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An Analysis of Grammatical Cohesion in Student's Academic Writing

Case study: Third year EFL students at Mohamed Khider University -Biskra-

Research proposal submitted to the department of foreign languages in partial requirement for fulfillment of Master degree in English language: Sciences of Language

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2015 / 2016

Dedication

I dedicate this modest work to

My dear father who gave me strength, encouragement and help

My beloved mother who gave me love, patience and hope

My husband who gave me support and care

My brothers the source of support

My sisters

My nephews Dido, Joud, and Mino

My soul friends who have always been a source of help and motivation

To all those who prayed for me and besought God to help me

Acknowledgments

Special thanks and enormous gratitude go to my supervisor Mr. Adel Boulgroune for his guideness and insightful advices. I also would like to thank the board of examiners: Mr. smatti and Mrs. Amri who have kindly accepted to examine this dissertation. I would thank Mrs. Imene Guettal for her help in collecting data. I am thankful for all written expression teachers for their collaboration in answering the questionnaire. I will never forget my parents Amor and Lakhdari Nadjia, I am so grateful for all what they have done to me. I owe greatly to my husband for his help and support to finish my studies. Special thanks to my best friend Sara for her helpful support.

Abstract

Teacher when teaching writing skill often try to look for what may help their students write a cohesive essay. The present study aims at analyzing to what extent third year students are aware of the use of grammatical cohesive devices in creating a cohesive piece of writing. For this purpose, it is hypothesized that the appropriate use of grammatical cohesive devices would improve the students' writing. A descriptive study is carried out in this research through using two basic tools; a test which is analyzed in terms of students' use of grammatical cohesive devices and a questionnaire that is submitted for written expression teachers in order to evaluate their attitudes toward students' use of this issue. The results of the study reveal that third year students of English at Biskra University are aware of the importance of grammatical cohesive devices since they employ all the types in their essays. However, they fail to make balance in using those ties, besides this variance there is inappropriate employment of those devices in which students exaggerate in repeating the same item and ignoring others this is what results a non cohesive piece of writing.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

LMD: Licence Master Doctorate

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

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ملخص البحث

General Introduction

Academic writing is one of the major skills required of advanced second language students. Writing a good piece of writing is not only based on having good ideas but also on knowing and understanding the different aspects of writing. Grammatical cohesion is considered one of the important aspects in academic writing; it plays a significant role in creating meaning and unity to any piece of writing through linking words in sentences and linking between paragraphs together, so readers can easily extract the meaning that the writer aims to convey.

1. Statment of the Problem

Grammatical cohesion is considered as one of the most challenging aspects in academic writing; many students can communicate their ideas successfully but they often fail to meet the standards of grammatical accuracy. Students do not use grammatical cohesive devices efficiently; their writing usually is characterized by the misuse, nonuse or overuse of these ties. Therefore, students should recognize the essential role that grammatical cohesion plays in producing a valuable piece of writing.

2. Significance of the Study

Although the scope of this research is limited, it could provide some insights into the role grammatical cohesion plays in producing consistent piece of writing. Moreover, the recommendations could be beneficial for FL written expression teachers in that they can help students produce grammatically cohesive writing.

3. Aims

The present study aims at:

1. To examine the use of grammatical cohesive ties in EFL students' essays.
2. To evaluate the use of grammatical cohesive ties in students' essays.

4. Research Questions

This study tries to answer one major question:

1. Do third year EFL students employ accurate grammatical cohesive devices in their academic writing?

And two related questions:

1. What are the most frequent grammatical cohesive devices EFL students uses in their writing?
2. To what extent do they employ proper use of grammatical cohesion?

5. Hypothesis

Our research is directed by one main hypothesis:

1. If third year EFL students employ accurate grammatical cohesive devices their writing will be improved.

6. Limitation of Study

The research study is restricted by the following major limitations:

The subjects of the study are limited to a small sample, a group of third year LMD students in English Department at Biskra University.

Because of the limited time the research had to analyze students essays and a questionnaire for teachers who teach written expression module.

7. Literature Review

A great number of researchers have been done concerning the use of cohesive devices in ESL/EFL situation where academic writing represents a challenge for both students and a challenge for both students and teachers.

In their book **Cohesion in English** Halliday and Hassan (1976) provide us with a detailed description about all what is concerns cohesion, they state 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 a form but of meaning” (1976: 1, 2). Moreover, they emphasize that 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. Besides, they make a clear classification of the two sub classes of cohesion lexical and grammatical; this latter in which the research is concerned and it is classified into four types: reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction.

McCarthy in his book **Discourse analysis for language teachers** (1991) refer to textuality as “the feeling that something is a text and not just a random collection of sentences” (1991, 35). Moreover, in terms of grammatical cohesion he add “basically most text display links from sentence to sentence in terms of grammatical features such as pronominalisation, ellipsis...and conjunction of various kinds” (1991, 25).

DeBeaugrande and Dressler in their book **Introduction to text linguistics** (1981) defines text as a “communicative event” which characterized by textuality which depends on different standards called “constitutive principles of textual communication”; cohesion and coherence are the two main standards they explain: cohesion refers to the surface element which create connectivity between ideas within a text through grammatical and lexical items, while coherence refers to the intended meaning beyond any text within an

arrangement of the concepts and relations. It is based on the interpretation that comes to the readers' mind to realize the intended message.

8. Metodology Design

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

a. Population

The study population comprise third year students of English and written expression teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

b. Sample

The study sample consist of two groups: The first group involves 36 subjects from third year EFL students who will be randomly selected to represent the whole population of third year students. The second group involves 10 teachers of written expression module who will be randomly selected to represent the whole population of written expression teachers.

c. Data Gathering Tools

The means adopted in this research are test and questionnaire: the test is directed to third year EFL students. They will be asked to develop a topic in a form of essay; the test tends to evaluate their written production in terms of grammatical cohesion. The questionnaire is directed to EFL teachers who have been teaching written expression

module. The questionnaire investigates the teachers' attitudes towards the use of grammatical cohesion in the students' writing.

9. Structure of the Study

The present research is basically divided into three chapters. The first chapter attempt to introduce the basics of the academic writing process; its definition, stages, types and characteristics. The second chapter treats the notion of grammatical cohesion as an important aspect in creating unity of a text by giving an overview about how linguists shifted the attention from analyzing the surface structure to the analysis of the whole discourse, and explaining in details the different types of grammatical cohesion. The third chapter comprises the fieldwork which is devoted to the analysis of the results obtained from the teacher's questionnaire and the students' test.

Academic Writing

Introduction

Writing is an essential skill that needs a considerable effort while learning a foreign language. Students at university are asked to write academically different types of assignments. Consequently, academic writing is a complex task that requires certain aspects to be followed. Hence, this chapter will provide a theoretical overview about academic writing, for instance, the nature of writing and the definition of academic writing. It also comprises the process of academic writing, the type of writing and the major features that characterize any academic piece of writing.

1.1. The Nature of Writing

Writing in a foreign language (FL) is regarded as a fundamental skill in the process of language learning. It is defined by many researchers in different ways. According to Byrne (1988:1), “when we write, we use graphic symbols: that is letters or combination of letters which relate to the sounds we make when we speak.” This definition considers writing as a combination of symbolic graphs that have a relation to the sounds that we produce when we communicate. Similar to that, Crystal (2006:275) believes that “writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expressions”; Crystal has seen writing as a tool of communication that involves the use of graphic symbols.

Writing is a complex process that requires the use of certain cognitive efforts. White and Arndt state that “writing is far from being simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands a conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time” (retrieved from Quintero 2008). In the same vein, Josèf (2001:5) confirms that “writing is among the most complex human activities, it involves the development of a

design idea, the capture of a mental representation of knowledge, and of experience with subjects.”

Nunan (1989) considered writing as a difficult skill to be learned compared with the other skills no matter whether the language is first or second; this difficulty of the writing skill involves the appropriate use of various elements simultaneously. Lines (2005) relates writing to two concepts process and product; process refers to the stages that writer goes through in order to produce refined piece of writing that he presents to his audience whereas the product is the refined result that the writer intended to reach from the first time he starts writing .Moreover, writers should not neglect neither the process nor the product because the final production cannot be perfect without giving each stage of the process time and effort they need.

