Investigating Difficulties Faced by EFL Students in Using Grammatical Cohesion and coherence in Written Discourse

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Abstract

This study investigates the difficulties Faced by EFL Students in Using Grammatical Cohesion and coherence in Written Discourse. It hypothesizes that there are different types of grammatical cohesive ties errors used by Sudanese university students in written discourse and less skilled students use fewer grammatical cohesive ties of a well-written text is one of the main reasons for the bad quality of EFL students' academic writings .

This study aims at investigating types of cohesive ties is used by ELF students in written discourse. It is an attempt to provide facts about coherence and cohesive ties in written discourse. The study method used was the descriptive, qualitative analytic method. The study concludes that these second year students of Sudan have real problems in discourse features (grammatical cohesion ties and coherence) which, as statistically verified, affect their written performance. This has been supported by the results of the first research tool; the test. The statistical analysis for the test respondents' answers reveal that second year students of English language are so poor in writing as they lack the practical experience of these discourse features of cohesion and coherence.

It recommends that There should be free test for the university students before they start writing course to identify how weak are they in using grammatical cohesion ties and coherence. The weak students should attend intensive courses in grammatical cohesion ties, writing, vocabulary, and discourse analysis; according to the points of their

weakness. More systematic assignments on the use of discourse features (cohesion &coherence) should be applied and practiced, until teachers make sure that these students do not have any discourse problem. Teachers should follow the updated theories of text linguistics as well as the modern approaches of teaching writing such as interdisciplinary socialization approaches that teach writing skill at two levels: linguistic level and conceptual level; each according to the genre to which it belongs.

Key words: Grammatical cohesion, coherence, discourse features, writing quality

1. INTRODUCTION

Cohesion is a crucial feature to be used in writing. The text is a unit of the language in use. It is not only a grammatical unit but also a semantic one. Cohesion is a semantic concept, "it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text" (Halliday and Hassan 1976). It is expressed through the grammar and vocabulary. Cohesion features are the properties that distinguish a text from a disconnected sequence of sentences.

   Kroll (2003) stated that writing involved 'process theory' and 'the composing process' , where many felt that the focus of the writing course in writing process was a theoretical development when it was first popularized and. However, a more precise statement was the process insights enhanced the methodological breakthrough in terms of the teaching of writing. Also he believed that every writer either from the beginner until the professional writer, engage in some processes in completing a given writing task. Moreover, most writing teachers probably agree that by lengthening a single piece of writing, it will contribute most towards the expansion of the students' writing skills. In addition, according to McNamara, Crossley and McCarthy (2010), writing is well produces a substantial challenge for students and crucial importance for achievement in an extensive diversity of circumstances and profession. Aligned with this view, Crowhurst (1990) also stated that in order to communicate convincingly with others at large such as peers, colleagues, coworkers, teachers and

community, effective writing is apparently crucial. In discourse research, text processing always has a noticeable status, and researchers are interested in the textual cohesion's mechanism where they formed hypotheses of the possibility of coherence in the reader's mind (Yeh, 2004).

In contrast, in terms of textual coherence, Carrel (1982) claimed that text cohesion is not necessarily a written property manifested by grammatical or lexical connective ties, but cohesion is an outcome of coherence where the readers are able to connect ideas from their schemata. She proposed that in teaching writing and composition in second language cohesive ties should only act as secondary part to instruction in terms of organization of the flows of ideas in text. This is due to her view, where she mentioned on how the explicit cohesive ties should not be relied on in unifying the text's idea when the readers have the ability to connect the text's idea without relying to it. According to Thompson (2001), the audience awareness in writing is affected by the organization of text and the signal of the organization. Based on his view, a text can be a record of dialogue between the writer and the reader. It involves an attempt made by the writer in guessing the expected information by the readers in certain point at unfolding text, and proceeds with their expected questions towards the written text. Aligned with Thompson's (2001) idea regarding the relationship between the writer and the reader, McNamara, et. Al (2010) also have the same view where they believed that the writer's aim in conveying the thesis of composition should be aided by the cohesion which either across or within the text. Based on the previous studies reviewed by them, they found that many assumed that in order for the text to communicate successfully the writer's envisioned message to the reader, the essential condition involved a cohesive text. In relation to cohesion in writing, Tanskanen (2006) referred it as the grammatical and lexical elements which connect between parts of the text on its surface which has no commonly exclusive than coherence although they are separated. Tanskanen (2006) referred coherence as an outcome of a dialogue between the reader and the text which does not reside in the text. Thus, it is concluded that cohesion also contributes to coherence, as it is one of the ways in signaling the coherence in the text. According to

