

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Arts and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages
English Division



The Role of Lexical Cohesion in Improving Students' Essays

Case study: Master One EFL Students at Mohamed Khider University -Biskra-

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Submitted by
Sara OUNISSI

Supervised by
Mrs. Ahlem SALHI

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Dedication

I dedicate this modest work to

My parents: *the most precious people to my heart.*

My sisters and brothers: *the ones who gave me love and care.*

My nieces and nephews: *the dear and beloved angels.*

My friends: *the persons who have always been a source of hope and motivation.*

Thank you all

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In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All the Praise is due to Allah alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds.

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Abstract

Teachers of written Expression often look for what may help their students to produce cohesive essays. The present study aims at investigating the important role lexical cohesive devices play in creating unified essays and to check the awareness of Master One students of these chains while writing. Thus, it is hypothesized that the suitable use of lexical cohesive devices would improve the students' essays. The hypothesis is evaluated by a descriptive study through the use of test for the students and questionnaire for the teachers. The test e been used in order to examine the extent to which students use the lexical cohesive device in their essays and their areas of difficulty while dealing with these ties. The questionnaire has been used to survey teachers' attitudes toward this issue. The obtained results reveal that students are aware of the importance of the lexical chains since they employed all the types in their essays, but they failed to make a balance in the frequency of the devices, besides this variance there is inappropriate use of many ties.

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ملخص

General introduction

Writing in a foreign language (FL) is a difficult task for many students; mastering of writing skill requires different aspects like; content, spelling, language use, punctuation, coherence and cohesion. However, English as Foreign Language (EFL) students often put their entire focus on content and neglect the other aspects especially the aspect of cohesion. Students should take into consideration that writing is more than being a matter of putting ideas together, but rather the information should be presented to audience in organized format that reserve the discourse' meaning and value. Therefore, students should recognize the importance of cohesion in creating continuity in text and in producing effective writing. Cohesion is the linguistic way that links a sentence to its predecessor or successor in the surface structure of written works, through grammatical and lexical items.

1. Statement of the Problem

Although EFL teachers spend huge efforts and lot of time teaching how to write a good essay, many students at advanced level still produce non-cohesive essays; this kind of writing is mostly due to the misuse of connectors, the overuse of functional connectives, and the poor variety of cohesive devices. Thus, in order to write consistent essays EFL students are supposed to achieve the lexical appropriateness and grammatical accuracy in their essays. However; the integration between the two subclasses of cohesion plays a significant role in creating meaningful and unified essays, grammatical cohesive ties gain more attention than lexical cohesive chains.

2. Significance of the Study

Through this research, we try to provide some insights into the role lexical cohesive devices play in producing consistent essays, and to come up with recommendations that could be beneficial for EFL written expression teachers, so they can help students produce lexical consistent essays.

3. Aims

The aim behind conducting this study is investigating the use of lexical cohesive ties in EFL students' essays and exploring correct and wrong use of lexical cohesive chains in students' essays.

4. Research Questions

This study tries to answer two questions:

- To what extent do EFL students employ appropriate use of lexical cohesion?
- What are the most frequent lexical cohesive devices students' use in their essays?

5. Hypothesis

Our research is directed by one hypothesis:

- If Master one EFL students employ appropriate lexical cohesive devices, their essays will be ameliorated.

6. Methodology Design

The most suitable methodological procedure to conduct this research is a descriptive one; we are going to describe students' problems with the lexical cohesive ties.

6.1. The sample

The study population comprises Master One students of English and written expression teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The study sample consists of two groups; the first group involves 30 subjects from Master one students who will be randomly selected to represent the whole population of Master one students. The second group involves 10 teachers of written expression module who will be randomly chosen to represent the whole population of written expression teachers.

6.2. Data gathering tools

The means adopted in this research are test and questionnaire; the test is directed to Master one students; they will be asked to develop a topic in a form of essay; the test tends to evaluate their essays in terms of lexical cohesion. The questionnaire is directed to teachers of written expression; it investigates the teachers' attitudes towards the use of lexical and cohesion in the students' essays.

7. Structure of the study

The present research is basically divided into three chapters; the first chapter deals with the process of writing, its stages, its difficulties, and the role of teacher in this process. The second chapter treats the notion of cohesion, its definition, its types, EFL students' problem in dealing with cohesive ties, and its contribution to successful writing. The third chapter comprises the fieldwork which is devoted to the analysis of the results obtained from students' test and teacher's questionnaire.

Chapter one

Writing skill

Introduction

Writing is one of the important skills students need to master while learning a foreign language. It is a complex skill that requires students to exert a considerable effort and frequent practice to different types of texts. In addition, teachers have great part in facilitating the writing skill; their first responsibility is to select the appropriate approach to teach this skill, and then to switch through the different roles they have to play while teaching. Moreover, teacher's feedback to students' production is very important in teaching writing; it is the key for improving students' writing as well as motivating them to create more effective piece of writing.

1.1. Nature of Writing

In written communication, humans use combination of linguistic graphic symbols that have a relation to sounds produced during oral communication. However, writing is more than being a matter of transcribing language into symbols, but rather it is the ability of manipulating letters in a systematic way (Byrne, 1988). Writing is a complex skill used to achieve different purposes in different contexts with different audience. In addition, since it is an inborn capacity, students have to exert an effort to learn its conventions and to make frequent practice in order to master this skill (Weigle, 2002).

Writing includes two related concepts; process and product. The process refers to the procedures of dealing with ideas from the first step of gathering information until the final step of presenting them to readers in appropriate way. Whereas, the product refers to

what writers can present to audience as a concrete written work, i.e. the process is all the stages that writers go through until the target result is reached, and the outcome of this operation is what can be called the product (Lines, 2005). As a result, teachers should make equivalence between both of them; they need to drive students to recognize the role of the former and the significance of the latter.

When teachers deal with writing as process, they focus on classroom activities that reinforce creativity to develop students' proficiency so they can use the language fluently; writing as process is "non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (Zamel, 1983 cited in Hyland, 2003: 11). Whereas, when writing is considered as product teachers apply different approaches that support quality. These approaches use activities of imitating; teachers reinforce students to master the sentence level, then they expect them to write effectively (Nunan, 1991).

1.2. Stages of writing

Many researches support the view that any piece of writing should pass different stages of adjustments and refinements until it is appropriate to be addressed to audience, Smith (2003:13) says "writing is an art, and like any good artist, a good writer continues to work on a piece until it has the desired impact". However, all researchers agree that the process of writing follows different stages, there are different views about number of stages, but a typical model categorizes Four stages "prewriting; composing/ drafting; reviewing; and editing" (Tribble, 1996: 39).

1.2.1. Prewriting stage

It can be difficult for many students to start writing, and they may spend much of time staring at a blank piece of paper wondering what to write. Prewriting works as a warming-up period that urges students to write; it “helps students create images and ideas about the assigned topic” (Roberts, 2004:6); in other words, it helps students to build a general overview about the topic. Also, it is a way through which students reserve their thoughts; Carroll and Wilson (1993:30) says it is a “way to plumb the writer's mind for ideas or as a way to focus an idea”. Writers put whatever comes to their minds about the topic; without giving attention to their relation to the topic, to spelling, grammar, punctuation, or word selection (Brown and Hood, 1998).

Consequently, prewriting is the stage of generating and shaping ideas about a topic without evaluating their structure or their suitability to the development of a topic because the most important thing that writers should focus on is gathering information about the topic, and not to worry about grammar, spelling or even punctuation, because these aspects will be examined in later stages.

Brown and Hood (1998) state that in the prewriting stage writers should focus on four factors which are the basics of the whole writing process:

- **Reader:** They have to take into consideration the person they are writing for.
- **Purpose:** They need to clarify the message they want to convey.
- **Content:** They should understand the nature of topic they are writing about.
- **Situation:** It is preferred to consider the place and exploit available time well.

Prewriting is a demonstration of the thinking way that students have whether random or sequential; if it is random the ideas will be thrown in a messy way, but if it is

sequential the ideas will be written in a proper way (Carroll and Wilson, 1993). There are different types of prewriting strategies “Some prewriting activities are simply warm-ups, ways to get the brain in gear. Others help generate ideas, and still others assist the writer in focusing an idea” (Carroll and Wilson, 1993:32). Thus, Students needs to have a repertoire of prewriting strategies from which they can choose the appropriate strategy that suits their way of thinking and their purpose.

Galko (2001) states some strategies that can be used in generating ideas:

- **Brainstorming:** Putting all the ideas without paying attention whether they are suitable, silly, complex, or whatever.
- **Free-writing:** expressing ideas as they are in mind.
- **Asking questions:** making different questions related to the topic; asking ‘who, what, where, when, and why’.
- **Mapping** (also called clustering or webbing): drawing a diagram; the topic should be placed in the middle and surrounded by the other ideas.
- **Listing:** The ideas are put in form of list under the general topic.

1.2.2. Drafting stage

After planning the work it will be easier to start writing the first draft, “drafting means writing a rough, or scratch, form of your paper” (Galko, 2001: 49); it is the real writing stage and the preliminary version of the work where students start putting ideas on the paper. It is a non-judgmental process; the ideas are placed in a messy and unplanned form, without giving attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, or word selection (Brown and Hood, 1998).

Drafting is the stage where writers' primary focus is to select appropriate ideas and start developing them using the plan produced in the prewriting stage, here the structure is not considered because it may shift the writers' attention from the content which must gain the most attention, because it would be difficult to concentrate on making correct structure and developing the topic in the first draft. However, it is preferred to make remarks about problems encountered to be refined afterward (Kane, 2000). Hence, the aim of writers in this stage is completing the draft rather than producing perfect one because what is important is the quantity not the quality.

1.2.3. Revising stage

Many students hate to look again to their work after it is finished, or they make quick glance forgetting that revising "is the heart of the writing process" (Johnson, 2008:179); it is the process of looking again to the whole work with "fresh eyes" to see what you have produced as a first draft. Revising is the stage where writers take the role of readers, and go through reading slowly to check content and style; verify whether the goals are clearly stated and supported by good details, in appropriate way so readers can understand the intended message (Stark, 2003).

Fulwiler (1988) considers that poor writing is due to the poor and less patient revision where students loss the desire to complete their product and check it. In revising writers "reexamine what was written to see how effectively they have communicated their meanings to the reader" (Seow, 2002: 317). Accordingly, writers see whether the intended message is clear to the audience or not. This stage should be an evaluation of the topic in a critical and objective way; writers have to examine their paper critically and make the necessary changes like reordering of parts, changing combination of sentences, expressing

thoughts in another way, as well as eliminating wordiness and unnecessary ideas and details (Chesla, 2006).

1.2.4. Editing stage

Editing is the final step before submitting the final draft to readers, it is important if writers want to introduce polished paper; “it is usually necessary if we want to end up with something satisfactory” (Elbow, 1973:38). Unlike revision which is general overview of the work, editing requires precise examination of each word and sentence the text consists of; writers make a great attention to grammatical accuracy, spelling, punctuation and correctness of form (Chesla, 2006). However, according to other researchers, like Hannell (2009), good editing do not stop at the process of checking punctuation and spelling, grammar, but it needs to examine the effectiveness and the appropriateness of the content, words choice, and sentence structure.

1.3. Basics of effective writing

Effectiveness of any piece of writing depends on organization, clarity, and appropriate word choice (Starkey, 2004).

1.3.1. Organization in writing

Any written work should be presented to readers in ordered structure; Starkey (2004: 2) says:

By following [an organized method of writing], you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your [piece of writing] work together and how they support your thesis.

From the quotation above, we understand that organization directs readers through text and makes the intended message more explicit, it also guarantees the required sequence of thoughts because the direction of ideas and how they are combined together can contribute in supporting thesis of topic. Thus, readers will be convinced with what they read.

1.3.2. Clarity in writing

The writer's goal from any piece of writing is to convey the message behind the topic, but readers cannot successfully achieve the intended message if the ideas are not clearly stated. Clarity has a significance role in the credibility of any written work, as well as it ensures that the meaning will be grasped as much as possible (Starkey, 2004).

