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To Mom and Dad

for their devotion to my education,

and

to my family

for their patience and support,

I dedicate

my work.

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ABSTRACT

Coherence is a multidimensional concept which covers a large number of grammatical and discourse features of texts that need to be mastered by language learners. English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language novice learners, however, seem to have a vague conception of coherence and tend to rely heavily on cohesive devices to link their ideas while they neglect other discourse features. This is believed to be a consequence of language teachers' emphasis on these devices in their writing instruction. This research investigates whether teaching explicitly the different aspects of coherence would lead the involved participants — Second Year students of English at The Department of Foreign Languages, University of Mentouri, Constantine— to write more coherent texts. An experiment is carried out to investigate the effectiveness of a method of teaching coherence developed by Lee (2002) in which equal importance is given to all its aspects. An experimental group was taught following that method and a control group was taught following the method proposed in the textbook most widely used by teachers in the department in which the study was conducted. A pre-test and a post-test were administered and the results of the two groups were compared. The results confirm that the proposed method of teaching coherence helped the EXP group improve, especially in the areas with which the participants were found to have most problems, namely, the grammatical aspects and the mechanics of coherence.

RESUME

La cohérence est une notion à dimensions diverses; elle englobe un grand nombre de constituants du texte qui doivent être maîtrisés par les apprenants des langues étrangères. Cependant les apprenants de l'Anglais comme langue étrangère et seconde ont une compréhension floue de ce que peut être la cohérence. Ils ont tendance à trop utiliser les connecteurs logiques par exemple et à négliger les autres constituants de la cohérence. Ce défaut semble être la faute des enseignants car ces derniers donnent la primauté à l'enseignement de ces outils linguistiques en dépit des autres constituants de la cohérence.

Cette recherche veut prouver que l'enseignement directe des différents constituants de la cohérence mène à diminuer le nombre de fautes et donc à obtenir des textes de plus en plus cohérents. Une expérience a été faite sur les étudiants du deuxième année, département d'Anglais, institut des langues étrangères, université de Mentouri, Constantine, pour vérifier l'efficacité d'une méthode d'enseignement de la cohérence proposée par Lee 2002. Cette méthode donne une égale importance aux constituants de la cohérence du texte anglais, pour cela on a soumis un groupe de ce département à cette méthode alors qu'un autre a suivi la méthode classique qu'on trouve dans le livre scolaire le plus utilisé par les professeurs de l'expression écrite. Deux tests ont été fait avant et après la recherche et les résultats ont été comparés. La méthode était réussie et a conduit à l'amélioration du rendement surtout en ce qui concerne les constituants les plus difficiles pour les apprenants : la grammaire et la ponctuation.

ملخص

الترابط هو مفهوم متعدّد الأبعاد يشمل عددا كبيرا من مقوّمات النص التي يجب على متعلم اللغة أن يتمكن منها. لكنّ الطّلبة المبتدئين للغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية أو أجنبية لديهم فهم مبهم لهذا المفهوم و ميل إلى الإكثار من استخدام أدوات الرّبط اللغوية و إلى إهمال مقوّمات الترابط الأخرى. يبدو أن هذا النقص راجع إلى إصرار مدرسيهم على تلقين تلك الأدوات على حساب الخصائص الأخرى. ينظر هذا البحث فيما إذا كان التلقين المباشر لمختلف مقوّمات النص المترابط قد يؤدي بالطلبة المشاركين في البحث (طلبة السنة الثانية، قسم الانجليزية، معهد اللغات الأجنبية، جامعة منتوري، قسنطينة) إلى كتابة نصوص أكثر ترابطا. أجريت تجربة في هذا القسم للتحقق من فعالية طريقة لتدريس الترابط مقترحة من طرف لي (2002). تعطي طريقة التدريس تلك أهمية متساوية لكل مقومات الترابط في النص الانجليزي. أجريت التجربة على فوجين درس احدهما وفقا لطريقة التدريس المقترحة في هذا البحث بينما درس الفوج الآخر وفقا للطريقة المقترحة في الكتاب المدرسي الأكثر استعمالا من طرف أساتذة التعبير الكتابي في القسم الذي اجري فيه البحث. اجري اختباران قبل و بعد البحث و تمت مقارنة نتائجهما. تؤكد النتائج أنّ طريقة التدريس المقترحة في البحث أدّت إلى تحسين أداء طلبة فوج الاختبار خاصة فيما يتعلق بمقوّمات الترابط الأكثر صعوبة بالنسبة إليهم و هي المقوّمات اللغوية إضافة إلى علامات الوقف.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CV	Clear View
Diff.	Difference
Effe. Intro.	Effective Introduction
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
Elabo.	Elaboration
Ellip.	Ellipsis
ESL	English as a Second Language
Exampl.	Examplification
EXP	Experimental
Improvt Mean	Improvement Mean
Info. Distrib.	Information Distribution
Intro.	Introduction
L1	First Language
LC	Local Coherence
O/N	Old/New
P/S	Problem/Solution
Parall.	Parallelism
Pgh Trans.	Paragraph Transition
Pph Div.	Paragraph Division
Pron. Ref.	Pronoun Reference
Repet.	Repetition
Rlv	Relevance
Subst.	Substitution
T/C	Topic/Comment
TSA	Topical Structure Analysis
T-unit	Topic Unit

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1. Statement of the Problem

From observation of Second Year students' written production, and from discussions with teachers of Written Expression at The Department of English, it has become evident that coherence is a recurrent problem in students' compositions. Cohesive devices are often misused (especially *because*) or overused (especially *and* and *but*) by students, in their attempts to impose some logicality on their writing which contains sometimes no clear logical organization. The problem is noticed in essays of students who receive training on the use of cohesive devices as well as in essays of those who do not. The training our students receive seems to help them only become acquainted with the meaning and functions of the most widely used connectors. They seem to have a vague conception of coherence and to know little about the possible strategies that would help them improve this aspect in their production. They tend to focus on sentence level coherence and to ignore discourse level coherence.

2. Aim of the Study

The reason behind the interest in the subject is the belief that coherence should be a significant element in writing instruction, and that teachers should be able to use specific terms to explain the concept and to give instructional feedback on students' errors.

This research work aims at gaining thorough understanding of the concept of coherence. It also seeks to use recent research findings to suggest practical strategies that would help students write more coherent texts and become effective writers.

3. Research Questions and Hypothesis

This research work is motivated by the two following questions:

a. How can we use research findings about the concept of coherence to help students enhance their written production?

b. Is there a way to guide students write more coherent texts with fewer connectors?

We hypothesize that raising students' awareness to the discourse aspects of coherence as well as to the grammatical ones using explicit terms would help them write more coherent texts.

4. Means of Research

To check the above hypothesis, we carried out an empirical study in which the effectiveness of a method of teaching coherence developed by Lee (2002) is assessed. In this method, the aspects of coherence identified in the literature are taught following specific steps of instruction in which coherence is described using precise terms. Two groups are involved in the study, an experimental group which is taught following the method of teaching under study and a control group which is taught following a method proposed in the textbook most widely used by teachers of writing in the Department of English in which the study is carried out. A pre-test and a post-test are administered and their results compared.

5. Structure of the Study

This dissertation comprises four chapters. Chapter One attempts a comprehensive definition of coherence. It presents a historical overview of Discourse analysts' understanding of the concept, defines coherence from two different perspectives — a text-based perspective and a reader-based one—, distinguishes five aspects of coherence, and explains how these are influenced by the genre of the text.

Chapter Two looks into Discourse Analysis for useful techniques of teaching coherence. It also identifies the stages of awareness-raising proposed by Discourse analysts to help learners assimilate the different aspects of coherence. In addition, the chapter reviews different techniques of assessing coherence.

Chapter Three gives, first, detailed information about the sample and the teachers involved in the study, the procedures followed, and the assessment tool used to score the papers of the pre- and the post- tests. Then, the chapter presents the results of the study to identify the areas which are difficult to the participants and to examine how the proposed course helped them improve.

Chapter Four discusses the results of the study against previous research findings, draws teachers' attention to some pedagogical implications which invite them to consider how to apply the proposed method in their classes, discusses the limitations of the study, and proposes paths for future research.

Chapter One

What Is Coherence

Introduction

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Introduction

Coherence in discourse is the quality of being unified and meaningful. Coherence features in English are responsible for organizing and understanding texts at different levels, starting from the clause and its constituents to larger discourse elements. In the literature about coherence, two approaches are distinguished: a text-based approach that defines coherence as the sum of the linguistic and the organizational devices used by writers to organize their ideas and a reader-based one which defines coherence as the result of text interpretation and considers the contribution of the reader to the creation of coherence. In addition to these two approaches, Genre Analysis gives some insights on how genre conventions control the use of the text features of coherence by the writer. Before giving a definition of coherence, we find it appropriate to start with a justification of our claim that coherence should be given the greatest weight in writing programs.

1.1. What Makes Good Writing?

Writing is an important means of communication; it is probably the skill that is most needed in academic communities. A great deal of the work carried out in the academic world is done through the medium of writing. Students keep written records of lectures, do written homework, write summaries and reports, and sit for written exams in almost all their modules. In addition, writing remains the most practical means through which the proficiency level of language learners is assessed. Their mastery of the graphological, the grammatical and the rhetorical resources of the target language is clearly manifested in their written production.

So, if we assess language learners on the basis of their writing ability, what are the aspects we expect them to master? Writing can be looked at from two perspectives: the structural and the communicative. Widdowson distinguishes between writing as usage

and writing as use. The first he defines as "[…] the use of the visual medium to manifest the graphological and the grammatical system of the language", the second as the use of sentences to build discourse (1978: 62). Writing in the academic world is almost never used for the mere manifestation of the language system; texts are considered to be "[…] meaningful configurations of language intended to communicate" (DeBeagrande 1980a: I.11). According to DeBeagrande and Dressler (2002) a text derives its communicative value from its conformity to the following ten standards of communication: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, intertextuality, efficiency, effectiveness, and appropriateness. All these standards are behind the success of communication, but cohesion and coherence have a special status. DeBeagrande and Dressler say: "To some degree, cohesion and coherence could themselves be regarded as operational goals without whose attainment other discourse goals may be blocked" (I.3). The empirical studies of Chiang (1999, 2003) confirm that raters' and native speakers' judgements of the quality of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' writing relies more on discourse features like cohesion and coherence. Grammatical weaknesses are not considered unless they hinder their understanding of the writer's intended meaning.

Therefore, coherence should be given an important weight in writing syllabuses if instruction is to be effective, and in order to be able to teach it appropriately, we need thorough understanding of the concept and useful insights on how to introduce it best in writing classes.

1.2. Defining Coherence

Putting a clear definition of coherence is not an easy task because it is a complex phenomenon that takes in a large number of constituents. In this section, first, a historical overview of the development of Discourse analysts' understanding of

coherence is presented; second, the text-based and the reader-based approaches to coherence are discussed; third, a detailed discussion of the text features of coherence is attempted, and finally, the contribution of Genre Analysis to the understanding of the concept is considered.

1.2.1. The Cohesion and Coherence Debate: A Historical Overview

Coherence has long been confused with cohesion because of the traditional overemphasis on the linguistic description of texts. Consequently, the linguistic devices which signal underlying coherence relations were considered almost the only source of continuity in texts, and they were inseparable from the semantic relations they signal. Later, however, the distinction between the concepts of cohesion and coherence was made clear, and the contribution of a certain number of other features was recognized.

The most important work that emphasized the purely linguistic description of coherence was Halliday and Hasan's <u>Cohesion in English</u> (1976). Halliday and Hasan prefer the term 'texture' to coherence: "A text has texture, and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text (2)". Their definition of texture comprises many features which are divided into two categories: features which are internal to the text, and features which are external to it.

The book is devoted to the study of cohesion which is, the authors maintain, the most important internal element of texture, and the factor that distinguishes a text from a non-text. They define the text as a semantic unit (2), and cohesion as the set of internal semantic relations that build it. Halliday and Hasan say: "The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text" (4). It does not concern the global meaning of a text but "[…] how the text is constructed as a semantic edifice" (26). They systematize this semantic notion into five lexico-grammatical categories: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical

cohesion. These categories, they say, provide continuity from one sentence to another (10) and make practical the analysis of texts (13).

The other elements Halliday and Hasan recognize are three and they are only supplementary to cohesion in building texture. Two of these features are textual: one is information structure and thematic patterns (299), and the other is macrostructure of the text that categorizes it as one kind of discourse (a letter, a narrative, a poem …etc) (324). The last feature they mention is consistency of register: it is an extra-textual feature that makes a text cohere in respect to the context of the situation in which it has been said or written. It shows, for example, that a text is a personal interaction, an imaginative narrative told at night by a mother to her three–year-old child (323).

So, it could be said that Halliday and Hasan introduced almost all the elements of coherence discussed in the literature about the topic, but under the term 'texture'. The limitation of their work, however, is that they gave a detailed description of cohesion only, and although they meant by cohesion the meaning relations underlying a text together with their linguistic signalling, their description of the concept was purely linguistic. Moreover, Halliday and Hasan considered the cohesive devices they identified necessary if any successful interpretation of a text is to be achieved, they strongly state: "The continuity is not merely an interesting feature that is associated with text; it is a necessary element in the interpretation of text. There has to be cohesion if meanings are to be exchanged at all" (300).

This statement seemed to undermine the crucial role of the other features of coherence and drew upon the work of Halliday and Hasan heavy criticism from many scholars. Discourse analysts noticed the existence of discourse sequences which are coherent without being cohesive. The following sequence is an example:

A: Can you go to Edinburgh tomorrow?

B: B.E.A. pilots are on strike. (Coulthard 1977: 10)

They also noticed that some discourse sequences may be cohesive without being coherent as it is the case in the following example:

Peter went to the movies. He has blue eyes. (Van Dijk 1980: 53)

The conclusion driven from the examples is that cohesion is neither necessary nor sufficient for the establishment of coherent discourse (Cook 1989; Coulthard 1977; Brown and Yule 1983; Van Dijk 1980; Nunan 1993; Carrel 1982). From this conclusion arose the necessity to make a clear distinction between the concepts of cohesion and coherence.

Attempts to understand what type of links connect coherent sequences which are not cohesive led many Discourse analysts to distinguish two types of connectivity: 'conceptual connectivity' and 'sequential connectivity' (DeBeaugrande 1980a: I.2.10). DeBeaugrande says that the first type concerns "[…] how underlying concepts and relations are put together" while the second concerns "[…] how elements are arranged in the surface text" (ibid.). The distinction, in other words, is between coherence -the underlying relations that build a discourse- and cohesion -the overt signaling of those relations (Widdowson 1978: 31; Coulthard 1977: 10). The underlying connectivity of any coherent discourse is studied under two categories of relations: local coherence relations, and global coherence relations. Local coherence involves relations between pairs of sentences or propositions, while global coherence involves relations between larger segments of discourse. Both types of connections are indispensable in acceptable discourse; their importance is highlighted by Crombie (1985: 33): "These relations provide the semantic underpinning for-and are, therefore, a necessary aspect of- the

interpretation of all coherent stretches of language which extend beyond the expression of a single proposition".

In addition to the distinction between the two types of connectivity, communicative and genre approaches contributed to the full understanding of coherence. Other constituents of textual coherence were identified, and the way the different aspects of coherence are influenced by the genre of the text was highlighted. These are discussed below in detail.

1.2.2. Text-Based versus Reader-Based Coherence

Text-based approaches claim that coherence is a property intrinsic to texts; that is, a text coheres if it contains a certain number of features which set it apart as a meaningful and unified whole. Coherence in a text-based approach is created by the writer who understands and makes appropriate use of the resources the language provides to express, organize and connect ideas. These features are: Local Coherence; the underlying semantic relations between pairs of propositions or smaller discourse segments, Macrostructure; the overall theme and organization of a text, Cohesion; the sum of different linguistic tools which serve to make explicit the underlying connectivity of a discourse, Information Distribution; the linear organization of information which comprises two subdivisions –the Topic/Comment (T/C) and the Old/New (O/N) distributions of information, and Metadiscourse; a set of expressions and mechanical tools that clarify the attitudes of the writer as well as the organization of information in his text. The text features of coherence are discussed below in detail with reference to the relevant literature.

However, purely text-based analyses cannot provide us with a full description of coherence because reading and writing are interactive skills and the decisions a writer makes in the process of writing cannot be fully understood without bringing the reader

into the image. Studies which involve the contribution of the reader to the text are known as The Procedural Approach (DeBeaugrand and Dressler 2002; DeBeaugrande 1980a; Reboul 1997; Rouchota 1996; Adam 1991). DeBeaugrande and Dressler say: "Coherence is not a mere feature of texts, but rather the outcome of cognitive processes among text users. The simple juxtaposition of events and situations in a text will activate operations which recover or create text coherence" (2002: I.11). Thus, in the procedural approach, coherence is not intrinsic to the text; it is the product of text interpretation (Reboul 1997: 12; Adam 1991: 139).

Meaning is not 'ready-made' in texts (Widdowson 1978: 31); readers and writers cooperate to make it (Cook 1989: 75). The writer does not put explicitly all the details involved in the recovery of coherence relations (DeBeaugrande 1980a: I.4.6), s/he selects information that would convey her/his message respecting cooperative principles among which are relevance and brevity (Grice 1975). The reader, on her/his part, expects the message to cohere and the writer to adhere to those principles, and s/he is ready to rebuild coherence (Brown and Yule 1983: 224; Bednark 2004: 692). What happens during the act of reading is that the knowledge presented in the text interacts with the knowledge that pre-exists in the memory of the reader. The reader supplies the necessary cognitive efforts to interpret cohesive ties, to recover text connections, to recognize textual patterns, and to infer any missing links (DeBeaugrande 1980a: III.4.41; McCarthy 1991: 27; Nunan 1993: 62; Graesser, Millis, and Zwaan 1997: 182).

The process of coherence recovery is influenced by the reader's knowledge about the world, her/his knowledge of the linguistic code, and her/his knowledge of the shared communicative conventions in the language used (Widdowson 1978: 32). S/He is likely to have in mind schemata about people, properties and events, and how these

may be expressed and organized using the linguistic means and the organizational conventions of the language (Crystal 1995: 232). Coherence cannot be rebuilt if the reader does not possess the schemata of the world involved in the discourse situation (Carrel 1982). S/He will fail to interpret a sequence like '***Clare loves potatoes. She was born in Ireland.***' if s/he is not able to make the connection between 'loving potatoes' and 'being Irish' (McCarthy 1991: 26).

Moreover, a text coheres in the mind of the reader depending on the schemata the latter has about the possible organization of texts of the same or a similar kind (Cook 1989: 9; Widdowson 1978: 32; Brown and Yule 1983: 244-5; Cain 2003: 348-9). Kramsch (1997) explains that structural knowledge is necessary in the act of reading and that it is used by readers-both in the macro- and the micro- levels of processing. So, as Kramsch put it, "Meaning is a rhetorical and not just a cognitive task". A reader's knowledge of textual structures would function as a facilitator in the building of a coherent representation of the world of the text: the more familiar the reader is with the type at hand, the less is its processing cost, and the more coherent it is (Sberber and Wilson 1986: 49; Smith 1994: 95; Widdowson 1978: 26).

1.2.3. Aspects of Coherence

Text-based coherence is the sum of the semantic relations and the linguistic devices used by writers to create unified and meaningful texts. To produce a coherent text, writers establish semantic relations between pairs of ideas, organize them in relation to one topic and (a) given pattern(s) of organization, make those semantic relations explicit using different linking devices, reorganize their ideas linearly respecting some linguistic and communicative restrictions, and finally, they try to make it easy to read their production: they conventionalize the layout of their texts, make clear the organization of their ideas through giving outlines where required or using

organizing expressions, and communicate adequately their attitudes. These requirements correspond, respectively, to the five textual aspects of coherence mentioned above (Local Coherence, Macrostructure, Cohesion, Information Distribution, and Metadiscourse). These aspects are discussed in this section in detail with reference to the relevant literature.

1.2.3.1. Local Coherence

Local Coherence, says Van Dijk, "[…] involves semantic relations between sentences, hence, relations between propositions expressed by these sentences" (1980: 53). These relations can be explained in semantic, functional, and pragmatic terms.

Semantically, "[…] two sentences (or propositions) are connected if their respective facts are related" (53). Propositions can be linked by conditional relations (relations of cause-consequence, reason-phenomenon…etc.), temporal relations (when a fact occurs before, after, or with another in time), or model relations (relations of comparison, contrast, identity…etc.). Van Dijk also recognizes semantic relations between smaller segments like predicates, arguments, and individuals and their properties. Examples of this kind of connections are inclusion, possession, contiguity, and identity (ibid.).

In parallel with semantic analyses, propositions can be analyzed functionally to determine the role each one plays in a coherent discourse. Functional links are based on hierarchical meaning links, the most common of which are specific/particular and more general, class/set and element, and relations of paraphrase, repetition, contrast and correction (35-8). Similar taxonomies are proposed by Crombie (op.cit. 36-41) and Winter (in Coulthard and Johnson 2001). Crombie asserts that the list of these relations is limited and highly teachable (33).

Moreover, relations like repetition, explanation, and correction are not understood only semantically or functionally. "[…] the semantic relations of coherence are at the same time conditions for coherent speech acts" (Van Dijk 1977: 57-60). An explanation does not only add a reason, but is also an act of explaining. The relation underlying the sequence *'John is sick. He can't come.'* can be understood semantically as having a conclusion function, or pragmatically as the act of drawing a conclusion.

Pragmatic analysis is supported by an important number of Discourse analysts who resort to the speech act theory to explain how the mere juxtaposition of propositions can result in a coherent discourse (Widdowson 1978: 29; DeBeagrande 1980a; McCarthy 1991; Crombie 1985: 25; Cook 1989: 38; Nunan 1993). Widdowson (1978: 31) defines coherence as "[…] the relationship between illocutionary acts".