Morris, Beghtol and hirst (2003), readers' understanding is related with the relationship between words when they read the text. Similarly, McNamara, et. Al (2010) also stated that in terms of the reading understanding, cohesion is crucial for its ease, but however it depends on the needs of the readers whether the facilitation benefits them. But on the other hand, they also asserted that the relationship between writing and cohesion has just a little understanding. Hoey (1991) stated that There are three main categories of cohesion which are referential cohesion, relational cohesion and lexical cohesion. Although cohesion involves both grammatical and lexical elements as mentioned previously by Tanskanen (2006), however, for the purpose of this present study, the entire focus will be only on discourse features (grammatical cohesion and coherence) in written discourse.

Tanskanen (2006) agreed with this view, as cohesive devices prompt the successful interpretation of message to the receiver, whether there is a close link between knowledge structures and cohesion. Thus, the purpose of this research is to investigate the use of grammatical cohesion and coherence among EFL students in written discourse. Henceforth, the objectives of this research are to discover that the types of grammatical cohesion that students are used in their written discourse. In addition, this research is also made to identify how the students use the grammatical cohesion and coherence in their written discourse.

The aim of this paper is to explore the significance of mastering (discourse features (cohesion and coherence) in written texts at Sudan University of science and Technology, College of languages .The study describes the processes of cohesion and coherence and the participatory aspect of the students.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Writing is the most complex skill to master in EFL context. EFL learners face serious problems when they write. They are not aware of the mechanics of coherence and cohesion, besides they face problems in the generating and organizing ideas. The problems can be attributed to the fact that students in schools are not well-trained in English writing. Teacher at schools focus on the sentence level more than the discourse level and so they do not emphasize such cohesive

devices. Cohesion and coherence are considered as the two important features of good writing. Thus more attention should be paid in creating and organizing ideas in general and to the role of grammatical cohesive devices particularly.

1.2 Research Questions

This study is set out to answer the following questions:

1. 1. What types of grammatical cohesive ties do Sudanese second-year University students EFL misuse in their writings?
2. 2. What is the respective effectiveness of coherence on the evaluation of the overall quality of students' written texts?

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

This study sets out to test the following hypotheses:

1. There are different types of grammatical cohesive ties misused by EFL students in written discourse.

2. Less skilled students misuse coherence of a well-written text is one of the main reasons for the bad quality of EFL students' written texts.

1.4 Objectives of the Research

This study sets out to achieve the following objectives:

1. It is an attempt to investigate types of cohesive ties misused by ELF students in written discourse.

2. It an attempt to provide facts about coherence and cohesive ties in written discourse.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Language learners are able to apply a variety of conjunctive devices to bridge the previous and following sentence (s) both to make their writing more clear, orderly, and logical and to make their writings semantically, pragmatically, and grammatically well formed. This study will make an important contribution to a basic issue in educational research, as it will provide a description of grammatical cohesive ties and coherence used in written discourse by students

majoring in English at Sudan University of science and technology-College of languages. It is expected that the study might help to determine the relation between the use of grammatical cohesive ties and the quality of writing. An understanding of students' use of cohesive devices can help providing the way for preparation of writing course materials and upgrading of teaching and learning process to suit the learners of English language EFL in Sudan.

1.6 Research Methodology

The researcher has adopted the descriptive analytical methods. one instrument have been used for collecting data relevant the study, namely written diagnostic test was given to students of English (second year) so as to reveal the problematic areas.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

This study was limited to investigate difficulties faced EFL students in using grammatical cohesive ties and coherence in written discourse. It hoped that will tentatively cover the academic year from (2018-2019). It was conducted at Sudan University of science and Technology, College of languages, and study sample was exclusively drawn from second year students of English.

