

**REITERATIONS IN ESL LEARNERS’
ACADEMIC PAPERS:
DO THEY CONTRIBUTE TO LEXICAL
COHESIVENESS?**

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Using Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) theory on repetition as a sub-type of reiteration in establishing lexical cohesive ties, and Liu’s (2000) categorization of this type of cohesion, namely: repetition, synonyms, antonyms, superordinate/hyponyms, related words, and text-structuring words, the study investigated the most preferred types of lexical cohesion used by 30 ESL learners from the Graduate School of De La Salle University-Manila—15 from among those enrolled in different programs other than English, and 15 from the group of those enrolled in an English program. The sampled part was the Conclusion section of their academic papers. It likewise examined how a lexical item coheres with the preceding occurrence of the same item, and what given holistic scores in overall lexical cohesion suggest.

Results showed that Repetition was the most frequently used type of lexical cohesion by both groups sampled. The students also frequently employed related words like situational synonyms, situational antonyms, lexical items with superordinate/hyponym relationship, and text-structuring words. A total of 60% of repeated lexical items had an identical type of occurrence. Holistic scores revealed more than 50% of the student papers obtained an average rating in overall lexical cohesion. Results could be considered useful in improving the contents of the Advanced Academic Reading and Writing course of the University, and in deciding what classroom exercises could best be given to the students to help them achieve a higher level of lexical cohesion when they write.

Studies show that among the lexical cohesive ties – reiteration and collocation (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), or repetition, synonyms, antonyms, superordinate/hyponyms, related words, and

text-structuring words (Liu, 2000) – the most heavily used is repetition. In one of her studies, Castro (2004b) notes that students are able to relate their ideas more conveniently through this lexical cohesive device. The same observation is evident in Duterte-Angeles' (2005) and Mojica's (2006) studies – students seem to have used this device with ease. This interesting finding seems to indicate the need to further investigate students' attempts to achieve lexical cohesion in their papers. Results could prove useful for ESL educators in devising appropriate measures to help ESL learners write more cohesively.

L2 teachers consider lack of cohesion in writing as one problem that cannot be ignored. The reason behind ESL teachers' serious concern for cohesiveness may be better explained by scholars' definition of this term. According to Hoey, cohesion may be "crudely defined as the way certain words or grammatical features of a sentence can connect that sentence to its predecessors (and successors) in a text" (1996, p.3). He makes reference to certain elements in each sentence that prompt the reader to find interconnectedness among sentences. Similarly, Halliday and Hasan regard cohesion as referring to the "range of possibilities that exist for linking something with what has gone before" and that "this linking is achieved through relations in meaning" (1976, p.10). *Counted by De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) as one of the seven standards of textuality – textuality being referred to by Halliday and Hasan in strong relation to coherence—"cohesion is said to occur when the components of the SURFACE TEXT, i.e., the actual words we hear or see, are mutually connected within a sequence" (Halliday & Hasan, p.3). For them, cohesion includes whatever signals connections among surface components.

Alarmed by students' failure to write cohesive papers, Liu (2000) observes that the focus in ESL classrooms has been on the discussion of functional connectives instead of providing help in expanding students' vocabulary and facilitating understanding of acquired lexical items. Her being aware of probable implications of this shortcoming has urged her to propose a series

of exercises on content lexical ties that may prove useful in addressing this concern.

Several other educators have recognized the role played by cohesion in second language reading and writing. They have not abandoned the task of investigating how cohesive ties are established and what teaching strategies or pedagogical implications can be proposed thereof. Hoey (1996) notes that, in general, studies on cohesion in the field of linguistics as well as proposed instructional materials on the use of cohesive devices abound.

