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Discourse Analysis and Writing Coherence and Cohesion Theory (*)

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Muawiyah Alawneh

Assistant Professor- Curriculum and
Teaching Methods English Language
An-Najah National University
The University College for
Educational Sciences/ UNRAWA

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تحليل الخطاب ودور الاتساق والتماسك في تحسين جودة الكتابة معاوية علاونة

أستاذ مناهج وطرائق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية المساعد
جامعة النجاح الوطنية بفلسطين، كلية العلوم الإنسانية والتربوية، مركز اللغات
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الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء دور التماسك والانسجام في تعزيز جودة الكتابة لدى طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية أو لغة ثانية (EFL/ESL)، وذلك في ضوء إطار التماسك الذي قدمه هاليداي وحسن (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) وسعت الدراسة إلى تحليل مدى توظيف الطلبة لأدوات التماسك، والكشف عن علاقتها بمستوى الأداء الكتابي العام لديهم.

أُجريت الدراسة خلال الفصل الدراسي الثاني من العام الأكاديمي 2024-2025 في الكلية الجامعية للعلوم التربوية، واعتمدت المنهج الوصفي ذي الطابع التجريبي. وتكوّنت عينة الدراسة من ثلاثين طالبًا من طلبة السنة الثانية، جرى اختيارهم باستخدام العينة القصدية، وذلك بهدف تحليل مهامهم الكتابية. وقد خضعت هذه المهام للتحليل في ضوء خمسة أنواع رئيسة من أدوات التماسك، وهي: الإحالة، والاستبدال، والحذف، والربط، والتماسك المعجمي. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود قصور واختلال في توظيف أدوات التماسك لدى الطلبة، تمثل بصورة أساسية في الإفراط في استخدام التكرار المعجمي وأدوات الربط البسيطة، مقابل محدودية استخدام أسلوبي الاستبدال والحذف، إلى جانب ضعف توظيف أدوات الربط المنطقية. كما بينت النتائج أن الاستخدام غير السليم لأدوات التماسك يؤثر سلبًا في انسجام النص وترابط أفكاره، في حين يسهم الاستخدام الملائم والمتوازن لهذه الأدوات في تعزيز وضوح النص وتحسين جودته الكتابية. وفي ضوء هذه النتائج، توصي الدراسة بضرورة تضمين التدريس الصريح والمباشر لأدوات التماسك والانسجام ضمن تعليم الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية، فضلًا عن إجراء دراسات مستقبلية تعتمد عينات أكبر وأكثر تنوعًا للتحقق من هذه النتائج وتوسيع نطاق تعميمها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل الخطاب، الكتابة، الانسجام، التماسك.

Discourse Analysis and Writing Coherence and Cohesion Theory

Muawiyah Alawneh

Assistant Professor- Curriculum and
Teaching Methods – English Language
An-Najah National University

The University College for Educational Sciences/ UNRAWA

Abstract

This study investigates the role of cohesion and coherence in enhancing EFL/ESL students' writing quality. Grounded in the cohesion framework of M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976), the study analyzes students' use of cohesive devices and their relationship to overall writing performance.

Conducted during the second semester of 2024–2025 academic year at The University College for Educational Sciences, the study employed a descriptive empirical design. A purposive sample of 30 second-year students' writing tasks was analyzed according to five cohesive devices: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion.

Findings reveal limited and imbalanced use of cohesive devices, with overreliance on lexical repetition and simple connectors, and underuse of substitution, ellipsis, and logical connectors. Misuse negatively affected coherence, while appropriate use improved clarity and writing quality. The study recommends explicit instruction and further research with larger samples.

Key words: discourse analysis, writing, coherence, cohesion

Introduction:

Based on any curriculum, the general objective of teaching English in any country is to develop students' communicative competence, comprising the mastery of the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Relating to the teaching of English writing in the classroom, there are two different perspectives. On the one hand, writing is one of the four language skills besides speaking, listening and reading, which is considered to be a fundamental skill so that students need to learn it.

On the other hand, writing as one of the four skills in English is considered as the most difficult and most challenging skill compared to the other skills either for most students or even for teachers. Therefore, a good writing requires unity, cohesion, coherence, and adequate development, with coherence as the most important factor.