1.2. Definition of Academic Writing

Academic writing is considered as a type of writing used by graduate students to fulfill accurate writing assignments. Bailey (2003:VI) states that “academic writing is designed for anybody who is studying (or planning to study) at English-medium colleges and universities and has to write essays and other assignments for exams or course work”. This definition denotes that academic writing concerns only university students and colleges write different assignments in order to reach specific purpose.

Writing academically requires from colleges and university students to be aware of the level of formality needed in the works they produce. This idea is better explained by Oshima and hogue (1988:02):

Academic writing as the name implies, is the kind of writing that you are required to do in college or university. It differs from other kinds of writing such as personal literacy, journalistic, or business writing. Its differences can be explained in part of special audience, tone and purpose.

That is to say, academic writing is a type of writing planned for colleges and university students to target a particular audience and to reach specific purpose, and it is different from other types of writing that requires certain conventions to be followed. Similar to that, Hogue (2007) considered academic writing as one of the writing genres in which students submit any kind of assignments to college, and it differs from the other type of writing in terms of specific form, structure, organization, and conventions.

Academic writing is considered as a challenging skill even for native students because it requires many aspects to be mastered. Stuart and April (2012:V) assert that “academic writing is the challenging intellectual price of admission to college”. From this quotation we understand that academic writing is not an easy type of writing, it definitely requires students to use their intellectual capacities appropriately in order to extend a specific purpose. Since academic writing is a difficult type that requires different aspects to be followed, Coffin and Curry (2003:2) declare that “students may be required to produce essays, written examination, or laboratory reports whose main purpose is to demonstrate their mastery of disciplinary course content”. University students are asked to write different assignments that share the same purpose, principles, and target a particular type of audience.

1.3. The Academic Writing Process

Any piece of writing passes through different stages of adjustments and refinements before it is presented to the reader. Smith (2003:13) states that “writing is an art, and like any good artist, a good writer continues to work on a piece until it has the desired impact.” Although, many researchers approve that the writing process follow certain stages, there are different views concerning the number of stages Tribble (1996:39) categorizes four stages: “prewriting; composing/ drafting; reviewing; and editing.”

1.3.1. Prewriting

Writing is regarded as a challenging skill for many students when they start writing; it may take a lot of time wondering what they will write in the blank piece of paper. McCuen-Metherell and Wrinkler (2009:3) state that “writing is typically a hard work-even for gifted writers.” Therefore, prewriting is the first step before starting writing; it is helpful to form a general over view about the topic. Cotton (1988) asserts that “students who are encouraged to engage in an array of prewriting experiences evidence greater writing achievement than those enjoined to ‘get to work’ on their writing without this kind of preparation.” (cited in Roberts, 2004:8).

Roberts (2004) considered prewriting as an important stage at which students try to understand the topic and collect the information needed to write the assignment; students in this stage direct themselves through knowing what exactly the topic is about, the purpose of the topic they are writing and for whom the assignment is written. In this respect, Brown and Hood (1989) emphasize four essential elements in the process of writing that the writer should take into consideration during the prewriting stage: the reader, the purpose, the content and the situation.

1.3.2. Drafting

Drafting is the second stage in the writing process in which students are able to take the pen and start writing the first draft, “drafting means writing a rough, or scratch, form of your paper” Galko (2001: 49). According to Brown and Hood (1989), the drafting stage is the starting point of the writing task at which the bits of information are written down in a messy way without paying attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, or word selection.

For Kane (2000), drafting is an essential step that requires great attention from the writer to produce a good assignment by the end of the whole process. During this stage, students must concentrate only on the amount of information needed in the topic because it will be difficult if you try to write well-formed text in the first draft as he states “writing becomes impossible if you try to do it one polished sentence at a time”. Hence, students in this stage should give more importance to the content and neglect the structure that it will be refined afterward.

1.3.3. Revising

Writing is considered as a continuous process in which writers whenever they finish one step, another step pursues, Johnson (2008:179) regarded revising as “the heart of the writing process.” Also, Fulwiler (2002:168) confirms the importance of the revising stage: “if you want to improve your writing, from now on, plan for revision.” In this stage, writers evaluate their production critically taking into consideration the different aspects of the text, the clarity of message that they want to convey to their readers, the logical order of ideas, and making the necessary changes such as: reformulating certain sentences, correcting spelling and grammatical mistakes, and checking the structure of text (Chelsa, 2006).

Revising is the stage where the writers take the role of the reader. Seow (2002: 317) states that writers “reexamine what was written to see how effectively they have communicated their meanings to the reader.” Stark (2003) asserts that the writer in this step examines his text from different angles, check the content and the structure of the text, and take into account the clarity of ideas and if they are supported with evident details so that the reader can realize the intended message.

1.3.4. Editing

Editing is the final stage before students submit their assignment; it is an important step for writers to present a polished paper. Fulwiler (2002:178) states that “editing is polishing to make the paragraphs, the sentences and the individual words communicate carefully, correctly with clarity, style, and grace”. Elbow, on the other hand, confirms that “it is usually necessary if we want to end up with something satisfactory” (1973:38).

Editing refers to the correction of grammatical, lexical, and mechanical errors before publishing the final product: “good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right and leave the details like correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar until later” (Hedge, 1988:23). However, many students confuse between the two stages revising and editing as they are the same but they are totally different; revising is to refine and to reformulate the content whereas editing is to examine the language style and to correct errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (Fulwiler, 2002). In the same vein, Hannell (2009) confirms that good editing do not require only to check spelling and punctuation but a complete work needs an appropriate content, an organized ideas, word choice, and sentence structure.

1.4. The Types of Academic Writing

Murry and Hughes (2008) assert that in reading an academic piece of writing, the reader differentiate a number of types: definition, description, classification, cause–effect, comparison and contrast, and argumentation. Each type indicates a certain objective that the writer tends to reach.

1.4.1. Definition

Defining terms is regarded as a crucial thing in conducting academic writing. Writers at the beginning of the assignment try to clarify the terms they use to best reflect what they want address; the accurate and appropriate use of words show to the reader the degree of understanding of the terms that the writer uses (Gillett and Hammond, 2009). According to Vandermeij and Meyer (2012:232), “Writers compose definitions for a number of reasons—to correctly define a misunderstood term, to deepen or re-direct its meaning, to plumb a term’s history, or to entertain readers.”

1.4.2. Description

Gillett and Hammond (2009:117) state that “In your writing, you will often have to describe something: an object, a system, an organization or a process”. When students are asked to describe an object, they have to explain its function and give certain details, while when describe a system they are required to provide characteristics that support the description, and the process description requires an explanation of how things are done or made.

1.4.3. Comparison and Contrast

Vandermeay and Meyer (2012:182) claim that “writers compare and contrast subjects in order to understand their similarities and differences. Their purpose may be to stress the similarities between seemingly dissimilar things or the differences between things that seem quite similar.” This type tends to compare and contrast between two subjects or more to show similarities or differences.

1.4.4. Classification

According to Vandermeay and Meyer (2012:200):

Classification is an organizational strategy that helps writers make sense of large or complex sets of things. A writer using this strategy breaks the topic into individual items or members that can be stored into clearly distinguishable groups or categories.

The writer in this process classifies the text into separable and manageable parts following logical order so that the reader could clearly understand.

1.4.5. Cause and Effect

In this type of writing, writers are supposed to present a comprehensible discussion of the subject to the reader giving reasons and justifications to the cause and the effect of a certain subject. In this respect, Vandermeay and Meyer (2012:163) wrote: “in a cause and effect essay, the writer develops the thesis through cause and effect reasoning. That is, she or he analyzes and explains the causes, the effects, or both the causes and the effects of a phenomenon.”