Investigations have revealed that second language learners of English were less capable in comprehending a given text than native speakers when cohesive items had been removed. Jonz notes, "If cohesive ties are interrupted, the text becomes harder to process than if the broader set of linguistic patterns were interrupted" (1987, p. 423). His study sought to measure language-based comprehension using two cloze procedures, resulting in the creation of two test instruments: 1) a cohesion-based cloze test, and 2) a standard cloze test of the same length. His study shows that "as a linguistic phenomenon, the cohesive tie is more centrally implicated in comprehension processes..." and that one has to be proficient in L₂ to have an easier access to the use of cohesive ties. These findings can lead to the development of appropriate lessons that could cater to the needs of nonnative users of English who have been found to depend more simply on text for comprehension, in addition to syntax, than do natives (Carrel 1983, in Jonz, 1987).

Materials in teaching cohesion have been proposed by Lubelska to improve reading. Her sample materials aim to develop the students' ability to interpret cohesive devices better, using what she terms "discovery procedures" (1991, p.569) to enable the students to see the importance of cohesive devices in an authentic text. Lubelska believes that one of the reasons why many of the learners fail to comprehend reading is their inability to note the relationship of sentences to one another and to the whole text (Connor & Johns, 1990; Cook, 1989; Grellet, 1981; Machay, 1979; Nuttall, 1982; in

Lubelska, 1991). Closely related to this failure is the students' non-readiness to interpret the cohesive devices used by the writers.

Freebody and Anderson (1983) conducted a study to assess the effect of text cohesion on children's comprehension of social studies passages through experiments. Main effects for vocabulary surfaced, although comprehension was found not to interact with vocabulary difficulty. In another related study, Pearson (1974-1975, in Freebody & Anderson, 1983) observed that "higher cohesion, that is, the joining of proposition into longer, more explanatory sentences led to enhanced recall" (p.280). Their data show that learners' performance was somehow suppressed by the writers' "inconsiderateness" (Freebody & Anderson, p.285) – that is, through texts made less cohesive by replacing a referential tie with one that is "at least one step lower in this hierarchy" (p.281).

Reading comprehension is found to be facilitated by the "processing of cohesive ties in the mind" (Arnold, 1988, p.106). According to the Kintsch Theory (Irwin, 1986, in Arnold, 1988), information is processed by a reader through the choice of propositions (idea units) and by processing them clause by clause or sentence by sentence" (Arnold, p.108). Cohesive and meaningful texts prompt the learner to "chunk" these processed features into bigger structures or units that may be a title or main idea. Arnold is convinced that the limited findings on instruction involving learners' weakness on anaphoric relationships should lead to the proposal of different techniques and materials that could address learners' needs concerning the use of cohesive ties, which eventually is expected to enhance their comprehension skills.

Castro (2004s) compared L2 English texts written by native speakers of Arabic, Japanese, and Spanish. Among the qualities investigated was textual cohesion, which was measured in terms of the frequency and types of identical cohesive devices, length of established chains, existence of chain interaction for text, and the number of the non-interacting lexical items. She notes similar patterns of textual cohesion and meaning construction in the sampled texts

coming from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds which for her have implications for ESL teaching.

In another study, Castro (2004b) compared the degree of cohesion and coherence in the essays of 30 Filipino college freshmen. Although no significant differences were found among the low, mid, and high rated essays on their choice of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices, she finds the results pedagogically useful for ESL writing instructors who can teach students the appropriate cohesive markers and discuss their importance in composition writing.

Educators' concern in investigating cohesion in students' written output can probably be addressed by looking at how students use lexical cohesive devices to achieve cohesion in their written work. Following are the specific questions this study has sought to answer:

- 1) What types of lexical cohesion are employed by ESL students enrolled in two Advanced Academic Writing courses?
- 2) How does a lexical item cohere with a preceding occurrence of the same item?
- 3) What do the students' holistic scores in over-all lexical cohesion suggest?

Framework of the Study

The present study adopts the same framework used in Mojica's (2006) paper: one type of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) concept of lexical cohesion – in particular, repetition as a sub-type of reiteration—with contributions from Salkie (1995, in Liu, 2000) and Carter and McCarthy (1988, in Liu, 2000). This type of cohesion is regarded by Halliday and Hasan as the “cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary” (p.274) and which, according to them is of two types: reiteration and collocation. Of their four sub-types of reiteration, the first three are used in the study: repetition, synonym or near-synonym, and superordinate. Liu's grouping of this type consists of the following: first group: repetition, synonyms

and antonyms; second group: superordinate/hyponyms; third group: related words; and fourth group: text-structuring words (Salkie, 1995; Carter & McCarthy, 1988, in Liu, 2000).

