Cohesion in Written Discourse: A Case Study of Arab EFL Students

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Abstract
This study analyses cohesion and coherence in selected discourses written by advanced learners in the Department of English at Najran University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A case study of Master Degree (M A) students in the female section of Najran University English Department discovers a number of results that show that writing is still a great difficulty for them even at a relatively higher level of education. They show weakness in logical thought and organizational pattern. They lack the fundamental knowledge of the rules of syntax, inter-sentence relations, cohesive devices and other advanced methods of composition. The study is expected to help L2 Saudi teachers to address the problems of cohesion and coherence at discourse level and take pedagogical precautions to prevent them. The study follows content analysis method.

*Keywords***:** cohesive devices, cohesion errors, discourse analysis, lexis, organization

Introduction

Writing is a spontaneous process combining thoughts and techniques simultaneously. The proper organization of thoughts in writing leads ideas from one sentence to another and from one paragraph to the next logically and coherently. It is a skill in which we produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways. It involves manipulating, structuring and communicating seemingly disconnected ideas into an organized whole. English language students are carefully taught these mechanics of writing right from elementary to advanced levels.

Just as visual art needs content, concept and style to produce a piece of unified drawing or painting that beams aesthetic beauty, so does a piece of writing to convey a coherent meaning by integrating lexis into discourse. And the most important catalyst in discourse is cohesion. It combines content, concept and style to produce an effective piece of composition.

The basic unit of a composition is paragraph. Again, a paragraph is a group of related sentences dealing with a central idea. An ideal paragraph has a well knitted structure: topic sentence, body and conclusion. Usually, a paragraph begins with a topic sentence. It contains the subject matter as well as the attitude of the paragraph. For example, "Mr X is a teacher" does not make a topic sentence, because it is a statement of fact. It does not express any attitude, and as such, does not call for further explanation. But if we say "Mr X is an ideal teacher", immediately we need to explain why he is "ideal". So a topic sentence should have both a subject and an attitude. The body of the paragraph explains, supports and expands the topic sentence. No irrelevant ideas or information can be inserted in the body of the paragraph. The concluding sentence brings the paragraph to a logical end.

There is a close connection between the structures of a paragraph and a composition. Just as the paragraph has a topic sentence to introduce the main idea, in the same way, a composition has a topic paragraph to introduce its central focus. Secondly, in a paragraph the sentences in the middle serve the purpose of expanding or developing the main idea. Similarly, the middle part of the composition supports and expands the topic paragraph. There is a concluding sentence in a paragraph to bring the ideas to a logical conclusion. In the same way, in a composition there is a concluding paragraph to summarize all the ideas developed in the middle and bring them to a logical end. It is to be noted that for a successful composition, the number of the middle paragraphs should ideally equal the number of supporting sentences selected in the topic paragraph---neither more, nor fewer. Moreover, the developers in the paragraph or the composition should be connected by different cohesive devices so that ideas smoothly pass from one sentence to another or one paragraph to the next. Any abrupt breach of ideas will destroy the inherent beauty and symmetry of the discourse---an essential component of cohesion.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics by Matthews (1997) defines cohesion in term of syntactic unit (Sentence). A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics by David Crystal (1997) defines cohesion in terms of a grammatical unit (words). Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that the concept of cohesion is a semantic one. For them it refers to relation of meaning that exists within text, gives the text texture and defines the text as text.

Thus, writing a free composition involves combining lexis into text that produces meaningful communication. Heaton (1988, p. 135) emphasizes that writing skills require mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual abilities. He divides cohesion skills in four groups: language use, mechanical skills, judgment skills, and stylistic skills. While the use of language involves the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences, mechanical skills help to combine those isolated sentences into an organic whole. Judgment skills mean the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information. Thus a piece of writing is constructed in such a way that one sentence leads naturally to the next and there should be a regular progression of thought.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) emphasize intimate inter-sentential relationships, which distinguish a text from a sequence of isolated sentences. According to them, cohesion refers to the intra-textual relations of the grammatical and lexical items that make the parts of the text together as a whole to convey the complete meaning of it. Therefore an interconnection of different cohesive devices is essential to produce a cohesive piece of writing. Halliday & Hasan (1976) describe text connectedness in terms of reference, substitution, ellipses, conjunction and lexical cohesion. According to these authors, these explicit clues make a text a text (1976:13). Cohesion occurs "when the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another"(1976:14).

