Role of Cohesive Devices in Enhancing Sudanese Student's Writing Ability

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the problem of cohesive devices in enhancing students writing ability to EFL learners at Sudan University of Science and Technology The sample of the study comprised (70) students EFL learners at second year, consists in two group, which were randomly selected and were randomly assigned to both experimental and control groups studied them in the traditional method.

A writing pre-test and post-test were given to both groups at the end of the study to make sure that they were equivalent to investigate the role of cohesive devices in Enhancing student's writing ability, the same test was given to experimental and control groups. The result of the study based on statistical analysis, indicated that the experimental-group outperformed the control group. The result of study that writing of Sudanese university students are-misuse of cohesive devices affected the coherence of written text. And inability to use cohesive devices correctly in written texts ,the researcher recommended that cohesive devices should be taught effectively, using proper materials in English syllabuses at university education.FEL learners should be aware of the concept of cohesive devices and use them in their written texts.

Keywords: cohesive devices, Sudanese students, writing ability

INTRODUCTION:

This is a study of the role of cohesive device in enhancing Sudanese university   students, writing ability. Writing is an important skill and the learners should practice more to enable them to construct accurate sentences, and paragraph. It is Important for teachers to know the problems are difficulties and the needs of their students so that theycan help them to be creative in using Cohesive devices.

Statement of the Problem:

During her experience in teaching English as a foreign language for several years ;the researcher has noticed that Sudanese students face a numbers of difficulties when using cohesive devices. This research highlighted the role of cohesive devices in enhancing students writing ability.

This research examines the serious problems undergraduate students faced in writing which cohesive greatly affect to their ability in a written text.

Objective of the Study:

This study aims at:

- To shed light on the problems facing E.F.L. undergraduate students in using cohesive devices.
- To suggest some suitable solutions to improve students' ability in using cohesive devices.

Question of the Study:

1. To what extent are EFL undergraduate students able to use cohesive devices correctly?
2. How canwe improve EFL Sudanese university Students ability in the use of cohesive devices?

Hypotheses of the Study:

Researcher sets out to test the following hypotheses.

1. EFL Sudanese university students are unable to use cohesive devices correctly.
2. EFL Sudanese university students misuse of cohesive devices affect the coherence of written text.

Significance of the Study:

This study is hoped to be significant to teachers who are not used or trained to use cohesive devices. It   is also of use subsequent researches thatwould this topic for their research

Limits of the Study:

This study is limited to investigate problems encountered by Sudan university of Science andTechnology students in ability to use cohesive devices in writing skill .Undergraduate students, college of languages in the second year   Study English as foreign language passes approximately the same English abilities during the academic yeas (2019-2020).

Methodology

To achieve this research, the researcher has adopted the descriptive analytical method and use a test has been used as a tool for data collection. The data obtained will be analyzed to identify the role of cohesive devices in students writing abilities. The aim of the test is to diagnose the student's weakness in using cohesive devices.

The Concept of Cohesion:

Cohesion is defined in the oxford advanced learner's dictionary (1992:239) as "A close relationship based on grammar or meaning between two parts of a sentence or a larger piece of writing ".

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976:5) state that:" Cohesion is expressed partly through the grammar and partly through the vocabulary". In the last definition there is no division between vocabulary and grammar; the guiding principle in language is that the more general meanings are expressed through grammar, and the more specific meanings through vocabulary. Cohesion is expressed partly through the grammar and partly through vocabulary.

Another definition of cohesion by Martin (1992:101) "Cohesion is a part of a text forming component in the linguistic system; it links together the elements that are structurally unrelated through dependence on the other for its interpretation, without cohesion the semantic system cannot be effective at all".

Concept of Cohesive Devices

www.slideshare.com/cohesion and coherencepresentation,cohesive devices are devices that bring together different parts of a things.

In communication terms, cohesion devices are usually single words or phrases that contain and hang different parts of the text. These are basically cohesion tools. The main function of cohesion is to form text. The cohesive device helps to unify the text as a semantic whole. The text must be meaning .