Hence, local coherence relations are necessary while their overt signaling through linguistic means is not always needed. The absence of cohesive devices is sometimes even considered a sign of good prose (Chiang 2003: 480).

1.2.3.2. Macrostructure

Although local coherence relations are a necessary condition for the production of coherent discourse, they cannot fully account for the whole of the concept. Van Dijk (1985: 116) explains that, on the one hand, sentences may cohere locally but fail to construct a unified whole:

> *This morning!* [Sic] *had a tooth ache. I went to the dentist.*
>
> *The dentist has a big car.*
>
> *The car was bought in New York*
>
> *New York has had serious financial troubles* (ibid.).

On the other hand, he adds, paragraphs may cohere without their first and last sentences being linked with any of the local relations mentioned so far (ibid.).

So, a coherent text has, in addition to Local Coherence, a more global kind of organization or a 'Macrostructure'. A macrostructure is "[…] a theoretical reconstruction of intuitive notions such as 'topic' or 'theme' of a discourse" (ibid.). The topic is often made explicit in the discourse's title, its thesis statement, its topic sentence(s), or its summary (in conclusions, for example, or in introductions that contain the blueprint of the discourse) (ibid.).

Macrostructure controls the relevance of the discourse's single propositions, their importance and the nature of the relations that link them (ibid.). This control is achieved through 'macro-rules' which, Van Dijk says, "[…] select, reduce, generalize and re-construct propositions into fewer, more general or more abstract propositions […] ('Going to the station', 'Buying a ticket', 'Going to the platform' would thus together result in the macro proposition 'Taking the train to…')" (ibid.). These macro-rules are indispensable for the production and the understanding of coherent discourse. They facilitate the storage, the retrieval, and the reproduction of complex discourse because the reader/writer can go through these processes without having to bear in mind all the discourse's details (op.cit. 100-1).

Most studies on macrostructure divide a unified discourse into elements according to the respective functions those elements play in their environments. Practically, therefore, the 'macro-pattern' of a discourse is the outline of the functions of those elements (Crombie 1985: 58). Hoey (1983 qtd. In Basturkmen 2002: 52-3) suggests a taxonomy of macro-patterns which, he argues, are persistent in English texts. For example, a coherent text may be a succession of the following elements: Situation-Problem-Solution-Evaluation. This pattern, he maintains, is extremely common in English expository writing. It is also typical to narratives, and is often referred to using the following labels: Setting-Complication-Resolution-Moral (Van

Dijk 1977a: 101). The other macro-patterns Hoey proposes are Instrument-Achievement (or Cause-Consequence), General-Particular, and Preview-Detail. Similarly, Crombie (1985: 61) proposes the macro-patterns Situation-Problem, and Topic-Restriction-Illustration. Macro-patterns co-occur with micro-relations, and the distinction between the two disappears when there is a shift from one sentence or sentence pair to another (Van Dijk, *1977a:* 106).

1.2.3.3. Cohesion

Cohesion, as defined earlier, is a set of linguistic devices which connect ideas making explicit the semantic relations underlying them. The most commonly used typology of cohesive devices is provided by Halliday and Hasan (1976). This typology contains the following five cohesive devices: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion (all the examples used below are taken from Halliday and Hasan op.cit.).

Reference is a device that reminds the reader of an element that has been mentioned before in the text (anaphoric reference) or refers to an element that will be mentioned later (cataphoric reference). For example,

- *It's an old box camera. – I never had one of that kind (43).*

- *He who hesitates is lost (56).*

- *I would never have believed it. They accepted the whole scheme (56).*

Substitution is the replacement of an element in the text by one of the following items: *one, ones, same, do, not,* and *so.* For example,

- *These biscuits are stale. - Get some fresh ones (92).*

- *Does she sing? – No, she doesn't. –Yes, she does (127).*

- *The children work very hard in the garden. – They must do (130).*

Ellipsis is the omitting of an element that has been referred to earlier (and, rarely, an element that will occur after) in the text. For example,

- ***Would you hear another verse? I know twelve more (143).***

Conjunction is a device that makes explicit the semantic relations that exist in a text. It has four kinds: Adversative, additive, temporal and causal. Consider the following examples.

- ***For the whole day he climbed up the steep mountainside, almost without stopping.***

    a- ***And all this time he met no one. (additive)***

    b- ***Yet he was hardly aware of being tired. (adversative)***

    c. ***So by night time the valley was for bellow. (consol)***

    d. ***Then, as dusk fell, he sat down to rest. (temporal) (238-9)***

Lexical cohesion occurs when two elements relate semantically in some way. Types of lexical cohesion are: reiteration (including repetition, synonym, super ordinate, and general word) and collocation (including all items in the text that are semantically related). These cohesive devices, according to Halliday and Hasan (op.cit. 10), provide continuity from one sentence to another and make practical the description and analysis of texts (13).

1.2.3.4. Information Distribution

The global and local coherence relations discussed above represent the hierarchical organization of the semantic elements of a discourse. These relations are further organized linearly in natural discourse so that we can move from one sentence to another smoothly. Writers should connect their sentences respecting processing constraints which are both interactional and cognitive. Socially, a writer's task is to communicate a message to her/his reader respecting communicative standards among which is informativity (DeBeagrande and Dressler 2002). The message should contain some new information that is appropriately linked to what the reader already knows

(Van Dijk 1985: 113). Cognitively, the writer should follow the conventions of Information Distribution to make the understanding of the message an easy task for the reader (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 87-8).

To achieve the linear organization of sentences in writing, two concepts are useful: thematic structure and information structure. Thematic structure is concerned with how the clause is built as a message. The English clause is structured in a fashion that characterizes it as a 'communicative event' (Halliday 1985: 38-54). It contains two constituents: the Theme; "[…] the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned", and the Rheme "[…] the part in which the Theme is developed […]" (ibid.). The Theme is often placed in the front of the clause, and it is often a nominal group (sometimes it is an adverbial group, a prepositional phrase, or a whole clause –for example, a topic sentence). Information structure, however, is concerned with how information is distributed in the clause. Halliday (op.cit. 274-5) defines Information as "[…] a process of interaction between what is already known or predictable and what is new and unpredictable". The information unit, therefore, is divided into a Given part and a New one.

There are a number of generalizations about the Given-New structure that can be summarized in the following points:

1) The Given in a clause contains information that is mentioned before, inferred from the linguistic or the non-linguistic situation, or presented as Given for rhetorical purposes (Halliday 1985);

2) the Given is optional, the New obligatory;

3) the New is more prominent than the Given (275);

4) the Given is short, the New is longer;

5) the Given is often the complete subject of the clause, the New the complete predicate (Vande Kopple 1997).

Although, theoretically, thematic structure and information structure are two distinct notions, practically, they are closely connected. There is an 'unmarked correlation' between the two structures: "[…] a speaker will choose the Theme from within what is Given and locate the focus, the climax of the New, somewhere within the Rheme", says Halliday (1985: 278). Fries (1997) expresses this correlation using the dichotomy Theme-New Rheme. He explains that Thematic information gives the reader an idea about how to relate the discourse segment to what preceded it (it functions locally), whereas the New-Rhematic information contributes to expressing the goals of the discourse. Cognitively, the Given-New distribution facilitates information processing because the Given orients the reader by pointing to an antecedent s/he would research in her/his memory to relate it to the New (Vande Kopple 1997; Fries 1997).

This orienting function is explained in Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (1986). During information processing, they maintain, the reader is in search of the relevance of what s/he reads at the least processing cost, and having in mind a certain presentation of the situation in which the discourse appears, s/he tends to relate the New information s/he receives to that presentation (87-8). So, it is natural that the Given information comes before the New (203) because the writer adapts her/his utterance to the way it would be processed by the reader (217).

Thematic structure has been studied both in isolated sentences and in whole discourses (Van Dijk 1977b; Connor and Farmer 1990). In both of the studies mentioned here, the terms Topic-Comment are preferred to Theme-Rheme. The Topics of the sentences of a discourse are not related only linearly, but in respect to the topic of the

whole discourse. Van Dijk and Connor and Farmer tried to investigate the nature of the relations that link the two. Sentences have topics that organize them linearly, and discourses have topics that organize them globally, and global organization controls local organization: Even if a sentence topic does not refer to a previous sentence topic, it should refer to a phrase that relates to the topic of the whole discourse (Van Dijk 1977b: 61).

Connor and Farmer investigated the kind of relations that link a topic of a discourse to the Topics of its single sentences using Topical Structure Analysis (TSA). TSA is a linguistically-based revision strategy which aims at helping students improve their written production by forcing them to consider coherence both locally and globally. Using this technique, they try to revise how the meaning of each of their sentences relates to the meaning of the whole discourse and to its purpose (TSA is further discussed in Chapter Two).

Another important linguistic technique that is used in English to organize sentences linearly is Nominalization. It is the picking up of the Comment of a sentence in the Topic of the one that follows it using a noun group. The following is an example of nominalization:

> *"People began to make more use of machines*
>
> *and industrialization occurred bringing with it changes (…)" (Martin 1997).*

Martin demonstrates how nominalization is useful to write summaries, to evaluate previous ideas, and to achieve smooth flow of information from one sentence to another.

1.2.3.5. Metadiscourse

To write coherent texts, writers should make their attitudes and the organization of their ideas clear if communication is to be effective (Grice 1975). They can choose

from among the array of linguistic devices at hand items which would help them be organized and clear. Metadiscourse devices are a possibility. Like Information Distribution, Metadiscourse devices organize texts and reduce their processing cost. Hyland (2004: 133) defines Metadiscourse as

> […] self-reflective linguistic expressions referring to the evolving text, to the writer, and to the imagined readers of that text. It is based on the view of writing as a social engagement and, in academic contexts, reveals the way writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their attitudes and commitment.

He says that Metadiscourse expressions, like connectives (however, therefore, etc.), sequencers (first, second, etc.) and edges (might, perhaps, possibly, etc), are commonly taught in English classes but inappropriately. A few teachers explain how these expressions might influence the interaction between the writer, the reader and the text (op.cit. 135).

The other possibilities of Metadiscourse markers Hyland cites are Punctuation, whole clauses ('First, let us consider…'), and even a sequence of sentences ('The book is organized as follows: the first chapter…, the second…') (ibid.). Punctuation and layout are also identified by Brown and Yule (1983: 198) and Crystal (1995: 232) as coherence features. Hyland (op.cit. 138-9) suggests a typology of Metadiscourse markers, and says that the list is open; it may include all the items that fulfill the same function. However, these expressions function as Metadiscourse in some parts of the text and not in others.

A number of theoretical and empirical studies, for example, Dahl (2004); Camiciottoli (2003), agree on the usefulness of Metadiscourse markers as text organizers and as facilitators of comprehension.

1.2.4. Coherence and Genre

A writer organizes his text according to the conventions of the represented type of discourse. These conventions are called 'genre schemes' (Smith 2004: 46). Widdowson (1978: 52) describes a text's conformity to those schemes in terms of coherence degree. A text coheres according to the degree of its conformity to the organizing conventions of the type it represents. If we try to organize a piece of discourse, we can arrive at different cohesive versions or 'texts', but we would judge 'most coherent' the one that conforms best to the required type. Thus, a text is judged to be coherent as "[…] a description, a technical report, a legal brief, an explanation and so on" (op.cit. 45).

Some coherence features, e.g. thematic structure, are used almost invariably in all types of discourse. Others vary to give the type its identity. The features that change most obviously are Punctuation, Layout and Macrostructure. From the outside shape of a text we know whether it is a letter, a newspaper article, or an essay and we build expectations of what we are likely to read in its different parts before indulging in the details (Crystal 1995: 232; Brown and Yule 1983: 198). The macro-pattern of a text is the second most obviously changing feature. Certain macro-patterns are typical to specific discourse genres (McCarthy 1991: 161; Crombie 1985: 62; Van Dijk 1985: 131). The following table summarizes the relations mentioned in these works:

The discourse genre	The typical macro-pattern(s)
- Stories	- setting-complication-resolution
- Advertisements, technological advances reports	- problem-solution
- Argument, scholarly papers	- premises-conclusions
- Encyclopedias, reference texts	- general-specific
- Political journalism	- claim-counterclaim
- Newspapers	- facts-causes, previous events, explanations, background

Table 1. Macro-patterns and Text Genre

Metadiscourse is another coherence feature that changes according to the discourse genre. Hedges, attitude markers, and self-mentions are typical to human and social sciences; hedges are used, in all academic writing, to soften categorical assertions; and transitions are used more frequently in soft fields (Ken Hyland 2004: 144-5). Metadiscourse is more marked in certain fields (e.g. extended essays and persuasive writing) than in others (Lee 2002: 36).

Concerning Information Distribution, the Given-New is violated in poems and advertisements, but it is obligatory in research papers (Lee 2002: 36).

Conclusion

Coherence is found to be a multidimensional concept. From a text-based perspective, it is a number of aspects which govern the organization of texts from the sentence level to the discourse level. From a reader-based perspective, coherence is understood to be the product of collaboration between the writer and the reader. Moreover, the writer is supposed to use the textual elements of coherence respecting genre rules to help his readers understand the text with the least efforts possible.

Chapter Two

Teaching and Assessing Coherence

Introduction

2.1. Teaching Coherence

  2.1.1. Teaching Local Coherence

  2.1.2. Teaching Macrostructure

  2.1.3. Teaching Cohesion

  2.1.4. Teaching Information Distribution

  2.1.5. Teaching Metadiscourse

2.2. Discourse Analysis and Teaching Coherence: An Awareness-raising Approach

2.3. Techniques of Assessing Coherence

Conclusion

Introduction

The previous chapter tried to supply a rather comprehensive definition of coherence; this one tackles the issue of teaching and assessing it. The chapter looks in Discourse Analysis for practical techniques that are suggested to help teachers introduce effectively the discourse features that were discussed in Chapter One, and it reviews different techniques of assessing coherence.

2.1. Teaching Coherence

2.1.1. Teaching Local Coherence

In the literature about coherence, there are no interesting suggestions for teaching local coherence in isolation; suggestions are given in relation to other aspects. TSA (Connor and Farmer 1990), discussed in Chapter One, encourages students to consider the semantic relations between their ideas through examining their sentence topics. TSA pushes students, for example, to elaborate their ideas through discouraging frequent topic shifts (see more details below in section 2.1.4.). Another example is the insistence of some Discourse analysts (Zamel 1983, Crewe 1990) on making students examine the semantic relations underlying their ideas as a preliminary step to deciding on which cohesive devices to use. This is further discussed in the section on teaching Cohesion. Turcotte (1998) insists that teachers make their students identify the semantic relations underlying the texts they read before asking them to write appropriately. Students, he argues, cannot write something they cannot identify. This is an inevitable preliminary step to teaching the meanings of conjunctions.

2.1.2. Teaching Macrostructure

Macro-patterns are taught in discourse-based strategies following four basic steps: explicit teaching, examination of authentic texts, scrambled sentence reordering, and frames. These strategies, if used in the order they appear here, are likely to lead

students gradually towards effective use of the studied structures. The first two strategies introduce the macro-patterns object of study, and the third makes learners aware of how the conventional ordering of discourse elements makes texts appear coherent and natural (Lee 2002; Basturkmen 2002).

The frame, the fourth strategy, is defined by Wray and Lewis (2000) as 'a skeleton outline' which consists of different key words and phrases (starters, connectives…etc.) which students will fill in with relevant content. They argue that these frames save students the time they would spend on structure and give them, therefore, the opportunity to consider the content. This strategy is encouraged by a number of Discourse analysts and EFL/ESL teachers (McCarthy 1991: 161-2; Lee 2002: 35; Basturkmen 2002: 55). McCarthy (ibid.) strongly recommends the use of frames and explains that they help students with low writing competence to organize their details because these students are always 'trapped' in local problems at the expense of global organization. Frames, he says, are also likely to help them avoid digression (1991: 161-2). This strategy is helpful in planning as well as in revision (Johns and Paz 1997).

McCarthy (op-cit 79) also recommends that teachers introduce vocabulary that is typical to the studied macro-patterns. In the Problem-Solution pattern, he illustrates, one is very likely to encounter words like *dilemma, hinder (ance), answer, result, (re)solve*, and so on.

2.1.3. Teaching Cohesion

To teach cohesive devices, Zamel suggests a number of activities which aim at helping students understand the semantic and the grammatical restrictions that govern their use. Sentence combining and completion exercises are proposed as an alternative to the lists of transitions that figure in many textbooks (1983: 25-6). For the manipulation of longer stretches of discourse, she suggests the reordering of scrambled

sentences and the addition of any necessary linkers. Such exercises may lead to a number of differently ordered passages which require the use of different devices; this way, learners are obliged to decide which linkers go with which type of semantic relations, and how to place them appropriately within the order of the sentences (op.cit. 27). She also recommends that students be helped to observe that conjunctions are not always necessary, and that other linking devices, for example, lexical cohesion, pronouns, ellipsis and substitution, are equally or more important (op.cit 28). This is best done, she suggests, during reading (24). The same recommendations are given by Turcotte (discussed above).

For the same purposes, Crewe (1990) outlines three pedagogical approaches which represent, he says, "[…] three stages of awareness that connectives have a textual meaning and are not just surface-level fillers" (321). These approaches are the reductionist, the expansionist and the deductionist approaches.

In the first stage/approach, students learn a list of only the most common connectives (and, but, also…etc.); the others will be learnt through exposure. In the second stage/approach, the previous list of 'opaque' connectives is replaced by a list of their paraphrases ('in addition to this', 'because of this', 'as a result of'/consequence of, reaction to this'…etc.), which state more explicitly the nature of the relationships they are intended to signal. In the last stage/approach, learners are more concerned with the nature of the semantic relations underlying their writing than with the connectives themselves. They are obliged to state first (during the planning stage) those relations, and they can supply connectives only when they have answered questions like: "Does your next section add a similar point to the argument? If so, is it of the same importance or of greater importance? Same? Use 'also', 'in addition', or 'besides'.

Greater? Use 'moreover' or 'furthermore". Learners are supplied with a list of similar questions for the other types of relations (ibid. 321-3).

2.1.4. Teaching Information Distribution

Information Distribution is proposed by Discourse analysts mostly as a revision strategy. The reason is that local considerations in the planning stage are likely to hinder the generation of ideas (Vande Kopple 1997). After students have considered the hierarchical organization of their ideas, it is time to think of how best those ideas could be presented linearly.

As an introductory activity to the topic, Fries (1997) presents students with a written text, requires them to read it and to identify the information that is the point of focus in the text. After having agreed on this, he explains the Theme-NewRheme structure of the English clause and how the information they have identified fall in the New-Rhematic part.

Vande Kopple suggests a taxonomy of practical strategies that would help learners express the Given information before the New. These strategies are the use of passives, reversals, fronts, the expletive 'there', the What-cleft and the It-cleft sentences. He supplies examples of the use of these strategies, exercises about their use in longer stretches of discourse, and practical advice about how they could be best introduced in a writing class.

Discourse Analysis also suggests Nominalization as a practical means to achieve smooth movement of ideas. Sometimes, the Rheme of a sentence is picked up in the Theme of the following one. Nominalization, says Martin (1997), is especially useful in the making of summaries and evaluations of previous points. Martin uses Halliday's concept of the 'grammatical metaphor' to show how meanings like qualities and processes, which are generally encoded, respectively, by adjectives and verbs can be

sometimes expressed using nouns (for example, instable→instability; transform→transformation).

Clause structure can be further exploited to revise the propositional development of writing. The progression of sentence topics can be examined to evaluate their contribution to the discourse topic, and to control digression. This can be done through TSA (Connor and Farmer 1990). This revision strategy shows how sentence topics progress to develop the discourse topic. The authors distinguish three possible progressions: Parallel Progression (when successive sentence topics are semantically identical), Sequential Progression (when they are different: the second topic picks up the comment of the previous sentence), Extended Parallel Progression (when a Parallel Progression is temporarily interrupted by a sequential one). Each kind of the progressions they identify plays a given role in the propositional chain of the text. The first kind of progression is used to reinforce the same idea, the second to add details about the previous idea, the third to return back to a previous topic. Students learn to draw diagrams of how topics progress in their compositions and to assess their propositional development accordingly. Too many Sequential Progressions, for example, shows deviation from the focus of the writing unit. This can be improved by adding an Extended Parallel Progression to achieve a clearer focus. In the first stages, the diagrams are necessary, but through practice, students learn to carry out the analysis more or less intuitively.

2.1.5. Teaching Metadiscourse

The literature available about metadiscourse merely defines the concept and suggests no practical ways of teaching it; this may be because of the newness of the concept. Hyland (2004: 135) points to the fact that metadiscourse is generally taught in a "piecemeal fashion" and that it is rarely shown how metadiscourse markers influence

the interaction between the writer and the reader, or how they relate to the different text genres. Those markers, Hyland adds, are seen from a purely linguistic perspective.

2.2. Discourse Analysis and Teaching Coherence: An Awareness-raising Approach

All the exercises suggested by Discourse analysts in the previous section require that teachers of writing in ESL/EFL classes lead students to assimilate the aspects of coherence gradually following four basic steps: explicit teaching, sample-text analysis, manipulation exercises, and writing practice.

