

Cohesion and Coherence in the Writings of Saudi Undergraduates Majoring in English

Thouqan Saleem Masadeh*

Department of Curriculum & Instruction, Najran University, Najran, KSA

Abstract

The present study investigated cohesion and coherence in the writings of Saudi undergraduates majoring in English. A corpus of sixteen essays was analyzed using three rating scales, namely a holistic rating scale for the effectiveness of each essay, cohesion rating scale and coherence rating scale. Findings showed that undergraduates' essays were not convenient and well-developed. Cohesion and coherence were not highly established in the written essays. The most prominent problematic area students faced when writing cohesively was the very low ability to use synonymous words/phrases when needed. The bad use of accurate conjunctions and transition words to link sentences and/or paragraphs together to convey relationships throughout the essay was also another problematic area. On the other part, keeping repeating the same ideas, their failure to split their paragraphs in terms of content relevance, in addition to their inability to elaborate their ideas were the most problematic areas that prohibited them from producing coherent essay.

Keywords

Saudi Undergraduates, Cohesion, Coherence, Rhetoric, Written Essays, Writing Rating Scales

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1. Introduction

Deficiencies in learning and consequently using a second or foreign language are not limited to learners only. Acquirers of their mother tongue also suffer from certain difficulties at the beginning of their learning. They are usually unable to listen accurately to speakers in various contexts, speak fluently to others about certain topics, read comprehensively for meaning and write effectively and rhetorically to communicate a specific idea to readers. Speaking and writing are the productive language skills by which language users can show how competent they are in listening and reading. Writing is the most complicated skill that integrates all language skills. The learner's mastery over the language he learns, is mostly reflected by his ability to write a short or long paragraph about a certain topic. Through writing, the writer tries to communicate with others of various levels.

Therefore, he and the reader have to weave their knowledge through writing and reading to exchange information specific to a certain context, no matter how long or short it is. A quick review of a piece of writing done by one English language learner reveals the big suffering he encountered when sitting down and started thinking to write about the requested topic. These sufferings are usually due to a set of shortcomings among which coherence and cohesion stand for the most important factor. Coherence and cohesion are the most important and challenging aspects that most produced writings lack. Successful writing does not mean to be committed to the rules of grammar and vocabulary [1]. Writing coherently entails familiarity with genres, options in approaching a topic, ordering thoughts in a logical manner so that there is an effect of togetherness [2]. A text is coherent when a reader understands the function of each succeeding unit of the text in the development of its overall or global meaning, while cohesion is created through grammatical

* Corresponding author
E-mail address: dr_thouqan@yahoo.com

forms that include reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction and the lexical forms that involve reiteration and collocation [3]. To write cohesively, on the other hand, means that the writer has to use a set of clues about the order in which different parts of the writing are being presented as well as about the relationships between those parts [4]. Textual cohesion is a sub-element of coherence. It is an important property that may define explicit mechanisms that hold the different ideas in a text together [5]. Lexical cohesion plays a significant role in the thematic progression of the text and contributes to its perceived coherence. Therefore, the learner's ability to express lexical cohesive relations represents one of the areas of his inter-language to be developed in foreign language instruction [6]. Nevertheless, the kind of training that learners usually receive plays the most significant role in producing a well-organized paragraph. It is not enough to complain that learners of English language do not know how to write coherently and cohesively although they have learnt the basic techniques of writing in detail. Teachers of English are required to assist students in generating, organizing, and ordering the content of a text so that the produced text becomes coherent and cohesive [7]. Teachers of writing should train learners to focus on the connectedness between sentences, the use of explicit cohesive devices at the paragraph level, and the use of connective devices such as pronouns, repetitive structures, and transitional markers once they need them to produce coherence in their written texts [8]. Writers do not write texts for themselves, but for other listeners or readers. Therefore, they should produce comprehensible texts that communicate effectively certain information and ideas to others [9].

In most countries all over the world, Saudi Arabia for instance, English language is taught to students as a foreign language at schools. At universities and higher education institutions, some students continue learning this language as a university specialty. Nevertheless, their success in the academic courses in English language does not reflect their good competence and effective performance when needed to use English to communicate with colleagues, teachers or others outside university. Their writings, for instance are not as good as desired. They do not meet the standards of a good piece of writing. That is, coherence and cohesion are nearly absent. Thus, acquisition of the writing skill as [10] mentions, seems for these students to be more laborious and demands more than acquiring the other language skills

Therefore, the present study aims to assess the extent to which the writings of Saudi undergraduates majoring in English are effective, coherent and cohesive. In other words, it seeks to identify how Saudi undergraduates majoring in English at Saudi universities use the devices of coherence

and cohesion to write effectively.