Starkey (2004) has introduced five factors that can guarantee the clarity:

- a. **Eliminate ambiguity:** avoidance of words and expressions that have multiple interpretations. Students should use the most suitable vocabulary for the topic so readers will not be confused, for example; the ambiguous sentence: When doing the laundry, the phone rang. Can be converted to clearer sentence: The phone rang when I was doing the laundry (Starkey, 2004: 12).
- b. **Modifiers add precision:** The accurate use of modifiers is very important because specific adjectives and adverbs can make more powerful effect than group of words, for instance; the football team practiced in the rain, instead we can say; the football team practiced in the torrential downpour (Starkey, 2004: 13).
- c. **Powerful, Precise adjectives and adverbs:** introducing thoughts in a simple and precise form can lead readers to understand meaning. Good writing does not depend on the use of blurred vocabulary; "to be effective words must be precise" (Kane, 2000:262), for example; the vague sentence: Janus needs to file his

application soon, can be specified as: Janus needs to file his application by January 4 (Starkey, 2004: 14).

- d. Concise:** avoid wordiness; there is no need to write a paragraph in order to express an idea that can be more explicit in one or two sentences, for example;

Because of the fact that. In most cases, just because will do.

Because of the fact that he was late, he missed his flight.

Because he was late, he missed his flight (Starkey, 2004: 15).

1.3.3. Word Choice in writing

The right choice of vocabulary has great contribution in forming meaning, writers should rely on words that have the exact sense they want to express. For Kane (2000) and Starkey (2004) there are two aspects of a words' meaning that should be taken into consideration while choosing words: denotation and connotation; the former "is the basic or literal meaning of a word" (Starkey, 2004: 21); in other words, it is the first meaning a word indicates, whereas, the latter "is a word's implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions, and suggestions" (Starkey, 2004: 21); that is to say, it is the indirect meaning that a word can express. For instance; the word 'white' has one literal meaning and several implied ones: literally: Color, socially: Peace, and culturally: For Arabs expresses happiness (wedding), for Indians it expresses sorrow (funeral).

The wrong use of words can be a result of the use of synonyms because sometimes in order to avoid repetition, a word is substituted with its synonym which has other primarily meaning, sources of the inappropriate use are; the use of slang language because it is thought to be formal, or the use of clichés words because they considered original ones (Starkey, 2004).

1.3.4. Mechanics in writing

Mechanics are rules that guarantee the effectiveness of any piece of writing; “the writing process comprises the mechanics by which writers create publishable products” (Sundem, 2007: 41). Mechanics refers to the surface structure of language; how words are spelled and the way in which they are ordered (Kane, 2000); simply, it refers to the different rules of grammar, punctuation and capitalization.

Grammar represents the central component of the language system; without knowing the grammar rules it is impossible to use that language syntactically correct, different investigations lead “...writers to conceive grammar as essential component of language” (Celec-Murcia, 2001:23). In addition, mastering punctuation and capitalization is important in writing because the quality of written works is judged also by punctuation. In this respect, Harmer (2004) emphasizes that no matter how original are the ideas, and how they are arranged if they are not expressed in clear and accurate manner.

1.4. Types of writing

Writing is not only a means of transmitting information, but a means that serves different needs of people, since students’ writing is not limited by the classroom teachers have to take into consideration all the types of writing that students need in and out the class. According to Hedge (2000) the typical classification of writing types includes six types: Personal, study, public, creative, social and institutional writing.

1.4.1. Personal writing

Writing is used as a means to satisfy one’s personal needs; it can be used as a kind of aide-memoires through which persons express their personal life, reserve their

experiences and adventures, write about their daily life, record special events and occasions. Usually people write about their personal thoughts with their first language but if teachers encourage their students to use their second language while writing they will be more motivated to practice the language. Thus, if students are convinced, they will give their best, because personal things can make students intrinsically motivated.

1.4.2. Study writing

This kind of writing is used in fields of education, it includes varied tasks that students asked to do in order to be assessed; students may asked to write essays, reports, reviews. In addition, students may do other different activities of writing in order to help themselves in the learning process; they can summarize lessons, paraphrase others ideas during homework as well as taking noted during sessions.

1.4.3. Public writing

This type of writing requires students to follow a specific organization and to be restricted to certain conventions, because this kind is going to be addressed to special audience like organizations or institutions. Furthermore, it is demonstrated in letters of inquiry or complaint, or letters for editors.

1.4.4. Creative writing

This writing has two orientations; personal and social because writers can share their production with public in order to contribute to the social development or they reserve the work for their selves, and exploit it to develop their writing skill and to build strong self confidence. Moreover, this writing is demonstrated in poems, stories, songs and drama;

teacher should make special attention to students who have problem with those tasks because this kind of writing is supported only by talented individuals.

1.4.5. Social writing

It used to build new social relationships between strange people or to maintain a previously relations among family or friends. It includes the use of personal letters, text messages, e-mails, and notes of congratulation or sympathy.

1.4.6. Institutional writing

It is used to write about language as specific purposes; it has tight connection with professionals, students can be specialized in their writing in different domains. It gives students chance to write about fields they are interested in, and provides them with a vocabulary luggage of jargon language. Besides, it includes writing academic papers, legal contract, and advertising copies.

1.5. Approaches to teaching writing

There are diverse approaches for teaching writing skill in classroom, each approach emphasizes different aspects that constitute any piece of writing. Raims (1938) states the following figure about all the aspects that students have to deal with while producing any written work.

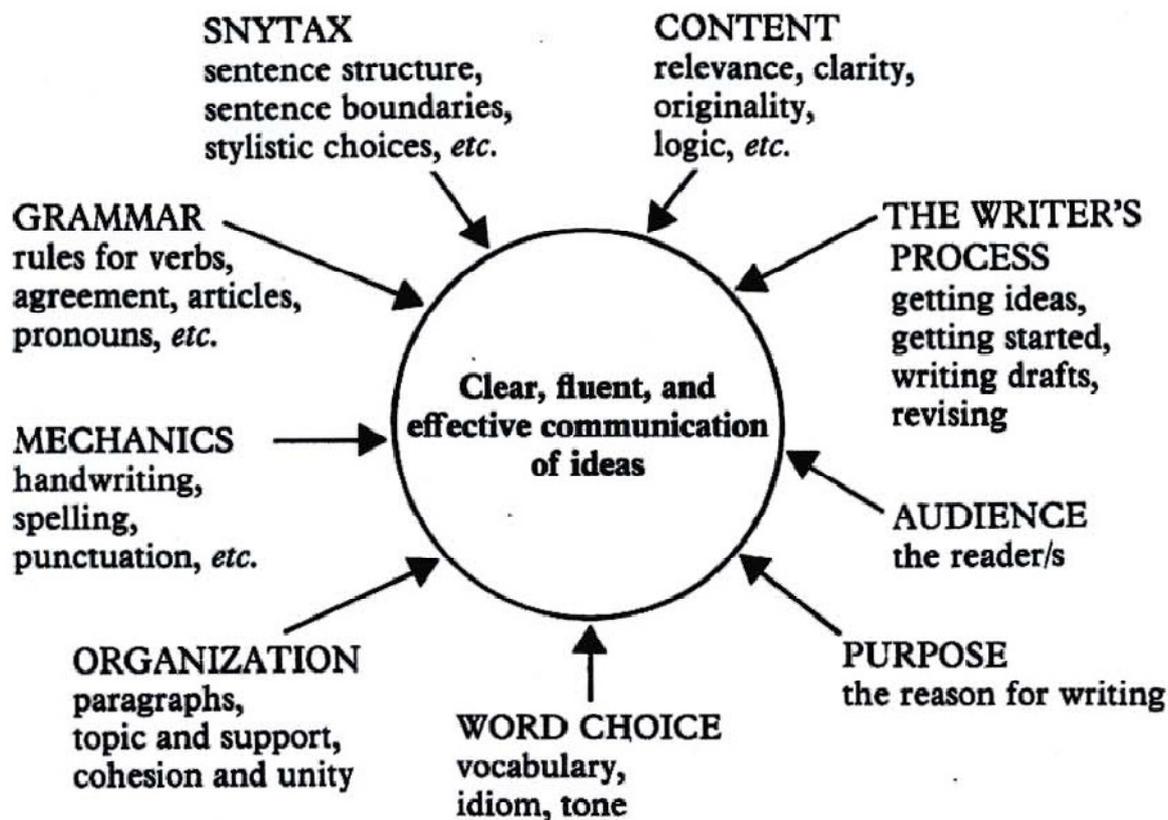


Figure 01: Producing a piece of writing

Raims (1938:6)

In addition, he suggests the following six approaches for teaching writing; the controlled-to-free writing approach, the free-writing approach, the paragraph pattern approach, the communicative approach and the process approach.

1.5.1. The Controlled-to-Free Approach

In the 1950s and 1960s, the current approach was the audio-lingual approach, writing was only a reinforcement of speech which considered primary, to develop speaking skills students was taught grammar and syntax through different procedures. In addition, the principle of the controlled-to-free approach in writing is imitation through specific progression; students are asked to imitate patterns of sentences and then paragraphs, with

making some changes in grammatical rules or syntactic structure. Moreover, only if the students' level is improved they will be able to move to more advanced one in which they can rely on creativity and express their own thoughts. This approach focuses on accuracy and neglects fluency and creativity, in addition, students are not supposed to make errors since they are only imitating. Consequently, mistakes are not tolerated and this makes teachers' feedback easy and quickly (Raims, 1938).

1.5.2. The free-writing approach

The free-writing approach emphasizes content rather than form; writing skill is developed through frequent practice on a given topics, practice in writing is essentially concerned with content and fluency at the expense of accuracy and correctness. However, grammatical accuracy is taken into consideration; organization will be done after the content is finished.

At the beginning of the class students are usually given a an assignment to write freely about any topic they want in few minutes, grammar and spelling should not be taken into consideration because the important is to produce complete piece of writing. In addition, at first students may find some difficulties, but after frequent training they will cope all kinds of problems. Furthermore, readers and content are given great concern since students are writing about topics of their interests; those subjects will be used later as a base of other more focused tasks. The role of teachers is limited to reading students' written works and responding on the expressed ideas (Raims, 1938).

1.5.3. The Paragraph Pattern Approach

The paragraph pattern approach emphasizes organization rather than accuracy of grammar and fluency of content. Paragraphs and sentences are the basic elements of this

approach; students are given paragraphs to copy them and make an analysis to their form, then they are asked to imitate the form of models. Students order random sentences in a paragraph form; they identify general statement and supporting details, and from this they generate suitable thesis statement to the topic. This approach is based on the fact that people organize their ideas according to their culture, subsequently; even if students are able to construct their thoughts in organized way in their first language, they still need to learn how to organize them according to the second language they learn (Raims, 1938).

1.5.4. The grammar – syntax – organization approach

This approach supposes that in order to write piece of writing students should to master different aspects of language. Thus, teachers rely on the tasks that require students to deal with well organized form as well as accurate grammar and appropriate syntactic structure, for example; in order to carry out writing task about how a machine operates, different aspects should be reviewed:

- Organized plan.
- Chronological order.
- Enumeration words for the sequence of ideas.
- The appropriate vocabulary.
- Well structured sentences.

Students have to make a relation between what they write and what they asked to write, and in order to explicitly address, the message the purpose of written work should be correspondent with the form (Raims, 1938).

1.5.5. The Communicative approach

This approach is concerned with two things; the goals of any piece of writing students produce and the readers for whom this piece of writing is directed. Two important questions should be asked by students before they are engaged in writing process; why am I writing this? and who will read it?

The usual audience of student's work is teachers, but in the communicative approach teachers transfer their role to other students because writers are thought to be more perfect when their work has a communicative purpose. Thus, because of the communicative nature of the approach teachers select readers outside the classroom to give students chance "to learn to think about real audiences and to learn to solve myriad problems associated with writing to those audiences" (Kennedy, 1998:12), so, students will work about different aspects that professionals take into their consideration. Students as audience read the piece of writing and give feedback to the producers through responding; summarizing, rewriting or making comments. Moreover, context influences content, language and levels of formality (Raims, 1938).