The step of awareness-raising that is emphasized most by Discourse analysts is sample-text analysis. In an awareness-raising approach, reading is seen as the learner's input of different linguistic and discourse aspects of writing. The aim of reading in such an approach is not merely the understanding of the content of texts; the aim is a closer examination of the different devices writers use to achieve their communicative purposes (Byrne 1988: 9). Through exposure and text analysis, learners should become familiar with the conventions of writing in the target language in order to be able to apply them to their own writing. Those conventions will function as facilitators in the writing process. Smith maintains that "Every convention frees the writer from the necessity of making a decision; it is a ready-made solution to a problem". Therefore, the teacher's goal in a writing class is to commit students to analyze, themselves, how different aspects of text organization are realized in English texts, and, eventually, to lead them to use these aspects in their own written production. This is, Smith (2004: 48) asserts, the only way they can improve their writing; otherwise, explicit teaching would be pointless.

Other Discourse analysts argue that explicit instruction with examples is necessary in ESL/EFL classes of writing because of three reasons. The first is that awareness-raising through text analysis only requires vast exposure and a long time, and learners

have little access to English and a limited time to learn it (Liu and Braine 2005: 634-5). The second reason is the negative influence of L1. Although some ordering principles are universal (Smith 2004: 92), Contrastive Rhetoric studies prove that many of the resources languages offer for the organization of composition are different. This applies to the mechanics as well as to the discourse level structures (Connor 1996: 2; Kaplan 1997; Matsuda 1997; Miranda 2003: 300). Kaplan explains that ESL/EFL students need to be taught explicitly the conventions of text organization in the target language because they are not aware that those conventions differ from the ones of their mother tongues or of how strong the impact of the difference is on their writing.

Other Discourse analysts find explicit teaching a useful stage of awareness-raising because it helps learners become more autonomous and self-reflective. For McCarthy and Carter (1994: 165), "A more reflective language learner is a more effective language learner". Schoonen et al. (2003: 168) say: "The presence of linguistic and metacognitive knowledge resources in long-term memory is just one facet of the writing process". It makes, they explain, decision making during the writing process easier, faster and more judicious (ibid.).

However, explicit instruction should not inhibit learning by obliging students to memorize the presented material; rather, teachers should draw their attention to how these aspects are realized in the target language and help them apply those aspects to their writing. Widdowson (1978: 53-4) suggests that teachers exploit what students have already read in books of geography, philosophy and science to demonstrate how the studied features are realized in the target language. Ruthenford (1987: 104, qtd. In McCarthy and Carter 1994: 162) explains how teachers should understand awareness-raising:

> Whatever it is that is raised to consciousness, it is not to be looked upon as an artifact or object of study to become committed to memory by the learner […] What

is raised to consciousness is not the grammatical product but aspects of the grammatical process […] C-R (consciousness raising) activity must strive for consistency with this principle".

Manipulation exercises are guided writing tasks which require students generally to reorder jumbled passages, to fill in incomplete sentences with (a) missing element(s), or to drop any irrelevant ideas. Such exercises put in practice students' knowledge about the aspects dealt with and require them to decide on how best to apply that knowledge to achieve coherence. After manipulation exercises, students are supposed to be ready to engage in free writing tasks in which they apply the studied aspects to their own compositions (Lee 2002; Basturkmen 2002).

2.3. Techniques of Assessing Coherence

We mentioned in the introduction that some teachers give ambiguous definitions of coherence. This ambiguity makes the evaluation of coherence in students' writing a rather subjective task. Teachers who rely on such fuzzy definitions of the concept are highly likely to give unreliable scores (Todd et al. 2004: 86-7). However, the growth of researchers' understanding of the concept encouraged some of them to put forward scales which aim at providing teachers with more objective ways to evaluate the papers of their students. They equally aim at teaching students easy ways, if possible, to revise their own production.

Connor and Farmer (1990: 128) suggest TSA, discussed earlier, as a strategy for the description of text coherence. They propose that it be used both in research as a descriptive tool and in classes as a revision strategy. TSA has the advantage of obliging students to consider coherence in their papers both locally and globally. It examines first the placement of successive sentence topics and then how these contribute to the building of the discourse topic. TSA is used by Lee (2002) in the assessment of the participants in her study. In her study, the participants who improved their papers

were found to have relied more on Sequential Progressions. This means that their ideas were more elaborated in their revised drafts, thus, more coherent. Rogers (2004: 143) proposes another assessment technique based on sentence topics. She found a strong correlation between 'topic continuity' — 'Sequential Progression' in Connor and Farmer (1990) — and writing quality. In other words, the fewer is the number of topic shifts in a discourse, the higher is its quality; however, it is not claimed that topic delay always enhances coherence.

Another method of assessing coherence is proposed by Todd et al. (2004). This method is based on the semantic analysis of the content of a discourse. The scorers, first, identify the key concepts in the discourse and the semantic relations that link them, then they measure the average distance of moves between the key concepts, the percentage of coherence breaks and the number of moves in relation to T-units (A T-unit is defined by Fries as "[…] an independent clause together with all related dependent clauses" (qtd. in Todd et al. 2004: 89). These three measures allow for a quantitative assessment of coherence: the lower is the distance between the key concepts and the number of coherence breaks, the greater is the coherence of the text. Todd et al. argue that these measures yield objective judgments of coherence and complain that teachers almost always ignore them while scoring the papers of their students. They suggest that teachers be trained on this assessment technique until they get used to it and do looser, more intuitive analyses (102).

Pepin (1998) proposes a more exhaustive technique of coherence assessment. It a typology of coherence mistakes aimed at helping teachers found their intuitive judgments of the papers of their students. The typology contains the following items:

1.Cohesion Mistakes :

1.1.Mistakes of Semantic Parallelism (when subsequent comparable concepts are not made in correspondence with each other)

1.2.Mistakes of Resonance: Resonance, according to Peppin, is the use of pronouns and linkers. It is required where there is a sudden change of topic. The way this kind of problem can be solved is illustrated through the following examples which she extracts from student papers:

[On discute des avantages et des inconvénients de la télévision.] *Pour les enfants, ma mère disait que... He bien c'est faux.* [Assez longue digression.] *Les plus vieux disent que la télé...* [Dire : « Les plus vieux, eux, ... » ; ou « Pour leur part, les plus vieux... »]

Même si un athlète ne pourra pas jouer aussi longtemps qu'il l'espère, l'argent qu'on lui donnera sera plus que nécessaire pour le reste de sa vie. Un docteur ne pourra s'attendre qu'à une petite pension de rien qui ne lui durera que quelques années. [Dire : « Un docteur, lui, ne pourra ... » ; ou « Un docteur, quant à lui,... »]

2. **Hierarchy Mistakes**

   2.1. **Mistakes in the order and the coordination of ideas**

   2.2. **Lack of Syntactic Parallelism (The same kind of parallelism described by Halliday and Hasan above)**

3. **Mistakes of 'Uncertain Resolution'**

   3.1. **Juxtaposition of Ideas (When ideas change suddenly and their relations to the previous elements of a text are not made clear)**

   3.2.**Information Deviation (or digression)**

The typology proposed by Peppin refers to many of the aspects of coherence identified above in the literature, but it classifies them slightly differently. Peppin proposes it as a guide for teachers who would like to give more reliable scores to their students' papers.

It is also helpful, she says, for students to assess, and, ultimately, to revise their own production.

The last scale we propose is one developed by Chiang (1999). The scale comprises four subscales for Syntax, Morphology, Coherence, and Cohesion; however, only the last two are of concern in the present study. Coherence and Cohesion, like the two other areas of evaluation, are further subdivided into their constituent aspects. The scorer gives for each aspect either of five scores; each score represents a different level of performance achieved by the student writer. Here are the Coherence and Cohesion scales:

Please circle the number that reflects the degree to which you agree with the statement about the essay. Circle NA (Not Applicable) when insufficient or no information is available concerning the particular feature.

5 = Strongly Agree   4 = Agree   3 = Undecided   2 = Disagree   1 = Strongly Disagree

COHERENCE

5 4 3 2 1 NA (a) The beginning section is effective in introducing the reader to the subject.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (b) The ideas in the essay are all very relevant to the topic.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (c) The ideas in the essay are well-related one to another.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (d) The causal relationship between ideas is clear.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (e) Problem statements are followed up by responses/solutions.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (f) Different ideas are effectively compared/contrasted.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (g) Ideas mentioned are elaborated.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (h) The writer's overall point of view is clear.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (i) The division of paragraphs is justifiable in terms of content relevance.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (j) Transition between paragraphs is smooth.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (k) The ending gives the reader a definite sense of closure.

COHESION

5 4 3 2 1 NA (a) The exact same vocabulary/expressions/structures are repeated consistently.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (b) Equivalent words/paraphrases, when used, are used appropriately.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (c) Pronouns of reference are used appropriately and accurately.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (d) Ellipsis is used where needed.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (e) Junction words are used judiciously and accurately.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (f) Where no junction words are used, transition between sentences is smooth.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (g) New information is introduced in an appropriate place or manner.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (h) Examples are introduced judiciously, not just to form an exhaustive list.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (i) Punctuation is employed appropriately to separate ideas and sentences.

In the study carried out by Chiang, this scale proved to be reliable and showed content validity, but it still needs refinement (292).

Conclusion

The exercises reviewed in this chapter adopt on the whole an awareness-raising approach which helps learners write more coherent compositions through gradual assimilation of the aspects of coherence. This has been typically realized in many ESL/EFL classes following four basic steps: explicit teaching, sample-text analysis, manipulation exercises, and writing practice which yielded positive results.

Chapter Three

Teaching Coherence in Writing to Second Year Students

Introduction

3.1. The Sample

3.2. The Teachers

3.3. Procedures

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    3.4.2. The Post-Test

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Conclusion

Introduction

The present study seeks to check whether teaching explicitly the different aspects of coherence would lead to any improvement in the participants' written production. It does so by teaching coherence analytically, giving equal importance to all the constitutive features -the discourse-based and the grammatical ones- instead of relying heavily on conjunctions and transitional words, and giving fuzzy advice about how the other features could be realized in English or ignoring those features altogether.

3.1. The Sample

The empirical study took place in the Department of English, The University of Mentouri, Constantine. Two groups of Second Year students of English were involved, an Experimental group (EXP) and a Control one (CTR), 15 students in each group. The number of participants in each group was larger, but some papers were eliminated from the study because of their writers' absences either during the time of the instruction or on the day the post-test was administered. In the Department, the groups are formed randomly, and this saves us the random sampling which is necessary in similar experimental studies.

The participants were taught in their First Year of instruction how to write a paragraph in English and were introduced to different types of development (Description, Narration, and Expository writing). In their Second Year, they were introduced to essay writing techniques. Teachers usually start with an introduction of general techniques and then deal with different types of development: Exemplification, Cause and Effect, Comparison and Contrast and so on. Teachers in the Department of English work in coordination, so, it would be rather safe to assume that the participants received approximately the same instruction.

3.2. The Teachers

The teachers who participated in the study are two; the teacher-researcher who taught the Experimental group, and another one who taught the Control group. Two teachers were chosen because we believe that it is highly unlikely that the same teacher follows two different methods without transferring, even unconsciously, the knowledge and the strategies used in one method to the other. However, the two teachers have approximately the same qualifications and the same teaching experience.

3.3. The Procedures

3.3.1. The pre-test

After the participants were introduced to the general essay writing techniques, they were asked to write an essay on the following topic: ***We use some foods as medicines. Develop this idea using pertinent examples.***

3.3.2. The Training in Coherence

During 12 sessions, including the ones in which the pre- and the post- tests were carried out, the two groups were taught the Example essay following two different methods. The Example essay was chosen because it is the one the participants were dealing with when the experiment was carried out. This is to avoid interrupting the normal preceding of the groups' sessions. In addition, the participants were not informed they take part in a study in order not to influence their behavior or their learning habits.

3.3.2.1. Teaching Coherence to the CTR Group

The CTR group was taught the Example essay following the method adopted by most teachers in The Department of English in which the study was carried out. Most teachers of writing use the two textbooks Writing with a Purpose (Trimmer 2000) and Refining Composition Skills (Smalle et al. 1995) as references for the development of writing. In these textbooks, coherence is defined rather vaguely. The authors define

coherence as the smooth movement from one sentence to another. Trimmer says: "A paragraph is coherent when the sentences are woven together in such a way that readers move easily from one sentence to the next and read the paragraph as an integrated discussion rather than a series of separate sentences" (169). He explains that this smooth movement is a result of the writers having a sense of purpose. This makes them plan in chunks and not think of their writing sentence by sentence (ibid). A similar definition is provided by Smalle et al. in which the authors recognize smooth movement and logical order to be the basic constituents of coherence (30).

Both textbooks provide explicit instruction about how to achieve coherence in writing, propose sample texts for analysis to show how the presented instruction can be put into practice, supply manipulation activities, and give students opportunities for further practice.

As far as instructions are concerned, the authors strongly emphasize the use of cohesive devices like pronoun reference, repetitive structure, and transitions (Trimmer 170-4; Smalle et al. 294-8). Cohesive devices are given the greatest weight compared to other features of coherence. Lists of transitions are provided and their use is demonstrated through different examples. The semantic relations between propositions are there in the examples, but students are hardly encouraged to consider those relations without the linguistic linking devices.

Other features of coherence, like information flow, are explained only vaguely. Trimmer advises writers, for example, to pick up the last point of a paragraph in the one that follows (173), but he does not suggest any practical strategy -for example, Nominalization- that would help apply this. It is also advised that writers use topic sentences that state their purposes and relate paragraphs to what precedes them (162), however, it is not explained how the structure of the clause in English helps do this.

The vagueness with which these techniques are introduced, on the one hand, and the emphasis on cohesive devices, on the other, explain why students tend to overuse connectors. Connectors, for them, are the most evident and the most accessible resort whenever students are looking for means to connect their ideas. Moreover, the only macro-patterns which are clearly explained are The Five-Paragraph-essay, the General-Specific pattern, and the Premises-Conclusion(s) pattern in argument. Other important patterns like the Problem-Solution and the Hypothetical-Real patterns are sometimes present in the supplied sample texts, but they are hardly given any special consideration.

As for practice, the exercises Trimmer and Smalle et al. bring in require students either to reorder sentences in scrambled texts to achieve more logical order, to omit any irrelevant sentences to achieve unity, or to add transitions to achieve greater coherence. These exercises are useful because they engage students in decision making about the features they intend to revise, but they do not treat unity and order under the concept of coherence. Unity, order, and coherence stand each alone as a distinct property of texts (Trimmer 60-9). Smalle et al. consider order to be a condition of coherence (30), but suggest a review of coherence which summarizes Cohesion only (294-8).

Although the two textbooks adopt the stages of awareness-raising identified in the literature, the authors do not show coherence to be a clear cut concept; some of its aspects are treated as distinct properties of texts. In addition, the way the different features of coherence are presented makes some of them predominate and become, eventually, students' most evident source for the revision of their written production at the expense of the remaining features.

It is possible that students who follow thoroughly the methods of the two textbooks accumulate implicit knowledge of the features which are not explained to

them. But, it is worth noting that these books are not accessible to the students; the textbooks are used only by teachers, and the latter cannot cover all the content because of practical reasons.

Moreover, the participants in this study are Algerian learners of English. They have, like all EFL learners, the problem of L1 influence. Abdullah and Al Shoumali (2000: 177-9) found that Cohesion and coherence are the most obvious weaknesses in the writing of Arab participants in English and that in Arabic they wrote very long sentences which are packed with relative clauses. Hatim (qtd. In Connor 1996: 11) raises the issue of the difference between Arabic and English in the way argument is shaped. While English writers use the argument-counterargument organization, Arab writers repeat, paraphrase or double their arguments. This, Hatim explains, is due to orality in the Arabic culture in addition to other social and political restrictions (12-3).

3.3.2.2. Teaching Coherence to the EXP Group

The problems of limited exposure, textbook inaccessibility, and L1 influence motivate us to join the Discourse analysts who argue for the necessity of explicit teaching in EFL classes (See Chapter Two). The EXP group is taught in this study following a method proposed by Lee (2002) to teach coherence. The method also adopts the stages of awareness-raising identified in the literature but with a different division. Lee taught each of the five aspects of coherence following five stages of instruction:

1) Introductory Activities: In this stage, Lee asks the participants questions that draw students' attention to the importance of the introduced aspect in writing. To introduce Macrostructure, she asks students to narrate a story or to describe, for example, an embarrassing event that happened to them and to analyze its structure.

2) Explicit Teaching: Lee supplies explanations of the meaning of the introduced aspect and of its role in achieving coherence. She does this through simple-text

analyses or by asking students to edit sentences or passages applying the instructions provided in the lecture.

3) Student Handouts: In the handouts, the introduced aspect is explained with examples which illustrate its use. They are meant to be kept as a reference of the lectures.

4) Awareness-raising Tasks: In this stage, students analyze texts in which there are problems of incoherence and try to edit them following the instructions they received on the concerned aspect(s). They can reorder an ill organized passage to realize a given macro-pattern or complete one which lacks a necessary feature of coherence.

5) Writing Practice: This is the stage in which students try to apply what they have learnt in the previous stages to their own production. Students are given a topic and asked to plan their compositions following, for example, a given macro-pattern.

What is crucial about this method is that all the aspects of coherence are given equal importance and are defined using precise terms. Lee explains how each of the introduced aspects contributes to the building of coherence and demonstrates how each is influenced by the genre of the text. Lee achieved with this method of teaching positive results and won the 1999 TESOL Award for Excellence in the Development of Pedagogical Materials.

In this study, we followed the same steps of instruction. The study, in fact, is an adaptation of the method proposed by Lee to our conditions. This adaptation implied two main changes. First, not all the aspects of coherence are taught exhaustively; only the ones related to the Example essay are selected. Second, in assessment, only the aspects taught during the time of the instruction were taken into consideration.

Finally, we would like to emphasize editing. The participants will be asked throughout the study to edit their essays taking into consideration the feedback they receive from the teacher. This is believed to get them to work on their own weaknesses, if any, and to apply the introduced techniques to their own production which is the ultimate aim of the study.

3.3.3. The Post-test

In the post-test, the participants were asked to rewrite their pre-test drafts taking into consideration what they have learnt about the Example essay during the time of the instruction. They were supplied with a checklist which served as a reminder of the different coherence aspects they are supposed to realize in their texts.

3.3.4. The Assessment Tool

To score the pre- and the post- test papers, we used the analytical scale proposed by Chiang (1999) (introduced in Chapter Two) to get detailed information about the participants' performance in each item in isolation; however, the items were reorganized and grouped to represent the aspects of coherence identified in the literature (Local Coherence, Macrostructure, Cohesion, Information Distribution, and Metadiscourse). Moreover, the final score of coherence is not the sum of the five aspects mentioned in the literature; rather, it is the sum of what we call *primary items*. The primary items of coherence in the scale are those which are mandatory to the realization of the aspect under which they fall; for example, Macrostructure comprises four primary items, namely, Relavance, Paragraph Division, Effective Introduction, and Closure. No one of these four items is optional; each of the four items must be achieved to get a satisfactory score on Macrostructure, no one replaces the other. On the contrary, there are other items which we call *secondary items*. Take for instance Cohesion. The items under Cohesion are not always necessary; we can, for example, write cohesive

passages without Conjunction, or without Substitution or Ellipsis. Parallelism is not obligatory either. These items are optional; they can replace one another. The secondary items are considered in the calculation of the aspect of coherence under which they fall, but not in the calculation of the final coherence score. In all the tables which report the pre- and the post- test results, the primary items are written in bold.

3.4. Analysis of the Results

3.4.1. The Pre-test

In this section, we present a close examination of the results obtained in the pre-test by all the participants involved in the study with the aim of identifying the areas problematic to the participants, and of setting grounds for a later description of their improvement. Table 2 reports the means got by the EXP and the CTR groups in the pre-test on the aspects detailed in the assessment scale.

Aspects	EXP Mean	CTR Mean
Relev.	4.4	4.3
Pph Div.	4.5	4.1
Effe. Intro.	3.3	3.8
Closure	3.7	3.8
L C	3.5	3.5
Elaboration	2.9	3.1
Causal	3.0	3.1
Problem/Solution	3.9	3.6
Exampl.	3.5	3.1
Cohesion	3.1	3.5
Conjunction	2.9	3.5
Repetition	3.0	4.2
Substitution	3.7	4.5
Reference	3.3	3.6
Ellipsis	3.2	3.5
Parallelism	3.3	5.0
Info. Distrib.	3.5	3.9
O/N	3.9	4.5
T/C	3.5	3.7
CV	4.4	4.3
Pph Trans.	3.1	3.3
Punctuation	2.0	2.8

Table 2. The Pre-test Means of the Individual Aspects of Coherence

An aspect is considered problematic when the group gets a mean that is less than 4. The number of non-problematic aspects in the pre-test is 4 in the EXP group and 7 in the CTR group. In what follows, we will attempt a description of the participants' pre-test performance following the order of the aspects of coherence which appears in the literature. Information about each aspect are summarized in a table and analyzed, and extracts are taken from the participants' papers to support the analysis.

3.4.1.1. Local Coherence

	EXP Mean	№ of Low Scores	CTR Mean	№ Low of Scores
LC	3,5		3,5	
P/S	4,1	5	4	4
Causal	3	13	3,1	12
Elabo.	2,9	12	3,1	10
Exampl.	3,5	4	3,1	7

Table 3. Descriptive Information about Local Coherence

The different LC relations are considered here, from the least to the most problematic.

§   First, the scores of P/S (Problem/Solution) do not influence the final LC (Local Coherence) score; this local relation is so obvious to create any difficulty for the participants. The number of uses of such a relation does not matter as long as a type of food medicine is suggested for each illness the writer mentions. This is why almost all the participants scored higher than 4 on this aspect.

§   All the participants in the two groups scored low on Causal relations. They did not answer the question: *How does any type of food heal the illness you propose it for?* The participants, at best, named the vitamin(s) contained in the food and said that it is helpful.