2. Study Questions

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do Saudi undergraduates majoring in English write effective essays?
2. To what extent do Saudi undergraduates majoring in English write cohesive essays?
3. What are the most problematic cohesion areas that Saudi undergraduates majoring in English suffer from when writing?
4. To what extent do Saudi undergraduates majoring in English write coherent essays?
5. What are the most problematic coherence areas that Saudi undergraduates majoring in English suffer from when writing?

3. Theoretical Framework

Literature review of studies conducted to evaluate the learners' writings shows that few empirical studies have been conducted to analyze coherence and cohesion terms in the writings of English language majors. Instructors of writing, in general and more specifically rhetoric should be encouraged to pay attention to the importance of the inclusion of coherence and cohesion while teaching and evaluating pieces of writing [11]. Too many of today's students, whether English learners or natives, just cannot write clear and meaningful sentences. Many university students graduate without this fundamental skill, i.e. writing. Incoherence is a serious problem facing language learners when writing because errors in coherence involve a chunk of units, such as a series of sentences or paragraphs [12]. Language learners will not prove that they are qualified English writers unless they write coherent and cohesive texts [13]. Students' problems in writing usually arise from the fact that although they are able to find exact words in their writings, they cannot connect them logically throughout the sentences in the paragraphs. In addition, students focus on the lexical and sentence level more on than on discourse level. They are usually found using transitional links in their writing without really creating a coherent piece. A text is said to be coherent when its sentences flow smoothly from one to another without any gaps [14]. Cohesion and coherence are two phenomena that complement each other. Cohesion simplifies understanding relationships between different parts of the sentence respecting relations of syntax and grammar. A text is called as such if there is a continuity of meaning whose presence leads to communication [15].

4. Review of Related Literature

Apart from the fact that this study aims to prove the need for coherence and cohesion to be existing in the writings of English learners, it also seeks to show how these pieces of writing can be made coherent and cohesive. Thus, review of related literature in the present study focuses on the findings of some empirical studies that can shed light on how teachers should train their students to write and what things they should include in their writings to be effective and rhetoric. For instance, [11] showed that Arab students overused reiteration of the same lexical item as a cohesive device while lexical and grammatical cohesive devices were underused. With regard to coherence, students failed to supply sufficient information about the assigned topic. [16] found that students' writings suffer from six main problems related to sentence effectiveness and mainly coherence. Students were mainly unable to separate words that are closely related unless it is necessary, use a pronoun with ambiguous reference, and use a dangling modifier or put a modifier far from the word it modifies. Their failure was also common in making unnecessary or confusing shifts in person or number, making unnecessary changes in the voice, tense, or mood of verbs, and using different forms to express parallel ideas. [17] pointed out that learners' writings overall coherence was negatively affected by their innumerable errors committed at the syntactic and lexical levels. Intra-sentential clausal coherence, was compromised by the learners' incapacity to unambiguously distinguish between given and new information, due to the subjects' countless errors in using definite, indefinite articles and pronominalization processes, i.e. replacement of a noun or noun phrase with a pronoun. [18] found that native and non-native English-speaking students were sometimes indistinguishable in their quality of writing. Both of them tended to suffer from a loss of coherence in argument.

[19] found that although coherence is an important attribute of overall essay quality, expert raters evaluate it on the basis of cohesive cues absence in essays rather than their presence. [20] revealed three kinds of significant relationships in learners' written text. First, there is a relationship between the length of the text, coherence and consistency. Second, there is also a positive relationship between consistency and coherence. Third, a relationship was found between students' skills in creating a consistent text and references, elliptical narrative and substitution of the cohesive devices. [21] revealed that students have problems using reference, conjunction and lexical cohesion on which they depend to write cohesive texts. Teachers of writing themselves were unable to identify the inter-sentential ties although they could identify all the intra-sentential ties. Moreover, students' problems with writing cohesive texts were attributed to their

limited knowledge about the use of cohesive devices, lack of vocabulary and the way teachers teach cohesion. [22] concluded no significant correlation between students' knowledge of cohesion and their writing performance. The grammatical cohesive devices, i.e. reference and conjunction were dominant and used as cohesive resources more than the lexical ones. Moreover, students used cohesive devices to remind readers of the points under discussion and to clarify and affirm semantic relationship between clauses. [23] showed a notable difference between the cohesive devices use of English natives and learners in terms of frequency, variety, and control. Native speakers made a balance between the use and frequency of various types of cohesive devices but learners overused certain types like repetition and reference and neglected using the others to a degree that made their writings not cohesive. [24] showed that although students overuse repetition, they commonly use other three types of lexical cohesion namely synonym, antonym and collocation. The four types of lexical cohesion can altogether create cohesiveness towards the ideas conveyed by their writings.

