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**Investigating EFL Learners' Use of Lexical  
Cohesive Devices in Writing:**

**A Case Study of a Group of First Year LMD Students at the  
Department of English of the University of Algiers 2.**

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Magister in English Linguistics and Didactics.

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## **Declaration:**

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgment is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

Date:

Signed:

## **Acknowledgments:**

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Hammitouche for her guidance and constructive feedback. I would like to thank her for making at my disposal the comfortable atmosphere needed for this work to be completed throughout our fruitful work sessions.

Secondly, I also want to express my deep gratitude to Mr. Benatmane and Miss Ounis for their generous cooperation and help without whom this work could not have been achieved.

Also, my thanks go to the students and teachers who participated in this study for their cooperation and patience.

Finally, I am thankful also to Prof. Bensemmane and Dr. Boukhdimi for their guidance during the years of my post graduate studies.

## **Dedication:**

In the first place, I dedicate this work to the soul of my dear father, Ahmed Hazel.

I also dedicate this work to my mother, my sisters and brothers for being patient and understandable.

This dissertation is also dedicated to professor Hammitouche and professor Bensemmane for taking me under their wings when I was just starting out.

## **Abstract:**

The present study is an attempt to unveil the types of lexical reiteration that EFL first year (LMD) students have, most frequently, recourse to when writing and the extent to which they affect the quality of their written performance. To this end, a descriptive small-scale research has been conducted with a group of 14 students enrolled in the department of English at the University of Algiers 2. The procedure of the study consists of undertaking an analysis of cohesion in the light of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory on lexical reiteration as a sub-type of lexical cohesion. The sampled corpus involves one-paragraph compositions written by the subjects under two different conditions. The first part of the written production is represented by a set of paragraphs that learners have produced as part of an assigned homework while the second consists of their second term writing examination papers.

Furthermore, as a follow-up to the results gained from students' written productions' analysis, two questionnaires were devised in the present study, one to the group of first year students and the other to teachers of writing. The students' questionnaire has sought to unveil their perceptions, the reasons that underlie their use of lexical ties and whether their perceptions of lexical ties match their productions. The questionnaire to the teachers was meant to elicit the type of instruction they advocate for cohesion, more precisely lexical cohesion.

Results of the analysis of cohesion have shown that the group of first year LMD students have overused repetition of the same item. The instructors should, therefore, pay more attention to the teaching of other lexical cohesive ties. Moreover, in the light of the comparison between the high- and low-rated papers in terms of the most preferred types of reiteration, the findings of the study indicate that good student writers use more lexical cohesion ties than the poor writers. Equally, they tend to vary their repetition via exploring the semantic relation of synonymy better than the writers of poor papers who were found to rely mostly on repetition of the same item.

Also, the study has succeeded to demonstrate that little attention is, currently, being paid to the cohesive effect of vocabulary by teachers of writing who exhibit a tendency towards concentrating on the grammatical devices of cohesion as being the sole crucial ingredient of cohesion in writing.

As a matter of fact and in the light of the obtained results, we hope we could substantiate the fact that using the variety of lexical reiteration ties is a further underlying characteristic of good written performance. Similarly, results could be deemed insightful in improving the contents of the first year LMD writing course of the University, and in making decisions about what classroom exercises could best be

provided to the students to help them achieve a higher level of lexical cohesion in their written performance.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**ESOL:** Used by Liu (2000) to cover both EFL and ESL students and Contexts

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**LMD:** Licence Master Doctorate

**MT:** Mother Tongue

**P:** Paragraph

**Q:** Question

**S:** Student

**T:** Teacher

# Introduction

## General Introduction:

Given the complexity of the writing skill that makes the writing experience plagues even native speakers, one can safely assume that the problems it poses for EFL learners are even more acute. In fact, this seems to be the case in our Algerian context where the writing skill is highly valued and placed as a basic criterion for academic success since evaluation is mainly communicated via writing. Moreover, the complexity of the skill is due, in part, to the fact that being EFL learners, students often encounter difficulties developing their writing skill because they have limited chances to write for an authentic audience and for real life purposes. As a result, writing teachers are faced with the challenge of how best to assist student writers to cope with these demanding circumstances through establishing a reliable framework of writing instruction that adequately depicts the main pillars of the writing skill. To this end, text cohesion and coherence have been recognized to be the two main attributes of well-written compositions. In this context, Celce Murcia stresses the importance of both aspects in writing as follows:

A well-written text exhibits two important features: it has coherence, and it has cohesion. These inherent features of a well-written text facilitate the interpretation of the text during the reading process (Celce Murcia 2000:125)

## 1 .Aims of the study:

The present study is an attempt to examine writing difficulties that confront first year university students when writing one-paragraph compositions as a preliminary stage for whole essay writing. More particularly, it investigates how student writers handle textual features of cohesion, namely lexical reiteration as a component of discourse competence in writing. To this end, the study is meant to identify the types of reiteration prevailing in the written output of a group of first year students enrolled in the department of English of the University of Algiers 2.

The purpose is three-fold:

- 1 .To analyze lexical cohesion, namely reiteration in the light of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory.
2. To investigate the relationship between overall writing quality and the types of reiteration employed by the students.
3. To examine the importance allocated to lexical cohesion in writing classes

Investigating lexical cohesive devices from the students' perspective is deemed important because the analysis of cohesion in students' compositions can provide both teachers and researchers with useful insights into the patterns of texture that are created by the student writers . These patterns can also provide them with valuable information regarding an important aspect of the students' rhetorical competence, i.e. the appropriate use of lexical cohesive ties. Once the instructors identify the types of cohesive ties employed by the students, they can then, adapt modal paragraphs that exhibit a variety of lexical cohesion ties, namely those that proved to be problematic to students. This can be attained only if teachers of writing are made aware of how students handle the challenge of creating lexically cohesive paragraphs.

As such, the role of instruction can by no means be underestimated. In the same vein, the study seeks to trace the sources of the potential errors and deficiencies in using lexical cohesive devices that may be located in the type of instruction that writing teachers provide. The assumption upon which the study is based is that investigating both students' performance and teachers' practice would lead to conclusive remarks regarding the amount of attention paid to this type of cohesion in writing classes.

## **2. Scope and Significance of the Study:**

Relying on the fact that English is a foreign language in our country, the mastery of its written form proved to be more vital than fluency in speech, particularly for university students. Indeed, the majority of the exams require that students exhibit their academic skills in English through writing. The alarming rate of failure mirrors

the difficult writing situation that our students are confronted with. Therefore, the motivation to conduct the current study stems, to a great extent, from our deep interest to find out the factors that interact and contribute to writing proficiency in an attempt to respond to the preoccupation of many EFL teachers in the department of English who have explicitly expressed their frustration about the quality of their students' writing. Being limited in scope, our research pretends not to be able to cover all the possible sources of such difficulty. Rather, the study rests upon an assumption that the unsuccessful bits of written language that students produce may partly reside at the level of discourse competence, and more particularly due to a deficiency in exploring the cohesive effect of vocabulary. To this end, the study has sought to identify the most preferred types of reiteration that first year students tend to employ most frequently and those that are mostly ignored and why. Besides, we want to know whether writing quality is affected by the use of certain types of lexical reiteration.

In fact, our choice of this area of investigation that we deem fertile and worth conducting is to be accounted for in the significant role played by vocabulary in holding discourse together since a considerable part of cohesion comes from lexis according to several studies. These research findings pushed us to reconsider the prevailing writing situation in relation to our EFL context, particularly for first year university students. This section is meant to elucidate the rationale that would support the significance of undertaking the present study.

To begin with, what significantly characterized the majority of studies dealing with learners' language in keeping with the general interest expressed by theoretical linguistics in sentence grammar was its focus on the learners' output data at the sentence level. Recently, however, some outstanding linguistic attempts have shifted the focus of attention beyond analyzing sentence structure towards analyzing the process by which language is utilized by human beings. As a matter of fact, *Discourse* and *text* have been introduced and adopted as legitimate units of linguistic analysis beyond the sentence level. Fries (1952), Harris (1952), and Van Dijk(1972,1977) represent few of the attempts, in this line of research, that have contributed to the evolution of *text linguistics*.

Following this trend, the growing interest in text linguistics and Discourse Analysis has motivated ESL/EFL researchers to study and shed light on the communicative functions and rhetorical rules of language. As a result, emerging concepts such as *cohesion* and *coherence* have been stressed and identified to be the two mainly recognized features and standards of *textuality* (Beaugrade and Dressler, 1981). Consequently, instructors of rhetoric, nowadays, place and associate a great emphasis, in their teaching and evaluation of composition, on text cohesion and coherence.

In the light of the aforementioned emerging interest in the features of textuality and well-formedness of texts, namely, cohesion and coherence, the current study aims at highlighting the role of the core feature of lexical cohesion and its contribution to textuality. In other words, besides grammatical cohesion expressed by such means as tense sequence and reference among other tools, there seems to exist from a lexical point of view a crucial component of texture that is lexical cohesion. In practical terms, several studies have revealed that lexical cohesive ties which involve the use of repetition, synonyms / antonyms and superordinate /hyponyms among other semantic relationships are viewed to be as essential cohesive devices in native speakers' speech and writing (Carter and Mc Carthy 1988, Halliday and Hasan 1976, Halliday 1994, Mc Carthy 1991, Salkie 1995, Winter 1977 and 1978). In this respect, empirical research undertaken in this line of interest, has demonstrated that ESL writing was found to lack the variety of lexical cohesive devices used by native speakers (Connor 1984, Liu 2000, Silva 1992). Such crucial role of lexical ties can only lead us to question whether this type of cohesive devices that is equally recognized as a significant rhetorical resource is appropriately used by Algerian EFL learners in writing.

In simple terms, we conducted this study assuming that Algerian EFL student writers as well as other non-natives of English learning EFL writing need to be provided with training in the paragraph level prior to the essay level and exposed to cohesive ties so that they can produce cohesive and coherent texts. That is why, the study addresses first year students who are required to master the foundations of paragraph writing and stresses the need to analyze their written output at this level and

phase of writing evolution with regard to the appropriate use of lexical cohesive devices.

In other words, the framework of the study is meant to address the stage of paragraph writing due to beliefs regarding the characteristics of good writing and the meaning of writing development. In fact, while cohesion has mainly to do with links in a sequence of sentences, coherence maintains control of the entire idea of a text. Thus, for the sake of achieving coherence in writing, the writer needs to master adequate skills in making every paragraph cohesive, a stepping stone to a coherent text. In relation to this concern, several studies have demonstrated that L2 writing is generally shorter, less cohesive, less fluent and involves more errors than L1 writing (Hyland :2003 ). Therefore, the study is centred around the idea that the preliminary stage of paragraph writing is deemed high time to draw student writers' attention to the significant role of cohesive devices in yielding cohesive and, hence coherent written discourse. Moreover, prior to engaging students in the next challenging phase of essay organization, the rationale of the present study argues for the necessity of investigating cohesion matters in one paragraph- compositions since there should be room for both concepts, cohesion and coherence, to be introduced and reinforced at this stage of writing proficiency.

Moreover, it is worth noting that insights from writing theory and research highlight that L2 research findings should wherever possible be compared to L1 writing research if L2 writing is to be considered as a unique writing experience in its own right. For instance, Silva (1992, 1993) has pointed to different issues in her attempt to locate the scope of differences for L2 students if compared to L1 students. In fact, she noted among a set of differences that L2 student writers use cohesive markers differently, in particular, they tend to use those which are "less facilitative and create weaker lexical ties" (cited in Grabe and Kaplan 1996:239)

Furthermore, a further motivation that feeds the intention to conduct the present study is a quest to unveil a potential rhetorical transfer that may occur when EFL learners bring with them different rhetorical patterns while composing in the target language as far as reiteration as a lexical cohesive device is concerned. In this respect,

Celce Murcia (2000:83) draws our attention to an underlying cross lingual variation in the perception of reiteration:

The whole notion of repetition or reiteration differs from one language and culture to another. In some languages, it is considered good style to simply repeat the same word several times (e.g. Arabic, Japanese) whereas in other languages ( e.g.; English) it is necessary to vary repetitions and use different synonyms or appropriately related words in order to achieve good style .(Celce Murcia,2000:83)

The content of the above quotation seems to be of direct relevance to our EFL context in that it suggests a significant systemic difference between Arabic, being the first language in Algeria, and English, the target language in this study in terms of the appropriate use of reiteration. Consequently, such variation can merely lead us to question whether Algerian EFL learners' compositions tend to approximate an English-like or an Arabic-like reiteration. The analysis of cohesion adopted in the present study should reveal the types of reiteration that tend to dominate the written output of the student participants.

### **3. The place of Lexis and lexical cohesion in discourse studies:**

Essential to discussing the significance of the present study, we deem it crucial to address fundamental questions: What makes lexis and lexical relations interesting for text and discourse studies? Why would the use of lexical relations reflect interesting aspects about the organization of discourse?

In an attempt to answer such questions, Martin (1992:271) argues that considering the contributions of lexis to discourse structure is “an ambitious undertaking” for two reasons. First, grammar has been central in functional linguistics and this was at the expense of lexis. Second, the vast scope of the experiential meaning coded via lexis makes it difficult to control and analyze. Nevertheless, lexical relations have an important role to play in discourse structure

In addition, what makes lexical description problematic is seemingly an obvious fact about lexis, i.e. its richness. Ironically, such complexity is an underlying reason that should be used to argue for the central role of lexis in discourse. In this respect, Hoey expresses his attitude towards this issue in the following way:

It is the flexibility and extent of our lexicon that makes the infinity of syntactic patterns we can produce interesting; it is in part the way we can combine the resultant sentences to make endlessly new patterns of semantic relationships that makes every communication original. (Hoey 1991:210)

In other words, the role of lexis in discourse organization can be depicted in terms of its contribution to cohesion and coherence. The structure of coherence may be lexically motivated in the way necessary inferences, rhetorical predicates and logical relations among assertions can be immediately interpreted from the use of specific lexical forms. For instance, using the word “problem” in an initial clause usually indicates the beginning of a problem- solution discourse (Hoey, 1994)

What is more, there seems to be a consensus among a number of researchers who argue that lexical cohesion tends probably to be the most important aspect of cohesion.(Halliday and Hasan 1989, Hoey 1991, Witte and Faigly 1981). To substantiate such claim, we shall present the following quotation to support the usefulness of addressing cohesion in lexical terms:

However luxuriant the grammatical cohesion displayed by any piece of discourse, it will not form a text unless this is matched by a cohesive patterning of a lexical kind. (Halliday and Hasan 1976:292)

Therefore, writing a piece of written discourse entails more than writing a series of clauses or sentences in a mechanical activity. Our endeavour in this humble piece of research is to provide insights into the patterns of lexical reiteration that characterize concrete instances of EFL written discourse. Thus, this descriptive exploratory research seeks to answer the following research questions.

#### **4. Research Questions:**

1. What types of lexical reiteration are used by a group of first year university students in writing?
2. How do low- and high-rated compositions differ with regard to the types of reiteration employed?

3. Do EFL writing instructors associate the same degree of importance to lexical cohesion as grammatical cohesion and coherence in their attempt to enhance discourse competence in writing?

### 5. Operational Definitions of the main concepts of the study:

Having presented the scope of our main area of interest, we turn now to clarify the reference and meaning of the main concepts used in the present study. Indeed, the fundamental objective of the present section is to avoid ambiguity and establish familiarity with the core terms and notions that will, henceforth, be used too frequently and which altogether constitute the cornerstones on which the present study rests.

In the first place, the scope of the present work is limited to deal solely with one skill of language proficiency, namely writing. In fact, writing is taken in the present study to mean composition that:

...Involves the combining of structural sentence units into a more or less unique cohesive and coherent large structure (as opposed to lists, forms, etc.). A piece of writing which implicates composing contains surface features which connect the discourse and an underlying logic of organization which is more than simply the sum of the meanings of the individual sentences. (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:4)

Besides, writing proficiency is believed in the present study to result from the interaction of the components of communicative competence as coined by Canale and Swain (1980) and described by Scarcella and Oxford in The Tapestry of Language learning (1992). Indeed, the theoretical framework that underlies the communicative competence here encompasses four areas of knowledge and skill: Grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

The components of writing proficiency as seen from a communicative perspective will be summed up in the following list:

**Grammatical competence:** It is the kind of competence which includes the ability to use grammar, syntax, vocabulary and mechanics of the language.

**Sociolinguistic competence:** It refers to learners' ability to employ the language appropriately taking into account a set of variables including the topic, the genre, the audience and the purpose.

**Discourse Competence:** This type of competence is reflected through the learners' ability to organize their written output cohesively and coherently.

**Strategic Competence:** This competence revolves around a set of strategies that when employed by the student writers are said to facilitate handling the writing process such as brainstorming, organizing, writing, revising and editing.

As concerns discourse competence in writing which we seek partly to investigate in the present study through highlighting the use of reiteration as a sub-type of lexical cohesion, it is worth noting that the term 'discourse' emerges early in communicative models of language competence. It has been commonly used in connection with context as a matter of situational appropriateness or else with the connectedness of discourse and text like the aforementioned classic model of Canale and Swain (1980). The latter inserted discourse connectedness in two senses. Firstly, as coherence of meaning or content, and secondly as the use of cohesive devices like pronouns, synonyms, repetition, etc.

Moreover, overall writing quality is to be viewed in the present study from a broader perspective to involve as Witte and Faigely (1981) argue:

All discourse is context-bound to the demands of the subject matter, occasion, medium and audience of the text. Cohesion defines those mechanisms that hold a text together, while coherence defines those underlying semantic relations that allow a text to be understood and used. (Witte and Faigely 1981:202)

Besides, highlighting the scope of the concept of cohesion seems in order here. To this end, we choose to devise a brief definition from Halliday and Hasan's seminal work: Cohesion in English (1976:4) that we assume fits properly as an operational definition ignoring, thus, the heavy details that may add an extra complexity to the notion:

The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within a text and that define it as a text.

In their exhaustive account of cohesion relations, Halliday and Hasan distinguished between five types of cohesive devices, namely: reference, substitution, conjunction, ellipsis and lexical cohesion. These categories of cohesion are illustrated as follows:

**Reference:** E.g.: Sally is 20. Her friend is 22 (Her refers to Sally: Anaphoric reference)

**Substitution:** e.g.: Do you intend to leave London?

I think so (*So* substitutes for the whole preceding clause)

**Ellipsis:** e.g.: Which pens are you buying?

Both (There has been an ellipsis of the word *pens*)

**Conjunction:** E.g.: Because the man walked down the road, he was late (Because stands as a subordinating conjunction which signals a semantic relationship between the two sentences).

Owing to the fact that our main concern in the present study is lexical cohesion, what should basically be borne in mind, in this respect, is that lexical cohesion is established through the structure of the lexis or vocabulary. A further distinction relates to the aspects of this type of cohesion which is available in Halliday and Hasan's model of cohesion under the two headings of reiteration and collocation. Reiteration, on the one hand, includes the repetition of the same word (e.g.: mushroom-mushroom), the use of a synonym (e.g.: pretty- nice) , the use of a superordinate (e.g. :vehicle-car) and the use of a general word ( e.g.: we all kept quiet , that seemed the best *move*) . All these devices have the function of reiterating the previous item, either in an identical or somewhat modified form, and this reinforces the creation of a cohesive tie between the items since the items are co-referential. Nevertheless, as Halliday and Hasan (1976:282-283) argue that even without co-referentiality; two occurrences of an item in a text will constitute a tie like in example (1):

(1): There is a boy climbing that tree. Most *boys* love climbing trees

On the other hand, collocation has to do with the type of cohesion realized through the association of lexical items “that regularly co- occur” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:284). Such general definition of collocation may seem a little vague at first glance. The researchers attempted to identify the scope of this concept by mentioning that the association is achieved when the lexical items have a tendency to appear together in similar lexical environments or when they are related lexico-semantically. For instance , *boy* and *girl* are cohesive because they have opposite meanings , but *laugh* and *joke* ,and *boat* and *row* do form a cohesive tie although they are not directly and systematically related .Only, as Halliday and Hasan(1976:284-286) point out, “typically associated to one another”.

Given the vast scope that collocation encompasses, Hasan (see Halliday and Hasan 1989) has recently modified her description of lexical cohesion by narrowing down its function in research to a set of categories which are more easily replicable. Admitting that collocation , even though crucial to the texture of a text, could not clearly and readily be verified reliably among researchers , Hasan now adopts the lexical categories of synonymy , antonymy ,hyponymy ( superordinate-subordinate class, meronymy (part- whole) and repetition as types of co-extension ( Hoey 1991 in Grabe and Kaplan 1996:58).