§   Only a few participants scored high on Elaboration; 3 in the EXP and 5 in the CTR one. Most of the participants did not give enough information to adequately develop their ideas. However, we gave higher scores to participants who gave more details about the different uses of the same type of food medicine, and very low ones to those who moved to a new Problem and a new Solution in each sentence.

§   Exemplification seems not to be as evident an issue as one might expect. Participants who scored low on this aspect have one of two problems. The first is giving fewer examples than enough to adequately develop the topic. Four participants in the EXP group have this problem. Three of them mentioned only two examples with at best two uses for each, the fourth mentioned only onions as a remedy to blood pressure. The second and the most common problem is just the opposite of the first; giving more examples than necessary. This is the case in only one paper in the EXP group against 5 in the CTR one. These six participants made an exhaustive list of food medicines, and some of them exhausted even the uses of each of the examples. One of

these participants wrote seven developmental paragraphs, each about one kind of food, and mentioned all their possible uses. This is far more than an adequate development of the topic requires.

3.4.1.2. Macrostructure

Paragraph Division and Relevance

	EXP Mean	№ Low Scores	CTR Mean	№ Low Scores
Pph Div.	4,5	2	4,1	4
Rlv.	4,4	2	4,3	2

Table 4. Descriptive Information about Paragraph Division and Relevance

The means of the two primary aspects, Paragraph Division and Relevance, fall in both groups above the critical value 4; they are the least problematic issues for almost all the participants. There are no serious problems to be commented on here.

Effective Introduction

	EXP Mean	№ Low Scores	CTR Mean	№ Low Scores
Effe. Intro.	3,3	8	3,8	5

Table 5. Descriptive Information about Effective Introduction

The problems related to writing Effective Introductions are of four kinds. They are listed here from the least to the most frequent.

§ ***Problems with the macro-pattern of the introduction:*** In the paper of one participant in the EXP group, the participant introduced the topic with the pro- and anti- home remedy debate. She started with the view for treatment with food medicines, moved to the one against, and then mentioned that she is for this practice. Whereas in such cases, writers usually start with the view against theirs, and then they mention the one they agree with and give their thesis statements.

§ ***Problems with the controlling idea of the essay:*** Participants sometimes mention a given key word that is supposed to limit the content of their development but deviate later from the scope of that word. This is the case in 1 paper in the CTR group and in 2 in the EXP. One participant spoke in his introduction only about foods which are rich in

fibers, but he mentioned in the body an exhaustive list of many other types of food. Another participant seemed to be going to speak about medications extracted from food but supported the idea with examples of raw foods used as medicine.

§ *Problems of Local Coherence:* Some participants have a trouble relating the focus of their essays to the idea with which they choose to open their development. This is the case in at least three papers, one in the CTR group and two in the EXP. Here is an example extracted from a participant's paper.

> The development of science has affected many fields including medicine, and nowadays scientists are making many researches to handle the evolution of chronicle diseases or even find treatments: the first is what we called medicament, and the second is the food used as medicament. People use this second kind for many reasons and it succeeded in many occasions.

§ *The problem of starting far from the topic:* The participants in the two groups were taught how to write a Funnel introduction, one that starts with a general statement about the topic and moves gradually towards more specific ones. This is a realization of the General-Specific macro-pattern using the terms of the method proposed in the study. This kind of introduction is a problem to many students. In the present study, it is a problem in the papers of 1 participant in the EXP group and of 2 in the CTR one. It is difficult for some participants to meet the two requirements of the General-Specific pattern: Starting with a general idea and maintaining Relevance at the same time. This difficulty is obvious in the following introduction. The italicized parts of the introduction are not necessary for an adequate development of the topic.

> *Many years ago people had lived a simple life. Although the poverty and illiteracy and the less of cultural means, they face life as it is*, they have ate a healthful foods such as = olive oil, honey[…]*Nowadays our life completely altered from the past. We are in the moment of technology where we can invente or create whatever we want in all domains,*

though this development, the Majority are suffering from Many Fatal diseases; in vice versa people in the past had not many healthful problems. Today we need to every natural things, we Become Searching for Natural Treatment

Then chemicals. What we are going to mention are some Examples of foods that used in medicine and have a good results.

§   ***The problem of giving the thesis statement right in the opening sentence of the essay:*** This problem is more frequent than the previously listed ones. It occurred in 2 papers in the CTR group and in 3 in the EXP. The opening sentence in almost all these papers is typically: "***There are a lot of foods can be used as a cure for many health problem***". Giving such a statement right in the opening of an essay makes the participants' development look like an outline.

At the end of this section, we would like to make a final comment on the classification of the problems related to writing Effective Introductions. Generally speaking, ¾ of the problems listed here are in a way or another related to Relevance. Starting far from the topic implies including some irrelevant ideas; the problem of connecting the thesis statement to the opening of the essay (LC above) is a failure to show the Relevance of the opening statement(s) to the focus of the essay; and giving a false controlling idea leads, no doubt, to an unclear focus in the essay; this leads generally either to the inclusion of some irrelevant details, or to the failure to show clearly their Relevance to the concern of the writer.

Closure

	EXP Mean	№ Low Scores	CTR Mean	№ Low Scores
Closure	3,7	6	3,8	5

Table 6. Descriptive Information about Closure

The problem of Relevance shows also in conclusions. We have a total of 11 papers which scored less than 4 in both groups on the aspect. In 8 of those papers, the problem is opening a new discussion in the conclusion; i.e., in the 8 papers there is violation of

Relevance. One of the participants, for example, chose to close her discussion of the topic talking about some plants, which are not all eatable, used by many of people to cure from certain diseases. Another participant says in her conclusion that people discovered the benefits of food in the treatment of illnesses through what is said about them in the Quraan, which could be the topic of another essay.

To conclude, in most of the cases discussed in this section the problem is maintaining Relevance. Relevance got means higher than 4 in both groups, but is violated in the two borders of the essay, the introduction and the conclusion.

3.4.1.3. Cohesion

Concerning Cohesion, there is a considerable difference in the achievement of the two groups. The CTR group have fewer problems than the EXP. Table 7 contrasts the two groups' scores in all the strategies of Cohesion.

	EXP Mean	№ Low Scores	CTR Mean	№ Low Scores
Cohesion Mean	3,1	10	3,5	6
Repetition	3,0	6	4,2	1
Substitution	3,7	1	4,5	0
Pronoun Reference	3,3	7	3,6	5
Ellipsis	3,2	10	3,5	5
Parallelism	3,3	4	5,0	0
Conjunction	2,9	10	3,5	4

Table 7. Descriptive Information about Cohesion

First, we would like to comment on the Cohesion strategies on which the CTR group got high means and no low scores compared to the CTR group; namely, Repetition, Substitution, and Parallelism. These strategies are less frequently used by the participants of the CTR group, and with fewer problems.

§ *Repetition and Substitution:* We noticed that the participants of the CTR group have few problems with Repetition (only one participant out of six who used Repetition had the score 3) and Substitution (only two participants used Substitution and had no problems with it). The participants of the EXP group, however, have more difficulties.

Those who have problems are 6 out of 8 who used Repetition and 1 out of 3 who used Substitution.

The problems related to Repetition are of three kinds. The first is when participants use only Repetition (3 cases in the EXP in addition to the one in the CTR group), the second is when they use only Pronoun Reference (1 case), and the third is when they use none of the three kinds of reference (2 cases). The third case is the most serious; it had a strong negative influence on the final coherence scores of the two papers which contain it.

An important observation to be made here is that the judgment of each of the three kinds of reference, Pronoun Reference, Substitution, and Repetition, is partly made on the basis of the two others. What is important about the use of these aspects is not only whether they are used appropriately; it is also significant whether a participant can make a balanced combination of the aspects.

§ *Parallelism:* Concerning Parallelism, there is only one participant who made use of it in the CTR group, and with no problem; in the EXP group, it is more frequently used. It is used in nine papers in the EXP; in four of them, there are immature attempts at creating Parallelism. Three participants omitted a few elements from their sentences trying to make series of three to for uses of one type of food medicine, but they failed to maintain the same grammatical structure. Observe the following extracts.

o Olive oil has a considerable role to cure so many illnesses as: Coughing, which is very common, for also hair which can keep fresh and healthy using olive-oil and hair and other illnesses.

o […] it [olive oil] serves to make forcible bones and muscles, assist human body to growth, good for the skin and hair and make a forcible nails […]

This is typically the problem whenever students attempt to create Parallelism in their writing. Another less serious problem with this aspect is omitting fewer elements than

required to come up with an elegant structure. In the following extract, it would have been better if the participant avoided the use of the pronoun *it* which refers to the word *carrot,* starting from the second clause.

> It [carrot] is rich with vitamine A which is necessary for vision, it ameliorates immunity, it prevents from cancer, and it also protects the skin from sun's rays.

The most problematic areas of Cohesion, to both groups, are Pronoun Reference, Ellipsis, and Conjunction. Table 7 shows that a considerable number of participants in both groups have trouble with these three strategies, but the number in the EXP group is much higher. It is in these aspects that the performance of the two groups differs most. Let's consider each of these four aspects separately.

§ *Pronoun Reference:* The problems with reference are three: the lack, the overuse, and the inappropriate use of referring words. In the following extract there are two blanks which represent, each, a missing referring word.

> […] in winter for example—don't feel cold, when you drink olive-oil in previous years. —Useful in the case when you have difficult respiration in the chest.

The second paragraph illustrates the overuse of Pronoun Reference. All the pronouns used to refer to parsley are written in bold.

> First, the most common food or vegetable we use is parsley, it is a green plant with small leaves and stronge smell we use it as a spice but also we can use it as a medicine because it can disapear Acne if we use it on the face. It is very beneficial too for thouse who have Anaemia and who suffer from kidney if they drink its water Lastly, if we eat its leave we shall have a good and fresh smell in mouth.

Although the writer used the appropriate pronoun to refer to the food being discussed, there still is a problem to follow the development of her ideas. By the middle of the paragraph, the reader would have forgotten what the food medicine being discussed is. The third mistake of reference is the use of the wrong referring

word. It is fairly common that the participants use the relative pronoun *which* to refer to a human being like in the sentence "*For example, someone which has his vocal cords hurt [...]*". It is also common that they use a singular pronoun to refer to a plural noun, and vice versa. This is what we read in the following extract: "*Some people agree that there are some food used as a medicines. and each of it have a specific case, where and when use it*". These problems appear very frequently in the papers mentioned in Table 7, and they also appear in many other papers but less frequently.

§ *Ellipsis:* In the cases mentioned in Table 7, it is very common that the participants do not omit words which are unnecessary to express adequately their ideas. Moreover, in some of their papers, there is frequent occurrence of wordiness. This latter made their scores of Ellipsis even lower. The reason is that we consider a participant who cannot avoid wordiness one who is highly unlikely to use Ellipsis. Here are some of the instances were Ellipsis is necessary but not used. In the two examples, the italicized words should be removed and the ones between square brackets added.

- We use olive oil *for pains to calm them* to stop head*ach* and *also for* stomach [aches] and to make easy the digestive process when eating heavy food.
- Honey as a prototype can omit places of burning on the body if we put it regularly above wounds [. It can] *and* decrease cough [,] *and it helps also of* illiminate roumatism and *it* force*s* bornes and all the body.

In the following examples Ellipsis is preferred, but not obligatory. It makes the passages more refined.

- it [carrots] ameliorates immunity, *it* prevents from cancer, and *it is also* protects the skin from the sun*'s* rays.
- [...] by experience, these foods become medicines *and they are* used by all of us [...]
- One of the foods *that is* used as medicine [...]

§ _Conjunction:_ The problems related to the use of Conjunctions are of two kinds: the overuse and the misuse of Conjunctions. Concerning the first problem, participants, sometimes, double the use of Conjunctions; they use two Conjunctions which have the same meaning to join two clauses while one would suffice. This is quite common in many papers, but it is more serious in 4 in the EXP, and in 1 in the CTR group. Consider the following extracts.

- o […] It [carrots] prevents from cancer, **_and_** it **_also_** protects the skin from the sun's rays.
- o These illnesses and others are cured thanks to these medicines **_And therefore_** we should not be late to use them.
- o […] **_because_** it belongs to nature, **_so_** it can never harm us.

Some participants overuse the same Conjunction. This is generally done with **_and_** and **_also._** This problem is more common than the previous one. It is the case in 6 papers in the EXP group and in 3 in the CTR one.

- o garlic use decrease sugar level in the blood **_and_**, dates use energy digestion, **_and_** honey cure in […] or chest, eyes and complexion **_in addition_** the appel is rich in vitamine c, give energy **_and_** […]
- o   Some people agree that there are some food used as a medicines. **_and_** Each of it has a specific case where and when use it. **_and_** we must know how we use these foods. **_however_** there are some people whom dislike this method of treatment […]

In addition to the overuse of Conjunctions, participants sometimes misuse them; they sometimes use the wrong Conjunction (the first passage), and sometimes misplace them (the second passage). There are 3 papers in the EXP group in which the misuse of Conjunctions is so obvious.

- o Finally, I want to say that **_even_** the development of medicines, **_however_**, most of people they used the natural medicines in order to […]
- o Olive-oil has a considerable role to cure so many illnesses as: coughing, which is very common, for **_also_** hair […]

3.4.1.4. Information Distribution

	EXP	CTR
Mean	3,5	3,9
№ of Scores ≤3	7	6
Papers with problems with O/N	2	1
Papers Having Problems with T/C	2	4
Papers Having Problems with Both	3	1

Table 8. Descriptive Information about Information Distribution

From Table 8, we notice that the O/N principle appears not to be a problematic issue for the participants, accept for a few. On the contrary, the T/C aspect is a problem for many, 5 out of the 7 participants who got a low score on Information Distribution in the EXP group, in addition to 5/6 in the CTR group.

Concerning problems with the O/N distribution, they are, typically, of the kind we observed in the following extract.

[…] we can use it [honey] to cure from some diseases. For example, someone which his vocal cords are hurt and his voice starts to vanish, we always advice him to eat honey with other things to become in a good health and feel fresh.

In the above extract, the newsworthy piece of information is the illness for which we use olive oil. This piece should have appeared in or near the end of the clause instead of the solution which is an "older" piece of information that has been spoken about since the first clause in this paragraph.

For the T/C issue, however, we have at least three kinds of mistakes listed in what follows.

§   The first kind is when participants write sentences or clauses without topics, like it is the case in the following extract and in 4 other papers in the EXP group.

The first example is "green plant" such as "minth" is a green substance which is used to cure human body from many diseases like: stomach-ache, also has a lot of benefits…honey contain substances cure people from many diseases for

example: pain of stomach, to protect the skin, "used for beauty", difficult in digest
and useful for the pain of throat.

§ The second kind of problem is when participants write their examples successively, connecting the topics to the comments with the relative pronoun *which*. The result is a list of successive relative clauses. Notice the following example.

Let's start with seeds as good example that can be replace medicines like: barley which is looks like wheat and rich in protein[…]and good for inflammation, diarrhea tuberculosis. Lentils which is rich in iron[…], good for kidney[…]

This kind of problem is very common. It appears frequently in one paper in the EXP, and in 5 in the CTR group. One of the CTR group participants made the listing even more obvious using dashes and moving to a new line to introduce each new example.

§ The third kind of problem with the T/C structure is when participants put in the comment the stem of a verb instead of its appropriate finite form; sometimes they miss the verb altogether. This is illustrated in the following extract: ***"This plant use to regulate blood-depression in our bodies ie. when the Bloody-depression is used this plant decrease the bloody-depression it a useful plant[…]".*** This kind of problem is very serious in two of the EXP group papers. It also occurs in many other papers, but less frequently.

3.4.1.5. Metadiscourse

Clear View

	EXP	CTR
Mean	4.4	4.3
№ of Scores ≤3	3	1

9. Descriptive Information about Clear View

CV is one of the aspects least problematic to the participants (with Paragraph Division and Relevance above). The means of the two groups for the aspect are above 4, and there are no serious problems to be discussed here.

Paragraph Transition

Paragraph Transition is considered a Metadiscourse strategy. However, there is overlap between this aspect and Cohesion; in fact, Pgh Trans. is frequently achieved through the use of cohesive devices. But Cohesion and Pgh Trans. are considered in the study two different aspects because the latter is not necessarily achieved through the use of the cohesive devices mentioned before; rather, the aspect comprises many other strategies like using sequencers or other signal words (lexical words) which are identified in the literature under the notion of Metadiscourse. Metadiscourse markers do not merely connect ideas; they also show the way the writer is set to organize his examples in addition to his attitudes about the importance of each one.

	EXP	CTR
Mean	3,1	3,3
№ of Scores ≤3	9	8

10. Descriptive Information about Paragraph Transition

Table 10 shows that there is a problem with Pgh Trans. in the papers of more than half the participants in both groups. The movement from one paragraph to another in their essays is either abrupt (the first passage), or mechanical (the second passage) with the use of sequencers which are an easy resort to the majority of students. This is why this second kind of problem is more common than the first. In a paper which received one of the highest scores of coherence, the writer seemed to move in each paragraph to a new discussion. The content and the Relevance of the paragraphs are not readily understood from the paragraphs' openings. In the first passage, the first sentence is the thesis statement, the italicized ones are the opening sentences of the developmental paragraphs, the remaining ones are details that would help see the movement more clearly.

- o   Till now people believe in these recipes and use some as medicine […] *Stress is one of the main dangers of modern life.* […] It [mint]is another recipe for cough-patients

given by doctors in addition to medicines. ***Usually people eat foods without knowing its benefits.*** If we take orange as an example […] when I go to the doctor, he advise me to eat orange and it gave good results.

One unknown example of these plants used as medicine is Ginseng.

The second passage is an example of mechanical movement between paragraphs. Each sequencer signals the beginning of a paragraph, and the sentences mentioned are as short in the paper as they appear here.

o First, the most common food or vegitable we use it is parsley […] Second, pomegranate; […] Third, the HALBA, […]

Punctuation

	EXP	CTR
The Mean	2	2,8
№ Low Scores	12	10
№ of Scores < 3	10	6

Table 11. Descriptive Information about Punctuation

When deciding upon the scores of Punctuation, we have taken into consideration the four following items: marks of Punctuation, capitalization, indentation, and paragraph layout; i.e., all the signs that give any piece of writing its final shape. We do not attempt to give an exhaustive discussion of all the signs of Punctuation; rather, we are going to comment the ones most widely used, especially, the comma and the full stop. The participants in both groups have approximately the same kind of problem with Punctuation. Five problems are identified in their papers; they are classified here from the least to the most frequent.

§ The use of unconventional signs like '=' instead of the colon or '*…*' without *etc.*

Although the poverty and illiteracy and the less of cultural means, they face life as it is, they have ate healthful foods such as = olive oil, honey…Nowadays our life […]

§ Faulty Capitalization: Some participants seem not to be following any of the rules of Capitalization; they just capitalize at random.

Weat, for instance, even if it is small, But consist of Many Effctive things[…]

§ Moving to a new line in the middle of a paragraph without any justification

medicines that we can use them as a food and from which we get a lot of profit

like:

garlic which is very good to reduce blood-pressure as its main importance,

onion which is good for killing viruses […]

§ Separating subjects and their verbs with commas

Fruit, also can play an important rule as medicines especially apple which is

good whenever eat it in breakfast […]

§ Using commas injudiciously: Often, we read whole paragraphs with only one or

two full stops - 7/10 papers in the EXP group and 4/6 ones in the CTR group. Some

participants use commas instead of full stops at the end of their sentences, and others

use none. It is the case even in some papers which got high scores of coherence.

Another example is being "the black seed", it is used in case of stress so a tea-

spoon of it with a cup of coffee stress will be removed directly, it also makes you feel

active when you drink it with juce in the morning, also diabetes, during the period

of month you are supposed to observe the difference.

3.4.1.6. Further Observations

In this section, we would like to point to three problems which had a strong

negative influence on our perception of coherence while scoring the papers. First, it is

noticed that all the participants, without exception, who have very low final scores on

coherence also have very low scores on T/C. This is in one paper in the CTR group and

in three in the EXP.

Second, many participants overuse the relative pronouns *which* and *that*. Instead

of separating their sentences with full stops, those participants attach them with

relative pronouns. The result is often a chain of sentences with only one full stop in the end of the paragraph.

Third, subject/verb disagreement is a recurrent problem which disturbs the flow of ideas and makes reading the text an uncomfortable task. Although this disagreement does not affect the propositional development of the text, it affects the smooth movement between ideas and can be said, therefore, to affect coherence.

3.4.2. The Post-Test

Table 12 reports the means of individual aspects of coherence got by the two groups in the post-test.

Aspects	EXP Mean	CTR Mean
Effe. Intro.	3,9	3,9
Relev.	4,5	4,3
Pph Div.	4,7	4,3
Closure	4,3	3,9
L C	4,0	3,5
Causal	3,2	3,0
P/S	4,0	3,8
Elabo.	3,3	3,3
Exampl.	3,7	3,2
Cohesion	3,7	3,5
Repet.	3,6	4,1
Subst.	4,0	4,5
Pron.Ref.	3,7	3,7
Ellip.	3,5	3,7
Parall.	3,9	4,0
Conjunction	4,0	3,2
Info. Distrib.	4,1	3,7
O/N	4,2	4,4
T/C	4,1	3,7
C V	4,5	4,5
Pph Trans.	3,6	3,8
Punctuation	2,9	3,2

Table 12. The Post-test Means of the Individual Aspects of Coherence

In the post-test, the number of non-problematic aspects (aspects which got means higher than 4) has increased from 4 to 11 in the EXP group while it is 7 in the CTR group in the two tests. This means that the EXP group improved their second drafts remarkably while the CTR group modified theirs only slightly; in fact, some of their

final coherence scores even dropped. In the pre-test, the EXP group performed better than the EXP, but in the post-test, the EXP group made up for the difference and even made better in some aspects especially in Cohesion and Information Distribution. The post-test performance of the two groups is more clearly seen later in comparison to the pre-test performance.