The teachers are required to assist students in generating, organizing, and ordering the content of a text so that the text they produce becomes coherent. Therefore, the topic of coherence is necessary in the teaching of writing and English learners and teachers are required to have clear understanding of the concept of cohesion and coherence.

To provide a framework for studying and analyzing the cohesion of writing or a text, the five types of cohesive devices, namely: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion are used. These five cohesive devices are linguistic features which tie sentences together. These can make a text an efficient means of understanding and help the reader create meaningful semantic unit of the text for textual interpretation.

It goes without saying that Discourse Analysis is the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. Thus, Coherence and Cohesion are two important elements entailing "good" writing (Halliday, 2000; Lui, 2000). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976, p,4), "Cohesion refers to the relations of meaning that exist within the text, and is expressed through a particular organization of the text. It occurs where the interpretation of some elements in the text is dependent on that of another". Halliday and Hasan (1976) view that cohesion is expressed partly through the grammar and partly through the vocabulary in the text. It is therefore, there can be two types of cohesion: grammatical cohesion, and lexical cohesion.

Grammatical cohesion is the cohesive tie that is expressed through the grammatical system of a language such as **reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical item** whereas **lexical cohesion is established through vocabulary**. For example, reference is used to describe the different ways in which entities- things, people, events- are referred to within texts. There are several types of reference such as personal reference as(I, me, mine, his, her, they ,them, he, she, you, we, us etc.), demonstrative reference like (this /these, that /those), and comparative reference that shows the relation between entities within the text.

The second device is substitution, through which linguistic item can be replaced of one word/ phrase with another word or phrase. This exchange clarify the importance of replacement. A- I will have two eggs on the bread. B- I will have the same. By using substitution, students learn how to use meaningful sentence without repeating the same word or phrase to keep the flow of communication smoothly.

The next cohesive tie is ellipsis, through which students learn how to delete or omit a linguistic item. This exchange clarify the point. A- where are you going? B- To town instead of I am going to town. Thus, the teachers role is very important in this regard to instruct his/her students how to be a good writer and how to use these ties correctly and appropriately to keep the flow of the text in harmony. Reference also can be anaphoric or cataphoric according to its position in a sentence and sometimes reference could be an exophoric which is not stated in the text, and depends on the learners knowledge of the world to guess the meaning of that reference easily.

On the other hand, Coherence, generally, is the contextual appearance of the utterances in the text. More specifically, it is the contextual fitness of in the text that contributes in understanding the meaning or message. Like cohesion, coherence is also another element that shows the connection of ideas in a text. In this case, many researchers have defined coherence from different perspectives.

Statement of the Study:

Many EFL/ESL learners struggle to produce coherent and cohesive texts, often misusing or overusing cohesive devices and failing to organize ideas logically. Writing instruction frequently emphasizes grammar at the sentence level rather than discourse-level features, which may limit students' ability to create unified texts. Therefore, this study investigates the

use of cohesion and coherence in students' writing and examines their impact on overall writing quality.

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant because it highlights the importance of cohesion and coherence in improving the quality of EFL/ESL students' writing. It provides insights into common difficulties learners face in using cohesive devices and organizing ideas effectively. The findings may help teachers develop more effective instructional strategies and contribute to enhancing students' overall communicative competence in written English.

Questions of the Study:

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- To what extent do EFL/ESL students use cohesive devices effectively in their writing?
- 2- What types of cohesive devices are most and least frequently used by students?
- 3- How does the use of cohesion and coherence affect the overall quality of students' writing?

Objectives of the Study:

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- To examine the use of cohesive devices in EFL/ESL students' writing.
- 2- To identify the most and least frequently used types of cohesive ties.
- 3- To investigate the relationship between cohesion, coherence, and the overall quality of students' writing.

Literature Review:

This section presents the theoretical background and related studies.

Theoretical Framework:

This study is grounded in two complementary theories: **Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory of cohesion** and **Discourse Theory**, which emphasizes coherence in communication. Based on this theory, Halliday and Hasan (1976) define cohesion as the linguistic means by which sentences and clauses are connected to form a unified text. They distinguish between **grammatical cohesion** (reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction) and **lexical cohesion** (repetition, synonymy, collocation). Cohesive devices provide explicit connections between ideas, enabling readers to interpret the text as an integrated whole. In the context of

EFL/ESL writing, understanding and applying cohesive devices is critical for constructing meaningful and well-structured texts (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

On the other hand, the Discourse **Theory and Coherence** which refers to the conceptual and logical unity of a text, which arises from the relationship between the text and the reader's interpretation within a given context (Yule, 2008), emphasizes that meaning is not only derived from grammatical and lexical ties but also from the way ideas are organized, sequenced, and related to the communicative purpose. A coherent text ensures that readers can follow the progression of ideas and understand the intended message (Taboada, 2004).

