CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION
1.1Context of the study

Our prime objective behind learning a foreign language is to communicate with other people to understand them, talk to them, read what they have written and write to them (Byrne, 1991). Of the 4,000 to 5,000 living languages, English is by far the most widely used. It is the most commonly learnt, taught, and understood language today. It is extensively used as a second language and as official language in many other countries. It is the commonest language of international communication (Yule, 1991)

There are three main categories of communication: oral, written, and non-verbal. Oral communication is regarded as the most essential. People use spoken words to exchange ideas and information which save time and effort. Oral communication is a vital part of everyday lives, beginning at birth. It is an essential ingredient of successful family, social and business relationships. An oral communication breakdown, can lead to misunderstandings and serious problems in our social and business lives (Satterwhite, 2007).

To understand a written or an oral language we should be acquainted or well informed of certain linguistic devices, which make all the separate parts *cohere* or logically consistent so that all the separate parts fit together and add up to a credible harmonious whole. Coherence is the degree to which a piece of discourse 'makes sense'. When

you attempt to understand a connected piece of speech or writing, your degree of success will depend upon several factors. Some of these, such as your general knowledge of the subject matter, are obvious and of no linguistic interest. But a factor of considerable interest and importance is the *coherence* of the discourse, its underlying structure, organization and connectedness. A *coherent* discourse has a high degree of such connectedness; an *incoherent* discourse does not, and is accordingly hard to follow.

The notion of coherence is important within the various approaches to language called functionalism, and particularly within Systemic Linguistics. Some types of connectedness are provided very explicitly by overt linguistic devices like anaphors; these are singled out for special attention as cohesion. But there are also more general devices for providing structure which are not explicitly grammatical in nature, and these other devices are examined under the rubric of *coherence*.

Here is a simple example, taken from a newspaper article:

> *After ten years of standardization, there should be a healthy UK market for used models. Curiously, there seems to be only one big second-hand PC dealer in London.*

The point of interest here is the word *curiously,* whose function is to relate the following sentence to the

preceding one in a manner that is immediately obvious to the reader: given the content of the first sentence, the assertion made by the second one should seem surprising. The skilful use of such connections has, of course, been recognized for a long time as an essential part of good speaking and writing. But now linguists are increasingly turning their attention to the explicit analysis of these connective devices. The term itself was introduced by the British linguist Michael Halliday, who has been particularly prominent in investigating coherence.

Cohesive devices, sometimes called linking words, linkers, connectors, discourse markers or transitional words, are one of the most misunderstood and misused parts in the writing of English language learners at Sudanese secondary schools. They are words like '**For example**', '**In conclusion**', '**however**'and '**moreover**'. Together with coherence, cohesion provides 25% of your marks in both parts of the Writing test. However, most students have not been taught how to use them effectively.

Cohesive devices tell the reader what we are doing in a sentence and help to guide them through our writing. They signal to the reader what the relationships are between the different clauses, sentences and paragraphs. Let's look at two examples below.

> The public transport in this city is unreliable **and** it's cheap.
> The public transport in this city is unreliable **but** it's cheap.

There are two cohesive devices in the sentences above: 'and' and 'but'. Both give the reader different signals and change the meaning of the sentence. The first sentence tells the reader that 'it's cheap' is simply being added to the previous information, however, the second sentence tells the reader that they are giving a contrasting opinion to the first part of the sentence by using the word 'but'.

In other words, the second sentence is saying 'it's unreliable (which is bad) **but** the good thing about it is it's cheap, so I don't mind using it.' Simply using the word 'but' conveys that whole message without needing to literally say it.

This makes our message more succinct and our writing easier to read. But, does that mean we should use as many cohesive devices as possible?

However, using them too much often leads to students using them incorrectly. It is stated that '**makes inadequate, inaccurate or over use of cohesive devices**'. Students think that using them as much as possible will get them a high mark, but don't consider the meaning and how each of them should be used in a sentence.

1.2 Statement of the problem

It is at undergraduate level where students start facing such challenging situations with technical language. At College they are introduced to a type of language which requires them to be well acquainted with technical terms. They need that in reading and writing. It is true that such

language makes its appearance as early as the basic level but tutors hardly consider introducing their technical terms.

Upon coming to college students are introduced to cohesive devices as indispensable tools for logical and well-connected writing. These are linguistic links the presence of which in a text provides structure. It is true that they have encountered them in secondary schools but in grammar lessons. Perhaps they were handled as parts of the grammatical content of the syllabus. Now, they are faced with the challenging situation of incorporating them into their writing processes. Hence the problem arises from inability to conform to the appropriate use of these vital devices in writing.

1.3 Objectives

This study sets out to explore the hurdles undergraduate students encounter with their course of writing. It seeks to find out how these obstacles can be addressed and dealt with successfully. A number of steps have to be taken in relation to the current predicament which will be stated in details in chapter five.

One salient objective is to blend the handling of both reading and writing as they are observed to be powerfully linked that tackling writing alone may not produce the desired effect. At least at one step of the processes of treatment that reading should be accounted for.

1.4 Significance of the problem

The importance of this study emerges from the fact that it seeks to shed light on helping the undergraduate understand and the cohesive devices in their writing. This can be done by examining the different factors responsible for the students' failure to absorb and apply the said devices.

The study will be of great value to the teachers and students of English and curriculum designers as well. Also, it will help teachers to evaluate their teaching methods and suggest some ways to enrich it in a way to help their students get a good grasp of the diverse mechanics of writing. Moreover, it will enable students to identify the factors and areas that actually impede their path to good writing.

This study has further linked the skill of writing with that of reading as the two disciplines are closely interrelated. The reading part can help augment the students' word power of which the linking devices represent the core. Above all, it will be useful for the other researchers to recognize the impact of writing as a receptive skill when linked with reading and hence conduct some studies on the area with the aim of finding the effect of such blend of reading and writing.

1.5 Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

1- To what extent can the undergraduate syllabus of English be used for improving students' mechanics of writing?

2- To what extent do tutors and classroom practitioners pay special attention to the question of writing mechanics in general and linking devices in particular?

3- What is the effect of further handling the teaching of cohesive devices along with that of reading to augment the students' writing abilities?

1.6 Hypotheses

1. The undergraduate syllabus followed at our universities can be used for improving the undergraduates' knowledge of the mechanics of writing.

2. Tutors and classroom practitioners pay special attention to the question of writing mechanics in general and linking devices in particular?

3. The effect of further handling the teaching or cohesive devices along with that of reading to augment the students' writing abilities.

1.7 Methodology

In this study, experimental methods will be adopted. The proposed experiment will be conducted at Sudan University of Science and Technology. There will be two groups. One group will be helped to work with the mechanics of writing with special focus on cohesive devices. This group will also be presented with a good host of English reading comprehension text in order to detect

the uses of the cohesive devices in the text. The other group is a control group.

The experiment will take two months, and then the two groups will be asked to demonstrate through writing the use of cohesive devices. As part of data collecting tools to inform the present study, a questionnaire will be used with the tutors. The researcher will also confirm the validity and the reliability of the research tools before their application.

1.8 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter a detailed description of the theoretical framework has been provided with some focus on the definition of the research problem and the research methodology. In the next chapter some relevant literature will be critically reviewed.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the issue of cohesive devices use at undergraduate level and other related topics with some emphasis on the nature of writing and reading comprehension. Important findings and arguments from opponents and proponents of an English-only teaching method will be discussed. The chapter is divided into two parts, the first one is on the theoretical framework, and the other is on previous studies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In any kind of writing, namely academic writing, it is essential to present an argument as clearly and cohesively as it ought to be. Furthermore, it is mandatory to discuss and evaluate the existing research or ideas about the topic in question. Often you will be assessed on your ability to do both.

Developing the language to connect ideas in academic writing will undeniably help a lot with both these tasks of discussion and assessment. The appropriate use of 'discourse markers,' that is, words or phrases that signal a relationship, can reveal and reinforce the direction that a scientific argument is taking, and make clear the relations between sections of the involved writing.

Experienced or veteran writers use these special connecting words or phrases to bridge gaps between ideas that may at first seem unrelated.

2.2 Connectives used in and between sentences

Connectives allow us to be more precise about the relationships between statements in a sentence or between sentences. Particular phrases and words serve different functions in connecting ideas and arguments. For example, different clauses or words can signal or 'signpost' additional or similar information, opposition or contrast, concession, cause or effect, emphasis, clarification, or a relationship in time or sequence.

Some useful examples of each are categorized by function in the following section. Note that most of these terms can also be used to start new paragraphs. However, some of them need to be incorporated into fuller sentences to be effective as paragraph openers.

For example, if you use *notwithstanding* as a paragraph opener you may have to add other words to provide more information such as *"Notwithstanding a lack of natural resources, the region has …"*

Addition – *to add an idea*
additionally, and, also, apart from this, as well (as), in addition, moreover, further, furthermore, too

With the above linking words, we can further add Personal Opinion which can be exemplified as follows: Every enlisted linking word can be used with the sentence in the bold type:

In my opinion/view, To my mind. To my way of thinking, I am convinced that, It strikes me that, It is my firm belief that, Iam inclined to belief that, It seems to me that, As far as I am concerned, I think that **the economic recession of the previous decades is foreseeable**

.

Condition – *to provide a condition*
if, in that case, provided that, unless

Now, the following linking devices are essentially those of:

For comparison – *to show how things are similar*
correspondingly, equally, for the same reason, in a similar manner, in comparison, in the same way, on the one hand, similarly, too

For contrast – *to show how things are different*
alternatively, although, but, conversely, despite, even so, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, on the contrary, contrary to, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, on the other hand, rather, still, though, yet, whereas, while.

For emphasis – *to put forward an idea more forcefully*
again, in fact, interestingly, indeed, it should be noted (that), more important(ly), most importantly, to repeat, (un)fortunately, unquestionably

2.3 Connecting paragraphs

Apart from using the linking words / phrases above, showing the link between paragraphs could involve writing 'hand-holding' sentences. These are sentences that link back to the ideas of the previous paragraph. For instance, when outlining the positive and negative issues about a topic you could use the following:

Example (from beginning of previous paragraph):
One of the main advantages of X is . . .
One of the positive effects of X is . . .

When you are ready to move your discussion to the negative issues, you could write one of the following as a paragraph opener:

Example:

Having considered the positive effects of X, negative issues may now need to be taken into account . . .
Despite the positive effects outlined above, there are also negative issues to be considered . . .
It is always important to make paragraphs part of a coherent whole text; they must not be isolated units unrelated to the whole piece.

> "Do not expect your reader to make the connection between your ideas, but make those connections explicit. This way, the reader will be lead in a logical order through your argument and will be reminded of your current theme or angle.'(Gillett, Hammond, & Martala, 2009)

2.4 Checking for paragraph links in your own work

When you are editing your next written assignment, ask yourself the following questions as you read through your work:

⌐⋏ Does the start of my paragraph give my reader enough information about what the paragraph will be about?

⌐⋏ Does my paragraph add to or elaborate on a point made previously and, if so, have I made this explicit with an appropriate linking word / phrase?

⌐⋏ Does my paragraph introduce a completely new point or a different viewpoint to before and, if so, have I explicitly shown this with a suitable connective?

ר٨ Have I used similar connectives repeatedly? (If yes, may need to vary them using the above list.)

For restatement – *for rephrasing statements*
in other words, more simply, namely, simply put, to put it differently / another way, such as, that is

The cause of things – *to attribute the reasons for something occurring*
a / the consequence of, because, due to, for, the effect of …, since, the result of

Some of the salient items of the linking devices are those associated with arrangement and order:

Time order – *to indicate a chronological sequence*
first, second, third (etc), next, before, earlier, finally, following, given the above, later, meanwhile, subsequently, then, to conclude, while

The focal point of this study is the use of linking devices in order to govern the process of writing. Many professional writers believe that writing is a difficult activity for most people. According to (Yavuz&Genc, 1998), most students, low and high achievers alike, find writing difficult and view it as something they just have to persevere through in order to pass certain exams (cited in Al Asmari, 2013). Byrne (1991) attributes this to three factors:

First, Psychological factors: As we use speech as a normal medium of communication in most circumstances, we normally have someone physically present from who we get feedback. Writing, on the other hand, is essentially a

solitary activity and the fact that we are required to write in our own makes the act of writing difficult.

Second, Linguistic factors: As oral communication is sustained through a process of interaction, the participants often help to keep it going. Because speech is normally spontaneous, people pay little attention to organizing their sentence structure or connecting their sentences. Through interaction, people can repeat, backtrack or expand depending on how other people react to what they say. Unlike speech, in writing, people have to compensate for absence of speech features. To keep the channel of communication open, people have to use their own efforts. They have to ensure that the text they produce can be interpreted on its own through the choice of sentence structure and by the way how sentences are linked together and sequenced, and

Third, Cognitive factor: People grow up learning to speak and in normal circumstances; people spend much of their time doing it. People appear to speak without much conscious effort or thought and generally they talk because they want to. People usually talk about matters which are of interest and relevant to their social affairs or professions. Writing, on the other hand, is learned through a process of instruction. In order to write, people have to master the written form of the language, and to learn certain structures which are less used in speech, but are important for effective communication in writing. Also, people have to organize their ideas in such a way that

they can be understood by a reader who is not present. To many people, writing is a task which is often imposed on them. In many situations, people find it difficult: what to write. For many of us, being at a loss for ideas is a familiar experience especially when are obliged to write. According to Hedge (2010), writing is a difficult task to large numbers of English-language students. He agrees with Byrne that a writer is unable to exploit all the devices available to speaker such as gesture, body movement, and facial expression, tone of voice, stress, and hesitation. Hedge (2010), stated that:

> Effective writing requires a number of things: a high degree of organization in the development of information, ideas or arguments; a high degree of accuracy; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and a careful choice of vocabulary, grammar patterns, and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers. (p.7)

2.5 Standard Writing System

According to Nelson (1965: 197), the idea of the standard writing system has emerged since the beginning of English language history. In the period of

the standardization, the virtues of having a single system in which all writers spell the same words in the same way were adopted. For example, in the late 19th century, King Al Fred helped establish the West Saxon way of writing old English as strong standard for two hundred years or more then the political changes resulting from the Norman Conquest broke down this standard and introduced another period of innovation during which writers adopted a new standard based on French Spelling. In the late fourteenth century, another new standard based on speech and writing practice was yet developed. For example, educated people regardless of their native dialects pretty spell much alike.