It is, thus, not without significance the effort to elucidate our choice of reiteration to represent lexical cohesion rather than adopting the whole framework of lexical cohesion as presented by Halliday and Hasan (1976). In effect , our attempt to examine the notion of collocation alongside our readings throughout the relevant literature have allowed us to reach , although not a deep assertion , but a neutral assumption that this side of lexical cohesion is not likely to serve our ultimate objective in terms of implementation in teaching due to its vagueness and unintelligibility. What is more is that collocation is rather a complex notion referring to the possibility that certain lexical patterns will co-occur. This striking nature of collocation led Hasan (1984) to conclude that because of the intersubjective nature of collocation, it would be safer to avoid this category in

research. That is why, we share in this respect Mc Carthy's view towards the notion of collocation as he argues:

It is debatable whether collocation properly belongs to the notion of lexical cohesion, since collocation only refers to the probability that lexical item will co-occur, and not a semantic relation between words. Here, therefore, we shall consider the term lexical cohesion to mean only exact repetition of words and the role played by certain basic semantic relations between words in creating textuality.....we shall consequently ignore collocational associations across sentence boundaries as lying outside of these semantic relations.( Mc Carthy 1991:65)

As a matter of fact, the main concern of the study revolves around unveiling the way reiteration is approached in the written output of a sample of EFL learners. To put it simply, Halliday and Hasan define reiteration as follows:

Reiteration is a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item; at one end of the scale; the use of a general word to refer back to a lexical item; at the other end of the scale; and a number of things in between; the use of a synonym, near synonym or superordinate. (Halliday and Hasan 1976:278)

In other words, the phenomenon of reiteration can be described quite exhaustively by stating that this type of cohesion is achieved when an item is restated in a later part of the discourse through direct repetition or by employing lexical relations. By lexical relations, it is meant the set of stable semantic relationships that are found between words and which constitute the basis of descriptions employed in dictionaries and thesauri. For example, *rose* and *flower* are related by hyponymy (*rose* is a hyponym of *flower*. *Flower* in its turn is a superordinate of *rose*).

Indeed, reiteration that calls for these semantic relations of synonymy, hyponymy and more general nouns is "extremely common in English discourse" (Mc Carthy 1991: 66). In simple terms, writers and speakers do not merely repeat lexical items endlessly but rather they choose to vary their repetitions. Such variation serves to add new dimensions and nuances to meaning.

## **6. Organization of the Study:**

The study contains four chapters. The first chapter presents a critical account about the theoretical background underlying the key aspects of writing relating to the study. It is made up of two parts. The first part is an account about cohesion within its general framework of discourse analysis, its different types, and how it relates to coherence. The second part covers research on writing and more particularly, the application of cohesion theory to the study of writing. Then, the second chapter is concerned with research methodology and design followed in undertaking the present study in which we describe the different research tools along the procedure. In the third chapter, the results we obtained from the different research instruments are presented.

Finally, chapter four consists of two parts. The first part is devoted to the discussion of the results where data is utilized to answer our three main research questions taking into account the findings of the studies reviewed in the literature. The second part gathers the insights of the present research in terms of pedagogical implications and implementations in writing instruction.

The study ends up with a recapitulating conclusion that summarizes the content of the study in the light of the limitations encountered and the suggestions provided for further research.

## **Chapter 1:**

### **Theoretical Background Underlying Cohesion, lexical cohesion and Writing Research**

#### **Introduction:**

The emerging interest in “Discourse” which has been introduced and adopted as a legitimate unit of linguistic analysis beyond the sentence level has soon started to generate interest in studying what aspects are involved to make texts appear as unified wholes rather than as sets of unrelated sentences. Such tendency unveiled some regularities that are said to shape language in use. As a result, the concepts of cohesion and coherence have been stressed among such outstanding norms. The present chapter is meant to review the literature relating to the key aspects of writing that we intend to highlight in the present study. To this end, the chapter is composed of two parts. The first part yields a critical account about cohesion within its general framework of Discourse Analysis, its different types, and how it relates to coherence. The second part tackles research on writing and more precisely, the application of cohesion theory to the study of writing.

#### **Part I: Cohesion in English**

##### **1. 1.Cohesion in Discourse Analysis:**

###### **Introduction:**

Granted the fact that the concept of cohesion was the outcome of linguists’ deep interest in studying language beyond the limits of sentence level, we deem it appropriate to introduce the concept of cohesion within its general framework of discourse analysis. The latter has emerged as an independent branch of study that investigates the regular patterns of a given language in its both modes spoken or written. Cohesion is, indeed, among the underlying regularities that shape such patterns. In other words, using Halliday and Hasan’s words, cohesion usually occur

“where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other in the sense that it cannot be decoded except by recourse to it” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:4). It follows that cohesive ties build texture an element that distinguishes a text from a non-text.

In this part of the first chapter, we will attempt to offer a brief overview about discourse analysis, and the emphasis will be on the concept of cohesion including its different categories. More precisely, lexical cohesion is the type of cohesion that will occupy the largest space and elaboration as it is the core aspect that is to be highlighted throughout the present piece of research.

### **1.1.1 The Scope of Discourse Analysis:**

To determine the scope of discourse analysis as a field of study in its own right, a variety of definitions were put at our disposal. Let’s examine one concise definition presented by Cook:

Discourse analysis examines how stretches of language considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context become meaningful and unified for their users.(Cook 1989:1)

In other words, the domain of discourse analysis is said to reside beyond the limits of the sentence, i.e., it investigates the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. The interest within this field of language analysis is the way sentences “are put to communicative use in the performing of social actions” (Widdowson, 2007:47).

To put it simply, discourse analysis encompasses the study that tackles how language users understand each other, make sense of what they read or hear and are able to distinguish a meaningful well-structured text from a non-text or unrelated sentences. The following two pieces of language may serve as a typical illustration of how such distinction is performed:

A: This box contains, on average, 100 large plain paper clips.” Applied Linguistics is, therefore, not the same as linguistics. The tea is as hot as it could be. This is Willie Worm. Just send 12Guinness “cool token” bottle tops.

B: Playback, Raymond Chandler, Penguin Books in association with Hamish Hamilton. To Jean and Helga, without whom this book could never have been written. One, the voice on telephone seemed to be sharp and peremptory, but I didn't hear too well what it said- partly because I was only half awake and partly because I was holding the receiver upside down. (The examples are adapted from Cook 1989:03)

According to Cook, even though each of the two passages contain five grammatically correct utterances, as language users, we tend to recognize that the second passage tends to make sense while the first gives the impression that it is far from being a meaningful unified whole. The latter results from the fact that the second piece of language contains some kind of linguistic forms and structures that allow it to hang together and, hence, function as a meaningful unified whole. More precisely, the quality that characterizes the second passage and seems to be absent in the first is what is known as coherence. Cook elaborates on this phenomenon as follows:

It is a quality which is clearly necessary for communication and therefore for language learning, but which cannot be explained by concentrating on the internal grammar of sentences. (Cook, 1989:4)

Indeed, this quality is one among other features that are not explicitly mentioned and that the reader or listener can deduce on his own. For instance, he or she may identify the text, title, genre, context, intended audience...etc. Consequently, the reader or listener attempts to explore the different aspects of the utterances and sentences to attain the intended meaning of the writer/speaker. Thus, discourse analysts seek to unveil those language characteristics that help the reader/listener to make sense of what is said /written and, hence, establish successful communication. To this end, it investigates turn-taking in conversations, monologues, classroom talks as well as written texts like letters, newspapers' articles, recipes...etc. The analysis, therefore, involves both spoken and written language.

However, the reference of the term "discourse" has been a matter of disagreement among linguists. The confusion, in fact, concerns the use of the terms "text" and "discourse" among researchers which displays considerable diversity. A brief consideration on the use of these terms seems in order.

### **1.1.2. Text and Discourse:**

Prior to going further, it is worth noting that the distinction between the two terms “discourse” and “text” is far from clear-cut. Nevertheless, the reference of these terms needs more clarification and specification for a more explicit use in the present study. Some researchers restrict their use to one of the terms, while those who choose to use both terms may employ them almost interchangeably, or they may establish a clear distinction between them. Moreover, the available definitions adopted in various studies for either of the concepts may sound indistinct. For instance, such similarity is quite plausible in comparing: “a text is a unit of language in use” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:1), and “the analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use” (Brown and Yule 1983:4).

It is worth noting, in this respect, that when both terms are used within the same study, there is often a tendency to systematically differentiate between the two. For example, the term “text” has been employed to underline the theoretical construct that underlies discourse (Van Dijk 1977:3). It has equally been emphasized that text is the record of discourse (Brown and Yule 1983:26). A mere distinction is drawn by some researchers who have arguably suggested that the difference resides at the level of the mode: texts are generally written and composed of sentences, while discourses are spoken and made up of utterances (Couthard 1985:6). A widely adopted definition suggests that discourse includes text, or more precisely, that text refers to discourse without context, whereas discourse involves both text and context (see Widdowson 1979:145). Therefore, discourse is not apparent but it is rather manifested in texts.

Even though, there seems to be a considerable diversity in defining the terms text and discourse by researchers, some points of convergence do actually exist. For instance, text is deemed as a product, while discourse is recognized to involve processual aspects as well (Brown and Yule 1983:23, Widdowson 1979:148-149).

Pursuing one of the lines of thought stated above, more precisely, considering text as the record of discourse or decontextualising it would be a neglect of the role of contextual condition and the processing aspects of language use that are to be emphasized in the present study. In other words, admitting the fact that text is to be viewed as a mere decontextualized trace of discourse (Widdowson 2000:22) would

deprive us of potentially crucial information. Moreover, as De Beaugrande (2001:114) maintains, it is quite unfeasible in actual analysis to isolate or decontextualize texts (see also Brown and Yule 1983:25).

Therefore, we seek in the present research to adopt a definition that aids to differentiate the two concepts without restricting either. One plausible proposition is presented by De Beaugrande:

It is essential to view the text as a communicative event wherein linguistic, cognitive and social actions converge and not just as the sequence of words that were uttered or written. (De Beaugrande, 1997:10).

Within this framework, discourse is regarded as “a set of interconnected text” (De Beaugrande 1997:21). Both definitions seem reasonably convenient since the concept of text acquired a contextual status compared with the preceding descriptions.

From a relatively broader perspective, discourse has been taken to be meaningful, well-structured and contributes to a successful communication (McCarthy 1991:12). In other words, any piece of language that obeys certain conventional formulae or norms is qualified as discourse. One attempt to identify such norms is Beaugrande’s taxonomy (1981: cited in Madaoui 2004:21-22). The latter revolves around seven criteria that need to be fulfilled to establish discourse. These involve:

**Cohesion:** refers to formal surface relations between the sentences that make up a text.

**Coherence:** refers to the underlying relations that hold between propositions of the sentences making up the text and which establish their relevance to the central thought of the text.

**Intentionality:** refers to the text producer’s attempt at handling the linguistic resources of the text in a way that meets his/her intentions and communicates the message to be conveyed in an appropriate and successful way.

**Acceptability:** refers to the receiver’s ability to perceive any relevance of the text in question. A reader, for instance, who cannot identify the relevance of the material in

question, would not be able to recognize the textuality of the text and would be unable to assign the material its property as a text.

**Informality:** refers to the newness or the givenness of the information presented in a text, i.e. whether the information in the text is known or not to the receiver. A text to be informative must assure a balance between givenness and newness. A reader would not find informative a text that speaks only of what is already known. On the other hand, a reader would neither find informative a text that sweeps the ground with what is totally new.

**Situationality:** concerns the factors that make up a text relevant to a situation of occurrence. So, it is important to determine what is said, by whom, why, when and where.

**Intertextuality:** refers to the factors that make the use of one text dependent upon the knowledge of previous texts. A text, in fact, belongs to a wider universe of discourse and it is in this sense that the text receiver is actually able to perceive the intended message.

### **1.1.3. Written Discourse:**

The present study is limited to deal with one mode of discourse, namely written discourse. The latter refers to the form of language that is structured and planned beforehand. The writer is aware of how and what to write in an attempt to make it congruent and appropriate with his communicative purpose. Throughout this process, the writer constantly revises his product. In fact, written discourse differs from the spoken one in that it does not allow for the possibility of employing intonation and pitch as discourse markers which characterize the immediate communication established through speech. Nevertheless writers do explore the various linguistic devices that are available in the language to tie the boundaries of sentences together. As a result, the ultimate written product tends to exhibit text cohesion, a quality that enables the reader to decode the texts they read.

According to Mc Carthy (1991:152), the fundamental unit in written discourse is the sentence. He deems it as the convenient grammatical unit which is “dismissed as being of dubious value as a unit of discourse”. Obviously, a written text is regarded as a text if it comprises more than one sentence, either occurring consecutively (successively) or embedded in one another. Nonetheless, the notion of text in relation to discourse is not clear cut as it entailed a thorough elaboration throughout the previous section.

#### **1.1.4. Texture:**

The quality of texture in the light of Halliday and Hasan’s model (1976) is guaranteed by the cohesive relations. In fact, using the researchers’ words: “what distinguishes a text from a non-text is its texture” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:02). In other words, the existence of some linguistic features in a passage composed of more than one sentence leads to its unity and contributes to its texture. It follows that the understanding of two sentences (that make up a text or part of it) generally hinges on the interpretation of those linguistic ties. For instance,

Wash and core six cooking apples. Put them into a fire proof dish.( Cook1989 :03)

In the above example, the pronoun “them” used in the second sentence refers to the six cooking apples in the first sentence. This cohesive relation establishes texture in the text as the interpretation of the whole sentence depends on the preceding one. The latter, namely reference constitutes one type of cohesive ties, other instances of cohesive relations should be discussed later in the present chapter.

Prior to going further, the concept of cohesion, its different types along its relation to coherence constitute the key notions that we attempt to tackle and clarify in what follows.

#### **1.1.5. Cohesion:**

Interest in the concept of cohesion has grown tremendously after the publication of Halliday and Hasan’s seminal work Cohesion in English in 1976 which succeeded to draw attention to cohesion and coherence. This outstanding work was the first to

present a systematic analysis and an exhaustive account of cohesion from a textual perspective. In simple terms cohesion is viewed as a network of lexico-grammatical relations which ties the parts of a text together. It is a relational feature of language that differentiates connected meaningful texts from non-texts. Therefore, cohesion constitutes the explicit textual feature of discourse which is clearly recognized by a variety of linguistic markers. The latter may be depicted as signposts that help the reader decode what they read in the light of what the writers seek to convey. Obviously, this hinges on an appropriate interpretation of the cohesive devices that are mostly interrelated through presupposition.

Besides, the above attempt to simplify and clarify the reference of the concept of cohesion which results from our own interpretations of the authors' presentation of the notion, we deem it appropriate to present the definition allocated to the concept in question using Halliday and Hasan's words:

Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another; the one presupposes the other in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text. (Halliday and Hasan 1976 :6).

To demonstrate the crucial role played by cohesive ties in creating text unity and meaning, let's devise an example proposed by Yule (2006:125):

My father once brought a Lincoln convertible. He did it by saving every penny he could. That car would be worth a fortune nowadays. However, he sold it to help pay for my college. Sometimes, I think I'd rather have the convertible (underlined words are by the author of his work).

At first glance, the text above gives its reader the impression that it is a meaningful whole. In other words, the text succeeds to make sense by means of the variety of cohesive markers that were employed by the writer. For instance, the pronoun *he* points to *my father*, *that car* and *the convertible* refer to *the Lincoln Convertible*. Thus, the relationship of cohesion in the text is established partly thanks

to the network that links the referring item and the presence of the item to which it refers. In the above example, there are instances of cohesion besides reference. For instance, the element *however* provides a tie between what follows to what precedes its occurrence. It follows that Halliday and Hasan (1976:08) maintain that cohesion is provided across the boundaries of the sentences as well as within a single sentence. However, they point out that within a sentence, it is of secondary importance due to the fact that sentences by themselves are cohesive given their grammatical structure. To demonstrate this, the researchers suggest the following example:

If you happen to meet the admiral, don't tell him his ships go down (ibid: 08)

According to the authors, it is obvious that both items "him" and "his" refer to the admiral. Hence, the sentence hangs together without recourse to cohesion. Grammatically speaking, the sentence "John took John's hat off" and "John hang John's hat on a peg" (ibid: 08), has no place in language use. Thus, by using pronominal forms, the sentence is enhanced: "John took his hat off and hangs it on a peg". Therefore reference guarantees grammatical cohesion at the inter-sentential level. Besides, there are further cohesive devices that are structurally determined like lexical cohesion. Yet, in order to make sense and achieve text meaning and unity, i.e. coherence, readers and writers have recourse to both types of cohesion.

Furthermore, the discussion allocated to the concept of cohesion by the researchers seems to suggest a strong claim. The latter revolves around the fact that cohesive ties are to be viewed as the sole basis of coherence. In this respect, Halliday and Hasan point out that "cohesive ties between sentences are the only source of texture" (ibid: 02). Such claim was followed by several challenges among discourse analysts who argued that the concept of coherence is much more inclusive and does not depend merely on the existence of cohesive ties. Instead, they underlined a plausible fact that cohesion is to be rather considered as a "guide to coherence" (McCarthy 1991:26). In fact, the relationship of cohesion to coherence has proved to be deeper and far from clear-cut. Therefore, we deem it relevant to devote a section to elaborate on both concepts.

Nevertheless, if we examine Halliday and Hasan's view of cohesion and other discourse analysts' refutation like Brown and Yule's, we will deduce that almost a consensus is reached concerning the existence and contribution of semantic relations to coherence. In the following respect, we shall tackle the taxonomy of cohesive devices as presented by Halliday and Hasan (1976).

## **1.2. Types of Cohesive Devices:**

Both terms "device" and "tie" are used interchangeably to substantiate the meaning of linkage. A tie stands "for one occurrence of a pair of cohesively related items" (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:02). In fact, cohesive ties of different types and frequency occur in texts. In other words, as a fundamental unit, the notion of "tie" has served significantly in the analysis of cohesion of a given text via indicating the type of relation among its propositions.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) have classified cohesive ties into five major categories: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. It is worth noting that in Halliday and Hasan (1994), these cohesive ties have been reclassified into four types with ellipsis being a sub-category of substitution. In the following section the five types of cohesive ties will be described separately.

### **1.2.1. Reference:**

Being the first category in Halliday and Hasan's taxonomy, reference is a common cohesive device that involves "words which don't have a full meaning in their own right" (Salkie 1995:64). Halliday and Hasan (1976:308) define reference as "the relation between an element in the text and something else by reference to which it is interpreted in the given instance". In fact, reference acquires its cohesive status thanks to the role it plays in that it helps the reader trace the different entities and events of the text. Three types of reference can be categorized. The first category involves personal reference which is marked by the use of personal and possessive pronouns,

and possessive adjectives. They point to individuals and objects that are mentioned in some part of a text. Example (1) illustrates this type:

(1) Neil is a devoted teacher. He always prepares his lessons carefully ( the personal pronoun he and his refer to the noun Neil)

Demonstrative reference is another sub-type which is chiefly established by means of demonstratives. This type of reference serves to identify a single word or phrase, or a longer text across several sentences, paragraphs, or even pages. See example (2).

(2) As a writing teacher, I would like to emphasize this. Cohesion is very important for text organization( the demonstrative pronoun “this” refers to the entire following sentence)

The third category is “comparative reference” which is maintained through adverbs and adjectives of comparison. Usually, reference items and the antecedent items are co-referential. By co-referential, it is meant that they share a textual environment where a semantic relation is established whereby the interpretation of an item depends on something else in the discourse. Example (3) is an instance of comparative reference:

(3) Some people eat to live while others live to eat.

(The comparative referential tie “others” refers to “people”)

The last point to be considered about reference is that there are certain items which are tied to their context. They can be traced to their referents either by means of the situation or within the preceding text (anaphora) or succeeding text (cataphora).

### **1.2.2. Substitution:**

Like reference, items included under this heading are context dependent. However, while reference is a relation of meaning, substitution is a relation of wording. In other words, reference is a semantic phenomenon; substitution including ellipsis is

grammatical. By substitution, it is meant “the replacement of one item by another” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:88).

Halliday and Hasan identify three main categories of substitution: nominal, verbal and clausal. Here are examples of each category:

(1) Which shirt do you want? I want the red one

(2) You wash the dishes. I will do the pans

(3) John loves sailing, so do I

### **1.2.3. Ellipsis:**

Considered as the equivalent of substitution by zero, ellipsis refers to “the omission of an item” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:88) that is to be understood from the preceding context. In the linguists’ view, substitution needs an explicit linguistic form such as *do* and *one* to point to the presupposed item, whereas in ellipsis no linguistic item is employed to refer to the presupposed item. When encountering an elliptical or substitute clause, the reader or listener needs to supply the missing words, which establish a cohesive relationship with what has been stated before. As in the case of substitution, ellipsis functions at a nominal, verbal and clausal level. Examples of these are given below:

1/ John arrived on Sunday-and went the next day.

2/John cleaned the hen -house .David the barn.

3/ would you like some cakes? - Yes, please.

### **1.2.4. Conjunction:**

One of the most obvious ways in which cohesion is achieved is through conjunction. The main function that this type of cohesion performs is connecting sentences. To use Cook’s words, the use of conjunction “explicitly draws attention to the type of the relationship which exists between one sentence and clause and another” (Cook,

1989:21). As a result, they establish a link between the ongoing and the preceding parts of a text and, thus, represent an aid for the reader in his decoding process. Halliday and Hasan (1976) divide conjunctive relations into five broad categories: additive, adversative, causal, temporal and continuative each of which is further divided into several sub-categories. Examples below are meant to illustrate these five categories:

1. This is the first time I have tried Japanese food , and I like it very much.(*and* is an additive conjunction)
2. Jane finally arrived at the railway station; however, the train had left.(*However* is an adversative conjunction)
3. She is an efficient secretary, so her boss always admires her.(*So* is a conjunctive tie signifying a causal relationship).
4. Tom had a shower. Then, he had breakfast.(*Then* is a temporal conjunctive tie)
5. You don't have to worry. It wasn't your fault after all. (*After all* is a continuative conjunction).