Halliday and Hasan stress the role of a reference item that functions anaphorically, together with a related lexical item, as in the following examples:

Close family friends attended Kay's birthday *party*.
Everyone enjoyed the *party*. (repetition)
Everyone enjoyed the *gathering*. (synonym)
Everyone enjoyed the *event*. (superordinate)

Halliday and Hasan also reiterate that cohesion occurs "where the INTERPRETATION of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another" (4). They remind, however, that the two lexical items may cohere whether they have the same referent or whether a referential relationship exists between them, and that the second occurrence, in relation to the first, may be either of the following: a) identical, b) inclusive, c) exclusive, or d) unrelated, in terms of reference. Examples:

A drug pusher is giving drugs to some kids.

- a) The drug pusher will be accosted by the approaching policeman.

The drug pusher in *a* has the same referent as *A drug pusher* mentioned in the first sentence. The second occurrence therefore is identical. The referent item *he* is often used in this instance.

Those drug pushers destroy the lives of their victims.

Included in b) *Those drug pushers* is *The drug pusher* referred to previously, as well as the other drug pushers. The second occurrence therefore is inclusive.

- b) There's another drug pusher at the corner down the street. The drug pusher referred to in a) is excluded; thus, the second occurrence is exclusive. Halliday and Hasan recognize the occurrence of explicit non-identity of reference – there is no reference item to replace *drug pusher*. A substitute or elliptical form, *another one* or *another*, can be used.
- c) Most drug pushers find kids an easy prey. *Most drug pushers* has no referential relation to *the drug pusher* previously mentioned. It is difficult to say whether the drug pusher referred to in *a* finds kids an easy prey, and the speaker may not necessarily be aware of this or care. Occurrence of the second is unrelated.

The study also derives from Liu's grouping of lexical ties. She clusters repetition, synonyms, and antonyms together in one group, the last item not explicitly included in Halliday and Hasan's categorization. Whereas superordinates belong to reiteration in Halliday and Hasan's grouping, Liu classifies them as belonging to group 2. Her group 3 consists of related words that may be synonymic, contrasting, or having a superordinate/hyponymic relation (Salkie, 1995, in Liu, 2000), depending on the context in which they are used. These she terms situational synonyms, situational antonyms, and situational superordinate/hyponyms. Liu's fourth group consists of text-structuring words (Carter & McCarthy, 1988, in Liu, 2000) that make sense only if there is something for the reader to refer back to in the preceding statements and/or look ahead as a way of lexicalizing them for better understanding (p.30). Halliday and Hasan's second type of lexical cohesion, termed "collocation," can probably fall occasionally into Liu's third group, which consists of related words.

Following are examples from students' papers:

- A. Situational synonyms
- *search — retrieval*
 - *productivity — continuity*

B. Situational antonyms

- *in the Filipino society – in the United States*
- *benefits — risks*

The fourth type in Liu's grouping, called text-structuring words, includes what she terms as "half-way house words" as they fall somewhere "between what have been traditionally called content and functional words" (p.30). We need to find the referents of certain nouns, adjectives, and verbs by looking back and reading ahead to comprehend the text more fully. The following passage contains text-structuring words:

It is the key to healthy functioning because it pervades all realms of an individual's life

The underscored words *key* and *healthy functioning* belong to the category text-structuring words as one has to reread the preceding statement in order to know what are being referred to by the highlighted words (self-esteem in that paper) and to look ahead for more explanations concerning *self-esteem*. As Liu (2000) observes, both words need to be "lexicalized" (p.30) to make them meaningful to the reader.

