



**Sudan University of Science & Technology**

**College of Graduate Studies**

**College of Languages**

**Investigating the Difficulties Encountered by EFL University  
Students in Using Cohesive Devices in Writing at University  
Level**

تقصي الصعوبات التي تواجه طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية في استخدام  
أدوات الربط في الكتابة في المستوى الجامعي

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for  
the Attainments for MA Degree in English Language ( Applied  
Linguistics)

**Submitted by:**

Mohammed Noor Yagob Gago Babiker

**Supervised by**

Dr. Hillary Marino Pitia Laki

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my father who has exerted much greater efforts upon me, until I reached this stage of education.*

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## **Abstract**

This study aimed at investigating the difficulties encountered by EFL students in using cohesive devices in writing. The researcher adopted descriptive analytical method for data collection. The researcher used test and questionnaire to collect the data of the study. The researcher gave a test to 40 students of second year English major at Al Neelain University Faculty of Arts Department of English Language and 20 English teachers to response the questionnaire. The researcher used SPSS programme to analyze the data, which showed in percentage and numbers of the students. The results obtained confirmed that second year students at Al Neelain University have difficulties in using grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in writing. Moreover, the researcher recommended that , English teachers should encourage the students to use different types of cohesive devices in their writing.

## مستخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة لتقصي الصعوبات التي تواجه طلاب الذين يدرسون اللغة الانجليزية باعتبارها لغة أجنبية في استخدام أدوات الربط في الكتابة في اللغة الانجليزية. تبنت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي حيث استخدم الباحث في هذه الدراسة أداتين هما اختبار لطلاب اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة النيلين مستوى الثاني جامعي و استبيان للأساتذة اللغة الانجليزية لجمع بيانات هذه الدراسة. حيث اجري الباحث اختبار مكون من خمسة عشر اسئلة ل 40 طالبا اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة النيلين مستوى الثاني جامعي و 20 معلما للغة الانجليزية للإجابة علي الاستبيان. استخدم الباحث برنامج التحليل الاحصائي في تحليل البيانات حيث كانت النتائج في شكل نسبة مئوية لاسيما الاساتذة و اختبار الطلاب. أثبتت نتائج هذه الدراسة بان طلاب اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة النيلين مستوى الثاني جامعي ضعفاء في استخدام أدوات الربط في الكتابة في اللغة الانجليزية. كما أوصى الباحث الاتي: علي أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية تشجيع الطلاب لاستخدام أدوات الربط المختلفة في الكتابة بالانجليزية، إضافة إلي رفع مستوى الوعي بأهمية أدوات الربط و مدي تأثيرها في الكتابة الانجليزية.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Introduction**

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.0 Background of the Study

English language is the most spread language all over the world. Therefore, teaching and learning English language have been popular in the world. However, learning English language goes through different aspects of language skills. One of these aspects is writing skill. Writing skill is an important part of communication or discourse. Moreover, writing has faced many difficulties through the process of learning. One of these difficulties is using cohesive devices in writing an English text in order to make it well structured for readers. Cohesion is the grammatical and lexical linking within a text or sentence that structure a text together and gives its meaning. It is related to the concept of coherence. However cohesion has two main kinds one is grammatical cohesion and second is lexical cohesion. The former is based on structural content and the latter is based on lexical content. Moreover cohesive devices play an important role in writing skills and achieve discourse communication. These devices are linking words, connectors, discourse markers or transitional words which show relationship between paragraphs or text.(Haliday and Hassan, 1976 Cohesion in English London: Longman).

This study is going to investigate the difficulties which face foreign learners of English language in using cohesive devices in their writing an English text.

## 1.1 Statement of the Study

The researcher noticed that foreign learners of English language exactly (2<sup>nd</sup> year students at Al Neelain University Faculty of Arts) have difficulties in using cohesive devices in their writing and communication in English. Using cohesive devices is very important in English writing and discourse (communication). If the students do not know how to use these devices in their writing they may make mistakes in structure of English writing or send wrong message through their communication. This may result into linguistic different points of view.

- From a syntactic point of view, they do not know how to use grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in writing a paragraph or sentence. For instance the use of anaphoric

In the following sentences e.g. Ali is a student. he studies in KDS. In this example the cohesive device pronoun “he” shows the relationship between first clause and the second and agreement of the subject and the pronoun.

- From semantic point of view, for instance, they do not know which correct device they use in the structure of text; this can change the meaning of the structure of text or paragraph. For example, the using of AND or BUT

- 1- The public transport in this city is unreliable and it is cheap.
- 2- The public transport in this city is unreliable but it is cheap.

There are two cohesive devices in the sentences above “and” and “but”. Both give the reader different meaning. Therefore if the students do not use them correctly they can change the meaning of discourse.

## **1.2 Questions of the Study**

The present study will attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent do 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of Al Neelain University have difficulties in using grammatical cohesion devices?
2. To what extent do 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of Al Neelain University have difficulties in using lexical cohesion devices?
3. What are the main reasons that make the teachers neglect teaching cohesive devices as a part of writing ?

## **1.3 Hypotheses of the Study**

The present study has the following hypotheses:

- 1- 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of Al Neelain University have difficulties in using grammatical cohesive devices.
- 2-2<sup>nd</sup> year students of Al Neelain University have difficulties in using lexical cohesive devices.
- 3-Teachers at Al Neelain neglect teaching cohesive devices as a part of writing for many reasons.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The present study aims to:

1. Investigating whether 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of Al Neelain University have difficulties in using grammatical cohesive devices.
2. Exploring whether 2<sup>nd</sup> year students Al Neelain University have difficulties in using lexical cohesive devices.
3. Finding out whether teachers of English at Al Neelain University neglect teaching cohesive devices in writing for many reasons.
4. Show that how cohesion devices play an important role in understanding of the text and writing skill.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study stems from the fact that it investigating the difficulties and errors encountered by foreign students at the university level when they use cohesive devices in writing text. It shows the importance of cohesive devices in writing skill and discourse Also it will shed light on different types of cohesive devices such as, lexical and grammatical and the causes which led to errors. Finally, it will be targeting English teachers and students.

## **1.6 Methodology of the Study**

This study is investigating the difficulties that foreign learners make in using cohesion devices. Therefore the researcher uses descriptive analytical method to carry out the data collection of the study which collects through test and questionnaires as the tools to collect the data of the research.

The study population will be a representative sample of level two at Al Neelain University Faculty of Arts.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

This study is limited to investigating the difficulties encountered by EFL university students in using cohesive devices in writing at University level particularly students of English language at Al Neelain University Faculty of Arts Department of English Language. The sample of the study are level two students (40)are given a test and teachers (20) for questionnaire, during the academic year of 2019.

**Chapter two**  
**Literature review and previous studies**



# CHAPTER TWO

## Literature Review and Previous Studies

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of two parts. Part one reviews of literature related to research topic such as the concept of the cohesive devices and cohesion and coherence. While part two discusses previous studies related to the research topic.

### 2.1 Literature Review

#### 2.1.1 The Concept of Cohesive Device

Cohesion can be defined as the property that distinguishes a sequence of sentence form a discourse from a random sequence of sentence. It is a series of lexical and grammatical and other relations which provide links between the various parts of a text.( Indah Wardaty Saud).

Halliday and Hassan (1976) point out that “cohesion expresses the continuity that exists between one part of text and another”.(p.299).

They also identify grammatical and lexical cohesive devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. Reference shows the relationship between a word and what it refers to. Baker (199) argues that substitution and ellipsis show grammatical relationships, in substitution one item is replaced by another item, but ellipsis includes the omission of an item. Halliday and Hassan (1976) argue that lexical cohesionsuch as reiteration and collocation. The former covers repetition of lexical items, for

example the repetition of earlier item a synonym or near synonym, while the later covers lexical items which co-occur with each other in the language.

### **2.1.2 Coherence and Cohesion**

There are several researchers and articles differentiated the difference between coherence and cohesion. According to Halliday and Hassan (1976) that coherence is a means that makes the sentences semantically well structure. Werth (1984) states that we achieve well-form of discourse through “connectivity” that exists in form of cohesion, coherence, connectors, and collocation”.

In many languages cohesion can be establish through the employment of discourse markers. When all sentences related to each other, and no sentence is interpreted in isolation of other sentences, the coherence will obtain the context. All of writers divide cohesion into two components. Grammatical component which concerns with structural content and lexical component which concerns with language content.(ArburimIseni, AliAsbasaeid and M. Ali, research paper).