### **1.2.5. Lexical Cohesion:**

This type of cohesion brings us closer to the actual analysis since it highlights the lexical relations of cohesion that are to be emphasized in the present study. In simple terms, lexical cohesion is said to be achieved by the selection of vocabulary. In Cohesion in English, Halliday and Hasan allocate some twenty pages to the treatment of lexical cohesion, which is quite striking in the light of their following comment:

However luxuriant the grammatical cohesion displayed by any piece of discourse, it will not form a text unless this is matched by cohesive patterning of a lexical kind.(Halliday and Hasan 1976:292)

Therefore, the space devoted to lexical cohesion in Cohesion in English does not reflect or parallel the crucial role of this form of cohesion in discourse. Nonetheless, the outstanding value of Halliday and Hasan's work in highlighting the contribution of lexis in maintaining cohesion in discourse cannot be challenged. Their modal of lexical cohesion rests on a division of the various lexical cohesive devices into two main categories: reiteration and collocation.

### **1.2.5.1. Reiteration:**

All the devices of reiteration are labeled so for the mere reason that they perform the function of reiterating the previous item in an identical or somewhat modified form, and this is the essence of the creation of a cohesive tie between the items in discourse. In other words, this category of lexical cohesion can be achieved via:

#### **1.2.5.1.1. Reiteration of the same item:**

This form of reiteration is basically the most straightforward of all the cohesive devices. It merely refers to the repeated words or word-phrases that thread the text together, i.e., the reference of the same item to itself in a preceding lexical environment. For instance:

There was a large mushroom growing near her, about the same height as herself; and when she had looked under it, it occurred to her that she might as well look and see what was on the top of it. She stretched herself up on tiptoe, and peeped over the edge of the mushroom...(Halliday and Hasan, 1976:278)

In the above example, the repetition of the word *mushroom* to refer back to the same term, this mere re-occurrence constitutes a lexical cohesive tie. Halliday and Hasan remind, however, that a “lexical item coheres with a preceding occurrence of the same item whether or not the two have the same referent, or indeed whether or not there is any referential relationship between them” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:283). Therefore, the second occurrence, in relation to the first, may be either of the following: a) identical, b) inclusive, c) exclusive, or d) unrelated, in terms of reference. Examples:

There is a *boy* climbing that tree.

- a) The boy’s going to fall if he doesn’t take care
- b) Those boys are always getting into mischief
- c) And there’s another boy standing underneath
- d) Most boys love climbing trees

. In (a) *the boy* has the same referent as *a boy* has; the reference item “he” could be used instead. In (b) *those boys* includes the boy referred to in the first sentence; here there is an explicit non-identity of reference, and in such instances we cannot have a reference item to replace *boy*- we can however have a substitute or elliptical form, *another one* or *another*. In (d), *most boys* bears no referential relation at all to the boy previously mentioned; we cannot gather from (d) whether the boy in question likes climbing trees or not, and the speaker does not necessarily know or care. Characteristically, in(d) where there is no relation of reference between the two occurrences of *boy*, there is more lexical repetition overall; here not only *boy* but also *climb* and *tree* are repeated, and this compensates as it were, for the lack of any referential connection.

However, as Halliday and Hasan observe:

Properly speaking, reference is irrelevant to lexical cohesion. It is not by virtue of any referential relation that there is a cohesive force set up between two occurrences of a lexical item; rather, the cohesion exists as a direct relation between the forms themselves (and thus, is more like substitution than reference). ( Halliday and Hasan 1976:284) .

#### **1.2.5.1.2 Reiteration by Synonym:**

Reiteration is not always achieved via repetition of the same item. Instead, it is realized via other semantic relations like synonym and near synonym. By synonym, it is meant “the sameness of meaning” (Palmer 1981:59). Thus, the semantic relationship that emerges between a term and its synonym establishes a close cohesive tie. To illustrate how synonymy contributes to lexical cohesion, Halliday and Hasan present the following example:

a) Accordingly....I took leave, and turned to the ascent of the peak. The climb is perfectly easy ...

b) Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran, and leaping down the ridges tightly, plunging it among the bulrush beds, and clutching the sword. And lightly wheeled and threw it. The great brand made light’ nings in the splendor of the moon... (Halliday and Hasan 1976:178)

Example a) demonstrates how reiteration by synonym occurs in which climb “climb” refers to “ascent”. The second example constitutes an instance of reiteration by near – synonym in which the word “brand” refers to “sword”.

### **1.2.5.1.3. Reiteration by Superordinate:**

Lexical reiteration ties involve another semantic relationship which is recognized between a *superordinate* and its *hyponym*. The former is known as “upper class”, and the latter is referred to as “lower-class”(Palmer 1981:76). This type of semantic relationship is based upon the notion of inclusion. To substantiate this type of lexical reiteration ties, let’s examine the following example:

Henry’s bought himself a new Jaguar. He practically lives in the car (Halliday and Hasan 1976:278).

In this example, *Car* refers back to Jaguar; and car is a superordinate of Jaguar- that is, a name for a more general class (as vehicle is a superordinate of car, spoon of teaspoon, cut of pare, and so on). All these are cohesive in the same way as the general words; the latter differ only in level of generality.

### **1.2.5.1.4 Reiteration by General Word:**

The fourth type of cohesive ties in the category of reiteration concerns the class of general words. The latter refers to those nouns which encompass more generalized reference, if compared to superordinates, in the main noun classes, like “place noun”, “fact noun”, “action noun” and the like. Such lexical items have a considerable contribution to cohesion. When performing a cohesive function, a general noun is generally preceded by the anaphoric reference “the”. Therefore, the interpretation of this combination depends to a great extent to what precedes its occurrence. The function of general words is, thus, referential. For instance: “It seems to have made very little impression on *the man*”, and “it seems to have made very little impression on *him*” (*ibid*: 275). However, these two types of cohesion differ in that cohesion through general words allows the possibility of integrating an interpersonal element into the meaning. The table below classifies some instances of

general nouns which Halliday and Hasan (1976) suggest:

**Common General Nouns in English:**

Type	Examples
Human	People, person, man , woman, child, boy, girl
Non-human animate	creature
Inanimate concrete count	Thing, object
Inanimate concrete mass	Stuff
Inanimate abstract	business, affairs, matters
Action	Move
Place	Place
Fact	Question, idea.

To complete this brief presentation of reiteration, the type of lexical cohesion that we chose to treat in the current study, there remains one detail that we think entails to be mentioned. Following Halliday and Hasan’s modal, the point relates to the fact that a given lexical item is not restricted to a specific grammatical category, or to a given morphological form. That is to say, a term may take variant inflectional or derivational forms that are usually subject to the context. For instance: talk, talking and talked all indicate a single lexical item “talk”. It follows that these sets are cohesive irrespective of their differences. As a result, there are no clear rules that are said to restrict how far this principle can be stretched. We want to turn now to examine the second type of lexical cohesion in English, namely collocation.

**1.2.5.2.Collocation:**

For Halliday and Hasan (1976:187), all lexical items that stand in systematic relationship to each other in a given text constitute collocations. They are also referred to as “collocational cohesion”. According to the authors, collocation is “cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:284).At first glance, the definition may bear different interpretations, but Halliday and Hasan attempt to provide further clarifications to this concept. They underline that the association is achieved when lexical items have a tendency to appear in similar lexical environments or when they

are related lexico-semantically. For instance, *boy* and *girl* are cohesive because they have opposite meanings, but *laugh* and *Joke*, and *boat* and *row* are also cohesive even though they are not systematically related. Merely, “typically associated with one another”(Halliday and Hasan 1976:284-286)

In this respect, Halliday and Hasan highlight various meaning relations of collocational cohesion that can be recognized in a text. These include: relation of antonymy (eg *wet/dry*), relation of complementarity (e.g. *stand up /set down*), relation of part to whole (eg.*car...Box...Lid*), relation of part-part (e.g. *mouth/chin*), relation of co-hyponymy (e.g. *chair-table*) and words down from the ordered series (e.g. *Monday/Tuesday*).

All in all, collocation as a sub-category of lexical cohesion as presented by Halliday and Hasan is deemed vague since the relations still loosely defined when compared to the relatively precise definitions allocated to the sub-classes in the category of reiteration. That is why, their collocation category has been described as “a ragbag of lexical relations” (Hoey 1991a:7).

Nevertheless, this plausible criticism is not to hide the fact that with their study, Halliday and Hasan were the pioneers in drawing attention to these complex relations which construct the unity of text and discourse. Besides, they admit that it would be essential to further define the scope of the category of collocation. They recommend that when this is intended to be done, it should be conducted “in the light of a general semantic description of the English language” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:258).

### **1.3.Lexical Versus Grammatical Cohesion: Some points of Convergence:**

Lexical cohesion refers to the type of textual relationship that is achieved by means of lexical devices. These devices represent the relations of meaning that are part of the language system. On the other hand, grammatical cohesion is attained through the use of grammatical devices that are devised from the system of proforms. This system is made up of pronouns and deictics . Even though these two types were kept distinct, there seem to be some points where grammatical and lexical devices converge to build up the network of cohesion. The central similarities that these types of cohesion share concern the functions of

coreferentiality and repetition of semantic meaning which both perform. (Bensemmane, 1985:219).

Coreferentiality in lexical cohesion is found in the semantic meaning that anaphoric lexical reiteration holds. The same function is guaranteed in grammatical cohesion through the pronominal system which constitutes the brief form of the nominal system when semantic meaning is being repeated. To illustrate how these types of cohesion operate, we devise the following example from Bensemmane (1985:21):

- (1) My neighbour is a great cook. The man made pizza the other day
- (2) My neighbour is a great cook. He made pizza the other day

The first example is an instance of coreference realized through a combination of an anaphoric reference item “the” and a lexical item (a hyponym). The noun phrase “the man” reintroduces partially the semantic content of neighbour via lexical reiteration.

On the other hand, the second example is a typical form of coreference created by a grammatical item in which the semantic content of “neighbour” is reintroduced through the reduced form “he”. This type of repetition leads to grammatical cohesion.

Therefore, even though the last example contains a linguistic index “he” which is grammatical in nature, it operates “in the deep structure as a repetition of a surface lexical form” (Bensemmane, 1985:22). In lexical cohesion, reiteration is achieved through several sense relations. However, when repetition results from the association of a hyponym and a reference item (like the example above), the distinctive point between lexical and grammatical cohesion becomes hidden since both types overlap.

It is worth noting, however, that when it comes to the repetition of pragmatic meaning, the border line between lexical and grammatical cohesion becomes clear. For instance:

- (1) John turned to the ascent of the peak. The air felt pure.
- (2) John turned to the ascent of the peak. It felt pure. (Bensemmane 1985:22)

In the first example, “the air” is the reduced form of “the air of/ during

the ascent". It is comprehended from a pragmatic perspective by referring back to "the ascent". However, in example (2), it is not the ellipited form of "ascent" since it does not point to "the ascent", nor can it replace it. Thus, this results in pragmatic incongruence with the presupposed item "the ascent"

In other words, the explicitness provided by lexical reiteration makes it crucial to text decoding. Therefore, at this point grammatical cohesion tends to share no common points with lexical cohesion. This issue was clearly put forward by Bensemmane:

It is generally assumed that a text exhibiting grammatical devices of cohesion has a tendency to be more ambiguous to the reader than a lexical cohesive text in the sense that explicitness provided by the repetition of lexical meaning via lexical forms is lacking in grammatical cohesion. It is quite conceivable that heavy use of pronouns, proforms and ellipited forms are likely to obscure the writer's message and hence the explicitness provided by lexical devices of cohesion is crucial to text understanding. (Bensemmane, 1985:22)

#### **1.4.The relationship of Cohesion to Coherence:**

One of the starting points of the present study is the conviction that cohesion contributes to coherence; i.e. cohesion is one of the available linguistic ways of signaling coherence in texts. The present section is meant to explore the concepts of cohesion and coherence in terms of their contribution to the interpretation of written discourse and as being of paramount importance in judging writing quality. In fact along other concepts in discourse studies, the dichotomy of cohesion and coherence has received the attention of many researchers who attempted to discuss and debate the concepts from different perspectives. The section is introduced by some definitions which are intended to identify the scope of each concept. Yet, the overall objective of the section goes beyond quoting the different definitions allocated to the two concepts. In practical terms, the connection between cohesion and coherence is an issue that has been raised several times: To what extent does the surface form

contribute to the perception of the underlying coherence of a text?

For Halliday and Hasan (1976), adopting a functional perspective on the constructive use of language, the surface structure must make a significant contribution. However, other researchers have argued that an analysis of the logical coherence of a text for comprehension involve using procedures not essentially marked by surface forms. The section essentially targets recent criticism directed towards the cohesive view of coherence. In fact, the criticism was mainly the outcome of a growing interest in schema theory which chiefly views text processing the result of an interactive process between the text and the reader.

In the first place, it seems worthwhile to examine more closely some of the definitions given to cohesion and coherence by previous research because this will show how these concepts have been perceived in discourse studies.

Essential to defining the concept of cohesion in relation to coherence is the attempt to examine Halliday and Hasan's views on both concepts. In fact, the definition provided by the authors is slightly unclear. They maintain that cohesion means the coherence of a text with itself, while coherence is the coherence of the text with its context of situation (Halliday and Hasan 1976:2). In addition, they also employ the term *texture* to refer to the property of "being a text" (ibid:2). However, what they acknowledge is the fact that the scope of cohesion, being limited to the text, is more restricted than that of coherence which further involves the context.

Besides Halliday and Hasan's views, De Beaugrande and Dressler present the two concepts within their seven standards of textuality. Cohesion in their model: Subsumes the procedures whereby the surface elements appear as progressive occurrences such that their sequential connectivity is maintained and made recoverable (De Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:3-10).

Coherence, on the other hand, Subsumes the procedure whereby elements of knowledge are activated such that their conceptual connectivity is maintained (De Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:3-10)

Therefore, De Beaugrande and Dressler deal with cohesion and coherence as two clearly distinct phenomena, without one having an influence on the other. In contrast, if we examine Enkvist's (1990) statement that "the difference between

cohesion and coherence....can be said to lie in the eye of the linguist rather than in language as such”, hence it is deemed needless to argue that the two concepts are different. When one of these lines of thought are adopted, namely that cohesion and coherence are entirely separate phenomena , or that they are deeply related to each other, very little can be said about their relationship and about how they may influence each other.

Furthermore, to define the concepts of cohesion and coherence, we can equally refer to Witte and Faigely( 1981:202) who state that:

Cohesion defines those mechanisms that hold a text together, while coherence defines those underlying semantic relations to allow a text to be understood and used.( Witte and Faigely 1981:202)

A further distinction between these two concepts relates to the level of language, whether the formal or the functional, to which each concept is said to belong.

#### **1.4.1.Cohesion/Text and Coherence/Discourse:**

To begin with, cohesion is said to reside at the formal level that is the text level which is regarded as essential to its definition. Text, in its turn, is identified by the manner in which a set of sentences builds larger units or *supra-sentential* units of language. Within these units, successive sentences are related via formal devices of cohesion that include two categories of linkage: grammatical cohesion established through syntactic devices, and lexical cohesion realized via lexical devices. Besides, the ability to decode text cohesion entails that the language user has recourse to his linguistic competence that involves the knowledge he possesses about the linguistic system or what Widdowson (1978) chooses to coin as “rules of usage”, besides his linguistic performance which is referred to as “rules of use”.

On the other hand, the concept of coherence is to be found in the functional level of language that is the level of discourse. The scope of discourse concerns how related sentences succeed to function as utterances in communication, or put it simply: how coherence is achieved. Thus, coherence is a pre-requisite for decoding sentence in use.

The type of relation that coherence provides is non-formal and requires that the language user activates “rules of use” in Widdowson’s words, or his “communicative competence” using Hymes’ (1972) words. In fact, text on its own does not signal coherence links. These links result from the reader’s ability to infer or make use of his pragmatic competence. In practical terms, coherence is defined and measured by “the extent to which a particular instance of language use corresponds to a shared knowledge of conventions as to how illocutionary acts are related to form longer units of discourse”(Widdowson 1978:45 Cited in Bensemmane 1986).In other words, language users determine the coherence of a given piece of language when they perceive its utterances as related and functioning according to one of the recognized rhetorical devices such as description, explanation, report...etc. Therefore, once “the illocutionary significance of the relationship” is perceived by the language user, he will be able to identify the variety of links resulting from the grammatical and lexical meanings of a text and recognize it as discourse.

In sum, the aforementioned distinction between cohesion and coherence is briefly a tentative conclusion that cohesion is more likely to be a feature of text. Coherence is rather a feature of discourse. Indeed, such distinction has followed a general interest in semantics and pragmatics respectively (Bensemmane 1985:4-5).

#### **1.4.2.The importance of Cohesion in relation to coherence:**

The relationship between the concepts of cohesion and coherence has not proved to be that simplistic as the distinction drawn above, more precisely the importance of one concept if compared to the other has not reached a consensus among researchers who attempted to tackle the concepts from different perspectives. The starting point was a criticism directed to Halliday and Hasan’s seminal work: Cohesion in English (1976). It is worth noting, however, that the aim of Halliday and Hasan’s study was to examine the linguistic resources that can be used to signal cohesion in text rather than to determine how texts are understood, and as an exhaustive account of these resources, Cohesion in English(1976) has proved to be a crucial tool( for critically favorable views see for instance Brown and Yule 1983:195-197)

The core viewpoint advocated by Halliday and Hasan that has been

severely criticized is their claim of seeing cohesion as a necessary property for achieving unity in texts. Many researchers have arguably attempted to demonstrate that overt markers of cohesion were not solely sufficient to create connection in text and make it appear as a unified whole. In fact, they argued that what chiefly matters is the linkage or the unity found between the propositional units in the text. Coherence was, thus, deemed an indispensable criterion: without coherence, a set of sentences would not form a text, no matter how many cohesive ties there were among the sentences (Brown and Yule 1983:195).

To support the above claim, we can consider example (1) from Enkvist (1978). The following passage involves a set of cohesive elements that are all instances of repetition (words in *Italics*):

The discussion ended last week. A *week* has seven days. Every *day* I feed my cat. *Cats* have four legs. The cat is on the mat. *Mat* has three letters.

Although cohesive ties were abundantly used, the set of sentences in example (1) does not create a unified whole since coherence is not established between the propositions. According to Enkvist, the text is *pseudo-coherent*.

Essential to text unity, coherence has proved to be an independent feature that can be realized without recourse to cohesive ties, Widdowson( 1978:29) provides an instance of this occurrence through the following example(2):

A: That's the telephone.

B: I'm in the bath.

A: O.K.

Even though this short text has no surface textual cohesion, its three utterances do form a unified whole. In fact, unity is achieved in this text due to the fact that the situation can easily be imagined and, thus, the propositional content of the text would sound meaningfully linked, i.e. coherent. As a result, a conclusion was reached stating that overt markers of cohesion have a minor role to play in the creation of unity in texts when compared with the crucial contribution of coherence ( Enkvist 1978, Widdowson 1978:28-29).

It is worth noting, however, that there seem to be clear difficulties in meeting data that would exhibit coherence without cohesion. Consequently, similar examples

have been adopted in several studies to demonstrate the lack of surface cohesive devices in a coherent text. For illustration sake, Brown and Yule (1983:196) employ Widdowson's constructed example mentioned above. It would, thus, be apparent that even though coherence without cohesion is plausibly a possible phenomenon, we assume, in practical terms, that this occurrence is quite uncommon. The short text stated in example (2), whether intentionally adopted for the sake of an argument or actually taken from a real conversation may perfectly make sense without surface cohesion, but, undoubtedly, the longer the text, the more likely it will seemingly exhibit cohesion.

What is worth mentioning is that the importance of cohesion if compared to coherence has constituted a fertile area of debate and discussion. Yet, the validity of the concept of cohesion and its contribution to the unity of discourse has not arguably been challenged. Even the critics tend to acknowledge that cohesion plays a role, though a minor one, in achieving unity in discourse. Nevertheless, there are researchers who have attempted to debate the whole notion of cohesion. Arguments in this line of thought come from Carrell (1982) who pointed that cohesion has little if any importance or value in text studies. Such criticism stems from both theoretical and empirical research findings. In fact, the criticism was the outcome of an emerging interest in "Schema Theory". The latter maintains that the procedure of text processing is the outcome of an interactive process between the text and the prior background knowledge or "memory schemata" of the listener or the reader. In other words, contrary to the textual analysis approaches like cohesion theory "which operates on text as though it occurred in a vacuum-schema theory takes the text processors into account" (Carrell 1982:482).

Following Carrell's (1982) viewpoint, a text may be cohesive but not coherent. Cohesion may be regarded as one of the many components that contribute to coherence. The researcher concludes that:

Cohesion is not the cause of coherence; if anything, it is the effect of coherence. A coherent text may will likely be cohesive, not of necessity, but as a result of that coherence. Bonding an incoherent text together won't make it coherent, only cohesive. (Carrell 1982:486)

To round off the present discussion of the relationship of cohesion to

coherence, it seems significant to bear in mind that though cohesion and coherence are closely related concepts, they are also distinctive. Both concepts provide connectivity in a text or discourse and facilitate understanding. However cohesion refers to the syntactic and semantic connectivity of linguistic forms at a surface level (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), while coherence involves the connectedness in content and organization. In other words, although cohesion has a role to play in connecting ideas between sentences in a single paragraph, it does not necessarily lead to the global flow of a text across paragraphs. Thus, in relation to cohesion, coherence can be viewed as cohesion on a global scale. To put it simply, coherence essentially concerns the overall connectedness of the ideas in a piece of writing rather than interrelationships between sentences. Therefore, the broader scope that coherence encompasses includes discourse level relations. Nonetheless, given their explicitness, “cohesive links are more likely to facilitate the reader’s interpretation of a text than implicit links of coherence which involve recognition of the propositional and illocutionary development of the text as discourse”.

