CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In this interlingual contrastive study of English and Malay, the fundamental interest of which being the 'different devices' [speakers of these two languages use] to present information, we have demonstrated the use of translation as a tool for the measurement of discoursal meaning and simultaneously established that translating implies a text analysis according to the laws of the source language (English in this instance) and a corresponding synthesis in the system of the target (Malay).

Studying original English texts of a specific discoursal genre, namely scientific discourse, together with matching translations into Malay has provided interesting insight into the workings of cohesion and coherence within the linguistic systems of Malay and English. The result of this insight, explored in CHAPTERS FOUR, FIVE and SIX, has given us a picture of the different elements in a text that enable it to hang together internally as a piece of meaningful discourse, a product of meaning making processes which are essentially dynamic.
Based on the reasoning set forth in these chapters and on the observation of many examples occurring in the context of extended discourse, the conclusion is drawn that textual information manifests itself in many different ways, some less accessible than others and there are many different ways of analysing a text's structure and translating its internal coherence. Generally speaking, some of these methods of analysis can work in isolation.

Cohesion and (on a global level) coherence occur as the result of the interplay between all kinds of structuring devices, both implicit and explicit. Studying them in isolation can lead to a better understanding of them while an interlingual analysis via source and translated texts enhances further the insights into these surface lexico-grammatical choices or devices and the linkages or relations between clauses or clause complexes, which are essentially semantic relations, in the respective languages.

The findings from confronting English with Malay through the help of translations seem to confirm what has been said about text and the structure of text. Structure determines the various devices of TEXTURE, that is, the devices which ensure that a text hangs
together, that it is not a mere concatenation of elements and that it is operational as discourse. Various factors collaborate in producing this cumulative effect and one of them is cohesion. In other words, the findings of this research support the Halliday model and believe in its importance for identifying the many types of functional meanings that are present in text and which are essential to conveying the full import of messages.

This endeavour proves that translation can be used as a tool for the interlingual study of discourse and a very effective one at that too.

Just as we communicate in texts, we cannot translate isolated words or sentences unless they are part of a complete discourse which is usually embedded in a particular context of situation. To translate any source text, it is not enough to know what the corresponding lexical and grammatical units are between the source and the target languages, stylistic conventions used in each of the text types from which the individual sentences are extracted: a conversation, a popular newspaper article, a basic textbook, a research paper or a political speech, need also to be considered.
It is up to the translator to recognize the discrepancy between source language syntactic structures used as coherence markers and their effect in the target language he/she is translating into, and to find ways of using 'natural' target language syntactic structures to achieve the same effect. To put it more emphatically, it is not enough to reproduce text coherence mechanisms in the target language, but one has got to recognize the function of a certain instrument in the source language, identify an appropriate corresponding mechanism in the target language (which may be totally different in nature) and devise a transfer regularity between them.

Using translations to discover the parallelisms and differences that exist between Malay and English in creating textual cohesion and coherence through the use of syntactic markers and semantic relations in the communication of a message is only part of an overall design to explore the relevance of discourse or text analysis to translation and the possibility of establishing a translation theory of some sort that is linked to contrastive textology.

It is true, the findings for one genre of discourse need not necessarily apply across the board to all genres. Nonetheless, bearing in mind the complexity of the task if oral discourse, narratives, hortatory
discourse, descriptions and so forth had been brought into the fold of the research and its discussion, a more modest study as that set out in this thesis seems more logically feasible.

Research on these aspects is highly relevant to translation theory which, according to Newmark (1982:19) "provides a framework of principles, restricted rules and hints for translating texts and criticizing translations, a background for 'problem-solving' and which (ibid) is 'concerned with choices and decisions'.

Based on the observation of many examples occurring in the context of extended discourse in the corpus, it can be concluded that in the domain of scientific discourse (perhaps not to the same degree in other types of discourse) Malay and English do not differ so significantly in their availability of cohesive devices and the categories of devices. In fact, generally speaking, it is expected that there would be considerable parallelism between the two languages.

Leaving aside the question of transfer (lest it be forgotten that modern Malay has had its fair share of English influence, both lexically and structurally), the lack of differences between Malay and English in this study also calls into question the relativistic view
that different languages or cultures employ different strategies for rhetorical organization of texts. As has been pointed out by some researchers, it is more plausible that members of different speech communities have similar modes of textual organization available to them. Thus the crucial differences among speech communities may not lie so much in the presence or absence of particular features of textual organization as in the appropriateness of these features.

In fact, it is possible that cross-linguistic differences will turn out to be relatively unimportant if the texts compared are produced by equally proficient writers, for similar purposes and audience and under similar conditions as in the case of this study. The Malay and the English texts exhibit to a large extent, similar types of rhetorical organization. Herein perhaps lies the explanation for the close similarity between the translated Malay texts and the source texts in English in the corpus.

There is the counter-argument that translation is not really a suitable tool for a study of this nature as the translator does not initiate his own ideas but takes his cues from the source text. In other words, he is more or less guided and influenced by the structures of the text in the source language and the order in
which the information is given. This argument may have a tiny grain of truth if the focus of the study is thematization and information and not cohesion. The findings, apparently, may give a false picture of the actual order of things. The issue is, had the translator been the originator of the text in the language he is handling, would the text have been presented in that manner.

The feeling that a translated text may be influenced to a certain extent by the source text in its structural make-up may not be totally wrong. This is highly plausible in the case of two language systems that have many grammatical features and applications in common. It is equally likely with pairs of languages like Malay and English, where one has been very much subjected to the influence of the other in its attempts at enlarging its lexicon especially that pertaining to new fields of scientific knowledge and human intercourse and at adjusting itself to new ways of thought and thinking that are alien to the culture and the society. In its efforts at modernization and adaptation to the needs of a changing society confronted with scientific and technological development and innovations, modern Malay is very much influenced by the syntactic structure of English, the language of its ex-colonial masters.
This study represents a first in the use of translation as a tool for a contrastive analysis of Malay and English. It is useful at two levels. It provides interesting insights into the language systems analysed, that is, at the level of examining the constituent parts that make up the sentences that make up the text and at the level of translation proper with the putting together of the units analysed by reformulating the text in the target language.

Lastly I would like to add that, overall the objective results of my study with the use of translation as the tool of investigation are quite significant. Though this study has but examined only one aspect of the message-forming features of a text, since an attempt to examine them all would turn out to be too gigantic a task, it has proven that translation can be a useful tool for cross-linguistic studies.