According Halliday and Hassan cohesion deal as semantic relation than grammatical relation.Cohesives keep cohesion in the text. It convey the meaning of the text and they preserve meaning in the text.Blum-Kulka (1986/ 2000) argued that cohesion holds relationship between different parts of the text using certain devices.( International Journal of English language & translation studies, Volume:6 Issue: July- September, 2017).

When sentences, ideas and details connect together clearly, so the writing is coherent.

In conclusion, cohesion focuses on sentences and their relationship with each other, while coherence deals with the context. Therefore the role of cohesive devices is link between sentences, clauses and phrases.

### **2.1.3 Discourse and Cohesion (Discourse Markers)**

Discourse is spoken language used by human to communicate with each other. In order to achieve a good discourse, it must be construct with different markers or devices such cohesion and coherence. Since that the main goals discourse to send message to the reader or hearer. A single word as the imperative verb “ stop” can be understand as discourse. While along sentences and phrases cannot be understood as a discourse without discourse markers or cohesive devices. Discourse markers are “linguistic, paralinguistic, or context (coherence) which show relationship between syntactic and semantic properties in discourse units”.( Anglisticum Journal, Volume:2, Issue:4).

According to Salkie (1997), discourse is a stretch of language which may be longer than one sentence. Gee (2008) also mentions that discourse is “stretches of language which hang together so as to make sense to some community of people “. (p.115).

McCarthy (1991) defines discourse from social dimension. That is to say, discourse is constructed by social life as well as it shapes the world. In other hand Schiffrin (1994) defines discourse as utterance. The utterance is considered as the smallest unit of which discourse is comprised.

Moreover, Van Dijk (1997) relates the discourse to three dimensions which are language, communication and interaction. it is define by its function as a

communicative event. It used to interact, not just using language or communication with others.

#### **2.1.4 Spoken Versus Written Discourse:**

Spoken language is different rather than written language. Therefore discourse analysis awareness of the need of studying the spoken written discourse separately.

Davies and Widdowson (1974) argue that spoken and written languages have different features. They assume that spoken discourse includes first paralinguistic elements such as gestures and the tone of voice. The second thing is the feedback which states through the reaction of the listener. While the written discourse in other hand also produces through linguistic elements. However, they define written discourse by the presence of graphological tools in writing which substitute the paralinguistic ones like punctuation and underlining.

On other hand Dubin and Olshtain (1986) distinguish between written and spoken discourse in terms of planning by argue that “written discourse is usually planned, while spoken discourse can be planned or unplanned” (p. 93\_4). Moreover, Yule and Brown (1983) make a distinction between the models in terms of function. They state the following:

One is transactional function, which means that a natural utterance would be used to achieve one function to all exclusion of other.

Second is interactional function, which means that function included in expressing social relations and personal attitudes.

They argue that written language has a transactional function because the writer often aims to provide his reader with information and transmit particular thoughts. In contrast that spoken language has an interactional function because the speaker wants to establish relationships people and society.

According to Schiffrin (2006) that the goal of text, written and spoken is to achieve the language according to the need of the receivers.

He says that “spoken discourse is more fragmented and written discourse is more integrated” (p. 189). He explains that fragmentation is the rapidity of moving from one idea to another. This feature is faster in spoken than written. While integration is the different ideas that are tidying in long and complex structure of sentences because the writer has the sufficient time in producing that.

### **2.1.5 Texture and Textuality**

Halliday and Hassan (1976) define text that “ a text is unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence and it is not defined by its size. Sometimes envisaged to be some kind of super-sentence\, a grammatical unit that is larger than a sentence but is related to a sentence in same way that a sentence is related to a clause a clause to a group and so on by constituency a text is not something that like a sentence only bigger.(p. 1-2).

That to say a text is not an act of parole, and it is not define by its grammatical function. They demonstrate the main factor that constitutes a text which is cohesion. It is the principle through which we can relate our

utterances or sentences. Therefore, they explain on the constituency in producing language (spoken and written). There should be a linear sequence where each line should be linked to the previous one. This kind of linear progression of text creates a context of meaning.

Texture on another hand referred to textuality which means the feature of being a text and stands as a whole. Thus De Beaugrande and Dessler (1981), in their well-known Introduction to Text Linguistics, they define textuality in term of commutative function that the text is supposed to realize. They state seven standards of textuality which meet in order to fulfill the commutative function of any text. These standards are referred to as the constitutive principle of texture communication. They are as followings:

**-Cohesion** is the first standard which deals with the way in which the principle of the surface text are mutually tied within a sequence. The surface principle depends on each other according to grammatical forms and conventions.

**-coherence** is the second standard whereby component or the order of statements relates one another by sense. Cohesion and coherence are text-centred notions.

**-intentionality** is the third standard which concerns with the text producer s attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text instrumental in fulfilling the producer s intentions.

-**Acceptability** is the fourth standard of textuality, related to the text receiver's attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text having some relevance for the receiver.

-**Informativity** is the fifth standard which deals with the extent to which the occurrences of the present text are known or unknown.

-**Situationality** is the sixth standard that deals with the factors which make a text relevant to a situation of occurrence.

-**Intertextuality** is the seventh standard that concerning the factors which make the use of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts.

## **2.1.6 Types of cohesive devices**

There are two main types of cohesion, grammatical cohesion, which concerns with structural content and lexical cohesion that concerns with lexical content. Firstly, the researcher is going to shed light on various types of grammatical cohesion devices.

### **2.1.6.1 Grammatical cohesion:**

Grammatical cohesion is based on structural content or syntax. They are used to connect sentences and phrases in a text.

According to Halliday and Hassan are four grammatical cohesive devices, conjunction, substitution, ellipsis and reference.

## 1) Conjunction:

Conjunction devices are used to tie the sentences meaningfully. However, conjunction words such as , and, but, so, because, nevertheless, rather,.....etc are used to structure the texts.(Halliday and Hassan, 1976).

Generally, conjunctions connect the meanings of the speech to achieve coordination between sentences. For instance:

**Ahmed** is a manager of a company **and** works in Omdurman. In this sentence the writer used conjunction ‘and’ to tie the sentences together in order to express the full meaning of discourse.

Conjunction divided into four categories:

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| a)- Additive | b)- Adversative |
| c)- causal   | d)- Temporal    |

### **a)- Additive conjunction:**

additive is a type of conjunction relation which is closer to coordination. Additive words such as ( and, or, else, in addition, thus, for instance, nor.....etc).

For example:

Perhaps he went there, or he changed her his mind.

Additive conjunction divided into five types: additive (expressed by the use of and, and, beside, in addition...etc), negative (using cohesive devices such as, nor and ...not, not....either...etc), comparative (using expressions like: in the same way, by contrast... etc) and appositive (for exposition or exemplification, for instance.... etc). (Hadjira, p. 13.2013).



## **B)- Adversative conjunction:**

The basic meaning of adversative relation “contrary to expectation “ .adversative words such as ( yet, however, despite this, other hand, any way, rather.....etc).

For example:

Despite he revised his lessons but he fail in exam.

## **c)- Causal conjunction:**

it includes reasons, result and relation between the sentences. Causal words such as ( so, in that case, otherwise, as the result, because....etc).

For example:

Ali failed in the exam because he didn't study his lessons.

## **d)- Temporal conjunction:**

It is a relationship between successive sentences. It involves such as (then, next, afterwards, finally, meanwhile, hence.....etc).

For example:

He finally got a good result.

It also concerns with describing actions which took place in certain time .

It is expressed by different cohesive devices such as after that, next at the same time , at this point... etc.

## **2) Substitution :**

Substitution can be define as a word or a phrase that is not deleted from the text, but it replace by another linguistic form.(Hallidayand Hassan).according Halliday and Hassan there is difference between reference and substitution in the way which are function. The former, deals with meaning relation, while the later deals with words and their use to replace each other in order to avoid repetition in a text

According Halliuday and Hassan(1976, 89), that substitution is relation on the lexical grammatical level in linguistic system. Whereas reference shows the relation on semantic level in linguistic system.

According to Kennedy (2003) there are three types of substitution.

### **A) Nominal substitution:**

Nominal substitution is a process of replacement of nouns with “one” or “ones”.

For example:

My **car** became old. So, I must buy new **one**.

There are some new **balls** in the bat. These **ones** have lost their bounce.

In the above example balls and car replace by “ones” and “one”.

## **B) Verbal substitution:**

The verbal or a verbal group can be replaced by a verb which is "verb to do". It functions as a head of group and it usually replaces at the end of the group.

For example:

A. Ali says you drink too much?

B. So do you?

Here do replace the phrase "drink too much".

## **C) Causal substitution:**

Causal substitution shows where a clause can be replaced by "SO" or "not".