1.4.6. Argumentation

The writer in this type has two different opinions in which he embraces one and tries to support his point of view by giving arguments. Wyldeck (2008:17) asserts that “this type of essay focuses positively on the side the writer believes is correct, and finds fault in the opposite point of view. The writer’s job is to argue well enough to convince his readers that he is right.” Vandermeij and Meyer (2012) confirms that the writer in this type presents the topic objectively by describing the opposite point of view reasonably, and supports his view using arguments that are based on logic and evidence in order to convince the reader.

1.5. The Main Characteristics of Academic Writing

Writing in English within an academic context requires some criteria that make the written piece more effective. The effectiveness of any piece of writing depends on organization, clarity, coherence, appropriate word choice, and mechanics.

1.5.1. Organization

In any piece of writing information should be presented to the reader in an organized format so that he could understand and believe what you are saying, and willingly follow your production. Starkey (2004:02) states that:

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.

Organization is determined through certain techniques before engaging into the physical act of writing. In other words, writers follow different techniques before start writing such as brainstorming and free writing, those techniques help to organize the written work and to guide the reader. Shannon (2011) says that there are two techniques to organize the written material formally and informally. The writer in the informal technique uses brainstorming, free writing, and mind mapping in order to keep the organization of the paper. The classic outline is the formal technique that comprises the main idea and the specific details which they are well developed and organized.

1.5.2. Clarity

The learner's goal in any piece of writing in an academic context is to convey the intended message of the topic. Clarity is a necessary element in writing that students are required to process in order to make their writings readable as well as it ensures that the meaning will be well grasped (Starkey 2004). Murry and Hughes (2008) states that clarity is a fundamental element in writing so that it makes the written piece easy to be read, they mention that the key of achieving clarity is to formulate clear and short sentences, to be relevant, and to avoid ambiguity. Barrass (2005:22) confirms that "[e]ach instruction must be a complete and carefully constructed unambiguous sentence, so that the action required at each step cannot be misunderstood"; writing does not only require only to write down one's ideas but rather a well constructed sentences that avoid ambiguity.

According to Starkey (2004), Clarity in writing will be achieved through:

- a. Eliminating ambiguity:** this could be achieved through avoiding expressions and words that have many interpretations; the writer should focus on what he wants to deliver and avoid any language structure that could confuse the reader (Starkey, 2004:12).

- b. Modifiers add precision:** Using the appropriate modifiers is necessary to make your piece clear, and it is achieved with the use of powerful adjectives and adverbs (Starkey, 2004:13).
- c. Powerful, Precise adjectives and adverbs:** clear writing requires the employment of simple and precise forms so that the reader can get the exact meaning: “effective words must be precise” (Kane, 2000:262).
- d. Be Concise:** by avoiding wordiness and repetition, writers should go directly to the point no need to express an idea in a number of sentences while it can be expressed just in one sentence. Starkey provides two ways to avoid repetition by “eliminating unnecessary words and phrases, and using the active (as opposed to passive) voice whenever possible” (Starkey, 2004: 15).

1.5.3. Coherence

Coherence is considered as an essential element in any type of writing whereas it is principally crucial in academic writing, where success or failure depend on how coherent is that the piece of writing. According Crème and Lea (2008), coherence is concerned with the overall sense of the text that should be arranged and bond together in a way that helps the reader better understand. Murry and hughes (2008:45) states that “a good writer ‘sticks’ their ideas together so that they act as links in a chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the connections become unclear and the argument structure breaks down”; any written text should follow a logical order of ideas so that it makes sense and if the ideas are not clearly stated this leads to incoherent piece of writing.

Shannon (2011, 11) states that coherence is the element which allows the reader to move easily from one idea to another, and it is achieved through:

- **Organizational structure:** coherence is achieved by the well order of ideas and through planning to organize the written material.
- **Paragraph unity:** focuses on the idea that each paragraph develops one main idea which is supported with specific details.
- **Sentence cohesion:** it refers to the connection between sentences within the same paragraph and how they are interrelated.

1.5.4. Word Choice

The precise choice of vocabulary has great contribution in forming a valuable piece of writing, writers should use words that have the exact meaning they intend to convey. “Authors should always aim for the most precise language possible in writing. In academic and scholarly writing, that principle is even more important” (Shannon, 2011:18) The choice of words is very important in formal writing so that the reader can understand what the writer accurately wants to convey. Starkey mentions there are two aspects in choosing words that should be taken into account: denotation and connotation.

- Denotation:** is the “literal meaning, of a word” (2004: 21); the exact meaning a word indicates or the meaning extracted from the dictionary.
- Connotation:** "is a word’s implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions, and suggestions” (2004:21); the indirect meaning we infer from a word.

1.5.5. Mechanics

Mechanics are conventions that play a significant role in producing an effective piece of writing; “the writing process comprises the mechanics by which writers create

publishable products” (Sundem, 2007: 41). Starkey (2004) refers to mechanics as the different rules of grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.

Grammar is considered as the key aspect of language; it is crucial to have grammar knowledge in order to use the language correctly. In this respect, Celec-Murcia (2001:23) states many investigations that led “...writers to conceive grammar as essential component of language”. In addition to the mastery of grammar, Harmer (2004) emphasizes that spelling, punctuation, and well formed structure of text as essential elements in writing; he states that it is not important how original are the learner’s ideas and how they are arranged if they are not presented in a clear and correct way.

Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, we consider writing as an important skill that EFL learners should develop. However, writing in an academic context is regarded as a challenging task for many students because it requires various aspects. In producing any academic piece of writing, students pass through different stages which enable them start from an idea in mind until they reach a polished piece of writing. In addition, students should know the different types of writing so that it will be easy for them to deal with different kinds of writing and should also know the different rules that direct any academic piece of writing.

Grammatical Cohesion

Introduction

Any piece of language, whether written or spoken, has given regularities to be followed in order to express the aim of its producer in a right way. One of these factors is grammatical cohesion; it is one of the important and challenging aspects that build text and gives it texture. However, it is a part of cohesion; it is more used by speakers/writers than lexical cohesion. In this chapter, we will try to introduce a background about how linguists shifted the attention from analyzing sentence in isolation to the analysis of text, discussing the notion of texture and making a clear distinction between coherence and cohesion, and then we will concentrate on grammatical cohesion and its crucial role in building the unity of the text.

2.1. Discourse Analysis

Traditionally, in language study linguists were concerned with the analysis of sentence in isolation and their focus was on the level of structure following the Chomskian theory of Transformational Generative Grammar (1957), which is purely syntactic view; it focused on the form and neglect the meaning. Cook (1989) states that in 1952 Zellig Harris published a paper with the title “Discourse Analysis”; this paper introduced the term 'Discourse Analysis' for the first time, and it is "concerned with the study of the relationship between language and contexts in which it is used” (McCarthy, 1991:5); Harris focuses on the function of linguistic elements and the context in which they are used.

According to McCarthy (1991) the advent of the Harris' theory shifted the attention from analyzing sentence in isolation to the analysis of discourse. Hence, linguists have become aware of the use of context and language function. Cook (1989:13) summarizes Harris ideas as:

If we are to find the answer to the problem of what gives stretches of language its unity and meaning, we must look beyond the formal rules operating within sentences, and consider the people who use language, and the world in which it happens as well.

Harris' work has influenced different disciplines such as: semiotics, sociology, psychology, etc, the study of language in context led to the emergence of different works ; Hymes (1964), Austin (1962), Searle (1969), Grice (1975), Halliday and Hasan (1976). (van Dijk, 2002 cited in Alba-Juez, 2009).

In brief, the new approach led the linguists to analyze language as group of sentences combined to form text rather than isolated sentences as McCarthy (1991:5) states "Discourse analysts study language in use: written texts of all kinds, and spoken data, from conversation to highly institutionalised forms of talk"; he recognized that language is not just a group of rules that have to be emplaced in order to achieve the surface structure, but it requires unity and meaning to serve a communicative function.

2.2. Text and Texture

Text is a linguistic product in both written and spoken language with any length, which constructs a unified semantic piece. Halliday and Hassan (1976:1) wrote: "text is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that form a unified whole". In addition, what makes a text meaningful and unified is its texture; texture is the property that distinguishes a text from something that is not a text, without texture a text would be mere group of words deposited together in random way and each sentence may have different meaning and own context. Texture is also defined as what

makes any length of text meaningful and coherent, texture otherwise referred to as textuality.