The writing system today is based on this notion in most of its features. In spite of some rather extensive changes of pronunciation, there have been no major alternations in the writing system. However, there have been changes in the direction of great consistency and virtually complete standardization. Modern language writing system as a result of strong pedagogical and social pressure for standardization has become a kind of a language which virtually uniform wherever; English is used with few exceptions which could be shown as follows:

2.6 Importance of Writing

The importance of writing skill in different fields of knowledge can obviously be seen in many contributions. For example, Huckin and Olsen (1991:3) reported that, for

many technical professionals the ultimate product of their work is a written document if their documents are badly written, they affect not only the individual, but also the entire organization in which they are working. Organization knows this and sometimes their employment or promotion depends on writing ability the better they write the good chance they will get. White, (1991) asserts that writing is an important human thinking activity for the following reason:

1. Through writing, thoughts can be recorded for a long time.

2. Writing is a means of communication, through which learners are able to share ideas and feelings (Sanders, 1988).

3-It exposes learners to more than one medium and also provides additional connection with the language outside the classroom.

4-It is used in formal and informal texts.

2.7 Writing Development

According to Rub (2002: 13), course books have been produced on the assumption that, in order to write well and build good paragraphs, students should master the language at sentence level. It was believed that writing activities should focus on sentence formation and grammar models of correct language were set as a basic reference to learners to imitate and copy.

Approaches based on this view are related to the bottom-up approaches. They have been proposed and provided to learners with the idea that they need not only access vocabulary and grammar to produce a coherent piece of language, but they should have also access to the macro-features of the text. These text macro-features include: the topic of the message and the overall structures of that text. It is believed that the origin of writing approaches goes back to the time of Charles Fries in which language was seen as speech and that learning process as a habitat formation (Nunan 1991).

Those approaches emphasized the idea of controlled writing in which writing is regarded as a secondary tool and reinforcement for oral habits. Written exercises were also seen as a part of this reinforcement and they should be free to extend language control in order to promote fluency. Some other approaches rejected this idea, For example: they argued that it is not a manipulation of fixed patterns that lead to language use and it is not by imitation, only that learning takes place. In short, learning to write is viewed as an exercise of habit- information. The writer is a manipulator of previously learned language structures and the reader is a teacher who asks for an accurate piece of writing. The text according to them is seen as a collection of sentence patterns and vocabulary items (ibid: 165).

The development of teaching composition to students of English has been rapidly changing since the beginning of

the twentieth century. This period witnessed cycles of changing approaches and orientations towards second language writing. Some of these approaches achieved remarkable success and then faded, but never disappeared. These approaches were controlled writing approach, current-rhetorical approach, the process approach, English for academic purpose approach and the product approach (Silva, 1990:11).

2.7.1Controlled Writing Approach

Controlled writing approach based on the idea that students are given guidelines that help them to produce the written task. This approach is subjected to several criticisms. It is criticized as being not enough for producing written discourse in which sentences were linked together and well- formed; therefore the focus on grammatical correctness only is no longer acceptable (Alan, 1986).

2.7.2 Current-rhetorical Approach:

The outcome of those criticisms was the current-traditional rhetorical approach which focuses on the composed products. In contrast with the controlled writing approach the rhetorical approach calls for producing longer structures of language rather than separated sentences. The main units of this approach are the paragraph, the organizational conventions of discourse forms and its

development. Richard Young provided the characteristics of current-rhetorical approach as cited in Rub (2000):

1. The emphasis is on the composed products rather than on the composing process.

2. The discourse is analyzed into words, sentences and paragraphs.

3. The discourse is classified into descriptive, narrative, expositive and argumentative.

4. The stress is on the use of syntax, spelling and punctuation.

5. The style is concerned with economy, clarity and emphasis.

6. The perception is connected with informal essay and research writing.

According to Connor (1996:59), current- traditional rhetorical approach benefited writing in three ways: First, ―written products become a respectable object of academic enquiry‖. Second, writing was on longer taught by par- time instructors or teaching assistants. Third, a number of journals were devoted to research in writing .All in all, Current traditional rhetoric contributed to free writing from being a mere reinforcement of its sister skills; viz. It became an independent skill and was practiced for its own sake.

2.7.3 Process Approach

According to Raimes (1983:126) the process approach was based on the assumption that writing is anon- linear

process in which writers try to approximate the target meaning through using strategies to explore, generate, discover and reformulate their ideas. This approach based on studies carried out by writers who have ability to compose and express ideas using ways and strategies similar to those used by native speakers of English language. The word process refers to the stages writers apply to express ideas and convey meaning. Activities in the classroom are not based on the teacher; Students alone develop their skills to choose topics, find appropriate information, revise and rewrite their written work by adding and deleting irrelevant information and ideas.

According to the proponents of this approach, writing is assumed to be a cycle and creative process and learning to write is to develop an effective composing product. The reader is asked to focus on communication rather than on form. The text formality serves its context and purpose and the writing content depends on individual writers (ibid).

2.7.4 English for Academic Approach

The proponents of English for academic purpose approach criticized the above mentioned approaches because they focused on the writer without paying attention to the context writing and their negligence to the individual differences that appear in the variations of writing process. This approach suggested that, academic discourse schemata should be developed, because it focuses on

academic genres. English for Academic purpose approach viewed writing as acceptable technique in an academic context and learning to write must be socialized into the academic community. According to the proponents the standard community and the readers are one part of that community. Those readers have ability to judge the appropriateness of the academic discourse, while the text should meet the standard and the requirements of the academic community and falls into recognizable genres (Raimes, 1987).

2.7.5 The Product Approach

Ezza (2000: 16- 18) mentions that the product approach is concerned with the finished text particularly with the manipulation of language structures of relevant written text. All writing forms characteristics of grammar translation and audio-lingual methods were exclusively concerned with the correct presentation of such linguistic phenomena as vocabulary, sentence structure and writing mechanics.

Writing traditions in the 1950s and early 1960s which are dominated by the audio-lingual method were termed controlled and free writing. Their primary emphasis was on sentence exercises and grammatical processing of paragraphs…etc. such writing habits were thought to be a continuation of writing practice preached by Fries (1940) (cited in Ezza 200). His argument was that written exercises might be part of the work of second language

learner. In other words, writing was incorporated into the process of learner's acquisition of oral habits.

However, the middle of 1960s witnessed the introduction of a new approach to the process of writing known as current traditional approach. This approach was concerned with the logical construction and argument of discourse forms. Emphases were put on the topic sentence supporting sentences, use of transition and methods of development. Due to this approach, writing becomes important academic subject of research. There would be pedagogical purposes behind conducting research on writing. Thus writing was no longer taught by part-time instruction or teaching assistants (Silva, 1990:159).

In conclusion, the product approach freed writing skill from becoming a mere reinforcement of the other skills. It became an independent skill practiced for its own sake. Therefore, writing was no longer the neglected child in the family of other four skills.

2.8 Parts of Writing Process

With writing, as with the other skills of listening, speaking and reading, it is useful to make sure that students are involved in meaning-focused use, language-focused learning, and fluency development. It is also important to make sure that the uses of writing cover the range of uses that learners will perform in their daily lives. These can include filling forms, making lists, writing friendly letters and business letters, note-taking and academic writing.

Each of these types of writing involves special ways of organizing and presenting the writing and this presentation also deserves attention.

2.8.1Meaning-focused Writing

Writing is an activity that can usefully be prepared for by work in the other skills of listening, speaking and reading. This preparation can make it possible for words that have been used receptively to come into productive use. For example, in English for academic purposes progra, learners can be involved in keeping **issue logs** which are a kind of **project work**. At the beginning of the programme each learner chooses a topic or issue that they will follow through the rest of the programme—for example, terrorism, economies of the third world, earth crisis . They become the local expert on this topic. Each week they seek information on this subject, getting information from newspapers, TV reports, textbooks and magazines. They provide oral reports on latest developments to other members of their group, and make a written summary each week of the new information.

2.8.2 Goals of the Writer

Written work is usually done for a purpose and for a particular audience. For example, a friendly letter may be written to keep a friend or relative informed of you and your family's activities. When a letter like this is written,

the writer needs to keep the goal in mind as well as suiting the information and the way it is expressed to the person who will receive it. Once again, an important way of encouraging writers to keep their goals and audience in mind is to provide them with feedback about the effectiveness of their writing. This feedback can be direct comment on the writing as a piece of writing or it can be a response to the message. For example, Rinvolucri (1983) suggests that the teacher and learners should write letters to each other with the teacher responding to the ideas rather than the form of the letter.

Teachers should also check their writing programme to make sure that learners are given practice in writing for a range of purposes to a range of readers. The following list, adapted from Purves, Sofer, Takala and Vahapassi (1984), indicates how wide this range can be.

Purpose

To learn

To convey, signal

To inform

To convince, persuade

To entertain

To maintain friendly contact

To store information

To help remember information

Role

write as yourself

write as some other person

Audience

self

Specified individual

Specified group

Classmates

General public

Type of writing

A note or formal letter

A formal letter

Résumé, summary, paraphrase

Narrative

Description

Exposition, analysis, definition, classification

Narrative, description, with evaluative comment

Argument

Literary

Advertisement, media

Journal writing

In **writing with immediate feedback** the writer sits next to a reader and as each sentence or paragraph is written, the writer gets feedback from the reader and they discuss what has been written and what might come next. The writer then writes the next paragraph and the discussion continues. This technique is especially useful when writing instructions or technical descriptions.

In **writing to your students** the teacher writes personal letters to each learner and they reply in writing. The only rule is each letter should offer the reader some new bit of information about the writer. This technique involves genuine communication between the teacher and the learners (Rinvolucri, 1983).

Situational composition is a type of free composition. A situation is created using an advertisement, a letter, a table of numbers, etc. The learners must do a piece of writing that suits the situation. The language and the way of writing must suit the situation (Sweeting, 1967; Wingfield and Swan, 1971). Here are a few examples.
• The learner is given a letter that must be answered.
• The learner is given some facts that must be written as a newspaper report.
• The learner is given some facts that must be written as a report of an experiment.

Letter writing can be an activity between members of the class. The class can be organized so that some people pretend that they are working in a bank, others are working in shops, a tourist agency, a factory, a building company, and a school. They write letters to each other about various things, asking for information, looking for jobs, complaining about something, and so on. Or one class can become pen-friends with another class in another town or country.

Learners research and write academic **assignments**. Learners need to be familiar with the form of assignments and the conventions for quoting and acknowledging reference sources. The use of a marking schedule can help learners with this if they see the schedule before they do the assignment. The marking schedule can include space for comments on handwriting, spelling and grammar, use of sub-headings, use and acknowledgement of sources, quality of organization and quality of ideas.

2.8.3 Gathering Ideas

Leibman-Kleine (1987) suggests that techniques for gathering ideas about a topic can be classified into three groups. The first group consists of open ended, free-ranging activities where all ideas are considered or the learners follow whatever path their mind takes. Typical of these are **brainstorming** and **quick writing**. These activities could be preceded by relaxation activities where learners are encouraged to use all their senses to explore a topic.

The second group consists of systematic searching procedures such as **questioning** (who, why, where, when . . .) or filling in an information transfer diagram. In all cases the learners have set steps to follow to make sure they consider all the important parts of the topic. Research by Franken (1988) has shown that when learners are in command of the ideas in a topic, the grammatical errors are significantly reduced in their writing. The third

group consists of techniques which help learners gather and organize ideas at the same time. These include using tree diagrams and concept diagrams or maps. These all involve arranging ideas into relationships, particularly according to importance and level of generality. One of the biggest blocks in writing is a lack of ideas. Techniques which help learners gather ideas will have good effects on all other aspects of their writing.

For **group brainstorming** the learners get together in small groups and suggest as many ideas about the writing topic that they can think of. At first no idea is rejected or criticised because it may lead to other ideas. One person in the group keeps a record of the ideas.

With **list making** before writing, each learner makes a list of ideas to include in the writing. After the list is made then the learner attempts to organise it and this may lead to additions to the list.

Looping is when each learner writes as quickly as possible on the topic for 4 or 5 minutes. Then they stop, read what they have written, think about it and write one sentence summarizing it. Then they repeat the procedure once more.

Cubing is when the learners consider the topic from six angles: (1) describe it; (2) compare it; (3) associate it; (4) analyse it; (5) apply it; (6) argue for and against it. They note the ideas that each of these points of view suggest and decide which ones they will use in their writing. Other

similar procedures include asking, "who, what, when, where, how, why". So, for the topic "Should parents hit their children?", the learners work in small groups and (1) describe what hitting involves, (2) compare it with other kinds of punishment, (3) associate it with other uses of physical force such as capital punishment, (4) analyse what cause–effect sequences are involved in hitting, (5) apply the idea of hitting to various age levels, and (6) make a two-part table listing the pluses and minuses of hitting. After doing this the learners should have a lot of ideas to organize and write about.

2.8.5 Reading like a writer

Reading like a writer is when the learner reads an article or text like the one they want to write. While reading the learner writes the questions that the writer seemed to be answering. These questions must be phrased at a rather general level. For example, the first question that might be written when reading an article might be "Why are people interested in this topic?". The next might be "What have others said about this topic before?". After reading and making the questions, the learner then writes an article or text by answering those questions. The learners make concept diagrams or information trees to gather, connect and organize ideas about the topic they are going to write about.

