## Abstract

The present research is a study of the discourse semantic stratum within the systemic functional theory of language. It focuses on cohesion in written discourse and more specifically, on conjunctions in authentic texts. Five written-to-be-read speech texts delivered by the then Minister of Education Dato' Sri Najib Tun Abdul Razak were chosen for the analysis of the cohesive conjunctions present in them. These texts belong to the genre of political discourse, which fall under the factual expositions of the hortatory type. Besides identifying a range of conjunctions used, and establishing the categories they belonged to, - additive, adversative, causal and temporal – this study also attempts to determine if the cohesive conjunctions used, derive from an external or an internal organization of the texts. The framework adopted for the study is based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) and Martin's (1992) models of cohesive conjunctions. The findings revealed that some of the cohesive conjunctions do not readily fit into Halliday and Hasan's categories of conjunctive relations. Therefore, these conjunctions have been reclassified under new categories. It was also found that all the 5 texts were mainly guided by internal conjunctions to organise and develop the texts. It is believed that this exploratory study of the nature of cohesive conjunctions used in political speeches, could shed some light on the authentic use of conjunctions. It is also hoped that this study could provide insights or facilitate the instruction of cohesive conjunctions especially in a second language environment like ours.

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