1.5.6. The Process approach

Students should not expect their first draft to be perfect; they need to recognize that draft is going to pass different stages of refinement to be polished and appropriate for readers. Teachers guide and help students at each of these stages, Ken Hyland (2003:10) says "The process approach to teaching writing emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task".

Besides, feedback is very important in drafting stage, whether it is from other students or teacher; it pushes writers to see their work from different perspectives and this can lead to the emergence of new ideas, new sentences and new words, that can be useful in the next stages and may be included in the final work. Thus, the readers' task is to focus on content, ideas, rather than to focus on form, which is of secondary importance. In the process approach writing is considered as discovery process in which students are encouraged to write about their own topic, and provided with time and feedback to go through the stages of pre-writing; drafting, revising and editing (Raims, 1938).

Consequently, these approaches are “complementary and overlapping perspectives, representing potentially compatible means of understanding the complex reality of writing” (Hyland 2003:2); instead of adopting one of the approaches teachers tend to select eclectic choice.

1.6. Role of teacher in writing

Good teacher is like an actor who can play different roles at the same time and switch between them easily and in perfect way. Harmer (2001) asserts that teachers' effectiveness will be enhanced if they knew how to play their roles. Teachers' roles may vary according to the task they are teaching; Harmer (2004) mentions the significance of teachers' roles in the development of students' writing skill, on the other hand, he emphasizes three functions that teachers should give special focus during writing process; he states the following roles:

1.6.1. Teacher as motivator

One of the important role teachers usually occupy in writing tasks is the role of motivator; teachers work hard for creating relaxing atmosphere in which good ideas can

emerge easily, as well as making a discussion about the topic of the work to give a general overview so students will be highly involved in the assignment, talking about the significance of the task also can urge them to make their maximum effort and to put their full concentration during the process of production. In addition, teachers can give some suggestions especially for those who do not know how to start, or select some ideas for those who are confused with different thoughts. Furthermore, they should be supportive and caring and hearten students to think creatively and intelligibly (Harmer, 2004).

1.6.2. Teacher as resource

In the tasks that require a lot of time teachers often play the role of resource. They provide students with information about the accurate grammar and correct spelling where necessary. Also, they give guidance through the development of the assignment by offering suggestions and advices; teachers are usually the primary resource students return to when they want to ask how write something or when they want to know information about something in the activity (Harmer, 2004).

Indeed, teachers do not know everything; and sometimes, student keep asking some sort of questions that carry complex knowledge that teachers may not have, the role of the teacher here is to provide them with guidance for instance showing them where they can find the piece of information they are looking for in a certain website or a title of a book (Harmer, 2001).

Consequently, another feature of this role is to encourage students to employ resource materiel by themselves; it is good to be available as a resource, but at the same time it is also important to direct students to exploit resources materials by themselves, so they will not rely on the teacher in everything because acting as a resource does not

necessarily mean being a spoon- feeder to students. Thus, they will not find themselves lost without teacher.

1.6.3. Teacher as feedback provider

One of the things students expect from their teachers is to supply them with feedback. It is preferred to give feedback in positive and encouraging shape because students need to be criticized in a motivating way; constructive criticism has the major contribution to the development of students. In addition, teachers focus on particular aspect since it is impossible to give feedback in every aspect, taking into account the nature of the task, the suitable kind of feedback, and the degree of focus needed in each stage (Harmer, 2004). Furthermore, the teachers are supposed to offer student with feedback, correction, handing out grades, and determining who passes to the next level. Moreover, Students should be given the opportunity to know what to be assessed and how (Harmer, 2001). Besides, teachers have to be fair in giving constructive criticism for the poor performance and give credits for the good performance. When the teachers act as a feedback providers, they should do that sensitively and encouragingly and mainly with discretion.

1.7. Teacher's Feedback

Providing feedback is one of the essential roles teachers play in teaching writing; “It helps the writer work out the text’s potential and to comprehend the writing context, providing a sense of audience and an understanding of the expectations of the communities they are writing for”; through feedback teachers help students to see the topic from different perspectives as well as engaging them in a communicative task; so students can discover what professionals take into consideration while writing. For Harmer (2001)

feedback depends on two things the nature of the written task and effect the teacher wants to make.

Coffin et al (2003) identify the purposes from feedback in the following points:

- Support the students work as well as motivating them.
- Focus students 'attention to specific aspects.
- Raise students' awareness of the academic writing conventions.
- Make an explanation of mark.
- Show areas of strengths and weaknesses.
- Suggest more appropriate ideas.

The type of feedback teacher provides determine how students approach the writing process, Harmer (2007) identifies two types of feedback in written works.

1.7.1. Correcting Feedback

This type of feedback concentrates on the correctness of form; teachers correct students' use of language in terms of grammatical accuracy, lexical appropriateness, patterns of organization and fluent discourse, and it is usually provided in the final version of written works. One of the demotivating things during providing feedback is giving students their piece of writing colored with red ink, with lots of crosses and question marks; this image can give students impression that their work is poor production, and this may lead them to lose their desire to write. It is true that some student's final work seems like a first draft but teachers should avoid over-correction taking into consideration the sensitive nature of students and their role as motivators (Harmer, 2007), this does not mean that teachers have to lie in order not to hurt his student, but means correcting student's work in soften way. According to Harmer (2007) there are different techniques that can be used for correcting students' final work rather than over- correction.

1.7.2. Selective Correction

To avoid over-correction problems teacher may use selective correction in which teacher job is limited to the correction of spelling mistakes, tenses, word order, or punctuation. Students should be previously informed about the aspect that teacher is going to concentrate on while correcting, this can be beneficial because if students are included in making decision, they will be reinforced to do a task and they will give special attention to the areas of teacher's correction (Harmer, 2007). Hence, focusing each time on specific area will reinforce students' learning of the different aspects that any piece of writing should consist of.

1.7.3. Using Correcting Symbols

In order to avoid the negative image of the over-use of red ink teachers can use the technique of abbreviation, for example; the (S) for spelling mistakes, the (G) for grammatical mistakes and (T) for wrong verb tense; this technique is to write under a mistake its corresponding abbreviation (Harmer, 2007). As a result, by this technique teachers encourage students to make self correction, at the same time the guidance to areas and kinds of mistakes leads students to write correct version by their own. However, teachers should be careful while applying this technique because some students may consider it as laziness from the teacher, and in this case it will be demotivating technique rather than a motivating one.

Harmer (2004) suggests the following figure to illustrate the most frequently symbols that teachers often use while correcting written works. Also, students should have to memorize this list in order to understand the correction easily:

| Symbole | Meaning | Example error |
|---------|---|--|
| S | A spelling error | The <u>answer</u> is <u>abevious</u> . |
| WO | A mistake in word order | I <u>like very much</u> it. |
| G | A grammar mistake | I am going to buy somefurnitures. |
| T | Wrong verb tense | I <u>have seen</u> him yesterday. |
| C | Concord mistake (e.g. subject and verb agreement) | People <u>is</u> angry. |
| ⌊ | Something has been left out | He told ⌊that he was sorry. |
| WW | Wrong word | I am interested <u>on</u> jazz music. |
| ⌋ } | Something is not necessary | He was not ⌋too }strong enough. |
| ?M | The meaning is unclear | That is <u>very excited photograph</u> . |
| P | A punctuation mistake | Do you like London. |
| F/I | Too formal or informal | Hi Mr Franklin, Thank you for your letter... |

Table 01: Correction symbols

Harmer (2004: 120)

1.7.4. Reformulation

Reformulation is based mainly on a comparison; teachers rewrite the wrong sentence of students into other version which is more syntactically correct; it is more useful in the stage of drafting and the following stages of adjustment (Harmer, 2007). Hence, reformulation helps students to learn about correct structure of sentence as whole rather than learning about its small parts separately.

1.7.5. Referring students to a dictionary or a grammar book

In some cases teachers propel students to use a dictionary or grammar book to check some words, using expression like ‘check the dictionary’. The reason from consulting these materials is to reinforce the autonomous learning in one hand and to raise

their awareness about the importance of exploiting the resources. Like in the technique of using symbols in this technique teachers have to make sure that students realize the intended aim behind the technique.

1.7.6. Ask me

Teacher uses expressions like ‘ask or consult me’ because their feedback cannot be explained clearly in the paper; it needs to be addressed directly to the writer and this may result a discussion (Harmer, 2007). Thus, face to face feedback is the last solution for teachers to address their notes and comments.

1.7.7. Remedial teaching commit

It used in the case where a big number of students in the same class have made the same mistakes. In remedial teaching teachers take examples of the common mistakes and put them in the board and ask the whole class to participate in order to fix them; it is useful way of correcting because students feel more comfortable when their mistakes are anonymously corrected (Harmer, 2007). Thus, in this type of feedback students receive public feedback without the fear of being laughed at as well as they will be given a chance to participate in correction.

1.8. Responding Feedback

This type of correction focuses on content rather than the correctness of student’s performance; teachers look for how details are ordered and how they support thesis statement, the type of pattern of organization is used as well as the fluency of discourse (Harmer, 2007). This kind of feedback is usually supplied during the different stages of writing in order to help students to make more refined drafts; Nation (2009: 120) says

“feedback is useful if it occurs several times during the writing process”. In responding teachers does not say what is right and what is wrong but they make comments, give suggestions in a guiding way not an evaluating or a judging one, and students have to understand the reason behind each comment and suggestion (Harmer, 2007). Like in correction teacher can respond to content in different ways; the most important ones are the following:

1.8.1. Responding to work in progress

Responding to work in progress occur when students are doing written task in classroom, teachers turn around class in order to see how students are developing their topic and provide them with necessary feedback; “Feedback therefore emphasizes a process of writing and rewriting where the text is not seen as self-contained” (Hyland, 2003:177). Teachers should respond carefully because some students appreciate the teacher’s comments and suggestions whereas others prefer to discuss their points of view before they consider the teacher’s view, it is useful to discuss with students why they have started in this way, and how some details can support a thesis of the topic, then suggestions and advices can be provided (Harmer, 2007). Hence, discussion is more favorable because students feel they have personal attention, they are free to explain their opinions and that teacher do not consider the work wrong and they obliging them to change their ideas but he is trying to convince them with more appropriate thoughts.

1.8.2. Responding by written comments

This kind of response works well when teachers ask their students to give their complete draft before they start working on the final one. In this type, teachers’ reaction is written down “writers should receive comments on the ideas in their writing (Are there

enough? Are they relevant?)” (Nation, 2009: 121), in the other hand, the teachers may make comments of appreciation about good things in the work “Feedback should always be positive, first pointing out what students did well” (Johnson, 2008:160).

In brief, we can say that teacher’s feedback is based on both correcting form and responding to content; when teachers’ feedback is concerned with the final production they usually like to make correction but when the feedback is provided along the stages of writing they prefer to respond, teachers need to ensure that students understand and benefit from this reaction. Moreover, students have to keep in mind that making mistakes is a natural part in the learning process not an indication of poor production, and they will be encouraged to correct their mistakes and benefit as much as possible from teacher’s comments and suggestions.

Conclusion

Writing is one of the most important skills EFL students need to develop in learning a language, at the same time; it is one of the most challenging skills for many students. What makes writing a very difficult task is the fact that it requires some different aspects which are considered to represent a challenge for students to perfect. In producing any piece of writing, students have to go through different stages that enable them to transfer a blank sheet of paper to final polished piece of writing which can be addressed to audience. In addition, teaching writing is a difficult task; teachers primary job is to select the approach that best fits their students’ needs, teachers also have to switch between different roles in order to guide students during any writing task. Moreover, teachers’ feedback should not be delayed to the final draft but it should be provided during the different stages so students can learn the basics of effective writing from early stages.

Chapter two

Discourse and lexis

Introduction

Text is not only a group of words or sentence gathered in a random manner but rather it is a combination of sentences in a logical way, lexical cohesion is one of the important and challenging aspects of discourse analysis that creates unity to the text. However, it has a significance role in building texture and giving meaning to the text, it gain less attention compared with grammatical cohesion. In this chapter, we will deal with the important relationship between discourse and lexis and how the lexical choice can build unified text.