With **add details** the teacher gives the learners several sentences that contain the main ideas of a story. Each sentence can become the main sentence in a paragraph. The learners add description and more detail. The learners can explain the main sentence in a general way and then give particular examples of the main ideas.

Quick writing (speed writing) is used with the main purpose of helping learners produce ideas. It has three features, the learners concentrate on content, they do not worry about error or the choice of words, and they write without stopping (Jacobs, 1986). They can keep a record of their speed in words per minute on a graph.

For **expanding writing** the learners write their compositions on every second line of the page. When they have finished writing they count the number of words and write the total at the bottom of the page. Then they go over their writing using a different colored pen and add more detail.

They can make use of the blank lines while they do this. They then count the total number of words again. Further additions can be made using yet another colored pen. The teacher can then check the work and get the learners to write out their final draft (Chambers, 1985).

2.8.6 Organizing Ideas

The way learners organize ideas gives them a chance to put their own point of view and their own thought into

their writing, particularly in writing assignments and answering examination questions. Often the ideas to be included in an assignment do not differ greatly from one writer to another, but the way the ideas are organized can add uniqueness to the piece of writing. Two possible ways of approaching the organization of academic writing is to rank the ideas according to a useful criterion or to classify the ideas into groups. The use of sub-headings in academic writing is a useful check on organization.

With **projection into dialogue** the learners look at a model letter and list the questions that the writer of the letter seemed to be answering. They then use these questions to guide their own writing. After the learners can do this with model texts, they can apply the same procedure to their own writing to see if it is well organised (Robinson, 1987).

2.8.7 Ideas to Text

Some students are able to say what they want to write but have difficulty in putting it into written form. That is, they have problems in translating their ideas into text. Some learners can do this but are very slow. That is, they lack fluency in turning ideas to text. A possible cause is the difference between the writing systems of the learners' first language and the second language. Arab learners of English have greater difficulty in this part of the writing process than Indonesian or French learners do because of the different written script. If the learners' first language

uses a different writing system from English, then there is value in practicing the formal skills of forming letters of the alphabet and linking these letters together. There is also value in giving some attention to spelling.

Some learners will find problems even in saying what they want to write. One cause may be lack of practice in writing in any language. Each cause requires different techniques to deal with it and teachers need to consider how to discover the causes and how to deal with them.

2.8.8 Reviewing

An important part of the writing process is looking back over what has been written. This is done to check what ideas have already been included in the writing, to keep the coherence and flow of the writing, to stimulate further ideas, and to look for errors. Poor writers do not review, or review only to look for errors. Chapter 10 looks at responding to written work.

One way of encouraging learners to review their writing is to provide them with **checklists** (or scales) containing points to look for in their writing. Research on writing indicates that such scales have a significant effect on improving the quality of written work (Hillocks, 1984).

In **peer feedback** learners read their incomplete work to each other to get comments and suggestions on how to

improve and continue it. The learners can work in groups and read each other's compositions. They make suggestions for revising before the teacher marks the compositions (Dixon, 1986). Learners can be trained to give helpful comments and can work from a checklist or a list of questions (Pica, 1986).

2.8.9 Editing

Editing involves going back over the writing and making changes to its organization, style, grammatical and lexical correctness, and appropriateness. Like all the other parts of the writing process, editing does not occur in a fixed place in the process. Writers can be periodically reviewing what they write, editing it, and then proceeding with the writing. Thus, editing is not restricted to occurring after all the writing has been completed.

Learners can be encouraged to edit through the feedback that they get from their classmates, teacher and other readers. Such feedback is useful if it occurs several times during the writing process and is expressed in ways that the writer finds acceptable and easy to act on. Feedback that focuses only on grammatical errors will not help with editing of content. Teachers need to look at their feedback to make sure it is covering the range of possibilities. Using a marking sheet divided into several categories is one way of doing this. Figure 8.1 is such a sheet for learners writing university assignments. It encourages comment on

features ranging from the legibility of the handwriting to the quality of the ideas and their organization.

2.9 The Topic Type Hypothesis

The purpose of this part is to look at one way of analyzing the kind of information that occurs in non-fiction texts. The reason for doing this is to provide learners with a strategy for gathering information to write on a particular topic, and a strategy for taking notes from a reading text or a lecture. Using topic types is most suited to learners who are of at least intermediate proficiency. It is particularly suited to learners with academic goals. Topic type activities are well suited to group work.

Although texts may differ in the topic they deal with, they may be similar in that they are all based on the same topic type. For example, a recipe for cooking fish curry, a set of instructions for using a cell-phone, a set of directions to a place, and a description of a teaching technique are all examples of the instruction topic type. The instruction topic type includes texts that tell (or instruct) you how to do something. The instruction topic type has the following parts.

• the tools needed

• the materials or ingredients needed

• the steps involved

• the cautions or conditions involved in some of the steps

• the outcome or result of following the steps.

Not all of these parts need to be present (following a set of directions to get to a place does not need tools or ingredients). The only essential one is the steps. Here is an example of a recipe broken into its parts.

Dumplings

1 cup self-raising flour 1 tablespoon of olive oil pinch of salt milk to mix

Mix flour and salt together. Add milk and mix to soft dough. Add olive oil and mix. Roll into balls the size of a golf ball. Place on top of a gently boiling stew. Cook for about 20 minutes without turning and with the lid on.

Materials/ingredients	Flour, salt, milk oil, olive
Tools/equipment	(Bowl, mixing spoon, pot of stew)
Steps	Condition
mix flour and salt	
add milk	to a soft dough
mix	
add olive oil	the size of a golf ball
mix	gently boiling
roll into balls	for about 20 minutes
place on top of stew	without turning
cook	with the lid on
Result	Dumplings

The topic type hypothesis says that texts on different topics but which are all of the same topic type will contain the same general kinds of information.

Johns and Davies (1983) described 12 topic types. Some are much more common than others. Table 9.1 is adapted from Johns and Davies and lists the most important topic types and their parts.

Characteristics

What are the features of the thing described?

What is the proof that some of these features exist?

What general category does this thing fit into?

What other information is there about this thing?

Physical structure

What are the parts?

Where are the parts located?

What are they like?

What do they do?

Instruction

What are the steps involved?

What materials and equipment are needed?

What do we need to be careful about at some steps?

What is the result of the steps?

What does this result show?

Process

What are the stages involved in the development?

What material is involved at each stage?

Where and when does each stage occur?

How long does each stage last?

What acts at each stage to bring about change?

What is the thing like at each stage?

What happens at each stage?

State/situation

Who are the people, etc. involved?

What time and place are involved?

What is the background leading up to the happening?

What happened?

What are the effects of this happening?

Principle

What is the law or principle involved?

Under what conditions does the principle apply?

What are some examples of the principle in action?

How can we check to see that the principle is in action?

How can we apply the principle?

Theory

What is the hypothesis?

What led to this hypothesis?

How is it tested?

What are the results of testing?

What is the significance of the results?

2.9.1 Topic Types and Writing

An important step in the writing process is getting information to write about. As the parts of a topic type are already specified, once the topic type of a writing topic is known or decided, it is relatively easy to see what kinds of information need to be gathered. For example, if the writing topic is to describe how to cut a circle out of a piece of wood, the instruction topic type, then the information that needs to be gathered is as follows.

1. What are the tools that are needed?

2. What materials, e.g. wood, are needed?

3. What steps need to be followed?

4. Is there anything that needs to be given special attention at any of the steps?

Note that using topic types helps in the gathering of information but does not say how the information should be organized nor how it should be expressed. There are several ways of describing the steps. They can be written as imperatives as in a recipe (add two cups of sugar, mix well), or they can be written as declaratives (the butter is then added).

The following skills are needed when using topic types to help gather information for writing.

1. The learners need to be familiar with the few topic types that are relevant to their area of study. They need to know the parts of each of these topic types.

2. The learners need to be able to relate a particular topic to a particular topic type.

Here are some writing topics with their topic type:

What is photosynthesis?
Process

How do you make a macro in MS-Word?
Instruction

How is chocolate made?
Process

Describe the baobab tree. Characteristics

What was the most frightening thing that happened to you?
State/situation
What are lemurs?
Characteristics
Why can high interest rates lead to inflation? Theory
What are the parts of the eye?
Physical structure

2.9.2 Topics Types for Reading

Knowledge of topic types is useful when predicting the kind of information that will be in a text, when taking notes from a text, and when evaluating the adequacy of a text.

Topic Type

Type of Texts
What happened?

(state/situation)

Letters

Newspaper reports

Stories

Historical accounts

Diary reports

What is it like?

(characteristics, physical

structure)

Consumer reports

Magazine article

Poems

Application form

Curriculum vitae

Letter of recommendation

Course outline

How do you do it?

(instruction)

Recipes

Operating instructions

Shopping list

Help or troubleshooting notes

Article for a teachers' journal

M

ethods section of an experimental report

What happens to it?

(process)

Science texts

Why does it happen?

Science texts

(theory, principle)

2.10 Predicting from the Title of a Text

The teacher tells the learners the title of a text they are going to read. If the learners already know about topic types, they then decide what topic type the text is likely to be. They can then list the questions for each part of the topic type and suggest answers to those questions which are closely related to the topic of the text. If the learners are not familiar with topic types, the teacher tells the learners the relevant topic type and then gives them the general questions for each part of the topic type. The learners work in groups to suggest answers for each question. After they see the text the learners can then comment on the accuracy of their predictions.

Here is an example based on a text called *Limestone caves*, an example of the process topic type.

What are the stages involved in the development of a limestone cave?

What material is involved at each stage?

Where (location) and when does each stage occur?

How long (time) does each stage last?

What (instrument) acts on the cave at each stage to bring about change?

What is the cave like (property or structure) at each stage?

What happens (action) at each stage?

2.10.1 Taking Notes from a Text

After looking quickly at the text, the learners decide what topic type it is. Deciding on the topic type is similar to answering the general question "What am I supposed to learn from this text?". If brief notes are going to be taken, they should possibly focus on the obligatory part of the topic type, for example the steps in an instruction text, or the parts in a physical structure text. If the learner wants to take detailed notes, it may be worth filling in an information transfer diagram based on the parts of the topic type (see Nation and Newton, 2009 for more discussion of information transfer). Here are some examples.

stage material Time structure Instrument and

<div align="right">**actin**</div>

2.11 **Limitations of the Topic Type Approach**

Topic type analysis works well with texts that have a clear communicative purpose and that use only one or at most two topic types. This present chapter about topic types uses two topic types—characteristics (What are topic types? What are they like?) and instruction (How do you use topic types? What techniques can be used with them?).

The parts of topic types can be at different levels of grammatical analysis. For example, some parts may be nouns or noun groups, while others may be whole sentences or several sentences. In the classification topic type for example, the item being defined and the group it fits into are usually noun groups, while the defining characteristics can be a clause, a whole sentence or several sentences. This is not a serious problem but it makes the use of information transfer diagrams more difficult.

While there has been some work and research on topic types (Johns and Davies, 1983; Nagabhand, Nation and Franken, 1993; Franken, 1987) this has not been enough

to truly test and develop the idea, and to expand and refine the list of topic types.

One problem in using topic types for analysis is that in some texts two topic types are used at the same time. One is used to make the text interesting and engaging for the reader, and the other relates to the information that the reader should get from the text (Nagabhand, Nation and Franken, 1993). Here is an example.

Coconuts

Once, when I was small, I bought a coconut with my pocket money. As I

carried it home, I could hear liquid sloshing about inside. I could see

three things that looked like eyes, on one end. When I got it home, I

wasn't sure what part you were supposed to eat. (Crook, 1978).

In this text, the state/situation topic type (What happened?) is used as a way of making the text interesting and accessible for young readers. However, the content of the text (what learners should get from reading the text) is best viewed as an example of the characteristics topic type which tells what something is like, in this case what coconuts are like. The way to test for this is to ask "What should the learners know after reading this text?". Clearly the answer for the above text

is not what happened in the story (state/situation) but what coconuts are like (characteristics).

This leads to the last caution when using topic types. Topic types deal only with the information in a text not with the structure of the discourse nor the vocabulary and grammatical devices used to express the information. It is possible to see connections between topic types and organization and grammar and vocabulary, but these are not the main focus of a topic type approach.

Perhaps the greatest value of a topic type approach is in gathering ideas for writing where the topic clearly fits into a known topic type. Using guiding questions like those in Table 9.1 or information transfer diagrams can be a very effective way of putting learners in control of the data gathering part of the writing process (Franken, 1987).

2.12 Responding to written work

The assessment of learners' written work can have a range of goals. These goals can be classified under various headings. First, as we have already seen   the writing process, assessment can focus on the product or the piece of writing itself, or on the process of writing. Second, assessment can differ in its purposes. It can aim at making a summative judgment on the learners' writing for the purpose of awarding a grade, or passing or failing. It can aim at a formative shaping of the learners' progress in writing by diagnosing problems, by providing

encouragement to keep writing and to write more, and by providing constructive feedback on the content and form of the writing.

2.13 Motivating

Positive feedback on the content of learners' writing can do a lot to increase the amount of writing that learners do and to improve their attitude to writing. This feedback includes comments like the following. "The part about the fire was really interesting. Can you tell me more about that?"

"You wrote that the end of the movie surprised you. What were you expecting?"

Written feedback like this tells the writer that their work is being read, is understood, and interests the reader. Especially with younger learners, it is important not to discourage writing by always giving feedback that points out

Goals	Purpose	Means
Motivating	Increase amount of writing	Positive feedback on the content
	Develop a love of writing	Publication of the writing
	Improving the	

quality of writing

Improve the

written product   Peer feedback

Conferencing

Marking of errors

Analytic assessment

Improve control of the

writing process

Use of checklists

Self-assessment

Diagnosing

problems

Measuring

proficiency   Finding poorly

controlled

parts of the

writing process

Analysis of the product

Award grade

There should be a place in a writing course for feedback on errors but this kind of feedback needs to be very carefully balanced against the positive encouragement to write more, and these two kinds of feedback need to be separated.