Therefore, one of the main objectives of this study is to focus on the attitude and organizational problems that Arab students encounter while composing their essays in English. An investigation into students' written work will provide a means to help L2 teachers in KSA to recognize the importance of the mechanics of writing as one of the challenging areas in teaching discourse.

Literature Review

A great deal of empirical studies has been conducted by researchers to see the use of cohesive devices in students' writing. However, little has been done to find out the problems of attitudes and organization in the field of discourse. So here is a brief survey of researches done in this area to justify the feasibility and validity of the present work.

Neuner (1987) conducted an analysis of twenty good essays versus twenty poor essays written by college first year students. The essays were randomly selected from a pool of 600 essays on the topic "write a letter giving advice to students at school." Two readers from a panel of twelve holistically evaluated each essay using a four-point scale. Three independent coders conducted analysis on the essays after instruction and practice. Finally, the results revealed that the frequency or percentage of cohesive ties did not show any significant differences between well- written and poor essays. Another researcher, Khalil (1989), investigated the relationship between cohesion and coherence in 20 compositions in Arab EFL students' college writing. The relationship of cohesion and coherence was tested by the use of multiple correlation statistics. Finally, a weak correlation (r=0.18) was found between the number of cohesive ties and coherence score of the text. Another researcher was Jonson (1992), who examined cohesion in expository essays written in Malay and in English by native speakers of both languages. Sample compositions evaluated holistically as good or weak in quality were submitted by Malaysian

teachers of composition in Malay and by American teachers of native and non-native speakers of English. The results revealed no differences in the amount of cohesion between good and weak compositions written in Malay by native speakers (20 persons) or in English by native (20 persons) and Malay speakers (20 persons). His empirical study on cohesion in written discourse of native and non-native speakers of English also indicated that judgments of writing quality may depend on overall coherence in content, organization, and style rather than on the quantity of cohesion.

Tonder and Louise (1999), in their study, investigated the relationship between amount of lexical cohesion and lexical errors on one hand and the perceived coherence ratings and academic scores of student academic writing on the other. Findings indicated that the amount of lexical cohesion showed highly significant relations with the coherence ratings. Furthermore, the results reported in the studies reviewed indicate that the relationship between writing quality or textual coherence and cohesive device use has not been concretely established. However, there are studies in which opposite results were reported. For example, Zhang (2000) conducted a study to examine the use of cohesive devices in the writing of Chinese undergraduate EFL students. He asked 107 students of two different universities to participate in his study. The results indicated that no satisfactory relationship exists between the frequency of cohesive ties used and the quality of writing. On the other hand, most of the researchers have found that there is no significant relationship between the quantity of cohesive devices used and the quality of writing.

Ezza (2004) thinks that EFL students' writing problems, especially those relevant to cohesion and coherence, might be caused by employing outdated approaches and resources for teaching writing, especially in the Arab world. Consequently, he applied a content analysis to existing writing courses in three Arab Universities and reached the conclusion that English Departments adopted approaches and materials characteristic of the 1940s and 1950s. Thus, he recommends incorporating the new developments of the linguistic and writing theories into the writing syllabus.

Affected by Halliday and Hasan's indication that cohesion is in effect a linguistic property in relation to textual features, Achili (2007) believes that ESL/EFL novice learners tend to rely heavily on cohesive devices, as a consequence of their teachers' emphasis, to link their ideas while they neglect other discourse features. She conducted an experiment that included two groups, control and experimental, from the second year students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages in University of Mentouri, Constantine. A pre-test and post-test were administered and the results confirmed that the proposed method of teaching coherence helped the experimental group improve, especially in the areas with which the participants were found to have most problems.

From the above brief literature review we can conclude that most of the researchers have concentrated on the presence or absence of cohesion devices in written discourse. None of them has examined the learners' ability in generating and organizing ideas and developing these ideas into readable text logically and coherently. Therefore, the present research is concerned with such an investigation into some selected compositions written by some advanced learners of

Applied Linguistics. It focuses more on mechanics and organization of in written discourse than on sentence-level error correction or small-scale grammatical deviations.

Methodology

The participants in the present study are selected from the Department of English, Najran University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The medium of their undergraduate education was English. They share a homogeneous mother tongue, and their background and prior education lend a touch of homogeneity to the group. The students are supposed to use English both inside and outside the classroom. The socio-economic position of this group can be considered high by Saudi Arabian standard. Data was collected from these students so as to make this discourse oriented analysis meaningful.

The number of the participants is eight . Although the sample size is small, hopefully it would be representative for Arab learners as a whole for the reason that the selection includes only the advanced learners, i, e, the newly appointed Teaching Assistants of English Department who are doing their M A in Applied Linguistics.