The cohesive device shows the logical relationship between sentences and paragraphs. Text is that not cohesive They expand the context, such as:

  a) Whether information is completely new.
  b) Related to information in other sentences.
  c) Or is a reference to old information from previous sentences.

Cohesive devices may take a number of forms example pronouns, nouns and conjunction ... etc.

The Importance of Cohesive Devices in a Text:

They improve reading and comprehension. Without them, the semantic system cannot be effectively activated at all, and they depend on each other to connect structurally unrelated elements to each other for interpretation. E.g.Sara(proper noun) is an intelligent girl.She(pronoun) always stands first in the class). (Sheis holding two sentences together).

Types of Cohesion:

There are two types of cohesion:

  - Grammatical Cohesion: which is based on structural content.
  - Lexical Cohesion which lexical content, and background knowledge.

Grammatical Cohesion:

Grammatical cohesion refers to various grammatical methods that can be used to clarify the relationship between sentences. Cohesive devices are used to connect text fragments in a specific way.

The purpose is to help readers understand the items mentioned, items replaced and even items omitted (Harmer 2004).

In addition, the fusions sentence using cohesive device which have semantically relation cohesive devices requires a shared language environment to interpret items.

Sentence like "she said so" are semantically correct,because grammatically, we don't want to know who "she" refers to and what "so"meant. To analyze this sentence, we must look at what "she"and "therefore" refer to in the surrounding environment. In the following sections, many other examples of various cohesion situations covered by various cohesion devicetypeswillbeintroduced.

Types of Grammatical Cohesion:

Halliday and Hassan (1976) give us with the essential categories of grammatical cohesion indicating that we are able systemize this concept by classifying it into a little number of particular categories they allude to them as; reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. These categories have a hypothetical premise and particular sorts of linguistic cohesion which has moreover give a commonsense implies for depicting and analizing text.

(1) Reference:

Reference is one of cohesive devices; it's in utilized as an expression which makes to the other words within the content for their interpretation.

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976:308) "reference is a relation between an element of the text and something else by reference to its interpretation in the given instance ".

Reference is used to describe the different ways which things, people and events are referred to within text. Reference item in English include pronouns items, (he, she, it, him, they,…..etc.) , demonstrative items,(this, that, those, there,……etc) and comparative items (similar, differently, additional,…….etc).

For example:

Yesterday Ahmed and Ali went to the zoo, they watched there different kinds of animals.

In this example "they" refer to Ahmed and Ali, "there" refers to the zoo, "they" and "there" show that information about them is retrieved elsewhere within the text. It characterizes a particular type of cohesion which is called reference.

According to Brown and Yule (1988:204) "The traditional semantic view of reference is one in which the relationship of reference is taken to hold between expressions in a text and entities in the world, and that of co-reference between expression in different part of a text".

Reference is sub-categorized by Halliday and Hassan (1976:33) as follows:

Reference
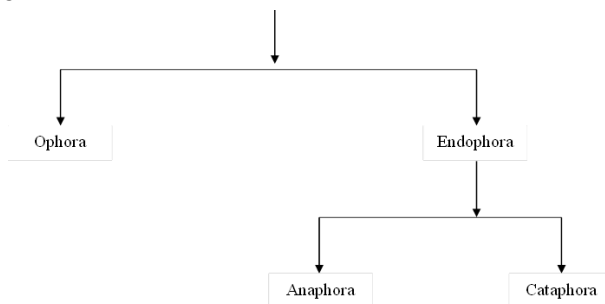
Exophoric Reference: Exophoric reference points to something outside the language of the text, which is understood on the context.

e.g. Look at this .

This refers to something that the speaker and listener can see and understand, but it has no meaning outside the context, we don't know what "this" is.

McCarthy (1991: p. 41) "exophoric reference direct the receiver 'out of' the text and into an assumed shared world". E.g. that must have cost a lot of money in this example we have to look beyond of the text to retrieve the meaning of the sentences.