2.1. Discourse and Lexis

For many years, the focus in studying and analyzing language was on the structure of sentence from a purely syntactic point of view following the Chomskian theory of Transformational Generative Grammar (1957) which concentrates on the syntactic aspect of language and neglects the semantic one (McCarthy, 1991). Many linguists have investigated the development of discourse analysis; Cook (1989) states that Harris's paper published with the title "Discourse Analysis" in 1952 "concerned with the study of the relationship between language and contexts in which it is used" (McCarthy, 1991:5) has shifted the attention from the analysis of sentences in isolation to the investigation of language in use.

After the work of Harris, linguists have become aware of the use of context and language function and many works has emerged; Hymes (1964), Austin (1962), Searle

(1969), Grice (1975), Halliday and Hasan (1976), and different disciplines such as: semiotics, sociology, psychology, etc., were influenced by the study of language in context (Van Dijk, 2002 cited in Alba-Juez, 2009). Hence, they recognize the essential role that lexical items play in organizing discourse.

Although lexis is very important in the understanding of the discourse structure, it still represents a challenging area to linguists. Martin (1992:271 cited in Tanskanen, 2006:7) argues that:

This [considering the contribution of lexis to discourse structure] is an ambitious undertaking, in at least two respects. First, lexis has received less attention in functional linguistics than has grammar, and so there is less to build on. And second, the scope of the experiential meaning coded through lexis in any language is vast, which fact alone makes it harder to bring under analytical control. Nevertheless, lexical relations have an important role to play in discourse structure.

We can understand that Martin (1992) argues that lexis is an essential part of discourse but grammatical relations gained more attention than the lexical ones. Many linguists support Martin's view; Sinclair (1998: 3 cited in Tanskanen, 2006:8) argues that "the tools for lexical analysis remain unrefined", while "grammar has gone through many stages of sophistication; that is to say, grammatical relations are highly used in discourse until it become polished while lexical relations are ignored.

In addition, Halliday & Hasan (1976: 292) claim that "However luxuriant the grammatical cohesion displayed by any piece of discourse, it will not form a text unless this is matched by cohesive patterning of a lexical kind"; in other words, however the importance of grammatical cohesion in building text it cannot be sufficient if it is stranded alone without lexical cohesion. Likewise, Hoey (1991: 210 cited in Tanskanen, 2006:8) says:

It is the flexibility and extent of our lexicon that makes the infinity of syntactic patterns we can produce interesting; it is in part the way we can combine the resultant sentences to make endlessly new patterns of semantic relationships that makes every communication original.

From the quotation above, we can see that Hoey (1991) talks about the great role lexis plays in building different and endless patterns of discourse, which are the basis of creating meaning of discourse and giving it originality.

2.2. Large Patterns of Text

Patterns of text have great role in creating organization and clarity to discourse. McCarthy (1991) talked about the importance of lexis and shed some light on the large patterns of text that have a lexical nature, as well as their significance role in the analysis of discourse. McCarthy (1991) states that “both readers and writers need to be aware of these signaling devices and to be able to use them when necessary to process textual relations” (McCarthy, 1991: 31); that is to say, writers have to be aware of these signals in order to convey their message clearly and readers have to recognize them to interpret discourse in a right way. There are four types of patterns: problem/solution, claim/counterclaim and question/answer, general/specific.

2.2.1. Problem/solution pattern

Problem/solution pattern is regarded as a sequence of relations that constantly arising in texts; this significance feature has a great part in building the whole discourse as well as in the interpretation of text. Furthermore, this pattern is mostly achieved through the cohesive ties; McCarthy (1991:78) says “discourse organizers often contribute to our awareness that a problem-solution pattern is being realized”. Generally it consists of four

elements: situation, problem, response, evaluation; McCarthy (1991:79) displayed the vocabulary that often comes under the elements of problem-solution patterns:

- The situation: difficulty, dilemma, drawback, hamper, hind (er/ance), obstacle, problem, snag.
- The problem: change, combat (vb), come up with, develop, find, measure(s), respon(d/se).
- The response: Solution, result, answer, consequence, effect, outcome, result, solution, (re)solve.
- The evaluation: (in)effective, manage, overcome, succeed, (un)successful, viable, work (vb) Likewise.

For instance; most people like to take a camera with them when they travel abroad. But all airports nowadays have x-ray security screening and x-rays can damage film. One solution to this problem is to purchase a specially designed lead-lined pouch. These are cheap and can protect film from all but the strongest x-rays (McCarthy, 1991:30); we can clearly recognize that the situation is taking camera while traveling abroad and this faced by the problem of the have x-ray security screening and x-rays can damage film, and the solution is to purchasing a specially designed lead-lined pouch. The evaluation is that the pouches are cheap and protect the film.

From this example, we notice that the problem/solution pattern is realized through both grammatical and lexical chains.

2.2.2. Claim/Counterclaim Pattern

This pattern also called the hypothetical/real pattern. It is group of vocabulary that occurs together in the same text in order to indicate uncertainty; in other words, to built contrast among different claims in the text. For instance; Historians are generally agreed

that British society is founded on a possessive individualism, but they have disputed the origins of that philosophy. Some trace it back to the middle ages, other link it to the rise of capitalism but the consensus is that the corner stone of this society has been the nuclear family where the man the breadwinner holds dominance over his dependent wife and child (McCarthy, 1991:30).

We can see from the example, that the word ‘agreed’ introduces the claim of the text, ‘disputed’ contrasts the claim of the discourse, and ‘consensus’ contrasts both of the claims.

The following list contains the items that indicate claims/counter claims in the text provided by Jordan (1984:148 cited in McCarthy, 1991:80):

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------------|-------------|
| according to | estimated | might | seems |
| apparently | evidently | old wives’ tales | should |
| appears | expected | perhaps | signs |
| arguably | forecast | potential | so-called |
| believes | imagine | probably | speculation |
| claimed | likely | promises to be | suggests |
| considered | look | reported | thought |
| could | may | says | |

2.2.3. Question/Answer Pattern

Question/Answer Pattern has some features shared with the problem-solution pattern, but its principal aim is “the pursuit of a satisfactory answer to a question explicitly posed (usually) at the beginning of the text”; in other words, the base of this pattern is to

introduce a question at the introduction and devote the whole text to answer this question, for instance;

Is London too expensive?

It's no surprise that in Britain, London is the most expensive city to stay in: we've all heard the horror stories. But just how expensive is it? According to international hotel consultants Horwath and Horwath's recent report, there are now five London hotels charging over 90 pounds a night for a single room (from Moneycare, October 1985: 4 cited in McCarthy, 1991:158).

From the example above, we can see that the question of the text 'Is London too expensive?' is answered throughout the text, by international hotel consultants Horwath and Horwath's recent report.

2.2.4. General/specific pattern

General/specific pattern drives the reader through developing ideas in three stages; the starting stage comprises a general idea about the topic, the middle stage is rich with supporting details and then the closing stage where the writer finishes the discourse with general statement about the whole text. McCarthy (1991) clarifies this pattern in the following figure:

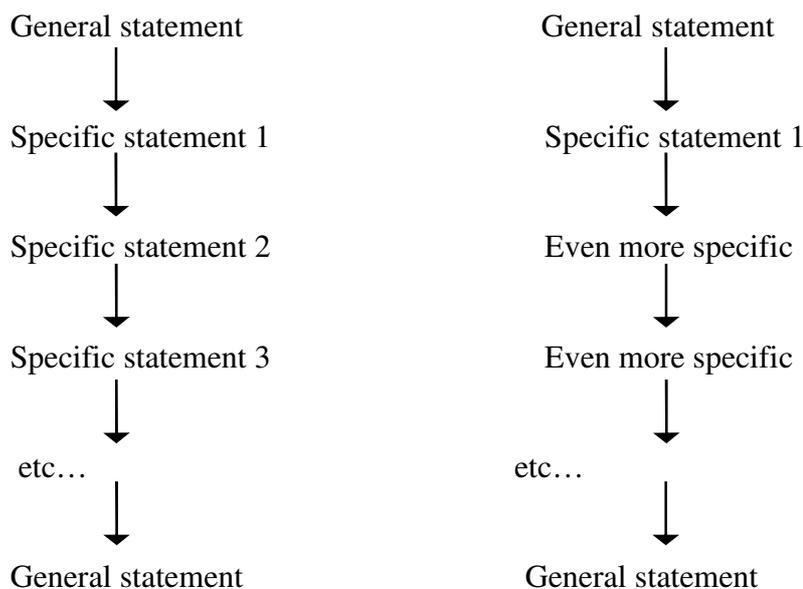


Figure 02: General/Specific Pattern

McCarthy (1991:158). Discourse analysis for language teachers.

From this figure, we can see that readers of the text can feel the smooth flow of ideas through the whole text; starting with a statement summarizes the whole text and then moving to specific and more specific details to prove the first statement, and finally ending with a general statement.

2.2. Text and Texture

Text is a linguistic product of discourse that exists in both written and spoken language. Widdowson (2007:4) explains a text as “an actual use of language, as distinct from a sentence which is an abstract unit of linguistic analysis”, that is to say; using language for a communicative purpose. In addition, Halliday and Hassan (1976: 1-2) explain that “a text is a unit of language in use... and is not defined by its size... a text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning”; we can see that Halliday and Hassan (1976) supports Widdowson (2007) view and add that text is not considered by its size, but by the unity of structure. Moreover, any text has texture; the

term “texture” can be defined as what makes any length of text meaningful and coherent, texture otherwise referred to as textuality.

In addition, DeBeaugrande and Dressler (1981) define text as a “communicative event” which depends on seven standards of textuality called “constitutive principles of textual communication”; these standards are:

- a. **Cohesion:** is the linguistic way that links a sentence to its predecessor or successor in the surface structure of written works through grammatical and lexical items.
- b. **Coherence:** it is defined as the continuity of the intended meaning beyond any text within an arrangement of the concepts and relations. It is based on learners’ interpretation of the related sentences.
- c. **Intentionality:** it refers to the text producer’s attitudes and aims that a text should accomplish the procedures intentions, and successfully conveys the message.
- d. **Acceptability:** it concerns the text receivers’ attitude that the text should provide the hearer/reader an ability to receive any relevance of the text.
- e. **Informatively:** it refers to the extent to which the text presents known or new information to the hearer/reader.
- f. **Situationality:** it refers to the factors that determine the situation, in which the text is produced; in other words, to indicate what is said, by whom, why, when and where.
- g. **Intertextuality:** it concerns the factors which make the use of one text dependent on knowledge of other texts.

2.3 Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and coherence play a great role in shaping text and its texture; according to Halliday and Hassan (1976) both of them are considered the main standards which build

a text as a whole, because texture of text is realized through these two fundamental units that set relations between and within parts of the text and differentiates a text from a non-text. Therefore, cohesion and coherence are the two fundamental units that set relations between parts of the text and provide it with the meaning continuity that readers require to infer to and to interpret discourse. Moreover, they are highly related concepts, but at the same time, they present two main independent parts in controlling text either spoken or written. Baker (1991:241) makes clear distinction between them:

Like cohesion, coherence is a network of relations which organize and create a text: cohesion is the network of surface relations which link words and expressions to other words and expressions in a text. And coherence is the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text.

From the quotation, we can understand that cohesion is used to achieve the unity of the structure while coherence is to achieve unity of the meaning. In addition, cohesion is accomplished through the use of cohesive devices while coherence is realized.

Also, Hoey (1991 cited in Baker, 1991: 241) views that cohesion deals with the surface level of text, whereas; coherence is concerned with the deep level. Cohesion is objective whereas coherence is subjective; that is to say; cohesion is property of the text while coherence is the reader's evaluation of the text.