(Bensemmane, 1985:15). For clarity sake, Bensemmane summarizes the link between the two concepts within the framework of “lexico-semantic cohesion” and “lexico-pragmatic coherence” in the following diagram which indicates that while A implies B, B does not necessarily imply A.

A	B
<p>(Linguistic) Cohesion</p> <p>Text</p> <p>-Sentence</p> <p><b>Links:</b> are linguistic including semantic i.e. definitional meaning</p> <p><b>Category:</b> Lexico-semantic Cohesion</p>	<p>(Pragmatic) Coherence</p> <p>Discourse</p> <p>-Utterance</p> <p><b>Links:</b> are pragmatic, including pragmatic, non-definitional meaning which may be more or less associated with specific vocabulary items</p> <p><b>Category:</b> Lexico-pragmatic Coherence</p>

**Diagram 01: Summary of the relationship of Cohesion to Coherence ( Adopted from Bensemmane 1985:15)**

**Conclusion:** To conclude, the present study is conducted out of the belief that “while cohesion does not provide a full account of the

textual interpretation of a text, it is an important indicator” (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:56).

## **Part Two: Cohesion in Writing Research**

### **1.6. Insights from Writing Research:**

#### **Introduction:**

What has led the second language acquisition theorist, Stephen Krashen, to claim that “studies of second language writing are sadly lacking” (Krashen 1984:41) reveals the prevailing ignorance of writing as a field of research in comparison with the amount of research undertaken on the other language skills. In practical terms, it was until the 1980’s that researchers started to consider L2 writing to be an area of enquiry that is worth investigating. However, the main attempts marked in this line of research, so far, revolved around how writing instruction can be improved rather than writing as a unique process that entails understanding in its own right (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). In other words, the emphasis was on prescription rather than description. Therefore, of particular concern here is to provide an overall idea about writing as a productive skill in terms of the demands it makes on the foreign language learner. In addition, a particular emphasis will be allocated to the process approach to writing since the latter has recently been advocated in the Department of English for designing the writing program.

To begin with, it is worth noting that the ignorance of writing in second language teaching constitutes one of the underlying reasons for its neglect in research. The prevailing attitude towards writing was explicitly stated by Freedman et al :

Learning to write in English when it is not your first, but a second or a third language poses its own problems. It presents difficulties (of a peculiar nature) to the teaching profession as well, and until recent years has been the neglected child in the family of the four skills. (Freedman, Pringle and Yalden 1983: 186)

#### **1.6.1. Defining Writing in the Light of the Process Approach to Writing:**

What should basically be borne in mind is that writing is viewed as a multi-dimensional process that entails not only linguistic skills but cognitive processes as well. In fact, the complexity lies in the several cognitive processes that are involved and that pave the way for the written production. For instance, reasoning, evaluating, thinking and decision making are a sample of the main cognitive processes that are involved in the writing experience. Moreover, the difficulty that shapes the writing process can partly be attributed to the difference between writing and its counterpart speaking, in terms of the physical absence of the interlocutor (the reader), and the insufficient amount of shared knowledge between the writer and the reader (Richards 1990:100-101).

Furthermore, this controversial nature of writing makes it difficult to reach a single definition that accurately depicts what processes are involved in this skill. In fact, the following two definitions demonstrate a difference in the scope and the nature of the writing process that some scholars highlight from their specific angles.

For instance, Hedge (2000) defines writing as follows:

Writing is the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process, which is one of the gradually developing a text. It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It is a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many language writers. (Hedge 2000:302)

In the above definition, Hedge has attempted to cover the main strategies involved in writing which makes her acknowledge the fact that writing is to be viewed as a demanding skill for language learners.

Moreover, according to Widdowson (1978), the process of writing is an ongoing challenge that reflects the interaction between the writer and the potential reader:

Writing..... is developing a discussion and arranging points in such a way as to persuade you, the reader, that I have something worthwhile to say.( Widdowson, 1978: 62 cited in Lynch 1996: 139).

Besides the aforementioned definitions, there have been several attempts to capture what constitutes the writing experience in terms of activities, steps and

strategies. Indeed, these attempts reflect merely the different approaches advocated for writing instruction. Given the fact that the present study is conducted in a context where the process approach is the advocated trend for teaching writing, it seems, therefore, reasonable to highlight the key concerns of this approach.

What paved the way for the emergence of a new and promising approach to writing was a prevailing tendency that has acknowledged the limitations of the product approach that used merely to consider the ultimate written product with little care paid to the writer or even the purpose of writing. This promising approach, namely the process approach to writing tends to deem the writing experience as a systematic process (Evans and ST John 1998). Moreover, what matters most in this process is the sake for meaning rather than form. In fact, this meaning-centered approach hinges primarily on the role that feedback can play in this recursive process where learners are heartened to produce multiple drafts and revise more. Therefore, students engaged in this active and meaningful process will be intensively involved and more responsible for their own learning (Jordan 1997:167-168).

### **1.6.2. The Application of Cohesion Theory to the Study of Writing:**

The scope of the concept of cohesion has been recognized to include all those explicit linguistic devices that are used to signal relations between sentences and parts of texts. As a matter of fact, cohesive devices are seen as the range of key words or phrases that are employed to assist the reader make links with what has already been stated or soon will be stated. To date, interest in research on cohesion has grown tremendously as a result of the publication of Halliday and Hasan's work: cohesion in English (1976). When their proposals were beginning to generate interest, other linguistic works emerged and focused on coherence or the relationship between cohesion and coherence (e.g. Carrell 1982). In terms of specific language skills, there have been numerous studies on the role of cohesion and coherence in reading (e.g. Fulcher, 1989 and Bensemmane 1985). Also, coherence and writing are another significant area that has been extensively investigated.

Due to the fact that our main interest in the present study is to explore the feature

of cohesion in writing, it should be noted that many studies have adopted “cohesion analysis” as a research tool following error analysis and syntactic analysis to investigate second language writing. Mainly, these studies have focused on how native and non-native writings differ and how low- and high-rated essays are distinguished in cohesion behaviours. The present section reviews some of the studies conducted on cohesion in second and foreign language writing. The emphasis will be placed on the major studies undertaken to research the aspect of lexical cohesion within the framework of the writing skill.

To begin with, it seems worthwhile to mention that writing quality is defined as a fit of text to its context which involves the writer’s purpose, the discourse medium, the knowledge of the audience, and so on ( Witte and Faigely 1981:199). Such factors underlie discourse theory and should therefore be integrated in written composition research.

The innovative probing of the underlying premises of the notions of cohesion and coherence has remarkably characterized second language writing studies. In this context, Scarcella (1984) investigated patterns of cohesion in the ESL academic writing of a variety of language groups in a US college. One of these groups involved Korean students who exhibited a significant difference in their cohesion behaviours when compared to native English speakers. Similarly, Connor’s (1984) study investigated the relationship between cohesion and coherence in the writing of native English speakers versus Japanese and Spanish ESL college level subjects in the United States. She surprisingly found that general cohesion density was not essentially the discriminating factor between native speakers and ESL writers. However, with regard to the present study’s concern, Connor in this study has demonstrated that ESL writing was found to lack the variety of lexical cohesive ties used by native speakers.

In terms of composition instruction, Couplan (1984) carried out a cohesion study of science and technical writing. She concluded that problems of cohesion and coherence are to be accounted for in the type of writing instruction provided. As far as EFL writing is concerned, Kharma (1986) tackled the problems encountered by Arab students when writing. The problems were found to revolve around the misuse

of cohesive features, and to the tendency to build wrongly constructed sentences and paragraphs. Among the problematic cohesive features she noted is the misuse of conjunctions when constructing longer sentences.

The overall purpose of the studies dealt with so far was to examine writing cohesion taking into account the entire taxonomy of Halliday and Hasan (1976). Though it is deemed relevant to examine such broader cohesion perspective, we choose henceforth to narrow down the present review of literature to deal with lexical cohesion and the studies allocated to this type of cohesion in writing research.

The present study may seem at first glance limited in scope since we have chosen to devote to one type of cohesion, namely lexical cohesion. Nonetheless, this choice is supported by empirical findings. In this respect, the consulted literature has basically drawn our attention to a different density of cohesive ties in writing. Numerical data was supplied by referring to Nunan (1993) who reported Hoey(1983). The latter carried out a study reflecting the predominance of lexical cohesive ties over grammatical cohesive ones. More precisely, the former constituted sixty percent of the total number of cohesive ties while the latter represents forty percent. Furthermore, the outstanding study undertaken by Witte and Faigely (1981) tend to strongly agree with the above distribution of cohesive ties. For both the high- and low- rated essays, they found out that “ the largest number of cohesive ties, about two-thirds of the total ties for both the high and low samples, fall into the category of lexical cohesion” ( Witte and Faigely 1981:197)

In addition, it is deemed important to notice that this study resembles partly the present study in terms of research concern. Thus, interestingly, the cohesion analysis undertaken by Witte and Faigely (1981) in the high- and low-rated essays revealed that the majority of lexical cohesive ties (65%) found in the low-rated samples fall into the same item sub-category. With regard to the same sub-category of lexical cohesion, namely repetition of the same item, the high-rated essays contain a relatively lower percentage (52%) of the total lexical ties (Witte and Faigely 1981: 197).

Due to the fact that the present research is meant to investigate EFL learners’

use of lexical cohesive devices in writing, it should be noted that this type of cohesion has almost been neglected in connected literature. Cohesion in English constitutes the starting point of such neglect. In fact, this pioneering work has offered an exhaustive treatment of grammatical cohesive devices at the expense of that of lexical cohesion which received a considerably more limited discussion. Besides, such deficiency has been underlined by Liu (2000:29) who was deeply frustrated due to the fact that her search has yielded no direct studies on the teaching and the use of content lexical ties in ESOL. The researcher maintained that the majority of ESOL writing textbooks have entirely neglected the subject or simply tackled it in passing.

For instance, Spencer and Arbon (1996) and Swales and Feak (1994) devoted their composition books solely to functional connectives in addressing the issue of cohesion. Furthermore, Reid (1988) granted a four page detailed discussion on connectives, while offered merely a space of less than one page on repetition and synonyms as cohesive devices. Equally, Ruetten (1997) tackled the use of repetition for cohesion in a quite brief unit, while he used to mention functional connectives in almost every chapter. What is more is the fact that both Reid and Ruetten overlooked superordinates/ hyponyms as viable cohesive devices. However, it should be recognized that works undertaken by Hamp Lyons and Heasley (1987) involved units such as “class relationship: definition” on how superordinates/ hyponyms are used in writing.

This deficiency in addressing lexical ties might account for the inadequate content of many EFL textbooks and that would further explain the lack of treating cohesion from this important perspective.

### **1.7. Lexical Cohesion as a Rhetorical Resource in Writing:**

While the above studies are likely to suggest an ignorance of treating writing from a lexical cohesion perspective, Byrne’s (1979) work is exceptional in this respect. The writer acknowledged the crucial role played by lexical cohesive ties in achieving unity and linkage in writing. Consequently, he chose to classify these ties within a framework of “rhetorical resources”.

Speaking about the written language and its resources, Byrne has attempted to

differentiate between the language used in speech and that used in writing. As a result of this distinction, the role played by cohesive devices in both modes of language is remarkably different. In this respect, Byrne argues:

Most sentence linking devices and those used to express logical relationships also occur in the spoken language but, because of the nature of the channel (the immediacy of the listener, the possibility of the interaction) they are less frequent than in writing, where they are essential for the construction of a text which has to be understood without further help from the writer. (Byrne , 1979:15)

The term rhetorical resource was used by Byrne to mean the tools that are entailed in writing for the purpose of yielding a text in which the sentences are organized into a coherent whole to make it congruent with the writer's communicative purpose. These devices were tackled under three headings: logical, grammatical and lexical.

A logical device refers to all the words or phrases which signal meaning relationships between or within sentences. These involve: addition, comparison/contrast, result, exemplification and so on. It is via using devices like these that the writer establishes the organization of his ideas and supports the reader with a sort of signposts that should help him pursue his line of thought from one sentence to another.

Of similar importance to the cohesion of a text is the linkage provided by certain grammatical devices. For instance, back reference (or anaphora) constitutes one of the cohesive devices that are available to signal relationships between sentences.

The third category of cohesive devices that Byrne deems as “another significant way in which sentences are linked together” (Byrne 1979:20) is lexical in nature. Accordingly, almost any passage exhibits a considerable amount of cohesion on a lexical level. The author maintains that repetition of key words is a common way to establish cohesion in texts. Alternatively, key items can be repeated through using synonymous words or phrases.

### **1.8.Cohesion Links and Coherence links from the writer's viewpoint:**

One of the starting points of the present study is the conviction that cohesion

contributes to coherence, i.e. cohesion is one of the ways of signaling coherence in texts. However, this issue has proved to be debatable as it entailed a lengthier and deeper elaboration within the previous part of this chapter. This issue is recalled here to examine and compare cohesion links and coherence links from a specific angle that of the writer.

Bensemmane (1985:11-12) has attempted to compare and contrast both links from the writer's point of view. According to the researcher, coherence links tend to be implicit in the discourse and constitute an obligatory feature of writing. In fact, they construct the backbone of the writing content. Cohesive links, however, are to be viewed as non-obligatory. Nevertheless, the use of cohesive links demonstrates the writer's willingness to be explicit and avoid ambiguity through relying on surface text signals. By doing so, the writer attempts to comply with Grice's (1975) cooperative principle "which translates into a minimum of the reader's inferring of missing propositions" (Bensemmane 1985:11). In other words, these cohesive links are supplied by the writer as an aid to his reader in his decoding process which reveals the writer's responsibility in taking his audience into account. Thus, cohesion is to be viewed as an optional non-obligatory feature of writing that is expected to reveal the internal coherence of a given piece of language. In simple terms, cohesion is "a special case of coherence" (Szwedek, 1980 cited in Bensemmane 1985:12) or "the marked aspect of coherence" (Bensemmane 1985:12).

As a matter of fact, the text can be seen as an outcome of the writer's attempt to generate two types of entities. The first is textual and is achieved by supplying surface signals of linkage that the potential reader decodes by activating his linguistic competence. The second entity is discorsal and comprises implicit connections that require the potential reader to have recourse to his pragmatic competence. Consequently, as Bensemmane points out:

Identifying links of coherence communicated via lexical pragmatics may be more problematic to the reader because semantic meaning underlying lexical coherence the receiver "creates" or has to work at it. Semantic and pragmatic meanings are co-extensive in the text, and are typically utilized simultaneously in discourse. (Bensemmane 1985:12)

## **Conclusion:**

Appropriate use of lexical cohesion devices is a significant area which has been allocated a limited prominence in research on writing instruction. The intention to conduct the present research was motivated by a need to unveil the patterns of lexical reiteration that students have, most frequently, recourse to when writing and the extent to which they affect the quality of their written performance.

The critical survey of related literature, presented so far, reveals the emerging interest of writing research in studying this mode of language beyond the sentence level. As a result, we have an abundance of books, studies and articles focusing on different aspects of cohesion and coherence. The assertions that there are aspects in texts which help make them appear as unified wholes rather than as collections of unrelated sentences.

The insights yielded by research in this area indicated two main views: a view which sees use of cohesive devices as a major ingredient as far as students' writing coherence and, hence quality is concerned and another view which claims the ineffective effect of the devices of cohesion on students' writing.

However, these findings tend to be inconclusive and sometimes far from clear cut or even contradictory. As a matter of fact, further research is needed in studying this aspect of students' writing.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **Research Design and Method**

#### **Introduction:**

The present study aims at investigating first year students' use of lexical cohesive devices in writing as well as the importance allocated to lexical cohesion in writing classes. More particularly, it is worth reiterating that this research attempts to find out the types of lexical reiteration employed by a group of first year university (LMD) students in paragraph writing. Besides, the study seeks to distinguish the main types of lexical reiteration ties found in high-rated paragraphs from those prevailing in low-rated ones. The extent of awareness about the role of lexical cohesion as a common feature of writing ability is similarly put under scrutiny. To this end, three research tools were used to gather data on the topic: students' written productions and two questionnaires addressing students and teachers of writing respectively. Each research tool was meant to reflect the way participants (students and teachers) perceive the phenomenon of lexical reiteration.

The present chapter tackles the context, the method, the subjects and the research tools devised in the present study. Equally, the steps that were followed to investigate first year students' use of lexical cohesive devices in writing as well as the methods of data analysis utilized are considered in the following respect.

#### **2.1 Context of the study:**

The linguistic background of the present study seems relatively limited because it deals with only one type of cohesion, namely lexical cohesion. This makes the background of the study rather specific since it attempts to shed light on reiteration as a sub-component of lexical cohesion. Thus, a great deal of effort has been allocated to the design of research instruments and the selection of the participants to make the procedure relevant and consistent throughout the whole research process.

Furthermore, we deem it relevant to pinpoint some considerations related to writing instruction in the Department of English within the LMD system as far as first year writing classes are concerned.

The current study is carried out within the Department of English of the University of Algiers 2. In the first place, what can be noted is that recently and for the sake of improving the quality of higher education in Algeria, the Ministry of Higher Education has adopted an innovative policy, namely the introduction of the LMD system. Within this system, the first degree prepared in the English Department is a “Three-year License”. Throughout the three years, students receive explicit instruction on the main pillars of the writing skill with the ultimate objective in mind that by the end of the three-year period, students should be able to handle the essence of academic writing. To this end, the writing syllabus is designed to proceed progressively from the mere sentence and paragraph structures to cover the variety of written discourse types.

The crucial role of writing lies in the fact that in addition to being a skill that is studied in its own right, its mastery is a pre-requisite that is entailed in handling examinations of literature, civilization and linguistic modules.

It is worth noting, moreover, that the recent trend advocated in the first year LMD system’s program revolves around integrating the receptive skill of reading and the productive skill of writing within the same module taking into account the fruitful insights of empirical research. The objective is to bring these skills together where the text can serve as a model for the intended pattern or target structure.

## **2.2. General Considerations about the Method:**

The purpose of this research is to explore first year students’ paragraph writing from a crucial angle that of lexical cohesion. Lexical cohesion is said to be achieved by the selection of vocabulary .It comprises two classes: reiteration and collocation. Reiteration is subdivided into four cohesive effects: word repetition, synonym, superordinate and general word. Hence the remainder of the semantic relations not classified under the class of reiteration are attributed to the class of collocation (Halliday and Hasan 1976). The present investigation seeks to explore the cohesive

effect of reiteration in a sample of EFL students' writing. Therefore, collocational links lie out of the scope of the present study. More particularly, the study aims at identifying the prevailing types of reiteration that tend to dominate first year students' writing in an attempt to pinpoint some deficiencies in the way students approach cohesive writing.

To this end, what characterizes the present research is its descriptive and non-experimental nature due to the fact that no treatment or manipulation of variables is taking place. Its overall purpose is to identify variables and investigate a possible relationship between them. With regard to this type of research methodology, Hart (2005:319) states:

Descriptive non-experimental research is also interested in identifying variables and relationships between them. There are, of course, different degrees of association and different ways of describing a phenomenon....The design is usually based on a case where a subject is measured only once, a cross –section of some kind of behaviour is observed based on a sample from a population .... Descriptive studies measure the occurrence of a phenomenon without intervening that is, making changes.

For the sake of providing clear demonstrations of the attained results and exhaustive interpretations of the present research findings, both quantitative and qualitative research tools will be combined in the procedure of data collection and analysis. Allwright and Bailey (1991:68) have coined the term « combined research » to refer to this type of procedure. The researchers supported their rationale for melting both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the same piece of research as follows:

There is of course no compelling reason why both quantitative and qualitative ways of collecting and analyzing data should not be deliberately combined in anyone research project, and every reason why both approaches should not be harnessed all times.(Allwright and Bailey 1991 :68)

In research terminology, the term hybrid research is also used to refer to this type of research (Ellis 1984) where both approaches are integrated within the same research instance.

The sections that will follow shall describe the subjects who contributed to this study, the research tools devised to collect data along with a meticulous account of the procedure adopted as well as the methods of analysis utilized.

### **2.3. The Subjects:**

Fourteen first year university (LMD) students aged 18 to 22 years old constitute the population sample of the study. The subjects are enrolled in a three-year English degree course at the Department of English of the University of Algiers 2. Moreover, the group tends to be homogeneous in terms of overall language proficiency as they have been studying the language for seven years. Hence, we assume that they are intermediate. The sample was randomly selected from a group of 30 students prior to knowing their writing ability. Nevertheless, the assessment of the subjects' written output indicates that the selected sample involves the three student writers' profiles i.e, good, average and weak. It is important to note, moreover, that our initial sample was intended to involve 20 students. However, since only 14 students could submit their tasks on time, while others did not manage to write anything, the focus group of the study was limited to 14 instead of 20.

Nevertheless, the limited number of the sample has a positive side due to the fact that research has clearly demonstrated the practicality of analyzing case studies with reduced samples. Indeed, the limited number of students is justified in the fact that small case studies were found to be the most insightful way to examine writing matters (Zamel, 1983). For instance, Zamel has carried out a fruitful research with only 6 students. Equally, Raimes (1985) conducted her investigation with merely 8 students.

The present study was carried out during the academic year 2011-2012. More precisely, data collection started in February and ended in July 2012. The rationale behind selecting this part of the academic year and gathering data in a progressive manner lies in the assumption that by the end of their first year, students would be able to handle paragraph writing as the first year syllabus is entirely devoted to enhance the structure along the main patterns of this fundamental unit of writing.