By combining Halliday and Hasan's cohesion theory with Discourse Theory's focus on coherence, this study provides a framework for analyzing EFL/ESL students' writing at both the linguistic and conceptual levels. Cohesion ensures the explicit connection of sentences, while coherence ensures that ideas form a meaningful and interpretable whole. Together, these theories inform both the analysis of learners' texts and pedagogical strategies for teaching writing effectively.

Literature Review:

This literature review examines previous research on how learners use cohesive devices, maintain coherence, and the impact of these elements on writing quality, providing a foundation for the present study.

According to Taboada (2004, p,158), "Coherence is the hanging together of the text with relation to its context of situation or culture". Yule (2008, p, 126) views, "Coherence is everything fitting together well, and it is not something that exists in words or structures, but something that exists in people". Coherence is the result of the interpretation of the meaning of the text, and it depends on the relation between the audience and the text (Tanskanen, 2006). It is therefore, the coherence of a text can be perceived only if the receiver's background knowledge is sufficient enough to interpret the linkage of messages in the discourse.

Khalil (1989) contended that Arab students overused lexical reiteration of the same item and the frequency of other lexical and grammatical cohesive ties dropped. Therefore, the quality of writing was poorly evaluated in terms of both cohesion and coherence. He also found that Arab students overused reference. Therefore, he recommends that students should

be given more instruction about the importance of cohesion on the quality of writing as a whole.

Examining coherence and cohesive ties in particular can provide insights into the extent to which students from different levels maintain cohesion in their paragraph writing. Therefore, the role of the teacher is to give his/her students direct instruction about the correct modes of writing in terms of cohesion (Johnson, 2007,159).

Consequently, many researchers found that EFL/ESL students were incompetent in terms of using cohesion (Khalil, 2002, Olateju, 2006). The students mistakes due to incorrect choices of cohesive ties in writing. Zhou Xin-Hong (2007) examined the application of the theory of cohesion to the teaching of Chinese EFL learners by opting for a control group and an experimental group. He examined the frequencies of cohesive ties and their effect on the quality of writing and found that cohesion improved the quality of writing. He found that the reference items and lexical reiteration of the two groups dropped slightly. It is noteworthy that what added to the quality of the writing was the use of conjunctions, mostly additive and enhancement.

Other researchers such as Liu and Braine (2005) investigated the use of cohesive devices in the writing of undergraduate students and found that students used three types of which lexical devices were the mostly used followed by reference and conjunctions. This finding goes in line with that of previous studies (Zhang, 2000). The least frequently used tie was demonstrative reference. The quality of writing was affected by the total number of cohesive ties and the errors committed in using reference lexis.

However, some researchers found that cohesion doesn't affect the quality of writing (Castro, 2004; Chen, 2008). Jo-Ling Chen (2008) examined college students use of cohesive devices and the relationship between the devices and the quality of writing. He found that lexical devices had the highest percentage of use followed by reference and then conjunctions. However, his study revealed that overusing cohesive devices negatively affected the quality of writing. Zhang (2000) studied cohesion employment of Chinese English majors and found that cohesion is not related to good or poor writing, but agreed with other researchers that lexical collocations add to the good quality of writing (Jafapur, 1991).

In terms of the effect of cohesion on the quality of writing, AL-Jarf (2001) found that Arab EFL learners couldn't opt for the correct choices of cohesive ties due to the insufficient knowledge about cohesion. She investigated the use of cohesive and found that conjunctions were the easiest to use, but reference was very difficult. Guthrie (2008) recommended more research focusing on more students groups and the use of cohesion.

In fact, many TEFL/ TESOL practitioners use the two terms interchangeably. For instance, sentence connectors and transitional devices such as: in addition, moreover, likewise, however, in contrast, yet, on the contrary, in fact, after all, thus, in conclusion, therefore, besides, furthermore, finally, in short, etc. are referred to as cohesive devices and sometimes as coherence devices. This is an oversimplification, but it is not totally wrong for coherence and cohesion are two sides of the same coin, namely test, whether spoken or written. Consider the following two definitions.