Method

Data for the study came from 30 graduate students enrolled in advanced academic writing courses in English at De La Salle University-Manila. These ELS students were grouped into two: Group A, or the multidisciplinary group, whose programs are varied, meaning the students come from different disciplines, and Group B or the English group, whose program is Master of Arts in Teaching the English Language or MATEL. The advanced writing course for Group A is meant only for graduate students in different fields who fail to pass the essay part of the admissions test given by the University. Group B's advanced writing course is a basic component of their MATEL program. The two groups were presumed to be different in their level of proficiency in English.

Papers were chosen on the basis of their availability and completeness of parts prescribed for each paper. From each group, papers with the following scores were taken: 90-100% (3); 80-89% (6); 70-79% (5); 60-69% (1). The first part of the Conclusion section, totaling between 100-135 words, was examined for the existence of lexical cohesion. Papers sampled were those submitted between SY 2000-2001 and SY 2005-2006.

Two professors who have taught writing courses for years and who are believed to possess expertise in the field were invited as co-raters. All three of us coded lexical items that featured in cohesive ties, as well as in rating the overall lexical cohesiveness of each paper. The invited raters coded and rated 53.33%, or 16 papers, of the 30 samples, adopting Castro's (2004b) rating scale ranging from 1-4 with some changes on the descriptors. The following rating scale was used in rating the over-all lexical cohesiveness of the text:

- 4 = Above Average in terms of overall lexical cohesiveness
- 3 = Average in terms of overall lexical cohesiveness
- 2 = Below Average in terms of overall lexical cohesiveness
- 1 = Almost totally incohesive

As contained in Castro's instrument, the raters were requested to give the reasons – positive or negative – for their evaluation. Given reasons served as their justification for the ratings. Two out of three raters' decisions prevailed.

To answer the first question, data were analyzed using the four types of content lexical ties proposed by Liu and which have been discussed in the framework: Group I: Repetition, Synonyms, Antonyms; Group II: Superordinate/Hyponyms; Group III: Related Words; and Group IV: Text-structuring Words. Frequencies and corresponding percentages of occurrences of these content lexical ties were taken. To answer the second question and determine how lexical items cohere with or without referential relationships existing between them, Halliday and Hasan's type of cohesive occurrences

were used. For the third question, holistic scores were tallied based on the adopted rating scale.

Results and Discussion

Frequently Used Lexical Ties

Table 1 shows the students' preferred types of lexical ties. It can be noted that both groups have a high preference for Repetition, the first type in Liu's first group of lexical ties. This finding supports Castro's (2004a) observation and those of Connon (1984) and Norment (1994) as cited by Castro (2004a). Samples of high frequency lexical items belonging to this type of cohesion are the following: *commercials, gender, images, Filipino, hedging, children, people, self-concept, motivational, working, adults, and parents*. Several others occurred with frequencies lower than four. [Types of relationships existing between repeated words will be discussed later.] Graduate students seem to find the use of Repetition a convenient way of establishing lexical ties, both groups having employed this type on an almost equal frequency. One probable reason for this is to enable them to create emphasis.

Table 1.
Summary of preferred types of lexical ties

| Lexical Tie | Group A | | Group B | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|
| | <i>f</i> | % | <i>f</i> | % |
| Group I | | | | |
| Repetition | 165 | 49.7 | 167 | 50.3 |
| Synonyms | 22 | 71 | 9 | 29 |
| Antonyms | 3 | 50 | 3 | 50 |
| Group II | | | | |
| Superordinate/Hyponyms | 39 | 71 | 16 | 29 |
| Group III | | | | |
| Situational Synonyms | 54 | 60 | 36 | 40 |
| Situational Antonyms | 11 | 52 | 10 | 48 |
| Situational Superordinates/Hyponyms | 3 | 50 | 3 | 50 |
| Group IV | | | | |
| Text-structuring Words | 27 | 40 | 40 | 60 |

It is somewhat surprising to note that Group B students are behind in the employment of Synonyms, Superordinate/Hyponyms, as well as Situational Synonyms and Situational Antonyms, with differences ranging from 4 to 42%, they being expected to be more familiar with language teaching. It is only in the use of text-structuring words that this group of students enrolled in an English program have shown higher results. The two groups use Antonyms and Situational Superordinate/Hyponyms equally.