For example:

A. Is it going to rain?

B. I think so.

In this example the clause "going to rain" replaced by "so".

## **3). Reference**

Reference can be identified as the situation in which one element cannot be semantically interpreted unless it is not referred to another element in the text. Moreover words are pronouns, articles, demonstratives and comparatives which are used as referring devices

to refer to items in linguistic or situational texts. Reference may either be exophoric or endophoric (M. Bloor, and T. Bloor, 2013).

Hilladay and Hassan (1976) define Reference as “ the relationship between an element of the text something else by reference to its interpretation in the given instance”.

Eggins (1994,95) argued that “ the cohesive resource of reference refers to how the writer introduces participants and then keep track of them once they are in the text. Participants are places, people and things that get talk about in the text”.

The participants in the text can be introduced as present reference. While other participants which track throughout the text defined as presuming reference. The presuming reference creates cohesion in the text because it links the two items in the text (Eggin, 1994:96).

Reference is used to describe different ways to tie sentences, clauses and phrases together in the text. However, there are many reference words to tie the items in a text. Such as pronoun, demonstratives, articles .... Etc.

According to Brown and Yule (1988:204) “ the traditional semantic view that, reference is one in which the relationship of reference is taken to hold between items or expression in a text and entities in the world and that of co –reference between expression in different parts of a text”.

## **There are two basic types of reference:**

According to M.Bloor and T.Bloor reference may either be Exophoric or Endophoric.(M.Bloor and T.Bloor, 2013).

### **A). Exophoric reference:**

Exophoric reference requires the reader to infer the interpreted referent by looking beyond the text in the immediate environment shared by the reader and the writer.

For example:

That is a wonderful idea.

To understand the meaning of “that” the reader must look out the situation.

### **B). Endophoric reference:**

Endophoric reference on other hand, deals within the text itself.Endophoric reference can be divided into two classes: One is anaphoric and the second is anaphoric.

### **Cataphoric reference:**

According to Partridge (2012), “It shows where a word or phrase refers back another word or phrase used earlier in the text”. (page. 115).

For example:

Mona went to the party. She sat with Sara.

In above example the pronoun “she” refers back to the noun “Mona”, therefore “ she” is an anaphoric reference.([www.ccsenet.org/elt](http://www.ccsenet.org/elt) ,

Vol, 9. No 7. 2017).

### **Cataphoric reference:**

Cataphoric reference on other hand, it looks forward to another word or phrase mentioned later in the text.

For example:

As soon as he arrived, Mike visited his parents.

In this example “he” is cataphoric reference that looks forward to the noun Mike.([www.ccsenet.org/elt](http://www.ccsenet.org/elt) ,Vol, 9. No 7. 2017)

### **4).Ellipsis**

Ellipsis is the process of omitting an unnecessary item, which has been mentioned earlier in a text, and replacing it with nothing. Ellipsis is like substitution because Hilladay and Hassan(1976)argued that “ Ellipsis is simply substitution by zero”. It considered as an anaphoric relation because the omission process indicate within the text.

Cutting (2002) states that “both substitution and ellipsis can be used when there is no ambiguity as to what is being substituted or ellipse” (p. 12).therefore; ellipsis is the process whereby items of a sentence that are predictable from context can be omitted. (Hardjir, p. 12).

However, when ellipsis occurs the item that is omitted from the text can still be understood. Moreover, McCarty (1990-43) defined ellipsis as

“omission of some elements that normally required by grammar which writer assumes are clearly from the context and therefore need not to be raised”.

### **There are three types of ellipsis:**

Halliday and Hassan classify three types of ellipsis, normal, verbal and clausal.

#### **a). Normal ellipsis**

in normal ellipsis the noun is omitted. For instance.

My brothers like sports. In fact {0} both love football.

In this example [0] means my brothers]. So the noun my brothers is omitted.

#### **b). Verbal ellipsis**

Verbal ellipsis includes the omission of the verb. For instance, the verb been studying is left out in B.

A: Have you been studying?

B: Yes, I have [0].

In the above example [o] means [studying].

#### **c). Clausal ellipsis**

Clausal ellipsis occurs when the clause is omitted. In example mentioned below, the clause writing on the board is excluded in [B].

A: Who is writing on the board?

B:Ali is [0].

In this example [0] means the clause [ writing on the board].

### **2.1.6.2 Lexical cohesion:**

The lexical cohesive devices concerns with lexical items or content. Lexical cohesive devices are repetition, synonymy, superordinate, general nouns and collocation.

#### **1). Repetition**

In repetition cohesion achieved through repeating the same word or phrase.(Ibid. p. 284) For instance.

a). I turned to the **ascent** of the peak. The **ascent** is perfectly easy.

In the above example the cohesion achieved through the repetition of noun (**ascent**). (Ibid. p. 279).

#### **2). Synonymy and super ordinates**

Synonymy and super ordinates establish cohesion ties between elements by pointing to the original referent with the different lexical form while expressing the same expanded semantic meaning.(Ibid. p. 284). For example.

b). I turned to the ascent of the peak.

-The **ascent** is perfectly easy.

- The **climb** is perfectly easy.( synonymy)



In this example the cohesion achieved through the synonymy of two words (**ascent**) and (**climb**).

### **3). General noun**

General nouns such as name of thing or person that exist of boundaries of lexical cohesion and substitution (Ibid. p .284). For instance

c). I turned to the ascent of the peak. The ascent is perfectly easy.

The **thing** is perfectly easy.( general noun).

In the above example the general noun functions as lexical device by referring back to the normal phrase, the ascent is perfectly easy.

### **4). Collocation**

The last lexical cohesion device is collocation devices in texts through commonly co-occurring lexical items.

Halliday and Hassan argued that “the most problematical devices are collocation devices or aspect of lexical cohesion” (p. 284). There is no short examples can illustrate collocation s cohesive function.(Ibid. chapter 6).

## **2.2 Previous Studies Related to the Study**

There are many studies and researches conducted in cohesion devices in writing an English text. Many researchers show that foreign learners of English language have difficulties in using cohesive devices in their writing. However, below are some studies conducted by different researchers in this field.

2.2.1 **Afnan Bahaziq** conducted a study in cohesive devices entitled written discourse and analysis of students essay writing. He conducted a critical analysis of text and investigates the use of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices. His data is taken from The Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB). His sample is an examine 's essay writing who scored 73 in the text. The text takes about 30 minutes to write one topic. (MELAB Sample essay and commentary, 2013). moreover, he found that the result of the analysis reveals that 71.08% of grammatical used in the essay is reference. This might indicate that the writer has little background of the appropriate method of using of reference. The remaining percentage (28.92%) of the total grammatical devices applied in the text is divided between conjunctions and ellipsis. There is no evidence of substitution. (Afnan Bahaziq, English Language Teaching Vol, 9, No. 7, 2016. MELAB).

2.2.2 **Asami Nakayama** conducted study in cohesive devices entitled. He analyses academic essays written by Japanese university students. However, he found that their writings have a lack of coherence and weak structure. He conducted micro-analysis based on a student s essay by using learner corpus consisting of 21 student's essays. The findings show that Japanese students have difficulty with using cohesive devices. His participants were 21 students from science and Engineering Department at university in 2009. They were all fresh men. However, the result shows that they faced many difficulties in using cohesive devices. (article, the Importance of Cohesion in Academic Writing). (Download from <http://flesch.source.net>).

2.2.3 **Hadjira Bellaouar** conducted study in using grammatical cohesion entitled written business letters at first year master students of Marketing at University of Ghardaia on 17/06/2013. He conducted the study by given text to 30 students of first year master of marketing class at Ghardaia University. The result obtained corroborate that grammatical cohesion may enhance the learners of Marketing in their writing if they use the devices correctly. He used text method to collect his data , students given a text to write about marketing and apply grammatical cohesion in their written. The result shows into steps, one is the use of grammatical cohesive devices reference in the text used total 577 used 449 (77%).

The step is that learners correct versus wrong use of grammatical cohesive devices. It shows the total number of appropriate and appropriate use of grammatical cohesive devices made by students, correct 528 ( 91%) while wrong 49 8.(49%).(HadjiraBellaouar,University of Ghardaia,17/06/2013).

2.2.4. **Besma Azzouz** conducted a study in grammatical cohesion entitled students writing shows that second year students at Mentouri University-Constantine have faced difficulties in using grammatical cohesive devices in their writings. They made inappropriate uses of grammatical cohesive devices in written text. Most of conjunction devices are used wrong. His sample represents one group second-year L.M.D students of the department of foreign languages at the University of Constantine. The number of subject's population amounts to 40 students. However, the text given to the students was an essay written task the text should tie by cohesive devices. Moreover, the result show that most of

students made inappropriate use of grammatical cohesion and other devices types.(. BesmaAzzouz, Mentouri University-Constantine, 2009).