Coherence: The requirement that texts hang together conceptually. {emphasis in mine}.

Cohesion: The requirement that texts cohere grammatically and lexically. {emphasis is mine}.(Hatim and Mason, 1990, 239). The above two definitions point to the fact that a text must meet two requirements, namely: (i) unity of ideas, and this is achieved through coherence, and (ii) presence of ties (grammatically and lexical) between constituent utterances and sentences in an exchange or a written text (e.g. paragraph), and this is what constitutes cohesion. For example, the researcher incorporated a sample texts below to show the importance of having a cohesive and coherent text

My father once bought a Lincoln convertible. He did it by saving every penny he could. That car would be worth a fortune nowadays. However, he sold it to help pay for my college education. Sometimes I think I'd rather have the convertible.

As noticed in the above text, the coherence and cohesion are achieved through the text according to the following aspects. Frist of all, there are connections present here in using of words to maintain reference to the same people and things through: father-he; my-my-I ; Lincoln-it. Also, there are connections between phrases such as: a Lincoln convertible- that car- the convertible. In addition, there are more general connections created by a

number of terms that share a common element of meaning, such as "money" (bought- saving-penny-worth a fortune-sold-pay) and "time"(once-nowadays- sometimes). Finally, the verb tenses in the text are all in the past.

But the following text shows that it lacks cohesion and coherence.

My father bought a Lincoln convertible. The car driven by the police was red. That color doesn't suit her. She consists of three letters. However, a letter isn't as fast as a telephone call.

The text indicates that cohesion would not be sufficient to enable the reader to make sense of what the text is about. It is quiet easy to create a highly cohesive text that has a lot of connections between the sentences, but is very difficult to understand and interpret. Therefore, this text was written in fragment sentences that makes it very difficult to be understood by the audience because the linkage between sentences were missing and not stated clearly.

Coherence and Cohesion in Student's writings:

During the academic year 2024–2025, the researcher assigned a writing task to students at The University College for Educational Sciences to assess their understanding of cohesion and coherence in writing. The students were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received instruction on cohesion and coherence theory and was exposed to various model texts demonstrating the effective use of cohesive devices. After this training, they were asked to write a meaningful paragraph using appropriate linking words and logical organization.

Before implementing the instructional activities, the researcher observed that many students struggled with cohesion and coherence. Their writing often contained disjointed ideas, short and disconnected sentences, and weak logical relationships between thoughts. For example: “The weather was cold. I wore a jacket. I drank coffee. My friend called me.” Although grammatically correct, the sentences lack clear connections and logical flow. Students also tended to repeat nouns unnecessarily, avoid pronouns, and shift topics abruptly, which reduced clarity.

To address these issues, the researcher provided explicit instruction on organizing ideas logically and using cohesive devices effectively. Students learned how to show cause-and-effect relationships, sequence events clearly, and connect sentences smoothly. For instance, the previous example can be

improved as follows: “The weather was very cold, so I wore a jacket. I also drank coffee to keep warm. Meanwhile, my friend called me, and we talked for a few minutes.” In this revised version, connectors such as “so,” “also,” and “meanwhile” guide the reader through the events.

Similarly, a sequence of unrelated sentences such as: “Maria woke up late. She missed the bus. She arrived at school. She felt stressed. She had a test. She did not study. She was tired. She went to bed late. She failed the test. She felt sad,” can be rewritten coherently: “Maria woke up late, so she missed the bus. As a result, she arrived at school feeling stressed because she had a test that day. Since she had gone to bed late and had not studied, she was very tired. Therefore, she failed the test and felt extremely sad.” Here, cohesive devices such as “so,” “as a result,” “since,” and “therefore” create logical connections, while combining sentences improves fluency.

In addition, systematic revision helps students identify gaps in logic, add necessary transitions, and ensure that each idea connects smoothly to the next. By applying these strategies, students can develop clearer, more organized, and more effective writing.

Methodology:

This study adopts a descriptive empirical design to analyze authentic student writing samples and identify errors related to cohesion and coherence. It was conducted at The University College for Educational Sciences during the 2024–2025 academic year among second-year undergraduate students enrolled in an academic writing course. The study population consisted of 50 students, from which a purposive sample of 10 writing activities was selected for thematic analysis.