The study was conducted utilizing writing compositions only. The students were asked to write a free composition based on some techniques they learnt in their undergraduate studies. The test was conducted during a two-hour class session under the supervision of the class teacher concerned. The titles of the compositions were: a) Qualities of a Good Citizen (composition development by "listing", b) Islam and Christianity (Composition development by "comparison and contrast", and c) Global Warming (Composition development by "definition" or "Cause and effect"). The learners are already familiar with all these "techniques" of composition writing, avoiding complicated, unfamiliar patterns. Samples were collected in the months of Feb-March 2015, from Department of English, Najran University, KSA**.**

Analysis and discussion:

The analysis mainly and primarily focuses on organization of thought and mechanics of writing discourse in accordance with the texts usually prescribed for the students in their undergraduate education. These texts include: Interactions 1, 2 Gold Edition (2012) written by Tanaka and Baker. Both these are published by McGraw Hill, UK. Other reference books are From Paragraph to Essay: Developing Composition Writing, Longman, 1975, written by Maurice Imhoof and Herman Hudson, Writing Power 1 by Karen Blanchard , Sue Pteterson and Dorothy E Zemach and Academic Writing: From Paragraph to Essay by Dorothy E Zemach Lisa and A Rumisek. These books meticulously teach students the structures of ideal paragraphs and developing paragraphs into long, consistent and coherent compositions. Taking the instructions of these prescribed books as general standards for composition writing, we will evaluate the samples under investigation. To begin with, we will analyze the introductory paragraphs of all the 8 samples to show whether these topic paragraphs are written in the light of their knowledge the learners gathered at undergraduate level.

Composition sample 1: Introductory paragraph

A Good Citizen

The qualities that people should have in order to be considered good citizens are really ambiguous to some extent. There have been many controversies regarding this topic. It's a kind of privilage for the society to have good citizens.

This introductory paragraph is remarkably free from grammatical mistakes except one concerned with spelling ("privilage"). The discourse also begins with its title placed at the middle position of the upper margin. The opening sentence is also dented. However, the introduction shows weakness both in techniques and cohesion. The topic sentence does not focus on either the subject matter or the attitude expressed by the title. Consequently, there are no developers in the body of the introduction and, as such, no satisfactory concluding sentence. Therefore, any logical development of the composition is difficult. The introduction is poorly written and does not follow any standard rules of paragraph writing.

Composition sample 2: Introductory paragraph

Good citizen is a blessing to society. The good citizen is the person who certain duties and responsibilities along with rights. While he has all rights to participate in political, legal, social, economic and religious affairs of the country. He has the responsibility to have respect for the culture and heritage of the country.

This introductory paragraph suffers both grammatical and cohesive errors. The word "citizen" is a count noun which should have a determiner before it (like "a"). Secondly, the second sentence does not have a finite verb, and as such, grammatically incorrect. And finally, the third sentence is also unacceptable as it does not have any main clause. On the other hand, there is no organizational pattern in the paragraph. There is no topic sentence, and it does not speak anything about the "duties and responsibilities" of a good citizen except that in the last sentence the writer mentions "to have respect for the culture and heritage of the country." There is no concluding sentence either. The paragraph is also devoid of its title. Therefore it may me noted that this "introduction" of the composition lacks both ideas and method of an ideal discourse.

Composition sample 3: Introductory paragraph

Every country has a certain number of population. People who live in different countries reflect a good or bad image of their countries. In fact, a good citizen has a number of characteristics, however, these qualities differ from those which existed in the previous periods. For example, the good citizen used to be one who help others, obey his parents, practice his religion and depend on himself. On the other hand, a good citizen is now seen in a different way. For example, a good citizen is one who loves for the environment and pursue his studies so that he can serve the community in which he or she lives.

Although this introductory paragraph seems to focus on the "characteristics" of the population of a country, if not on their "duties", the author veers away from this idea of the topic sentence and makes the introduction a "contrast paragraph" by showing some differences of characteristics of the citizens of the past and the present time. The introduction does not show any logical development of the central idea of the composition, nor does it indicate any pattern in the organization of thought. It does not have a concluding sentence either to bring the ideas to a logical conclusion. So it may be said that the introductory paragraph of the composition under investigation does not meet the rules of a standard paragraph. Moreover, there are also grammatical errors. The third sentence shows punctuation errors and as such makes it an unacceptable grammatical unit. There is no subject-verb agreement in fourth sentence: "the good citizen… who <u>help</u> others … <u>obey</u> his parents … <u>practice</u> his religion … <u>depend</u> on himself". The same type of errors continues in the last sentence. This "Introduction" is also devoid of its title.