2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of cohesion and coherence

Cohesion may be defined as the way in which a sentence is connected to its predecessors in a passage by means of some lexical items and grammatical features; it refers to the elements on the surface level of text that connect its parts and help it form a unified whole. For Halliday & Hasan (1976) it is achieved "when the interpretation of some element in discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it" (p. 4). They believe that the relation between these elements is semantic and not only syntactic.

Cohesion covers units beyond the sentence level, which form the basis for discourse studies. For Halliday & Hasan the semantic and syntactic links between pairs of elements in text are the major

contributors to the text's unity. Yet, to analyze cohesion in a text, the researcher should take into consideration the text itself, the pragmatic relations in it, and its purpose, because as Cox, Shanahan, and Sulzby (1990) indicate, cohesion analysis cannot accurately account for text coherence, if it is not related to text-dependent pragmatic relations that depend on the purpose of the text.

The following section presents Halliday & Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesive ties, which constitute the starting point of many other taxonomies.

2.2 Cohesive ties

Halliday & Hasan (1976) introduced a taxonomy of cohesive devices which is divided into two categories; grammatical and lexical. Grammatical cohesive devices include reference (pronominal and demonstrative, comparative, and the definite article "the"); ellipsis (the omission of words previously mentioned in the text); and conjunctive cohesive ties, which bring together whole messages (Hasan 1984). *Reference:* It is a semantic relation between two elements in text, one of which depends for its interpretation on the other. Two types of reference may be distinguished: exhophoric reference and endophoric reference. Exhophoric reference, which is also known as "situational reference," occurs when the thing referred to is a situation outside the text. Endophoric reference occurs between two elements in a text, when the meaning of one item referred to depends for its meaning on the meaning of the other item referred to. Halliday & Hasan consider only this item as cohesive since it contributes to "the integration of one passage with another so that the two together form the part of the same text" (p. 37). This type of reference is the focus of Halliday & Hasan's work. It encompasses three types: pronominal, demonstrative, and comparative. *Pronominal Reference:* It includes personal pronouns, possessive determiners, or possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns. *Demonstrative Reference:* Its function is to locate the referent for identification. It is either circumstantial (here, there, now, then) or nominal (this, these, that, those and the). *Comparative Reference:* Two types of comparison are distinguished: general or deictic and particular comparison. General or deictic comparison expresses identity (same, equal,

identical), similarity (such similar, so similar, likewise), or difference (other different else, differently, otherwise). The second type, particular comparison expresses quality and quantity, using adjectives and adverbs. *Substitution:* It takes place when one linguistic item is replaced by another. It is considered a relation among words and phrases rather than a relation of meaning. There are three types of substitution which are defined grammatically: nominal, verbal, and clausal. *Ellipsis:* Ellipsis is defined as "substitution by zero" (p. 142). It takes place when one element in a text, which is structurally necessary, is omitted, and is understood from the context. Like substitution, ellipsis entails three types: nominal, verbal and clausal. *Conjunctions:* A cohesive devise that guarantees the link between two linguistic elements; one is followed by the other. It is a grammatical relation that is subcategorized into four types: additives (and, also, moreover …), adversatives (yet, though, but, however …), causal (so, then, hence, because …), and temporal (then, next, after that …). The role of cohesive ties resides in connecting propositions in a text. They are used differently in oral and written communication. In oral texts, the referent may be absent and may be substituted for by the use of some external aids like gestures. These external aids, however, are not available in written texts. Consequently, in written texts the referent should be explicit.

2.3 Coherence

Coherence may be defined as a quality in text that enables the reader to make sense of it thanks to its organization according to some model of development. It refers to "those underlying semantic relations that allow a text to be understood and used" (Witte &Faigley, 1981, p. 22). It is a complex concept, which has been subject to controversy among discourse analysts. Accordingly, two approaches to the term are distinguished, namely text-based and reader-based coherence.

2.4 Textual coherence

Coherence, according to the text-based approach, refers to the semantic unity of text that is achieved by means of cohesive ties (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). In other words, it is defined in terms of the linguistic features in a text that distinguish it from a cluster of

sentences. Halliday & Hasan use the word "texture" to refer to coherence. They state that "If a passage of English containing more than one sentence is perceived as a text, there will be certain linguistic features present in that passage which can be identified as contributing to its total unity and giving it texture" (p. 2).