Samples of lexical cohesion found in students' papers:

A. Synonyms

- *alternation – transformation*
- *evolve – change*
- *results – output*
- *clustering – grouping*
- *limit – constraint*

B. Antonyms

- *approval – disapproval*
- *complex – simple*
- *broad – narrowed*
- *speed up – limit*
- *healer - healee*

C. Superordinate Hyponyms

- *management*
 - *employees*
 - *clerk*
- *cultural identity*
 - *humility*
- *value*
 - *face-saving*
- *topic*
 - *information*
- *tools*
 - *search engine*

D. Situational Antonyms

- *in the Filipino society – in the United States*
- *Western countries – Filipinos*
- *benefits – risks*
- *self-motivated – motivated by the enjoyment of benefits and incentives*

E. Situational Superordinate/Hyponyms

- *motivational factors*
 - *working environment*
 - *health care benefits*
- *key to healthy functioning*
 - *self-esteem*
- *changes*
 - *method of instruction*
 - *influence of new immigrants*
 - *trend of writing*
- *news writers*
 - *Filipino*
 - *Singaporean*
- *personal standard*
 - *perfectionism*

More text-structuring words have been noted in Group B's papers, the difference being equivalent to 20%. Liu refers to these words as "half-way house" words (2000, p.30) based on Carter and McCarthy's theory, as they may function as half-content words and half-functional words.

Examples follow:

S₁₂ (Group A) This study found significance different between the *novices and juniors* on some factors of *self-concept*.

Novices and juniors and *self-concept* could be understood more fully only by looking back at the preceding statement that

mentions how Chinese sisters' self-concept could be determined. Succeeding texts talk about the meaning of self-concept and its different types.

S₁₃ (Group A) Most of the respondents enjoy *job motivational programs* offered to them.

Referring to the previous statement, one would understand that the *job motivational programs* referred to are factors that motivate employees to be happy with their jobs, such as working environment and health care benefits. Sentences that follow explain why most of the respondents enjoy the available job motivational programs: *They enjoy the benefits and incentives given them; they are satisfied in their work.*

Cohesive Occurrences of Repeated Lexical Items

Table 2 shows the types of cohesive occurrences involving repeated lexical items.

Table 2.
Types of Cohesive Occurrences Among Repeated Lexical Items

| Group | Identical | | Inclusive | | Exclusive | | Unrelated | |
|---------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Group A | 27 | 60 | 7 | 15.55 | 5 | 11.11 | 6 | 13.33 |
| Group B | 30 | 66.66 | 5 | 11.11 | 5 | 11.11 | 5 | 11.11 |

It can be noted that the identical type of occurrence between and among repeated lexical items is the most prevalent. Here are some examples:

Identical Occurrence

S₂ (Group B) The transformation of a language undergoes a two-dimensional process; *literal and contextual* translation but in the stated telenovelas the writers used the Idiomatic translation that is between *the literal and contextual*.

Termed “simple repetition” by Hoey (1996, p.52), this type of occurrence enables the writers to add something new to what has been said earlier. Thus, *literal and contextual*, referred to initially as a two-dimensional process, is presented again in relation to the idiomatic translation telenovela passages. Hoey uses the term “semantic drift” to refer to the slight shift in meaning that takes place in a word from its original occurrence up to its repetition.

Complex repetition – which occurs when the repeated lexical item shares the same lexical morpheme as the first – has been noted, too, as in the following example:

S₁ (Group B) ... it seems to *portray* them in a light approval or disapproval ... it would still appear that women are *portraying* stereotyped rules.

Portray and *portraying* have the same lexical morpheme but are not formally identical. The occurrence of *portraying* belongs to the complex type of repetition.

The Inclusive, Exclusive, and Unrelated types of repetition occurred much less frequently, their percentages of occurrence ranging from 5-7% only:

Examples follow:

Inclusive Occurrence

S₃ (Group A) With personal standards being the more dominant dimension of *perfectionism* ... may be concluded that the

... UAAP Men's Basketball team (senior division) adopt an adaptive type of *perfectionism*.