Concerning the ten teachers who participated in the present research, they all teach the writing module at the Department of English of the University of Algiers 2. Five of them are considered experienced teachers who have been teaching writing for more than 10 years, two have an acceptable experience ranging from 5 to 7 years while three teachers started teaching only one to three years ago. It is important to mention that all the writing teachers of first year classes have accepted to collaborate and contribute to the present research. Therefore, there was no need to sampling.

#### **2.4. Research Instruments:**

For the sake of detecting the subjects' use of lexical cohesive devices in writing, a set of research tools was utilized to elicit an in-depth exploratory description of the current prevailing practice. To fulfil this requirement, the research tools used are: questionnaires and a corpus composed of a written task in addition to the students' second term writing exam papers. Indeed, two questionnaires were devised in the present research. The first addresses the group of first year student participants and it is meant to elicit the type of knowledge they possess as regards lexical reiteration in writing so that their perceptions could be compared to their actual production represented in the corpus. The second questionnaire is directed to teachers of the writing module in the English Department in an attempt to capture the type of teaching practice they provide to enhance lexical cohesion in their students' writing along with their evaluation and insightful suggestions to raise students' awareness towards this type of cohesive devices. This section is an attempt to yield a comprehensive description of the research instruments that were devised in conducting the present study.

##### **2.4.1. The Written Task:**

The subjects were required to develop one-paragraph composition on a topic suggested by the researcher: the importance of learning English as a foreign language nowadays. The topic is said to target expository writing which does not entail specific or disciplinary knowledge. In practical terms, all the subjects are supposed to possess something to say about the intended topic which may be viewed as being of general

knowledge. By doing so, we hope we could eliminate the influence of poor vocabulary knowledge that may reduce the students' chance to use lexical cohesion ties appropriately. In addition, the choice of such a topic may offer equal opportunities for all the subjects to write. Besides, the writing was assigned as a classroom task, and the subjects did not know the purpose of this assignment. Thus, we could ensure the subjects would use cohesive devices as usual. What is more is the fact that the task was assigned as part of a regular homework which is hoped to differ from an examination. This would suggest that factors that are usually recognized to impair writing quality such as anxiety and time limitations are significantly reduced.

Therefore, to complete the written task, students were allowed a week time. When handed back, the students' paragraphs were surrendered to cohesion analysis to find out the lexical reiteration ties they contain. Then, the corpus was photocopied and handed to the two teachers who contributed to the present study through correcting and grading the subjects' written production in terms of its overall quality.

#### **2.4.2. The Subjects' Examination Papers:**

Being aware that the writing ability can vary greatly from one written genre to another, the written data obtained from the written task is supported by the subjects' second term writing examination papers. The purpose is two-fold. We aimed chiefly at increasing the validity and reliability of the process of data collection by multiplying the sources of the written data so that the findings of the study would yield a genuine and an in-depth investigation of first year students' use of lexical cohesive devices. Moreover, we have chosen to target the subjects' second term examinations and not the first on purpose. The written task was assigned in the middle of the academic year and thus it could not be said to be representative of a first year writing ability. As a matter of fact, it is hoped that by the end of their first year, the participants are supposed to have acquired sufficient knowledge about the structure of the English paragraph in addition to their cumulative mastery of the English language itself. It is worth mentioning in this respect that students come to University to study English with enough background knowledge about writing as they are supposed to have tackled paragraph and even essay writing throughout their secondary education.

In fact, the emphasis at this level is to offer a reliable framework of English writing within a more specific, academic and in-depth instruction. Thus, we assume that paragraph writing is not to be viewed as a challenging activity for students at this level of language proficiency.

The overall objective of this examination is to check students' handling of comparison and contrast as one pattern of written expression which was tackled throughout the second half of the first academic year. Using the subjects' papers as a source of written data for the present study is believed to help us elicit further spontaneous data not intentionally designed for research purposes. On this type of research procedure, Seliger and Shohamy state:

Reviewing documents is yet another procedure by which the written language ability of the subjects is collected from various types of documents, without an official test.(Seliger and Shohamy 1989:179)

### **2.4.3 The Questionnaires:**

Given the exploratory nature of the present study, it is not deemed appropriate to consider merely the students' written output as being the sole source of data. A more informative way to broaden and deepen such investigation is possibly to involve other research tools to elicit aspects of the present investigation that are hidden and that cannot directly be attained via observing and analyzing students' written production. More importantly, students' perception of reiteration in writing should equally be accounted for and compared to their actual production so that to yield a more exhaustive picture as regards students' use of lexical ties. To this end, two questionnaires were designed and administered to the subjects participating in the present study. The first addresses writing instructors teaching writing to first year classes while the second seeks to brainstorm students' knowledge about how lexical reiteration ties are used in writing.

#### **2.4.3.1 The Teachers' Questionnaire:**

For the sake of investigating the degree of importance allocated to lexical cohesion in writing classes, a questionnaire was designed by the researcher and administered to ten writing teachers (see Appendix 1). It addressed the areas of discourse competence that are believed to account for the challenges facing first year students when writing. The emphasis is on reiteration, its sub-types and the way it is approached by writing teachers. Hence, to provide an in-depth investigation, both close and open-ended questions were utilized by the researcher. The aim of this section is two-fold. It is meant to describe the design procedure and the content of this research tool.

### **Types of Questions Involved and Their Justifications:**

The teacher questionnaire is made up of nine questions. The majority of the questions are close-ended. The purpose is two-fold. The first aim is to narrow down the scope of the answers to cover the specific research topic. The second is to make the analysis and collection of information manageable. Nonetheless, some open-ended questions were deemed significant to include when designing the questionnaire to give the teachers the opportunity to voice their own views about problematic issues that pertain to students' writing.

The questionnaire design has followed a particular order in an attempt to make it congruent with the main research concern. To meet this requirement, the first question was relatively broader in scope as it asks the teachers to describe their overall first year students' writing quality along a scale question. The question was formulated as follows:

**Q1:** How do you describe your first year students' paragraph writing?

Good

Average

Weak

The second question requires teachers to select among the suggested components of discourse competence, those which tend to pose problems to students in writing. Similarly, Q3 is meant to elicit teachers' main focus in terms of instruction as it asks teachers to define the type of cohesion whether grammatical or lexical that has received the greatest attention in terms of classroom practice. More particularly,

Q4 attempts to capture the type of instruction that writing teachers provide to enhance lexical cohesion in first year students' written output. To answer this question, teachers were allowed three options: implicit, explicit or no type of instruction.

In the light of a given rating scale, teachers of writing were invited to classify students' writing overall lexical cohesiveness that result from the adopted type of instruction. This information is elicited through Q5.

Owing to the fact that the present study is limited to deal with reiteration solely as one sub-type of the whole framework of lexical cohesion, Q6 seeks to identify the types of reiteration ties that tend to be problematic to students in writing from the teachers' perspectives. To elaborate on their views, teachers were required to answer an open-ended question (Q 7). In other words, the latter is meant to infer the possible reasons that are responsible for the deficiencies that characterize students' use of lexical cohesive devices according to teachers of writing as being stakeholders. In the light of their involvement in teaching first year students the writing skill for years, the participants were asked, by means of Q8, whether they approve or disapprove the integration of an explicit instruction of lexical cohesive devices for future LMD students in the first year writing syllabus. Finally, Q9 grants the participants some lines to suggest some classroom tasks that should be implemented to promote lexical cohesion in students' writing.

In sum, the objective of the teachers' questionnaire is to collect insightful data that relates to students' handling of lexical cohesion devices in writing from the teachers' perspective. Besides, the questionnaire seeks also to unveil some aspects of writing teachers' day –to-day teaching practice as concerns lexical cohesion matters. The emerging answers will be compared with those of the students' to provide a broad framework and insightful conclusions about the subjects' lexical cohesion profile.

#### **2.4.3.2 The Students' Questionnaire:**

Besides the students' written production, another source of data is seemingly deemed insightful in terms of investigating students' use of lexical cohesive devices in writing. To this end, a questionnaire was designed by the researcher and administered to our

subjects. Indeed, this research instrument has aimed primarily at identifying the learners' perceptions about the use of reiteration ties, the way they approach cohesive and coherent writing as well as the reasons they think are responsible for their misuse of these cohesive ties. In addition, the corpus has sought to find out the types of lexical reiteration ties as usually used by learners. Thus, the subjects' awareness about this aspect in writing was not sufficiently unveiled. That is why, this research tool has purposefully been designed to target and brainstorm students' knowledge about cohesive devices, notably the use of lexical reiteration devices in written discourse in an attempt to provide a complete picture and an in-depth understanding of first year students' reiteration handling strategies.

Therefore, by designing this questionnaire, we hoped we could be able to detect points of strengths as well as areas of weaknesses in the first year LMD writing syllabus from the students' point of view.

As a research tool, questionnaires have many advantages among these, Nunan(1992) cites:

It enables the researcher to collect data in fields' settings, and the data themselves are more amenable to quantification than discursive data such as free-form field notes, participant observers' journals, and the transcripts of oral language (Nunan, 1992:143)

In addition, the students' questionnaire would reveal whether the perceptions students have match their actual productions. Besides we opted to employ the present questionnaire as a tool to enable the participants to express their attitudes and suggestions which cannot be attained through observing and analyzing their written output. The positive side and practicality of questionnaires are further stressed by Freeman and Long (1990):

Questionnaires are often used to get language learners to self-report their attitudes or personal characteristics. (Freeman and Long 1990:35)

### **Types of Questions:**

The students' questionnaire is composed of eight questions. The majority of these questions are close-ended except one. In fact, we opted to involve an open-ended question to give the student participants the freedom to state the set of cohesive devices they usually opt to employ to establish cohesion in their written productions. As a matter of fact, the questionnaire may, to some extent, be viewed as a combination of both types of questions. A brief elaboration on the usefulness of each type of questions seems in order here.

### **Close-ended Questions:**

To define this type of questions, we refer to Nunan(1992) who maintains that a close – ended question is “one in which the range of possible responses is determined by the research. Agree /neutral/disagree”.

By using close-ended questions, researchers seek to guide the respondents of the questionnaire to answer targeted questions which aim at yielding useful data that can be smoothly analyzed later. It follows that close-ended questions are used in the present study to obtain specific information about the writing ability of the student participants, in particular, the aspect of using lexical ties. In fact, the questionnaire involves mainly this type of questions to avoid that the subjects digress from our research concern if open-ended questions were asked. It is worth mentioning that what characterizes such close-ended questions is the fact that participants have no recourse to elaboration in answering such questions.

### **Open-ended Questions:**

For Nunan (1992), “an open item is one in which the subject can decide what to say and how to say it”. We have intentionally opted to include an open- ended question when designing the students' questionnaire due to the several advantages that underlie this type of questions. However, it seems that there is a consensus that open-ended questions are difficult to analyze since answers cannot be easily analyzed into homogeneous categories. Nonetheless, this kind of questions have been used

intensively in qualitative research since they reveal the subjects' perceptions , interpretations and attitudes which altogether constitute the cornerstones of qualitative research. A further comment on this type of questions comes also from Nunan who adds:

While responses to closed questions are easier to collate and analyze, one often obtains more useful information from open questions .It is also likely that responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondent wants to say. (Nunan Op cit)

In the present questionnaire, a single open-ended question is deemed informative as it aims at brainstorming students' background knowledge about cohesive devices. The answers should then be sieved to see whether using the different types of lexical cohesive devices is present in students' perception of cohesive writing.

### **Questions' Justifications:**

The present questionnaire which addresses the student participants in the present study is made up of three parts .The underlying reason for this division is to offer a comprehensive lay out to this research tool whereby we attempted to answer the three main research questions posed in the present study from the students' viewpoint.

Part I is relatively broader in scope since it aims at identifying the most problematic issues that students are likely to encounter when writing .Therefore, we opted to devote two questions (Q1and Q2) to pinpoint this area of interest. Q1 invites students to describe their overall experience of paragraph writing along a scale question (Very difficult, difficult, slightly difficult, and not difficult at all). More precisely, Q2 requires that the student participants locate the area of difficulty that they usually come across when writing. The respondents were allowed three options so that to meet the requirements of our main research concern gradually (the options include: organization of content to achieve coherence, finding the appropriate connecting words or expressions to relate your sentences, finding the appropriate vocabulary, or other difficulties).

Part II is devoted to capture the options of lexical reiteration that students think they employ most frequently in their writings. To this end, Q3 asks students about their tendencies when they want to use a word or expression that they have already mentioned in the preceding sentence. The options were organized along a scale to allow students more space to make reasonable and adequate choices (For instance, the first option: repeat it exactly: always, sometimes, never). In fact the choices that students were invited to make constitute altogether the types of lexical reiteration (i.e. exact repetition, using synonyms, superordinates and general words) except the second which is grammatical in nature (using a pronoun). Although this question was closed-ended, we intended to offer all the possible options (grammatical and lexical) so that to enable the respondents to answer freely according to their actual use avoiding, hence, a leading question.

A further space is provided within this second part to students to exhibit their knowledge about cohesive devices through an open-ended question (Q4). The latter invites students to list some of the cohesive devices that they usually have recourse to in making their sentences linked together. This brainstorming question is posed to elicit spontaneous data from the students. The answers would then be sieved to look for any lexical ties among the listed cohesive devices.

Equally this second part addresses the type of knowledge that EFL learners possess regarding the nature of the effect of varying repetition that usually characterizes the model texts presented to them in reading and writing classes. This awareness checking is sought through Q5 which inquires about the reasons that underlie the writers' use of a variety of synonyms, superordinates and general words in the sample texts that are usually presented as materials to teach writing. To answer this question, we have chosen to supply students with three propositions. The reasons suggested are:

- Teachers want to help you learn new words.
- Writers want to avoid many repetitions to achieve good style.
- Writers want to achieve good style and create one coherent text.

Part III of the questionnaire involves three questions asked to highlight some issues that relate mostly to students' evaluation of their actual use of this type of cohesive devices in writing as well as the instructional factors that affect such use. This part is introduced by Q5 which is meant to enable the student participants self-assess their written production in terms of employing the variety of lexical reiteration ties by comparing their written output to the model texts they usually read in class. The comparison is attained by identifying the extent to which these model texts correspond to their written output in terms of employing the variety of lexical ties available in English, namely synonyms, superordinates and general words(to a great extent, to some extent or to no extent) .

If the respondents answered the preceding question with the responses “to some extent” or “to no extent”, Q7 requires that students determine the factors that hinder their appropriate use of the cohesive devices in question. To this end, we opted to provide students with a set of possible factors that contribute to such misuse. The first reasonable suggestion is that no lesson has been devoted to teach how repetition occurs in written texts. The second possibility hypothesized that EFL learners have noticed the use of these tools but they don't know how to employ them in their own writing. The last proposition states that students' vocabulary knowledge is very limited to allow them to vary repetition and that should account for their marked deficiency in using lexical ties appropriately in writing .

The students' questionnaire is concluded by involving students in decision-making about a more explicit instruction of lexical ties. The question is formulated as follows:

Do you see that integrating specific classroom exercises that are meant to teach you the appropriate means that are used to achieve repetition in texts would help you write more cohesive and coherent paragraphs?

## **2.5. Piloting the Questionnaires:**

Prior to real data collection comes the stage of trying out the research tools or what is coined in research terms as piloting. The pilot stage is deemed necessary as an initial

step to determine and sieve the quality of the questions that the researcher intends to ask. Besides, such piloting is said to decrease to a minimum the chance of ambiguity and confusion in the wording of the questions. Hopefully, this helps to increase the validity and reliability of the data gathered by means of the two questionnaires.

As a first step before data collection started, the teachers' questionnaire was surrendered to piloting. Two writing teachers that are said to possess expertise in teaching writing, since they have been teaching the skill for more than 15 years in the Department, were given the original version of the teachers' questionnaire. When the questionnaire was handed back, the teachers suggested a set of modifications to be made on this first version for improvement. In fact, two points were raised by the teachers. The first concerns the key words that are used most frequently in the questionnaire, namely cohesion, grammatical and lexical, coherence and some types of lexical cohesion devices like superordinate and general words, which the teachers see that they entail further clarification by the researcher. That is not to claim that teachers do not possess sufficient knowledge about these notions, but rather to provide a closer aid that should remind them the reference of these key concepts involved in the questionnaire. To this end, we opted to append a set of definitions and illustrations of the main concepts used in the questionnaire. The second point relates to the wording of some questions. For instance, one of the consulted teachers proposed to replace the word "qualify" that was devised in Q1 in the first version with the word "describe" which is considered more suitable and neutral for research purposes. In fact, the teachers did not hesitate to offer generously their insightful comments and suggestions for further amelioration of this research device that we have chosen to recapitulate here, so that to enable us elicit more relevant data.

With regard to the students' questionnaire, the phase of piloting was equally deemed crucial. Ten students among the student participants were given the original questionnaire to answer and underline some problematic questions. Indeed, the majority of the students did not seem to be familiar with some of the key terms used in the questionnaire such as superordinate and general words. That is why, we provided the improved version with a set of simplified examples to demonstrate the meaning of

these notions. Similarly, the students were unable to decode the term “cohesive devices” found in Q4 to the extent that the majority of them left the lines empty. When asked about this issue, the participants explained that they couldn’t guess the meaning of the concept. The researcher, then, demonstrates that the term in question refers to those words and expressions that are used to link sentences together into one coherent paragraph. The participants suggested to further simplify the term “cohesive devices” by substituting it with “linking words or expressions” to make it more accessible for first year students. Apart from these remarks, the student participants agree that the wording of the questions suits their level of language proficiency.

In brief, the piloting of both questionnaires was an inevitable phase to make sure that this research tool would help us yield relevant data. The importance of piloting is particularly insightful within the context of the present research since the questionnaires were not readily adopted from a given source but rather designed fully by the researcher.

## **2.6. Methods of Data Analysis:**

### **2.6.1. The Analysis of the Questionnaires:**

For the sake of analyzing the data obtained from the teachers’ and the students’ questionnaires, we followed a quantitative analysis in dealing with close-ended questions by means of a frequency count of all similar answers. On the other hand, we opted to employ a qualitative method that follows content analysis for the analysis of the answers obtained from open-ended questions. The procedure involves classifying the answers into categories after bringing similar ideas together. Thus, answers from close-ended questions were counted to get the percentage, while open-ended answers entailed an in-depth analysis by circling the essential ideas to be treated as the main categories.

### **2.6.2 The analysis of the Students’ written Productions:**

#### **2.6.2.1. Evaluation of Overall Writing Quality:**

Traditionally, there have been two different forms of evaluation of writing: The holistic and the analytic. The former hinges on the evaluator's general impression of the piece of writing, while the latter employs a set of criteria selected in advance by either the evaluator or the researcher. In the present study, the researcher has attempted to follow both systems in judging the subjects' writing. To this end, both the written task and students' examination papers were graded by two experienced writing instructors in the Department of English of the University of Algiers 2. It is worth noting, moreover, that the adoption of one of the marking systems would not be representative of writing teachers' orientation in assessing LMD students' written productions. In fact, some teachers do actually evaluate their students' writing along a set of pre-selected criteria (Such as: Content/10+ Form/10). That is why; one of the collaborating teachers adopts this trend of assessment in evaluating the corpus. However, what matters with regard to the context of the present study is to offer a grade that should indicate overall writing quality. Therefore, the two writing teachers have followed two distinct evaluation methods to yield one overall mark that should be used in the present research to classify the participants' writing as being of weak, average, or good quality.

Furthermore, to guarantee the reliability of such grading, attention was paid so that the difference between the two ratings does not exceed three points. In the present research, there was no need for a third rater since such gap did not take place. Besides, according to the consulted teachers, good and acceptable paragraphs are scored beyond 10/20 while weak paragraphs are scored below 10/20.

#### **2.6.2.2. Analysis of Cohesion:**

As we stated earlier in introducing the present study, the researcher has adopted Halliday and Hasan's (1976) modal for the analysis of cohesion. In each sentence, each lexical cohesive tie was identified, counted and described in terms of the type of reiteration it represented, i.e. in terms of same item, synonym, superordinate or general item. The framework of cohesion analysis is, indeed, the fruit of Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion in English as it appears in the final chapter of their seminal work. They attempted to offer a reasonably comprehensive framework of texture by providing "an

insight into what it is that makes a text a text” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:328). In the present section, we attempt to highlight the means that are suggested by the researchers for describing the cohesive patterns of a text. First, the major principles of analysis will be examined. Then, the coding scheme devoted to the various types of reiteration will be presented.

Basically, the fundamental concept that is used in performing the analysis of cohesion is that of the “tie”. In simple terms, a tie is understood as being the relation between the cohesive element and that which is presupposed by it. In fact, the concept is not only relational but also directional. The direction may be anaphoric, with the presupposed element preceding, or cataphoric with the presupposed element following. However, the anaphoric direction is likely to be the typical one.

Prior to undertaking an analysis of cohesion in a given text, some principles are to be borne in mind before embarking to actual analysis. The first principle stated by Halliday and Hasan draws our attention to an important aspect about the number of ties by recognizing that a single sentence may contain more than one tie. The second principle in Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) analysis concerns distance which is another characteristic of cohesion. With a low distance, an immediate tie has a presupposed item in the preceding sentence. A mediated tie occurs when the presupposed item is not found directly in the preceding sentence. In this case, some intermediate sentences tend to participate in the chain of cohesion. To illustrate this occurrence, the authors suggest the following example:

...Alice rubbed her eyes, and looked again (1). She couldn’t make out what had happened at all (2). Was she in a shop? (3)... (Halliday and Hasan 1976:330)

The second occurrence of “she” in the second sentence is a typical example of a mediated tie since it entrails the reader to pursue the target of its presupposition to the first sentence (Alice) in order to make sense of the passage

In fact, in terms of distance, the network of cohesion tends to be much more complex than the two mentioned types of ties.