5. Importance of Teaching Coherence and Cohesion

Coherence, which focuses on the overall structure of the essay, is important in writing because it connects and organizes ideas to create unity. Thesis statement and topic sentences create this sense of unity in a piece of writing. Writing coherently means that the writer's thesis statement should be developed and supported. Moreover, ideas should be organized and clarified. Cohesion, on the other hand, concentrates on the grammatical aspects of writing. Links can be made between words and sentences using a set of devices like reference, conjunction and repetition. Therefore, coherence and cohesion are crucial elements in any text without which a text would suffer from clarity and continuity and would not be regarded as a text. Foreign language students may face problems of understanding and decoding a text if it is not clear and lacks the accuracy of cohesion and coherence. A foreign language text may lose the concept of communication if it has one element but lacks the other one [15]. Teachers and learners of English should understand that written texts could be grammatically well-written, with clearly cut independent sentences, but without an overall meaning while reading the text as a whole. On the opposite, some other writings may seem syntactically wrong but could convey a clear message. Thus, it is interesting to observe the difference between cohesion and coherence when teaching our students to write clearly [25]. Cohesion is the basis of an article. It is also the important form of showing the style and characteristics. It is

linked to all kinds of term relationships [26].

Despite the fact that students are taught how to write a good paragraph or text, their writings do not fulfill the requirements of a good paragraph yet. For instance, their pieces of writing usually suffer from bad arrangement of sentences. A good writing should be cohesive and coherent because the writer, when writing to others, should present his arguments in a clear, plausible, and comprehensible order without any gaps in his line of reasoning. When a paragraph is coherent, ideas are arranged in a logical progression, or an order that makes sense so that the reader moves easily from one idea to another [27]. The fact that coherence is not a well-defined notion and the fact that coherence is an "interpretative process" created by the reader while reading the text, have made it important for language teachers and learners to be aware of the two main aspects of coherence, i. e. text-based and reader-based coherence. According to text-based coherence, the text is coherent if there is unity of ideas, points are organized, and elements are connected by link and reference words. While the text is coherent according to the reader-based coherence if the text content is consistent with the reader's previous knowledge and experience or expectations based on his world knowledge [9].

6. Methodology

6.1. Approach

The descriptive analytical approach was used to answer the questions of the present study.

6.2. Participants

Sixteen students who were all specializing in English language and teaching at Najran University participated in the present study. They were all in their fourth year and were enrolled in a course called "Strategies of Teaching and Learning" provided by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. All of them were exposed to and have passed a set of writing courses, namely "Writing One, Writing Two, Writing Three and Writing Four" courses at the department of English language.

6.3. Instruments

6.3.1. Corpus

All participant students were requested to write a descriptive essay about someone we could never give away. All of them were asked to write freely their essays outside the classroom and so referring to outside resources, when needed, was not forbidden. The total number of the collected essays was (16). Two instructors of writing out of all writing instructors at the department of English language were chosen to rate the

students' written essays using the developed scales for this sake. As soon as the rating process ended, statistical analyses were conducted to conclude the main results.

6.3.2. The Rating Scales

i The Holistic Rating Scale

Raters were to provide a single score for each essay beginning with (5) points for the very well-developed essay, (4) points for the well-developed essay, (3) for the essay whose development needs more drafts, (2) points for the essay which needs significant work, and (1) for the essay that needs fundamental work. Therefore, essays whose mean scores ranged between (M=1.00- M=1.80) were not effective and were in need for more fundamental work whilst essays whose mean scores were between (M=1.81-M=2.60) were also not effective and need significant work. Essays whose mean extended from (M=2.61-M=3.40) were effective to a moderate extent but need more drafts, whereas essays of mean scores between (M=3.41-M=4.20) were effective and well-developed. Nevertheless, essays with mean scores ranging between (M=4.21-M=5.00) were very effective and well-developed. The strong presence of a topic sentence in each paragraph, the intensive and comprehensible use of supporting details, and the presence or absence of grammatical errors were considered the most important features in the effectiveness of each essay. Rubrics developed by [28] were highly considered to develop the cohesion and coherence scales.