Composition sample 4: Introductory paragraph

A citizen is the member of various social groups in a society. For any community, having good citizens is a great blessing. Certainly, good citizenship needs to fullfill many qualities or personal traits such as honesty, patriotism, responsibility, self-respect and others.

Although this introductory paragraph seems to center around the main idea suggested by the title (which it lacks), it does not systematically develop that idea through logically written developers. On the other hand, it has bundled up all the different arguments in one last single sentence. As such, it does not have any concluding sentence. The paragraph lacks cohesion, pattern and forward movement. As a result it fails to meet the standard rules of composition writing. Moreover, the author does not mention the title of the composition.

Composition sample 5: Introductory paragraph

Qualities of a Good Citizen
There are about 250 countries on the face of earth. These countries are competing to reach the top in all domains, i. e. counties' governments work to achieve high levels of success in industry, agriculture, commerce, etc. These levels of success depend to a great extent on the citizens of the country, unless they work to achieve tranquility of their country, the government would not be able to reach its goals.

This introductory paragraph seems to focus more on the competition among countries of the world to achieve development in different fields than on the specific responsibilities of the citizens concerned. So there is no proper organization of thought or logical development of the arguments through coherent developers. It does not contain a concluding sentence either. The paragraph suffers both grammatical and spelling mistakes ("counties" instead of "countries" or the last sentence which is a grammatical hotchpotch).

Composition sample 6: Introductory paragraph
<u>Qualities of a good citizen</u>

As known to be a good citizen; there should be a certain positive qualities. Nowadays, with the revolution of special media which considered as a fatal & positive weapon; a lot of malicious roots aim to ruin the citizens' loyality towards his/her country. Therefore, our mission here is to defend our country & and not suspecting our good leaders.

Although this introductory paragraph seems to focus on loyalty of citizens towards their country, it does not expand the qualities leading to that loyalty. So there is no logical development here nor is there any well organized structure of ideas to be focused on. The writer seems to be very poor in written discourse. The opening sentence should have been written in this way: "To be known as/ In order to be a good citizen, one should have certain positive qualities". Such a beginning could have made a very good topic sentence and a very good impression as well. The paragraph also suffers other grammatical mistakes (for example, the second sentence is a grammatical hotchpotch). The writer also seems to lack the proper knowledge of writing the title of a paragraph or composition. Although in all titles the main words except articles, prepositions or short conjunctions begin with capital letters and the title is not underlined, in the above sample, the main words such as 'Good' and 'Citizen' do not begin with capitals and the title itself is underlined. Moreover, the title is underlined. So the introductory paragraph falls short of standard rules of written discourse.

Composition sample 7: Introductory paragraph
<u>Qualities of a good Citizen</u>

Actually, since we are muslims, we are raised on the principles and values of Islam that we have to follow in all aspects of our lives. One of the most important values is the faithfulness and loyalty towards your country and homeland. This is what we call citizenship.

Although the writer mentions in her topic sentence" the principles and values of Islam" as the qualities of a good citizen, she does not elaborate on the specific qualities and fails to develop the central idea into an organizational pattern. She mentions two qualities in one sentence, which are in fact, one. So the writing is immature and the writer shows a lack of knowledge of the mechanics of composition writing. Again, there are other mistakes also. The title is not written in the acceptable way and the writer should know that the word "Muslim" always takes a capital letter.

Composition sample 8: Introductory paragraph

Global Warming

Global warming is increasingly getting attention of individuals and governments. According to many scientists, it occurs mainly as a result of pollution. This phenomenon can be defined as the increase in the average of the temperature. In

recent years, the global climate is going through many changes. Blizzards, tornadoes, and earthquak are now more common than ten years ago. The number of wildfire is growing. Many severe droughts occur everywhere.

This introductory paragraph is written following the technique of "Cause and Effect". The writer has mentioned the cause of global warming and its consequent effects. However, the four effects have been written in two sentences. This is a technical mistake. The writer should have written the four effects in four separate sentences. As such, the paragraph would have total five developers to focus on the five issues. What is disappointing is that this paragraph, like the most others, does not contain a concluding sentence.

In the analyses above, we have observed that all the introductory paragraphs of the sample compositions lack essential characteristics of standard composition writing. They do not have good or effective topic sentences. There are no developers to carry the central ideas forward, and as such, no question of cohesion among sentences. And finally, there are no concluding sentences that bring the arguments to a logical end. Obviously, something is seriously wrong somewhere.