Endophoric Reference:

It is a grammatical term used to describe forms of reference made within any given text to other elements within the text.

e.g. "She gave the books to John. He left the room"

"He" is an example of endophoric reference, referring to John.

Brown and Yule (1988:192) point that "where their interpretation lies within a text they are called "endophoric" relations and do from cohesive ties within the text"

Endophora consists of anaphora and cataphora. Anaphora refers to presupposition of something that has gone before, while cataphora refers to the presupposed element.

Endophoric relations are categorized either as:

*Anaphoric (reference back)

Cataphoric (reference forward)

Anaphoric reference:

It's a grammatical term used to describe a linguistic feature, which refers to a previously mentioned element in any given text.

For example:

"The water system is failing because of old pipes and shortage of qualified technicians to repair them these are the reasons why change is necessary"

"These" has an anaphoric function, referring back to the reasons given in the preceding part of the text.

Anaphoric relations are all kinds of activities which involve looking back in text to find the referent.

For example: McCarthy (1991:36) "It rained day and night for two weeks, the basement flooded and everything was under water, it spoilt all our calculations". Here the first "it" refers to the discourse itself, the second "it" refers to the events of two weeks, or the fact that it rained or flooded; i.e., the whole situation rather than an event in particular.

Cataphoric Reference:

Grammatical terms used to describe a linguistic feature which refers forward to another element in any given text.

E.g.

Child: why does that one go?

Father: that what?

Child: that one.

Father: that one what?

Child: that parrot, that you kept in the cage.

Cataphoric relation looks forward for their interpretation, to exemplify the cataphoric reference.

Another example:

The man is living alone. His wife left him for 9 years.

Another example:

"She was terribly afraid. All kinds of black memories of her childhood came up to her mind. She could not fight against them as had been her custom because simply Mary Brown was dying at that moment"

This short text contains a number of cataphoric reference items which involve looking forward for determining what they refer to. In this example all the pronouns (she/her) refer to Mary Brown. In this cataphoric reference, the referent has been withheld to the last sentence in order to engage the readers'/ the listeners' attention.

Thus, Brown and Yule (1983) state that exophoric and endophoric co-reference need a processor based on mental representation. On the one hand we refer to the world and on the other hand we refer to the world created by the discourse.

(2)Substitution

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976) state that substitution takes place when one feature (in a text) replaces a previous word or expression, for instance: —"I left my pen at home, do you have one?"

In this example, — "one" is replaced or substitution for —"pen".

Important to mention substitution and reference are different in what and where they operated in , so the replacement refers to the relationship and the reference is related to The wording relationship associates the meaning. Substitution is to avoid the duplication in the text itself; however, the reference needs to appear from text context to retrieve its meaning.

> *In terms of the linguistic system, reference is a relation on the semantic level, whereas substitution is a relation on the lexical grammatical level, the level of grammar and vocabulary, or linguistic form. (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 89*

As such, we can substitute nouns; verbs and clauses .Kennedy (2003) points out there are three types of substitution nominal, verbal, and clausal substitution

Types of Substitution: There are three types of substitution; these are nominal, verbal and clausal substitution

Nominal Substitution:

Where the noun or a nominal group can be replaced by a noun.

"One" / —"ones" always operate as a head of…. nominal group.

e.g.: ―"there are some new tennis balls" in the baf .These ones have lost their bounce‖. In this example "tennis balls" is replaced by the items "one"

Verbal substitution: the verb or a verbal group can be replaced by another verb which is "do" .This functions as a head of verbal group, and it is usually placed at the end of the group.

e.g. A: Annie says you "drink too much".

B: So do you?

Here,"do‖" substitutes ―"drink too much"

Clausal substitution: where a clause can be usually substituted for "so" or expressed "not".

e.g. A: It is going to rain?

B: I think so.

In this example, the clause "going to rain" is substituted for "so"

Ellipsis

The relation between substitution and ellipsis is very close because it is merely that ellipsis is substitution‖ by zero (0). What is essential in ellipsis is that some elements are omitted from the surface text, but they are still understood. Thus, omission of these elements can be recovered by referring to an element in the preceding text .Harmer defines it: "words are deliberately left out of a sentence when the meaning is still clear". (Harmer, 2004:24).On considering the following example.