3.4.3. Overall Results

The aim of the study is to check whether explicit instruction of the aspects of coherence would yield any improvement in the post-test scores compared to the pre-test ones. The scoring of the 60 papers involved in the study yielded the results given in Table 13.

Participants	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	38	40	31	32
2	34	41	40	45
3	40	44	32	30
4	17	25	38	39
5	33	37	46	46
6	38	37	33	39
7	44	45	18	19
8	35	41	40	38
9	37	40	40	42
10	24	36	42	41
11	42	44	32	42
12	42	42	40	40
13	35	43	46	40
14	34	41	45	47
15	40	46	39	39
The Means	35,5	40,13	37,47	38,6

Table 13. The Pre- and the Post-test Results

In the pre-test, the score mean of the EXP group, 35.5, was lower than that of the CTR group, 37.47, but the case was inverted in the post-test. The EXP group score mean, 40.13, is relatively higher than the CTR group one, 38.6. The level of improvement in the two groups is made clearer in Table 14 which gives the difference of scores between the pre- and post- tests.

Participants	EXP Diff.	CTR Diff.
1	2	1
2	7	5
3	4	-2
4	8	1
5	4	0
6	-1	6
7	1	1
8	6	-2
9	3	2
10	12	-1
11	2	10
12	0	0
13	8	-6
14	7	2
15	6	0
The Mean	4,7	1,1

Table 14. The Improvement Scores

A quick inspection of the score differences in the two groups allows us to see that the difference scores obtained by the EXP group are relatively higher than those achieved by the CTR group. The table is converted into frequency distribution histograms (Figures 1 and 2) which give a clearer image of the achievement of the two groups.

Figur 1
EXP Frequency Histogram of Score Difference

Figure 2
CTR Frequency Histogram of Score Difference
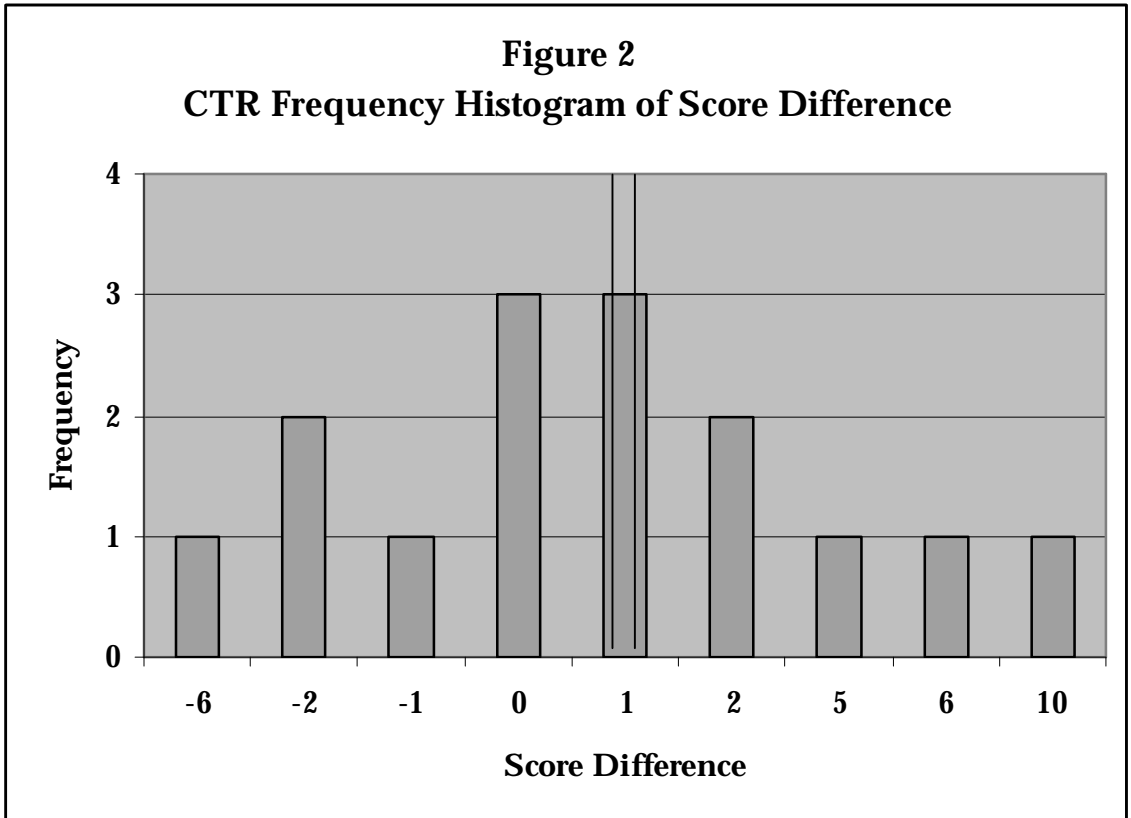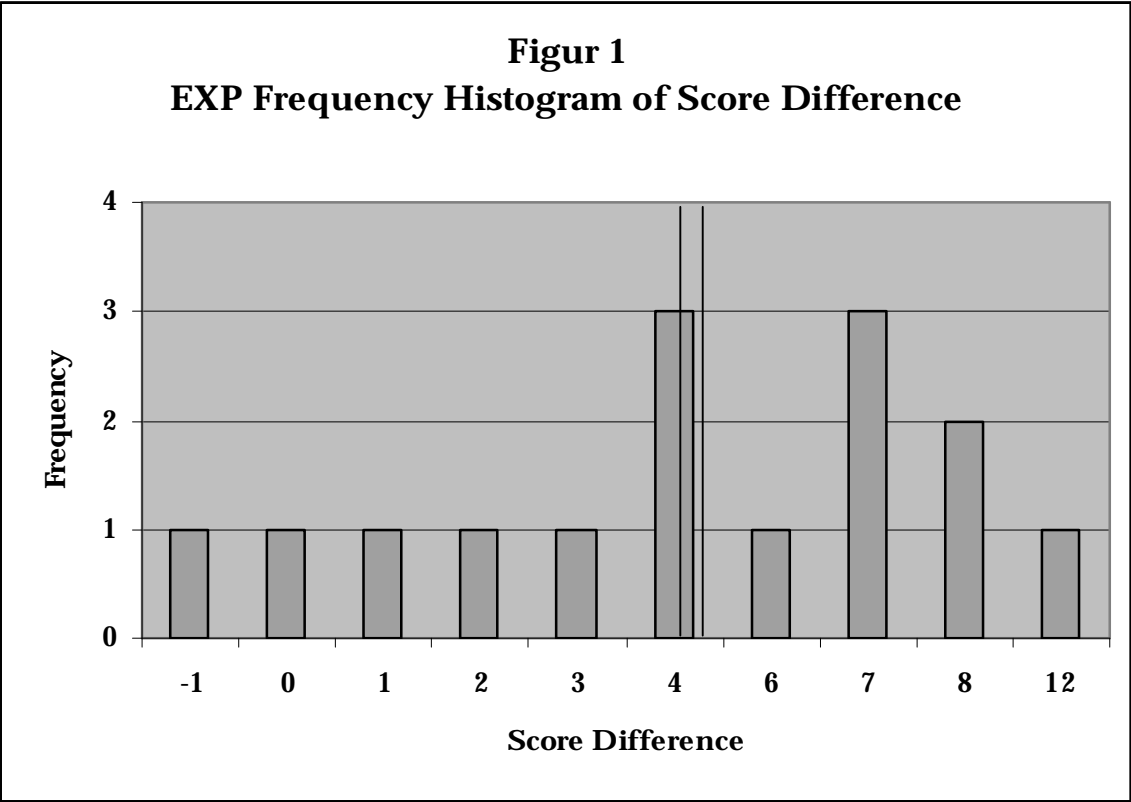
A first observation that could be made out of the above histograms is that the difference scores of the EXP group are spread slightly further towards the right end of the scores axis with only one score under the zero value and another that is equal to

zero. In the CTR group, nearly half the scores (7 out of 15) are equal to or less than zero. A second observation is that the range of spread of the difference scores of the EXP group, 13 or (12-(-1)), is smaller than that of the CTR group, 16 or (10-(-6)). The first observation means that nearly all the participants in the EXP group (13 out of 15) wrote more coherent drafts in the post-test whereas almost half the participants in the CTR group made modifications which influenced negatively their coherence scores in the post-test. The EXP group achieved an improvement mean of 4.7; the CTR group achieved one of only 1.1. The second observation implies that the EXP group difference scores tend more than those of the CTR one towards homogeneity, but this homogeneity is not obvious enough to encourage an early prediction about whether the difference in the achievement of the two groups is due to the experimental conditions. To make such a prediction we need to carry out a statistical test. This is the aim of the following section.

3.4.3.1. Checking the Hypothesis

In this section, we will attempt to answer the question: Does the difference in the achievement of the two groups arise from the desired influence of our independent variable, the method of teaching coherence proposed in the study, or is it only due to chance? In other words, we need to know the probability that two sets of scores drawn from the same population could achieve improvement means which vary by as much as 3.6; (4.7-1.1).

To know this probability, we have chosen to carry out a t-test. According to Miller (1975: 64), a t-test is opted for when

a. the sample scores are drawn from a normal population;

b. the two populations have equal variances;

c. an interval scale is used to measure the data.

We will start here by showing how the characteristics of our data meet the requirements of the t-test.

a. Normality: Knowing the three measures of central tendency, the mean, the mode, and the median of each group (Table 15 below, and placed on the previous frequency distribution histograms) we can easily asses the normality of the two populations from which our two sample groups were drawn. The histograms (Figures 1 and 2) show that the distributions of the two sample scores are fairly symmetrical (Miller ibid. 61-7).

	The Mean	The Median	The Mode
EXP	4,7	4	4
CTR	1,1	1	1

Table 15. Measures of Central Tendency of the Improvement Scores

In the EXP group, both the median and the mode take the value 4, and the mean (4.2) is nearly equal to them. This means that most of the scores of this group are distributed closely around the peak of the distribution represented by the three measures. In the CTR group, the mean, 1.1, the median and the mode, 1, also are nearly the same, and most of the scores are distributed around them. To conclude, we can safely say that our two groups of scores are drawn from normal populations.

b. Equal Variance: Concerning the principle of equal variance, Miller (op.cit. 71) explains that the t-test is a 'robust' test that can be carried out even if the principle of equal variance is violated; accordingly, it would be rather safe to overlook this requirement here.

c. Interval Measurement: The scores assigned to each of the aspects range from 1 to 5, and each score represents the participant's level of proficiency in the use of the aspect. The scores 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 represent varying proficiency levels, and the difference between each two, although still qualitative, is fairly the same. Therefore, we consider the scale to be interval. This way, the data of the present study meet the three requirements of opting for the t-test.

<div align="center">

The t-Test

</div>

After having justified our choice of the t-test, we will proceed to the calculation of the value of t following the steps proposed by Miller (op.cit. 78).

§ *The null hypothesis*: The difference between the two sets of the improvement scores is due to chance.

§ *The alternate hypothesis*: The difference between the two sets of the improvement scores is due to the treatment variable (the method of teaching coherence proposed in the study).

§ Table 16 gives the square values of the improvement scores for both groups and their sums which are needed to calculate the variances of the two groups' scores.

Participants	EXP		CTR	
	Diff.	Diff.²	Diff.	Diff.²
1	2	4	1	1
2	7	49	5	25
3	4	16	-2	4
4	8	64	1	1
5	4	16	0	0
6	-1	1	5	25
7	1	1	1	1
8	7	49	-2	4
9	3	9	2	4
10	12	144	-1	1
11	2	4	10	100
12	0	0	0	0
13	8	64	-6	36
14	7	49	2	4
15	6	36	0	0
Sum	70	506	16	206

<div align="center">

Table 16. The Improvement Scores, Their Squares, and Their Sums

</div>

These are the meanings of the statistical abbreviations used here: S^2: Variance; S_1^2: EXP Variance; S_2^2: CTR variance; N_1: the number of EXP participants; N_2 : the number of CTR participants; $\overline{X_1}$: the EXP mean ; $\overline{X_2}$: the CTR mean ; df: degree of freedom.

§ $S^2 = \dfrac{\sum X^2}{N} - \overline{X}^2$

$$S_1^2 = \dfrac{506}{15} \cdot (4.7)^2 = 33.73 - 22.1 = \boxed{11.63}$$

$$S_2^2 = \dfrac{206}{15} - (1.1)^2 = 13.73 - 1.21 = \boxed{12.52}$$

§ $\overline{X}_1 = 4.7$ $\overline{X}_2 = 1.1$

$S_1^2 = 11.63$ $S_2^2 = 12.52$

§ $t\,N_1 + N_2 - 2 = (\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2)\dfrac{\sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$

$$= (4.7\text{-}1.1)\,\dfrac{\sqrt{(15+15-2)15\times15}}{\sqrt{(15\times11.64+15\times12.52)(15+15)}}$$

$$= 3.6 \times \dfrac{\sqrt{6300}}{\sqrt{10872}} = 3.6 \times \dfrac{79.37}{103.38} = 3.6\times0.76 = \boxed{2.74}$$

§ df $= N_1 + N_2 - 2 = 28$

§ The required t value for a df = 28 and a level of significance = 0.02 is 2.46.

§ Since t = 2.74⟨2.46, we reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternate hypothesis. So, the method of teaching coherence proposed in the study is the cause of the difference in the improvement scores of the EXP and the CTR groups.

3.4.3.2. Analysis of the Improvement in Coherence Achievement

In this section, we attempt to analyze the improvement of the two groups in each aspect separately. We need to compare the differences between the results they got on each aspect to answer questions such as: What are the aspects of coherence which improved more considerably in the papers of the EXP group compared to those of the CTR group? Which are the ones that did not improve considerably? Are there aspects which have the same level of improvement in the two groups? Are there any which improved better in the CTR group? Answering such questions would help us identify

the areas where the method of teaching coherence proposed in the study was most successful. This would also help us decide whether any changes are required to make it more effective, especially in our instructional context. We will start, like in the previous section, with a table that classifies the improvement means per aspect, following the order of the aspects of coherence which appears in the literature. Consider Table 17.

Aspects	EXP Mean	CTR Mean
Relev.	0,1	-0,1
Pph Div.	0,2	0,2
Eff. Intro.	0,6	0,1
Closure	0,5	0,1
L C	0,5	0
Examplification	0,2	0,1
Causal	0,2	-0,1
Problem/Solution	0,1	0,2
Elaboration	0,4	0,2
Cohesion	0,6	-0,1
Repetition	0,7	0
Substitution	0,7	0
Pron. Ref.	0,4	0,1
Ellipsis	0,4	0,1
Conjunction	0,6	-0,3
Parallelism	0,4	0
Info. Distrib.	0,5	-0,1
O/N	0,3	-0,1
T/C	0,6	0
C V	0,1	0,2
Pph Transi.	0,5	0,5
Punctuation	0,9	0,4
The Mean	4,8	1,1

Table 17. Descriptive Information about the Improvement Means per Aspect

We consider a high mean one that is equal to or higher than 0.4. The most manifest difference is that there are no aspects which got an improvement score which is equal to or less than zero in the EXP group, whereas six aspects scored under zero, and five have not improved in the CTR one. Another obvious difference is that the aspects

improved in the CTR group got relatively low means except for Punctuation and Paragraph Transition.

In the previous section, we found that the students have more problems with the grammatical realization of coherence, and the improvement scores show that they have improved more considerably in these aspects. The aspects with the lowest scores in the pre-test are the ones which got the highest improvement scores. In what follows, we are going to get a closer look at the performance of the participants of the two groups in parallel, to spot where the improvement in the EXP group came from.

- **Local Coherence**

	LC	Causal	P/S	Exampl.	Elabo.
EXP	0,5	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,4
CTR	0	-0,1	0,2	0,1	0,2

Table 18. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Local Coherence

L.C has not improved considerably in both groups. We mentioned in the pre-test analysis that the participants did not get high scores on Causal and Elaboration relation. Even in the post-test, their scores on them have not improved. Concerning the P/S relation, we noticed that it was not at all a problem, and, as expected, the improvement scores are not considerable. For Exemplification, however, there are some papers in the EXP group in which there is slight improvement, in addition to one that improved considerably. In the pre-test, the writer of this paper mentioned only one example of food medicines, onions, which is not enough to support a claim about the usefulness of such a kind of treatment. In the post-test, the participant gave more support to his claim using two other examples and explained their usefulness. This considerable modification, especially the explanations he provided, also raised his score of Elaboration. In the CTR group, there are no changes that could be considered here.

- **Macrostructure**

<u>Relevance</u>

	EXP	CTR
Improvement Means	0,1	-0,1
№ of Scores ≥ 2	1	0

Table 19. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Relevance

Only one participant in the EXP group made considerable improvement in Relevance. This participant got the score 3 in the pre-test; she wrote a relatively long introduction starting with ideas which are somehow unrelated to the topic. In the post-test, she dropped them and rewrote a shorter but a more effective introduction. Consider the differences between her pre- and post-test introductions. We consider the bold italicized parts to be irrelevant.

<u>The Pre-test Introduction</u>

In the past, people were living in good healthy *because they had not a complex problems as the present time, they were working hard jobs, they were breathing fresh air because there was not industry, cars…etc pollution* the most important reason that they were eating a good food which had a benefit on their health and with time science discovered that food was very important to the human body. Scientist adviced us to eat some food as a medicines.

<u>The Post-test Introduction</u>

Nowadays, people are suffering from different deseases that are mostly caused by industrial foods and medicines. Scientists suggest to cure some of them by plants, herbes and also advice us to use some food as medicines because they have a large qualities.

There may be a problem with Elaboration in the second draft, but surely, there is none with Relevance.

Paragraph Division

	EXP	CTR
Improvement Means	0,2	0,2
№ of Scores ≥ 2	1	1

Table 20. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Paragraph Division

Paragraph Division is also recognized not to be a problem in the pre-test. Only a few participants deviated from the conventional five-paragraph-division. In the post-test, there is considerable improvement in two papers, one in each group. In the pre-test draft, the EXP group participant mentioned only one example of food medicines, onions, and developed it in only a few sentences, each written in a new line. In the post-test, he included more examples, garlic and herb infusions, and developed each example in a separate paragraph with some details. These changes made his division more acceptable one. The CTR group participant, however, had a different kind of problem; she declared in her introduction that she is going to mention examples of food medicines, but we, abruptly, read in the first developmental paragraph the usual pro- and anti- home treatments debate. That debate is not irrelevant; but it could be a better idea if the writer mentioned it in the introduction, declared her view vis-a-vis the issue, and then said that she is going to support it with examples. In the post-test, the participant removed the paragraph altogether and mentioned an additional example instead, and this solves the problem.

Effective Introduction

	EXP	CTR
Improvement Means	0,6	0,1
№ of Scores ≥ 2	3	0

Table 21. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Effective Introduction

The three participants who got high improvement scores in the EXP group solved three different problems in their post-test drafts. One of them wrote in the pre-test a relatively long introduction with lots of irrelevant details. In the post-test, she dropped

the irrelevant ideas and came up with a shorter but a more effective introduction (see the extract brought up to discuss improvement in Relevance above).

The second participant had a problem with the controlling idea of her thesis statement. In the pre-test introduction, she seemed to be going to talk about the experiments made by the ancient Arab scientists to make medications out of food, but, in the body, she focused on giving examples of foods commonly used by people in our age to cure the most common illnesses. In the post-test draft, this participant made some modifications; it is clear in the second draft that she is going to mention examples of food medicines, however, she could not reach the score 5 because of other factors which diminish its effectiveness but which are irrelevant here.

The third participant introduced the topic with the pro- and anti- home remedy debate. She started with the view for treatment with food medicines, moved to the one against, and then mentioned that she is with this practice. In the post-test she made a more conventional organization. She started with the view against hers, moved to the one she is for, and then declared in the thesis statement that she is going to support it with some examples.

<u>Closure</u>

	EXP	CTR
Improvt Mean	0,5	0,1
№ of Scores ≥ 2	2	0

Table 22. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Closure

There is no considerable improvement in conclusions except in two papers in the EXP group. Consider the following extracts.

<u>The Pre-test Transitions</u>	<u>The Post-test Transitions</u>
In fact, when people think of these foods really they are convinced	In fact, when you really think of these foods that used as medicines you

that they have a great benefits, and most of medications they buy from pharmacy are composed of some kinds of this food. | will convince that are of a great benefits and importance and for almost cases are effective more than those we get from pharmacy.

The participant stated in her pre-test conclusion that most chemical medicines are extracted from food. Such an idea needs support that would be developed in another essay. The statement opens a new discussion in the end of the essay and, therefore, violates unity. In the post-test draft, the participant tried to remedy this problem by dropping the problematic statement and writing, instead, her judgment vis a vis the topic she discussed in her essay. She considers the examples of food medicines with which she supported her thesis to be, in most cases, more effective than the ones bought from pharmacies. This modification solves the problem, but it does not give the paper the score 5 on Closure; we still are uncomfortable with the idea of delaying such an attitude to the conclusion.

In the second improved paper, the writer tried to make a middle-way view between the one for chemical treatment and that for home remedies. The problem is that we are surprised by the debate; it was not at all mentioned previously in the essay. In fact, the conclusion seems to be taken from another essay. In the post-test conclusion, the writer avoided that debate and chose to reemphasize the importance of food medicines, but she got only 3 on Closure because she wrote the following statement: "*this is the advice of the doctors because this foods give energy in the body and keep it in many diseases especially the contamination diseases about water[...]*". The participant seems to be trying to specify some diseases for which certain food medicines are especially effective. However, we doubt the truth of the specification, and even if it was true, it is irrelevant because there was no such a specification in the body. Except for this problem, all the content of the conclusion is relevant and gives a sense of closure.