The middle paragraphs of the compositions just follow suit. There is no logical development or organizational pattern. The middle paragraphs have no connection with information provided by the introductory paragraphs. The students have started with one idea and then have veered away into other discussions. There are hardly any concluding paragraphs. The ones given at the end are unsatisfactory, as they hardly contain enough sentences to summarize the middles to bring the compositions to a logical end. It is highly disappointing to see such a miserable failure at discourse level by students of higher level of education.
As already mentioned, there are other grievances as well. The wrong use of reference and collocations and grammatical mistakes also destroy the symmetry and beauty of discourse. The following is an analysis of some of these problems of cohesion in the selected samples.

1. Reference
From the samples, the researcher has randomly highlighted the lapses and loopholes in grammar and cohesion throughout the discourses.
Example-
   (a) Superfluous references---
   1) *Global warming is increasingly getting attention of individuals and governments. According to many scientists, it occurs mainly as a result **of the pollution**. This phenomenon can be defined as the increase in the average **of the temperature.***
This is a superfluous reference, as emphasis is laid more on the words *' pollution'* and *'temperature"* with a definite article 'the' . But the statements here are general, not specific. The correct ones should be, 'According to many scientists, it occurs mainly as a result **of pollution**. This phenomenon can be defined as the increase in the average **of temperature'**.

   2) *An ignorant or a selfish man cannot be a good citizen. If he is timid, he **lacks the courage** to defend any encroachment on his rights. If he is a selfish, he lacks **the generosity** to respect others' comfort.*

This is, again, an example of superfluous reference. The qualities "courage" and "generosity" as used here are general, not specific. So the correct forms of the sentences should be, 'If he is timid, he **lacks courage** to defend any encroachment on his rights. If he is a selfish, he lacks **generosity** to respect others' comfort.

b) **Vague references–**
1)   *Another quality of a good citizen is to stay away from anti-social activities like smuggling. They shouldn't betray* **the country** *or to respect policies and constitution of* **this country**.

Here the phrases **the country** and **this country** seem to show that the writer is talking about a particular country. But there is no mentioning of the name of any country in this paragraph or elsewhere. Therefore, the reference here is vague. The readers are unable to understand which country the writer is talking about. So the writer should have used some other modifiers instead of the definite article "the" or the demonstrative "this". The sentence may be written like---' They shouldn't betray **their country** or to respect policies and constitution of **their country'.**

2)   *It is a race, and as long as a country has good* **citizens that put its tranquility and welfare first,** *… such country will win the race.*

This is the opening sentence of the last paragraph of the composition. A new paragraph should not begin with a pronoun reference, particularly when it is a concluding one. This is because the last paragraph summarizes all the major points of the middle paragraph and brings the central idea to a smooth and logical conclusion. Secondly, the pronoun reference "its" is vague. Does it mean the "country" or the "race"? Of course, it is understood that by "its" the writer wants to mean the country, not race, but the wrong construction of the sentence confuses the pronoun reference. The correct form should be, ' It is a race **for a country**, and as long the good **citizens put its tranquility and welfare first,** … such country will win the race'.

C) *Wrong reference choice–*
1. *As known to be a good citizen; there should be a certain positive qualities. Nowadays, with the revolution of special media which considered as a fatal & positive weapon; a lot of malicious roots aim to ruin the* **citizens'** *loyality towards* **his/her** *country.*

While the possessive "citizens'" is a plural noun, the reference pronoun is singular, his/her. So the correct reference form should be 'a lot of malicious roots aim to ruin the **citizens'** loyality towards **their** country'.

2.   **Inaccurate Collocations**

Example:
1)   *We should as good citizens spread to the outside world* **a great concept** *and* **a nice reputation** *about our lovely country.*

Here "a great concept…about our country" indicates a wrong lexical cohesion. Concept means an idea or a principle that is connected with something abstract. For example, we speak about the concept of social class or the concept of civilization. So the use of 'concept' before a 'country' is a

wrong lexical cohesion. The correct use is: 'a great idea…about our lovely country. Secondly, the word 'nice' does not collocate with abstractions. It means something pleasant, enjoyable or attractive. For example, we say: a nice day/smile/place, etc. Therefore, the expression 'a nice reputation' is a wrong lexical collocation. The right one should be: 'a good reputation'.