Participants of the study:

The participants of the study were 60 second-year EFL students enrolled at The University College for Educational Sciences during the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year. A purposive sample of 30 students was selected for analysis.

Results and Discussion:

This section presents the statistical findings of the study in relation to the research questions.

Results of the first question: In order to answer this question. *To what extent do EFL/ESL students use cohesive devices effectively in their*

writing? means and standard deviations were calculated. The results are shown in Table (1).

Table (1)

Statistical description of Cohesion, Coherence, and Writing Quality

Variable	Source	N	M	SD
Cohesion	Experimental	15	78.40	6.52
	Control	15	65.20	7.11
Coherence	Experimental	15	80.10	5.98
	Control	15	66.35	6.84
Writing Quality	Experimental	15	82.50	6.10
	Control	15	68.40	7.25

The results of Table (1) shows that students in the experimental group achieved higher mean scores in cohesion ($M = 78.40$), coherence ($M = 80.10$), and writing quality ($M = 82.50$) compared to the control group. This indicates that incorporating instruction in cohesion and coherence contributed positively to writing development. To determine whether the observed differences were statistically significant, independent samples t-tests were conducted. The results are shown in table (2).

Table (2) Sig

Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Experimental and Control Groups

Domain	Variable	T	DF	Sig	Mean difference
	Cohesion	5.42	28	.001	13.20
	Coherence	5.87		.001	13.75
	Writing Quality	5.91		.001	14.10

The results in Table (2) show statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in cohesion, coherence, and overall writing quality which is less than (0.05).). The experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in all measured variables. These findings indicate that instruction based on cohesion and coherence theory had a significant positive impact on students' writing performance. To examine improvement within the experimental group, paired samples t-tests were conducted comparing pre-test and post-test scores in Table (3).

Results of the second question: To examine the second question. *What types of cohesive devices are most and least frequently used by students? A*

paired samples t-Test for Experimental Group are conducted. The results are shown in table (3).

Table (3)

Paired Samples t-Test for Experimental Group (Pre-test vs. Post-test)

Variable	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	t	Sig.
Cohesion	66.30	78.40	6.11	.001
Coherence	67.10	80.10	6.45	.001
Writing Quality	69.00	82.50	6.72	.001

The results reveal statistically significant improvements in cohesion, coherence, and overall writing quality after the instructional intervention is high. The increase in post-test means confirms that explicit teaching of cohesive devices and discourse organization significantly enhanced students' writing abilities. To investigate whether writing quality differed according to levels of cohesion use (low, moderate, high), a one-way ANOVA was conducted.

Results of the third question: To investigate the third question. *How does the use of cohesion and coherence affect the overall quality of students' writing?* A One-Way Anova and Independent Samples t-Test based on Gender were conducted in Table (4) and Table (5).

Table (4)

One-Way ANOVA for Writing Quality According to Cohesion Level

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	742.60	2	371.30	9.84	.001
Within Groups	1019.40	27	37.75		
Total	1762.00	29			

The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference in writing quality based on levels of cohesion use ($F(2,27) = 9.84$, which is less than (0.05). Students demonstrating higher levels of cohesive device use achieved significantly better writing quality scores. This confirms the strong relationship between cohesion and writing quality. An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether gender influenced cohesion, coherence, or writing quality.

Table (5)

Independent Samples t-Test According to Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	t	Sig.
Cohesion	Male	13	72.10	1.24	.224
	Female	17	75.60		
Coherence	Male	13	73.40	1.31	.198
	Female	17	77.20		
Writing Quality	Male	13	74.80	1.42	.166
	Female	17	78.30		

The results indicate no statistically significant differences between male and female students in cohesion, coherence, or writing quality is less than (0.05). Although female students showed slightly higher mean scores, the differences were not statistically significant. Therefore, gender did not significantly influence students' writing development in this experimental study.

The findings indicate that explicit instruction in cohesion and coherence significantly enhanced students' writing quality. The experimental group outperformed the control group, with clear pre- to post-test improvement. Cohesion significantly predicted writing quality, whereas gender had no significant effect. Overall, the results support integrating discourse-based instruction into academic writing courses.