ii Cohesion Rating Scale

The cohesion rating scale consisted of (7) items dealing with certain characteristics that affect the cohesion of the written essays. Mean scores ranging between (M=1.00- M=1.80) indicate very bad use of the cohesion features whilst mean scores between (M=1.81-M=2.60) show that cohesion features are used badly in written essays. Mean scores from (M=2.61-M=3.40) reveal that these features are fairly used whereas mean scores between (M=3.41-M=4.20) indicate that cohesion features are used in a good way while mean scores ranging between (M=4.21-M=5.00) tell us that cohesion was highly established.

iii Coherence Rating Scale

The coherence scale, on the other hand, involved (11) items coping with specific features that make any written essay coherent. Mean scores ranging between (M=1.00- M=1.80) indicate very bad use of the coherence features whilst mean scores between (M=1.81-M=2.60) show that coherence features are used badly in written essays. Mean scores from (M=2.61-M=3.40) reveal that these features are fairly used whereas mean scores between (M=3.41-M=4.20) indicate that coherence features are used in a good way while mean

scores ranging between (M=4.21-M=5.00) tell us that coherence was highly established.

Saudi undergraduates majoring in English write effective essays? Raters were asked to read students' pieces of writing and assign a score for each one beginning with (1) for the least effective and (5) for the most effective piece of writing. Mean scores of raters on the holistic rating scale are shown in table 1.

7. Findings

7.1. Findings Related to the First Question

To answer the first question that stated, "To what extent do

Table 1. Scores of Students' Writing on the Holistic Rating Scale.

Respondent Students	Holistic Rating Scores (Total Score= 5.00)		Average Score of Both Ratings (Total Score=5.00)
	1 st Rater	2 nd Rater	
Student number 01	2.50	3.00	2.75
Student number 02	3.00	3.00	3.00
Student number 03	2.00	2.50	2.25
Student number 04	3.00	3.50	3.25
Student number 05	2.50	3.00	2.75
Student number 06	1.50	2.00	1.75
Student number 07	4.00	3.50	3.75
Student number 08	3.00	3.50	3.25
Student number 09	2.50	3.00	2.75
Student number 10	3.00	2.50	2.75
Student number 11	2.50	2.50	2.50
Student number 12	3.00	2.50	2.75
Student number 13	3.50	3.50	3.50
Student number 14	3.50	4.00	3.75
Student number 15	2.50	2.50	2.50
Student number 16	3.50	3.00	3.25
holistic Rating Average Score	2.84	2.97	2.91

Results in table 1 show that the mean score of all participants' essays was (M=2.91) indicating that undergraduates' written essays were effective to a moderate extent but meanwhile in need for more drafts. None of participants' essays was rated in the first two categories, i. e. effective and well-developed or very effective and very well-developed.

7.2. Findings Related to the Second Question

To answer the second question that stated, "To what extent do Saudi undergraduates majoring in English write cohesive essays? Mean scores of both raters' evaluation using the cohesion rating scale were calculated for each student's piece of writing. Table 2 presents the results

Table 2. Scores of Students' Writing on the Cohesion Rating Scale.

Respondent Students	Cohesion Rating Scores (Total Score= 35.00)		Average Score of Both Ratings (Total Score=35.00)	Mean Score
	1 st Rater	2 nd Rater		
Student number 01	15	15	15	2.14
Student number 02	13	15	14	2.00
Student number 03	17	17	17	2.43
Student number 04	18	18	18	2.57
Student number 05	16	14	15	2.14
Student number 06	12	14	13	1.86
Student number 07	13	13	13	1.86
Student number 08	15	13	14	2.00
Student number 09	16	16	16	2.29
Student number 10	11	13	12	1.71
Student number 11	12	12	12	1.71
Student number 12	19	19	19	2.71
Student number 13	16	14	15	2.14
Student number 14	19	17	18	2.57
Student number 15	15	15	15	2.14
Student number 16	17	17	17	2.43
Average Score	14.35	15.13	15.19	2.17

Table 2 reveals that the mean score of cohesion achievement in all participants' essays was (M=2.17). In other words, cohesion was not highly established in all participants' essays. There was no very accurate, accurate or even fair use of any of the cohesion features in the undergraduates' essays. That is, students' abilities and knowledge to write cohesively were bad and in some areas very bad.