2.2.1. Types of Cohesion

Cohesion is achieved through devices that build relationships across sentence boundaries, and serves to tie the sentences of text together, Salkie (1995: x) refers to the significant role of cohesive devices in creating texture as "they are like the glue which holds different parts of a text together". Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify cohesion into

two broad categories namely: grammatical and lexical cohesion. These lexico-grammatical devices are summarized in the following figure:

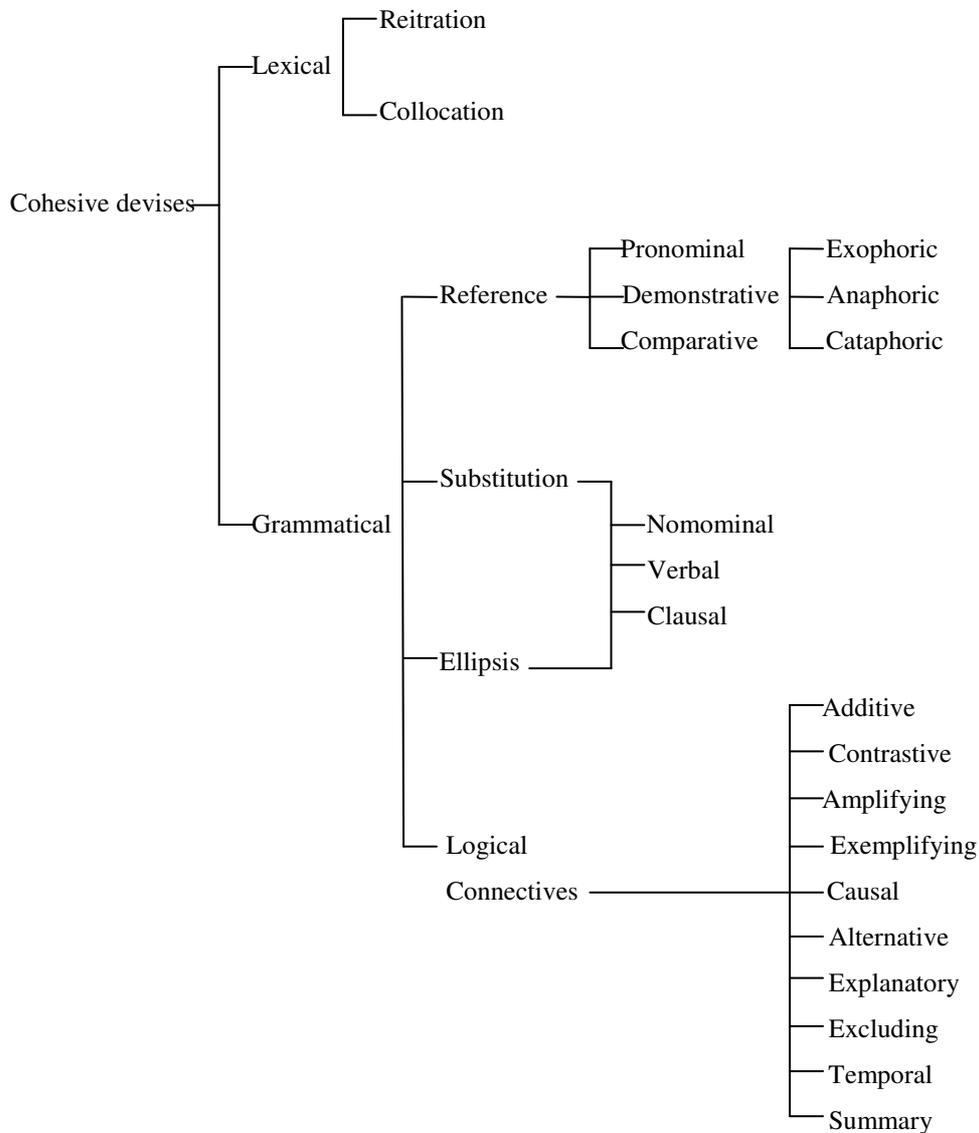


Figure 03: Types of Cohesion in English

Williams (1983 cited in Kennedy, 2003:23)

2.2.1.1. Grammatical cohesion

Grammatical cohesion has been classified into two four subclasses: reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction Halliday and Hassan (1976).

2.2.1.1.1. Cohesion by reference

Reference means that items in a linguistic or situational text are interpreted by reference to another item in the same discourse. Yule (1996:17) defines reference as “an act in which a speaker, or writer, uses linguistic forms to enable a listener, or reader, to identify something”.

- a. **Personal reference:** it is reference to an item using personal pronouns; “reference by means of function in the speech situation through the category of person” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:37). This is achieved by the use of personal pronouns, such as ‘I, you, he, she, it, etc’, and possessive pronouns such as ‘mine, yours, his, her, hers, etc’, and possessive determiners such as ‘me, your, his, her, etc’
- b. **Demonstrative reference:** referring to previous item through the use of demonstrative determiners; “reference by means of location on a scale of proximity” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:37). It is achieved by the use of proximity determiners such as 'this, these, that, etc' and adverbs like 'here, there, now, etc'. “Their basic use is to point to something in the situation” (Leech, et al., 2006:122 cited in AL-Farra, 2009).
- c. **Comparative reference:** it is used to show similarities between two items; it is “indirect reference by means of identity or similarity” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:37). It is expressed through adjectives like ' same, equal, other, better, etc' and adverbs like 'so, such, similarly, otherwise, etc'.

Reference as a cohesive tie includes exophoric reference and endophoric reference:

- A. **Endophoric reference:** the cohesive relations that are interpreted by referring to items exist in the text. Brown and Yule (1983:192) state that "where their

interpretation lies within a text they are called endophoric relations". Endophoric relations are divided into two types:

A.1 Anaphoric reference: when the pronoun refers back to a noun which has been previously identified in the text, “anaphoric reference points the reader or listener backwards to a previously mentioned entity, process or state of affairs” (Nunan, 1993: 22).

A.2 Cataphoric reference: When the pronoun precedes the noun it refers to. Nunan (1993: 22) says “points the reader or listener forward – it draws us further into the text in order to identify the elements to which the reference items refer”.

B. Exophoric reference: the cohesive relations that are interpreted by referring to the context; Brown and Yule (1983:192) say “where their interpretation lies outside the text in the context of situation, the relationship is said to be an exophoric relationship”. This reference can only be understood by the presence of different aspects shared between sender and receiver. Hence, to understand the text readers have to build a context that is supposed to be shared between interlocutors. Hence, the world shared between speaker and hearer is a necessary condition for interpretation. Halliday and Hassan (1976) summarize the types of references in the following figure:

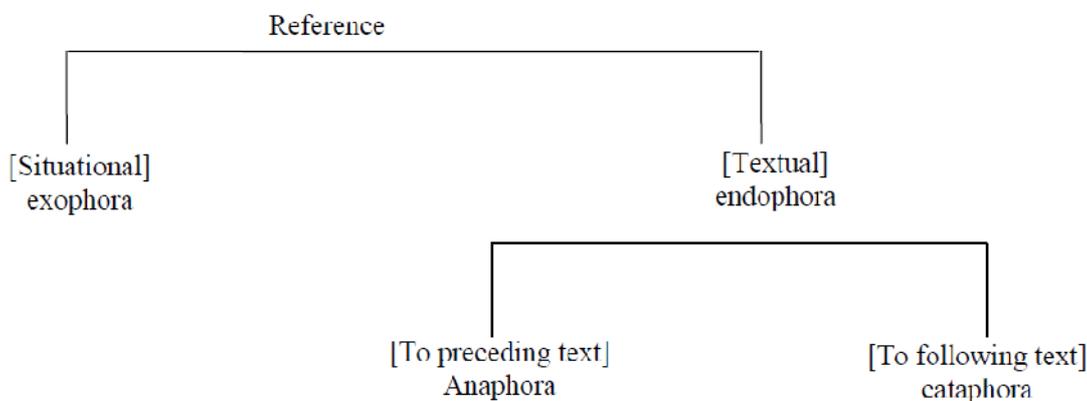


Figure 04: types of references
Halliday and Hassan (1976:33)

2.2.1.1.2. Cohesion by substitution

Substitution is the replacement of previously occurring item in a text by another (Gilany, 2009 cited in AL-Farra, 2009). Halliday and Hasan (1976) make a clear distinction between substitution and reference; substitution is related to linguistic items, while reference is related to meaning. Substitution is a way to avoid repetition in the text itself while reference needs to retrieve its meaning from the occurrence in textual or situational context. Therefore, there are three types of substitution: nominal, verbal, and clausal substitution:

- a. **Nominal substitution:** where a noun or a nominal group can be replaced by “one” / “ones” which functions as a head of nominal group. Nominal substitution is the largely used kind in writing.
- b. **Verbal substitution:** where the verb or a verbal group can be substituted by “do” which functions as a head of verbal group.
- c. **Clausal substitution:** this type occurs when an entire clause can be replaced by “so” or “not”.

2.2.1.1.3. Cohesion by ellipsis

Ellipsis is an omission of a linguistic element that is presented previously, without affecting comprehension because the meaning is obvious from the context; Nunan (1993: 25) says “ellipsis occurs when some essential structural element is omitted from a sentence or a clause and can only be recovered by referring to an element in the preceding text”. In this respect, McCarthy (1991:43) appends “What is special about ellipsis is that; even though, it occurs only with the omission of items from the text, this does not affect the total meaning, and the reader could easily extract the meaning from the rest of the text.” Moreover; there is very close relation between substitution and ellipsis as it is described by

Halliday and Hasan (1976:142): “ellipsis is simply 'substitution by zero'”; that is to say, substitution is to replace an item with another but in ellipsis the item is substituted by nothing.

Ellipsis like substitution; functions at a nominal, verbal, and clausal level:

- a. **Nominal ellipsis:** refers to ellipsis within the nominal group, in which a noun or pronoun is omitted.
- b. **Verbal ellipsis:** refers to ellipsis within the verbal group where the elliptical verb depends on a preceding verbal group. Halliday and Hasan (1976:167) explain that “an elliptical verbal group presupposes one or more words from a previous verbal group”.
- c. **.Clausal ellipsis:** clausal ellipsis functions as verbal ellipsis, where the omission to a clause.

2.2.1.1.4. Cohesion by conjunction

Conjunctions are different from other cohesive ties that they reach the meaning by using other features in the discourse. McCarthy (1991:46) claims that conjunction “signals a relationship between segments of the discourse”; this means that these features enables a reader relates the writer’s previous discourse with the coming one. In addition; Halliday and Hasan (1976:226) points out that:

“Conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly by virtue of their specific meaning; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meaning which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse”.

From the quotation, we understand that conjunctions are not only used to relate segments of discourse but also to express specific meaning. Kennedy (2003) summarizes the most common conjunction relationships in the following table:

| Relationship | Examples of Logical Connectives |
|----------------------|---|
| Addition/inclusion | And, furthermore, besides, also, in addition, similarly |
| Contrast | But, although, despite, yet, however, still, on the other hand, nevertheless |
| Amplification | To be more specific, thus, therefore, consists of, can be divided into |
| Exemplification | For example, such as, thus, for instance |
| Cause-effect | Because, since, thus, as a result, so that, in order to, so, consequently |
| Alternative | Or, nor, alternatively, on the other hand |
| Explanation | In other words, that is to say, I mean, namely |
| Exclusion | Instead, rather than, on the contrary |
| Temporal arrangement | Initially, when, before, after, subsequently, while, then, firstly, finally, in the first place, still, followed by, later, continued |
| Summary/ conclusion | Ultimately, in conclusion, to sum up, in short, in a word, to put it briefly, that is. |

Table 02: Basic Conjunction Relationships in English

Kennedy (2003:325). Structure and meaning in English.

2.2.1.2. Lexical cohesion

In order to create a unified piece of writing in terms of lexical cohesion writers have to take care to their vocabulary. Lexical cohesion is defined by Halliday and Hasan

(1976: 274) as “the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary”. Lexical cohesion has essential role in shaping text and its texture, like many researchers Hoey (1991:10 cited in Tanskanen, 2006:42) agrees that:

Lexical cohesion is the only type of cohesion that regularly forms multiple relationships. . . . If this is taken into account, lexical cohesion becomes the dominant mode of creating texture. In other words, the study of the greater part of cohesion is the study of lexis, and the study of cohesion in text is to a considerable degree the study of patterns of lexis in text.

Lexical cohesion is the basis of constructing text and giving it texture, it represents the large part of cohesion. It is divided by Halliday and Hassan into two main categories: reiteration and collocation:

2.2.1.2.1. Cohesion by reiteration

Reiteration can be achieved in a direct or in indirect way; directly is through the restating the same item again, whereas, indirectly is through the use of other devices that can serve the same sense. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976:278) reiteration is

a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item at one end of the scale; the use of a general word to refer back to a lexical item, at the other end of the scale; and a number of things in between –the use of a synonym, near-synonym, or super ordinate.