2.2.5 **Anna** (2010) conducted a study in “investigating argumentative essays of English undergraduates studying in Poland as regards their use of cohesive devices”.The research study examines the use of cohesive devices in the argumentative essays of Poland under graduates, using both quantative and qualitive analysis. Thirty two essays collected from three high institutions from Poland. The analysis is based on Halliday and Hassan framework on cohesion in texts, the analysis is conducted by estimating the average frequency of cohesive ties in all essays, their distance and the distribution of cohesive chains. The analysis also includes the comparative study of essays as regards the use of cohesive devices in two proficiency levels and in relation to writing quality. This examination did not provide conclusive results.

2.2.6 **Liu and Braine** (2005) point out that cohesion and coherence are both crucial textual elements and are recognized as features of good writing. Also, they suggest that some empirical studies indicate that cohesion is great value in any type of writing. They argue that both L1and L2 learners of English encounter difficulties in using cohesive devices in their writing ( Lui and Braine 2005: 624-625). They conducted study on Chinese students of EFL and their argumentative writing. The main focus was to determine how cohesive devices are used in writing. Their findings show that EFL have difficulties with cohesion in writing essay. The percentage of all cohesive devices is weak through the student’s writing essays. They conclude that this discovery points to the fact of an important relationship between the number

# **Chapter three**

## **Methodology**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter contains a description of methodology used in the study. It also contains the sample of the study, the data collection and reliability and validity of the test and questionnaire of the study.

#### **3.1 Methodology of the Study**

A descriptive analytical approach is adopted throughout this study .the present study tries to describe the nature of the phenomenon and the problem , and present it as it is , and consequently highlight the area of weakness which needs more concentration . the information was gathered through answering questionnaire and test .

#### **3.2 Samples of the Study**

The sample of the study involved 40 students of EFL of second year students at department of English language in Faculty of Arts at Neelain University. They are both male and female; all of them study English language as a foreign language in second level. They have been chosen randomly to set the diagnostic test. Moreover, the questionnaire given to 20 different teachers of English language who are mastering in English.

#### **3.3 The Data Collection Instruments**

The instruments which were used for data collection are both test and questionnaire .

### **3.4 Procedure**

The procedure of the study goes through the test and questionnaire designed by the researcher then give to the sample which described above . Moreover, below is the procedure of both test and questionnaire.

### **3.5 Text**

The test consists of two activities given to 40 the students at Al Neelain University Faculty of Arts Department of English Language in order to collect data of the study. The first activity was about grammatical cohesive devices use to fill the gabs between sentences to complete the sentences correctly. While the second one, about lexical cohesive devices use to fill the gabs between sentences.

However, the test well-designed by the researcher .the test involves different types of grammatical cohesive devices ( references, conjunctions, ellipses and substitution) , and types of lexical cohesive devices, which are ( synonymy, general noun and repetition). Moreover, the researcher used statistical program (SPSS) to analyze the result of thee test. The (SPSS) program distributed the result in tables and figure to show the correct and incorrect answers which obtain through the test.

### **3.6 Questionnaire**

the questionnaire designed by the researcher then given to 20 English teachers . The questionnaire consists of five statements given to teachers in order to test the third hypotheses of the study. The all members of the sample of twenty English teachers answered the questions easily. Moreover,

the researcher used statistical program (SPSS) to analyze the result of the questionnaire.

### **3.7 Reliability and Validity the Test**

First, the reliability of the test was conducted by the researcher then given to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students at Neelain University Faculty of Arts Department of English Language. The test consists of two questions in order to test two hypotheses of the researcher. Also, reliability is defined by the degree of accuracy of the data which the test measures.

Second, the validity of the test, to ensure the validity of the test the researcher prepared a test, then showed it to three lectures doctors of English Language at Sudan University of Science and Technology, Dr Hassan Bashoam, Dr Abass and Dr Hillary Marino Pitia. They expressed their opinions, and advised me to make some addition, omission and modifications related to the test.

### **3.8 Reliability and Validity the questionnaire**

First, the questionnaire reliability of the study is a certain questionnaire designed by the researcher then given to 20 English teachers. The questionnaire consists of five statements given to teachers in order to test the third hypotheses. Also, reliability is defined by the degree of accuracy of the data which the questionnaire measures.

Second, the validity of the questionnaire, to ensure the validity of the test the researcher prepared a questionnaire, then showed it to three lectures doctors of English Language at Sudan University of Science and Technology, Dr Hassan Bashoam, Dr Abass and Dr Hillary Marino Pitia.



They expressed their opinions, and advised me to make some addition, omission and modifications related to the questionnaire.

### **3.9 Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter the researcher described the methodology of the study , the tools which are used to collect the data of the study, the sample of the study which selected randomly, test and questionnaire. Moreover, it also included the validity and reliability of the test and the questionnaire.

**Chapter four**  
**Data analysis, result and discussion**

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **Data Analysis, Results, and Discussion**

### **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher analyzed the data obtained through the test and questionnaire by using (SPSS) program . Also the researcher discussed the result. Moreover, the result of the data analysis shows in tables and figures.

Students' test results and teachers' questionnaire results:

In this study the researcher stated three hypotheses for the research , therefore the researcher designed diagnostic test to test his two hypotheses and questionnaire to test third hypotheses. First the test result and second the questionnaire result.

### **4.1 Test Results:**

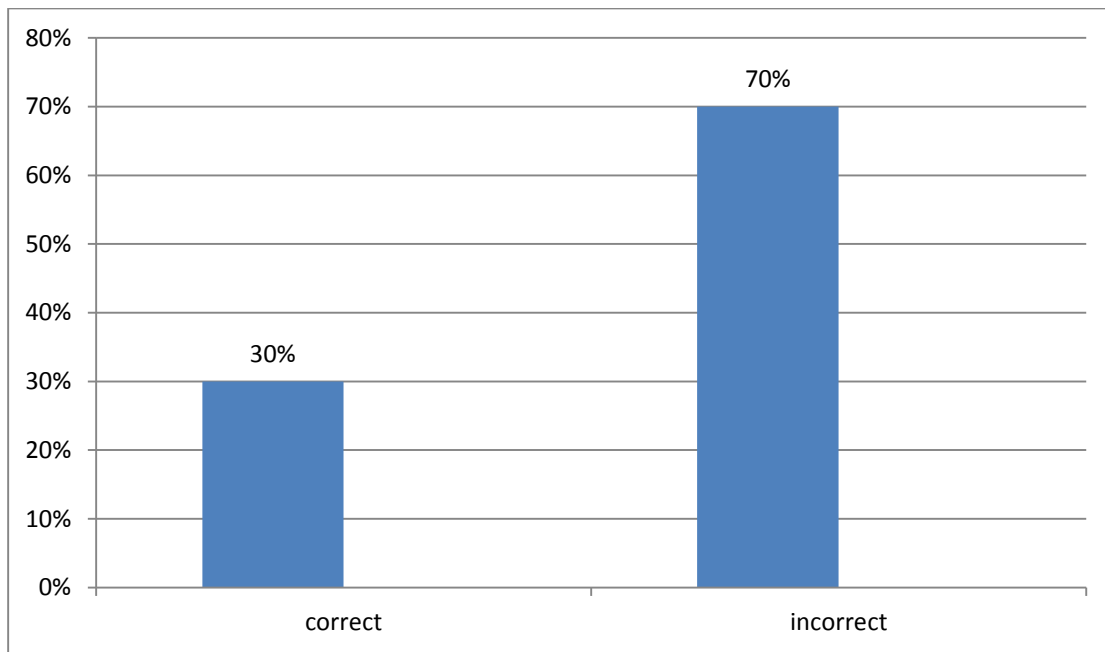
The test result based on the number of the students ( sample) and their answers which depends on how many students use the correct cohesive devices to complete the sentences show below in tables and figures.

Table 1:

Conjunctions:

options	frequency	Percent
correct	12	30%
incorrect	28	70%

Figure 1:



The data in table (4.1) and figure (4.1) shows the distribution of the students according their achievement in using conjunction in writing.