Another form of positive feedback is publication. This can take many forms. Reading written work aloud to others is a form of publication. Having your work circulated or posted on the wall of the classroom is another, and having it appear in a printed collection is yet another.

Some learners are embarrassed by praise, especially in the presence of peers. One way of dealing with this is to praise the piece of work not the person. That is, rather than say "You did a good job with the introduction", some learners may find it more acceptable to hear "The introduction was very clear and well organized".

The motivation to write is most helped by learners doing a lot of successful writing. **Speed writing** involves the learners writing for a set time each day and keeping a graph of the number of words written within that fixed time. Special praise is given to those who increase the amount they write within that time.

2.14 Improving the quality of writing

As it was already demonstrated, we have looked at ways of providing feedback on the various parts of the writing process. The techniques used to provide feedback to learners on their writing can differ over a range of factors. Table 10.2 lists the possibilities.

Source of feedback

Teacher

Peers

Self

Mode of feedback

Spoken

Written

Both

Size of audience

Whole class

Small group

Individual

Focus of the feedback

Product—several aspects or narrow focus

Process—several aspects or narrow focus

Form of the feedback

Comments

Scale

Checklist

Amount of writing

Single piece of writing

A portfolio of writing

1. *Source of feedback*. The feedback can come from the teacher, from peers, and from the learners themselves in self-assessment. The use of peer feedback can reduce the teacher's load but is also very valuable in helping writers develop a sense of audience. The use of self-assessment encourages metacognitive awareness of the writing process and the qualities of good writing.

2. *Mode of feedback*. Feedback can be written or spoken or a combination of these. Spoken feedback allows a dialogue to exist between the writer and the source of feedback. It may also be more effective in getting the writer's attention than written feedback. Written feedback provides a lasting record which can be used to measure progress and to act as a reminder.

3. *Size of the audience*. A teacher can give feedback to the whole class, to small groups or to individuals. Where there are common problems in the class, feedback to the whole class can save a lot of time. Working at the individual level, as in conferencing, can provide an opportunity to explore issues as well as give feedback.

4. *Focus of the feedback*. Feedback can focus on aspects of the written product as, for example, when marking scales are used. It can also focus on the parts of the writing process. The focus can also cover a range of aspects or parts of the process, or it can be narrowed down to focus on only one or two. Having a narrow focus can make peer evaluation more effective.

5. *Form of the feedback*. Feedback can be guided by the use of checklists or scales. Feedback can be uncontrolled when spoken or written comments are given on the strengths and weaknesses of the piece of writing without the systematic coverage of a scale. Upshur and Turner (1995) describe a way of making scales which can be used for marking large quantities of tests with reasonable reliability and validity.

6. *Amount of the writing looked at*. Feedback can be given on parts of a piece of writing, for example, when someone sits next to the writer and reads what they have just written after every two or three sentences are written. Feedback can be given on the whole of a piece of writing, or on a portfolio of writing. The advantages of seeing a portfolio are that a range of genres can be looked at, the learner's progress over time can be seen and commented on, and the assessment is likely to be more reliable and valid because of the numerous points of assessment.

Let us now look at some techniques for providing feedback that draw on the factors we have just considered. The various combinations of these factors provide a very large number of feedback possibilities. We will look at a few that together cover most of the factors.

2.14.1 Written Feedback to the Class

Where learners in the class have common weaknesses and strengths in their writing, an efficient way of giving

feedback is to prepare a written report that is handed out to the class. This report can detail what the best pieces of writing were like, what the common errors and weaknesses were, and what to do about them. The teacher may also make individual written comments on each piece of writing but these need not be so extensive if they are accompanied by a class handout.

This sheet also provides a useful record that can be looked at again by the teacher for later pieces of writing or for other years to see if the strengths and weaknesses are the same or have changed.

If a grade is given to the pieces of writing, the handout sheet can also explain the range of grades and the criteria for each step in the grading scale.

2.14.2 Oral Feedback to the Whole Class

A very effective way to give feedback on writing is to get the permission of two or three learners to put their pieces of writing on an overhead projector transparency and then go through them orally with the whole class. In effect, the learners are watching the teacher mark a piece of work and this can help the learners see what the teacher is looking for and what the teacher values in a piece of writing. The teacher can also ask the learners to comment and can interact with them on points in the piece of writing. This obviously has to be done tactfully and with praise for the writing playing a large part in the commentary. The name of the writer could be kept

confidential, but this is unlikely to be successful in a small class where learners know each other reasonably well.

It is worth remembering that when the good points and bad points are mentioned, it is better to end with the good points so that the writer is left with a positive feeling about the piece of writing. If learners know that everyone has a chance of having their writing discussed in this way, they may be less likely to use it as a way of making fun of others.

2.14.3 Individual Feedback Using a Scale

One way of speeding up marking and making sure a balanced range of aspects of writing are dealt with is to mark each learner's work using a scale. Each part of the scale can be accompanied by a brief comment explaining why that point on the scale was chosen. Here is an example of a scale.

Aspects of writing Richness of vocabulary 1......2.....3........4........5 Mechanics (spelling and punctuation) 1......2......3.......4.........5 Grammatical accuracy and complexity 1....2......3........4......5 Organisation and coherence 1 -------- 2 ------- 3 ------- 4 ------- 5	comments

Content

1 -------- 2 ------- 3 ------- 4 ------- 5

The use of a standard feedback tool like a scale gives learners feedback on each of the important aspects of their writing, allows them to see improvement or lack of it for each aspect, and makes them aware of the range of aspects that need to be considered while writing and when reflecting on it. It can be a useful preparation for self-assessment.

2.15 Conferencing on a Portfolio

Conferencing involves a one-to-one meeting between the teacher and the learner to talk about the learner's writing. A portfolio is a collection of several pieces of the learner's writing, some of which may have already been marked and commented on. The major strength of conferencing is that the learner can provide an explanation of what was involved in the pieces of writing, and can seek clarification from the teacher about the teacher's evaluation of them.

Good conferencing is interactive. It should conclude with clear proposals for future improvement of the writing. Learners can prepare for conferencing either by preparing some questions to ask, or by having a sheet provided by the teacher that gives the learner some questions to consider. These questions can focus on what the teacher expects in the writing.

Conferencing on a portfolio allows the opportunity to look at weaknesses and strengths which appear in several pieces of writing and thus deserve comment. It also allows the opportunity to see improvement across several pieces of writing. This improvement can be in the quantity written, the quality of the writing, and quality and range of the content. Conferencing is also used at different stages of a piece of writing so that the learner is helped to improve a particular piece of writing. Conferencing takes a lot of time but its focused one-to-one interaction brings many benefits.

2.16 Marking Grammatical Errors

Some pieces of writing can be marked for grammatical accuracy, appropriate use of vocabulary, and spelling. This feedback can have the goal of helping learners develop knowledge and strategies for self-correction. Learners at intermediate and advanced levels appreciate such feedback and ask for it, particularly when they have to write reports, memos, and assignments that others will read.

The most effective way of giving this kind of feedback is to have a set of signals that indicate where the error occurs and what kind of error it is. The learners then have to correct their own errors after they have been marked and show their corrections to the teacher. They do not rewrite the piece of writing but make the corrections on the

marked piece of writing. This makes the teacher's checking much easier. See Chapter 8 for such a scheme.

If the number of errors per 100 words is calculated and put on a graph, learners can see their improvement on this aspect of writing. When the errors per 100 words are high, around ten or more errors per 100 words, it is easy to make very quick improvement in grammatical accuracy. This is because many of the errors will involve items like subject-verb agreement, article usage, and verb group construction, which are rule-based. Learning the rules and how to check their application brings quick improvement. When learners are making about three errors per 100 words, improvement is very slow because most of the errors are word-based, involving collocation, appropriacy, and grammatical patterns that apply to certain words.

Such feedback is a useful part of a well-balanced writing course, but it must not be the only kind of feedback. Too much of this detailed, negative feedback can discourage learners from writing and from taking risks when writing.

2.17 Peer Evaluation with a Focus

Peer evaluation involves learners receiving feedback on their writing from each other. It can be done in pairs or in a small group. Each learner brings the draft of a piece of writing; the others read it, and then give helpful comments. In order to make commenting easier, the learners can be told to focus on one or two aspects of the piece of writing, such as organization, the quality of the

argument, or formal aspects such as the use of headings or references. Usually the learners will make oral comments, but written feedback is also possible.

The main advantages of peer evaluation are that learners get feedback from others besides the teacher. It can help them develop a more balanced model of the reader, who they can then think of when they write. Peer feedback also allows those giving feedback to learn from seeing others' pieces of writing and hearing what others say about them. In the academic world, peer review is an important part of the publication process. It has the two goals of obtaining an adequate product as well as providing training for future writing.

A major problem with peer evaluation is that learners may not value the comments of their peers and see them as being far inferior to the teacher's comments (Zhang, 1995). There are several ways of dealing with this.

First, peer evaluation can be a step before teacher evaluation. If learners see that peer evaluation can result in an eventual better evaluation by the teacher, peer evaluation will be valued. Second, the quality of peer evaluation can be raised by providing training in evaluation (Min, 2005 and 2006) and by providing written guidelines to use during the evaluation. These written guidelines can be questions to ask or a checklist. Min's (2006) study shows that training learners in doing peer review results in many more comments being incorporated into the revision, peer comments becoming

by far the greatest source of revisions, and in better revisions.

The training Min used lasted a total of five hours and involved in-class modeling and one-on-one conferencing outside class. It should be possible to develop a more efficient training system. The benefits make it clearly worth doing.

2.18 Self-evaluation with a Checklist

Part of the writing process is checking over what has been written to make improvements. In formal writing, such as the writing of assignments for academic study, this checking can be helped if there is a checklist of things to consider. Here is a possible checklist.

_ Is your main argument clearly stated?

_ Is it presented very early in the writing?

_ Are the supports for this argument clearly signaled?

_ Are there enough sub-headings?

_ If you look only at the sub-headings, do they cover the main ideas
in the assignment?

_ Have you checked carefully for spelling and grammar errors?

_ Are all the references in your text also in the list of references?

_ Are your references complete and do they follow a consistent
format?

_ Have you kept within the word limits of the assignment?

A step towards self-assessment is pair checking, where learners work in pairs to check each other's assignment together. That is, both learners read the same assignment together.

2.19 The Sentence

To move to a more practical step in handling the present chapter two, it is worthwhile to consider the English sentence as an important unit of writing. Good sentences are the sinew of style. They give to prose its forward thrust, its flexibility, its strong and subtle rhythms. The cardinal virtues of such sentences are clarity, emphasis, concision, and variety. How to achieve these qualities will be our major concern in this part. First, however, we must understand, in a brief and rudimentary way, what a sentence is.

It is not easy to say. In fact, it is probably impossible to define a sentence to everyone's satisfaction. On the simplest level it may be described as a word or group of words standing by itself, that is, beginning with a capital letter and ending with a period, question mark, or exclamation point. (In speech the separateness of a sentence is marked by intonation and pauses.)

And yet an effective sentence involves more than starting with a capital and stopping with a period. The word or words must make sense, expressing an idea or perception

or feeling clear enough to stand alone. For example, consider these two sentences:

> (i) The package finally arrived.
>
> (ii)The package arrived, finally.
>
> (iii) Finally, the package arrived.

But we can imagine a situation in which a speaker or writer, wanting to stress exasperation, feels that *finally* should be a sentence by itself.

As that example indicates, there are sentences which contain subjects and verbs and sentences which do not. The first kind *{The package arrived)* is "grammatically complete" and is the conventional form sentences take in composition. The second type of sentence *{Finally* in our example) does not contain a subject and verb and is called a *fragment.* Fragments are more common in speech than in writing, but even in formal composition they have their place, which we'll consider in a subsequent chapter.

2.19.1 The Grammatical Sentence

The grammatically complete sentence is independent, contains a subject and a predicate, and is properly constructed. That definition may sound a bit formidable, but it really isn't. Let's briefly consider each of those three criteria.

2.19.2 Grammatical Independence

Grammatical independence simply means that the words constituting the sentence are not acting as a noun or

modifier or verb in connection with any other word or words. For example, *Harry was late* is independent. *Became Harry was late* is not. *Because* turns the words into an adverb (more exactly, an adverbial clause). The construction should modify another verb or clause as in:

The men were delayed in starting because

Harry was late.'

To take one more case. *They failed to agree* is a grammatical sentence. *That they failed to agree* is not. It is a noun clause and could function as the subject of a verb:

That they failed to agree was unfortunate.

   Or as the object of one:

We know *that they failed to agree.*

2.19.3 Subject and Predicate

The heart of a grammatical sentence is the subject and predicate. In a narrow sense the subject is the word or words identifying who or what the sentence is about, and the predicate is the verb, expressing something about the subject. In a broader sense, the subject includes the subject word(s) plus all modifiers, and the predicate includes the verb together with its objects and modifiers. For instance in   *The man who lives next door decided last week to sell his house,* the narrow, or grammatical, subject is *man,* and the narrow, or grammatical, verb is *decided.* The broad, or notional, subject is *The man who lives next door,* and the broad, or notional, predicate is *decided last week to sell his house.*

The verb in a grammatical sentence must be finite, that is, limited with reference to time or person or number. English has several nonfinite verb forms called participles and infinitives *{being,* for example, and *to be).* These can refer to any interval of time and can be used with any person or with either number. But by convention these nonfinite forms cannot by themselves make a sentence. Thus *Harry was late* is a grammatical sentence, but *Harry being late* isn't because it contains only the participle *being* instead of a finite form such as *was.* To sum up the whole thing:

1. A sentence is a group of words (and sometimes a single word) that makes sense standing alone.

2. Some sentences are grammatically complete; others—called fragments—are not.

3. Grammatical sentences must satisfy three criteria: they must (a) be grammatically independent, (b) have a subject and a finite verb, and (c) be properly constructed.