Penny was introduced to a famous author, but even before, she had recognized him‖. It appeared that the structure of the second clause indicates that there is something left out introduced to a famous author‖, the omission of this feature kept the meaning still clear and there is no need of repetition; Carter et al state that ―ellipsis occurs in writing where usually functions textually to avoid repetition where structures would otherwise be redundant(2000:182).

Nominal ellipsis: means ellipsis within the nominal group, where the omission of nominal group is served a common noun, proper noun or pronoun.

e.g. ―My kids practice an awful lot of sport. Both (0) are incredibly energetic‖. In this example, the omission concerned with"My kids" .

Verbal ellipsis: refers to ellipsis within the verbal group where the elliptical verbs on a preceding verbal group.

> e.g.: A: have you been working?
>
> B: Yes, I have (0).

Here, the omission of the verbal group depends on what is said before and it is concerned with —been working.

Clausal ellipsis: clausal ellipsis functions as verbal ellipsis, where the omission refers to a clause

> e.g.: A: why did you only set three places? Paul's, staying for dinner, isn't he?
>
> B: Is he? He didn't tell him (0). In this example the omission

falls on the —Paul's, staying for dinner we have basic categories of grammatical cohesion, reference Substitution, ellipsis and conjunction, there are very. Important in analyzing text. The aim is to help the reader. Understand the items referred to, the ones replaced and even The ones omitted. Types of grammatical cohesion describes the way in which Text is tied together by linguistic devices and to make cohesive. Discourse properly. (Halliday and Hassan, 1976)

Conjunction

Conjunction is achieved to have grammatical cohesion in texts which show the relationship between sentences. They are different from other cohesive, ties that they reach the meaning by using other features in the discourse. Because as Nunan (1993) points out, they use features to refer to the other parts of the text in order to make relationship between sentences extremely understood. Halliday and Hassan describe it as follows:

> *In describing conjunction as a cohesive device, we are focusing attention not on the semantic relation as such, as realized throughout the grammar of the language, but on one particular aspect of them, namely the function they have of relating to each other linguistic elements that occur in succession but are not related by other, structural means.*

> (Halliday and Hassan, 197*6*: 227)

Lexical cohesion

Lexical cohesion refers to the way in which related words are chosen to link elements of a text. There are two forms: repetition and collocation. Repetition uses the same word, or synonyms, antonyms,

etc. For example, "Which dress are you going to wear?" – "I will wear my green frock," uses the synonyms "dress" and "frock" for lexical cohesion. Collocation uses related words that typically go together or tend to repeat the same meaning. An example is the phrase "once upon a time"

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohesion_(linguistics)

> *Lexical cohesion is investigated how they contribute to the centrality Of discourse units. Lexical cohesive relations need to be distinguished in order to identify. Central discourse units and refers to the way in which related words are chosen to link elements of a text.* (Wikipedia.org/cohesion).

Types of lexical cohesion

The recent attempt at studying vocabulary above sentences is Halliday and Hassan's description of lexical cohesion? According to them (1976), lexical cohesion is created for the choice of a given vocabulary and the role played by certain basic semantic relations between words in creating textually. Thus, Halliday and Hassan divide lexical cohesion into two main categories: reiteration and collocation.

Reiteration can be identified through the following classes.

Repetitions Restate the same lexical item in a later part of the discourse.

> e.g.: what we lack in a newspaper is what we should get .In a word, popular newspaper may be the winning ticket. (The lexical item —newspaper‖ reiterated in the same form).

General nouns

They are used to refer back to a lexical item such as: person, people, man, woman for human nouns; things, object for inanimate, concrete countable nouns; stuff for inanimate, concrete uncountable; place for location …etc.

> e.g1: A: Did you try the steamed buns?
> B: Yes; I didn't like the things much.
> e.g2: What shall I do with all this crockery?