Widdowson (2007:4) defines a text " as an actual use of language, as distinct from a sentence which is an abstract unit of linguistic analysis" and claims that any piece of language is produced to fulfill communicative function, through the presence of some conditions like: context, semantic knowledge and the writers'/speakers' intention. Salkie (1995) further added other factors like: the intentions and the background knowledge for both the text producer and receiver; these factors are of much importance for the receiver to get the message. Similarly, DeBeaugrande and Dressler (1981) defined text as a "communicative event" which depends on seven standards of textuality, these standards should be present in any given text to achieve the communicative purpose that is created for and it is called "constitutive principles of textual communication". These standards are:

- a. **Cohesion:** Cohesion is a linguistic property of text that organizes and links its sentences together semantically through grammatical and lexical ties. "Cohesion is the network of lexical, grammatical, and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text. These relations or ties organize and, to some extent create a text".
- b. **Coherence:** is the feeling that a text is linked together as one piece that makes sense; it is the progression of concepts and meaning in logical way. Also, it depends on readers'/listeners' interpretation of the related sentences because it requires cultural knowledge of the language in order to understand the intended meaning of what the whole text is about.
- c. **Intentionality:** it refers to the text producer's intention to produce a piece of writing and what he intended to convey through this text.

- d. Acceptability:** it refers to the receptor willing to accept this text.
- e. Informatively:** it refers to the extent to which the text has a communicative value; text should present information to the hearer/reader in an informative way.
- f. Situationality:** it refers to the important role that context play in conveying meaning, i.e. to indicate what is said, by whom, why, when and where.
- g. Intertextuality:** the study of literature and its literary factors which make the formation and the understanding of one text dependent on knowledge of other similar texts.

2.3. Cohesion and Coherence

The work of Halliday and Hassan **Cohesion in English** in 1976 influenced many linguists to undertake studies about cohesion and coherence as properties that give unity and meaning to the text. In their work Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that what makes any length of text meaningful and unified is a texture and this texture is made by two fundamental units called cohesion and coherence. Thus, in any given text, sentences follow each other in an organized and logical way as a series in progression; this unity of form and meaning according to many linguists is achieved by these two properties of language; coherence and cohesion.

These two concepts are highly close, but at the same time, they present two main independent parts in controlling the text either spoken or written. Baker (1991:241) made 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.

That is to say, cohesion is what gives the text its surface unity through the use of different cohesive ties while coherence is what gives a structure to a text; there should be a connection and the continuity of the ideas because the intended meaning can be understood only if the ideas are in continuity and developing and at the same time supporting topic sentence.

2.4. Cohesion

Cohesion is considered as a semantic concept that combines the various parts of text in smooth way and gives it meaning that sender aims to deliver; Halliday and Hasan (1976: 4) define it as “relations of meaning that exist within a text and that define it as a text”. This network that holds text whole is achieved through the use of different ties called cohesive devices; Salkie mentions the significant role of the cohesive devices in creating texture as: "they are like the glue which holds different parts of a text together" (1995: x). Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify cohesion into two categories grammatical and lexical cohesion. They summarized these lexico-grammatical devices in the following figure:

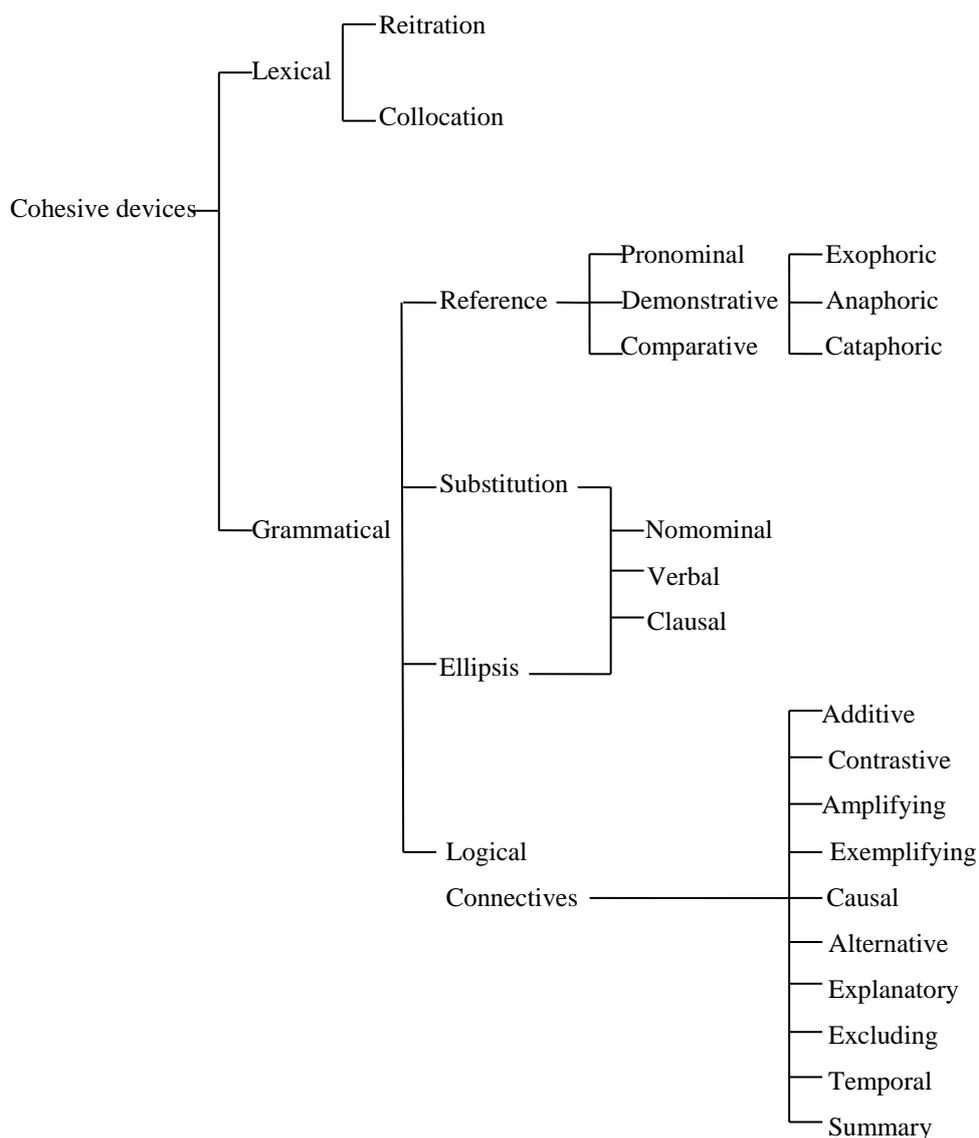


Figure 01: Types of Cohesion in English

Williams (1983 cited in Kennedy, 2003)

Moreover, McCarthy (1991:25) claims that: “basically most texts display links from sentence to sentence in terms of grammatical features such as pronominalisation, ellipsis (the omission of otherwise expected elements because they are retrievable from the previous text or context), and conjunction of various kinds”. Thus, grammatical cohesion is highly used to build texts.

2.5. Grammatical Cohesion

Halliday and Hassan (1976) classified grammatical cohesion into four subclasses: reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction.

2.5.1. Reference

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

- **Personal reference:** is the linguistic element used as referring device; “reference by means of function in the speech situation through the category of person” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:37). Personal reference uses 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’.
- **Demonstrative reference:** it is reference to an item by the use of demonstrative determiners; “reference by means of location on a scale of proximity” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:37). It is attained by the use of proximity determiners such as 'this, these, that, etc' and adverbs like 'here, there, now, etc'.
- **Comparative reference:** it is a linguistic elements used to fulfill the function of comparison; “indirect reference by means of identity or similarity” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:37). It uses adjectives such as: ' same, equal, other, better, etc' and adverbs like 'so, such, similarly, otherwise, etc'.

From that we can say that these linguistic elements help listener/reader to interpret what has been said by referring backward or forward to items exist in the text or outside the text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) distinguish these two types as endophoric reference and exophoric reference.