4. The parts of a sentence are subject, verb, object, and modifier.

5. These parts may be filled by single words or by functional word groups.

6. Functional word groups act grammatically as though they were one word. They include phrases and dependent clauses.

7. A phrase does not contain a subject-finite verb combination, though it may have a subject and a nonfinite verb form, either a participle or an infinitive.

8. There are several kinds of phrases—verb phrases, prepositional, participial, gerundive, and infinitive.

9. Clauses may be independent or dependent. Only dependent clauses act as functional word groups.

10. Dependent clauses are classified according to their grammatical role as noun, adverbial, or adjectival clauses.

11. An absolute is more than a functional word group but less than a sentence. It is related in idea but not in grammar to the rest of the sentence in which it occurs.

12. Grammatical sentences come in three basic types— simple, compound, and complex—plus a combination of the last two, the compound-complex sentence.

2.20 Paragraph

According to Bailey (2011), paragraphs are the basic building blocks of academic writing. Well-structured paragraphs help the reader understand the topic more easily by dividing up the argument into convenient sections. Butler (2007), Houge (2008), Zemach and Rumisek(2005) and Bailey (2011) define a paragraph as, " a group of sentences about a single topic". In academic writing, a paragraph is often between five and ten sentences long. It can be longer or shorter, depending on the topic (Zemach and Rumisek, 2005).

2.20.1 Paragraph Organization

A paragraph has three basic parts:

1. The topic sentence

It is usually the first sentence of the paragraph. Normally, it includes the main idea of the paragraph and it is the most general sentence of the paragraph.

2. The supporting sentences

These are sentences that give examples, definitions, information, reasons or other details about the topic. They explain the topic sentence.

3. The concluding sentence

It is the last sentence of a paragraph. It finishes the paragraph by repeating the topic sentence in different ways or summarizes the main points.

2.21 Essay Structure

An essay should be organized into an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. According to Rumisek &Zemach (3003), without an introduction and a conclusion, an essay is just a group of paragraphs. The introduction and the conclusion work together to make the topic and main ideas of the essay clear to the reader.

2.21.1 The Introduction

The introduction is the first paragraph of an essay which…

- is usually five to ten sentences.
- catches the reader's interest
- gives the general topic of the essay
- gives background information about the topic
- states the main point of the essay

2.21.2 Writing a strong introduction

To write a strong introduction the following points have to be considered:

- introduces the topic clearly.
- gives several sentences of information about the topic.
- states the main idea of the essay.

2.21.3 Making an Introduction Interesting

To make an introductory paragraph interesting for the reader, you can include ..

- interesting facts or statistics
- a personal story or example.
- an interesting quotation.(Rumisek &Zemach , 2003.pp71-74)

2.22 The Conclusion

The conclusion is the final paragraph of the essay. A good concluding paragraph …

- the main points of the essay.
- restates the thesis using different words.
- makes a final comment about the essay's main idea.
- may emphasise an action that you would like the reader to take.

2.23 Teaching writing skills

Anita(199:1) states that writing is an instrument of both communication and self-expression. Most people, however, especially when writing in a foreign language or

a second language, use it primarily with other members of their own community or the wider world. The teacher's main task is to teach effective functional writing rather than creative self-expressions. Therefore, there are few initial guiding principles to be considered with regard to the teaching of writing:

1. Writing should be as close as possible to genuine functional use of language as a distinguished form to satisfy teachers.

2. Since people use different means of communication there is no single way of writing correct English. It is, therefore, important for students to read as much as possible in order to be familiar with different varieties of writing English. They cannot be expected to write in a style which they have never seen or read about.

3. Good writing depends on a set of specific writing skills which flows automatically from good grammar to adequate and suitable vocabulary.

Mudawe(2008:138 -142) indicates that writing is the process of producing real materials in a well-organized way. Teachers of English are required to classify and group their learners in groups or levels for designing better activities.From the very beginning learners should know the alphabets, the relationship between sound and written symbols, spelling, punctuation, indentation, sentence structure and sentence combinations to produce a better

written work. Moreover, the basic paragraph building skills such as topic sentences, controlling idea, unity, coherence, transitions and subordinations should be well practiced by learners of English.

(Raimes) 1983 mentions the following writing activities and stages.

1. Pre- writing stage:

This is stage in which learners are trained to write letters and graphic symbols .A pre writing technique also helps students get ideas to write about.

2. Copying stage:

There are many activities related to this stage such as fill in the blank, scrambled sentences, putting sentences in the correct order, matching question and answers, correcting sentences, cross puzzles and sentence completion.

3. Dictating stage:

This activity is essential and important for developing the spelling. It can be practiced in many ways such as look at the picture and write the words, fill in the missing letters, rearrange the following letters to make meaningful words and match the word with pictures.

4. Controlled writing stage:

It is known as guided writing in which students will be given some information to be illustrated in tables, diagrams, pictures, sentences ..... etc. Then they are required to produce their writing referring to same

materials that presented. This kind of writing is in sharp contrast with free writing. Guided writing may take one of the following forms.

   a) Parallel sentences.

   b) Missing words.

   c) Word ordering.

   d) Joining sentences.

   e) Sentence completion.

   f) Writing based on pictures.

5. Free writing stage: Dickson defines Free writing it is the opportunity for students to write freely a brief period in each class, usually 10 times or there about. This offers students a rewarding experience of writing because it can avoid the inhibition which normally influences writing, inhibitions that have developed since first grade of elementary school; i.e. writing had to be clear, correct and neat. EFL students especially can benefit as their level of competency develops. To be successful though, free writing, while free for the students, will require the teachers to be organized, disciplined and methodical. In this stage, students are free in creating their own ideas, organizing their own thoughts and depending on their own way of thinking. The role of the teacher is to revise the strategies for developing the free writing task such as: date, margin, title and indentation.

2.23.1 Grammar stage:

It is admitted that it is too difficult to teach a language without knowing its structure and function. Teaching grammar is simply a matter of knowing how sentences are arranged and formed. A language cannot be learned without learning its grammar because it is the element that makes meaning in the language use (ibid).

Al Mutawa and kilani (1989), point that grammar is the most important element in producing a correct piece of writing. Teachers of English language should make sure that their students have acquired the necessary skill in the area of grammatical meaning which includes syntax, functional words, intonation and stress. Therefore, the following items must be considered when teaching grammar.

a) Grammatical structures (subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tense form, phrases, clauses... etc.)

b) Syntactical structures (complete sentences, sentences variety and correct parallel structures).

6. Punctuation marks stage:

Correct punctuation is more important in writing. Teachers should help their students develop the ability in using correct punctuation marks to avoid committing mistakes in writing.

Teachers must help students produce a coherent piece of writing with a meaningful context. To achieve this goal, they should bear in mind the following points:

a) Planning:

The role of the teacher is to support and encourage students to plan their own writing by stating purposes, linking ideas and knowing what kind of readers they are going to address.

b) Revising:

It is one of the most useful techniques in EFL writing in which students are trained to revise their own production to make sure that all expressed ideas are logical and persuasive.

c) Reader- Based Prose:

This is actually concerned with having an idea about readers need to adjust their information accordingly and make the process of writing as easy as possible.

d) Motivation:

Students will be highly motivated when teachers give them meaningful, relevant and real purpose of writing. Thus writing skill becomes an area of interest for many students, scholars and writers.

As a result, many students might be able to write and their contributions may be noticed in different formats such as: books, educational forums, researches...etc.

To achieve this aim, teachers should follow these points in their teaching:

1. Assist students to generate ideas.
2. Provide students with continuous practice and planning.
3. Encourage them to revise the strategies.

4. Support students with new technologies in writing (ibid).

2.23.2 Ideas for Generating Ideas

1. Ideas for generating ideas

a. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way to get the 'ideas creation engine' running. It means 'opening your mind and letting ideas pour out'. It also means not engaging that 'checking' part of your brain that too quickly dismisses things as stupid or useless (because we lose out on a lot of potentially good ideas because we reject them too soon). For this reason, it seems helpful to separate the ideas collection and the (later) critical review of those ideas. The following is a way to brainstorm in class:

- Write the topic or title in a circle in the middle of the board.
- Tell students to call out anything that comes to mind connected with the topic.
- Write up everything on the board.
- There should be no discussion or comments (especially derogatory ones) – just ideas.

So, students will call out ideas. Teacher will write them up. It may take a while to get going, but after a bit, the ideas will probably start flowing. After a reasonable period of time (i.e. however long it takes to fill the board with thoughts), you can stop. Now there is a lot to look back over. Invite students to select ideas

they like and can use, or may be allow some discussion time in groups to continue the sifting process. Everyone should have something they can make use of.(ibid)

b. Text- starts

A lot of real- life writing involves looking at other texts and summarizing, reporting, responding to them, selecting ideas from them, commenting on them, etc. Supplying 'text-starts' can be a good way to provide useful writing work for students and practices reading/ writing skills that useful in professional life and academic research. The actual content of the texts provides a lot of 'support' for the writer in that there is something concrete to deal with and many ideas are already formulated and mainly need a response or opinion, rather than original thought.

c. Fast- writing

For many writers, the single most difficult thing is simply to start writing. The blank page sits in front of you, and it can become very hard even to put down the first word. The longer you fail to write, the harder that first sentence becomes. Instead, imagine that your students could have a whole page of their won writing to start from; not a final version, but something on which to base their new writing. This is what fast-writing aims to achieve. Even if only Word or a line from this first attempt makes it into the final text, it is ha served its purpose, like the ignition key on a car, getting the writing started.

Tell students that they need a few pieces of blank paper. The rules are that when you say 'start', they should:

- Start writing about the topic;
- Not stop writing;
- Not put their pen down at all;
- Not worry about spelling, grammar, etc;
- Write 'um, um, um' or rubbish' or something else if they can't think of what to write'
- Not stop to go back and read what they have written;
- Keep writing till you say 'stop' (which will be after five/ eight/ ten minutes or however long you think is appropriate for group).

At the end, they will have a page or more of writing. A lot of it will be rubbish but there will also often be ideas and ways of saying thing that are well worth retrieving. Give the learners enough time to really look back over what they have written. Tell them to be ruthless and cross out a lot of the writing, but also to retrieve some good pieces. They can then use these as starting points for the new writing.

2.24 Cohesion and Coherence

Coherence or cohesion is the intangible glue that holds paragraphs together. Having good coherence in writing project means that your ideas stick together or flow smoothly from one sentence to the next, so that readers

of your work can easily understand where you are taking them. Without cohesion a written work can seem choppy and may not flow well, a lack of coherence challenges the reader and can hurt comprehension.

2.24.1 Unity and Coherence

According to (Rumisek &Zemach, 2003), unity in writing is,"the connection of all ideas to a single topic" (p.78). In a piece of writing, all ideas should relate to the thesis statement, and the supporting ideas in a main body paragraph should relate to the topic sentence.

Rumisek &Zemach (2003), believe that coherence is related to unity. Ideas that are arranged in a clear and logical way are coherent. When a text is unified and coherent, the reader can easily understand the main points. When organizing your ideas, think about what type of organization is the best for your topic or essay type. Rumisek &Zemach (2003) present the following table of some examples of writing and good ways to organize them.

Type of writing	Type of organization
Chronology (historical events, personal narratives, processes)	Order by time or order of events/steps
Description	Order by position, size, and shape of things
Classification	Group ideas and explain them in a logical

	order
Comparison / Contrast	Organise in point -by-point or block style
Argumentation/persuasion and cause/effect	Order from least important to most important

2.25 Cohesive Devices

Rumisek &Zemach (3003) define cohesive devices as," words and phrases that connect sentences and pharagraphs together, creating a smooth flow of ideas" (p.82). According to Hedge (2005), cohesive devices are"the means by which parts of a text are linked as logically relate sequences" (p.83). They show the relationship between ideas and make the writer's intentions clear.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) identify a number of cohesive devices:

Halliday and Hasan (1976) identify a number of cohesive devices:

(a) **Reference**

A common way of linking ideas across sentences is through back reference by using, for example, it, this, he, she or they. Pronouns and demonstratives are the most common reference words.

(b) **Conjunction**

Conjunctions are words or phrases which join parts of a sentence together, or link a sentence to the next one.

76

There are different types of conjunctions which describe different functions such as: addition, contrast, cause and effect, comparison, sequence and giving examples.

(c) **Ellipsis**

Ellipsis refers to the omission of words or phrases

(d) **Substitution**

Sometimes a word or phrase substitutes for an earlier item in the text in order to avoid repetition.

2.26 Helping students with writing during writing

Hedge (2005) argued that it would be unwise to assume that all students, or even the majority of students, are skilled writers in their first language. Thus, EFL writers would definitely need help with linguistic form and organization of texts. Hedge recommended the following activities and techniques that teachers can use to help their students during the process of composition:

1. Teachers can raise students' awareness of the process of composition by talking explicitly about the stages of writing as well as structuring activities to take account of it.

2. Teachers can play a support role during the early stages of the composition process by helping students to get their ideas together. Teachers can encourage students to generate ideas by interviewing other students, pooling information, ideas, or opinions in the class, working from pictures, or reading texts of different genres.

3. Teachers can present good models for writing, indirectly, by promoting good reading habits. They can also provide

good models for writing directly, when appropriate, by analyzing textual structure, particularly with some types of more academic writing.