Halliday &Hasan (1976) define coherence as a property of text that distinguishes it from a non-text. It is achieved through linguistic features that contribute to the text's unity. These linguistic features are the cohesive ties. A key word in the definition is "unity." Coherence for Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Hasan (1984) is the property of unity, meaning that a text may be regarded as coherent when its parts hang together. For example, the sentence "The cow jumped over the moon" is considered coherent although it may not make sense, because as Hasan points out, "nonsense need not necessarily be incoherent" (1984, p.183). So, the coherence of the sentence is accounted for by non-structural relations, which make textual coherence a relative phenomenon and not a none-or-all one. That is, texts may be ranked from the most coherent to the least coherent.

This linguistic or textual analysis of coherence accounts for the text's comprehension, which is achieved by means of the functions the different text features demonstrate. However, Halliday & Hasan do not claim that cohesion analysis is enough to distinguish between good texts and bad texts, effective texts and ineffective ones. They believe that it's necessary to take into consideration the related concept of register, which refers to the non-textual, contextual information that the reader makes use of to understand a text.

The approach has two main assumptions. The first is that the number of cohesive ties in a text is sufficient to account for the coherence and comprehension of the text. The second is that these cohesive ties facilitate comprehension in the sense that they minimize the cognitive effort required of the reader to establish relationships among the propositions and their functions. Tierney and Mosental (1984) consider these assumptions as flawed because the cohesive ties may not be explicit or may be used ambiguously.

Problems with the linguistic approach to coherence are also discussed in Maat (1998). He considers that the choice of the

connections to be under analysis needs to be motivated, which is not a simple matter. For him, the approach naively assumes that the examination of connectives can be done spontaneously. Also, he sees it as being too reliant on the analyst's intuition. Yet, its focus on lexical choices to account for coherence relations provides a criterion for assessing the importance of relational distinctions.

The linguistic approach has also been criticized by many other researchers who think that coherence is achieved through the relationships among sentences and ideas in a text, both contributing to its rhetorical unity. Thus, analyzing the underlying propositional units in a text is more revealing than looking for cohesive ties. For a text to be coherent it should meet the following criteria: cohesion, organization (the orderly, systematic presentation of information) and register, which refers to situational consistency (Moe, 1979, p.18). In this respect, writers should present information in a well-organized way, and use the appropriate cohesive ties to create coherent texts and facilitate comprehension. This linguistic approach to coherence has a decisive advantage, according to Pander Maat (1998), which resides in its focus on the lexical possibilities offered by languages to distinguish among existing coherence relations.

3- METHODOLOGY

3.1Introduction

In this chapter a report of the methodology of the researcher is given. It particularly comprises the data collection, the subject of the research and techniques utilized in the analysis of the data collected.

3.2 Data collection:

The research study has designed to assess the knowledge of grammatical cohesive ties in written discourse of EFl Universities' students, their written text form the corpus of the basic data. So, the materials for collecting data of the study were originally written answer sheets for examination held in academic year (2018-2019) at Sudan University of science and technology.

The total number of the written text considered in the assessment was 81 mixed subjects. The answer books were randomly

chosen to represent the second year students enrolled in the department of English, faculty of art, Sudan University of science and technology.

As mentioned above, the data of this study has been elicited through ready –made materials , namely answer sheets for the English departments examinations at Sudan University of science and technology.

The rationale for adopting ready-made materials has been on the assumption that students would be more motivated to perform at their best on examination than on a voluntary test .this view has been supported by Seliger and Shohamy (1989)

3.3 The subjects:

There was one group of subjects participating in this study. All the subjects of the study were English language students enrolled in Sudan University of science and technology. all of them were Sudanese, maxed group, they all admitted to their respective university . They can be said to have studied English for eight years (the group aged from 18-19 years). All the subjects were majoring in English and preparing themselves to graduate with a B.A degree in English. While in schools and later in universities, they all practiced composition writing regularly. As the group Sudanese university selected, were all national (governmental), all the subjects can be said to be representatives of Sudan University of science and technology, however, were Arabic native speakers.