- a. Endophoric Reference:** It is the cohesive relations that took place in the text; so the meaning is interpreted by referring to the text. Brown and Yule (1983:192) state that "where their interpretation lies within a text they are called endophoric relations". Reference items can be expressed within a text into two different ways anaphoric or in a cataphoric way.
- **Anaphoric Reference:** is referring back to the item 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). This reference is clearly exemplified by McCarthy (1991:38) And the living room was a very small room with two windows that wouldn't open and things like that. And it looked nice. It had a beautiful brick wall. The reader of this example can understand that 'It' refers backward to 'the living room'.
 - **Cataphoric Reference:** is referring forward to an item which has been introduced before it is identified; Nunan 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" (1993: 22), for example: "I turned the corner and almost stepped on it. There was a large snake in the middle of the path" (Yule, 1996:23). The reader of this example can easily interpret that 'it' refers forward to the noun phrase 'a large snake'.
- b. Exophoric Reference:** It is the cohesive relations that took place beyond the text boundaries; so the meaning is interpreted by referring to the context as Brown and Yule say "where their interpretation lies outside the text in the context of situation, the relationship is said to be an exophoric relationship" (1983:192-193). For example; '... look at that' (1983:193). The listener here cannot interpret the meaning unless he refers back to the context of the discourse as McCarthy states:

"Exophoric reference directs the receiver out of the text and into an assumed shared world" (1991: 41). That is to say, in order to interpret the meaning different aspects shared between the sender and the receiver should be given. McCarthy (1991:41) presented a good example of that: She was using one of those trimmers to get rid of the weeds. In this example we can notice that the shared world between the speaker and the listener is necessary part to know what 'those' refers to.

In brief; the world shared between the interlocutors is a key condition to understand the meaning of the discourse. Halliday and Hassan suggest the following diagram to summarize the types of references:

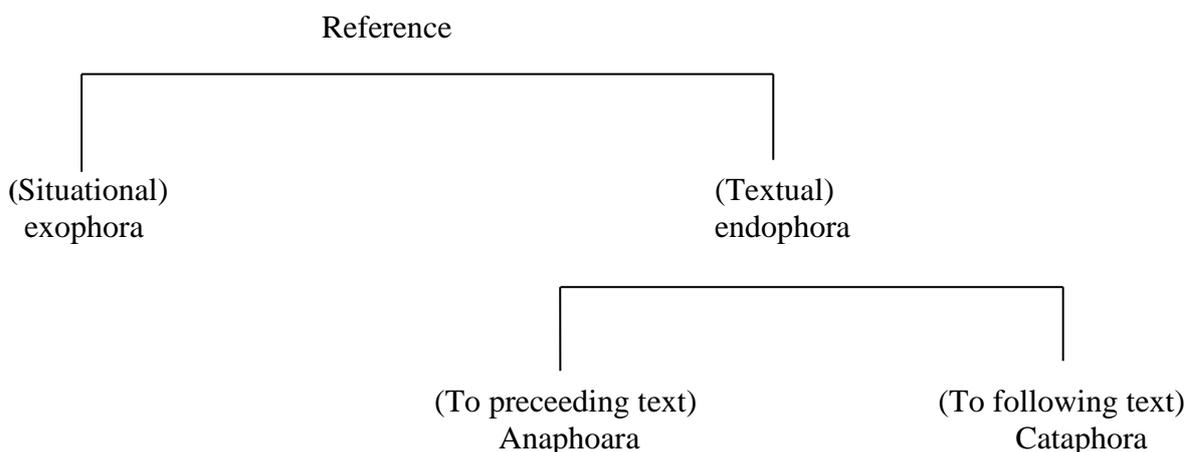


Figure 02: Types of references (1976: 33)

2.5.2. Substitution

The second type of the grammatical cohesive devices is known as substitution; according to Halliday and Hasan it is the replacement of an item that has been previously mentioned in a text. Unlike reference that retrieves its meaning from the occurrence in textual situational or context, substitution is used to avoid repetition in the text " a substitute is sort of counter which is used in place of the repetition of a particular item" (Halliday and Hasan1976:89).

In addition, Halliday and Hasan (1976) summarized the distinction between substitution and reference in this quotation: “In terms of the linguistic system, reference is a relation on the semantic level, whereas substitution is a relation on the lexicogrammatical level, the level of grammar and vocabulary, or linguistic form” (1976: 89). Thus, substitution is related to wording, while reference is related to meaning.

Moreover, there are three types of substitution: nominal, verbal, and clausal substitution:

- a. **Nominal substitution:** is marked when noun or a nominal group is replaced by “one” / “ones” which function as a head of nominal group. This kind of substitution is largely found in texts.
- b. **Verbal substitution:** it is the replacement of verb or a verbal group by another verb which is “do”. This functions as a head of verbal group.
- c. **Clausal substitution:** it is the replacement of an entire clause by “so” or “not”.

2.5.3. Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the omission of a linguistic element because the meaning is easily understood 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”. McCarthy confirms that the meaning is not affected by the omission “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.” (1991:43).

Moreover; the relation between substitution and ellipsis is very close; “ellipsis is simply 'substitution by zero’”; (Halliday and Hasan 1976:142). In brief, in the two cases the item is replaced; in substitution the element omitted and replaced by another element

but in ellipsis the item is omitted and replaced by nothing. Ellipsis like substitution functions at a nominal, verbal, and clausal level; Kennedy (2003:324) indicates that “ellipsis is the process by which noun phrase, verb phrase, or clauses are deleted or “understood” when they are absent”.

- a. **Nominal ellipsis:** it refers to ellipsis that takes place within a nominal group, in which a noun or pronoun is omitted.
- b. **Verbal ellipsis:** it refers to ellipsis that takes place within the verbal group in which a verb is omitted.
- c. **.Clausal ellipsis:** it refers to the omission of clause.

2.5.4. Conjunction

Conjunction is different kind from all the other grammatical cohesive devices; unlike the other cohesive ties that reach their meaning by backward or forward for its reference in the text, conjunctions express their own meaning; 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.

Moreover, it defines the relation between the segments of the text; Cook (1989:21) argues that conjunction “explicitly draws attention to the type of relationship which exists between one sentence or clause and another”. Furthermore, Brown and Yule (1983:191) as many other linguists, he classified conjunction to four categories; additive, adversative,

causal, and temporal. But Kennedy (2003:325) introduced a clear classification with illustration of the most common conjunction relationships which he summarized 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 2.1: Basic Conjunction Relationships in English

Conclusion

To conclude, grammatical cohesion is key concept in language; it is not mere group of ties that are used to link between sentences in surface structure but is a necessary condition to produce meaningful piece of language. It is considered as a part of texture; it works as network that unified between sentences in surface and deep level, so readers/hearers can go in smooth way along the text and understand the function of each sentence.

Field Work

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of students' test and teachers' questionnaire. The students' test aims to examine to what extent students employ grammatical cohesive devices in their essays and which device students frequently use as well as to what extent the use of those devices is appropriate. The analysis of the questionnaire helps us to identify the teachers' attitude toward students' level in writing formal assignments and the teachers' evaluation of their students' writing concerning the use of grammatical cohesion.

3.1. Students' Test

Third year students are asked to write an essay about "qualities of life partner" in order to evaluate to what extent they value grammatical cohesion in their academic writing.

3.1.1. The Sample

The sample consists of one group of third year students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The sample comprises 36 subjects who were randomly chosen to represent the whole population of third year students. The choice of the sample is based on the consideration that students at this level already cope with the basic aspects of writing. Hence, we suppose that students have experienced different academic writing tasks and they are able to employ the cohesive devices in their essays.

3.1.2. The Description of the Test

The test was given in order to collect data about the use of grammatical cohesive ties in students' academic writing. Students are asked to develop a topic in a form of an essay, and those essays will be analyzed in terms of grammatical cohesion in which we

count each type of grammatical cohesion manually to observe which type is frequently used and which one is rarely used.