Let’s examine the rest of the passage presented by Halliday and Hasan:

-Was she in a shop? (3) And was that really- was it really a sheep that was sitting on the other side of the counter?(4) Rub as she would, she could make nothing more of it.(5)

Taken by itself, the clause “rub as she would” cannot be resolved. Thus it must refer to “Alice rubbed her eyes” in sentence (1) in order to be comprehended. Here, we have an instance of what the authors call “remote tie”. It is important to note that what distinguishes remote from a mediated tie is the fact that in a remote tie there is no intermediate references to the rubbing of the eyes.

Also, it seems important to note that a tie may occur in both positions, i.e. be at a time mediated and remote. For instance, the “she” in sentence (5) presupposes nothing in (4) but refers back to (3); thus the tie is remote. Equally the presupposed item in (3) is another instance of “she” which has to be traced to “she” in sentence (2) and back again to “Alice” in (1). Therefore it is also mediated. Halliday and Hasan draw our attention that this type of occurrence characterizes both modes of language, i.e. speech and writing, “with a tendency for the more informal modes of discourse to be the more complex, as they are also in sentence structure” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:331)

As a matter of fact, when conducting an analysis of cohesion in the light of Halliday and Hasan’ modal, the researcher should specify, for any sentence, the following:

1. How many cohesive ties it contains.
2. For each of these ties, he shall indicate what type of cohesion is involved: Reference, substitution and so on.
3. For each tie, he shall specify whether it is immediate or non-immediate; and if non-immediate, whether mediated, remote or both. Then, he shall assign numerical values to each instance of a non- immediate tie, showing the number of intervening sentences.

### Sample Text:

To demonstrate how the analysis of cohesion is conducted, the researchers present the following text as a sample. The text is, then, followed by a table which displays its content of instances of cohesion. Given that our concern in the present study is lexical reiteration; only instances of this category of lexical cohesion are to be mentioned.

### The Text:

... The last word ended in a long bleat, so like a sheep that Alice quite started (1).

She looked at the Queen, who seemed to have suddenly wrapped herself up in the wool (2). Alice rubbed her eyes, and looked again (3). She couldn't make out what has happened at all (4). Was she in a shop (5)? And was that really- was it really a sheep that was sitting on the other side of the counter (6)? Rub as she would, she could make noting more of it (7)....

Sentence number	No of Ties	Cohesive Item	Type	Distance	Presupposed Item
(2)	1	The Queen	L 1.6	N 2	the Queen (in preceding text)
(3)	2	Alice	L 1.6	N1	Alice
		Looked	L 1.9	0	Looked
(7)	2	sheep	L 1.9		A sheep

**Table1: Analysis of cohesion as Presented in Halliday and Hasan (1976)**

Type of Cohesion	The Coding
Lexical	L
1. Same Item	1
2. Synonym or Near Synonym( incl hyponym)	2
3. Superordinate	3
4. General Item	4

5. Collocation	5
1.5 Having Reference that is :	
(a) Identical	6
(b) Inclusive	7
(c) Exclusive	8
(d) Unrelated	9

**Table2: Summary of the Coding Scheme as Presented in Halliday and Hasan (1976)**

**Conclusion:**

The present chapter reflects our main preoccupation in avoiding the points of weaknesses that characterized many of the previous studies, such as reliance on a single research instrument only, lack of plausible demonstration of research context, and emphasis on students' viewpoint or teachers' viewpoint without integrating both, among many others. We hope our data collection procedure, tackled throughout this chapter, has not overlooked many of these aspects of research methodology.

As a follow-up to the results gained from students' written productions (the written task and the exam papers), two questionnaires were devised, one to the group of first year students and the other to teachers of writing. The students' questionnaire has sought to unveil their perceptions, the reasons that underlie their use of lexical ties and whether their perceptions match their productions. The questionnaire to the teachers was meant to elicit the type of instruction they advocate for cohesion, more precisely lexical cohesion.

Finally, the context of the study was equally considered as we see that it entails description in terms of the participants, the writing skill and the demands it places on students.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **Presentation and Analysis of the Results**

#### **Introduction:**

The present chapter is meant to demonstrate the results of the study. First of all, we will attempt to present the results obtained from the analysis of cohesion of the corpus in order to identify the types of lexical reiteration that were used most frequently by the subjects as well as those that were less used or not employed at all by the student participants . Then, the writing ability of the student writers was evaluated by two writing teachers who were asked to assess the written task as well as the students' second term papers for overall quality. Such evaluation has enabled us to unveil the types of reiteration ties that prevail in the high-rated papers as well as those used in the low-rated ones. The distinction is attained by observing and comparing a sample of five papers representing the good writers' profile with a counter sample composed of the same number representing the weak writers' profile. Thus, both samples were compared in terms of the frequent types of reiteration used. Secondly, the results elicited through questionnaires are shown in the form of tables followed by comments.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that the presentation of the results obtained by means of the different research tools devised in the present study is an attempt to make it congruent with our core research concern. Therefore, these results will be presented and analyzed in the light of the three research questions posed at the beginning of the present study. The discussion that follows the presentation of the obtained results will seek to answer these research questions.

#### **3.1. Presentation of the Results obtained from the Analysis of Cohesion of the Subjects' Written Production:**

In this research, two sets of data were analyzed. The first results from the written task assigned by the researcher as homework. The subjects were required to write one- paragraph composition where they should state the reasons that make learning

English as a foreign language important, particularly nowadays. The latter will henceforth be labelled: corpus A. Besides corpus A, corpus B is made up of the subjects' second term writing examination papers. The purpose of the examination was to check the students' mastery of the comparison /contrast pattern on a topic suggested by the teacher (you have spent a year at the university; your current views about studies at the university might be different from your views of the studies at the university before this year. Choose two or three major differences and discuss them. Provide convincing examples and details).

Thus the written productions used for this study consist of 14 passages in each corpus. The purpose is to multiply the sources of the written data so that to obtain an average of frequency that would be representative of the selected sample's use of lexical ties. Such conclusions could not be attained in a case when we rely solely on one measurement of the subjects' most frequently used lexical ties derived merely from one source of written data. In what follows, we shall display the results attained as a result of undertaking the analysis of cohesion.

### **3.1.1 Frequently Used Lexical Ties:**

As we stated previously, the researcher has entirely relied on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) seminal model in undertaking the present analysis of cohesion. It is worth reiterating at this stage of data presentation that the present study accounts chiefly for the types of reiteration recognized by Halliday and Hasan in their listing of cohesion categories. Therefore, the remaining types, namely grammatical cohesion and the second type of lexical cohesion, i.e. collocation lie outside the interest of the present research. Thus, when encountered during the analysis phase, these cohesive ties were neglected.

Following Halliday and Hasan's procedure, in each sentence, each cohesive tie was identified, counted and described in terms of the type of lexical cohesion it represented i.e, in terms of the same item, synonym, superordinate and general word. The results obtained are displayed in the following set of tables. Respectively, Table 3 shows the frequency of each type of lexical reiteration ties

found in corpus A. The following table (table 4) indicates the types of reiteration spot in corpus B.

Finally, table 5 will summarize the prevailing lexical cohesive ties in terms of their mean frequency obtained by counting the reiteration ties found in both corpuses .Therefore, the ultimate results that will be scrutinized for the distribution of lexical reiteration ties in the subjects' written output should appear in table5.Hence, for the sake of clarity, the numerical data provided in table 5 should later be presented in a figure to demonstrate the frequency of each type of lexical reiteration in relation to the remainder of the categories. Descriptions and interpretations of the results would then appear.

Paragraph number	Number of ties used	Same item	Synonym	Superordinate	General Word
P1	15	10	4	1	0
P2	8	4	4	0	0
P3	6	4	2	0	0
p4	7	3	2	2	0
P5	9	3	6	0	0
P6	6	3	3	0	0
P7	5	3	2	0	0
P8	6	3	3	0	0
P9	8	6	2	0	0
P10	10	9	1	0	0
P11	10	7	3	0	0
P12	5	4	1	0	0
P13	9	6	2	1	0
P14	5	3	2	0	0
Total	109	68	37	4	0
Percentage	100%	62,38%	33,94%	3,66%	0%

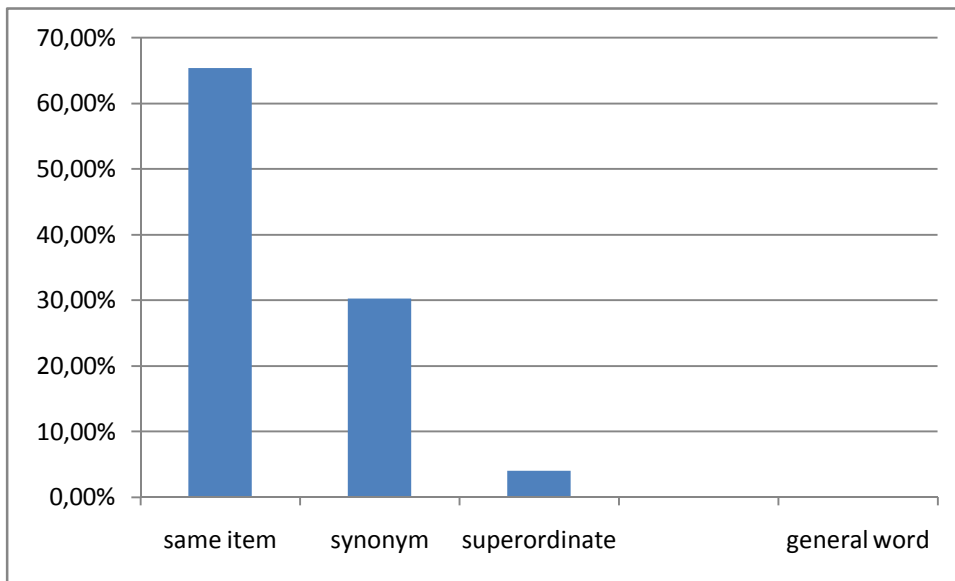
**Table 3:** Types of Reiteration Ties found in Corpus A

Paragraph number	Number of ties	Same item	Synonym	superordinate	General Word
P1	5	4	1	0	0
P2	10	7	3	0	0
P3	6	4	2	0	0
P4	3	3	0	0	0
P5	5	2	3	0	0
P6	6	6	0	0	0
P7	4	0	0	0	0
P8	6	3	3	0	0
P9	4	3	1	0	0
P10	4	1	3	0	0
P11	10	10	0	0	0
P12	5	5	0	0	0
P13	9	2	3	4	0
P14	8	5	3	0	0
Total	86	60	22	4	0
Percentage	100%	69.76%	25.58%	4.65%	0%

**Table 4:** Types of reiteration ties found in Corpus B

Type of Reiteration Ties	Corpus A	Corpus B	Total	Mean	Percentage
Same Item	68	60	128	64	65,64%
Synonym	37	22	59	29,5	30,25%
Superordinate	4	4	8	4	4,10%
General Word	0	0	0	0	0%

**Table5:** The Prevailing Types of Lexical Reiteration Ties in the Subjects' Written Productions



**Figure 1: Distribution of lexical reiteration ties in the subjects' written production**

In the first place, the figure demonstrates the students' preferred types of lexical ties. It can be noted that the subjects have a high preference for repetition of the same item, the first category of Halliday and Hasan's reiteration ties. The percentage is significantly higher than the remainder of the other categories, nearly 65,64 % (types of relationships existing between repeated lexical items will be discussed later). Thus, first year students seem to find the use of mere repetition the most convenient mean of establishing lexical ties. A possible reason for such use is to establish clear emphasis.

Synonyms are the second most frequently used category in the students' writing in this study. This category constitutes 30,25 % of the total number of lexical cohesion ties.

With regard to superordinates, the analysis of cohesion has revealed a very limited use of this type of reiteration ties among the subjects as the percentage does not exceed 4,10%.

What is striking in the distribution of lexical devices we obtained by examining the ultimate results is the total absence of the last category of Halliday and

Hasan's(1976) taxonomy of reiteration ties, namely general words. The percentage of the present category indicates surprisingly 0 %

Overall, a shallow examination of the findings obtained as a result of conducting an analysis of cohesion on the written samples selected for the present study unveils the patterns of cohesion employed by the student writers. Mainly, the analysis demonstrates students' explicit preference of repetition of the same item in making their passages lexically tied. This preference is reflected in the distribution of the four types of reiteration ties where this first category represents the majority.

Moreover, the analysis revealed also that student writers do actually have recourse, sometimes, to synonyms to avoid the effect of awkward repetitions in their writings. However, the limited use of synonyms, the rarity of superordinates along the absence of general words are questionable and, hence, entail further discussions and clarification.

Taken as a whole, the present findings resemble those attained by Witte and Faigely (1981). More precisely, the above mentioned distribution was found to prevail in the written sample of low-rated essays. In this respect, the researchers examine that:

The majority of lexical ties (65 %) in the low essays are repetition of the same item (Witte and Faigely 1981:197).

### **3.1.2. Type of Repeated Occurrences among Repeated Lexical Items:**

The advocated modal of cohesion analysis in the present study, namely Halliday and Hasan's involves further specifications concerning the identification of the type of occurrences among repeated lexical items .Following this modal, when conducting an analysis of lexical reiteration ties, the researcher has to specify whether the repetition of a lexical item is identical, inclusive, exclusive or unrelated. The tables below demonstrate the frequency of the different types of cohesive occurrences involving repeated lexical items as they appear in the subjects' written productions. Table 8 synthesizes the results recorded in both corpuses.

No of Paragraph	Total number of same items	Identical	Inclusive	Exclusive	Unrelated
P1	10	2	6	0	2
P2	4	4	0	0	0
P3	4	3	1	0	0
P4	3	3	0	0	0
P5	3	3	0	0	0
P6	3	3	0	0	0
P7	3	3	0	0	0
P8	3	3	0	0	0
P9	6	5	1	0	0
P10	9	9	0	0	0
P11	7	6	0	1	0
P12	4	3	0	1	0
P13	6	5	1	0	0
P14	3	3	0	0	0
Total	68	55	9	2	2
Percentage	100%	80,88%	13,23%	2,94%	2,94%

**Table 6: Type of Repeated Occurrences found in Corpus A**

No of Paragraph	Total number of same items	Identical	Inclusive	Exclusive	Unrelated
P1	5	4	1	0	0
P2	7	6	0	1	0
P3	4	4	0	0	0
P4	3	3	0	0	0
P5	2	2	0	0	0
P6	6	6	0	0	0
P7	4	4	0	0	0
P8	3	3	0	0	0
P9	3	3	0	0	0
P10	1	1	0	0	0
P11	10	10	0	0	0
P12	5	4	1	0	0
P13	2	2	0	0	0
P14	5	5	0	0	0
Total	60	57	2	1	0
Percentage	100%	95%	3,33%	1,66%	0%

**Table7: Type of Repeated Occurrences Found in Corpus B**

Type of Repeated Occurrence	Identical	Inclusive	Exclusive	Unrelated
Students' Written Production				
Corpus A	<b>55</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Corpus B	<b>57</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Total	<b>112</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Percentage	<b>87,5%</b>	<b>8,59%</b>	<b>2,34%</b>	<b>1,56%</b>

**Table 8: The Prevailing Types of cohesive Occurrences among Repeated Lexical Items in the Students' Written productions**

It can be noted that the identical type of occurrence between and among the repeated lexical items is the most prevalent. It constitutes 87, 5% of the total number of cohesive ties that are said to belong to the first category of lexical reiteration. The discrepancy is highly notable between the frequency of the identical type and that of inclusive (8, 59%), exclusive (2, 34%), and the unrelated (1, 56%) repeated lexical items.

Coined as “simple repetition” by Hoey(1996:52), this kind of occurrence helps the writer to bring something new to what has previously been tackled. Hoey devises the concept of “semantic drift” to indicate the slight shift in meaning that occurs in a term starting from its original occurrence up to its repetition.

Thus, the inclusive, exclusive and unrelated types of repetition occur much less frequently. The distribution demonstrates that their percentage of occurrence range from 1, 56 % to 8, 59% only.

To summarize, the results of our analysis of cohesion of the subjects' productions indicate a predominance of repetition of the same item which seems to be the type of reiteration that was mostly relied on by the student writers who used it heavily for establishing lexical cohesion in their writing. Furthermore, within this first category, we noted the prevalence of identical repetition among the other types of repeated lexical items.

Equally, the results showed that the students involved in the study encountered more difficulties in using superordinates and particularly general words. Thus, we assume that the overall prevailing pattern of lexical reiteration in the subjects' writing is not balanced and mainly contribute to establish weaker lexical ties which proved to

be in line with Connor's examination of ESL writing when compared to native speakers' (Connor, 1984)

The above results are meant to provide an overall picture of the subjects' use of lexical reiteration ties and, hence, it was devoted to answer research question 1. The section that will follow should yield an in-depth investigation of the students' preferred lexical reiteration patterns. To this end, we attempt to turn now to the second research question which says:

How do low and high-rated papers differ with regard to the types of lexical reiteration employed?

### **3.2. Comparison between the High- and Low-rated Papers in terms of the Types of Reiteration Employed:**

The current study was conducted to unveil the patterns of lexical cohesion devices that actually prevail in the written productions of a group of first year students. Therefore, the previously presented results were meant to provide a holistic image of the subjects' use of lexical reiteration ties and, hence, it was an attempt devoted to answer the first research question (RQ 1). Respectively, the present section should go further in searching the prevailing lexical reiteration ties in the subjects' written productions. To this end, we shall turn now to highlight the cohesion profiles that actually differentiate high-rated paragraphs from low-rated ones. More precisely, the concern of the second research question is to identify the patterns of lexical reiteration ties that tend to emerge in good as well as poor written productions.

It is worth reiterating that the compositions under analysis were evaluated by two writing instructors who are teaching in the English Department at the University of Algiers 2. Each instructor has adopted his own criteria for correcting the sample papers involved in the present study following his usual trend of assessing overall writing quality. Thus, for reliability sake, we opted to get a "mean score" that should indicate relatively the overall quality of each of the 28 papers contained in both corpuses. Then, the one-paragraph compositions were rank-ordered which enabled us to sift them into good, average and weak papers. Owing to the fact that our central concern is to spot the preferred types of lexical reiteration expressed by the writers of the high-rated papers as well as those adopted by the writers of the low-rated papers, papers of average quality should lie outside the present scope of comparison.

As a first step, we opted to select a sample of five passages representing each profile. The papers were taken randomly from the two corpuses on the basis of the teachers' evaluations. The two evaluators have agreed on the following classification:

- Marks that are equal or above **12/20** signify a mark obtained by a good student writer and, hence the written output is more likely to be labelled a “high-rated paper”.
- **10/20** and **11, 5/20** refer to the marks obtained by average student writers.
- Less than **10/20** is a mark that is usually associated with a poor writing quality. Therefore, papers given such score are to be regarded as “low-rated papers”.

Table 7 displays the marks of the sample which is taken to be representative of high-rated papers that are the outcome of good student writers’ effort to yield paragraphs of good writing quality. Respectively, p1, p2, and p3 are taken from corpus A. While p4 and p5 are derived from corpus B (It is important to note that these marks result from counting the mean of two evaluations).

No of Paper	Mark Obtained
P 1	15
P 2	14
p 3	14
P 4	13
P 5	13

**Table9:** Marks obtained by the Sample Representing the High-rated Papers

On the other hand, the counter sample representing the weak student writers is selected on the basis of the marks shown in table 8. Mainly, p1, p2, p3 and p 4 are taken from corpus B while p5 is an excerpt of corpus A.

No of Paper	Mark Obtained
P 1	7
P 2	7
p 3	7
P 4	7
P 5	6

**Table 10:** Marks obtained by the Sample Representing the Low -rated Papers

Having classified the subjects’ written output on the basis of their writing quality, we seek now to sort out the main characteristics that distinguish paragraphs ranked high and low in overall quality via exploring the usefulness of Halliday and Hasan’s( 1976) theory of cohesion in writing research.

We anticipated that the quantitative analysis of lexical reiteration ties in the high- and low-rated paragraphs would reveal significant differences in the cohesion profiles of good and weak student writers. The findings of our analysis accentuated these predictions.

First of all, we assume that involving five papers in each sample seems reasonably sufficient to represent each profile. For instance, a widely acknowledged study undertaken by Witte and Faigely (1981) used the same number of papers in differentiating the cohesion profiles of essays ranked high and low in overall quality. The ways in which the student writers of the high- and low-rated paragraphs form lexical cohesion ties will be examined throughout the remaining part of the present section within a three-fold framework. The latter should highlight a comparison between the two counter samples of writing proficiency in terms of the overall density of the lexical reiteration used, the frequency of each type separately as well as the type of cohesive occurrences among repeated lexical items. Besides, for illustration sake, some excerpts will be taken from the subjects' written productions when appropriate to substantiate some comparative points.

### **3.2.1. Overall Density of the lexical Reiteration Ties in the High- and Low-Rated Papers:**

To begin with, the first aspect that we intend to pinpoint within this comparative framework is the total number of lexical cohesion devices employed in the two poles of writing proficiency. The result of counting the total number of lexical reiteration ties in the five papers produced by good student writers indicates **44** instances of this category of cohesion in English which represents exactly **twice** the number of lexical reiteration ties used by weak student writers, being **22**. Therefore, it can be noted that, in the first place, the figures for this aspect of the subjects' use of cohesive devices tend to be precisely comparable.