3.4 Data analysis:

As mentioned earlier in the (1.1) that the researcher would make sure use of the combination of the two techniques of errors and discourse analysis of English Language, a number of operations were performed on the basis of these two techniques of analysis to deal with discourse features (cohesion and coherence) in the students' written texts, respectively . These operations include : (a) the marking of the subjects' compositions as well as the classification of the discourse features (b) a quantitative analysis of these discourse features .

3.4.1 Discourse features and holistic Quality of writing

With regard to the first research Question which concerns the discourse features most frequently mishandled by EFL Sudanese university students, each of the students' compositions in the group was examined again sentence by sentence for adherence to the cohesive devices and coherence, as the two basic discourse features characterizing a well-written English text. The misuse of grammatical cohesive ties and coherence elements were identified classified according to the rating scale sheet of assessing discourse features designed by Chiang (1999). This discourse trait scale was actually designed by Chiang to assess " the effectiveness and the appropriateness" in the organization of the ideals above the sentence level.

The cohesive devices incorporated into Chiang's rating scale sheet and examined in this study include (a) reference (b) conjunction (c) substitution and ellipsis, whereas coherence elements outlined in the rating scale sheet and examined in this study, include: (a) topic introduction, (b) relevance and relatedness of ideas, (c) development of ideas across the text and (d) topic conclusion.

However, all the cohesion and coherence misuse were identified in each of (81) compositions and then counted to find the frequency of each of them in relation to the total number of discourse features misuses. then, the percentage of each type of cohesion and coherence misuse was calculated in relation to the total number of misuses .finally, the most frequently mishandled discourse features were identified on the basis of their frequencies of misuses.

As for the data analysis concerning the second research question which investigates difficulties faced EFL students in using discourse features on the overall holistic quality of EFL writing, students' compositions were randomly selected as representatives of the group participating in this study. These students' compositions were handed over to two of the English language lecturers in universities, each of who with an M.A degree in English, so as to rate and assess them analytically. They were asked to do that with respect to discourse features = cohesion and coherence – and holistic quality of the students' written performance. Each of the discourse features and holistic quality of the students' written performance as well as

assessed separately by the two raters and then inter-rated by the researcher. The discourse features were assessed with respect to the elements in the rating scale sheet mentioned above. This rating scale sheet of Chiang was composed of two sub-scales aiming at the two major areas of cohesion and coherence. The rating scale was, however, adapted in this study to fit the assessment of discourse features in that chiang's discourse scale comprises nine features for cohesion and eleven for coherence, whereas the rating scale used in this study comprises only three features for grammatical cohesion and seven features for coherence. these features are organized as follow:

(A)cohesion :

1- The accurate use of reference.

2- the appropriate use of ellipsis and substitutions

3- The correct use of conjunctions.

(B) coherence :

1-the effectiveness of the beginning section in introducing topic.

2-the relevance of the ideas in the composition to overall lecture of the topic.

3- The interrelations of ideas to one another.

4- The clearness of the point of view of the writers.

5- The reasonable of division of the paragraph or the essay in terms of the relevance of ideas.

6- The smooth transition between the sentences within the text.

7- The suitable and sensible conclusion of the topic (appendix (A) for description of Chiang's rating scale).

To assess the overall quality of students' written performance, the two raters were asked to score each composition for its overall quality, using the method of holistic impression. The score raged form ten, as the highest marks, to one, as the lowest mark of the competence in the writing. to carry out the rating process well the researcher had a meeting with the two raters in which he provided them with some clarifications of the meaning of the items of the discourse features outlined on the scale sheet and he answered some questions from the two raters concerning the rating scale and how to apply it to the students' composition.

3.5 Tools

The tool, which was used as a data-collecting method, was a test. It included eight items in order to gain the objectives and aims of the study.

4- DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 The Responses to the Diagnostic Test

The responses to the diagnostic test of the 82 students were tabulated and computed. The following is an analytical interpretation and discussion of the findings regarding different points related to the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Each statement in the test is analyzed statistically and discussed. The following table will support the discussion.