Thus, reiteration can be achieved through the use of general nouns, repetition, synonyms/near synonyms, antonyms, and superordinates:

2.2.1.2.1.1. Cohesion by repetition

It is the use of the same lexical item or another item that can reserve the meaning in a different parts of discourse “either in an identical or somewhat modified form and this is the basis for the creation of a cohesive tie between the items” (Tanskanen, 2006:32), repetition is very important in creating unity and meaning to text because it would be a meaningless text if the main words of the content are not repeated. Tanskanen (2006:50) terms repetition in the identical form as “simple repetition”, and the repetition in the modified form as “complex repetition”.

The large extent of repetition can be noticed in non-narrative texts; the other kinds of texts writers should be restricted to some technical words in order to reserve the meaning of discourse. Also, large occurrence of repetition in some text is usually a result of the writing ability individuals have; many studies assert that the overuse of repetition is an indication that writers are non native or not proficient (Reynolds, 2001 cited in AL-Farra, 2009).

2.2.1.2.1.1.1. Cohesion by general nouns

General nouns are a small set of nouns having a generalized meaning used to refer back to a previously mentioned lexical item through the use of the suitable noun, for example; person, people, man, woman for human nouns; thing, object for inanimate, concrete countable nouns; stuff for inanimate, concrete uncountable nouns; place for locations, etc. (Reynolds, 2001 cited in AL-Farra, 2009).

2.2.1.2.1.1.2. Cohesion by Synonymy/near synonymy

This type of the lexical relations is build by reasserting the same meaning through the use of another lexical item which have the same or similar meaning without changing the meaning of the text; this semantic relationship between a term and its synonym/near synonym creates unity to the text. According to Hedge (2000:115) synonymy is: "One linguistic item can be exchanged for another without changing the meaning of the sentence or utterance". Moreover; Salkie (1995:9) argues that mastering synonymy is essential for writing quality because "it can get boring if the same word is repeated, and this is one reason why synonyms are used instead"; in other words Salkie (1995) emphasizes that synonyms/near synonyms are signals of the coherence of text, because it could be impossible to make text relying on the small amount of vocabulary; there must be a variation in words so readers would not feel bored.

2.2.1.2.1.1.3. Cohesion by of antonyms

The role of antonyms is to build contrast between two things. Tanskanen (2006:59) argues that antonyms refer "to the relation between an item and another item which has an opposite meaning".

2.2.1.2.1.1.4. Cohesion by superordinate

Superordinate is a general word in the family tree of a particular word. It is defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 280) as "...any item that dominates the earlier one in the lexical taxonomy", for example; the term 'energy products' can refers to 'oil' (Tanskanen, 2006:57).

2.2.1.2.2. Cohesion by collocation

The term collocation was firstly introduced by Firth (1957: 181 cited in Fan, 2009:111) as one of the levels of meaning; he defines it as “the company the words keep together ‘or’ the statements of the habitual or customary places of that word”. Therefore, it can be defined as group of words that regularly work together.

Collocation is considered the most problematical part of lexical cohesion; Nunan (1993:29) claims that: “Collocation can cause major problems for discourse analysis, because it includes all those items in a text that are semantically related. In some cases this makes it difficult to decide whether a cohesive relationship exists or not”. Thus, besides the difficult of its employment it also represents an obstacle in interpretation. Additionally, Tanskanen (2006:34) states: "collocation is also a very subjective relation: what is considered as a valid relation will inevitably slightly vary from one communicator to the next"; in other words, collocation may be understood differently by interlocutors.

2.4.1.2.2.1. Types of collocation

There are different sorts of combination between the kinds of speech: nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, pronouns and interjections but McCarthy and O' Dell (2005) suggest the more important combination in the following Adjectives + nouns, Nouns + verbs, Noun + noun, Verbs + expressions with prepositions, Verbs + adverbs, and adverbs + adjectives. On the contrary of all researchers Tanskanen (2006) suggests a new categorization of collocation which is: ordered set, activity related collocation and elaborative collocation.

a. Ordered set

It is the first subcategory of collocation, and the easiest one to define if it is compared with the other subcategories. According to Tanskanen (2006:61) it “includes members of ordered sets of lexical items, for example, colours, numbers, months, days of the week and the like”.

b. Activity related collocation

It refers to the items which are associated to each other in a particular activity. The relation between items is divided by Martin (1992 cited in Tanskanen, 2006:61) into two: “nuclear (extending and enhancing) and activity sequence relations”; these nuclear relations reflect the ways in which “actions, people, places, things and qualities configure as activities”, for example; the word meal and eat tends to collocate together under the same activity.

c. Elaborative collocation

It is the most difficult type to be defined; it refers to pair of items that occur in the same environment, in which one item can be the detailed explanation of the other. Tanskanen (2006:63) defines it as "a category for all those pairs whose relation is impossible to define more specifically than stating that the items can somehow elaborate or expand on the same topic", for instance; people use ‘Miller Lane Lecture room’ in order to expand ‘Cambridge’. McCarthy and O' Dell (2005) argues that due to the complexity and the problematic nature of collocation researchers fail to give it a precise definition or typical categorization.

Conclusion

We conclude this chapter by saying that the organization of discourse is one of the central issues of discourse analysis, and cohesion is one of the important properties of text that contribute to the organization of discourse, both grammatical and lexical cohesion are the important devices for creating unity in text. Furthermore, when it comes to the analysis of meaning, lexical cohesion has great contribution to the semantic structuring of discourse; it is considered an important aspect of a text's organization and necessary for interpretation of text. It is understood that, in order to build text and to make the writer's communicative purposes achieved cohesion should not stand alone without the other standards of texture especially the concept of and coherence.

Chapter three

Analysis of results

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to test the hypothesis of the research; we have hypothesized that the use of lexical cohesive device will enable student to ameliorate their essays. This study is also intended to see the extent to which students employ lexical cohesive devices in their essays, the frequent devices used as well as the appropriate and inappropriate use of these chains. In order to conduct this descriptive study two tools have been used; test and questionnaire.

3.1. The Students' test

Participants have been given a task to write an essay on 'Educational System in Algeria Vs Educational System in Britain'. The test has been made to see to what extent students evaluate the lexical cohesive devices in their essays.

3.1.1. The Sample

The sample consists of one group of Master One Students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The sample constitutes of 30 subjects, they have been randomly chosen to represent the whole population of Master One Students.

The choice of the sample is attributed to the fact the students at advanced level are supposed to have acquired the necessary knowledge about writing aspects. Also, they are

studying 'Discourse analysis module' which deals with lexical items and emphasizes the importance of cohesion in building smooth and unified discourse.

3.1.2. Analysis of results

The analysis of the test have been carried out in two ways: investigating the frequent devices used in the essays, explaining the reasons behind the use of each type, and distinguishing the correct and wrong use of these devices. The data achieved from the test is presented in a form of tables; these tables contains the total number of devices used in the essays, the number of each type with its percentage, and examples about the most frequent lexical items.

3.1.3.1 The frequent use of lexical cohesion

The use of the two types of lexical cohesion; reiteration and collocation.

3.1.3.1.1 The use of reiteration

The use of all the types of reiteration; repetition, general nouns , synonyms/near synonyms, antonyms, and superordinates.

3.1.3.1.1.1 The use of repetition

The number of repetition and the total number of lexical cohesive device used in students' essays are revealed in the following table:

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|---|------------|
| Total of lexical ties | 1637 | 100% |
| Repetition | 965 | 58.95 % |
| Most frequent ties | Education, system, learning, different | |

Table 03: The use of repetition

The table above shows that repetition (58.95%) is the dominant device in students' essays, and this can be an indication that students are aware of the importance of repetition in building cohesive discourse, and because it is easy for them to rewrite the same word rather than thinking for another words which have the same meaning.

3.1.3.1.1.2 The use of general nouns

The table below represents the number of general nouns and the total number of lexical cohesive devices used by the students:

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Total of cohesive ties | 1637 | 100% |
| General nouns | 21 | 1.28% |
| Most frequent ties | Place, thing. | |

Table 04: The use of general nouns

The results in the table above show that general nouns (1.28%) are rarely used in students' essays, and they occupy the last rate compared with other lexical cohesive devices.

3.1.3.1.1.3 The use of synonyms/near synonyms

The table below represents the number of synonyms/near synonyms based on the total number of lexical cohesive devices:

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|---|------------|
| Total of cohesive ties | 1637 | 100% |
| Synonyms/near synonyms | 65 | 3.97 % |
| Most frequent ties | Students, learners Achieve, accomplish | |

Table 05: The use synonyms/near synonyms

The results show that the students' use of synonyms (3.97 %) is relatively rare; this can be a signal that students have a poor repertoire of vocabulary.

3.1.3.1.1.4 The use of antonyms

The number of the students' use of antonyms based on the total number of lexical cohesive devices is shown in the following table:

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Total of cohesive ties | 1637 | 100% |
| Antonyms | 387 | 23.64% |
| Most frequent ties | Girls, boys Compulsory, optional | |

Table 06: The use of antonyms

It is clear from the table above that antonyms (23.64%) gain the second highest percentage of frequency after repetition (58.95%); this is maybe due to the nature of the essay (comparison).

3.1.3.1.1.5 The use of superordinates

The following table represents the number of supordinates used in the essays based on the total number of lexical cohesive devices:

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Total of cohesive ties | 1637 | 100% |
| Superordinates | 57 | 3.48% |
| Most frequent ties | Subjects , institutions, country | |

Table 07: The use of superordinates

From the table above, we notice that superordinates are rarely used (3.48%) by the participants; supordinates' percentage is close to the percentage of synonyms.

3.1.3.1.2 The use of collocation

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|--|------------|
| Total of cohesive ties | 1637 | 100% |
| Collocation | 142 | 8.67% |
| Most frequent ties | Education, school, class, Claim for | |

Table 08: The use of collocation

The results above show that the use of collocation (8.67%) is lower than use of repetition and antonyms; this can be explained by the fact that collocation is considered a challenging aspect. So, many students are not competent to use collocation.

3.1.3.3 Correct versus wrong use of lexical cohesive devices

In this section we will present the total number of the appropriate and inappropriate use of lexical cohesive devices in the students' essays.

3.1.3.3.1 Correct versus wrong use of reiteration

3.1.3.3.1.1 Correct versus wrong use of repetition

The table below represents the adequate versus inadequate use of repetition:

| The total | Correct use | | wrong use | |
|-----------|-------------|--------|-----------|--------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 965 | 601 | 62.28% | 364 | 37.72% |

Table 09: Correct versus wrong use of repetition

The table above shows that the participants' appropriate use of repetition (62.28%) exceeds the inappropriate use (37.72%); this can be due to the student's familiarity with this device as well as its easy nature.

3.1.3.3.1.2 Correct versus wrong use of general nouns

The following table indicates the correct versus wrong use of general nouns used by subjects:

| The total | Correct use | | wrong use | |
|-----------|-------------|------|-----------|---|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 21 | 21 | 100% | / | / |

Table 10: Correct versus wrong use of general nouns

From the table above, we can note that general nouns are used appropriately by all the subjects; perhaps because students perfect the usage of this device or because it is not used much in the essays.

3.1.3.3.1.3 Correct versus wrong use of synonyms/near synonyms

The table below represents the number of correct and wrong use of synonyms:

| The total | Correct use | | wrong use | |
|-----------|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 65 | 48 | 80% | 13 | 20% |

Table 11: Correct versus wrong use of synonyms/near synonyms

The results indicate that the appropriate use of synonyms/near synonyms (80%) is higher than inappropriate use (20%).

3.1.3.3.1.4 Correct versus wrong use of antonyms

The table below indicates the correct versus wrong use of antonyms:

| The total | Correct use | | wrong use | |
|-----------|-------------|------|-----------|---|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 387 | 387 | 100% | / | / |

Table 12: Correct versus wrong use of antonyms

The results reveal that antonyms are correctly used in all the essays; besides the good amount of antonyms used in their essays, students succeeded to employ them correctly.