It follows that at the most elementary level; high-rated paragraphs are much denser in employing lexical reiteration ties than the low-rated paragraphs. The present results tend to suggest that the density of cohesion and more precisely, reiteration is of crucial interest in sharply differentiating good from poor writing quality.

Even though the observation made by Witte and Faigely(1981) is broader in scope as it involves the five types of cohesion in English instead of focusing on one type as it is the case in the present study, their findings tend to be more inclusive. The similarity that both studies bears is the density of cohesive ties that seems to be a discriminating factor between high-rated papers, which were found to be denser in cohesive ties and low-rated papers that involve a significantly small number of cohesive ties.

Our second observation concerns the way good and poor student writers form lexical ties. In other words, the distribution of the four types of lexical reiteration in both categories of writing should be presented in what follows.

### 3.2.2. Distribution of Lexical Reiteration Ties in the Low- and High-rated Papers:

Generally speaking, throughout the previous respect, we were mainly concerned with presenting a global picture about the two samples' use of lexical reiteration ties. The holistic figures yielded as a result of undertaking the analysis of cohesion in the written samples was our initial step in the conducted comparison. Now, we would like to move one step further in our continuum of investigation via highlighting the differences that we could sort out as a result of comparing two kinds of written performance.

Numerical data, in this respect, are outlined in the tables below. More precisely, table 11 and table 12 represent the frequency of each type of lexical reiteration found in the high- and low-rated papers respectively.

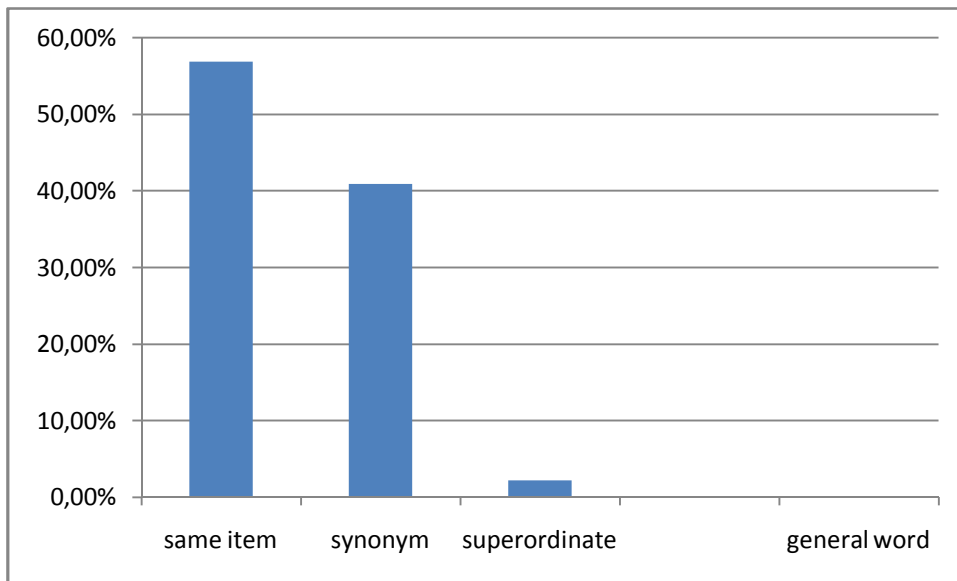
For a more comparable view, data is presented in figures 3 and 5 respectively which should bring the findings together and hence, comparison is made easier.

No of Paper	No of Ties Used	Same Item	Synonym	Superordinate	General Word
P1	15	10	4	1	0
P2	6	4	2	0	0
P3	9	3	6	0	0
P4	6	3	3	0	0
P5	8	5	3	0	0
Total	44	25	18	1	0
Percentage	100%	56,81%	40,90%	2,27%	0%

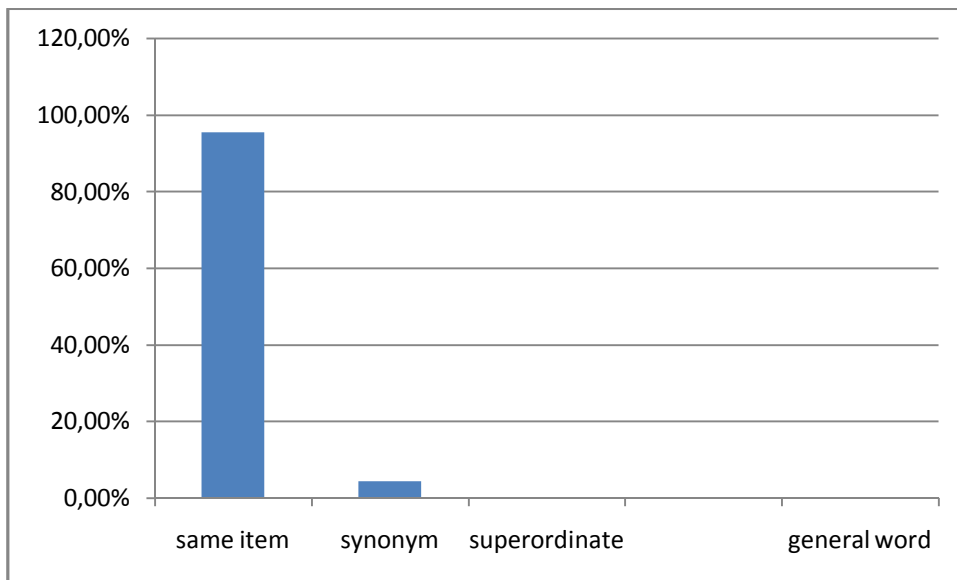
**Table11: Distribution of the types of Lexical Reiteration in the Sample of High-rated Papers**

No of Paper	No of ties used	Same Item	Synonym	Superordinate	General Word
P1	3	3	0	0	0
P2	6	6	0	0	0
P3	4	4	0	0	0
P4	4	3	1	0	0
P5	5	5	0	0	0
Total	22	21	1	0	0
Percentage	100%	95,45%	4,54%	0%	0%

**Table 12: Distribution of the types of Lexical Reiteration in the Sample of Low-rated Papers**



**Figure 2: Distribution of Lexical Reiteration Ties in the High-rated Papers**



**Figure 3: Distribution of Lexical Reiteration Ties in the Low-rated papers**

In the light of the figures, there is a significant discrepancy between the high and low-rated paragraphs in terms of the distribution of lexical reiteration ties. In fact, the variation concerns the percentages of the first three types of reiteration. Therefore, what can be stated, in the first place, is the single similarity that both types of student writers share. In other words, data shows that there is a consensus among the subjects to avoid the last category of lexical reiteration for we recorded its total absence in both types of writing quality. Apart from this shared aspect, our analysis yielded results that are precisely comparable in terms of the percentages of each type of lexical reiteration

contained in our samples. Thus, what follows should tackle the aspects of distribution that should differentiate proficiency in the written output of the subjects.

To begin with, the figures indicate that the first category of lexical reiteration, namely repetition of the same item constitutes the core of the discrepancy between the two samples compared. Indeed, reading the quantitative data obtained suggests a difference of 38, 64 % between the good and poor writings in employing the first category of Halliday and Hasan's lexical reiteration. To put it differently, we noticed that writers of low-rated papers have a greater preference for same item repetition than the writers of high-rated papers. This tendency is quite apparent in that they rely heavily on this category to establish lexical cohesion in their passages. In fact, nearly, all the lexical ties used in the poor papers fall into the same item sub-category (95, 45%). On the other hand, high-rated papers actually display relatively lesser dependence on this first category of lexical reiteration as it represents almost half of the total number of ties used (56, 81%).

With regard to synonymy, the frequency is reversed and the distribution is shaped differently. Remarkably, in order to reintroduce the same lexical item again, good student writers were found to be the good explorers of the semantic relation of synonymy with a proportion of 40, 20% compared to their fellow students. Poor student writers display notably a very limited use of this second category of lexical reiteration with merely a percentage of 4, 54%.

As far as using superordinates is concerned, the comparison shows a slight gap between the two profiles of student writers. Although very limited (2, 27%), high-rated papers do actually exhibit some instances of superordinates to reiterate lexical items. On the other hand, poor writers have entirely ignored this category of lexical reiteration since we did not come across instances of superordinates (00%) when analyzing the sample of low-rated paragraphs for lexical cohesion devices.

### **3.2.3. Comparison between the Types of Repeated Occurrences Found in the High- and Low-rated Papers:**

As far as the type of cohesive occurrences among repeated lexical items is concerned and in the light of the tables, both writers' profiles have exhibited a relatively similar distribution. The latter is characterized by an apparent dominance of the first sub-category of repetition, namely the identical in both samples, being respectively 19/21 in the poor paragraphs and 22/25 in the good paragraphs. Equally, the written samples tend, approximately, to involve similar proportions of inclusive repetition. Similarly, the selected samples contain no instances of exclusive and unrelated repetitions.

Type of Cohesive Occurrence \ No of paper	Identical	Inclusive	Exclusive	Unrelated
P 1	8	2	0	0
P2	3	1	0	0
P3	3	0	0	0
P4	3	0	0	0
P5	5	0	0	0
Total	22	3	0	0

**Table 13: Type of Cohesive Occurrence among the Repeated Lexical Items in the High-rated Papers**

Type of Cohesive Occurrence \ No of paper	Identical	Inclusive	Exclusive	Unrelated
P 1	3	0	0	0
P2	6	1	0	0
P3	3	0	0	0
P4	4	1	0	0
P5	3	0	0	0
Total	19	2	0	0

**Table 14: Type of Cohesive Occurrence among the Repeated Lexical Items in the Low-rated Papers**

To sum up, the present comparative framework has fully met our expectations in sharply differentiating proficiency in the written output of our subjects as regards the distribution of lexical reiteration ties. The latter has been proved, in the light of the present findings, to be one further underlying aspect that should account for writing quality. Thus, the dominance of same item repetition in poor writing along the marked deficiency in using synonyms, the absence of superordinates and general words are the characteristics that are more likely to be typically associated with a poor writing quality, while exploring the semantic relations of synonymy and superordinates seems to be the quality of good paragraphs (For illustration sake, see appendix 3 where we attempted to provide a set of instances of lexical cohesion devices taken from students' written productions. Equally, this appended part presents two sample tables showing a thorough analysis of cohesion performed in a high-rated paper and a low-rated one).

### **3.3. Presentation and Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire's Data:**

#### **Introduction:**

The students' questionnaire, as stated in the design chapter, targets the theoretical side underlying the subjects' perception of lexical reiteration in writing. It means that the

questionnaire seeks to address those aspects of background knowledge students’ possess regarding the phenomenon of lexical reiteration. By doing so, it is hoped that students’ responses would provide an in-depth explanation and clarification of the picture we obtained through scrutinizing students’ written productions in terms of the frequent types of reiteration used. Thus, the other side of the coin is particularly sought by means of this research tool. The questionnaire comprises three parts which correspond to a three-fold objective. Respectively, this section presents the data obtained from these parts following the aim stated for each part. Data is shown in a series of tables followed by descriptions of the content.

Part one has a general aim in that it serves to introduce us to the most problematic features which pertain to the subjects’ writing. Two questions were devised to cover this issue. Q 1 of the questionnaire is meant to elicit the extent to which the activity of writing is challenging to students. Table 15 shows the subjects’ answers to Q1:

Degree of Difficulty Students	Very Difficult	Difficult	Slightly Difficult	Not Difficult at All
S 1	+			
S 2		+		
S 3		+		
S 4			+	
S 5		+		
S 6		+		
S 7		+		
S 8		+		
S 9		+		
S 10		+		
S 11		+		
S 12		+		
S 13		+		
S 14			+	

**Table15: Degree of Difficulty of the Writing Activity According to the Students**

The point to consider in the subjects’ answers is that the majority of students (11/14) described writing as being a “difficult” activity. Besides, S 1 did not hesitate to express the hardships that he usually encounters during the process of writing as he described it as “very difficult”. Compared with their fellow students, S4 and S14 seem to find paragraph writing less challenging. Therefore, students do not deny the complexity and the difficulty of writing since none of them has circled the last column (not difficult at all ).

All in all, the students’ answers indicate an acute difficulty encountered by student writers in meeting the demands of academic writing. The hardships expressed

by the subjects entail an in-depth investigation of the reasons underlying the problematic aspects of the writing process. To this end, Q2 highlights some of the aspects that, more particularly, relate to the present study concern and that as we assume are among the most frequent challenging requirements of the skill. Table 16 presents the students' answers to Q 2:

Type of Difficulty Students	Organization of Content to Achieve Coherence	Finding the appropriate connecting words or expressions to relate Your Sentences	Finding the Appropriate Vocabulary	Other Difficulties
S 1	+	+	+	+
S 2			+	
S 3			+	
S 4			+	
S 5			+	
S 6			+	
S 7			+	
S 8		+		
S 9			+	
S 10		+		
S 11			+	
S 12		+		
S 13			+	
S 14			+	

**Table16: Types of Difficulties Encountered by the subjects when Writing**

The displayed answers suggest that the most frequent challenge facing our subjects when writing seems to be “finding the appropriate vocabulary” which represents the majority (11/14). Thus, students stress their need for a large vocabulary knowledge which seems to hinder the flow of their ideas in writing. Besides, S1 seems to find all the suggested aspects problematic which should account for the great deal of difficulty he expressed in answering the preceding question. In the second place, S8, S10 and S 12 agree that what plagues them throughout the writing process is “finding the appropriate connecting words or expressions to link their sentences together”.

In sum, the students' responses are deemed insightful in that they suggest a significant deficiency in students' vocabulary knowledge which should partly account for their misuse of lexical reiteration ties. Thus, the absence of the appropriate lexical item along with the need for the suitable cohesive ties indicate a shortage in equipping the participants with the necessary lexical items which would have enhanced the quality of their writing.

Due to the fact that the analysis of cohesion was limited in examining only writing products for cohesion while neglecting the writing processes, within the second part of the questionnaire we aim at studying the cognitive aspects of cohesion through brainstorming the subjects' background knowledge about the phenomenon of reiteration. Thus, Q3 is devoted to capture the options of lexical reiteration that students think they employ most in their writing. To put it simply, this question asks students about their tendency when they want to reintroduce a word or expression that they have already mentioned in the preceding sentence. The options suggest not only the four types of lexical reiteration but also a grammatical one (using pronoun) as the question is close-ended and the aim is to cover all the possible answers. Table 17 gathers students' answers to Q3.

Options Students	Repeat it exactly			Use a pronoun			Use a Synonym			Use a superordinate			Use a General Word		
	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N
S 1		+		+				+				+			+
S 2		+		+				+				+			+
S3		+			+				+		+			+	
S4	+				+				+			+			+
S5		+		+				+			+				+
S6		+		+					+			+			+
S7		+		+					+			+			+
S8		+			+			+				+			+
S9		+			+				+			+			+
S10		+			+				+			+			+
S11		+		+				+				+			+
S12		+		+					+			+		+	
S13		+			+				+					+	
S14		+		+				+				+			+
TOTAL	1	13	0	8	6	0	0	6	8	0	2	11	0	3	11

A: Always      S: Sometimes      N: Never

**Table 17: Options that Students Think they Tend to Employ to Achieve Reiteration**

It appears quite clearly in their answers that most students rely chiefly on using pronouns as the most convenient way to avoid exact repetition. This is reflected by the frequency of “always” (8/14) and “sometimes” (6/14) compared with the other suggested types of repetitions. In the second place, we find exact repetition which the majority of students tend “sometimes” to have recourse to (13/14). Nevertheless, almost half of the subjects (6/14) reiterate by means of synonymy. However, the two remaining types, namely the use of superordinates and general words have almost been

neglected by the sample since the majority (11/14) circle “never” to express their ignorance of these lexical cohesive devices.

All in all, students’ responses seem to underlie an important fact about students’ background knowledge. The latter revolves round the prominence that was given, in the students’ answers, to grammatical cohesion (namely using pronouns) at the expense of lexical cohesion ties. In fact, the latter results from several factors that we attempt to discuss in the discussion part below.

Closely linked to the previous question, Q4 is meant to provide a further space for students to demonstrate the type of knowledge they possess about cohesion in writing. Through this brainstorming open-ended question, the subjects were invited to list the most common cohesive devices that they usually employ to tie their sentences together into one coherent paragraph. We gathered students’ answers into categories which are shown in table 18 below.

Students	Cohesive Devices Listed	Category
S1	In addition, moreover, firstly, secondly, next, then	Conjunction: Addition, temporal arrangement
S2	In addition, moreover, firstly, secondly, next, then	Conjunction: Addition, temporal arrangement
S3	Firstly, then, In addition, Besides	Conjunction: Addition, temporal arrangement
S4	Pronouns, Conjunctions	Reference, conjunction
S5	Pronouns, Conjunctions	Reference, conjunction
S6	Also, but, however, whereas, while, for, since	Conjunction: Addition, contrast
S7	First, Second, then, moreover, in addition, furthermore	Conjunction: Addition, temporal arrangement
S8	However, but, while, for , since	Conjunction: Contrast, cause
S9	Moreover, Besides, in addition	Conjunction: Addition
S10	However, but	Conjunction: Contrast
S11	However, to conclude	Conjunction: Contrast,
S12	No suggestions	
S13	No suggestions	
S14	Conjunctions	Conjunctions

**Table 18: The Cohesive Devices Listed by Students**

The table demonstrates that most students agree that texts are tied together due to using conjunction and reference. According to the cohesive devices they mentioned, first year students’ background knowledge seems to revolve, chiefly, around conjunction and reference as being the sole cohesive ties that are available to link sentences together into one coherent paragraph. This conclusion is reached as a result of the nature of the data gathered. Apart from S12 and S13 who opted to leave the

lines empty, the majority of the subjects exhibit a good command of conjunctions, namely those of addition, contrast and temporal arrangement. However, what seems worth noting in the present results is the clear absence of cohesive ties of a lexical kind. This absence reflects a neutral fact about students' knowledge in that it lacks awareness about the cohesive effect of vocabulary.

The following question (Q5) extends the issue of awareness raised through the preceding question. More precisely, the researcher provides a multiple choice question to uncover the students' perceptions about the use of a variety of synonyms, superordinates and general words in the texts that are usually presented as modals in the reading and writing classes. Following the objective stated for this second part of the questionnaire, the question's aim is to check the subjects' consciousness about these three types of lexical reiteration since repetition of the same lexical item seems the most obvious type of this category of lexical cohesion. Moreover, the analysis of cohesion of the subjects' written productions reveal the over use of this sub-category of lexical reiteration at the expense of the other three categories. To this end, the question is meant as a follow-up tool. Table 19 presents students' answers:

Reasons Students	Teachers want to help you learn new words	Writers want to avoid many repetitions to achieve good style	Writers want to achieve good style and create one coherent text
S 1			+
S 2		+	
S 3			+
S 4			+
S 5			+
S 6			+
S 7			+
S 8		+	
S 9	+		
S 10			+
S 11		+	+
S 12		+	
S 13			+
S 14	+		

**Table19: Reasons Underlying the Use of Reiteration Ties in the Modal Texts According to the Students**

Surprisingly, the table indicates a higher standard of consciousness among students who seem capable of inferring the right option among the suggested ones. Nearly, more than half the subjects (8/14) were able to realize the effect of reiteration by means of synonyms, superordinates, and general words in enhancing the writing

style and contributing to writing cohesion. However, according to S2, S8 and S12, what really matters is the stylistic effect that results from varying semantic relations in yielding a beautiful text.

On the other hand, S9 and S14 believe that model texts were chosen to be so for the mere reason that they involve such rich repertoire of lexical items which should promote their vocabulary knowledge and hence, their foreign language.

In brief, Q5 addresses the way students perceive the variety of semantic relations employed to reiterate lexical items in texts. As a matter of fact, we noticed a relatively encouraging awareness among them. However, this awareness was not clearly reflected in their written production since it exhibits a significant deficiency in using these lexical ties. Therefore, there remain some pieces of the jigsaw to be completed within the learning context.

Following Q5, Q6 required students to self –evaluate their productions by comparing them to the texts they usually read in class in terms of the degree of their correspondence. Table 20 shows the subjects’ answers.

Degree of Correspondence Students	To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	To No Extent
S 1		+	
S 2		+	
S 3		+	
S 4			+
S 5		+	
S 6		+	
S 7		+	
S 8		+	
S 9		+	
S 10		+	
S 11		+	
S 12		+	
S 13		+	
S 14		+	

**Table20: Degree of Correspondence between the Students’ Writing and Modal Texts in terms of Using the variety of Lexical Ties.**

It can be noted that most students (13/14) see that their written output approaches to some extent the modal texts in terms of using the variety of lexical ties. Moreover, it can be noted that this holistic self-evaluation corresponds to the teachers' view since as we shall see below even teachers tend to describe their students' writing as being average in terms of overall lexical cohesiveness. However, this evaluation is not deemed adequately informative since it hides the whole truth. That is why; we chose to elucidate this information via the following question, namely Q7. The latter extends this concern by inviting students to select among suggested reasons the one/ones that make their writing lack the variety of lexical ties in case they answered the preceding question "to some or to no extent". The subjects' responses are shown in table21.