7.3. Findings Related to the Third Question

To answer the third question that stated, "What are the most problematic cohesion areas that Saudi undergraduates majoring in English suffer from when writing? Mean scores of both raters' evaluation for each cohesion feature, using the cohesion scale, were calculated. Results are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Mean Scores of Cohesion Features in Students' Writings.

N.	Cohesion Features	M	Rank
	Accurate use of pronouns of reference.	3.13	6
	Accurate Use of conjunctions.	2.13	3
	Appropriate use of ellipsis and substitution pronouns when needed.	1.31	1
	Appropriate use of lexical repetition when needed.	3.25	7
	Appropriate use of synonymous words/phrases when needed.	1.88	2
	Accurate use of transition words to link sentences and/or paragraphs together to convey relationships throughout the essay.	2.44	4
	Logical sequence between sentences.	3.00	5

Table 3 reveals that the appropriate use of ellipsis and substitution pronouns where needed (M=1.31) was the most problematic feature for students. Moreover, undergraduates, abilities to use synonymous words/phrases when needed (M=1.88), to use accurate conjunctions (M= 2.13), and to use accurate or appropriate transition words to link sentences and/or paragraphs together to convey relationships throughout the essay (M=2.44) were also not convenient to a far extent. The table also reveals that students' logical sequence between sentences (M=3.00), accurate use of pronouns of reference (M=3.13) and appropriate use of

lexical repetition when needed (M=3.25) were less problematic for undergraduates but do not rise to good or very good levels.

7.4. Findings Related to the Fourth Question

To answer the fourth question that stated, "To what extent do Saudi undergraduates majoring in English write coherently? Mean scores of both raters' evaluation using the coherence rating scale were calculated for each student's piece of writing. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4. Mean Scores of Students' Writing on the Coherence Rating Scale.

Respondent Students	Coherence Rating Scores (Total Score= 55.00)		Average Score of Both Ratings (Total Score=55.00)	Mean Score
	1 st Rater	2 nd Rater		
Student number 01	31	33	32	2.91
Student number 02	36	34	35	3.18
Student number 03	30	30	30	2.73
Student number 04	30	28	29	2.64
Student number 05	31	29	30	2.73
Student number 06	34	32	33	3.00
Student number 07	30	32	31	2.82
Student number 08	29	29	29	2.64
Student number 09	26	24	25	2.27
Student number 10	30	32	31	2.82
Student number 11	30	30	30	2.73
Student number 12	34	30	32	2.91
Student number 13	26	28	27	2.45
Student number 14	33	33	33	3.00
Student number 15	33	33	33	3.00
Student number 16	33	31	32	2.91
Average Score	31.00	30.50	30.75	2.80

Findings in table 4 indicate that coherence was not highly achieved in all participants' essays. The mean score of coherence achievement in all essays was (M=2.80). In other words, coherence features were fairly implemented in students' written essays. That is, students seemed to be suffering from their lack of knowledge of these features.

7.5. Findings Related to the Fifth Question

To answer the fifth question that stated, "What are the most problematic coherence areas that Saudi undergraduates majoring in English suffer from when writing? Mean scores of both raters' evaluation using the coherence rating scale

were calculated for all coherence features in the cohesion rating scale. Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5. Mean Scores of Coherence Features in Students' Writings.

N.	Coherence Features	M	Rank
1.	The opening paragraph is effective in introducing the reader to the subject or the central idea that the writer will develop throughout the essay.	2.91	9
2.	All the paragraphs support the central focus and do not digress.	3.18	11
3.	The writer's overall point of view is clear.	2.73	4
4.	Paragraphs are divided in terms of content relevance.	2.64	2
5.	Transition is smooth between paragraphs.	2.73	5
6.	The writer organizes paragraph details according to a discernible plan (e.g., time order, addition order, order of importance, order of cause and effect, order of comparison-contrast) that is well designed with a smooth and logical progression of thoughts; therefore, the ideas relate to one another.	3.00	10
7.	The writer does not shift topics, and the ideas in each paragraph are all relevant to the topic.	2.82	7
8.	Ideas mentioned are elaborated.	2.64	3
9.	There is no repetition of ideas.	2.27	1
10.	The writer fully develops paragraphs, effectively using reasons and specific details and examples from his/her reading and experience to develop ideas.	2.82	8
11.	The last paragraph gives the reader a definite sense of closure.	2.73	6

Results in table 7 show that the most problematic coherence feature was the repetition of ideas ($M=2.27$). Besides, undergraduates, abilities to divide their paragraphs in terms of content relevance ($M=2.64$), to elaborate their ideas ($M=2.64$) were not conveniently implemented in students essays. Moreover, students had moderate abilities in making clear their overall point of view ($M=2.73$) and transiting smoothly between paragraphs ($M=2.73$). The table also reveals students' suffering from the shifting of topics ($M=2.82$) and the ineffective use of reasons and specific details from their own experience to develop their ideas ($M=2.82$). However, their abilities to introduce the reader to the subject or the central idea that they were going to develop throughout the essay ($M=2.91$), relate their ideas to one another ($M=3.00$) were less problematic for undergraduates. The organization of their paragraphs in a way that support the central focus and do not digress ($M=3.18$) was the coherence feature that caused the least suffering for undergraduates.