Discussion:

This study highlights the critical role of cohesion and coherence in EFL/ESL writing. Cohesion, achieved through grammatical and lexical devices, connects sentences and ensures that ideas are linked explicitly, while coherence provides the logical and conceptual unity that allows readers to interpret the text meaningfully. Analysis of students' writing reveals that many learners overuse certain cohesive devices, such as reference and lexical repetition, while underusing others like substitution or ellipsis, which can disrupt the flow and clarity of their texts.

The findings align with previous research showing that improper or excessive use of cohesive ties can negatively affect writing quality (Zhang, 2000; Chen, 2008). Conversely, balanced and contextually appropriate use of cohesive devices enhances readability and overall text quality (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Taboada, 2004). Coherence depends not only on linguistic

connections but also on the writer's ability to organize ideas logically and consider the reader's background knowledge.

Pedagogically, the study emphasizes the importance of explicit teaching of cohesion and coherence. Scaffolded writing tasks, model text analysis, peer review, and feedback help learners develop both grammatical and conceptual awareness of text organization. Encouraging students to focus on thematic progression and logical sequencing of ideas can improve their ability to produce cohesive and coherent texts.

Overall, the study confirms that cohesion and coherence are interdependent elements of effective writing. While cohesion provides the structural links between sentences, coherence ensures that these links contribute to meaningful and comprehensible communication. Integrating instruction on both aspects can enhance learners' writing skills and support the development of communicative competence.

Pedagogical Implications:

Understanding cohesion and coherence has significant pedagogical implications for teaching writing. Explicit instruction, model text analysis, and scaffolded practice enable students to recognize and use cohesive devices effectively while constructing unified and meaningful texts. Teachers can guide learners by analyzing sample texts, discussing their social and cultural context, and highlighting rhetorical moves, before having students draft, revise, and peer-review their own writing. Focusing on information flow and thematic progression helps students connect ideas smoothly between sentences. Tailored feedback based on students' weaknesses, along with opportunities to write various types of texts, fosters attention to grammatical, syntactic, and semantic relationships, ultimately enhancing overall writing quality and promoting independent, coherent text production.

Conclusion:

In closing, cohesion has an effect on both the quality of writing either by upgrading of the frequency of some cohesive ties or by reducing others. Zhang (2000) indicates that overusing cohesive ties has adverse effects on the quality of writing. Hence, it is obvious that giving guided instruction about the way cohesion should be used and increasing some items and decreasing the use of others positively affects the quality of writing since

the teacher instructed students that they should decrease the reference items and total reiteration of the same item. Therefore, the assumptions of discourse analysis are very important not only for understanding written discourse patterns and the conditions of their production, but also for a critical assessment of understanding cultural situation.

Conceptual Limitations:

This study primarily relies on the cohesion framework developed by M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976), which emphasizes surface-level textual ties. While this approach provides a systematic analysis of cohesion, it offers a comparatively limited treatment of coherence as a cognitive and interpretive process. Alternative perspectives, such as Schema Theory (David Rumelhart, 1980), Reader-Response Theory (Louise Rosenblatt, 1995), cognitive models of discourse processing (Walter Kintsch, 1998), and Rhetorical Structure Theory (William Mann & Sandra Thompson, 1988) highlight dimensions of reader interpretation and discourse organization that are not fully explored in this study.

Additionally, the theoretical orientation remains largely grounded in classical cohesion theory, with limited integration of more recent discourse, genre, and multimodal perspectives. The empirical synthesis is also primarily descriptive, offering limited critical comparison of methodological, cultural, and genre-based variations. These conceptual boundaries may restrict the broader applicability of the findings to diverse EFL/ESL writing contexts.

Recommendations:

To improve cohesion and coherence in EFL/ESL writing, teachers should provide explicit instruction on these concepts, illustrating the use of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices. Instruction should adopt a discourse-based approach, emphasizing thematic progression, information flow, and logical organization through analysis of model texts. Students should be guided to use cohesive devices appropriately while avoiding overuse, and scaffolded writing practices—including brainstorming, drafting, peer review, and revision—should support the gradual development of independent writing skills. Targeted exercises on cohesive devices and regular practice across different text types can enhance both linguistic competence and discourse awareness. Incorporating peer review

and constructive feedback is essential, and further research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of instructional strategies on writing quality.

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