

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter presents summary of the study carried out so far. It also highlights the findings arrived at. Then, it restates the research hypotheses to verify their validity. Based on the findings, some recommendations for language teachers/learners are proposed. Suggestions for further studies are provided in this chapter as well.

5.1 Summary of the Study

Firstly, the study pointed out some existing practices in Saudi language classroom that overemphasize the language structures rather than using them as a resource for making meaning. It showed that concentration on language system and its grammar may have adverse effects on learning English writing. The study stressed the need for a paradigm shift and argued for a new approach to develop the students' productive abilities that is based on interaction and meaning analysis moving beyond the grammatical structures of a language and relate it to context.

Secondly, drawing mainly on the view that language is an interactional activity and exchanges of meaning, this study attempted to examine the discourse of media texts written by native and non-native writers of English. This is primarily to understand the written discourse features in different contexts, the disparity of interaction, ideas transmission, different vocabulary choice, diversity of clause structures, meaning development and how language actually works. To achieve this goal, the study adopted Michael Halliday's framework of '*Systematic Functional Linguistics*' to carry out the analysis. This framework treats language beyond its formal

structures and takes the context of culture and the context of situation in language use (Halliday, 1985). It deals with language systems as "means to an end, rather than as an end in themselves" (ibid). It focuses on how the grammar of a language serves as a resource for making and exchanging meanings between people.

The materials for the study were collected from two online newspapers articles; *The Washington Post* and *Arab News*. Selection of the sample articles was based on topic similarity. The selected articles were paired; one from the WP and the other from AN for the sake of comparison. Each pair deals with different topic, but articles in the same pair discuss similar idea.

The study combined two procedures for the analysis, the qualitative and the quantitative. The former was used for the detailed analysis of data and the latter for counting and comparing frequencies of features to be analyzed.

The analysis focused on the interpretation and description of three levels of meanings; the ideational meaning by investigating the *Process Types*, the interpersonal meaning examining *Mood & Modality* system and the textual meaning considering the *Cohesive Devices*. The findings revealed major differences as well as some similarities in the media texts written by native and non-native writers of English. They are presented below.

5.2 The Findings

Certain findings emerged from the analyses of media texts produced by native and non-native writers of English carried out in the previous chapter. The following points present them in focus:

1. Both native and non-native media writers of English center on the descriptions of the physical nature of the actions produced by the actors and make links between actions and actors with some associated qualities to transmit their ideas and the intended purposes.

2. Native media writers of English intend to provide more evidences for their claims – including more reported speech and intertextuality in their texts – than what the non-natives do.
3. The non-native media writers of English intend to expose their inner consciousness and inner insights to the readers more than what the native writer attempt to do.
4. Non-native media writers include positional states and presence of some entities more than what the native writers provide in their texts.
5. The physiological responses of the actors are not a major involvement in the media texts written by natives and nonnatives of English.
6. Both the native and non-native media writers of English tend be informative in their articles not demanding or questioning the readers.
7. The native media writers of English tend to write informally, while the non-native writers address their audience with complete formality.
8. The native media writers use more complex sentence structure in their texts, whereas the non-native writers focus on the use of simple sentence structure.
9. The non-native media writers employ a variety of clause structures in their articles more than what the natives do.
10. The native media writers use some symbolic and idiomatic language in their texts, but this is not a normal feature of the non-natives' articles.
11. The native media writers appear to be more personal and certain about the validity of their claims than the non-native writers.
12. The major motive of media texts writers, being natives or nonnatives of English, is to establish moderate relationships with the audience convincing them to accept their standpoints.

13. The native media texts writers of English involve more themes in their texts than what the nonnatives do, and hence they employ more cohesive devices.

To sum up, the analysis and comparison of the two sets of articles from *The Washington Post* and *Arab News* exhibit major differences as well as similarities in the discourse features between native and non-native media writers of English

5.3 Verification of the Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses are restated below in order to confirm or refute their validity. They are:

1. There are considerable variations in the discourse features between native and non-native writers of English.
2. Differences in the written texts by native and non-native writers of English are due to cultural aspects, social contexts, targeted audience and the authorial intentions in reporting an event.

Regarding the first hypothesis, it was confirmed through the findings listed above that show in details the variations of the discourse features between native and non-native writers of English.

Considering the second hypothesis, the analysis of the sample articles from WP and AN articles makes it evident that the cultural aspects as experienced by the authors affect the reporting styles. For example, when reporting the death of a sport man, the WP author included a brief history of the dead man's achievements and his good contributions to society. But the AN author did not add any information of this kind. This variation is considered to be affected by cultural aspects as good deeds and social contributions of a person are not publically posted in Saudi Arabia.

Secondly, social contexts also proved to affect the reporting styles. The expression 'guy' occurs 4 times in the WP article to refer to the dead man with the main aim to praise him. If the writer in AN newspaper uses 'guy' to refer to the Saudi dead man, it would be seen as disrespectful.

Addressing a particular audience also produces differences in the discourse features. When WP authors addressed American audience, they used more complex sentence structure and wrote informally. But AN authors addressed their Saudi audience formally and focused in simple sentence structure to make the message easily comprehensible.

Finally, the writing purposes directed the authors to include particular structures in their texts and produce variations. For instance, in pair 3 of the sample articles, as the purpose of the WP author was to convey the National Book Festival visitors' opinions and insights he included intertextuality and reported speech. While the AN author's intention was to show International Book Fair value, he kept providing descriptive information prompted by the use of verb 'to be' and some other 'copular verbs'.

This way, both of the research hypotheses were confirmed.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the discourse insights emerged from this study, it is recommended that the '*Systematic Functional Linguistics*' approach should be applied in language classrooms. It is imperative for language teachers to know how the language works linguistically and functionally to create meaning and then they should reflect this knowledge in classrooms practices as recommended in the following points:

- Teachers should be aware of the various backgrounds that the learners have which may influence their interpretations of the texts.

- The teaching materials should be designed to cater for the learners' needs emphasizing various communicative functions such as requesting, inviting, informing, directing, ...etc.
- Interaction should be created in classrooms during the teaching and learning processes.
- Teachers should plan to introduce purposeful activities in classrooms enabling the learners to share information/opinions, ask/answer questions, argue, reflect their ideas/attitudes and make sense of their world.
- Teachers should provide real/authentic texts rather than contrived ones to control the vocabulary choice and sentence structures. Real texts are purposeful and coherent.

To put it into focus, by applying the SFL approach in classrooms, teachers will provide the means for the language learners to understand how grammatical and lexical choices aid to express the intended meanings and learn to choose their language to write meaningfully for a particular purpose within a specific context of situation and definite audience in mind.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

To carry out further studies, the researcher proposes the following suggestions:

- The analytic data could be collected from more newspapers and not just restricted to two resources; in which each pair of articles would be collected from two different newspapers to maintain diversity of backgrounds and variety of language choices.
- A further study could also investigate the features of oral media discourse by native and nonnative speakers of English.