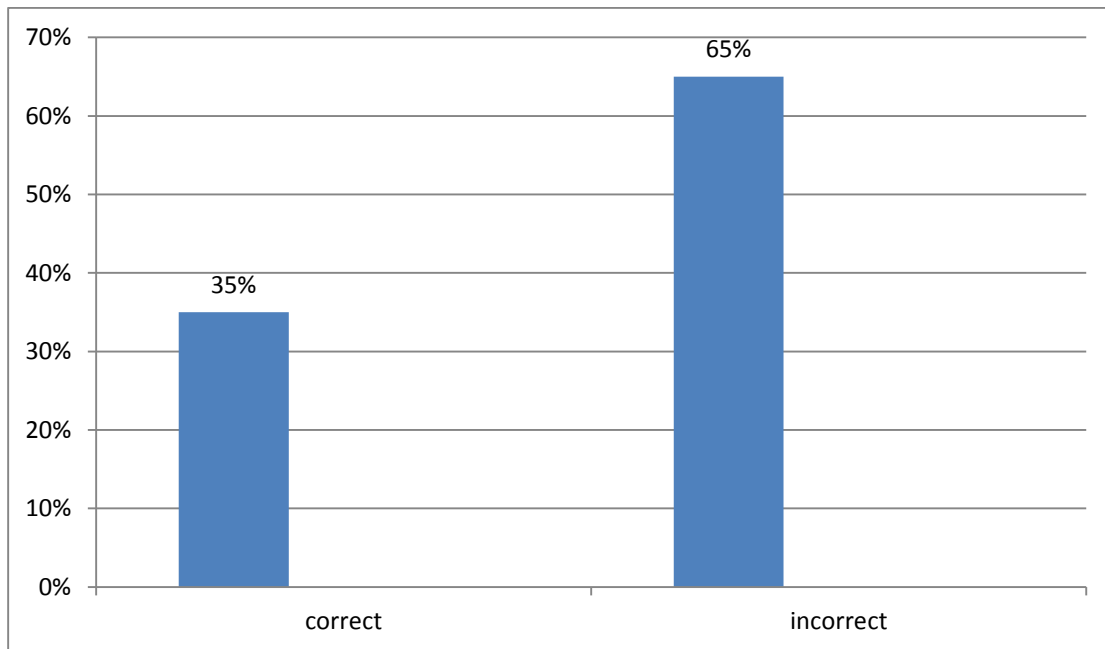
The data presented that 30% of students use the correct conjunction to complete the sentences in the test, while 70% of students fail to insert the correct conjunctions to tie the sentences correctly. This results that most of the students do not focus on using conjunctions correctly in their writing.

Table 2:

Substitution:

option	frequency	Percent
correct	14	35%
incorrect	26	65%

Figure 2:



The data in table (4.2) and figure (4.2) shows the distribution of the students according their achievement in using substitution in writing.

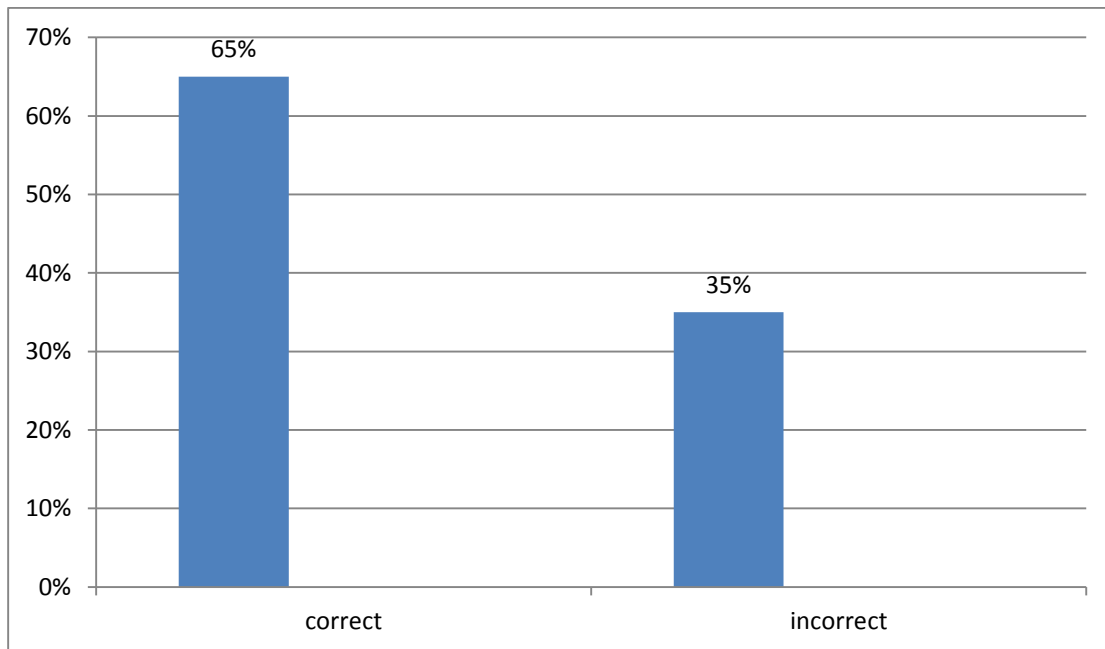
The data presented that 35% of students use the correct substitution to complete the sentences in the test, while 65% of students fail to insert the correct substitution to tie the sentences correctly. This results that most of the students do not aware of using substitution devices correctly in their writin

Table 3:

Reference :

option	frequency	Percent
correct	26	65%
incorrect	14	35%

Figure 3:



The data in table (4.3) and figure (4.3) shows the distribution of the students according their achievement in using reference in writing.

The data presented that 65% of students use the correct reference to complete the sentences in the test, while 35% of students fail to use the correct reference to tie the sentences correctly. This means that the students only focus on using reference devices in their writing , but they have weak background about other grammatical cohesive devices in writing.

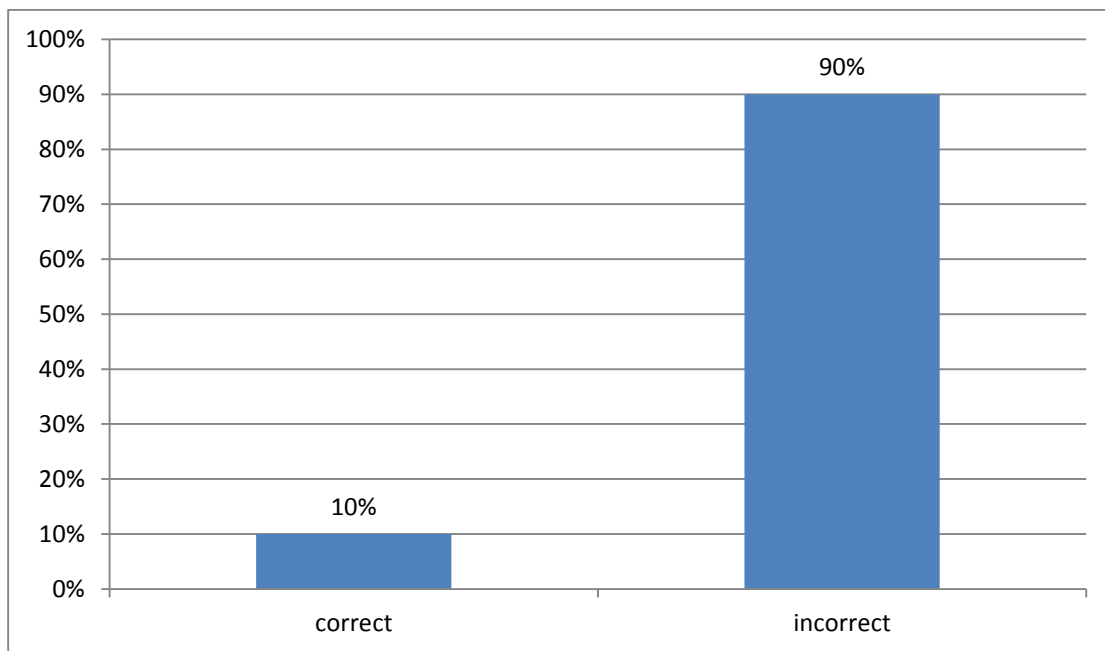
The results in all three tables and figures confirmed the researcher 's first hypothesis which argues that 2<sup>nd</sup> year students at University level have difficulties in using grammatical cohesive devices in writing, because most of the students fail to use the correct grammatical ( conjunctions and substitution ) cohesive devices.

Table 4:

Synonymy:

option	Frequency	Percent
correct	4	10%
incorrect	36	90%

Figure 4:



The data in table (4-.4) and figure (4.4) shows the distribution of the students according their achievement in using synonymy in writing.