4.2 Statistical Reliability and validity for student's test

The reliability coefficient was calculated for the measurement, which was used in the test using Alpha - Cronbach coefficient Equation as the following:

For calculating the validity and the reliability of the test from the above equation, the researcher distributed the attest to respondents to calculate the reliability coefficient using the Alpha-Cronbach coefficient the results have been showed in the following table

	Reliability	*Validity*	*N*
ALPH – CRONBACH	0.89	0.93	82

Validity = $\sqrt{\text{Reliability}}$.

From the above table its shown that the validity of the test is very high (0.93). this indicate that if we repeat the test we are sure with 93% that it's going to give us the same results

4.3 Discussion of the findings

The items (1 to3) tested students 'misuse of grammatical cohesion ties (reference, ellipsis and substitution and conjunction).The items (4 to

8) tested students' coherence in written discourse. These eight items converted into numbers and tables to facilitate analysis, discussion and interpretation as follows:

4.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table (4.2.1) the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to (reference) part

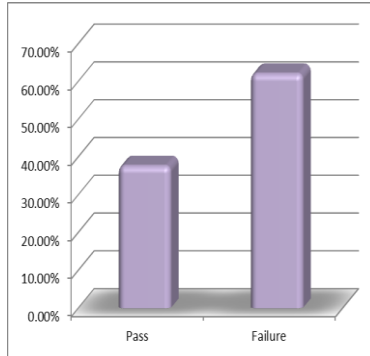| Part (1)	Frequency	Percentage
Pass	21	25.6%
Failure	61	74.4%
Total	82	100%
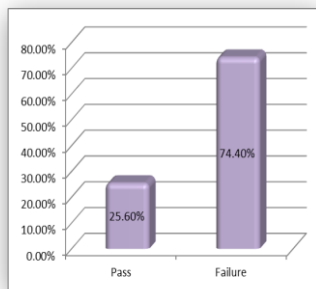
From the above table ( ) it's clear that the number of students who failed to pass the (reference) part of the test is (61) students , with percentage (74.4%%) which is greater than the number of students who passed it (21) students with percentage (25.6%).

Table (4.2.2): the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to the (ellipsis and substitution) part

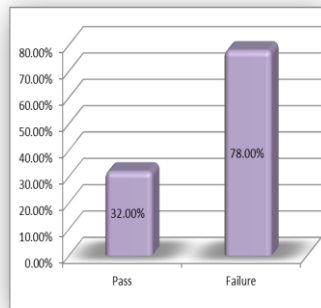| Part (1)	Frequency	Percentage
Pass	31	37.8%
Failure	51	62.2%
Total	82	100%

From the above table (4.2.2) it's clear that the number of students who failed to pass the (ellipsis and substitution) part of the test is (51) students , with percentage (62.2%) which is greater than the number of students who passed it (31) students with percentage (37.8%).

Table (4.2.3): the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to (conjunction) part
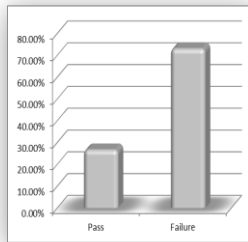
Part (1)	Frequency	Percentage
Pass	18	32.0%
Failure	64	78.0%
Total	82	100%

From the above table (4.2.3) it's clear that the number of students who failed to pass the (conjunction) part of the test is (64) students, with percentage (78.0%) which is greater than the number of students who passed it (18) students with percentage (78.0%).

Table (4.2.4) : the frequency and percentage distribution for the respondents according to the (introduction) part

Part (1)	Frequency	Percentage
Pass	22	26.8%
Failure	60	73.2%
Total	82	100%

From the above table (4.2.4) it's clear that the number of students who failed to pass the (introduction) part of the test is (60) students , with percentage (73.2%) which is greater than the number of students who passed it (22) students with percentage (26.8%).

Table (4.2.5): the frequency and percentage distribution for the respondents in the (relevant of ideas) part

| Part (1)	Frequency	Percentage
Pass	16	19.5%
Failure	66	80.5%
Total	82	100%

From the above table (4.2.5) it's clear that the number of students who failed to pass the (relevant of ideas) part of the test is (66) students , with percentage (80.5%) which is greater than the number of students who passed it (16) students with percentage (19.5%).