The second *perfectionism*, which appears to be a hyponym of the same lexical item mentioned first, can be regarded as part of it; the second occurrence is inclusive based on Halliday and Hasan's discussion of this type of repetition.

Exclusive Occurrence

S₅ (Group A) ... Filipinos are also at risk in attempting *suicide* even though the rates of completed *suicide* are not that high

The second *suicide* refers to a different type – completed suicide – whereas the first *suicide* talks about an attempted one. Non-identity of reference (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) makes the second occurrence exclusive.

Unrelated Occurrence

S₆ (Group A) *Employees* with good moods are an asset to the organization. However, moodiness is a fact of life. Not all *employees* can be high all time.

The second *employees* appears to have no referential relation to the *employees* previously mentioned. The first *employees* are specifically those with good moods.

Students' high preference for the use of identical forms of repetition seems to imply their attempt to make their texts cohere better by not simply repeating lexical items but slowly and unconsciously allowing "shift . . . such that its meaning at the end is slightly different from that it had at the beginning" (Hoey, p.54). Such "semantic drift" is believed to contribute to substantiating students' texts, in addition to their probable intention to emphasize their points. Low preference for the other three types of

cohesiveness might mean the students' desire to provide more supporting ideas for their main focus using repetitions that do not appear to be directly related. The inclusive, exclusive, and unrelated types of repetition probably helped them to reiterate and/or expand the main ideas proposed with some variety.

Holistic Scores in Overall Lexical Cohesion

Table 3 shows the summary of student papers' holistic scores. Data indicate that sampled papers from the multidisciplinary group (B) are slightly better than those from the group enrolled in an English program (A). The overall results do not suggest a strong cohesion, but they do not appear threatening either. The more than 50% Average scores obtained by Group B and the little less than 50% ratings obtained by Group A signify a lighter task on the teachers' part in developing the students' ability to achieve lexical cohesiveness when writing their papers.

Table 3.
Summary of Student Papers Holistic Scores

| Group | Holistic Scores | | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|---|-------------|-------|----------------|----|-------------------------------|-------|
| | 4 (Above Ave.) | | 3 (Average) | | 2 (Below Ave.) | | 1 (Almost Totally Incohesive) | |
| | <i>f</i> | % | <i>f</i> | % | <i>f</i> | % | <i>f</i> | % |
| Group A | 0 | 0 | 8 | 53.33 | 6 | 40 | 1 | 6.66 |
| Group B | 0 | 0 | 7 | 46.66 | 6 | 40 | 2 | 13.33 |

The slightly better performance displayed by students from various fields is highly encouraging, considering the fact that they enrolled in the course as a result of an unsatisfactory performance in the essay writing portion of the Admissions Exam. For Group B students – the future ESL teachers – more effort is necessary to help them improve their ability to produce more lexically cohesive items.

Sample comments from the raters follow:

For papers scored 1:

- *Irrelevant statements are given*
- *Use of irrelevant terms*
- *Writer violates rules of cohesion*
- *Vague sentences; terms not explained or discussed*
- *Use of several non-text structuring words*
- *Need to use more and appropriate transitional devices*

For papers scored 2:

- *Lack of cohesion between and among sentences*
- *An attempt at cohesiveness was made initially but it was not sustained in the last 2 sentences, which seem to digress and cannot be related to the topic started*
- *Needs to use transitional devices especially when sentences are long*
- *Situational synonyms useful but more transitions needed*
- *Sentences look choppy*

For papers scored 3:

- *Clear study*
- *Smooth flow of ideas*
- *Examples support the thesis statement*
- *Structure follows the G-S pattern in academic writing*
- *Sentences develop the main idea*
- *Cohesion evident in the first paragraph but the topic mentioned in the last paragraph has no referent in the text*
- *Too many problems that are unrelated are enumerated; lacks focus*
- *Sentences flowed in a logical way; transitions used*
- *Reader can follow the idea*

Summing up, students' possession of a relatively average amount of vocabulary can probably be regarded as one positive implication that can be derived from the study. Despite the high expectations that the raters might have had – they being seasoned professors of writing courses – only 19.99% of the total population sampled presented Almost Totally Incohesive papers, implying that the students' performance was not highly frustrating. Students' attempts to achieve lexical cohesiveness through identical repetition in combination with other types of lexical cohesion seem to have worked somewhat favorably, but obviously calling for further mastery of the skill.