The data presented that 10% of students use the correct synonymy to complete the sentences in the test, while 90% of students fail to use the correct synonymy to tie the sentences correctly. This means that most the students do not know how to use synonymy in their writing, it shows that



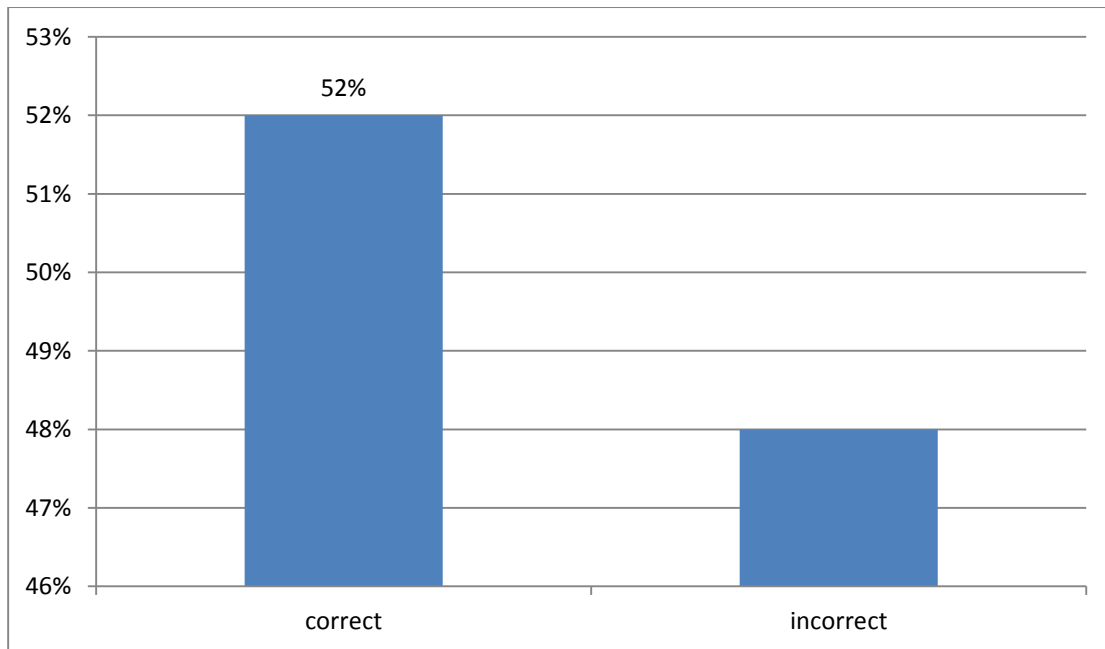
most the students have weak knowledge of synonymy, therefore they fail in using synonymy correctly.

Table 5:

General noun:

option	Frequency	Percent
correct	21	52%
incorrect	19	48%

Figure 5:



The data in table (4.5) and figure (4.5) shows the distribution of the students according their achievement in using general noun in writing.

The data presented that 52% of students use the correct general noun to complete the sentences in the test, while 48% of students fail to use the

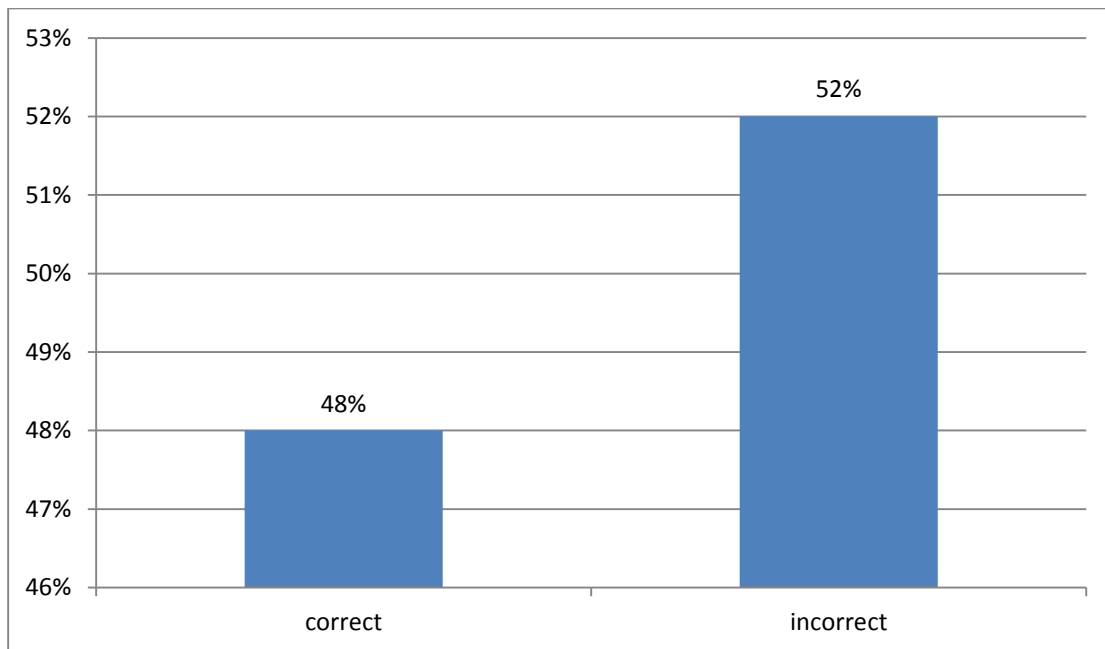
correctgeneral noun to tie the sentences correctly. This means that the students have some background in using general noun (lexical cohesive devices) their writing, but they do not know how to use other lexical cohesive devices correctly as the result showed above in using synonymy and repetition in writing.

Table 6:

Repetition:

option	Frequency	Percent
correct	19	48%
incorrect	21	52%

Figure 6:



The data in table (4.6) and figure (4.6) shows the distribution of the students according their achievement in using repetition in writing.

The data presented that 48% of students use the correct repetition to complete the sentences in the test, while 52% of students fail to use the correct repetition to tie the sentences correctly. This means that the students do not know how to use repetition in their writing, it shows that the students have weak knowledge of repetition, therefore they fail in using synonymy correctly.

The results in the above three tables and figures support and confirmed the researcher's second hypothesis which is 2<sup>nd</sup> year students at University level have difficulties in using lexical cohesive devices in their writing as the results shows that most of the students have weak background in using lexical cohesive devices.

#### **4.2 Questionnaire results:**

The following tables and figures represent the questionnaire results which obtain by teachers of English Language who teach English as a foreign language.

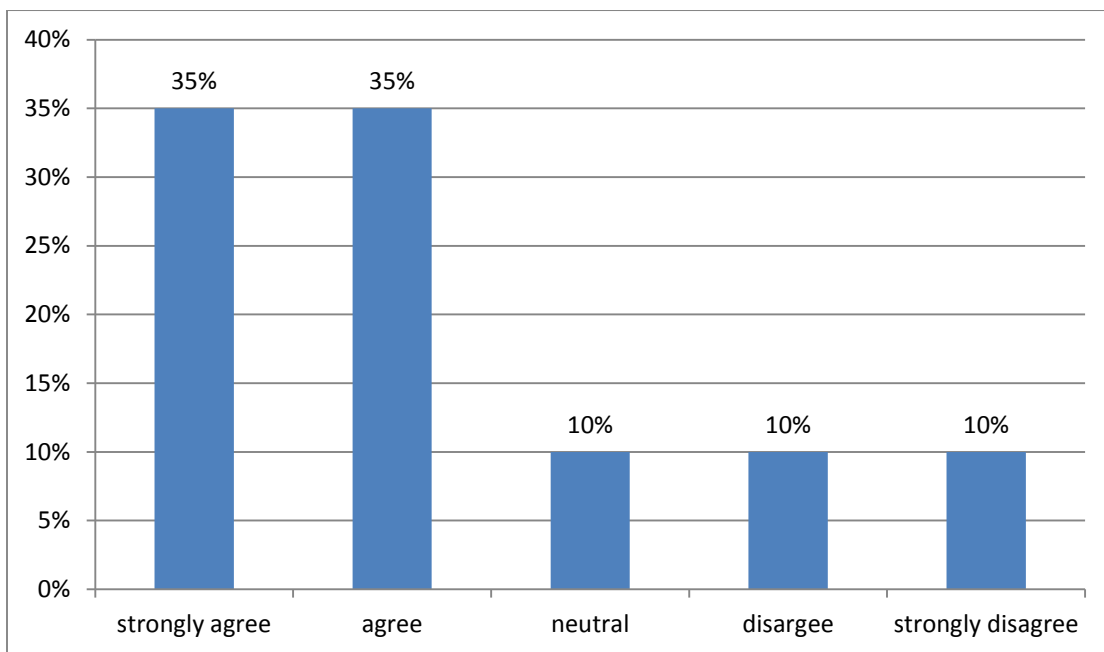
Statement one:

The vast majority of EFL students have difficulties in using grammatical lexical cohesive devices.