- **Cohesion**

	Cohesion	Pron. Ref.	Repet.	Subst.	Parall.	Conj.	Ellip.
EXP	0,6	0,4	0,7	0,7	0,4	0,6	0,4
CTR	-0,1	0,1	0	0	0	-0,3	0

Table 23. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Cohesion

The improvement mean of Cohesion in the EXP group is far higher than that of the CTR group. The difference comes mainly from the means of the three kinds of reference and from the use of Conjunctions.

We mentioned in the analysis of the pre-test above that the participants of the CTR group do not have considerable problems with Repetition, Substitution, and Parallelism. In fact, there are a few instances of the use of these cohesive devices in their papers. This may explain why their improvement means are zero.

On the contrary, the improvement means of the EXP group for the three aspects are considerable. Many participants in the EXP group improved their use of Repetition and Substitution, but only one participant improved considerably in each aspect.

§ *Repetition:* Consider the following extracts in which replacing Pronoun Reference with a Repetition solves the problem of the excessive use of Pronoun Reference.

The Pre-test Draft

One example in which we can use food as a cure is "olive oil". *It* contains a lot of benefits, generally speaking *it* cured almost of illnesses such as the fall of hair, when you keep use *it* regularly you will notice in short period that your hair become thicker. Also some people use *it* when they have pain in their stomach. Besides *it's* good for the

The Post-test Draft

One example of foods that can used as a cure is "olive oil". *It* contains a lot of benefits and can cure almost of illnesses such as the fall of hair when you keep use *olive oil* regularly, you will notice in short period that your hair became thicker. Some people also use *it* when they have pain in their stomach. Besides *it* is good for the skin of the newly born

skin of the newly born babies, and there are some people who drink *olive oil* at morning instead of breakfast to have more healthy and power.

babies to make their bones more strong. In addition to this, people who drink *olive oil* at morning instead of taking breakfast to be more powerful and healthy.

In the pre-test draft, there are six instances of reference, only one of them is a Repetition and all the remaining five are Pronoun Reference. In the post-test, however, there are five instances of reference, two Repetitions and three pronouns, which is a more balanced reference.

§ *Substitution:* In the coming extract, it is the use of Substitution (together with Pronoun Reference) which solves the problem of reference.

The Pre-test Draft

The first example is "green plant" such as "minth" — is a green substance which is used to cure human body from many diseases like: stomach-ache, — also has a lot of benefits. *This green substance* assist the stomach to digest food which enable us to make food needed for growth, — used for the pain of bladder and — help us to become more relaxe for example: when you drink a cup of *this green plant*, *it* serves to make you pleasant, more comfortable and — helping you to become les worried. These some benefits of *minth.*

The Post-test Draft

A first example is "natural herbs" such as "minth". *It* is a green herb. People use *this herb* in some cases of their illnesses. For example, stomach-ache, the pain of the abdomen. *It* has also a lot of benefits. People use *this herb* to cure their bodies from some diseases. For example, "minth". *It* assists the stomach to digest food, which enable us to make food needed for growth. *This herb* used also for the pain of bladder. *It* helps us to become mare relaxe for instance, when you drink a cup of *minth*, *it* serves to make you pleasant, more comfortable, *It*

helps you to become less worried.

These some benefits of *minth,* people

still now believe in *these natural herbs.*

I too believe in *these herbs* that *it* have

a lot of benefits.

In the pre-test draft, there are only four instances of reference: one Pronoun Reference, one Repetition, and two Substitutions. There are five cases where reference is necessary, but none of the three kinds is used (presented by the blanks above). In the post-test draft, the use of reference is much better. There are sixteen cases of reference: three Repetitions, five Substitutions, and eight pronouns. The participant, as noticed, made more use of Pronoun Reference and Substitution. This solved the problem of the lack of reference where it is necessary. In spite of that, the result is not 100% satisfactory. The paper reached with this improvement the score 4 on Substitution, because we consider her use of this aspect, although grammatically appropriate, a little heavy. It is not likely to find in a normal English text such a high frequency of the use of Substitution.

§ *Parallelism:* Two participants in the EXP group improved their use of Parallelism. One of them failed in her first draft to repeat the same structure in the successive paralleled elements, and used a Conjunction where it should not be used. In second draft, this participant kept the same structure successfully, but she failed to get the score 5 because she dropped the Conjunctions altogether, even in the last element of the series where it is necessary. Consider the following extracts.

<u>The Pre-test Draft</u>

Olive-oil has a considerable role to cure so many illnesses as: Coughing, which is very common, and also hair

<u>The Post-test Draft</u>

A first example to mention is olive-oil, it has a considerable role curing so many illnesses as coughing; which is very

which can we keep it fresh and healthy using olive-oil and other illnesses.

common, hair falling, protection of the skin against sun-rays.

The second participant made the parallel structure in one of her paragraphs more effective when she omitted the unnecessary pronouns in it. Observe the following extracts.

<u>The Pre-test Draft</u>

It [carrot] is rich with vitamine A which is necessary for vision, *it* ameliorates immunity, *it* prevents from cancer, and *it* also protects the skin from sun's rays.

<u>The Post-test Draft</u>

It [carrot] is rich in vitamine A which is necessary for vision, it ameliorates immunity, prevents from cancer, and also protects the skin from the Ultra violets rays that harm the skin when it is eaten fresh or cooked.

Finally, there is one paper in which Parallelism was used for the first time in the post-test. Parallelism helped the participant write a shorter, but a more straightforward paragraph. Consider the following extracts.

<u>The Pre-test Draft</u>

The first food which is important for all creature and we cannot live without it is "water". Water is not just a drink it is an important factor in our life because it serves to reduce the concentration of some minerals in our bodies especially the ones which the body throught it like NH_3. Water is also benefit for our kidney. it is an important factor in the chemical

<u>The Post-test Draft</u>

First example is "water".; it serves to reduce the concentration of some minerals in our bodies, it helps avoid kidney's diseases and it is an important factor in a chemical interaction in our bodies.

The remaining aspects of Cohesion, Pronoun Reference, Ellipsis, and Conjunction, are used by all the participants in both groups. In the pre-test, the two groups had nearly the same scores on Pronoun Reference and Ellipsis (see Table 23), but the CTR group had a higher mean on Conjunction, 3.5, than that of the EXP group, 2.9. Concerning the improvement means, those of the EXP group are much higher for the three aspects. So, there is improvement in the use of these cohesive devices in the EXP group, while there is no progress in the CTR one; there is even a decrease in the mean of Conjunction. Let's spot the improvement of the three aspects in detail.

§ *Pronoun Reference:* Many participants in the EXP group improved their use of Pronoun Reference, but only two of them got high improvement scores. The first participant had in her first draft many instances of *non reference*; she employed none of the three kinds of reference where it was necessary, and her clauses, consequently, were without any topics. In her second draft, she filled in the missing topics either with pronouns or with substitutes (Observe the extracts chosen above to illustrate improvement in Substitution). The second participant had in her first draft the two problems of lack and inappropriate use of reference. Consider the following extracts.

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
Some people agree that there are some food used as a medicines. and each of *it* have a specific case; where and when use *it* and we must know how we use *this* foods, however there are some people whom dislike this method of treatment I find and I believe that— is true that is some food used as medicines.	Nowadays some people disagree with the fact that there are some food used as medicines, They think *it* is not effective, but other think the opposite *it* is a good method of treatment because if we know how *its* used and when *it* might be effective for our health. So some food used as medicines.

The bold italicized pronouns in the pre-test draft are the instances of reference with problems. The pronoun *it* and the demonstrative adjective ***this*** are singular, but they are used to refer to the plural word ***foods,*** and the blank space represents a missing reference. In the post-test draft, the pronoun it refers to a method of treatment which is an appropriate reference although it would have been better to use Repetition or Substitution in the two last instances.

§ *Ellipsis:* Ellipsis got the improvement mean 0.4, which is lower than those of the other cohesive devices. There are many participants who improved their use of Ellipsis in the EXP group, but only two of them got a high improvement score. The first participant dropped unnecessary uses of Pronoun Reference (the bold italicized pronouns below) from a series of clauses, and this helped her achieve more effective Parallelism. Consider the following extracts.

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
It [carrot] is rich with vitamine A which is necessary for vision, it ameliorates immunity, *it* prevents from cancer, and *it* also protects the skin from sun's rays.	It [carrot] is rich in vitamine A which is necessary for vision, it ameliorates immunity, prevents from cancer, and also protects the skin from the Ultra violets rays that harm the skin when it is eaten fresh of cooked.

The second participant wrote shorter more effective topic sentences. The first topic sentence in her pre-test draft contains a rather heavy repetition of details which have just been mentioned in the introduction. The use of Ellipsis in the post-test draft created a more even movement and a stronger link between the first paragraph and the introduction.

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
[…] from them [food medicines] there are three main ones: *An vegetable which is used to cure illnesses is the onion*[…]	From them [food medicines] there are three main ones. *The first is onion.*

§ *Conjunction:* There are nine papers in which the use of Conjunction was improved in the EXP group; however, only two of them got considerable improvement scores. Observe the differences between the following extracts.

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
Last week, I felt a pain in my stomach, *but* when I decided to go to the doctor, my grandmother told ma that in this case, the natural medicines is only solution; is better than going to the doctor, *also*, in the past people don't go to the doctor […]	One day, I felt a pain in my stomach, when I decided to go to the doctor, my grandmother told me that, in this case, the natural medicines is only solution; they are better than going to the doctor. In the past *also* people do not go to the doctor […]

In the pre-test draft, above, the participant used *but* in the first sentence where there is no adversative meaning relation between the ideas it is supposed to connect. In addition, the placement of *also* later made the movement to the clause it introduces rather heavy. In the post-test draft, she dropped the unnecessary *but* and changed the placement of *also* to come up with a more satisfactory result.

Another instance of progress in the use of Conjunction can be observed in the following extracts.

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
Some people agree that there are some food used as a medicines. *and*	Nowadays some people disagree with the fact that there are some food

each of it have a specific case; where and when use it *and* we must know how we use this foods, *however* there are some people whom dislike this method of treatment I find *and* I believe that is true that is some food used as medicines.

used as medicines, They think it is not effective, *but* other think the opposite it is a good method of treatment *because if* we know how its used and when it might be effective for our health. *So* some food used as medicines.

In the pre-test, the participant relied heavily on the Conjunction *and* to link her sentences. Only the use of *however* is judicious in this draft (1/4 of the instances of Conjunction). In the post-test, she made some modifications on the way she expressed her ideas along with her use of Conjunctions. In the second draft, only the use of *because* is injudicious (1/4 of the instances of the use of Conjunction).

Now, it is inevitable to comment on the decrease in the performance of the CTR group in the use of Conjunction. The improvement mean of this group is negative (-0.3). If we go back to the results of individual participants, we find that three of them got a negative improvement score. In their post-test drafts, the three participants exaggerated in the use of example transitions and Conjunctions. In their pre-test draft, the use of those devices was more reasonable. Read the following extract; all the bold italicized elements are unnecessary additions.

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
Honey is the most popular food which used as a good medicine for a very large field of health problems […]	*As the first example supports the thesis, so does the second*, honey *as a second example*, is the most popularfood which is used as a cure fore a large field of health problems […]

Another participant used a variety of additive Conjunctions. In her second draft, there is a Conjunction to introduce each new example.

<table>
<tr><td>The Pre-test Draft</td><td>The Post-test Draft</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medicines, that we can use them as a food and from which we get a lot of profit like:

Garlic which is very good to reduce blood-pressure as its main importance, onion which is good or killing viruses found in rotted injuries, Honey which is good for coughing, Olive-Oil that is good for many illnesses *besides to* its importance for the dry skin […]</td><td>Medicines, that we can use them as food fom which, we can get lots of profits are the most used. *As examples* we have garlic which is very good to reduce blood-pressure, *in addition to* onion, which is good for killing viruses found in rotted injuries, *Furthermore* honey, which is good to calm coughing, *besides to* olive-oil which is very spread, because it is very good for […]</td></tr>
</table>

- **Information Distribution**

	Info. Dist.	O/N	T/C
EXP Improvt Mean	0,5	0,3	0,5
№ of Scores ≥ 2	0	0	1
CTR Improvt Mean	-0,1	-0,1	0
№ of Scores ≥ 2	0	0	0

Table 24. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Information Distribution

Information Distribution got one of the highest improvement means in the EXP group although only one participant got a high improvement score. The progress comes more from the T/C aspect than from the O/N one. 4/15 improved their O/N Information Distribution, however slightly, against 8/15 participants who improved the T/C structure of their clauses.

In a passage we chose above (p 106) to illustrate improvement in Pronoun Reference and Substitution, we observed that the writer of the passage wrote some of her clauses without any reference where reference is indispensable. This means at the

same time having no Topics for her clauses. The participant solved this problem by the use of pronouns or substitutes where necessary, and this way, she also solved the problem of having no topics in her clauses. The pronouns and the substitutes she added were the missing topics.

Another important observation about the improvement of the T/C structure in the EXP group is that many of the participants learnt not to start giving details right in the topic sentences of their paragraphs. In their pre-test draft, they usually do so by attaching some details to the topic sentence using a relative pronoun. What they learnt to do is drop the relative pronoun, put a full stop in the end of the topic sentence, and start a new one with a new topic which is typically a reference to a key word in the topic sentence. Here are two examples of this kind of change.

<table>
<tr><td align="center">The Pre-test Draft</td><td align="center">The Post-test Draft</td></tr>
<tr><td>One of these foods is Olive Oil, *which* is very beneficial for the human being's health, especially when we use it frequently.</td><td>One of these foods is "Olive Oil". *It* is very beneficial for the human being's health especially when we use it frequently.</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">The Pre-test Draft</td><td align="center">The Post-test Draft</td></tr>
<tr><td>An vegetable which is used to cure illnesses in the onion, *that* has a pungent taste and smell.</td><td>The first is onion. *It* is a vegetable used to cure from illnesses. *It* has a pungent taste and smell.</td></tr>
</table>

- **Metadiscourse**

Clear View

	EXP	CTR
Improvement Means	0,1	-0,1
№ of Scores ≥ 2	0	0,2

Table 25. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Clear View

In both groups, the improvement mean is under 0.4. We mentioned in the pre-test description that Clear View is not a problematic aspect; therefore, it is not required that the participants improve it.

Paragraph Transition

	EXP	CTR
Improvement Means	0,5	0,5
№ of Scores ≥ 2	2	2

26. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Paragraph Transition

The two groups improved similarly in Pgh Trans. They have the same improvement mean and the same number of participants who improved considerably. Instead of writing the name of a food medicine the first thing in their paragraphs, participants learnt how to show the link of each paragraph they write to what was previously discussed making use of example transitions. Although using example transitions remains somehow mechanical, it creates a relatively smooth movement between paragraphs. This change is typical to the four papers which got the highest improvement scores on the aspect. Examine the following extracts; the italicized parts are the topic sentences of each developmental paragraph.

The Pre-test Transitions

[…] but the focus is only on three main ones. […] *The carrot is a familiar vegetable* […] *Parsley is another important plant* […] *The mint is also a desirable plant* […]

The Post-test Transitions

[…] but the focus is only on three main ones. […] *A familiar vegetable is "carrot".* […] *Another important plant is "parsely".* […] *Still another desirable plant is "Mint".*

The modifications this participant made on her topic sentences are changes in Information Distribution. The movement in the sentences of the post-test is from Old to New information instead of the opposite in the pre-test sentences. But, we would like to note that the participants in both groups are using transitions exactly as these devices

were introduced; in other words, they are rehearsing ready-made structures. One of the four participants improved the transitions between her paragraphs because she made a better use of Ellipsis in her topic sentences. This was discussed before as an instance of improvement in Cohesion.

Punctuation

	EXP	CTR
Improvt Mean	**0,9**	**0,5**
№ of Scores ≥ 2	**4**	**1**

Table 27. Descriptive Information about Improvement in Punctuation

Surprisingly, Punctuation is the aspect which improved most in both groups, but with more considerable improvement in the EXP group. More information is given in Table 19.

In the analysis of the post-test, it was found that one of the most common problems of Punctuation is the injudicious use of the comma (the overuse or the lack of commas), in addition to problems of capitalization and layout which are less common. In the post-test, three of the four EXP group participants mentioned in Table 19, in addition to the one of the CTR group, improved their use of the comma. Consider the following extracts.

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
The first example is "green plant" such as "minth" is a green substance which is used to cure human body from many diseases like: stomach-ache also has a lot of benefits.	A first example is "natural herbs" such as "minth". It is a green herb. People use this herb in some cases of their illnesses. For example, stomach-ache, the pain of the abdomen. It has also a lot of benefits. People use this herb to cure their bodies from some diseases.

In the above example, the use of Punctuation is related to the structure of the clause. The participant wrote, in the pre-test, clauses without any topics and without any Punctuation either. In the post-test, she added the missing topics and full stops and solved the two problems. Here is another instance of improvement.

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
Parsley is another important plant which is famous by its considerable capacities and nutritive values. It prevents from anemia, and blood sirculation troubles, it helps to cure burns, wounds, and ulcer, it is useful for a good digestion, for eye problems such as conjunctivitis, and it is also used for beauty; to clarify the skin and to prevent hair from falling.	Another important plant is "parsley". It is famous of its considerable capacities and nutritive values. It prevents from anemia, and blood sirculation troubles. It helps to cure burns, wounds, and ulcer. It is useful for a good digestion, for eye problems such as conjunctivitis, and it is also used for beauty; to clarify the skin and to prevent hair from falling when it is used as fusion or cooked and mixed with different meals.

In this last example, the participant wrote a series of clauses separated only with commas. This is common, but the problem with this particular series is that one of its clauses contains another smaller series of words. In such cases usually, semi colons or full stops are used to separate the clauses, and commas to separate the smaller series within the clauses. What the participant did in the second draft is use full stops in the end of each clause. Although Punctuation in the second draft is not perfect, we consider it to be much better than it is in of the first. This is the same kind of improvement achieved in two other papers, one in each group. In the fourth pre-test paper in the EXP group, there is a problem of layout. The writer of the paper moved with each sentence

to a new line. The division is not done on the basis of paragraph content. Moreover, indentation is used at random. In the post-test draft, however, the participant developed each of his examples in a separate paragraph, and he used indentation only to mark the beginnings of his paragraphs.

- **Coherence Improvement and Connector Density**

One of the observations that prompted the present study is that EFL students tend to overuse connectors and that this overuse makes their writing sound unduly heavy. In this section, we will attempt an answer to the second research question: Is there a way to guide students write more coherent texts with less connectors? Our hypothesis implies that the method of teaching coherence under study would guide the participants to link their ideas with techniques other than connectors and use the latter less frequently. To check this proposition, we need to observe how dense the participants' use of connectors is in the two tests to see whether the participants used them less frequently and whether a change in Connector Density would influence the final scores of coherence. The density of connectors is calculated as follows:

§   we calculate the number of connectors used by each participant in his two drafts (The term 'connector' in this study refers to any Conjunction or transitional word or expression used to connect or introduce ideas);

§   we calculate the T-units they use in each draft (the term T-unit is defined in Chapter Two, p 43);

§   then, we divide the number of connectors by the number of T-units.

Observe Table 28 which compares the difference in Connector Density between the pre- and the post-test drafts of the two groups (The post-test - the pre-test density).

EXP	-0,4	-0,4	0,1	-0,2	-0,3	-0,1	0,2	-0,3	-0,1	0,2	-0,3	0,1	-0,3	0,0	0,2
CTR	0,6	0,1	0,4	0,5	0,0	-0,2	0,4	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,5	-0,1	0,1

Table 28. The Difference in Connector Density between the Pre- and the Post-test

The table is converted into Figure 3.