2) *They also should be **courage** not only in facing enemies, but also in making decisions in everyday life.*

Here the words 'they should be courage' signify wrong lexical cohesion under deviant collocation. The word 'courage' should be '**courageous'**.

3) *For example, many **Arabic countries** lack skillful individuals in many areas.*

The above sentence shows that the writer does not know the difference between the two adjectives, 'Arab' and 'Arabic'. The adjective 'Arabic' is used in connection with the literature and language of the Arab people. For example, we say 'Arabic poetry', not 'Arab poetry'. On the other hand, the adjective 'Arab' is used in connection with 'Arabia' or 'Arabs'. For example, we say, 'Arab countries' or 'The Arab World' etc.

Thus the sample essays are replete with different cohesion anomalies. These errors are caused by the ignorance of rule-restriction and inappropriate language training of the learners and also partly by lack of proper supervision by their teachers. Errors in lexical items weaken the cohesive force of the discourse and have a disorganizing effect on the unity of discourse. The chart below provides an over-all view of the cohesive, lexical and grammatical errors in the samples. The list, however, is not exhaustive. This list should be a table

Table 1 Types of errors

Error Types	The number of errors	Error %	Comment
Reference	54	18%	
Conjunction	9	3%	
Ellipsis	12	4%	
Substitution	9	3%	
Collocation	27	9%	
Grammar	42	14%	
Syntax	24	8%	
Punctuation	24	8%	
Agreement(SV)	24	8%	
Spelling	75	25%	
Total Items= 10	300	100%	

The table 1 shows that the combined percentage of cohesion anomalies is higher than the individual grammatical and syntactic errors. The findings, therefore, confirm the hypothesis that though the students are fairly competent to handle sentence level grammar, they are weak in dealing with cohesive devices in written discourses.

Conclusion and recommendation

There is no denying that Arab learners' proficiency in English is low. Most of them can hardly write acceptable English even at the sentence level. On the other hand, those who can do that find themselves at a loss when they are asked to write a discourse. And when they write any composition, they simply heap up their sentences in a jumbled way. This fact has been revealed by the sample compositions taken for our investigation and analyzed above. The results indicate the learners' inefficiency at the application of language as well as the basic mechanics of writing. The analysis shows that students are not aware of a clear-cut model of standard written English which they could follow and emulate. Most students even do not know how to differentiate between a well written discourse and a badly organized one. On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made for pedagogical implications.

Since errors in grammar and punctuation can be hard to spot, the learners may read their discourse aloud. This will increase their chances of spotting them and thereby correcting them. In the process, they should concentrate on fragment sentences (incomplete grammatical units), dangling modifiers, run-on sentences, misplaced modifiers, unclear and faulty shifts in pronoun references, inaccurate agreement of subject and verb and faulty tense shifts. If the learners pay attention to these areas of their discourse, it is expected that their writing will largely be free from lexical errors.

The problems of cohesion and coherence may be overcome by using effective transitions between sentences in a paragraph and between paragraphs in a composition. If the paragraphs are well-structured and well written, with a selection of clear-cut ideas to be expanded, it would be easy for learners to write long discourses maintaining logical development, structural organization, and satisfying conclusion.

Emphasis should be given on the identification and rectification of errors causing ambiguity and inappropriateness in the language. This should be done by giving the students ample drilling in the use of these cohesive devices, not in isolation but in the writing of actual discourse, where these features could be isolated first and then incorporated into the total framework of the discourse. The students should be provided with the format, structures, model, and brainstorming activities while teaching discourse writing.

The advent of the new technology in the modern age has assisted L2 instructors and pedagogues to engage learners in several activities to aid language skills (Mohsen, 2016), to adopt some software to track students' errors in writing and to give corrective feedback (Abusaleik & Abualsha'r, 2014; Lee & Lyster, 2016; Yu & Lee, 2016), to use visual aids in multimedia settings (Aldera & Mohsen, 2013; Mohsen & Balakumar; 2011; Mohsen, 2015) and to trigger writing activities in learning management systems (Mohsen & Shafeeq, 2014). Teachers are advised to leverage the rapid advancement of a new technology to help learners identify their errors and receive instant corrective feedback to bridge the comprehension breakdown that L2 learners face during the process of second language acquisition.

Finally, it may be asserted that as the failure in writing in most cases is due to outdated teaching methods and inexperienced teachers with limited discourse knowledge in teaching cohesion and coherence, the academics and education authority concerned should prioritize

professionalism over random selection. Strong motivation on the part of the learners as well as their awareness of the complexities of the writing skills may also substantially contribute to the production of comprehensive and well-organized discourse.

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