Table one:

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	7	35%
Agree	7	35%
Neutral	2	10%
Disagree	2	10%
Strongly disagree	2	10%

Figure 1:



These table (4.1) and figure (4.1) show the response of teachers according the statement one that strongly agree (35%), agree (35%), neutral ( 10%), disagree (10%) and strongly agree (10%). This means that students have difficulties in using cohesive devices in writing.

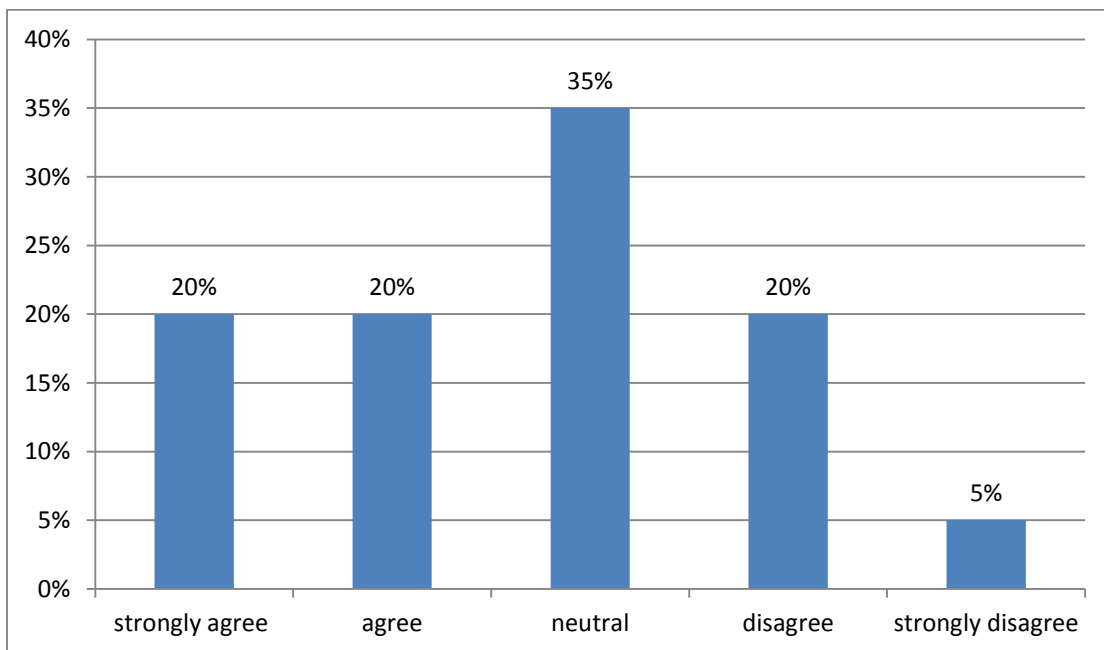
Statement two:

The main reasons of these difficulties is that teachers of EFL students do not integrated with cohesive devices.

Table two:

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	4	20%
Agree	4	20%
Neutral	7	35%
Disagree	4	20%
Strongly disagree	1	5%

Figure 2:



These table (4.2) and figure (4.2) show the response of teachers according the statement two that strongly agree (20%), agree (20%), neutral ( 35%), disagree (20%) and strongly agree (5%). This means that teachers do not integrated with cohesive devices and they do not support their students to use them in writing.

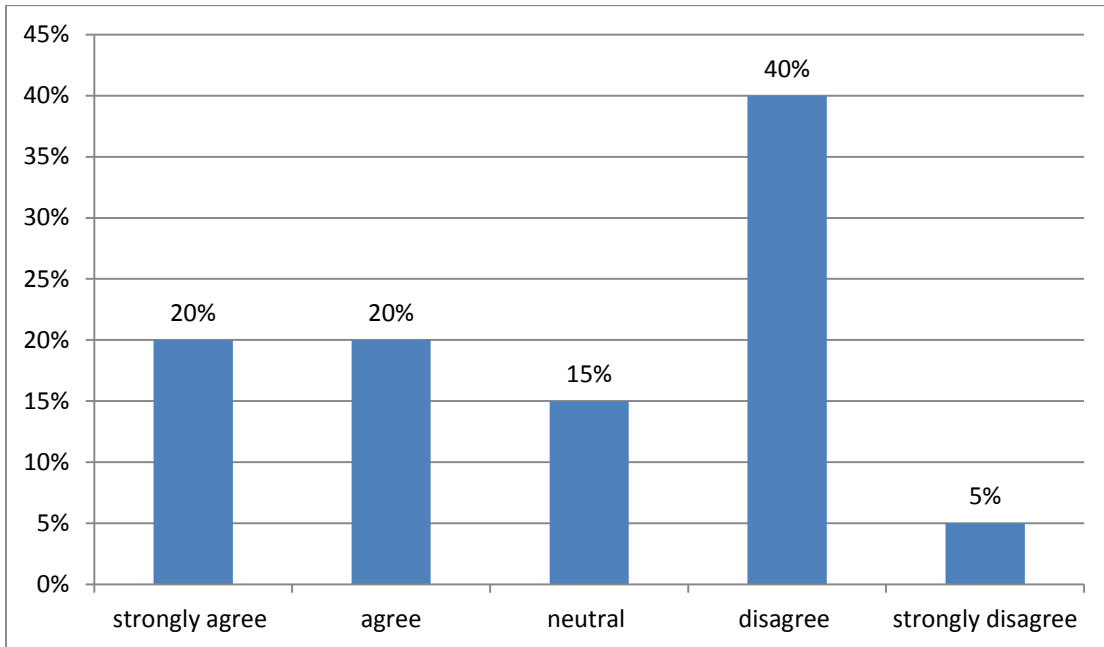
Statement three:

Cohesive devices are not integrated in the course outlines.

Table three:

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	4	20%
Agree	4	20%
Neutral	3	15%
Disagree	8	40%
Strongly disagree	1	5%

Figure 3:



These table (4.3) and figure (4.3) show the response of teachers according the statement three that strongly agree (20%), agree (20%), neutral ( 15%), disagree (40%) and strongly agree (5%). This means that cohesive devices integrated in the course outlines of the students but they do not use them in writing.

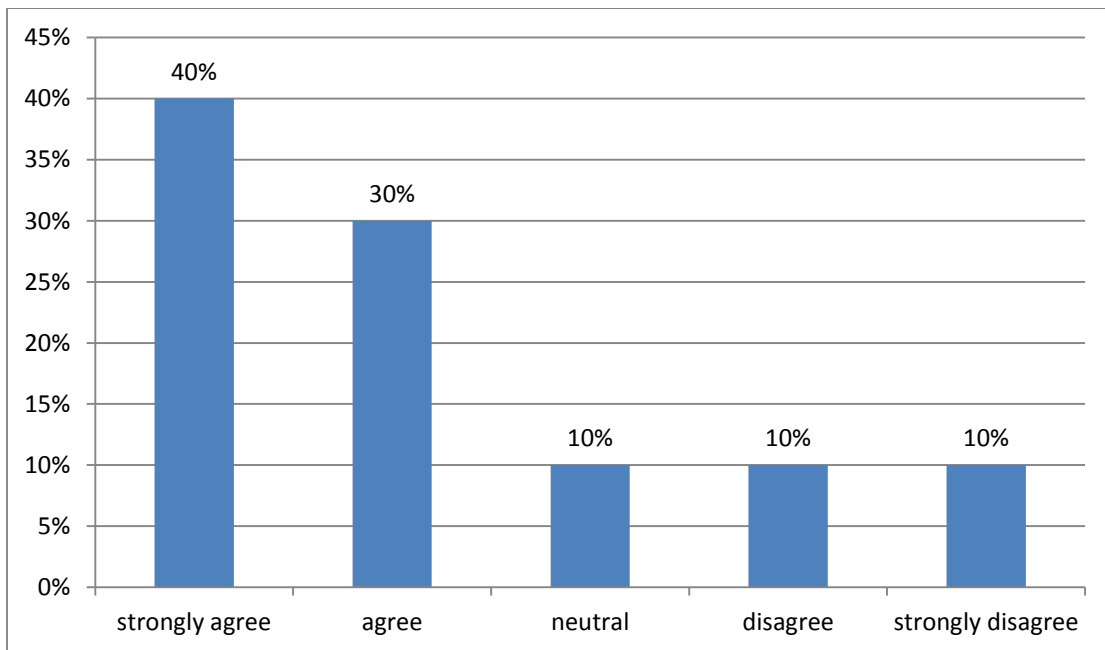
Statement four:

EFL teachers do not pay much attention to the cohesive devices, they just move through them fast while teaching writing.