4. Teachers can develop a sense of direction in students' writing by planning relevant writing activities.

5. Teachers can encourage students during the drafting process by creating a workshop atmosphere in their classroom to help students write down their ideas in English.

6. Teachers should provide activities to get students engaged in writing as a holistic process of composition.

Hedge (2005) confirms that, "Giving help during writing proves far more effective than giving it afterwards(p.55).

2.26.1 Revising and Editing

Among the studies on the stages of the writing process, research on the role of editing and revision is noticeable. It is believed that writing is a process of presenting and formulating. In other words, writing is a process of creating meaning. In this process, revision functions as a stage of representing and reformulating (Emig, 1971; Faigley&Witte, 1981; Hall, 1990; Murray, 1974; Sommers, 1980: cited in Li, 1999). The revision stage connects the other two stages of the writing process, planning and composing, in the way it examines (a) whether the finished draft presents the background knowledge the writer has collected for the designated topic, (b) whether the finished draft satisfies the imagine audience, and (c)

whether the finished draft reflects the linguistic ability of the writer to the greatest possible extent. Faigley and Witte (1981) indicated that revision could not be separated from planning and composing. Hedge (2005) indicates that revision activities only make sense as part of a much wider process of planning and composition. She stated that:

> Students need to be sure that their plans are reasonably well formed. Then they need to check a first draft to ensure that the 'global' structure of their writing is well organized. In this case, the concept and practice of revision needs to be closely linked with the concept and practice of planning (Hedge, 2005.122).

To many readers, it seems that revision and editing are the same. However, Leki, 1998; Hedge, 2005 and Oshima&Houge, 2007 argue that revision is different from editing. They believe that revising reconsiders the big issues of content and organization. In other words, writers focus on what they want to say and what ideas they want to express. When editing a piece of writing, writers work on the smaller issues of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. In other words, when editing a text, writers concentrate on how they say something rather than what they say (Leki, 1998).

If drafting is for the writer, revision is for the reader. During revision you consider your writing from your audience's point of view. You should revise for audience, purpose and form.

2.27 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter a detailed description of the theoretical framework of the use of cohesive devices in writing and how they challenge the writing process of Sudanese EFL undergraduate, namely at Sudan University of Science and Technology. In this particular chapter different aspects and types of writing have been considered, not to mention the mechanics of writing.

Review of Previous Relevant Studies

Introduction:

Writing research has been concern round a number of analysis. In this part the researcher intended to show some writing studies that investigate the use of writing skill and relevant of this study.

Hassan at Atieh's Study:

Hasan's (2006) has identified a major and serious weakness in the student's ability to write cohesive and coherent essays. This weakness prevails at all students' levels, even those university seniors who's a major in English .

The population of the study was 30 seniors students who writing 30 essays, they were al Al-Quds university essays. This weakness prevails at all students' levels, even thosein Palestine.

Hasan's found out that:

1. There is an astonishing degree of weakness in the student ability, to produce cohesive and coherent texts.

2. There is every serious weakness in the student's manifestation of the following. Rhetorical and linguistic feature: Cohesion (Local): reference,

conjunction, lexical, ellipsis and substitution. Coherence (global): A: text-topicality: Development, focus, relevance and continuity B: text-typology: Organization, deviation and parallelism or balance.

3.There are statistically significant differences in numberand use of cohesive devices in texts writing by those student.

4. There is no statistically significant correlation between the number of cohesive devices used in texts writing by those student's and the quality of those student's writingperformance in general.

5. There are statistically significant differences within the student's writing performance at the cohesion and cohesion levels.

6. There are no statistically significant differences within the student's writing performance both in the class and at home.

7. There are no statistically significant differences within the student's writing skill fullness at the performance level and at the cognitive levels.

8.There are no statistically significant differences among the student's writing abilities both at the performance level and the cognitive level due to gender.

The researcher would like to assert that this very important aspect of weakness should be taken and treated very seriously by school teachers, university instructors, syllabus-designers and decision-markers all together.

1) Teacher in general should devote more time, effort and attention to the writing skill so as to improve their student production of cohesive and coherent text through focusing equally on the inter-sentential intra-sentential levels of writing.

2) Teachers should not be tolerant of their student's mistakes and slow progress during the teaching process in away that motivate them to accept the writing lessons as a free and lively experience.

3) Teachers should train their students to use cohesive devices through focusing on both the grammatical and semantic conventions of academic writing.

4) Teachers should be devoted to their cares and they should be keen to improve their teaching expertise through attending workshops and reading the most up-to date references on methodology.

5) Syllabus-designers at the ministry of education should regularly revise the content of the English syllabus employed in school in Palestine so as enhance the students, language skill in general and writing skill in particular.

6) Decision-markers at the Palestinian university should reconsider the standards of admission to the departments of English so as ensure the best quality of students who wish study English major.

2-5-1 Philip's study:

1. Philip (2003) has investigates about writing skill an EFL at the Tertiary level, which has come to occupy the prominent role, it deserves in foreign language' teaching and learning , its value is confirmed by the latest research, which shows the classical relevance of writing as a recycling tools in the classroom the act of writing not only reflects our thinking , but also helps to create new thoughts.

2. Methodology in language teaching is the study of the practices and procedure used in teaching and the principle and beliefs that underline them, it includes the nature of language skill e.g., reading, writing, speaking and listening also the procedures for teaching them.

3. Philips found out that, group discussions are an excellent means for raising the student's motivation level and increasing their involvement in the learning process. to sum up, as teachers, our first task is to encourage mature learners to start writing, the focus should be on the message they wish to convey for particular purpose and audience, as ideas and thoughts

are generated, learners will be searching for appropriate language and related tools with which to convey this message writing and editing drafts reinforce writing as a creative learning process Development

mature learners writing skill from these basic premises emphasizes interactive writing, where by 5condlangUage learners struggle to reconcile purpose, meaning and function with their expanding array of linguistic tools, it is this constant struggle that constitutes the true writing skill in a 5econdlanguage.

Al ferdGasim's study:

Al fred'sGasim (2005) investigate difficulties facing the Sudanese secondary school students in writing English as a foreign language. The population of this study consisted of secondary school teachers and secondary school students in the district of Khartoum , the students sample was chosen purposely from Al zahideen secondary school for girls because the researcher works there and this facilitates the process of the experiment , ' the sample consisted of (90) students, (30) from each class (first, second and third) the teacher's sample consisted of (75) teacher's sample took part in questionnaire ; their responses exposed the difficulties they had in writing.

Al ferd's found that:

1. The teaching program contributed a great deal in overcoming the students difficulties in writing.

2. The teaching program contributed effectively in improving the students performance so the performance in post-test was far peter than in pre-test.

3. There was a great significance difference between the mean of post-test.

4. There was a great significant difference between the mean of the post-test and pre-test in guided composition of the first year indicating the effectiveness of the teaching program.

There was a great significance difference between the mean of post-test and pre-test in free composition of second class in favour of the post-test indicating the effectiveness of the teaching program.

6. There was a great significance difference between the mean of post-test and pre-test in quinded composition of the second class in favour of the post-test. 7. There was a great significance difference between the mean of post-test and pre-test in free composition of third class indicating that the teaching program contributed in overcoming the difficulties facing students in writing as it was shown by the post-test.

8. There was a great significance difference between the mean of post-test and pre-test in quinded compotation of third class in favour of the post-test.

Also Al ferd's recommends the following:

1. Teaching of English language should be given special and adequate training on methods of teaching writing.

2. English language should be thought by the specialized graduates. 3. Students should be provided with suitable leering materials and adequate practices to promote their ability in writing.

4. Teacher's views and ideas should be taken into consideration when designing the school syllabus.

5. Writing questions should be given weight in the school test and the examinations. Setting up realistic tasks, which are relevant to student life .

Chapter Three
Research Methodology

This chapter will give a satisfactory description of the research methodology adopted as well as the research instruments employed. Moreover, the validity and reliability of these instruments will be confirmed.

The chapter will further include as part of its components, four main sections:

1. The subjects of the study

2. The teaching/learning materials.

3. The theoretical principles on which the methodology is based.

4. Instrumentation and procedures of data collection.

3.1 The study methodology

The study adopted a mixed- methods approach: the descriptive analytical and experimental method. This allows the research instruments to complement each

other. Hence, an experiment, questionnaires, and class observations were used to address the research questions and objectives. The (SPSS) program version 17 was used for data analysis.

3.2 Population and sample

The study population was students and the teaching staffs of English, male and female   at   Sudan   University   of Science and Technology. This experiment was conducted at the Faculty of Languages. As it is known, all the students in Sudan enter university after spending seven years studying English right at the basic level and the secondary school, after spending four years studying English at basic school. All the students are aged 16-18 years old. They all speak Arabic as their first language, and all of them have studied English for 7 years at school. All the students who took part in the study experiment were males and females.

The test used was similar to students test practiced on their text book and as Sudanese Secondary Certificate (see appendix 1). The test consists of true/false and multiple choice questions, such questions are good means to assess reading comprehension because they don't require production (Nuttal1982). The students stay for three years at secondary school. There are some linking devices interspersed with parts of the questions of comprising the test.

3.3 Tools of the study

To collect the desired information to inform the resent study, two types of tools have been adopted. One type is a questionnaire, which was distributed to a randomly selected group of Sudanese English language teachers at universities. A pre-test and a post-test, is the second tool used in this research. The tests were administered to *first year* undergraduate students of Sudan University of Science and Technology. Students were, amounting to as many as a hundred were divided into two groups, namely experimental and controlled. Before the test, the experimental group has been subjected to a dose of exposure to linking devices which was positively reflected in their exam performance.

The descriptive and analytical method of investigation has been adopted in the present research. The well-known package of (SPSS) was employed for the data analysis to produce the wanted statistical end.

3.4 Description of the employed tools

A 20-item questionnaire with four components moderately touching   on issues connected with teacher training, methods of teaching English as a foreign language as adopted by Sudanese teachers in handling their classes, students' abilities and the type of English language curriculum taught at our teaching institutions.

The questionnaire which was judged by professor bellow
Prof. Ahmed Babikr Al Tahir

Prof. Ali Khalid Mudawi

Prof. Osman Cambal

Prof. Mahmmod Ali Ahmed

3.5 Research Experiment

There were three groups in the present study, that is (A), (B) and (C). The first one (A) as the experimental group, (B) and (C) were fused into a single (B)   as a control group. Both members of the groups were daily exposed to reading comprehension for a couple of weeks. Then, for the remaining 45 days the tutor started to draw their attention to the question of lexical items, vocabulary with the aim of identifying the new lexis and trying to infer their meaning. Authentic material was included from time to time to make the work more challenging and have the students work hard through the selected texts.

The main difference between the classes, in terms of how they studied, was that the researcher could use Arabic in the English class. The researcher has to resort to L1 now and then to help explain things that may pose impediments to understanding, while Arabic was not used at all in the control group. Both classes took a pre-test prior to the instruction program and a post-test after the program.

3.6 Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire (TsQ.), consist of 15 multiple statements and two open-ended questions. It was divided into three parts (see appendix 3):

i) Use of dictionaries,

ii) The syllabus at university

iii) Tutors' training

Part one i) includes 5 statements surveying students' use of dictionaries particularly bilingual ones, with Likert 4 points scale (strongly agree,

Agree, disagree and strongly disagree).

Part two included also five statements surveying the tutors' attitude towards the syllabus, also with Likert 4 points scale.

Part three surveyed different issues ranging from tutors' training to teaching at the general education, with Likert 5 points scale.

The questionnaire papers were distributed to as many as a 100 tutors who send a considerable time responding to the different items. The papers were, and then collected after two days for conducting the desired analysis and evaluation.

3.6.1 Reliability of the questionnaire

In statistics, reliability is the consistency of a set of measurements often used to describe a test. For the reliability of the questionnaires, the study used the split – half method: A measure of consistency where a questionnaire is splitted in two and the score for each half

of the questionnaire was compared with one another. The questionnaires were distributed to **100** teachers of English at Sudanese universities. The coefficient correlation formula was used to calculate the correlation:

The analysis shows that there was strong positive correlation between the answers given to the items asked: = 084%

3.6.2 Procedures

The questionnaire was administered to teachers by hand, and was given up to 15 days to respond to the questions, some were given to other teachers to distribute them. Two forms were returned unfilled, and some were lost.

3.7 Pilot Study

The pilot study (P.S) was conducted to check out the instruments used before their final administration. A group of randomly selected ten teachers, they were requested to fill in the questionnaire and feel free to write or comment orally on any observation they think necessary with a view to check the following:

1- The appropriate length of time needed to fill in the questionnaire.

2- Clarity of the questions.

The researcher received no comments regarding the above points from the   teachers.

Table (3-5) summary of teacher's questionnaire

Variable measured	Measured by
Use of dictionaries	Item 1,2,,4,5 and 6
Syllabus at university	Item 1,2,3, 4, 5 and 7
Tutors training	Item 1,2,4,5 and 5

Table No.(1) Academic status:

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Teacher	35	70.0%
Doctor	5	10.0%
Professor	10	20.0%
Total	50	100.0%

Table No.(2) Sex

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Male	33	66.0%
Female	17	34.0%
Total	50	100.0%

Table No.(4) Years of experience

Valid	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years	27	54.0%
5-10 years	8	16.0%
10-15 years	15	30.0%
Total	50	100.0%

3. 7.1 Classroom observation

The researcher visited some universities in Sudan and had a quick look at English language syllabus that was followed by these colleges. The researcher was also

interested in attending reading comprehension sessions to get acquainted with the ways and the learning strategies students use to learn and retain new lexical items. The Classroom observations, which involved 7 teachers, were conducted by using check-list to note down observations. The check list covered the following items: explaining exercises, grammar, vocabulary, checking understanding, praising, and telling jokes. As for vocabulary, students provide equivalent in Arabic, no more. No one particular strategy was used to show how they approach their vocabulary learning.