Figure 3
The Difference in Connector Density
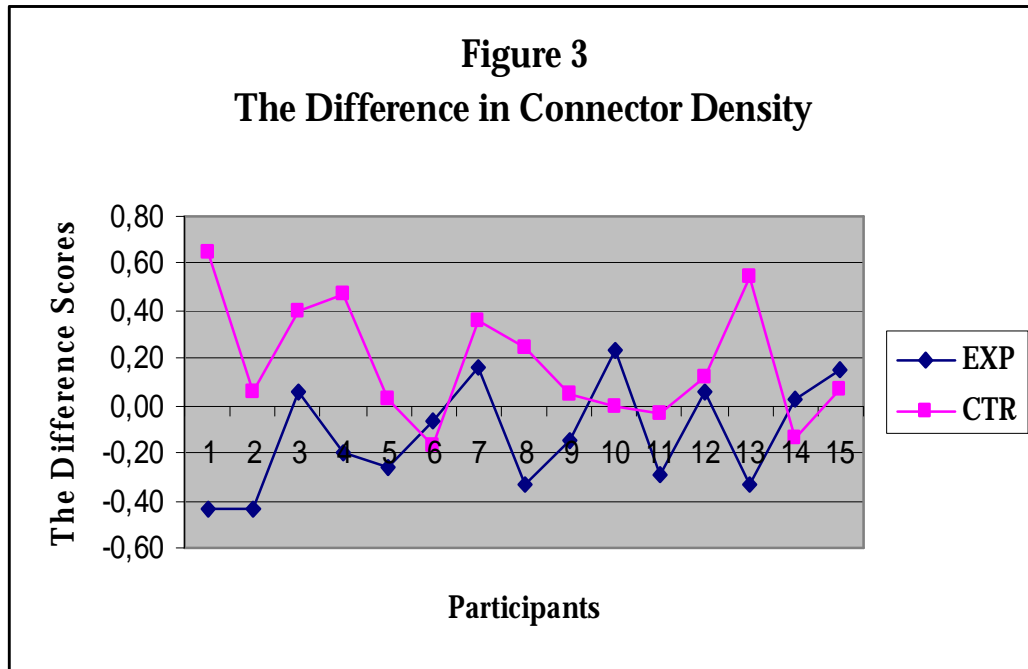
Clearly from the graph, the majority of the EXP group participants used connectors in their post-test drafts less or as frequently as in the pre-test ones while almost all the CTR group participants used more connectors. This result confirms our prediction, but we still need to answer the following question: Is a decrease in the density of connectors in a particular paper a sign of improvement in its overall coherence? Let's consider a correlation between the difference in Connector Density and the Coherence Improvement scores for both groups; this is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4
Correl. Connect. Dens. Diff./ Score Diff.
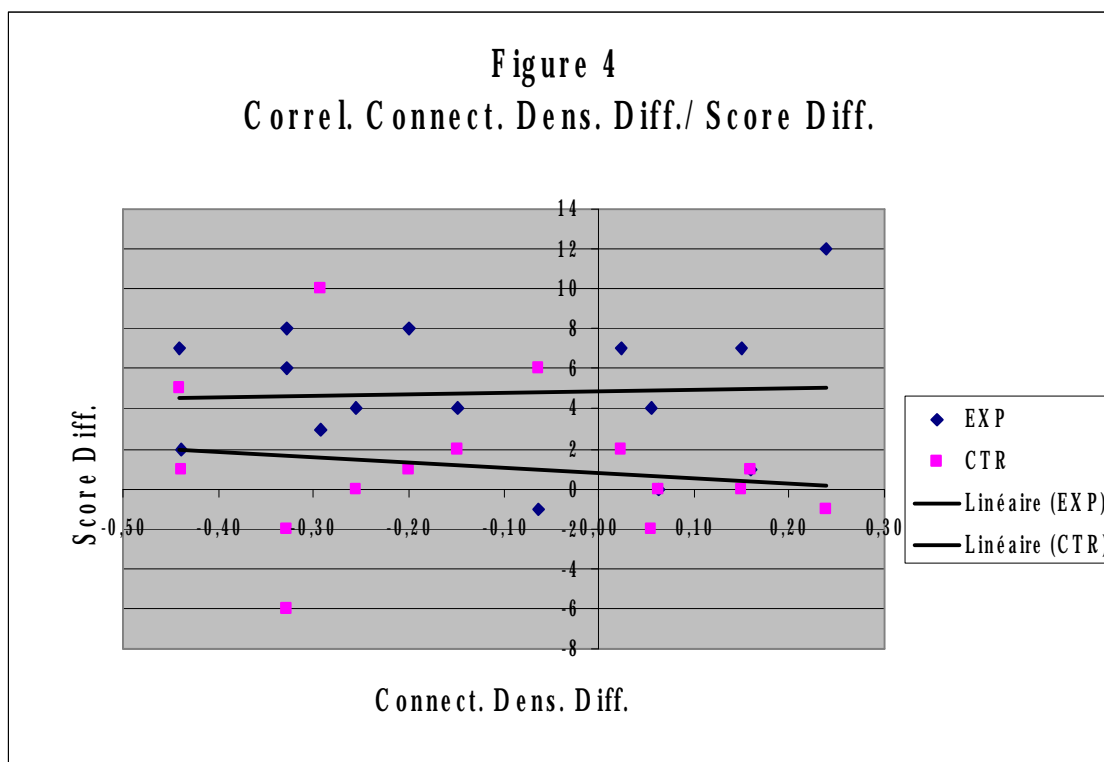
Figure 4 shows that Connector Density and coherence improvement do not correlate; this means that using connectors less frequently does not lead necessarily to greater coherence. In fact, in many of the papers which got high coherence scores, there is a higher frequency of the use of connectors than in other papers with lower coherence scores.

Another important observation we made concerning Connector Density is that a decrease in the frequency of connectors caused the scores of Conjunction in two papers in the EXP group to drop. This is just the opposite of what we expected. Observe the following extracts.

<table>
<tr><td align="center"><u>The Pre-test Draft</u></td><td align="center"><u>The Post-test Draft</u></td></tr>
<tr><td>[…] all natural medicines […] give results gradually with exact   measures <i>but</i> if we exaggerate in use it, it will be very dangerous for our health.</td><td>[…] all natural medicines […] give results gradually with exact measures. If we exaggerate in use it, it will be very dangerous for our health.</td></tr>
</table>

The Pre-test Draft	The Post-test Draft
It is true that science has discovered many developed industrial medicines, **but** this cannot deny the great benefit of some natural medicines, we take from food **and** which has sometimes more influence person's body.	It is true that science has discovered many manufactored industrial medicines, this cannot deny the great benefit of some natural ones we take from food which has sometimes more influence person's body.

The two participants who wrote the above passages dropped Conjunctions which are necessary to adequately express their ideas. In their pre-test papers, they also circled many other Conjunctions. The two participants seem to have grown hesitant about the use of Conjunctions.

Conclusion

The study we carried out was aimed at answering the two research questions of how to exploit the findings about coherence to teach it most effectively, and of whether there is any method of teaching that would help EFL students write coherent essays using fewer connectives than they usually do. The method under study takes advantage of research findings on coherence; it summarizes the findings of the literature about the topic, and adopts the stages of awareness-raising proposed by Discourse analysts to teach coherence. The method helped the EXP group participants overcome many of their weaknesses compared to the CTR group participants. The EXP group improved especially in the linguistic aspects and in the mechanics of coherence which were found to be problematic to them. Many of them were also found to have used fewer connectors in their post-test drafts, but Connector Density was not found to correlate with coherence scores. So, indeed, giving equal importance to all the aspects of coherence helps students realize them more effectively.

Chapter Four

Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

    4.1. Local Coherence

    4.2. Macrostructure

    4.3. Cohesion

    4.4. Information Distribution

    4.5. Metadiscourse

    4.6. Further Implications

Conclusion

Introduction

The analysis of the results in Chapter Three proved the effectiveness of explicit teaching with many aspects of coherence, especially the linguistic and the mechanical ones, or the aspects which were identified as the most problematic areas for the participants. This chapter discusses the results against other research findings, presents the limitations and the pedagogical implications of the study, and suggests paths for future research.

4.1. Local Coherence

Local Coherence was found to be a problem in this study, but not a serious one. Exemplification is a problem only for a few participants. In fact, almost all the participants showed a fairly homogeneous level of performance and those who had problems in the pre-test made, in the post-test, more rational decisions about the number of examples they needed to adequately support their ideas. In addition to the simplicity of Exemplification, it could be said that the supporting details in the participants' essays were, to some extent, shaped by the Five-Paragraph-division; the participants had in mind a prescribed Example essay, with an introduction, three developmental paragraphs each supplying an example to support the thesis, and a conclusion. They already had in mind a clear picture of the essay and this simplified the task for them.

As for Causal and Elaboration relations, achievement was more related to the nature of the topic than to the writing capacities of the participants or to the learning outcome of the course. Achievement in this aspect remained roughly the same in the two tests because the participants had little technical information about the benefits of food medicines which would have allowed them to elaborate their ideas and explain the Causal relations between taking a given food medicine and its effect on health.

Although the EXP group improved in these two relations compared to the CTR one who did not, the improvement was not really substantial. Hence, students' knowledge about the topic can be a determining factor in their achievement and teachers need to put this into consideration while choosing the topics of writing assignments, otherwise they can ask students to carry out simple research on topics they assume not to be known to them.

4.2. Macrostructure

It was observed that only a few participants have problems with Relevance and Paragraph Division. Two reasons may explain this. The first is the positive outcome of the introductory lectures to the general essay writing techniques (mentioned in Chapter Three). Before dealing with the Example essay, the teachers of the two groups introduced the Five-Paragraph-essay division which does not differ, at least in the Example essay, from the two macro-patterns proposed in the course, the General-Specific and the Preview-Detail. Relevance was also emphasized through training the participants to write effective thesis statements and topic sentences and to support them with pertinent ideas. This finding supports the emphasis of a number of Discourse analysts on using frames as a guide to writing coherently, especially in the case of students with a relatively low language proficiency level like the participants in this study (Wray and Lewis (2000); McCarthy 1991: 161; Lee 2002: 35; Basturkmen 2002: 55).

Problems of Relevance, however, were found in Introductions and in Conclusions; many participants found it difficult to decide where to start and where to end their discussions. Although the participants were taught techniques for avoiding irrelevance in the two edges of the essay equally, progress was made in the first but not in the second. On the one hand, students generally give much time and importance to writing introductions; on the other hand, they almost ignore conclusions either because they are

run out of time, or because they can hardly find what to say in a conclusion. Easy ways, like summarizing the body or restating the thesis statement, were proposed, but students in general find such practices rather boring. Alternative ways, like closing with a relevant quotation or anecdote are may be demanding for them and, if opted for, they are often immature attempts.

4.3. Cohesion

Concerning Cohesion, it could be said that the EXP group participants benefited considerably from explicit instruction. Almost all the cohesive devices were controlled better in the EXP group after the instruction, but the course still needs to be reconsidered to maximize its outcomes. First, many participants did not have a problem with reference itself, but with making a balanced use of its three kinds: Pronoun Reference, Repetition, and Substitution. Addressing the three kinds together instead of separately would have been a better idea. Second, even if the EXP group participants improved in using Conjunction, they still do not control the grammatical properties of some conjunctions. Indeed, as Zamel (1983: 24-5) argues, students need to be taught the grammatical restrictions of using Conjunctions along with their meanings, but doing this within the time constraints of the Second Year of instruction remains a hope. It would be more practical to focus on teaching cohesive devices in the First Year or in Grammar sessions, but of course, without separating the grammatical properties from the meanings of Conjunctions.

Another important point relating to teaching Cohesion is that the emphasis on alternative ways to Conjunction made some participants hesitate in using the latter in their post-test drafts even where necessary. This observation can be given two conflicting explanations: On the one hand, it could be said that the method prohibited the concerned participants to use any Conjunctions at all; on the other, it could mean

that they were considering the appropriateness of the Conjunctions they used in their pre-test drafts, and this consideration itself is positive although the results are not yet. Considering one's work with some instruction in mind means a surfacing awareness that needs to be encouraged. More attention and feedback from the teacher can turn this awareness into mastery of the considered aspect.

4.4. Information Distribution

It was observed that low scores of Information Distribution come more from the T/C aspect than from the O/N one. This could be explained by what Sperber and Wilson (1986: 203) say about the O/N principle of Information Distribution. According to them, it is a natural phenomenon that has more to do with cognition than with language itself. It could be said that O/N is a universal principle which applies to all languages. That is why EFL learners are not likely to face very serious problems with organizing their information following this principle.

The T/C structure, on the contrary, has more to do with the grammar of the language. The grammar of the English clause and the rules of word order are language-specific, and are very likely to differ from those of EFL learners' mother tongue(s). This is what creates the problems related to the issue. Obviously, then, EFL learners need instruction on the T/C issue. The outcomes of teaching T/C in this study are very promising. Explicit instruction yielded remarkable improvement in the performance of the EXP group in the post-test compared to the pre-test, and compared to the performance of the CTR group. T/C solved more than one problem (including Punctuation and Pronoun Reference). For this reason, we strongly recommend that teachers introduce this aspect in their writing classes and investigate the different methods proposed in Discourse Analysis to teach it for maximum benefits.

4.5. Metadiscourse

The principle of having a Clear View proved not to be a problem in this study. This is believed to have two reasons. The first is that the participants in both groups learnt to write effective thesis statements and topic sentences in which they clearly state their ideas, attitudes, or opinions, and to support them with relevant ideas. The second reason is the simplicity of the topic, and the explicit instructions given to the two groups in the pre-test. Students were, in fact, face to a rather simple task; they had only to say that there are some kinds of food used as medicine and to support the idea with pertinent examples which are available to all of them. The participants were not required to defend their own opinions about the topic which would have been a more demanding task. They had a clear sense of purpose which explains their overall satisfactory performance.

This finding confirms Trimmer's claim that coherence comes from having a clear sense of purpose (1995: 169). Having a clear sense of purpose appears to be a precondition to producing coherent texts. The textual features of coherence should be seen only as helpful planning and revision strategies. Teachers should consider ways of helping students with this aspect in the first stage of the writing process; they can, for example, encourage students to think their development globally before embarking in more local issues. The frames suggested by Discourse analysts in the literature proved to be a helpful way to do this, but teachers should be careful about their prescriptive nature. Frames have the disadvantage of presenting ready made shapes of whole essays which discourage thinking. This criticism has already been made by Wray and Lewis (2000) and Dudley-Evans (1997) and it is confirmed by the findings of the present study.

As for Paragraph Transition, the CTR group had the same level of achievement as the EXP when they received explicit instruction on the use of this aspect. However, it

was observed that some CTR group participants overused example transitions and additive conjunctions in their post-test drafts, while most of the EXP group participants used those devices less frequently. This is a confirmation to the claim that the overuse of conjunctions is a consequence of teachers' overemphasis on teaching connectors and that deemphasizing the role of connectors through teaching the other aspects of coherence leads students to write more coherent compositions with fewer connectors.

Both groups improved considerably In Punctuation, but the progress is even more considerable in the EXP group. Both groups received explicit instruction on Punctuation in the previous year of instruction; and their improvement in the post-test could have come from further practice and teacher feedback. But, an explanation to the better improvement of the EXP group is still needed.

The EXP group did not receive any further training on Punctuation; it was only pointed out that effective Punctuation facilitates reading by making clear the division of ideas to the reader. Awareness of the role of Punctuation in achieving coherence may be a reason of progress; however, we noticed that all the EXP group participants who improved in T/C improved also in Punctuation, and that the opposite is not true. A close examination of the relation between development in the two aspects allows us to conclude that knowing the structure of the English clause helped the participants punctuate their writing more effectively. It was found that many participants learnt, instead of chaining their ideas with relative pronouns, to put full stops in the ends of their sentences and to start new ones with new topics (In one of the cases there were no Topics and no Punctuation, and the writer supplied both in the post-test draft). Emphasis on the T/C structure solved two problems at the same time: overusing relative pronouns to connect ideas, and one of the most common problems of Punctuation: using commas instead of full stops.

4.6. Further Implications

Connector Density was found to have no influence on coherence per se; many papers in which the Density of Connectors is relatively high achieved very satisfactory coherence scores. So, using few connectors should be considered a matter of maturity of style rather than one of coherence; it creates more refined writing which is closer to that of native speakers of the language but it does not necessarily enhance coherence.

Another important issue which was pointed to in the pre-test analysis is the overuse of relative pronouns. Many of the participants wrote very long chains of ideas and connected them either with *which* or with *that*. This observation was also made by Abdullah and Al Shoumali (2000: 177-9). The Arab learners of English in their study overused relative pronouns in their English compositions and were found to use them as frequently as they do in their Arabic compositions. So, the problem of overusing relative pronouns seems to originate from the negative influence of the learners' mother tongue. The problem was solved in many papers in this study thanks to the instruction on T/C.

It is worthwhile reemphasizing the crucial role of feedback and editing in this study. Throughout the course, the participants in the EXP group had the opportunity to rewrite their papers. They worked on their own weaknesses taking into consideration written feedback supplied by the teacher as well as what they have learnt from the course. We recommend, however, that teachers give written feedback after each lecture only on the studied aspect to keep the students' attention concentrated on the lecture and take full advantage of it. Teachers should comment on other aspects only when there are serious mistakes. It is also imperative that feedback and editing follow immediately the lectures; otherwise the instruction is going to be pointless. Applying this recommendation remains bound to certain pedagogical requirements, one of them

is the number of students in class. A task like giving written feedback becomes a heavy burden for teachers added to all their pedagogical commitments. So, it remains a hope that the number of students in classes be kept to a minimum if any instruction is to be fruitful.

The method of teaching coherence under study proved effective in helping students improve coherence in their compositions, but the study has a number of limitations. The first is the size of the sample; the actual size does not allow for generalizing the results. The second concerns data collection. It was the teacher-researcher who designed the course, taught the EXP group, and scored the papers. It would have been more reliable if more researchers were involved.

Another limitation is that only the Example essay was considered. The use of some aspects of coherence, for example, LC, is not as complicated in the Example essay as it is in other types of development like Cause/Effect and Argumentative writing, and it would have been more interesting to observe the performance of the participants in those types. Restricting the scope of the study to only one type created also a difficulty in the specification of the aspects which should be taught. Some of the aspects of coherence which go with the Example essay–for example, LC relations, some macro-patterns, and sequencers- also go with other expository types of development like Cause/Effect, Comparison/Contrast, Classification, and so on. Other aspects apply to all types of writing -for example, Information Distribution with its two subdivisions (O/N and T/C), Punctuation, and Cohesion.

The course itself had its own weaknesses. One of them is its load. Sometimes the students found the lectures rather heavy; sometimes they where afraid of having to learn all the technical terms they heard in class although learning them was not emphasized by the teacher-researcher. Another weakness is the limited time devoted to

practice. Some participants needed more feedback than others, but the restricted time of the instruction made opportunities for further practice impossible. The course was also exhaustive. It was designed with no prior analyses of the participants' needs. Not all the participants needed to be taught all the aspects so exhaustively. It could be possible to adapt the lectures to their needs and get, most probably, better results.

Conclusion

Teaching coherence explicitly and giving equal importance to its different features has helped the participants in this study improve their written production, especially in the grammatical features and the mechanics of coherence which were found to be the areas most problematic to them. The EXP group participants relied less heavily on connectives to link their ideas and employed alternative ways. The participants also used other features more judiciously. So, explicit teaching of coherence is effective, but what is really important in such an approach is that teachers do not introduce the aspects of coherence separately; rather, they should make their students aware of the role each feature plays in building coherence and of the fact that not all the aspects of coherence are obligatory and that some of them can substitute for the others.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to gain thorough understanding of the concept of coherence and to look for effective teaching methods that focus less on cohesive devices and that draw students' attention to the other features of coherence which are similarly important. In this research, a method of teaching coherence developed by Lee (2002) is proposed as an alternative. This method gives equal importance to the different aspects of coherence and describes those aspects using precise terms. The method shows students how those aspects work together to build coherence in the English text.

The results of the experimental study we conducted show that the participants had more problems with the grammatical aspects and with the mechanics of coherence and that explicit teaching of those aspects is necessary. The proposed course has led the participants of the experimental group to use cohesive devices less frequently, to employ alternative strategies to connect their ideas, and to use other devices more judiciously. The results confirm the obligation of English as a Foreign Language teachers to explain to their students the role of each aspect in the building of coherent texts, and to the fact that some aspects of coherence substitute for others. It was found obligatory that teachers demonstrate through sample-text analysis how the different aspects of coherence interact to build it, and how these aspects are influenced by the genre of the text.

The present study investigated the outcome of the proposed course in the Example essay only. Future studies may replicate the same study with other types of development. Future research may also involve a larger sample and more than one researcher to get more reliable results. Another path for future research is Contrastive Rhetoric. It was pointed out in the review of the literature that Arab students who write in English tend to crowd their sentences with relative pronouns, which was confirmed

in this study. So, it would be interesting to investigate the differences between Arabic and English in the ways coherence is achieved, and to try to classify students' errors which appear to originate from the influence of Arabic.

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APPENDIX I

LESSONS ABOUT COHERENCE

1. **A Lesson about Macrostructure**

   1.1. <u>Introductory Activities:</u> In this stage the participants are asked to tell an anecdote. Then, the teacher helps them to identify the elements of the macro-pattern Situation-Problem-Solution-Evaluation. The teacher also explains the role of such a division in giving a clear idea about the content of the anecdote and in helping writers maintain relevance. The teacher talks also about encyclopaedic articles and helps students identify the macro-pattern Preview-Detail and supplies the same kind of explanation he gave for the previous macro-pattern.

   1.2. <u>Explicit Teaching:</u> The teacher explains the meanings of *Macrostructure* and *Macro-pattern*, their roles, the way these are influenced by genre, and gives the ones typical to the example essay: the General-Specific and the Preview-Detail patterns. He supplies an example essays for reading and helps students identify the introduced patterns in the essay. Here is a possible example essay which illustrates the use of the General-Specific and the Preview-Detail patterns.

<u>My Favourite Sights</u>

In each country in the world, there are always some beautiful sights to see. They might be a monument, a garden, or a cathedral. Every country is proud of them, and everyone is interested in talking about them. In my country, three important points of interest attract a great number of tourists all year. No portrait of these sights is complete without mentioning their historical and seasonal aspects. Because of these aspects, Quebec is a place where you can find some of the most interesting sights you will ever see.

Old Quebec City is the living witness of our history. The first example is the church Notre-Dame des Victoires. Located at the bottom of Cap Diament, this church was the first one built in North America. It commemorates the establishment of Quebec in 1908. it is a modest and

charming church, constructed by stones and dominated by a single belfry from where you can still hear authentic chimes ringing. Another example is the Ramparts. Originally, they were long fortifications all around the city with three main doors to enter in. now, the three doors are renovated and part of he fortifications is preserved, offering a harmonious blend of history and innovation. Finally, the focal point of old Quebec City is the Plains d'Abraham. It is a very large hill from which we can have a scenic view of Saint Lawrence River and the city. It was on this sight that our founders won many battles but, unfortunately, lost the most important one. Nevertheless, the spot is now a wonderful park where is still present, with its many cannons, a past which is not so far away. Regardless of the season, those three points are colourful: red in autumn, white in winter, light green in spring, and dark green in summer.