Conclusion

The findings provide some useful insights, one of which is the need for the students' lexical knowledge – this being an “important predictor of success” (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1998, p. 452)—to be honed further. Vocabulary development includes both the acquisition of vocabulary and the deepening of lexical knowledge. Verhallen and Schoonen believe such development can be achieved by conducting diagnostic testing, followed by the appropriate remedial teaching, making materials available at students' disposal and emphasizing the importance of “experience and practice in categorizing and hierarchical lexical network building” (p.469). Well-developed lexical knowledge can equip students in writing more lexically cohesive papers. Additionally, a bigger repertoire of vocabulary combined with a deep understanding of what has been stored can possibly be reflected in the students' written work, allowing them to be more evaluative and context-based in processing and presenting information (Nassaji, 2003), and hopefully, increasing their chances of achieving stronger lexical cohesion. The need to enhance students' ability to use cohesive lexical items is supported by the comments given by the raters and by the contents of the papers themselves. Sampled essays were not devoid of irrelevant passages, contributing to the almost total incohesiveness of three of the papers sampled and low cohesion in many texts. According to Freebody and Anderson, “irrelevant material in the text would . . .

place additional burdens on the reader and hamper the development of ideas about the meanings of text segments containing unfamiliar words" (1983, p.21). Integration of useful exercises in the Advanced Academic Writing course syllabus can probably help address this inadequacy on the part of the students.

An additional point to consider is the implication of the varying concepts regarding the relationship between cohesion and coherence. Articles reviewed show differing views about these two phenomena. Hoey, for instance, claiming that cohesive ties are not by themselves "criterial of coherence" (1996, p.12), argues that the two are not synonymous. Ho continues that a discourse may be fully coherent despite the absence of any cohesive tie (Widdowson, 1978, in Hoey, 1996). Hoey further believes that unlike coherence, cohesion can be judged rather objectively as there are identifiable linguistic features that can establish cohesive ties. Coherence, on the other hand, is viewed to be subjective, as two readers or listeners can have different evaluations of the same text, one possibly judging it as coherent and the other thinking otherwise. A clear distinction between cohesion and coherence is also argued by De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). Hasan (1984), on the other hand, claims that the degree of coherence correlates with the degree of interaction between cohesive chains. Her theory is supported by El Shiyab's (1997) findings that the continuum of interaction reflected in his data when he investigated lexical cohesion with reference to the identity chain in Arabic texts is "an indication of tight coherence within the text" (p.222), and that chain interaction is a strong basis in determining text coherence. If Hasan's contention that the underlying base for coherence rests on cohesion is true, then the more justification for us educators in ELT to be more seriously mindful of devising the best strategies in teaching our students the intricacies of establishing a strong cohesion in their texts. As Hasan argues, she does not believe that the "gulf between 'surface' and 'deep', between 'form' and 'meaning' . . . " is "irreconcilable" (p.186). For after all, when we look at cohesion in a text, concerns on coherence are not far away.

This paper might not have analyzed a big number of samples but it can be considered as a valuable contribution in the field of linguistics, particularly in our country where studies on cohesion are wanting. As revealed in the reviewed literature, lack of cohesion in students' writing is one of L2 teachers' biggest concerns. Researchers from other countries have noted the role played by cohesion in comprehending read texts. Studies like this concluded one can give teachers more insights concerning ESL learners' level or skill in recognizing and achieving cohesion in their work. Such information can then be useful in revising existing syllabi, and preparing the appropriate methodology and instructional materials to address these needs.

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