Table No.(4)

Validity coefficient is the square of the islands so reliability coefficient is (0.84), and this shows that there is a high sincerity of the scale and that the benefit of the study.

No		Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi-Square	df	Sig	Scale
1	Poor linguistic knowledge in English language syllabuses affect the improvement of student writing skill	4.56	0.611	25.720	2	0.00	Strongly agree ,
2	An adequately structured written sentence should aid the reader to understand the text	4.24	0.847	26.000	3	0.00	agree
3	The methods and	4.24	0.981	44.000	4	0.00	agree

		Mean	Std. dev	T test	Df	Sig	
	purposes of teaching the writing skill allow the students to communicative competence						
4	Activities inside the class help the students to improve their communicative competence	4.52	0.580	21.280	2	0.00	Strongly agree
5	Structures of good sentences help students to improve their writing skill	4.44	0.644	15.520	2	0.00	agree
6	Vocabulary should have an essential focus inside the class	4.36	0.722	32.720	3	0.00	agree

Table (5)

Paired Samples Test

Pair	No	Mean	Std. deviation	T test	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Before	50	10.9	4.38	-5.713	49	0.00
After	50	12.01	2.38			

Note from the table above is that the t-test (-5.713)
significant value (0.00) which is less than the probability
value (0.05) this means that there are statistically

significant differences in the degrees of students before and after the test.

Figure No (1) Paired Samples Test

From the table and figure above that the distribution of the sample by the statement as follows strongly agree by (44%) agree by (28%) no opinion by (12%) disagree by (8%) Strongly Disagree by (8%)

Table No.(6) Test

No	Before	After
1	21	17.5
2	17	16.5
3	17	15
4	17	14.5
5	16.5	14.5
6	16	14.5
7	16	14
8	15.5	14
9	15	14
10	15	14
11	15	14
12	11	14
13	14	13.5
14	14	13.5
15	13	13.5
16	13	13
17	12	13
18	11	13
19	11	13
20	11	13
21	10.5	13
22	10.5	13

23	10	13
24	10	13
25	10	12
26	9	12
27	8	12
28	8	12
29	12	12
30	7	12
31	8	12
32	8	12
33	7.5	12
4	7	11
35	7	11
36	7	11
37	7	11
38	7	11
39	6	10.5
40	6	10
41	6	10
42	6	10
43	5.5	7.5
44	5.5	9
45	5	8
46	5	8
47	5	7.5
48	4	7.5
49	3	7
50	3	8.5

3.7.2 Cranach's alpha method:

Where reliability was calculated using Cranach's alpha

equation shown below:

Reliability coefficient =   n   (1 - Total variations

questions)

N- 1   variation college grades

Cranach alpha coefficient = (0.70), a reliability coefficient is high and it indicates the stability of the scale and the validity of the study.

3.8 Summary of the chapter

This chapter described the methodology employed for gathering the data of the present study. Research instruments were described; instruments reliability and 50 validity were confirmed. Having finished with the methodology of the study, the next chapter will present data analysis, results and discussion.

Chapter four

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of data obtained from experiment, teachers' questionnaire, pre-test and post-test and classroom observations.

4.1 Analysis of the experiment.

The analysis of the experiment will focus on answering the salient question: to what extent can the undergraduate syllabus pursued at universities teach the mechanics of writing enabling the students to use the linking devices properly in writing? To answer this question, we computed the mean, standard deviation, standard error and ranges for the pretest- and post-test scores of both experimental and control groups. T-test was computed to find out whether each group had made any progress as a direct result of instruction.

Table (4-1) showed that when the mechanics of writing, namely the linking words have been introduced within the experimental group, they displayed relatively higher scores than those in the control group who were deprived of the linking words dose on the post-test. (mean =69 and 61 respectively) with similar variations among students in the experimental and controls (SD = 20.92 and 20.20 respectively).

In view of the fact that both the experimental and control group have been equal in size, no noteworthy differences have been detected existed between the groups on the basis of their pre-test mean scores formerly right at the outset of the experimentation. Results of the T-test in Table (4-2) shows that the mean scores of both control and experimental groups were (6.967) and (6.300) respectively, as shown in Table (4-2). Comparison of mean scores for the groups produced a difference of (+ 0.667) between experiment and control groups. Furthermore, the results of the T-test produced significant manifestations at the .001 level (p<.001***) which definitely entails that the difference between the experiment and control scores were statistically significant. This indicates, beyond doubt, that a student grasp of the linking devices within the experimental group improved significantly as a result of being introduced to a substantial dose of the writing devices.

Table (4-1) Scores obtained by the end of the Pre-test and Post-test as distributed within the Experimental and Control Groups.

Group		Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Experime ntal Group	**Pre-test**	61.333	20.9241	3.5064
	Post-test	69.667	20.9241	3.8202
Control Group	**Pre-test**	69.667	19.2055	2.6846
	Post-test	61.000	20.2055	3.5064

Table (4-2) T-test comparing the results of the two groups.

Group	N	Mean	St. Deviation	t-observed	df	Sig 2 tailed	St. error mean
Experimental	30	6.967	6.300	1.3170	29	000	.3820
Control	30	6.300	1.3170	26.201	29	000	.2404

Judging by the results manifested at table (4-1), it is safely admitted that the performance of the students at the experimental group is significantly improved as compared with the scores of the control group students. Improvement on the side of the control group is unnoticeably felt, though they receive the same dose of classes after the pre-test. Both groups show improvements but the experimental group showed a marked improvement with the highest scores when compared to the slight improvements achieved by the control group. These results clearly demonstrate the strongest evidence that effective handling of linking devices or cohesive devices can improve the students in using these essential tools of mechanics of writing.

4.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire.

It consists of four interrelated parts related to surveying teachers" 'poor language input with relatively insufficient amount of cohesive devices can considerably affect the overall standard of writing of undergraduate students.

Table (4-3) Poor language input (linking words) can affect standard of

Writing:

Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never	Total
63 (63%)	16 (16%)	8 (8%)	15 (15%)	7%	100%

 In view of the first item relating to the language input, the majority of teachers (78%) stated poor language input always affect the students performance. While only 7% of the respondents believed that language input never affects so seriously the students' performance.   This suggests that language input and handling do actually affect the students' performance in writing. Again, paying little attention to the question of cohesive devices can have the terrible consequences on the overall performance.

Table (4-4) an adequately structured sentence should be supportive in helping the reader understand the language intent.

Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never	Total
22 %	21%	4%	3%	00	100%

Glancing at table (4-4), it becomes clear that the correct structure is to a large extent, an element, readily responsible for appropriate understanding, and that the lack thereof can destroy the overall meaning effect a sentence ought to give. 70 % of the respondents do agree or are in favor of well structured sentences for proper understanding as a good structure can enhance the intelligibility of the language intent. Very few think that structure is not responsible for passing on the message. They, perhaps think that the semantic properties of the sentence are responsible for conveying the desired meaning.

There are a number of reasons why sentence structure matters. Sentence structure matters in English because of our use of modifiers. A **modifier** is a word or phrase that provides description in a sentence. However, putting the modifier in the wrong place can add confusion instead of clarity to your sentence. We can see this with simple modifiers in the wrong place.

'Only I love you!'

I'm pretty sure our friend didn't mean to tell his sweetheart that he was the only person on the planet that loved her. Structure that sentence a bit better and he would have had a much more pleasant result.

'I love only you!'

Then we have those dangling modifiers.

'To improve his building skills, a video was watched.'

In order to not offend our conscientious observers, a better choice of sentence structure would be:

'In order to improve his building skills, our friend watched a video.'

Now our readers know exactly who we are talking about and they won't need to figure it out and guess.

Good sentence structure helps to eliminate the use of sentence fragments as well. A **sentence fragment** is an incomplete sentence. These sentences are often incomplete because they are no longer attached to their clauses.

'It is important to eat vegetables every day. Having a variety.'

A sentence should be able to stand on its own. If we separate the two sentences, we can easily see that the second sentence is a fragment. We don't really know what 'having a variety' is referring to.

'Having a variety of vegetables can help us consume more of them.'

However, be careful not to error on the side of a run-on sentence to avoid a sentence fragment. A **run-on**

sentence is when two or more [independent clauses](#) are joined without the appropriate punctuation or conjunction. The final of the big three causes of sentence structure problems is using passive voice. Passive voice isn't a grammatical error so much as it makes the sentence harder to follow. In **passive voice**, the target of an action is put in the subject position even though they aren't doing anything. For example:

'The doll was bathed by Sally.

Table (4-5) The adequately selected techniques for teaching the writing mechanics allow the students to have good access to communicative competence

Total	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
100%	1(2%)	3(6%)	4 (8%)	17 (34%)	25 (50%)

Table (4-5) indicates that the majority of the respondents are of the same opinion that writing mechanics ought to be taught or explicitly introduced if arriving at solid communicative competence in writing is required. Only 2% of those respondent believed that teaching these mechanics is absolutely of no use. In comparison with the former percentage, the latter will be taken to as invalid.

Many instructors perceive that they should spend considerable time teaching correct grammar and usage. Studies tell us, however, that spending lots of time on explicit grammar instruction is less effective than brief and focused work on "surface" issues in the writing in which

students are currently engaged and at an appropriate time in the process.

Table (4-6) Varying activities and enhancing classroom interaction can help students improve their communicative competence:

Always	often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never	Total
28	20	2	0	0	100%

Almost 80% of the respondents recognize the effect of varying classroom activities and enhancing classroom interaction in improving students' communicative competence especially in the realm of academic writing.

Principally, learning a foreign language means to communicate with other people to understand them, talk to them, read what they have written and write to them (Byrne, 1991).

The main goal of this resent research is therefore to help language teachers better understand such a theoretical concept for improving their classroom practices. In so doing, we first explain the term communicative competence. Extending classroom interaction has proved useful particularly in setting like Sudanese universities where students cease using their English language outside the classroom.

Table (4-7) Paying special attention to vocabulary learning inside the classroom can help improve the students' writing abilities:

Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
24 (48.0%)	21(42.0%)	4 (8.0%)	1(2.0%)	0 (00%)	100%

Percentages drawn from table (4-7) reflect the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary inside the classroom. As many as 48% of the respondents consider that teaching and learning vocabulary for the purpose of improving Students' writing abilities of prime importance. This can be achieved through exposing students to vocabulary rich reading topics.

Speaking of reading, it has long been known that reading is one of the best ways to improve your vocabulary. In fact, the education experts at the Education Resources Information Center recently remarked that "reading is THE most efficient and effective means of acquiring vocabulary." Not only will reading help you better understand words and introduce you to new words, reading also helps you to become a better writer by exposing you to well-written prose.

Table (4.8) the extent a grammatical structure can affect the coherence of a sentence.

Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total

		es			
32 (64%)	15 (30%)	2 (4.0%)	1(2.0%)	0 (00%)	50- 100%

Disjointed sentences or impaired sentence structure can negatively affect understanding. A number of factors can disturb the unity or structure of a sentence. Table (4-8) demonstrates clearly that 64% of the respondents are of the same mind in relation to the issue of the structure. Almost all respondents agree that a sentence structure has direct effect on meaning and of very poor communicative value.

Adding sentence variety to prose can give it life and rhythm. Too many sentences with the same structure and length can grow monotonous for readers. Varying sentence style and structure can also reduce repetition and add emphasis. Long sentences work well for incorporating a lot of information, and short sentences can often maximize crucial points. These general tips may help add variety to similar sentences.

Varying sentences opening is one of the good habits of writing. If too many sentences start with the same word, especially *The*, *It*, *This*, or *I*, prose can grow tedious for readers, so changing opening words and phrases can be refreshing. Below are alternative openings for a fairly standard sentence. Notice that different beginnings can alter not only the structure but also the emphasis of the sentence. They may also require rephrasing in sentences

before or after this one, meaning that one change could lead to an abundance of sentence variety.

<div align="right">**Example**:</div>

<div align="right">*The biggest coincidence that day happened when David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.*</div>

<div align="right">**Possible Revisions**:</div>

<div align="right">ٱ *Coincidentally, David and I ended up sitting right next to each other at the Super Bowl.*</div>

<div align="right">ٱ *In an amazing coincidence, David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.*</div>

<div align="right">ٱ *sitting next to David at the Super Bowl was a tremendous coincidence.*</div>

<div align="right">ٱ *But the biggest coincidence that day happened when David and I ended up sitting next to each other at the Super Bowl.*</div>

Table (4-9) Students background and abilities can affect their writing performance

Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
31(62.0%)	14 (28.0%)	2 (4.0%)	2 (4.0%)	1(2.0%)	100.0%

Table (4-9) shows that 62.0% of the respondents do agree that a student's background knowledge and basic abilities developed at the secondary and basic schools are of very

pivotal importance on their overall learning, and particularly writing as far as the current research is concerned.

Assessing students' abilities against their written work is a matter of significant importance. Some students come to university with remarkably admirable background knowledge. They come from diverse indigenous linguistic and cultural backgrounds across the country. For a second language learner, writing is an extension of listening and speaking. Therefore, the student must be provided opportunities to build, extend, and refine oral language in order to improve written output. Since writing involves some risk-taking, it is important for students to be comfortable taking risks. They need to know that their efforts are appreciated and that the message they are trying to convey is valued over the form. They should be exposed to texts discussing different cultural settings.

Table (4-10) Bad punctuation can strongly smash up the sentence structure and lead to loss of meaning.

Always	often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never	Total
30 (60.0%)	16 (32.0%)	3 (6.0%)	1(2.0%)	0 (00%)	100%

Judging by the table above, 60% of the respondents believe that punctuation is such an essential tool in furthering the textual meaning. No one of the respondents belittles the effect of punctuation. Punctuation is one of the most important aspects of written English, and yet it is one that is taken the most lightly. It is, in fact, this feature of writing that gives meaning to the written words… much like pauses and changes in tones of the voice when speaking. An error in punctuation can convey a completely different meaning to the one that is intended. For example:

Your book, John.