3.1.3.3.1.5 Correct versus wrong use of superordinates

The table below shows the adequate versus inadequate use of superordinates:

| The total | Correct use | | wrong use | |
|-----------|-------------|------|-----------|---|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 57 | 57 | 100% | / | / |

Table 13: Correct versus wrong use of superordinates

The table above indicates that superordinates are appropriately used by all the participants; this can be a result of the rare appearance in the essays.

3.1.3.3.2 Correct versus the wrong use of collocations

The results above show the correct versus wrong use of collocation by subjects:

| The total | Correct use | | wrong use | |
|-----------|-------------|--------|-----------|--------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 142 | 101 | 71.12% | 41 | 28.87% |

Table 14: Correct versus wrong use of collocation

The results above show that students' use of inappropriate collocation (28.87%) is lower than the appropriate one (71.12%). However, the correct use exceeded the wrong one, students made many mistakes in employing collocation.

3.1.3. Discussion of results

From the results presented in the tables above we can notice that all types of lexical cohesive chains are used in students' essays. The tables show that the use of lexical cohesive devices differs from one type to another; the use of repetition dominates the essays (58.95 %); the use of this type more than the other types can be a result of the easy nature of this lexical device. However; repetition plays a significance role in the unity of essays, the overuse of this device led to the emergence of redundancy which made the essays boring.

The second highest percentage refers to the use of antonyms (23.64%); the enough percentage can be due to the students' mastery of this cohesive tie and to the nature of the essay that acquire a good amount of this lexical item. In addition, collocation occupies the third rate but with relatively little percentage (8.67%); perhaps because it represents the most problematic device to students; they cannot manipulate the combination of words if they do not have a large cultural knowledge. Synonyms (3.97 %) are rarely appeared in the essays; this indicate that instead of enhancing their vocabulary, students still rely on the poor vocabulary they have acquired at the first stages of learning the language. Moreover, the lexical cohesive devices that gain the less attention are supordinates (3.48%) and general nouns (1.28%).

Generally, students succeed to exploit all the types of lexical cohesion in their essays, but there was a clear variance between the use of these devices since repetition gained the most usage and antonyms acquired an acceptable usage while the other types are rarely used.

The analysis of essays reveal that the participants have used all the types of lexical cohesive devices in their writing, but a good number of repetition, synonyms and collocation are not employed correctly. Each of these devices has a source of inadequate use, and this inappropriate employment leads to the emergence of different problems that can reduce the quality of the essays.

Despite the high percentage of repetition (58.95 %) and their familiarity with this device, students still have some problems in using it; this proved by the percentage of inappropriate use (20.62%). Inadequate use of repetition is due to the poor vocabulary and the lack of organization at the sentence level. First example: 'strong and productive person can establish strong country. A strong country...' instead of substituting the word 'strong' with its synonym a student has repeated the same word many times. Second example: 'Algerian educational system and education in Britain are two different educational systems, in which each educational system...' a student can use different organization at the sentence level to avoid the repetition of the word 'educational'. The overuse of repetition caused the emergence of redundancy; this problem made the discourse sounds unnatural and boring.

Students problems in using synonyms are due the poor vocabulary they have and the problem of overwriting; the first example is: 'the important thing was to buy new system' the student have used 'buy' as synonym of 'adopt'; this indicates that in order to avoid repetition students attempted to use synonyms, but their poor repertoire of vocabulary led them to more serious problem which is the wrong use of the word, this problem can lead readers to consider the essays as meaningless production. The second example is: 'especially boys for their wrong thoughts and ideas'; a student has presented

the two synonyms 'thoughts' and 'ideas' in order to emphasize his/her idea but the use of two words with the same meaning together is considered a problem of overwriting.

The analysis of collocation shows that (28.87%) of the usage is inappropriate; most of students' errors are because of the interference of their mother tongue, for instance; '...students travel outside to study' students transfer the expression 'travel outside' from their first language, another error students have committed is in combining prepositions with nouns, verbs or adjectives as in these examples; 'students still claim of ...', 'by the contrary the Algerian system.....'. However, students have dealt only with common collocation which they are exposed to during their lesson, they have committed many mistakes; this can be justified by the fact that teachers rely on context to teach collocation but student may not be aware of it, and that students do not exert an effort to practice how to combine words.

Consequently, both teachers and students neglect that collocation is very difficult area that requires large cultural knowledge and lot of practice. Moreover, the results reveal that antonyms, general words and superordinates are successfully used by the participants. The correct usage of these devices can be an indication that students' mastery these aspects or because they are rarely used.

3.2. Teachers' questionnaire

The sample consists of teachers of 'written expression' of the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The sample was randomly chosen.

The questionnaire consists of sixteen closed-ended and multiple choice questions divided into three parts. The first part (from Q1 to Q3) includes three questions about

teachers' background; their qualifications, their experience in teaching and their experience in teaching written expression. The second section (from Q4 to Q07) is designed in order to elicit information about teachers' attitudes toward writing skill, as well as their opinions about the students' level and the problems they generally encounter in writing. The last part (from Q8to Q15) investigates teachers' opinions about the students' use of lexical cohesive devices. In addition, it seeks to know the teachers' ways of presenting lexical cohesion and how they evaluate the contribution of each type of the devises in creating a unified essay.

The questionnaire has been submitted to the teachers of 'written expression' at the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.

3.2.1. Analysis of results

The data obtained from the questionnaire are demonstrated in the following tables

Part one: General information

Question 01: What is your degree?

| Degree | N | % |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| License | / | / |
| Magister/Master | 6 | 75% |
| Doctorate | 2 | 25% |

Table13: Teachers' degree

From the results presented in the table, we can see that the majority of the questioned teachers (75%) have achieved Magister/Master degree and (25%) of them have accomplished the Doctorate degree. The high degree of teachers gives reliability to the results derived from the questionnaire.

Question 02: For how many years have you been teaching English?

| Years of teaching English | N | % |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1-5 years | 2 | 25% |
| 5-10 years | / | / |
| 10-15 years | 4 | 50% |
| More than 15 years | 2 | 25% |

Table14: Years of teaching English language

The results in the table above show that (60%) of the questioned teachers have been teaching English for 1 to 5 years; (25%) of them have been teaching English for 5 to 10 years, and (50%) of them have been teaching English for more than15 years. This implies that most of the teachers have along experience in teaching English language.

Question03: How long have you been teaching written expression?

| Years of teaching "Written Expression" | N | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| 1-5 | 8 | 100% |
| 5-10 | / | / |
| 10-15 | / | / |
| More than 15 | / | / |

Table15: Years of teaching written expression

The results shown in table above indicates that all the questioned teachers have been teaching written expression module from 1 to 5 years; this indicates that teachers do not have a long experience in teaching writing.

Part two: Writing skill

Question04: In your opinion, which skill is the most difficult for students to master?

| The skill | N | % |
|-----------|---|-------|
| Listening | / | / |
| Speaking | 1 | 12.5% |
| Reading | / | / |
| Writing | 7 | 87.5% |

Table16 The most difficult skill for the students

From the table above, it is clear that almost all the teachers (90%) have agreed that writing is the most difficult skill for students. Only one teacher has considered speaking as the most difficult one.

Question 05: How do you evaluate your students' essays?

| Level of writing | N | % |
|------------------|---|------|
| Very Poor | / | / |
| Poor | / | / |
| Average | 8 | 100% |
| Good | / | / |

Table17: Students' level in writing

The results show that all teachers have graded their students essays at the average level; in other words, students level in writing is relatively accepted.

Question 06: What is the primary concern of students when writing essays?

| Options | N | % |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------|
| Adequate vocabulary | 4 | 50% |
| Correct Grammar | 1 | 12.5% |
| Adequate vocabulary & correct grammar | 3 | 37.5% |

Table18: The students' primary concern

As it appears in the table, (50%) of teachers have claimed that student's primary problem is the adequate use of vocabulary more than the correct grammar while only one teacher have argued the contrary. In addition, three teachers (37.5%) have said that both of them are problematic for students.

Question 07: What are the most common writing problems you always notice in your students' essays?

| The problems | N | % |
|-----------------------|---|-------|
| Grammatical mistakes | 5 | 62.5% |
| Limited vocabulary | 6 | 75% |
| Poor content | 2 | 25% |
| Unorganized discourse | 2 | 25% |

Table19: The most common problems in students essays

As it appears in the table, (75%) of the teachers have considered the limited vocabulary as the most serious error in the students essays while (62.5%) of them have considered grammar as the most problematic aspect. Whereas, (25%) of the questioned teachers have said that poor content and unorganized discourse are the most problems they notice in students' essays.

Part three: Lexical cohesion

Question08: In terms of lexical cohesion your students' essays are?

| | | | |
|-----------|------|---------|------|
| Very poor | Poor | Average | Good |
| / | / | 8 | / |

Table20: Students' use of lexical cohesion

All the teachers have stated that the level of students' essays in terms of lexical cohesion is average; we can say that students give attention to this important aspect while constructing their essays.

Question 09: In your opinion, what is the most important in using lexical cohesion?

| Options | N | % |
|-----------------------------|---|-------|
| The frequency of vocabulary | 1 | 12.5% |
| The adequacy of vocabulary | 3 | 37.5% |
| The frequency and adequacy | 4 | 50% |

Table 21: The frequency and the appropriateness use of vocabulary

The results reveal that (12.5%) of the teachers have said that the important thing in dealing with lexical cohesive ties in writing is the frequent appearance of the vocabulary in text while (37.5%) have given the importance to the adequate employment. Moreover, (50%) of the participants have claimed that both; the adequate and the frequent use of vocabulary are important in using lexical cohesion.

Question 10: When you are teaching, you explain lexical cohesion through:

| Options | N | % |
|------------------------------|---|-------|
| Explicit teaching | 1 | 12.5% |
| Giving handouts | / | / |
| Awareness-raising activities | 7 | 87.5% |

Table22: Teaching lexical cohesion

The majority of teachers (87.5%) rely on awareness-raising activities to explain lexical cohesion, but one teacher has stated that explicit teaching is the most effective way, all of them have agreed that giving handouts do not play important role in teaching lexical cohesion. Teachers do not have any suggestion for how they explain lexical cohesion; perhaps they consider the suggested ways as the best ones.

Question 11: In your opinion, what is the most important contributor for cohesive essays? (Put 1, 2, 3... and 6 next to each one).

- a. Repetition of the same lexical items
- b. General nouns
- c. Synonyms/near synonyms
- d. Antonyms
- e. Subordinates
- f. Collocation

| Priority | N | % |
|----------|---|------|
| 1 | / | / |
| 2 | / | / |
| 3 | / | / |
| 4 | / | / |
| 5 | 6 | 75%% |
| 6 | 2 | 25% |

Table23: Repetition of the same lexical item: The most contributor for cohesive essays

From the tables above, we can see that 5 teachers have classified repetition as the Priority 6 and two teachers have given it the 5th priority.

| Priority | N | % |
|----------|---|-------|
| 1 | / | / |
| 2 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 3 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 4 | 5 | 62.5% |
| 5 | 5 | 62.5% |
| 6 | / | / |

Table24:General nouns: The most contributor for cohesive essays

As indicated in the table above, general nouns have been classified as 2 and 3 onetime, as 4 and 5 are graded by five teachers.

| Priority | N | % |
|----------|---|-------|
| 1 | 5 | 62.5% |
| 2 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 3 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 4 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 5 | / | / |
| 6 | / | / |

Table25: Synonyms/near synonyms: The most contributor for cohesive essays

The table above indicates that synonyms have been classified as 1 five times, and as 2, 3, and 4 only one time.

| Priority | N | % |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | / | / |
| 2 | / | / |
| 3 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 4 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 5 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 6 | 5 | 62.5% |

Table26: Antonyms: The most contributor for cohesive essays

The results in the table show that antonyms have been classified as 6 by five teachers, and as 3, 4, and as 5 onetime.

| Priority | N | % |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 3 | 37.5% |
| 2 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 3 | 4 | 50% |
| 4 | / | % |
| 5 | / | % |
| 6 | / | % |

Table27: Superordinates: The most contributor for cohesive essays

The results show that teachers have been graded superordinates as 1 three times, and as 2 one time and as 3 four times.

| Priority | N | % |
|----------|---|-------|
| 1 | / | / |
| 2 | 4 | 50% |
| 3 | 2 | 25% |
| 4 | 1 | 12.5% |
| 5 | / | / |
| 6 | 1 | 12.5% |

Table28: Collocation: The most contributor for cohesive essays

As it is presented in the table above, collocation has been classified as 2 by 5 teachers, and as 3 four times, but it has been graded as 4 and 6 only by one teacher.