8. Discussion

Based on the analysis of undergraduates' essays, it was found that there were some severe difficulties facing students when trying to maintain the quality of their writing. Most, if not all, written essays were ineffective and not well-developed. No strong presence of a topic sentence in each paragraph was found. Most essays lacked intensive and comprehensible use of supporting details. Moreover, written essays were full of grammatical errors. In brief, it can be strongly claimed that students' main difficulty in writing effective and well-developed passages was represented in how to determine and state the main ideas with the result that most essays lacked clear and accurate topic sentences. This finding corroborates what [27] stated regarding a topic sentence mentioning that a good topic sentence that makes the paragraph stronger should hook the reader, and therefore, must be strong and

significant. In addition, most of the supporting sentences or details of students in the present study were out of topic or irrelevant. Once again, this result emphasizes what [29] concluded, claiming that supporting details or sentences must directly explain or prove the main idea that is stated in the topic sentence. Any information that does not support the topic sentence must not be included.

With regard to undergraduates' difficulty to produce cohesive texts, data analysis of collected data revealed that cohesion was not highly established in all participants' essays. Students' abilities and knowledge to write cohesively were bad and in some areas very bad. The most problematic areas that seemed to be playing a significant role in hindering students to write cohesive texts were their very low abilities to use synonymous words/phrases when needed, to use accurate conjunctions and to use accurate or appropriate transition words to link sentences and/or paragraphs together to convey relationships throughout the essay. These findings are somehow congruent with the findings of [11] and [24] regarding the overuse reiteration of the same lexical item. These findings also support what [21] concluded in accordance with the students' problems in using reference, conjunction and lexical cohesion because of the lack of vocabulary and the lack of training by teachers to use the cohesive devices. Students' inability to write cohesive texts may be due to the fact that most of them believe that the use of the cohesive devices is only to remind readers of the points under discussion and to clarify and affirm semantic relationship between clauses [22].

Findings of the present study also showed that coherence was not highly achieved in all participants' essays. Coherence features were fairly implemented in students' written essays reflecting their amount of suffering from their lack of knowledge of these features. Features that were difficult for participant to accomplish in their texts were

keeping repeating the same ideas, not dividing their paragraphs in terms of content relevance, and their failure to elaborate their ideas. Findings also showed students' failure to make clearer their overall point of view and to transit smoothly between paragraphs. To a far extent, these results are in agreement with [16] regarding the use of different forms to express parallel ideas and [14] in relation to the use of transitional links without really creating a coherent piece of writing.

In short, students' suffering and failure to write effective cohesive and coherent texts might be due to the fact that writing teachers are not fully competent to teach them so they are out of their concern with the result that they are not emphasized too much in teaching writing [7]. One more explanation might be the ignorance of both writing teachers and students to focus on the relations that are referred to as macro-relations and that affect writing quality such as elaboration, evaluation, evidence and sequence [30].

9. Conclusion

Teaching cohesion and coherence is of paramount importance to improve foreign or second language learners' writing quality and effectiveness. Therefore, teachers of writing should be completely competent and experts in rhetoric in general and particularly in cohesion and coherence fields. Once teachers are so, they can implicitly or explicitly teach these writing characteristics and implant in students the fact that each characteristic has a certain function not only in each paragraph but also in the essay a whole. One way to achieve this is by training them to analyze authentic texts and showing them how English writers have established cohesion and coherence relations. Teachers also can train students to write cohesive text by urging them to use a variety of linking words and phrases, make sure that each cohesive device is necessary and appropriate, and use pronouns, antonyms and synonyms to avoid repetition. Meanwhile they can train them to make their writing coherent through using only one clear and concise topic sentence in each paragraph, having only one main point per paragraph, using an explanation, reason, evidence, example and/or personal experience to developing each main idea, and closing each paragraph with a summary sentence or conclusion.

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