3.1.3. Analysis of the Result

The data gained from the test is presented in a form of tables; these tables contain the total number of grammatical cohesive devices used in the essays, the number of each type with its percentage and examples about the most frequent grammatical ties.

3.1.3.1. The Frequent Use of Grammatical Cohesion

The use of the four types of grammatical cohesion; reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction.

3.1.3.1.1. The Use of References

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

	Frequency	Percentage
Total of grammatical ties	1340	100%
References	860	64.17 %
Most frequent ties	That , which , him , her , his	

Table 3.1: The Use of References

The table above shows that reference is the predominant device in students' essays. The high percentage (64.17%) of this type reveals that students are aware of its importance in creating cohesiveness.

3.1.3.1.2. The Use of Substitution

The table below represents the number of substitution and the total number of grammatical cohesive devices used by the students:

	Frequency	Percentage
Total of cohesive ties	1340	100%
Substitution	28	2.08%
Most frequent ties	One , Do	

Table 3.2: The Use of Substitution

According to the result shown in the table above, the students' use of substitution is relatively rare (2.08%); this can be a signal that students have a poor knowledge concerning this cohesive device.

3.1.3.1.3. The Use of Ellipses

The table bellow represents the number of ellipsis based on the total number of grammatical cohesive devices:

	Frequency	Percentage
Total of cohesive ties	1340	100%
Ellipsis	16	1.19%
Most frequent ties	/	

Table 3.3: The Use of Ellipsis

The results in the table above show that the use of ellipsis is very little with a percentage of (1.19%), which takes the last rate compared with the other grammatical cohesive devices; this problem is due to the little experience of students with this cohesive type.

3.1.3.1.4. The Use of Conjunctions

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

	Frequency	Percentage
Total of cohesive ties	1340	100%
Conjunction	436	32.53%
Most frequent ties	And , So , Because	

Table 3.4: The Use of Conjunction

The results show that conjunction gains the second highest percentage (32.53%) after reference; this is due to the students' familiarity with this type of cohesive devices.

3.1.3.2. Correct Vesus Wrong Use of Grammatical Cohesive Devices

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

The total	Correct use		wrong use	
	N	%	N	%
1340	1118	83.43%	222	16.56%

Table 3.5: Correct Versus Wrong Use of Grammatical Cohesive Devices

3.1.3.2.1. Correct Vesus Wrong Use of References

The number of appropriate and inappropriate use of references used by subjects is presented in the following table:

The total	Correct use		wrong use	
	N	%	N	%
860	730	84.88%	130	15.11%

Table 3.6: Correct Versus Wrong Use of References

The table above shows that the appropriate use of references (84.88%) exceeds the inappropriate use (15.11%); this can be due to the students' familiarity with this device as well as the nature of the proposed topic.

3.1.3.2.2. Correct Versus Wrong Use of Substitution

The following table indicates the correct versus wrong use of substitution

The total	Correct use		wrong use	
	N	%	N	%
28	20	71.42 %	8	28.57%

Table 3.7: Correct Versus Wrong Use of Substitution

The results indicate that the appropriate use of substitution (71.42%) is higher than the use of inappropriate one (28.57%).

3.1.3.2.3. Correct Versus Wrong Use of Ellipsis

The table below shows the correct versus wrong use of ellipsis:

The total	Correct use		wrong use	
	N	%	N	%
16	12	75%	4	25%

Table 3.8: Correct Versus Wrong Use of Ellipsis

The results indicate that correct use of ellipsis (75%) exceeds the wrong ones (25%).

3.1.3.2.4. Correct Versus Wrong Use of Conjunctions

The table below represents the correct versus wrong use of conjunction used by subjects:

The total	Correct use		wrong use	
	N	%	N	%
436	356	81.65%	80	18.34%

Table 3.9: Correct Versus Wrong Use of Conjunctions

The table above shows that students' appropriate use of conjunctions (81.65%) is higher than the inappropriate one (18.34%). This is an indication that students master these devices and use them adequately.

3.1.4. Discussion of Results

In accordance with the results obtained from the analysis of students' test, we notice that all the types of grammatical cohesive devices are implemented by students in their productions. The tables show that reference occupied the higher rate in comparison with the other types of grammatical cohesion with a percentage of (64.17%); the dominance of this type is due to the nature of topic proposed to students "qualities of life partner" that requires the use of personal and demonstrative references. However, reference is an important device in creating unity; consequently, the overuse of this type results a boring production that seems non native.

Conjunction takes the second rate after reference; the adequate use of conjunctions (32.53%) indicates the students' familiarity with this type. Although, conjunctions play a significant role in building a unified text, the use of some devices and absence of others is due to the limited knowledge of students concerning this device. In addition, substitution occupied the third rate with relatively little percentage (2.08%), which is an indication that this type represents a challenge for students in which they prefer to keep repeating the

same item instead of substitute this item to avoid the repetition. Moreover, ellipsis ranked in the last rate compared with the other grammatical cohesive devices with a percentage of (1.19%).

Generally, the results show that students succeed to employ all the types of grammatical cohesion in their assignments, but an unbalanced occurrence of these types is clearly noticeable in the high use of reference compared with the other types which are rarely used.

The results revealed that students used all the types of grammatical cohesion in their essays but there are a number of reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction that are not used correctly. Each of these devices has a source of inadequate use, and this misuse cause the appearance of different problems that may lessen the quality of the production.

However, references ranked with a high percentage (64.17%) in student's essays. Students still produce inadequately use of these ties. This is confirmed with the percentage of the inappropriate use (15.11%) which is due to the overuse of certain devices like in the following example 'to share the same values with your life partner make your life with her so simple and good, of course there is...'. This inappropriate employment caused unnatural production that seems a transfer of ideas from L1 to L2.

Students' problem in using conjunction is attributed to the limited knowledge of this type. Therefore, students mostly repeat the same items like in expressing contrast they usually use 'but' instead of using 'although' or 'however'. Also, in expressing addition they generally use the items 'and' and 'also' instead of using 'furthermore' or 'besides'. This problem is due to students' familiarity with certain devices that they acquire in the first stages of learning and little experience with the other devices.

The analysis shows that the inappropriate use of substitution and ellipsis are approximately the same. Thus, the frequencies indicate that the inappropriate use of substitution (28.57%) is due to the students' poor knowledge concerning the use of this type of grammatical cohesion in which they substitute a noun, verb, or clause in a sentence that appear in a formless structure as in the following sentence 'I am sure that the one who succeed in his life is the one who knows all his duties and do it...'. The frequencies of ellipsis (25%) indicate that it is the most challenging type compared with the other grammatical devices. Students misuse this type by omitting necessary nouns, verbs, or clauses, and they suppose that this omission is accurate in constructing a well formed sentence structure.

3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

3.2.1. The Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to ten teachers of "Written Expression" in the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The sample has been randomly chosen.

The questionnaire consists of thirteen closed-ended and multiple choice questions divided into three sections.

Section one (from Q1 to Q3) includes general questions about teachers' qualifications, their experience in teaching English and their experience in teaching written expression.

The second section (from Q4 to Q07) deals with the academic writing; teachers' opinions about the time allocated to teach written expression module, the importance of some aspects in writing essays, and the common mistakes in students' essays.

The third section (from Q8to Q13) is composed of questions seeking information about the students' level in writing grammatically cohesive essays, the most common grammatical cohesive ties in their essays, and the most problematic ties for them. Also, it aims to find out the way in which teachers explain these devices and how they evaluate the contribution of each type of these devices in creating unified essay.

3.2.2. Analysis of Results

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

Section One: General Information

Question 01: What is your qualification?

Qualification	N	%
License	/	/
Magister/Master	8	80%
Doctorate	2	20%

Table 3.10: Teachers' Qualification

The results show that the majority of teachers 80% have achieved Magister/Master degree and 20% of them have accomplished the Doctorate degree; this indicates the high level of the questioned teachers. So, the questionnaire presents reliable results.

Question 02: How many years have you been teaching English?