Question 12: What is the most frequent lexical device in student's essays? (Put 1, 2, 3... and 6 next to each one).

- g. Repetition of the same lexical items
- h. General nouns
- i. Synonyms or near synonyms
- j. Antonyms
- k. Supordinates
- l. Collocation

| Priority | N | % |
|----------|---|--------|
| 1 | 5 | 71.43% |
| 2 | 2 | 28.57% |
| 3 | / | / |
| 4 | / | / |
| 5 | / | / |
| 6 | / | / |

Table29: Repetition of the same lexical items: The most frequent lexical device in students' essays

The results in the tables above show that 5 teachers have classified repetition as the priority 1 while two teachers have graded it as the priority 2.

| Priority | N | % |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | / | / |
| 2 | 3 | 42.86% |
| 3 | 3 | 42.86% |
| 4 | / | / |
| 5 | 1 | 14.28% |
| 6 | / | % |

Table30: General nouns: The most frequent lexical device in students' essays

The results in the table indicates that teachers have classified general nouns as the priority 2 three times, and as 3 three times, and as 5 by one teacher.

| Priority | N | % |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 28.57% |
| 2 | 2 | 28.57% |
| 3 | 1 | 14.28% |
| 4 | 2 | 28.57% |
| 5 | / | / |
| 6 | / | / |

Table31: Synonyms or near synonyms: The most frequent lexical device in students' essays

The table above reveals that synonyms are graded as 1 and 2 three times, and as 3 one time, and as 4 two times.

| Priority | N | % |
|----------|---|--------|
| 1 | / | / |
| 2 | / | / |
| 3 | / | / |
| 4 | 1 | 14.28% |
| 5 | 1 | 14.28% |
| 6 | 5 | 71.43% |

Table32: Antonyms: The most frequent lexical device in students' essays

The results show that antonyms have been graded as 4 and 5 by one teacher, and as six by five teachers.

| Priority | N | % |
|----------|---|--------|
| 1 | / | / |
| 2 | / | / |
| 3 | 3 | 42.86% |
| 4 | / | / |
| 5 | 3 | 42.86% |
| 6 | 1 | 14.28% |

Table33: Supordinates: The most frequent lexical device in students' essays

The table above shows that supordinates have been classified as 3 and 5 three times, and as 6 only one time.

| Priority | N | % |
|----------|---|--------|
| 1 | / | / |
| 2 | / | / |
| 3 | / | / |
| 4 | 4 | 57.15% |
| 5 | 2 | 28.57% |
| 6 | 1 | 14.28% |

Table34: Collocation: The most frequent lexical device in students' essays

As it is indicated in the table, collocation has been graded as 4 by four teachers and as 5 by two participants and as 6 one time.

Question 13: Do you think that vocabulary is better taught through?

| Options | N | % |
|-------------------|---|-------|
| Reading | 3 | 37.5% |
| Context | 1 | 12.5% |
| Translation | / | / |
| Memorization | 1 | 12.5% |
| Reading & context | 3 | 37.5% |
| Total | 8 | 100% |

Table35: Strategies for teaching vocabulary

According to the table above, the majority of teachers have stated that the best way of teaching vocabulary is through reading or both reading and context. Only one teacher has stated that memorization can be effective way.

Question 14: Do you encourage autonomous learning of vocabulary?

| Options | N | % |
|---------|---|------|
| Yes | 8 | 100% |
| No | / | / |

Table36: Encouragement of autonomous learning of vocabulary

All the teachers encourage autonomous learning of vocabulary by students; perhaps this is due to the fact that acquiring vocabulary needs a lot of time and persistent effort.

Question 15: If yes, would you provide some useful strategies?

All teachers encourage their students to learn vocabulary autonomously; they have suggested different strategies that students can benefit from. Most of teachers suggested reading as the best way of learning; reading short stories, extensive reading, and reading clubs, others suggested using dictionaries, using notebooks and free writing assignments.

3.2.3 Discussion of results

From the analysis of the questionnaire, we can see that teachers' level is high since they have achieved the Magister/Master or Doctorate degree. Also, they have an extended experience in teaching English language, but their experience in teaching written expression is limited. According to the questioned teachers, writing is the most difficult skill to master, also, all of them say that the students' level in this skill is average. All the teachers indicate that students are aware of the importance of the adequate vocabulary in writing but it also represents the more problematic aspect for them.

In terms of lexical cohesion all teachers consent that students' essays have to be graded at the average level. Besides, most of teachers give more attention to the appropriate use of vocabulary rather than the frequent use. Additionally, teachers rely on

awareness-raising activities while teaching lexical cohesion and neglect the crucial role of explicit teaching. About the importance of each type in creating unity in the essays, synonyms are given the first rate followed by supordinates and collocation then general nouns and antonyms and then repetition which have given the last rate. However, the most frequent ties in students' essays are repetition firstly then synonyms, general nouns, supordinates collocation and antonyms.

Concerning teaching of vocabulary, all the teachers agree that reading is the most effective way of teaching vocabulary; only three teachers realize the importance of acquiring new vocabulary in the appropriate context. In addition, all of the teachers support the idea of autonomous learning of vocabulary, and they have provided some useful strategies they advice students to use.

Conclusion

The results obtained from the test and questionnaire show the awareness of students to the importance of lexical cohesive devises in constructing their essays, but the majority of them have difficulties to deal with some devices. First, it is clear from the test that some devices represent problems to students and these obstacles lead to the emergence of different problems. Also, the results show that there is a variance in the usage of the lexical cohesive devices; repetition dominates the whole discourse at the expense of the other ties and this may produce unbalanced discourse. Second, the questionnaire confirms the results obtained from the test, it also shows that students have average level in using lexical cohesion. However, students' primary concern is vocabulary they still have many problems using certain devices, likewise, students have problems in the correct employment of certain devices more than the frequent use. Thus, the results of this study confirm our

hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between lexical cohesion and effective essays.

General conclusion

This study has been conducted to evaluate students' essays in terms of using lexical cohesive devices and to discover the main problems students may encounter while dealing with these chains. The study is divided into three chapters; two of them devoted to the theoretical work and one is devoted to the field work which tests the hypothesis of the study.

The first chapter presents an introduction to writing skill; we gave an overview about writing by dealing with its definition and discussing its nature as process and as product. Also, we talked about the aspects that writers have take into consideration to create effective text as well as the stages they need to pass through in order to produce any piece of writing. Moreover, we described different approaches that can be used in teaching writing and the different roles teachers can play during writing tasks. Finally, we ended up this chapter by looking at the importance of feedback in enhancing students' writing.

The second chapter is devoted to the introduction of discourse analysis, focusing mainly on the concept of cohesion in general and lexical cohesion as a sub-class in particular. We dealt with the intersection between vocabulary and discourse analysis, in which we clarified the importance of lexis and the large patterns of text in building and interpreting discourse. We also talked about the two notions of text and texture, since they are the area where cohesive relations are built, As we gave explicit description of how cohesion and coherence exist within a text, and how they participate in shaping meaning of text, and giving it a texture. Lastly, we talked about the two types of cohesion in details.

This research has been done through the analysis of students' essays, and surveying the attitudes of written expression teachers toward this essential issue. The results reveal

that students are aware of the important role lexical cohesive devices play in producing unified essays. The test shows that students succeed to employ all the types of lexical cohesive devices in their essays, but they still have problems in dealing with some devices as well as the overuse of some types which made the discourse unbalanced. The questionnaire supports the results of test, and inserts that students' problems are more in the appropriate employment of vocabulary. On the basis of the results obtained, some recommendations are suggested to help teachers to ameliorate the quality of students' essays in terms of lexical cohesion:

- Lexical cohesion should be taught explicitly in order to ensure that students have understood its role and how each type can contribute in building the essays texture, because majority of students think that unity of text can only achieved through the use of conjunctions and transitional words.
- Lexical devices have to be practiced through different activities not only through essay writing; students should be able to manipulate these devices before they are asked to apply them in writing.
- It would be better to expose students to different types of discourse because this can give them a chance to acquire a good knowledge about cohesive chains.

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Appendices

Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear teachers:

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your opinions about the writing skill, and lexical cohesive devices. Your answers are very important for the validity of this research we are undertaken.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box (es) or give full answer (s) whenever necessary.

Part one: General Information

1. What is your degree:

License Magister/ Master Doctorate

2. For how many years have you been teaching English?

| 1-5 years | 5-10 years | 10-15 years | More than 15 years |
|-----------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | | | |

3. How long have you been teaching written expression?

| 1-5 years | 5-10 years | 10-15 years | More than 15 years |
|-----------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | | | |

Part Two: writing skill

4. In your opinion, which skill is the most difficult for students to master?
- a. Listening
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing
5. How do you evaluate your students' essays?
- a. Very poor
- b. Poor
- c. Average
- d. Good
6. What is the primary concern of students when writing essays?
- a. Adequate vocabulary
- b. Correct Grammar
7. What are the most common writing problems you always notice in your students' essays?
- a. Grammatical mistakes
- b. limited vocabulary
- c. poor content
- d. unorganized discourse

Part Three: lexical cohesion

8. In terms of lexical cohesion your students' essays are?

| Very poor | Poor | Average | Good |
|-----------|------|---------|------|
| | | | |

9. In your opinion, what is the most important in lexical cohesion?

a. The frequency of lexical chains

b. The appropriate use of lexical chains

10. When you are teaching, you explain lexical cohesion through:

a. Explicit teaching

b. Giving handouts

c. Awareness-raising activities

d. Others (please specify)

.....

.....

.....

11. In your opinion, what is the most important contributor for cohesive essays? (Put 1, 2, 3... and 6 next to each one).

a. Repetition of the same lexical items

b. General nouns

c. Synonyms/near synonyms

d. Antonyms

e. Subordinates

f. Collocation

12. What is the most frequent lexical item in student's essays? (Put 1, 2, 3... and 6 next to each one).

- a. Repetition of the same lexical items
- b. General nouns
- c. Synonyms/near synonyms
- d. Antonyms
- e. Subordinates
- f. Collocation

11. Do you think that vocabulary is better taught through?

- a. Reading
- b. Context
- c. Translation
- d. Memorization

12. Do you encourage autonomous learning of vocabulary?

- Yes
- No

13. If yes, would you provide some useful strategies?

.....

.....

.....

Thank You

ملخص

أستاذة التعبير الكتابي غالبا ما يسعون وراء ما قد يساعد طلابهم على كتابة مقال متماسك. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو التحقيق في الدور الهام الذي تلعبه أدوات التماسك المعجمي في بناء مقال متماسك و التحقق من وعي طلبة السنة أولى ماستر لأهمية هذه الروابط أثناء الكتابة. و بالتالي، تم الافتراض أن الاستخدام الملائم لأدوات التماسك المعجمي من شأنه أن يحسن مقالات الطلبة. تم تقييم هذه الفرضية من خلال منهجية البحث الوصفي عن طريق استخدام امتحان للطلبة و تقديم استبيان للأستاذة. الامتحان تم استخدامه من أجل تفحص مدى تطبيق الطلبة لأدوات التماسك المعجمي في مقالاتهم، و ماهي المشاكل التي تواجههم أثناء تعاملهم مع هذه الأدوات. الاستبيان تم استخدامه من أجل تفحص آراء الأستاذة حول هذه المسألة. النتائج المتحصل عليها تشير إلى وعي الطلاب لأهمية هذه الروابط المعجمية حيث أنهم قاموا باستخدام كل الأنواع في مقالاتهم، إلا أنهم فشلوا في خلق توازن بين تكرار هذه الروابط، إضافة إلى الاستخدام غير الصحيح للعديد من الروابط.