Leave the stuff there, someone'll come and put it any way (stuff is a general noun that refers to _crockery')

Synonymy

Used to express a similar meaning of an item

e.g1: you could try reversing the car up the slope. The incline isn't all that steep.

("Slope" refers back to "incline" of which it is a synonym) e.g. 2: A T6 p.m. I range a taxi, but because of the traffic the cab arrived later and I missed my flight.

Super ordinations

It involves the use of general class words.

E.g. this car is the best vehicle for a family of six. (Vehicle is a super ordinate of car).

Collocation

Collocation is the tendency of some words to co-occur together. The Syntactic relations of words in which we have a combination of words by expectation; i.e., we predict the following items of a given combination by looking at the first item.The co-occurrence of certain words from a chain to ensure unity and centrality of the topic of this text. These words in chain form the lexical cohesion of the text. Nunan argued that:

> *Lexical cohesion is, in many ways, the most interesting of all the cohesive categories. The background knowledge of the reader or listener plays a more obvious role in the perception of lexical relationships than in the perception of other types of cohesion. Collocation patterns, for example, will only perceived by someone who knows something about the subject at hand.*(Nunan, 1993: 30).

Thus, collocates can be words used in the same context or it can be words that contribute to the same area of meaning (Kennedy 2003). For example, a text dealing with the chemical treatment of food contains lexical chains such as : fruit ,skin,citrus,lemon,orange ,chemicals, products ,laboratory …etc .these words can be said to belong to the same register and contribute to the same topic.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

The following table shows the frequency distribution for the respondents' answers of the overall diagnostic writing test.

Table No (1) The Frequency Distribution for the Respondents' Answers of overall Writing test.
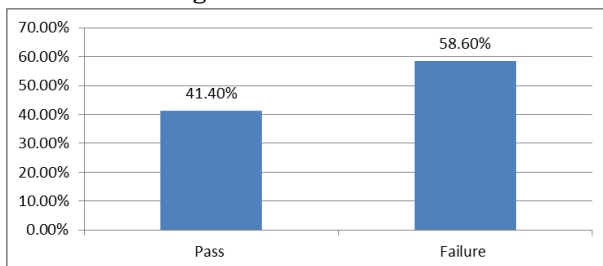
From the above table and figure it is obvious that only (29) students in the study sample with percentage (41.4%) have passed the diagnostic writing test, while (41) students with the percentage (58.6%) failed the overall writing test.

Table No (2) The Frequency Distribution and decisions for the Respondent's Answers of all the questions of the diagnostic writing test:

Sections	Pass		Failure		Decision
	frequency	*Percentage*	*frequency*	*Percentage*	
Control	13	44.8%	19	46.3%	Accept
Experimental	16	55.2%	22	53.7%	Accept
overall	29	100%	41	100%	Accept

The above table shows the summary of the result of the study. For section one end two, it's clear that the percentage of students who failed in both. Section of the test is greater than the percentage of students who gave correct answer (46.3%) and (53.7%) Respectively:

Table (3) one sample T-TEST for the questions of the study:

Sections	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-test	Std. Error Mean	DF	p-value
Pre Test	35	32.6000	11.97350	16.108	2.02389	34	0.00
Post test	35	37.2000	12.04599	18.270	2.03614	34	

Table (3) the T-value of the difference in the mean between the experimental group and control group on the pretest was (37.2%) with a standard deviation of (23.65%) and the mean score of the control group was (32,6) with a standard division of (11.9350). it also shows the difference in the mean score between the experimental group and control group was statistically significant.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The results of the study revealed that the highest percentage of the
students faces the following serious use of cohesive devices in writing
problems.

- EFL Sudanese University students are unable to use cohesive
  devices correctly in writing.
- EFL Sudanese university students are misuse of cohesive
  devices affect to the Coherence of written text.

Recommendation:

- Cohesive devices should be taught effectively, using proper
  materials in English syllabuses at university education.
- Activities that help learners be responsible for their learning
  on developing their written texts should be started.
- FEL learners should be aware of the concept of cohesive
  devices and use them in their written texts.

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