Table (4.2.6) : the frequency and percentage distribution for the respondents in the (appropriate use of examples) part

Part (1)	Frequency	Percentage
Pass	30	36.5%
Failure	52	63.4%
Total	82	100%
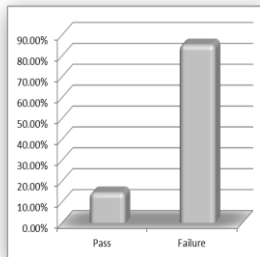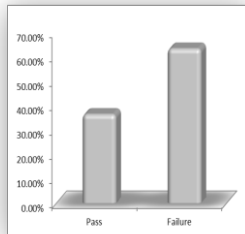
From the above table (4.2.8) it's clear that the number of students who failed to pass the (suitable conclusion of text) part of the test is (70) students, with percentage (85.4%) which is greater than the number of students who passed it (12) students with percentage (14.6%).

HYPOTHESES TESTING BY USING T – TEST

Table (4.2.9) one sample T-TEST for the questions of the study

Questions	N	SD	t-value	DF	p-value
2	82	2.81	17	81	0.00
3	82	2.3	16	81	0.00
For all	82	3.03	15	81	0.00

The calculated value of T – TEST for the significance of the differences for the respondent's answers in the question No (1) was (17) which is greater than the tabulated value of T – TEST at the degree of freedom (81) and the significant value level (0.05%) which was (8.5).   This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (0.05 %) among the answers of the respondents. This means that our second hypothesis is accepted. The calculated value of T – TEST for the significance of the differences for the respondent's answers in the question No (2) was (15) which is greater than the tabulated value of T – TEST at the degree of freedom (81) and the significant value level (0.05%) which was (8.5). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (0.05 %) among the answers of the respondents. This means that our second hypothesis is accepted.

5- CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

5.1Conclusions:

The main findings of the present study which answer the questions investigated can be summarized as follows:

As for the discourse features of grammatical cohesion & coherence, the misuses made by the students of this study in the 81 essays can be summarized as follows:

a-reference has been misused by (61) students with percentage (74.4%).

b- Ellipsis and substitution have been misused by (51) Students with percentage (62.2%).

c- Conjunction has been misused by (64) students with percentage (78.0%).

Findings of coherence as follows:

    a- Introduction has been mishandled by (60) students with percentage (73.2%).

    b- Relevant of ideas has been mishandled by (66) students with percentage (80,5%).

    c- Use of example has been mishandled by (52) students with percentage (63.4%).

    d- Transition between sentences has been mishandled by (63) students with percentage (76.8%).

    e- Suitable conclusion has been mishandled by (70) students with percentage (85.4%).

These results reflect that these second year students of Sudan have real problems in discourse features (grammatical cohesion ties and coherence) which, as statistically verified, affect their written performance. This has been supported by the results of the first research tool; the test. The statistical analysis for the test respondents' answers reveal that second year students of English are so poor in writing as they lack the practical experience of these discourse features of cohesion and coherence.

5.2 Recommendations:

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher would like to present the following recommendations:

1- There should be free test for the university students before they start writing course to identify how weak are they in using grammatical cohesion ties.

2- The weak students should attend intensive courses in grammatical cohesion ties, writing, vocabulary, and discourse analysis; according to the points of their weakness.

3- More systematic assignments on the use of discourse features (cohesion &coherence) should be applied and practiced, until teachers make sure that these students do not have any discoursal problem.

4- Teachers should follow the updated theories of text linguistics as well as the modern approaches of teaching writing such as interdisciplinary socialization approaches that teach writing skill at

two levels: linguistic level and conceptual level; each according to the genre to which it belongs.

5- After teachers introduce the theoretical knowledge in terms of discourse features of cohesion, coherence, they should provide the students with assignments in a form of written texts, then they should ask them to determine the discourse features in each text, till they assure that their students can detect the discourse features in any text. Finally, they should provide the students with some topics to write about, requesting them to pay great attention to these discourse features. Before marking, teachers can select the texts which are full of discourse misuses, after hiding the names, and introduce them to the students asking them to correct by deletion and addition. These features are interrelated as each one helps the other to realize. For more information, (Cf, Tabodda, 2004).

6- Teachers should not view errors as a reflection of the students' incompetence of writing: rather, they should accept that errors are significant part of learning as some scholars say: "errors are precious indicators of learning".

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