From the Plains d'Abraham, it is easy to discover the majestic Saint Lawrenec River. This beautiful broad river was the open door for our founders. Travelling in canos, they established the first three cities in the lands drained by the Saint Lawrence: Quebec, Montreal, and Trois-Rivières. They must have been impressed with the clear, sweet water, the three-studded islands, and the banks lined with pine and hemlock. Today, the river is an exceptional waterway extending 1,500 miles into the interior. Like the Mississippi River, it is, in every season, the location for great activities. Although the most important one is commercial, pleasure and sport are considerable: for example, boating, water-skiing, and fishing. These are particularly popular in summer. Furthermore, even though there are 3 to 5 feet of ice on the river in the winter, the Saint Lawrence River is still navigable.

On the north shore of Saint Lawrence River, five miles form Quebec, the famous Mont Morency Falls are located. These beautiful falls are discovered by a French explorer in the sixteenth century. About 350 feet high, and with frothing, foaming sheets of water, they are the highest falls in North America. During the summer, it is popular to go to one of the huge park areas near the falls to admire their cascades. At night, it is possible to hear and see a lovely sound and light show. During the winter, the main activity is at the bottom. The small drops of vapor in

the air form a huge, round block of ice at the bottom of the falls which becomes bigger and bigger. This strange sight draws a lot of children and adults who spend time climbing up and down.

Is it possible to find a country where the beauty, the history, and the variety in the scenery are combined in such perfect harmony? Of course, our four seasons mean four different aspects of the same sight. I don't know if it is because I am far from my country, but I am convinced that Quebec has some of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen.

1.3. <u>Students Handouts:</u> the following handout is given. It gives explanations of the meanings and the roles of Macrostructure and Macro-pattern, gives the frame of the essay proposed for study in the lecture, and gives a simple text to be decomposed by students the same way the did with the sample essay.

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Macrostructure

Macrostructure is the global organization of a text. It is the outline of the functions of its elements. A text should not be seen as a succession of sentences in which each sentence is related to its preceding or following one; rather, each sentence in a coherent text has a specific function in relation to the general topic of the text.

When your text is clearly divided into functional units, it is easy for you to control its unity, and for readers to understand how each piece of the information you include contributes to the overall meaning of the text.

In essays developed by examples, there are two very common patters of global organization: *the General-Specific pattern* (or the funnel), and *the Preview-Detail pattern*. In the first pattern, there is a movement from a general statement to more specific ones; in the second, an idea is given and is followed by details that explain or describe it.

Here is an outline of the macrostructure of the essay *My Favourite Sights*:

General	- In each country………………beautiful sights.	
	- In my country…………………………………….	
Specific	- Quebec is a place where…………………………	The Thesis Statement PREVIEW
Preview	- Old Quebec City	Topic sentence 1
Detail	- Notre-Dame des Victoires (location, history, description).	Detail
	- The Ramparts (location, history, description).	
	- The Plains d'Abraham (location, history,	

</div>

	description). - The seasonal aspects.	
Preview **Detail**	- the majestic Saint Lawrence River - History, description, the seasonal aspects.	**Topic sentence 2** **Detail**
Preview **Detail**	- the Montmorency Falls - History, description, the seasonal aspects.	**Topic sentence 3** **Detail**

To plan for an example essay, it is helpful to have such an outline. This way, you can make sure that you have included all the necessary elements in your plan. With this outline, you can also control the relevance of your individual sentences to the topic.

Exercise: *Draw an outline of the macrostructure of the following passage:*

The banana plant is the world's largest herb. It is often mistaken for a tree, but does not have a woody trunk or boughs. It springs from an underground rhizome to form a false trunk three to six meters (10-20') high and is crowned with a rosette of 10-20 beautiful, oblong banana leaves.

History credits Arab traders with giving the banana its popular name. Although there are several hundred varieties which differ in taste, color, form and size, Arab traders noted that bananas growing in Africa and Asia were small, about the size of a man's finger, and so called them banan, which means "fingertips" in Arabic. "Banana" is the singular form.

1.4. Manipulation Exercises: In this stage students are provided with an example essay which has no clear division and which contains irrelevant details. They are asked to find paragraph division and to identify the irrelevant details.

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The Essay Proposed for Editing

Americans are Friendly to Strangers

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I came to the United States one year ago and I had no idea about life in the United States and American traditions, except that life was complicated and people are strange. At the time I arrived at J.F.Kennedy airport, I felt very happy because I am fond of traveling around the world. Coming to America has been one of my dreams, so I could go to Jamaica or any island in the Caribbean. A few minutes later, however, I felt afraid. I asked myself why I had come to this strange world and what I was doing here. The reason for that was what I remembered my friends in Saudi Arabia saying about Americans and how they treat strangers. After I attended college, however, I

discovered the opposite of what I had expected. For example, the first semester I attended college, I became friends with one of the American students who used to attend math class with me. Even though American social relations are complex, hard to form, and hard to maintain, I managed to bridge the gap, and I was able to have close friendships with some Americans. We used to study together, go to parties together, and he used to help me a lot with my English. Even though he transferred to another university, we always keep in touch with each other. From my experience, I have come to understand that Americans are generally verbal and long, silent periods are uncomfortable to them. They like hard working people, and are proud of their country. So, when I sit with Americans, I start a conversation with them by talking about the weather, sports, or about teachers' skills in the classroom. I think conversations make a friendly atmosphere among people. The second example that proved to me that I had the wrong idea about Americans was when my wife and I drove across the country from New Orleans to San Diego. When I told my friend that my wife and I were going to drive across the United States and if they wanted to they could join us, they said, "It is dangerous to drive across America. You might get killed by one of the truck drivers or get robbed." However, we didn't pay attention to them because we wanted to find out what America is really like and how people treat strangers. We also wanted to explore the country which used to be a mystery to us; we wanted to see the villages which still live following the western tradition and the legendary cowboys if possible. On the way from San Antonio to El Paso, our car stopped because it ran out of fuel. We got out of the car and waited for anyone to give us a ride. Ten minutes later, a truck driver pulled off the road. I approached him carefully and I asked him, "Could you please give us a ride to the nearest gas station?" He asked me why. I said, "Our car ran out of gas and we have to get some." He said, "The nearest station is thirty-five miles away and you might not find anyone who can drive you back to your car." Then he came up with a solution to our problem. He towed our car to the nearest station. When we reached it, I took a fifty dollar bill from my pocket and handed it to him, but he wouldn't accept it. He told me that he helped me because we needed help. The same episode happened to me when I was once driving to home in my country. My house was one kilometer away from the place where I stopped, so, I parked the car and walked home. In general, Americans are friendly to strangers. They are also hardworking and very proud of their country. From my experience, a person who treats people well will put them in a position where they have to respect him in return, but if he treats them badly they will treat him in the same way. Human beings are born with a good nature and they will not behave badly unless they are forced to. I think a person should judge people by dealing with them, not by listening to his friends.

The Original Essay

Americans are Friendly to Strangers

I came to the United States one year ago and I had no idea about life in the United States and American traditions, except that life was complicated and people are strange, at the time I arrived at J.F.Kennedy airport, I felt very happy because I am fond of traveling around the world. Coming to America has been one of my dreams, so I could go to Jamaica or any island in the Caribbean .a few minutes later, however, I felt afraid. I asked myself why I had come to this strange world and what I was doing here. The reason for that was what I remembered my friends in Saudi Arabia saying about American and how they treat strangers. After I attended college, however, I discovered the opposite of what I had expected.

Even though American social relations are complex, hard to form, and hard to maintain, I managed to bridge the gap, and I was able to have close friendships with some Americans. For example, the first semester I attended college, I became friends with one of the American students who used to attend math class with me. We used to study together, go to parties together, and he used to help me a lot with my English. Even though he transferred to another university, we always keep in touch with each other. From my experience, I have come to understand that Americans are generally verbal and long, silent periods are uncomfortable to them. So, when I sit with Americans, I start a conversation with them by talking about the weather, sports, or about teachers' skills in the class room, I think conversations make a friendly atmosphere among people.

The second example that proved to me that I had the wrong idea about Americans was when my wife and I drove across the country from New Orleans to San Diego. When I told my friend that my wife and I were going to drive across the United States and if they wanted to they could join us, they said, "It is dangerous to drive across America. You might get killed by one of the truck drivers or get robbed." However, we didn't pay attention to them because we wanted to find out what America is really like and how people treat strangers.

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In general, Americans are friendly to strangers. From my experience, a person who treats people well will put them in a position where they have to respect him in return, but if he treats them badly they will treat him in the same way. Human beings are born with a good nature and they will not behave badly unless they are forced to. I think a person should judge people by dealing with them, not by listening to his friends.

1.5. <u>Writing Practice:</u> Students are asked to write an example essay to develop the topic "We use names of animals to describe personality traits" with a special focus on its Macrostructure. The teacher corrects the papers, and gives feedback mainly on the aspect if there are any problems.

2. A Lecture about Cohesion

2.1. <u>Introductory Activities:</u> Students discuss the ways they are used to link their ideas. The teacher points to pronouns, repetitions, substitutions and other cohesive devices and asks them about the roles they play in the text.

2.2. <u>Explicit Teaching:</u> The teacher explains the meaning of *Cohesion* and its role in building the text. He also introduces the different cohesive devices, explains the role of each, and demonstrates through examples (passages from a text students read in a previous lecture) how these devices work.

2.3. <u>Student Handouts:</u> The teacher gives a handout in which cohesive devices are explained and illustrated in appropriate examples, and a simple text to be examined by the students to identify the different cohesive devices used by the writer. The teacher also shows in this stage that the use of certain devices, like pronoun reference and repetition, makes the use of others, like conjunction, unnecessary.

Cohesion
Cohesion is the network of the linguistic devices which connect sentences and sentence elements together into one text. Cohesion provides continuity from one sentence to another and makes clear the semantic relations that exist in the text. Cohesive devices are:

The Definition of the Linguistic Device	Examples
<u>Reference:</u> a device that reminds the reader of an element that is mentioned before or mentions one that will occur later in the text.	-It's ***an old box camera***. – I never had one of that kind. - He ***who hesitates*** is lost. - I would never have believed it. ***They accepted the whole scheme***.
<u>Substitution:</u> the replacement of an element in the text by one of the following items: ***one, ones, same, do, not,*** and ***so***.	- ***These biscuits*** are stale. - Get some fresh ones. - Does she ***sing***? – No, she doesn't. –Yes, she does. - The children ***work very hard in the garden***. – They must do.

<u>Ellipsis:</u> **It is the omitting of an element that has been referred to earlier (and rarely an element that will occur after) in the text.**	- Would you hear another *verse?* I know twelve more.
<u>Conjunction:</u> **It is a device that makes explicit the semantic relations that exist in a text. It has four kinds: Adversative, additive, temporal and conditional.**	- For the whole day he climbed up the steep mountainside, almost without stopping. - *And* all this time he met no one. (Additive) - *Yet* he was hardly aware of being tired. (Adversative) - *So* by night time the valley was far bellow. (Conditional) - *Then*, as dusk fell, he sat down to rest. (Temporal)
<u>Lexical cohesion:</u> **It occurs when two elements relate in some way. Types of lexical cohesion are: recurrence (including repetition, synonym, and general/specific words) and collocation (including all items in the text that are semantically related).**	

Exercise: *Read the following texts and try to identify the linguistic devices that join its elements.*

The human nose is a wonderful thing. A whiff of a special smell can bring back fond memories of a great holiday or a budding romance. The pleasing odor of a favourite meal cooking, or cookies in the oven, can have us salivating with hunger. But its ability to smell foul odors it what makes the nose truly valuable. Our capability to detect foods that have gone off simply by giving them a sniff can prevent us from eating things that could make us sick. The smell of smoke has saved many people from fires.

2.4. <u>Manipulation Exercises:</u> **in this stage, students edit passages in which there are problems in the use of cohesive devices. Here is a handout as an example of this kind of exercise. The passages are taken from students papers.**

Cohesion: Exercises

Revise the following passages using appropriately the cohesive device referred to in the title of each selection:

Reference

1- Two things summarize all the characteristics I would like to find in my future husband, which are…

- ……………………………………………………..
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2- …especially for women who play the role of a good and sensitive woman by crying in front of men in order to get what she wants.

- ……………………………………………………
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3- …names of animals are used to praise someone or insult someone else.

- ……………………………………………………..
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4- The fourth problem which is increasing in the modern society is street accidents. Which directly lead to death of handicaps.

- ……………………………………………………..
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5- There is also another problem which is known as the disease of the century; AIDS which is the acronym of Acquired **Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome**…

- ……………………………………………………..
……………………………………………………….
……………………………………………………….
……………………………………………………….

6- A fourth problem that is much spread is headache caused by…

- ……………………………………………………
……………………………………………………….

7- Still another top killer is AIDS which is caused by illegal sexual relations…

- ……………………………………………………..
……………………………………………………….

8- Almost all countries face a great number of social problems and diseases which are top killers such as smoking, drug addiction, alcoholism and heart disease which are the problems that damage most the human being and that are increasing in modern societies because of their progress in different fields like industry and culture.

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9- For these reasons, everyone should choose the suitable person to be his friend, and he must have good manners because he is the closest person to him and may affect him.

- ……………………………………………………..
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10- Everyone likes money and does its best to get it.

- ……………………………………………………..
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11- Usually, books attract people with its lovely shapes and colors and even with its splashed titles that it looks really amazing. It leads you to buy it even when you are broke…books with its different kinds has its special tastes.

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12- We are in a period when we have our special personality and we have the right to direct our lives the way we want. One of this right is…

- …………………………………………………….
……………………………………………………….
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13- Women become quickly older than men and wrinkles may appear in her face…

- ………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

14- Our best friend is the book…So; the book has many advantages that make it the best friend.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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15- When people read a book and do not understand a word he will check its meaning in a dictionary.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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16- The book is the only one you can consider a good friend.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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17- the book can be with us everywhere because it is very easy to take it with us when you …

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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18- Most people are interested in fashion and their physical appearance more than the cultural one.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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19- We marry only once in our lives... So, we must choose the good person, a person with some characteristics that you as a woman want to find in your husband.

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20- Confidence is another characteristic that no one can live without it.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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21- The second thing I want to find it is…

- ………………………………………………………………………………

22- There is one dream everyone has it…

- ………………………………………………………………………………

23- Before they engage with anyone, girls have in mind some characteristics they hope to find them in their future husbands.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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24- Two things summarize all the characteristics I would like to find in my future husband, which are…

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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Substitution
1- We use names of animals to describe personality traits, either for referring to good aspects or bad aspects.

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2- The three points discussed here are just some instances of the advantages that are absent in the classical one.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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3- Another characteristic I insist on is the educated man.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
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Ellipsis
1- Using the names of animals to describe personality traits can be good or can be bad.

- ………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

2- Diabetes is considered as a big health problem.

- ………………………………………………………………………………

3- We see that people in modern societies enjoy

- ………………………………………………………………………………

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their lives with all the luxuries which are available to them.

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4- When some people want to achieve a purpose or they want to change anything in their lives…

- …………………………………………………………………...
…………………………………………………………………………

5- It helps us to improve. /It helps us to do…

- …………………………………………………………………...

Parallelism

1- A computer can be used to search the Internet, writing reports and letters, and to keep in touch with friends via e-mail.

- …………………………………………………………………..
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2- Before you leave, please turn off the lights, water the plants, and to lock the door.

- …………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………

3- Mr. Potter never saw the ocean, has never been on an airplane, and has never owned a car.

- …………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………

4- Max was a successful director, the winner of many awards, and he acted on stage.

- …………………………………………………………………...
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Conjunction

1- Still another top killer is drugs; this is the most dangerous problem. Because with time it causes addiction, so we cannot stop it. Drugs affect directly our health, so, it makes the person so lazy, careless and nervous, and it causes many social problems, in addition to this it damages the brain and the resistance system. Drugs spread faster in poor countries, because of social problems. But drugs spread also in the rich countries but with a less degree. So, drugs are very dangerous and affect all aspects of life.

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2- Although the development of science and the invention of different kinds of medicines, but there's no solution to treat those dangerous diseases.

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3- It (difference in age between husband and wife) permits couples to have an agreement in ideas which leads them to live in peace, happiness and love and generally they do not suffer a lot from family problems and the percentage of divorces really little and we can see many examples from our relatives and neighbors.

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4- He should be tolerant in order to protect his family life, so he does not give importance to small problems or details.

- …………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………..
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5- I do not oppose to this attitude, but I just see the idea of living with a person who is different from me in many ways more fruitful.

- …………………………………………………………………..
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6- But these parts or elements are more important than the marriage itself. Because if

- …………………………………………………………………..
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these elements are good, the marriage will be successful and among these elements there are first of all the husband and the wife, and they must love and like each other, and the comprehension between them and in my thought is also an element that should be respected, because there are some people who…

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7- As far as my point is concerned, it has nothing to do with degrees, because I have some acquaintances who have got diplomas but who seem to have never received any education.

- …………………………………………………………
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8- These were the main characteristics I have in mind about my future life partner, and however I find them not ideal…

- …………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………

9- Put each one alone (eggs), because if some break the others will not.

- …………………………………………………………
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10- Nowadays, the percentage of death is increasing because of health problems. But there are some illnesses which are caused by the person himself…

- …………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………
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11- Though responsibility is difficult, but there is no successful life without it.

- …………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………

12- Although the technological development and the discovery of the computer which is a magical machine that stores every kind of information but books remain our intimate friend although it is a classical method in getting knowledge but it's useful.

- …………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………
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13- Books are very nice because there are different kinds.

- …………………………………………………………
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14- The feeling of being a hero or something like that kills in you the feeling of loneliness or you are passing time because it makes you learn from the experiences of others even if they are imaginary persons, so you will be able to build your own ideas and principles on the right grounds.

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15- Second, what attracts me in this system is that I'll finish my studies in an early age because we have heard that three years are not sufficient to be well formed, no, the quality of information which we had, is better than the old system because we have studied new modules which are very interesting.

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2.5. <u>**Writing Practice:**</u> **Students in this stage write an example essay on the topic "examples of people who had a great influence on my life", with a special emphasis on using cohesive devices. The teacher's feedback also is focused on Cohesion.**

<u>**Note:**</u> **A lecture on Local Coherence was given before the one on Cohesion, and doing the exercises proposed above is not possible without continuous reference to local semantic relations in the students' passages.**

APPENDIX II

A COHERENCE CHECKLIST USED TO HELP STUDENTS EDIT THEIR ESSAYS

1- Does my introduction effectively introduce the reader to the subject?

2- Does it contain a thesis statement that states clearly the idea, attitude, or opinion discussed in the body?

3- Are all the ideas in the essay relevant to the topic? Do they develop my thesis statement?

4- Are they all well related one to the other? What kind of relation links each two pairs of sentences? Are the problems suggested followed by responses/solutions? Do I effectively explain the ideas I propose? Do I just mention them without any further explanations?

5- Is my overall point of view clear?

6- Is the content of the essay well divided into paragraphs on the basis of content?

7- Are the paragraphs globally arranged according to any of the patterns which are common in English texts (Problem-Solution/Preview-Detail/General-Specific)?

8- Is the transition between paragraphs smooth?

9- Does the conclusion give the reader a sense of closure? Or does it bring any new topic?

10- Are the key words and expressions repeated constantly?

11- Is reference used appropriately and accurately?

12- Is ellipsis used where needed?

13- Is the use of each conjunction justified (in relation to meaning)? Aren't they overused? Misused?

14- Is new information introduced in the appropriate place or manner? Does the distribution of information in my sentences provide smooth movement from a sentence to another?

15- Is punctuation employed appropriately to separate ideas and sentences?

16- Do I use clear indentations in the beginnings of my paragraphs?

17- Are my attitudes towards the ideas and the examples I propose clear to the reader? Do I express my doubts and certainties effectively?

18- Can readers read my essay and understand my purpose easily?

APPENDIX III

THE SCALE USED TO SCORE THE PRE-TEST AND THE POST-TEST

PAPERS

Please circle the number that reflects the degree to which you agree with the statement about the essay. Circle NA (Not Applicable) when insufficient or no information is available concerning the particular feature.

5 = Strongly Agree   4 = Agree   3 = Undecided   2 = Disagree   1 = Strongly Disagree

Macrostructure

5 4 3 2 1 NA The ideas in the essay are all very relevant to the topic.

5 4 3 2 1 NA The division of paragraphs is justifiable in terms of content relevance.

5 4 3 2 1 NA The beginning section is effective in introducing the reader to the subject.

5 4 3 2 1 NA The ending gives the reader a definite sense of closure.

Local Coherence

5 4 3 2 1 NA Examples are introduced judiciously, not just to form an exhaustive list.

5 4 3 2 1 NA The causal relationship between ideas is clear.

5 4 3 2 1 NA Problem statements are followed up by responses/solutions.

5 4 3 2 1 NA Ideas mentioned are elaborated.

Cohesion

5 4 3 2 1 NA The exact same vocabulary/expressions/structures are repeated consistently.

5 4 3 2 1 NA Equivalent words/paraphrases, when used, are used appropriately.

5 4 3 2 1 NA Pronouns of reference are used appropriately and accurately.

5 4 3 2 1 NA Ellipsis is used where needed.

5 4 3 2 1 NA Junction words are used judiciously and accurately.

Information Distribution

5 4 3 2 1 NA New information is introduced in an appropriate place or manner.

5 4 3 2 1 NA The clause elements are there and appropriately used.

Metadiscourse

5 4 3 2 1 NA (h) The writer's overall point of view is clear.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (j) Transition between paragraphs is smooth.

5 4 3 2 1 NA (i) Punctuation is employed appropriately to separate ideas and sentences.