Table four:

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	8	40%
Agree	6	30%
Neutral	2	10%
Disagree	2	10%
Strongly disagree	2	10%

Figure 4:





These table (4.4) and figure (4.4) show the response of teachers according the statement four that strongly agree (40%), agree (30%), neutral ( 10%), disagree (10%) and strongly agree (10%). This means that teachers of EFL students do not pay much attention to the cohesive devices, they just move through them fast while teaching writing.

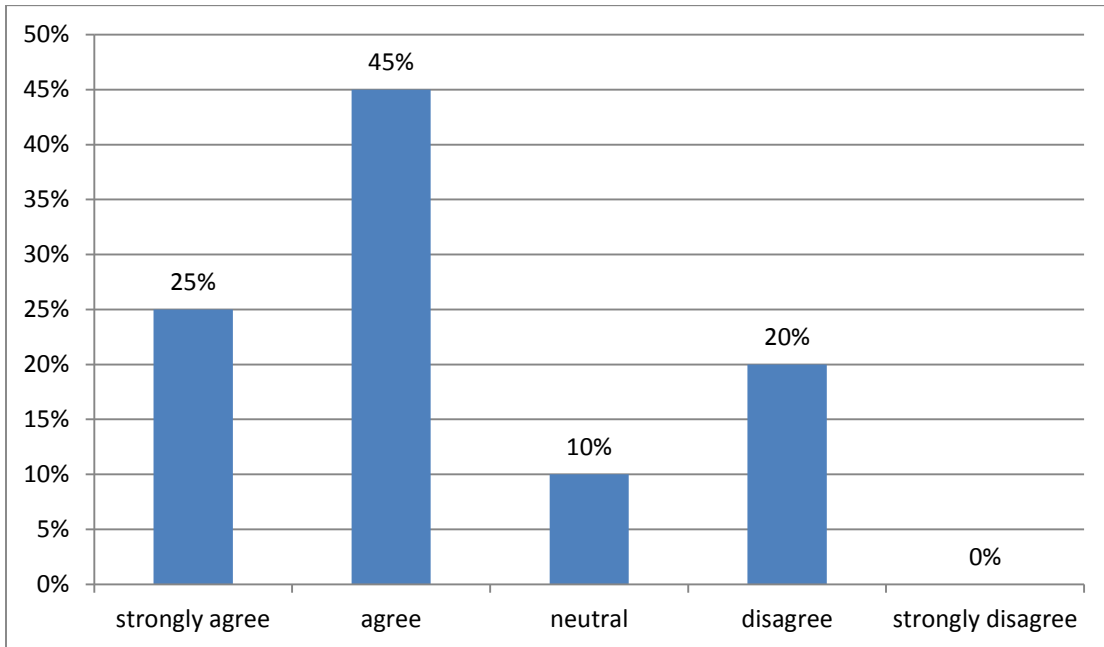
Statement five:

The complexity of cohesion in written text may be the cause of these difficulties.

Table five:

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	5	25%
Agree	9	45%
Neutral	2	10%
Disagree	4	20%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

Figure 5:



These table (4.5) and figure (4.5) show the response of teachers according the statement five that strongly agree (25%), agree (45%), neutral ( 10%), disagree (20%) and strongly agree (0%). This means thatThe complexity of cohesion in written text may be the cause of these difficulties which face the students in writing.

**Chapter five**  
**Recommendation, findings and suggestion for  
further studies**

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Main findings, Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions Further Studies

### 5.0 Introduction:

This chapter involves the main findings of the study, conclusion of the study, suggestion for further studies and recommendations.

### 5.1 The Main Findings of the Study

1. The students are unaware of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices.
2. The students misuse some types of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices, such as they do not know exactly the lexical ( synonymy and general noun).
3. The researcher found that EFL students need intensive practice on written discourse to improve their performance in using cohesive devices in writing.

### 5.2 Conclusion

According to the result of data analysis, the study reveals that EFL students have difficulties in using cohesive devices in their writing. However, the result of the test which has done by the students confirm the researcher's hypotheses which are 2<sup>nd</sup> year students have difficulties in using grammatical and lexical cohesive devices because the results which obtain through SPSS program show that (67%) of students did not use the correct

cohesive devices to link the sentences correctly, and most of the students failed in using grammatical cohesive devices (conjunctions ).

This result shows that researcher's hypotheses are true and also reveals the weakness of the students in using cohesive devices in writing. Questionnaire result in other hand shows the researcher third hypothesis that teachers of EFL students at Al Neelain University neglected teaching cohesive devices as a part of writing for many reasons. Furthermore, the result which obtain through questionnaire showed the weak role of the teachers in teaching cohesive devices, therefore, the teachers should focus on cohesive devices while they teach the students and they have to support the students to apply cohesive devices in their writing To conclude that according the result of data analysis, the study reveals that EFL students have difficulties in using cohesive devices in their writing mostly grammatical devices as showed in chapter four that 67% of students are weak in using cohesive devices, this result confirmed the researcher 's hypotheses that second year students at Al Neelain University have difficulties in using cohesive devices in writing . also the questionnaire results confirmed that there are some reasons behind the students ' weakness of using cohesive devices.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

- 1- Teachers should help the students in using different types of cohesive devices.
- 2- One solution to these difficulties is that the course and the outline should involve cohesive devices through the course.

- 3- The students should practice using different types of cohesive devices and they must pay much attention to different types of cohesive devices.

## **5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

Based on the findings of this study.

1. The teachers should explain and develop link between physical and abstract use of cohesive devices.
2. Investigating the problems of using lexical and grammatical cohesive devices in written text.
- 3- Investigating difficulties of teaching and learning in the field of writing skills.

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# Appendices

# Appendix 1

Sudan University of Sciences & Technology

College of languages

**Dear teachers:**

You are kindly requested to respond to the statements of the following questionnaire for a research entitle ( **Investigating the difficulties encountered by EFL students in using cohesive devices in writing**).

Thank you in advance for your cooperation

**HYPOTHESIS: THREE**

Teachers at Al Neelain University neglected teaching cohesion devices as a part of writing for many reasons.

NO	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1-	The vast majority of EFL students have difficulties in using grammatical and lexical cohesive devices.					
2-	The main reason of these difficulties is that teachers of EFL students do not integrated with cohesive devices.					
3-	Cohesive devices are not integrated in the course out lines.					
4-	EFL teachers do not pay much attention to the cohesive devices, just they move through them fast while teaching writing.					
5-	The complexity of cohesion in written text may be the cause of these difficulties.					

## Appendix 2

Sudan University of Science & Technology

College of Graduate Studies

Diagnostic test

**TIME: 40 MINUTES**

### Question one:

Choose suitable grammatical cohesive devices in the following to complete the sentences.

1. My friend is a singer. He is intelligent .....hard worker .....he is creative. ....he has never received any award in Sudan .....he won a prize in a competition in America last year .( although, therefore, but, and, moreover).
2. ....the room was small, we managed to live there for three years ( however, when, although).
3. New students often find University courses difficulty. ....often get trouble to overcome difficulties.  
( there, them, they, their).
4. Mr Smith works with Mr. Jones every day. ....works from 7:30 am till 4:00 pm. Mr. Jones helps ..... in working ( he, his, him her).
5. Homework is essential. ...allows students to review. ( he, it, its)

6. We will be visited by Mr. Laclos and Mr. Ibsen. .... is managing director of our operation. .... Is our guide to trip. ( first, one, the later, the former).
7. I met the man .....we bought our car yesterday.( when, which, who).
8. As soon as .....arrived, Mike visited his parents. ( she, he, her).
9. My car became old. So, I must buy new .....( it, one ,ones, thing).

## Question two:

Choose suitable grammatical cohesive devices in the following to complete the sentences.

1. There's a boy climbing the tree. .... is going to fall if he doesn't care. ( the boy, the lady, the man).
2. ....is going to fall if she doesn't care. ( the child, the idiot, the lady).
3. Mona is a student. .... studies at Al Sudan University.( Mona, the girl, the woman).
4. What we read in a book is what we should get. In general .....may be written in an old language. ( the article, the book, newspaper).
5. A: Did you see our horses in the garden?  
B: Yes, .....are in the field. ( the animals, the things, the plates).
6. At 6:pm I range a taxi, because the ..... arrived later and I missed my flight ( coach, cab, vehicle).