Years of teaching English	N	%
1-5 years	/	/
5-10 years	5	50%
10-15 years	2	20%
More than 15 years	3	30%

Table 3.11: Years of Teaching English Language

The table above shows that half 50% of the questioned teachers have been teaching English for 5 to 10 years and 20% of them have been teaching it for 10 to 15 years, and 30% of them have been teaching English for more than 15 years. This indicates that the teachers have extent experience in teaching English.

Question03: How long have you been teaching written expression?

Years of teaching "Written Expression"	N	%
1-5	4	40%
5-10	5	50%
10-15	1	10%
More than 15	/	/

Table 3.12: Years of Teaching Written Expression

The results shown in table above indicates that 40% of the questioned teachers have been teaching written expression from 1 to 5 years, and 50% of them have been teaching it from 5 to ten years, and only one teacher have been teaching it from 10 to 15 years.

Section Two: Academic Writing

Question 04: Do you think that time allocated to teach written expression is sufficient to help students better understand and assign academic writing?

Options	N	%
Yes	3	30%
No	7	70%

Table 3.13: Time Allocated for Teaching Written Expression

From the table above, it is clear that most of the teachers (70%) have agreed that time allocated for teaching written expression module is not enough for high level in academic writing.

Question 05: Do you think that your students are motivated to write academically?

Options	N	%
Yes	3	30%
No	7	70%

Table 3.14: Student's Motivation

As it is shown in table above the majority of teachers 70% have agreed that students are not motivated to write academically, only 30% of them have stated that the students are motivated to write academically.

The explanation in both cases

Yes:

- They are aware of the importance of writing
- Most of students prefer writing to speaking because they do not have to express themselves in front of all class; through writing they can freely express their opinions on a given topic in a correct and formal way.

No:

- This is because they have poor ideas and they make a lot of mistakes while writing.
- They lack necessary writing strategies
- It is due to the lack of interest, lack of practice, and poor writing performance.
- No technological means

Question06: How important do you think that the following aspects in writing essays are?

	Not important		important		Very important	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Grammar	/	/	5	50%	5	50%
Vocabulary	/	/	5	50%	5	50%
Cohesive knowledge	/	/	2	20%	8	80%

Table 3.15: The Most Important Aspects in Writing.

In accordance with the results, we notice that the questioned teachers have described grammar as important (50%) and very important (50%) aspect in writing essays. Similar to vocabulary, 50% of them considered it as an important aspect while 50% of them considered it as very important. Concerning the importance of cohesive knowledge in writing essays, most of the teachers 80% considered it as very important aspect and 20% of them have considered it an important aspect.

Question 07: what types of mistakes do students frequently make in their written production?

Options	N	%
Grammatical mistakes	/	/
Punctuation	/	/
Spelling mistakes	/	/
All together	10	100%

Table 3.16: The Most Frequent Mistakes

The table shows that all the teachers (100%) have agreed that grammatical mistakes, wrong use of punctuation and spelling mistakes are frequent in student's essays.

Question 08: To what extent do you think your students value grammatical cohesion in their writing?

Options	N	%
Little	9	90%
Much	1	10%
Very much	/	/

Table 3.17: Grammatical Cohesion in Student's Writing

From the results shown in the table, we notice that most of the teachers 90% agree that the students' value of grammatical cohesion is little, while only 10% of them state that the students' value of grammatical cohesive devices is much.

Question 09: In terms of grammatical cohesion, how would you evaluate your students essays?

Options	N	%
Very poor	/	/
Poor	3	30 %
Average	7	70%
Good	/	/

Table 3.18: The Most Common Writing Problems

As it appears in the table, 70% of the teachers have claimed that students have average level in writing whereas 30% of the questioned teachers have said that students have poor essays in terms of grammatical cohesion.

Question 10: When you teach grammatical cohesion you explain it through:

Options	N	%
Explicit teaching	4	40%
Giving handouts	2	20%
Awareness-raising activities	4	40%

Table 3.19: Teaching Grammatical Cohesion

The table shows that 40% of the teachers prefer to explain grammatical cohesion through explicit teaching and 40% of them prefer to use Awareness-raising activities while 20% of the teachers prefer to explain it through giving handouts. Teachers do not have any suggestion for how they explain grammatical cohesion.

Section Three: Grammatical Cohesion

Question 11: What is the most important contributor for cohesive essays? (Put 1, 2, 3 and 4 next to each one).

- a. Reference
- b. Substitution
- c. Ellipsis
- d. Conjunction

Priority	N	%
1	2	20%
2	4	40%
3	2	20%
4	2	20%

Table 3.20: Reference: The Most Contributor for Cohesive Essays.

As indicated in the table above, that two teachers graded reference as priorities 1, 3, and 4. And four teachers graded it as priority 2.

Priority	N	%
1	3	30%
2	2	20%
3	4	40%
4	1	10%

Table 3.21: Substitution: The Most Contributor for Cohesive Essays

The table above indicates that substitution has been classified as 1 three times, and as two times, and four times as 3, and only one time as 4.

Priority	N	%
1	/	/
2	/	/
3	4	40%
4	6	60%

Table 3.22: Ellipsis: The Most Contributor for Cohesive Essays

According to the tables above, the questioned teachers have classified ellipsis four times as 3 and six times as 4 in terms of priority.

Priority	N	%
1	7	70%
2	3	30%
3	/	/
4	/	/

Table 3.23: Conjunction: The Most Contributor for Cohesive Essays

According to the table above, teachers have classified conjunction at the first and second priority; 70% of teachers have classified it as 1 and the rest of them (30%) have classified it as 2.

Question 12: What is the most frequent grammatical device in student's essays? (Put 1, 2, 3 and 4 next to each one).

- a. Reference
- b. Substitution
- c. Ellipsis
- d. Conjunction

Priority	N	%
1	4	40%
2	4	40%
3	1	10%
4	1	10%

Table 3.24: Reference: The Most Frequent Grammatical Device in Students' Essays

The results in the tables above show that four teachers have classified reference as the priority 1 and 2 while one teacher has graded it as the priority 3 and 4.

Priority	N	%
1	1	10%
2	6	60%
3	1	10%
4	2	20%

Table 3.25: Substitution: The Most Frequent Grammatical Device in Students' Essays

The results in the table indicate that teachers have classified substitution as the priority 1 and 3 one time, and as 2 six times, and as 4 two times.

Priority	N	%
1	1	10%
2	3	30%
3	1	10%
4	5	50%

Table 3.26: Ellipsis: The Most Frequent Grammatical Device in Students' Essays

The table above reveals that ellipsis is graded as 1 and 3 one time, as 2 three times, and as 4 five times.

Priority	N	%
1	5	50%
2	2	20%
3	2	20%
4	1	10%

Table 3.27: Conjunction: The Most Frequent Grammatical Device in Students' Essays

The table above shows that the teachers have classified conjunctions as 1 five times and two times as 2 and 3 and one time as 4 in terms of priorities.

Question 13: What type of grammatical cohesion presents more challenge for your students?

Options	N	%
Reference	3	30%
Substitution	7	70%
Ellipsis	7	70%
Conjunction	1	10%

Table 3.28: The Most Challenging Type of Grammatical Cohesion

According to the table above, the majority of teachers (70%) have stated that substitution and ellipsis are the difficult aspects for students while 30% of them have

considered that reference is more difficult. Only 10% of teachers have claimed that conjunction is the challenging aspect for student.

Justification:

- They generally confuse between coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Thus, they misuse them in sentence. All these challenges are due to the lack of practice.
- It needs some deep concentration to make the appropriate relation between ideas and paragraphs.

3.2.3. Discussion of Results

From the analysis of the questionnaire, we found that teachers have high level of education and have long experience in teaching English language but most of them have a limited experience in teaching written expression module. Almost all teachers agree that time allocated for written expression module is not enough; if the time is not sufficient to cover the program of the module in a way that enables students to understand what is presented to them, teachers will be rushing toward finishing the program no matter the students understand or no.

The results show that students are not motivated to write academically in English, this is a responsibility of teachers to make their students motivated by providing them with relaxing atmosphere and appropriate tools that encourage them to use their abilities to produce accurate piece of writing. In addition, written expression teachers emphasize the importance of grammar and vocabulary and give more importance to cohesive ties in producing a good piece of writing but students still neglect these devices while writing. Furthermore, the majority of teachers prefer to explain these devices to their students

through the explicit teaching or awareness-raising activities, only two teachers prefer to use handouts.