Your book, John?

Although the words are same here, the two sentences mean completely different things because of the period (or full stop) and the question mark. Another example of how punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence:

He was bitten by a dog which hurt him.

He was bitten by a dog, which hurt him.

The first sentence means the dog hurt him. The second sentence means the bite hurts him. It's the comma after the *dog* that has completely changed the meaning of the sentence. A classic example that is generally given when teaching punctuation is the best that can be. It's this – Take the sentence *A woman without her man is nothing*. Now see the difference punctuation makes:

A woman, without her man, is nothing.

A woman: without her, man is nothing.

See how punctuation has made the same sentence mean two exactly opposite things? It's very important to know all the punctuation marks, their meanings, and when to use them in order to produce a good piece of writing – and more importantly, to convey the correct message.

Table (4-11) Pre-writing is such an essential step that further helps students set about their writing tasks self-assuredly.

Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never	Total
27 (54.0%)	9 (18.0%)	8 (16.0%)	6 (12.0%)	0 (00%)	100 %

The above table shows how important is prewriting. 54% of the respondents do agree that a session of pre-writing or spending a good time doing a kind of prewriting is substantial for good writing. In this connection the tutor establishes the use and application of the items (cohesive devices) which he seeks to introduce to his class.

To further help students to become productive in writing, they should be exposed to a session of pre-writing. Pre-writing is essential for the writer whose first language is not English. Especially at the lower levels of proficiency, students have a limited lexicon and therefore often have difficulty expressing their ideas. Therefore, teachers or other students may need to assist second language students to generate vocabulary and grammatical structures relevant to the topic. Models and samples are often helpful.

- Brainstorming — depending on the students' level of language, the writing down of ideas can be done by the teacher or by native English speaking students; the teacher may need to provide some guidance by asking questions to elicit vocabulary and structures associated with the selected topic
- Word banks generated by the students or as assigned by the teacher
- Drawing and sketching — enable students to illustrate ideas for which they do not have the language
- Discussion with native English-speaking peers or with the teacher
- Note-taking (often with the use of charts)
- Graphic organizers for eliciting, organizing and developing background knowledge
- Dictations — give learners some alternative models for addressing a writing task
- Researching and gather data by viewing videos, reading, talking, interviewing, and searching reference books or internet.

Table (4-12) Getting regular feedback of students' writing can further help develop their writing abilities and improve considerably their performance in other skills.

Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never	Total
24	22	0 (00%)	3	1	100.0%

| (48.0%) | (44.0%) | (6.0%) | (2.0%) |

The table demonstrates how important feedback in developing the students' writing is. 48% of the respondents stress the significance of feedback as they do practice it themselves.

There are many ways to give feedback on student writing. The best approach for any particular instructor depends on your purpose for giving the feedback, the amount of time available to you, and your preferred communication style. For example, you could give your students feedback in writing, in person, or through video recordings. Two considerations to keep in mind are that students often have deep psychological investments in their written work even when we as instructors perceive them to have put little effort into producing it, and that providing clear feedback is actually an extremely demanding writing task: students often find it difficult to understand what their instructors' comments mean, even when those comments seem quite straightforward to the instructors themselves (Hodges, 1997).

Formative comments are intended to help students revise their work; while summative evaluate the quality of a "finished" product. Thus, formative comments usually include recommendations for revision and questions that might help students rethink weaker elements in their papers, along with comments about things that are currently working well that a student might build on.

Summative comments, too, should address the strengths and weaknesses in a paper, but they typically explain the connection between those strengths and weaknesses and the grade the paper has received

They typically do not include advice about how the student might revise this specific paper, though they might include advice about how the student might improve his or her work in the future.

Table (4-13) Coherent paragraphs are necessarily fully developed paragraphs and hence they pass on the desired intention.

Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never	Total
26 (52.0%)	20 (40.0%)	3 (6.0%)	0 (00.0%)	1 (2.0%)	100.0%

As many as 52% respondents are of the same opinion that a well developed paragraph is essentially an outcome of a full application of coherence in which linking words glue nicely the different parts of the paragraph. Coherence in a paragraph is the technique of making words, phrases, and sentences move smoothly and logically from one to the other. In other words, the ideas are so interwoven and "glued" together that the reader will be able to see the consistent relationship between them.

It is obvious that if a paragraph is not unified, does not have a logical order, and does not have a consistent point of view, the reader is unlikely to grasp the point of the

paragraph. In addition, there are other devices and techniques that will help you achieve coherence.

In general, the coherence devices most helpful for making your communication clear for the reader are transitional words and phrases, repetition of key words and phrases, pronoun reference, and parallel sentence structure.

One of the most common methods of establishing coherence in a paragraph is the use of transitional words and phrases. These devices indicate to the reader the specific relationship between what was said and what will be said

Within a sentence, the coordinate conjunctions provide a coherent link to indicate relationships between parallel elements. The word *and* indicates a comparable idea; *but* and *yet* indicate a contrasting idea; *or* and *nor* indicate an alternative idea; *for* indicates a reason for a result already stated; and *so* indicates a conclusion from reasons already stated.

Table (4-14) Tutors encouraging and motivating their students can have a highly positive effect on their writing output.

Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
27(54.0%)	21(42.0%)	2 (4.0%)	0	0	100.0%

Judging by the above table, it is absolutely clear (54.0%) that motivation and encouragement can play a much vital role in urging students into practicing writing and consequently improving. There are quite a number of ways to induce positive motivation into students. Learning how to write well with value and purpose is not only essential for success in school but for effective participation in a professional environment and a rewarding social life (Graham, et al, 2012). Throughout a child's academic years, students are expected to carry out a variety of classroom assignments and excel on standardize testing which incorporates open ended questions and essay (Jasmine& Weiner, 2007).

Table (4-15) large groups or underprivileged classrooms can be very much detrimental to the overall teaching process and writing in particular.

Always	Often	Someti mes	Rarely	Never	Total
25(50.0 %)	20 (40.0%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	0	100.0%

It is evident from the table (4-15) that large groups can have a damaging effect on the teaching operation in general, and writing in particular. Some students would never be at ease attending such classes which impair their progress quite considerably.

In many countries large classes are a reality and they pose every challenge. Here are some of these problems

- It's difficult to keep good discipline going in a large class.
- You have to provide for more children of different ages and different abilities, wanting to learn different things at different speeds and in different ways.
- You can't easily give each child the individual attention they need.
- You may not have enough books or teaching and learning aids.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

This study is an attempt to explore the use of cohesive devices as reflected in the writing of the Sudanese EFL undergraduate students at the University of Sudan of Science and Technology. The aim is to find out whether exceptional attention paid to the teaching of writing mechanics, especially the linking words can help improve the writing of the undergraduate. To find answer to the pose question, the study surveyed the teachers' viewpoints in relation to the issue in question.

Basically, the study sets out to examine the questions:

1- To what extent can the undergraduate syllabus of English be used for improving students' mechanics of writing?

2- To what extent do tutors and classroom practitioners pay special attention to the question of writing mechanics in general and linking devices in particular?

3- What is the effect of further handling the teaching or cohesive devices along with that of reading to augment the students' writing abilities?

For purposes of further examining the study the following hypothetical statements were ironed out of the posed questions:

1. The undergraduate syllabus followed at our universities can be used for improving the undergraduates' knowledge of the mechanics of writing.

2. Tutors and classroom practitioners pay special attention to the question of writing mechanics in general and linking devices in particular?

3. The effect of further handling the teaching or cohesive devices along with that of reading to augment the students' writing abilities.

To achieve the set objectives, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach: the descriptive analytical and experimental methods. This allowed the research instruments to complement each other. Hence, an experiment, questionnaires, and class observations were used to address the research questions and objectives. The (SPSS) program version 17 was used for data analysis. 100 undergraduate students participated in the study experiment, 50 tutors s completed questionnaires, and 2 undergraduate classes were observed.

Statistically, the study found out that the teaching of linking devices can help undergraduate students improve their writing. A substantial dose of exposure to excessive

teaching of the devices and writing mechanics in general will produce the objectives sought after. These findings were in conformity with lots of works and research carried out across the globe, particularly in Arab countries. Again the findings further have been in commensurate with the set questions and hypotheses.

Findings:

1. It was found out those highly motivated students who have come from secondary schools with very good knowledge English are better placed to study, understand and apply linking words in the most proper required standards. In chapter two, literature review, all the examined studies in connection with the linking devices have confirmed that a good program set aside for handling the issue of the devices will assuredly be successful.

2. Two thirds of the respondents supported the idea that an enhanced cultural background can help students perform properly in English in general and the targeted category, in particular.

3. On the other hand, teachers expressed a variety of views about the advantages and disadvantages of having the reality of underprivileged classrooms that is large groups. 90% believe that large groups can be very detrimental to the teaching operation itself and that some students would find it difficult to put up with such large classes. Students who were born and studied abroad are

particularly negatively affected as they were not used to such overcrowded classroom.

A good curriculum handled by adequately trained tutors can have a considerable impact on the performance of the students. Almost all the respondents agreed to this postulation with exception of a few who believe that a good tutor is enough to make out of a bad syllabus something worthwhile. Students sometimes may find it difficult to understand the writing of their peers largely because of the badly structured sentences and phrases with which their writing is marred with. 80% of the respondents confirmed this fact as they themselves find it a bit difficult the writing of their students upon marking their production. An insignificant number viewed the problem from a different angle. If the students can express their thoughts in a language intelligible enough this would be quite agreeable, irrespective of the shaky structures they present us with. The interlocutor can understand the message.

Students can have good access to communicative competence having been exposed to a substantial dose of writing mechanics as part of a first-rate syllabus. 85% of the respondents have been in favor of a syllabus which contains a good host of writing mechanics. They believe that articulateness of writing owes a great deal of its lucidity to properly applied writing mechanics. Badly structured sentences usually come about as a result of the

writer's poor grasp of linking words and their appropriate use.

Many instructors perceive that they should spend considerable time teaching correct grammar and usage. Studies tell us, however, that spending lots of time on explicit grammar instruction is less effective than brief and focused work on "surface" issues in the writing in which students are currently engaged and at an appropriate time in the process.

Classroom interaction is an essential aspect of learning if the tutors managed to exploit that aspect fully. Almost 80% of the respondents recognize the effect of varying classroom activities and enhancing classroom interaction in improving students' communicative competence especially in the realm of academic writing.

Principally, learning a foreign language means to communicate with other people to understand them, talk to them, read what they have written and write to them (Byrne, 1991). Extending classroom interaction has proved useful particularly in setting like Sudanese universities where students cease using their English language outside the classroom.

Teaching and learning vocabulary in classroom settings drawing on authentic learning materials can be exploited to further improve students writing abilities. 86% of the respondents are in favor of teaching vocabulary along the line with the writing mechanics.

Good punctuation can account for first-class intelligibility. Punctuation gives the text its final shape. 60% of the respondents believe that punctuation is such an essential tool in furthering the textual meaning. No one of the respondents belittles the effect of punctuation. Punctuation is one of the most important aspects of written English, and yet it is one that is taken the most lightly. It is, in fact, this feature of writing that gives meaning to the written words... much like pauses and changes in tones of the voice when speaking. An error in punctuation can convey a completely different meaning to the one that is intended.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Tutors should seek to teach the mechanics of writing quite explicitly paying special attention to the question of linking words or cohesive devices.

2. Tutors should set out to help their students build good paragraphs while concentrating mainly on sound sentence structure in which cohesive devices are considered core or central part.

3. Tutors should all in their power to inculcate the idiomatic aspects of punctuation explaining the importance of punctuation in building good language structures.

4. Special attention should be given to pre-writing before embarking on the proper writing process. This the time when the tutor presents his students with ideas and new vocabulary to use and drawing their attention to the question of linking words and their importance in gluing the structures.

5. Feedback should not be neglected. There are many ways to give feedback on student writing. The best approach for any particular instructor depends on your purpose for giving the feedback, the amount of time available to you, and your preferred communication style. Feedback is an indispensable tool in making students stop to look back at their production with an examining eye.

Reviewing the writing output of undergraduate students one would immediately notice that it is intensively marred with inaccurate employment of the cohesive devices. Therefore, tutors have to spend much time drawing the students' attention to the devices and how they can be approached in the approved manner. Students should also know that using too many of them in a text can produce a negative effect.

The researcher assumes that undergraduate students' writing ability is very weak and hence, they are relatively poor in using English in the other skills. So, the only possible way to improve such an ailing situation is by means of much excessive writing. This fact can be attributed to the insufficiency of writing and even reading

lessons in Sudanese English language syllabus at the secondary level where the problem owes its origin.

Naturally, the proper use of cohesive devices has long been recognized as a fundamental aspect of good writing, but in recent years linguists have been turning their attention to the analysis of these devices. The term *cohesion* was coined by the British linguist Michael Halliday, and the study of cohesion is especially prominent within Halliday's Systemic Linguistics, but it is also now a familiar part of most linguistic analyses of texts and discourses.

Writing in broad general terms is so closely connected with reading. Undoubtedly, reading as a skill qualifies students to speak and write fluently. Mastering of writing skill has strong relation to do with reading skill. Therefore, the first step to be taken in this direction in order to improve students' writing is to introduce them to a rigorous reading program.

5.3 **Suggestions for further studies**

This study put forward the following suggestions for future researchers:

1. More evidence is required to substantiate the teaching of cohesive devices explicitly to establish a solid ground for the selection of the proper methods and techniques.

2. Much research is needed with respect to the type of English language syllabuses adopted at Sudanese universities with the aim of demonstrating that whether they are designed in a way that meets the growing demands of the students.

3. A research is needed to explore the entire mechanics of writing including the parts not handled in the present study.

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