The importance of each type in creating unity in the essays conjunction is given the first rate followed by substitution and then references whereas ellipsis has given the last rate. Although, the most frequent ties in students' essays are conjunction firstly then references, substitution and ellipsis at last.

Conclusion

The results obtained from the test and questionnaire show that students are aware of the importance of grammatical cohesive devices in creating unity of a text, but the majority of them face many problems in using some devices. The analysis of the test indicates that there is a variance in the usage of grammatical cohesion; reference dominates their essays compared with other cohesive ties which results unbalanced piece of writing. And the results obtained from the questionnaire shows that students' use of grammatical cohesion is average. However, students are aware of the importance of this aspect in creating unity, they have many problems in using some devices and they also fail to employ them correctly. Therefore, the results of this study establish our hypothesis that exist a firm relationship between the use of grammatical cohesive devices and effective academic piece of writing.

General Conclusion

Writing an academic piece in second or foreign language is extremely a difficult task; this is because of the various aspects that are included in such kind of writing. Hence, this research has been carried out to examine students' essays in terms of using grammatical cohesive devices and to perceive the main problems students encounter while dealing with these aspects in an academic context.

The study is divided into three chapters; chapter one and two are devoted to the theoretical background whereas chapter three is devoted to the field work, in which the hypothesis of the research is tested. The first chapter presents a general overview concerning academic writing as an important skill for students in advanced level. First of all, we dealt with the nature of writing and how writing is defined according to different linguists and what is precisely meant by academic writing. Besides, this chapter describes the process that should be followed to obtain accurate piece of writing as well as the different types of academic writing that students must differentiate between each one of them. Finally, this chapter ends up with the main characteristics of any academic piece.

The second chapter attempts to provide a background about how linguists shifted the attention from analyzing sentence in isolation to the analysis of the whole text, focusing mainly on the concept of cohesion in general and grammatical cohesion as a subclass in particular. Besides, we shed light on the notions text and texture as they are the area where cohesive relations are constructed. We also refer to how cohesion and coherence exist in the text and how they contribute in creating meaning of text and giving it texture. Lastly, we talked about grammatical cohesion in details.

The third chapter is devoted to the analysis of students' essays in terms of grammatical cohesion, and analyzing the attitudes of written expression teachers

concerning this issue. The results indicate that students are conscious of the importance of grammatical cohesive devices in creating a unified piece of writing. The conclusion that is drawn from the obtained results is that students succeed to employ all the types of grammatical cohesive devices in their essays, but they have many problems in using those devices appropriately. It is particularly clear that the overuse of a specific device and disregard others, which results in an unbalanced piece of writing. Besides, the analysis of the questionnaire supports the results of the test and emphasizes that students use different types of cohesive devices but at the same time face many problems in using them correctly.

On the basis of the results obtained, one suggests some pedagogical recommendations that could be important in enhancing the quality of students' productions in terms of grammatical cohesion:

- Teachers of written expression module have to be aware of the importance of teaching writing from a discourse viewpoint. Hence, the traditional method whose main focus is only on the structural features of a text and neglect its whole unity should be dismissed.
- Explicit teaching of grammatical cohesion could be beneficial for students to better understand the different types of cohesive devices and how each type can contribute to building the essays' texture, because the majority of students focus on conjunctions and transitions as they are the only ties in achieving unity. Therefore, teachers can focus more on this method of teaching so that students can realize this important aspect in constructing accurate pieces of writing.
- Students should be exposed to different topics, genres, and styles of writing. This will give them the chance to learn the different linguistic features that create cohesion.

As a final point, grammatical cohesion as a sub-class of cohesion has an important role in building the unity of a text. However, unity cannot be achieved only with this aspect; lexical cohesion is also an important aspect of cohesion which is ignored in this study, and it may be an area for future research.

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Appendix 01

Students' Test

People from all around the world vary from one to another, and for the sake of choosing a life partner each one have specific characteristics that he would like to find in his soul mate, such as being full of motivation, faithful and patient.

Each person have plans in life to achieve something; some cases we need someone to help us to establish our goals. So the role of life partner is to inspire and motivate us, being beside us when we face problems or we fail at something because being surrounded with kind of people will make success easier; indeed, he is the essential thing that keeps us going.

Faithfulness is the pillar of any relationship, the essential attribute that builds firm contacts between two people, it leads to the continuation of peaceful relations because trust is an essential property that provides us with peace of mind, a stressless life of merry and love.

A patient person means a wise person and a wise person means a life with less problems which is the target of any human being. Living with an understandable man is a dream of all the woman, a man that know how to behave in difficult times, and provides her with calmative atmosphere.

In short being happy in life requires having the right life partner with the suitable characteristics that will help dealing with life obstacles.

Appendix 02

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers:

You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire as a part of a master dissertation entitled : An Analysis of Grammatical Cohesion in Students' Academic Writing: A Case study of third year Students at biskra university.

Your participation is of a great help for us to undertake this research.

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

Section one: General Information

1. What is your qualification?

License Magister/ Master Doctorate

2. 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

Section Two: Academic Writing:

4. Do you think that the time allocated to teach written expression is sufficient to help students better understand and assign academic writing activities?

Yes No

5. Do you think that your students are motivated to write academically in English?

Yes No

In both cases explain.

.....

6. How important do you think that the following aspects in writing essays are?

Aspect/important	Not important	Important	Very important
Grammar			
Vocabulary			
Cohesive knowledge			

7. What type of mistakes do students frequently make in their written production?

- a. Grammatical mistakes
- b. Punctuation
- c. Spelling mistakes
- d. All together

Section three: Grammatical Cohesion

8. To what extent do you think your students value grammatical cohesion in writing essays?

a. Little

b. Much

c. Very much

9. In terms of grammatical cohesion, how would you evaluate your students' essays?

Very poor	Poor	Average	Good

10. when you teach grammatical cohesion, you explain it through:

a. Explicit teaching

b. Giving handouts

c. Awareness-raising activities

d. Others (please specify)

.....

.....

.....

11. What is the most important contributor for cohesive essays? (Put 1, 2, 3 and 4 next to each one).

- e. Reference
- f. Substitution
- g. Ellipsis
- h. Conjunction

12. What is the most frequent grammatical item in students' essays? (Put 1, 2, 3 and 4 next to each one).

- a. Reference
- b. Substitution
- c. Ellipsis
- d. Conjunction

13. Which type of grammatical cohesion presents more challenge for your students?

- a. Reference
- b. Substitution
- c. Ellipsis
- d. Conjunction

Would you please justify

.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration

ملخص البحث

عادة ما يسعون أساتذة التعبير الكتابي، إلى ما قد يساعد طلابهم على كتابة مقال متماسك. و الهدف من هذه الدراسة التحقق من مدى تمكن طلبة السنة الثالثة ووعيمهم في استعمال ادوات الربط اللغوية في كتابة نص متماسك. وبالتالي تم افتراض أن الاستخدام الملائم لأدوات الربط اللغوي من شأنه ان يحسن كتابات الطلبة . اتبعت دراسة وصفية في هذا البحث من خلال وسيلتين أساسيتين، دراسة تحليلية لمقالات الطلبة أخصيين بعين الاعتبار أدوات الربط اللغوي كما قدم استبيان إلى أساتذة المادة من أجل تقييم مواقفهم اتجاه استخدام الطلبة لهذه الأدوات. أما النتائج المتحصل عليها تشير إلى أن طلبة السنة الثالثة انجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة على وعي بأهمية استخدام الروابط اللغوية بما أنهم تناولوا كل أنواع هذه الروابط في مقالاتهم. إلا أنهم فشلوا في خلق توازن فاستعمالهم لها ، اضافة إلى هذا الاختلاف هنالك استعمال غير صحيح لهذه الادوات حيث انهم بالغوا في تكرار نفس الأدوات وتهمشيمهم لأخرى مما نتج عنه كتابة نصوص غير متناسقة.