Students \ Reasons	Because no lesson has been devoted to teach how repetition occurs in written text	You have noticed the use of these tools but you don't know how to use them in your own writing	Your vocabulary knowledge is very limited to allow you to vary repetition
S 1			+
S 2		+	
S 3			+
S 4			+
S 5		+	
S 6		+	
S 7			+
S 8		+	
S 9			+
S 10		+	
S 11		+	
S 12			+
S 13			+
S 14			+

**Table 21: Reasons that Underlie Deficiencies in Using Lexical Reiteration Ties According to Students.**

As the table indicates, most students (8/14) attribute their failure to use lexical reiteration ties appropriately to their limited vocabulary knowledge. In fact, the first question of the present questionnaire revealed that "finding the appropriate vocabulary" tends to be the most difficult to fulfil among all the requirements of writing according to the subjects. Thus, students' responses are not without significance since there seems to be congruence among first year students that the

underlying hindrance is their deficient vocabulary. Moreover, of a relatively similar importance is the number of students who have noticed the use of these cohesive devices but didn't know how to use them in their own writing. In other words, 6/14 of all the subjects see that their ability to perceive lexical reiteration ties alone is not sufficient to enable them to produce these cohesive devices correctly in writing. This discrepancy between students' perception and their production of lexical reiteration ties entails a lengthier elaboration and discussion which we opt to tackle in the discussion chapter.

Finally, our last concern in the present questionnaire was to consult students about their opinion concerning the implementation of an explicit instruction of lexical cohesive devices in the writing module. In deed, students agree that they need such instruction since all of them (14/14) see that an explicit instruction is more likely to improve their use of lexical cohesive devices that are available in the English language

### 3.4. Presentation and Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire's Data:

The teachers' questionnaire, as presented in the preceding chapter, is an attempt to answer the third research question. The latter is worth reiterating at this stage of investigation:

**RQ 3:** Do EFL writing instructors associate the same degree of importance to lexical cohesion as grammatical cohesion and coherence in their attempt to enhance discourse competence in writing?

To this end, the content of the questionnaire has been designed in a way that would allow us to unveil the current first year writing teachers' practice as concerns the aspect of lexical cohesion.

Prior to presenting the teachers' answers as regards their day-to-day teaching practice and their assessment of students' use of lexical cohesive devices in writing, the overall level of students' paragraph writing is displayed according to the ten teachers' responses to the first question:

Level	Good	Average	Weak
Teachers			
T 1		+	
T 2		+	
T 3			+
T 4			+
T 5			+
T 6			+
T 7			+
T 8		+	

T 9		+	
T 10		+	

**Table 22: First Year Students’ Level of Paragraph Writing According to Teachers**

Table 22 demonstrates that five teachers of writing out of the ten participating in the study described their first year students’ writing as being of average level. Equally, the same number of teachers seem to be unsatisfied with their students’ written production as they qualified it to be “weak”. What is striking when examining table 22 is that teachers have avoided describing students’ writing as being “Good”. What is more is that T4 has provided us with quantitative data besides the qualitative description of overall students’ writing to support her position:

Level	Good	Average	Weak
Teachers			
T 4	10,2%	31,8%	58% ( The majority)

**Table 23: Percentages of students’ level of Paragraph writing According to T4**

Such responses can only lead us to conclude that first year students’ writing is either of average or weak level. Indeed, this demonstrates that students do actually face difficulties in producing a well-written text in the light of their teachers’ evaluations. The students’ questionnaire has already been presented and demonstrated parts of the difficulties encountered by students while writing.

Through the second question, teachers have attempted to identify the most problematic components of discourse competence, as outlined by Canale and Swain (1980) and that are viewed to prevent students from producing cohesive and coherent paragraphs. The answers are presented in the table below.

Components of Discourse Competence	Grammatical Cohesion	Lexical Cohesion	Coherence
Teachers			
T 1	+	+	+
T 2	+	+	+
T 3	+	+	+
T 4	+	+	+
T 5	+	+	
T 6	+	+	+
T 7	+	+	+
T 8	+	+	+
T 9	+	+	+
T 10	+	+	

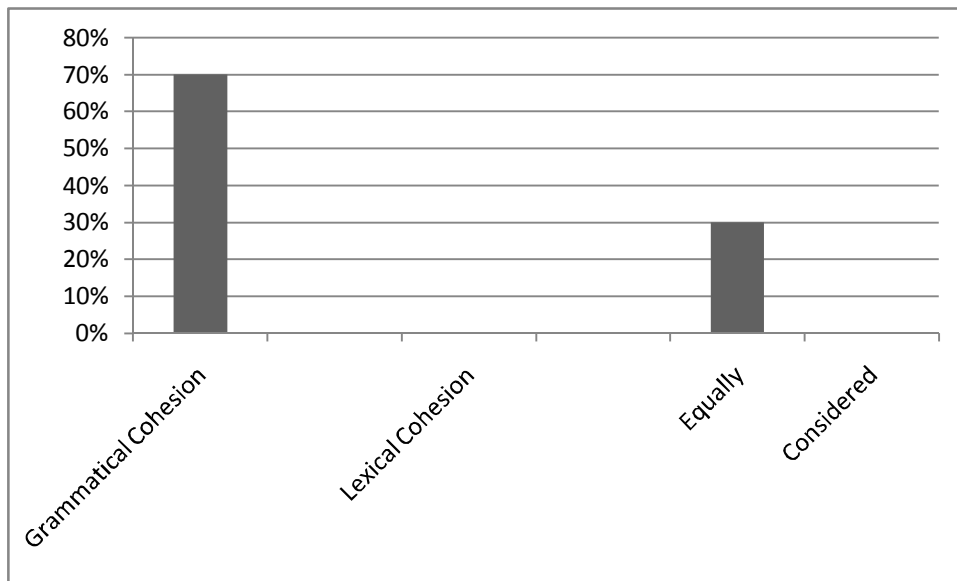
**Table 24: Most Problematic Components of Discourse Competence in Students’ writing According to Teachers**

As the table indicates, there seems to be a consensus among the writing teachers that all the components of discourse competence tend to pose problems to first year students in writing as the majority of teachers (8/10) have chosen to tick the three columns. Coherence and both types of cohesion are to be deemed as problematic to students when writing. However, two teachers claim that cohesion constitutes essentially the most problematic component of discourse competence. According to these two teachers, students actually manage to produce coherent writing but do not sufficiently rely on using cohesive devices. What can be concluded from the teachers’ answers to the second question is that cohesion, and more particularly lexical cohesion, being our main interest in the present study, is deemed to be problematic in students’ writing from the teachers’ point of view.

As for Q3 which says: What type of cohesion have you devoted more exercises and classroom practice to reinforce and draw your students’ attention to? The teachers highlighted the type of cohesion that they focus on while teaching how linkage and unity are achieved in written texts that they provide as models for students to follow. Table 25 shows teachers’ responses to this question.

Type of Cohesion Teachers	Grammatical Cohesion	Lexical Cohesion	Equally Considered
T 1			+
T 2			+
T 3	+		
T 4	+		
T 5	+		
T 6			+
T 7	+		
T 8	+		
T 9	+		
T 10	+		

**Table 25: the Type of Cohesion that is Most Considered by the Teachers in Writing Classes**



**Figure 04: Type of Cohesion that is most considered by the Writing Teachers**

According to the answers provided by the teachers, grammatical cohesion is the type of cohesion that is most emphasized by the teachers as 7/10 have preferred to concentrate entirely on the grammatical aspects of cohesion, putting aside the cohesive effect that vocabulary provides in yielding cohesive and coherent written discourse. The emphasis, thus, was on equipping first year students with the necessary grammatical cohesive devices that are centrally recognized by writing instructors in tying written discourse together. Nevertheless, a minority of teachers does actually acknowledge the variety of lexical ties in establishing cohesion in writing. In practical terms, T1, T2 and T6 are aware that lexical cohesion is worth to be given an equal importance besides grammatical cohesion in enhancing the writing skill.

However, given the above findings, we can safely assume that instructors of first year classes tend to agree and insist on promoting the grammatical devices of cohesion as being the sole available tool for promoting cohesive and coherent writing. As a matter of fact, such practice would be at the expense of the type of cohesion in question. The present results seem to match Liu's (2000) observation when noting a lack of addressing cohesion issues from this important lexical perspective from the part of writing instructors. Liu has expressed this imbalanced tendency as follows:

Lack of cohesion in writing is a problem that plagues many ESOL students. How to help students overcome the problem has long been a challenge to teachers and researchers alike. Yet in dealing with this complex task, many teachers continue to focus mostly on teaching the use of functional connectives such as conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs, overlooking another important element responsible for basic text cohesion: Content lexical ties (Liu, 2000:28).

Therefore, the prevailing lack of awareness among teachers highlighted by the above results as regards the role played by lexical cohesion in maintaining cohesive writing is significant. Yet, such tendency is to be accounted for in terms of convenient reasons that are not absolutely due to teachers' reluctance to offer an exhaustive instruction regarding this aspect of cohesion. Instead, the issue is more likely to entail a plausible and lengthier explanation in the discussion part within the following chapter.

Closely linked to Q3, Q4 was an attempt to find out the nature of instruction that is devoted to teach lexical cohesion. In other words, Q4 asked writing teachers to specify whether lexical cohesion has been taught implicitly, explicitly, or not taught at all. Table 26 shows teachers' responses.

Type of Instruction Teachers	Implicit	Explicit	No Type of Instruction
T 1	+		
T 2	+		
T 3			+
T 4			+
T 5			+
T 6	+		
T 7			+
T 8			+
T 9			+
T 10			+

**Table 26: Type of Instruction Advocated by teachers for teaching Lexical Cohesion to first Year Writing Classes**

As the table indicates, teachers' answers tend to be congruent with their responses to the preceding question. Such harmony is revealed by the total number of teachers who tend to neglect the aspect of lexical cohesion in writing instruction, being 7/10, the same teachers who merely opted to focus solely on grammatical cohesion to enhance cohesive writing. Thus, the majority of teachers of first year classes provide no type of instruction to draw students' attention to this aspect of writing organization. Moreover, the table demonstrates that even though lexical cohesion has been implemented by some teachers, namely T1, T2 and T6, the instruction provided is implicit. Hence, the table accentuates the illusion of an explicit instruction of lexical ties within our first year EFL context as far as the writing skill is concerned.

Following the rating scale suggested by the researcher, the teacher participants offered an evaluation of their first year students' writing in terms of its

overall lexical cohesiveness which should result from the instruction adopted. Table 27 shows the teachers' answers.

Evaluation Teachers	Above Average	Average	Almost Totally incohesive
T 1		+	
T 2		+	
T 3		+	
T 4		+	
T 5		+	
T 6		+	
T 7			+
T 8			+
T 9		+	
T 10		+	

**Table 27: Teachers' Evaluation of First Year Students' Writing in Terms of Its Overall Lexical Cohesiveness**

Table 27 displays the teachers' holistic impression about the organization of their students' writing in terms of the adequacy of their use of lexical cohesion ties. At the most general level, the majority of the teachers (8/10) qualified the students' writing as being average in terms of its overall lexical cohesiveness. This consensus among the instructors goes hand in hand with their description of the students' writing overall quality. It is worth noting, however, that T7 and T8 see that students' written output is almost totally incohesive.

Owing to the fact that the present research is meant to shed light on the sub-categories of lexical reiteration as being of considerable interest in building writing cohesion, Q6 asks teachers to indicate the most problematic ties that most students are not aware of. Table 28 demonstrates teachers' responses.

Type of Reiteration Teachers	Repetition of the Same Item	Using Synonym	Using Superordinate	Using General Words
T 1		+	+	+
T 2		+	+	+
T 3		+	+	+
T 4		+	+	+
T 5		+	+	+
T 6		+	+	+
T 7		+	+	+
T 8		+	+	+
T 9		+	+	+

T 10		+	+	+
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**Table 28: Most Problematic Lexical Reiteration Ties in Students’ Writing According to Teachers**

From the teachers’ viewpoint, students’ writing exhibits a considerable deficiency in using most of the lexical reiteration ties available in English. In other words, writing instructors signal that first year students’ tend to have recourse exclusively and mostly to repetition of the same item as being the sole available tool that is used to create lexically cohesive texts. Such fact is reflected through the teachers’ agreement (10/10) that the three categories of lexical reiteration, namely synonyms, superordinates and general words are seldom encountered in students’ writing.

When asked about the reasons that underlie such inadequacies, teachers suggested a variety of factors that, according to them, should account for students’ cohesion behaviours. In fact, this issue was raised by means of Q7 which we opted to leave open-ended to enable us to come up with rich and insightful data. Teachers’ answers were gathered into the categories that appear in table29.

Reasons Teachers	Poor Vocabulary	Lack of Awareness	Lack of Reading Habits	Lack of Practice
T 1				+
T 2	+			
T 3	+	+		
T 4			+	
T 5	+			
T 6			+	
T 7			+	+
T 8	+			
T 9	+			+
T 10			+	

**Table 29: Reasons behind Lack of Lexical Ties in Students’ Writing According to Teachers**

According to their answers, it can be noted that the majority of the teachers (5/10) highlight poor vocabulary knowledge on the part of the students. According to some teachers, the latter is merely an outcome that results from a lack of reading habits (4/10) as well as of practice of sentence and text structures (3/10). Another significant factor proposed by the teachers is “lack of awareness” (1/10) with regard to this aspect of written discourse.

It should be noted that teachers have listed all the factors that are attributed to students' learning habits. By doing so, they overlooked their actual practice, namely how the type of instruction they adopt can affect students' lexical choice. To this end, Q8 seeks to unveil teachers' attitude towards the implementation of an explicit instruction of lexical ties. Teachers' responses are displayed in the following table.

Attitude	Agree	Disagree
Teachers		
T1	+	
T2	+	
T3	+	
T4	+	
T5	+	
T6	+	
T7		+
T8	+	
T9	+	
T10		+

**Table 30: Teachers' Attitude towards the implementation of an explicit instruction of Lexical Reiteration Ties in writing Classes**

It seems apparent in the teachers' answers that most of them, more precisely (8/10) agree and, thus support the integration of an instruction of an explicit nature. Therefore, the majority of writing teachers see that first year writing classes constitute a fertile area for an instruction that is meant to emphasize this aspect of cohesion. However, the efficiency of such instruction was doubted by T7 and T10 who seem to question the claim that teaching lexical ties explicitly would certainly enhance lexical cohesion in students' writing. Rather, they think that the inadequate use of this type of cohesion by students would persist irrespective of the type of instruction adopted by the teacher. Following their views, the sole factor responsible for such misuse is the learners' poor vocabulary knowledge that they attribute mainly to lack of reading habits.

Finally, the last question is deemed as the fruit of the questionnaire as it invites the teacher participants to suggest the classroom tasks and exercises that they consider the panacea to enhance lexical cohesion in students' writing. To this end, we quoted these suggestions as proposed by the teachers in table 31 below. We hope that these suggestions would serve as a comprehensive aid of classroom practice for writing teachers to select those which suit their learners' needs.

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>The activities Suggested</b>
T1	“ Classroom practice relevant to teaching performed, provided they just do it”
T2	“ I used with my first year students such activities as: ordering sentences, sentence combining, paragraph completion, paragraph assembly, using pictures, editing and peer reviewing”
T3	“MCQ activities and vocabulary in context”
T4	“ Modified cloze test, I suggest more extensive reading, summarizing, use your own words, extensive use of the dictionary for accuracy of meaning, synonyms and acquisition of vocabulary”
T5	“Brainstorming about certain topics, drawing mind maps and diagrams”
T6	“ Specific Exercises and modal texts’
T7	“It is not in terms of classroom activities but homework tasks and intensive reading which should be considered. But concretely speaking, it is not enough or possible to check”
T8	“ I think reading tasks are compulsory to enhance students’ writing”
T9	“Filling gaps with either pronouns or expressions and words that refer to the same subject”
T10	“Reading texts, short stories( link reading activities with writing activities”

**Table 31: the activities Suggested by Writing Teachers to enhance lexical Cohesion in Students’ Writing**

### **3.5. Summary of the Results:**

In the present chapter, we attempted to yield a holistic framework of the findings of the present study. The presentation was structured in such a way so as to help provide the data obtained by means of the three research tools consecutively.

First of all, the subjects’ written production exhibited insightful data on the student writers’ most preferred lexical reiteration types. Moreover, the students’ written output revealed the extent to which the quality of writing is affected by the frequency of certain categories of lexical reiteration, namely the prevalence of same item repetition in poor writing and the exploration of other semantic relations like synonymy in good writing.

In addition, the students’ questionnaire demonstrated that the writing activity is considered challenging to students, particularly their search for the appropriate vocabulary that meets the demands of the context. Equally, this research tool has revealed that students’ perception of cohesion in writing is being synonymous of the

appropriate use of the different types of conjunction and reference. Nevertheless, students have clearly exhibited their awareness and ability to notice that the objective of varying repetition via using the different semantic relations is to have stylistic as well as cohesive effects on texts.

Finally, the teachers' questionnaire enabled us to notice the tendency of writing teachers' towards focusing on the grammatical devices of cohesion. Very limited implicit teaching practice is actually devoted to draw students' attention to the role of cohesive devices of a lexical nature.

## **Chapter Four:**

### **Discussion of the Findings and Pedagogical Implications**

#### **Part One: Discussion of the Findings:**

##### **Introduction:**

The present study is an attempt to identify the types of lexical reiteration ties that first year (LMD) students use most frequently in their writing, the extent to which good and poor student writers differ in their use of these cohesive devices and whether lexical cohesion receives the attention of writing instructors. The research tools that were devised to answer the research questions posed are: a corpus involving the participants' written productions, two questionnaires; one addressing students and the other teachers of writing. Indeed, the discussion of the results lies at the heart of the present research since it provides a more global view. To put it in other words, the present chapter serves to scrutinize the attained results as being inter-related and reflecting a single focused picture rather than discrete findings resulting from each research tool on its own. Thus, in this section, the findings of the present study are to be re-examined so as to yield a more holistic insight thanks to adopting a critical rather than a descriptive perspective.

#### **4.1 Frequently Used Lexical Ties:**

In the first place, the present research has sought to uncover the patterns of lexical reiteration as they appear in students' written productions. To this end, an analysis of cohesion was conducted in the light of Halliday and Hasan's modal (1976). In this respect, we will shed light on the subjects' use of lexical cohesive devices within a three-fold framework. The discussion will attempt to scrutinize the patterns of lexical reiteration that were found in the subjects' written productions in the light of their perception of this phenomenon as well as the factors that tend to be responsible for such use.

Given the exploratory nature of the present study, no hypothesis was put forward by the researcher. That is why; the first step in the analytical procedure of the present research was to look for the distribution of lexical ties in the students' written performance. On the basis of the attained results and as a follow up tool, the questionnaires were devised to achieve a full understanding of the learning context.

The results of the analysis of lexical cohesion were presented in the previous chapter and revealed that the distribution of lexical ties is characterized by:

1. A significant dominance of repetition of the same item, the first category of Halliday and Hasan's taxonomy in the subjects' written productions. Within the same category, we noted the occurrence of identical repetition as the most prevailing type among the repeated lexical items.
2. A relatively limited use of synonyms and superordinates.
3. A total absence of general words in the subjects' writing.

In general, the aforementioned aspects of the global cohesion profile of the subjects' written performance indicate an imbalanced lexical choice from the part of the students. Therefore, the present results tend to correlate with Connor's (1984) who demonstrated that ESL writing was found to lack the variety of lexical cohesive ties used by native speakers.

What is more is the fact that the distribution of the most frequent lexical reiteration ties employed by our EFL student writers was found to resemble the one which low-rated papers exhibit in Witte and Faigely's (1981) comparative study of cohesion in essays rated high and low in overall quality. Thus, it seems striking to find out that our first year students tend to form weak lexical ties in their written output.

Besides the results seem to be in line with the observation made by Silva (1992 cited in Grabe and Kaplan 1996:293) who has pointed to different issues in her attempt to identify the scope of differences that distinguish L2 students from L1 students. In fact, among the differences that she could sort out is L2 student writers' tendency to use cohesive markers differently. In particular, they tend to use those which are "less facilitative and create weaker lexical ties" (Silva cited in Grabe and Kaplan 1996:239).

In the light of the attained results, the present study reflects that the weakness lies in the redundancy which results from the intensive repetition of the same lexical item. The present state of affairs can be attributed to several factors. Though not exhaustive, we hope that data from the present exploratory research could unveil some of these factors.

In the first place, the aforementioned issue brings us to the introductory notes that we attempted to highlight when stating the rationale for undertaking the present study. More precisely, our initial quest to unveil a potential rhetorical transfer that may occur when EFL learners bring with them different rhetorical patterns while composing in the target language which was supported by theoretical as well as empirical evidence.

The argument comes from Celce Murcia (2000) who underlines such cross-lingual variation in the following way:

The whole notion of repetition or reiteration differs from one language to another. In some languages, it is considered good style to simply repeat the same word several times (e.g. Arabic, Japanese) whereas in other languages (e.g. English), it is necessary to vary repetition and use different synonym or appropriately related words in order to achieve good style. (Celce Murcia, 2000:83)

Therefore, given the above observation, we can assume that our EFL students' first language, i.e. Arabic should account for the dominance of same item repetition when writing in the target language, i.e. English. Then, this is an apparent case of a negative transfer from Arabic to English since students' written output seems actually to approximate an Arabic-like reiteration due to the prevailing instances of repetition of the same item in students' compositions.

In addition, as far as the target language , English, is concerned, McCarthy (1991:66) stresses an interesting fact about English discourse as he states that reiteration that calls for the semantic relations of synonymy, hyponymy and more general nouns is "extremely common in English discourse"( McCarthy , 1991:66).

Even though we cannot claim conclusive evidence about Arabic in terms of its tendency towards reiteration via same item, some comparative studies have reached

results that seemingly match and accentuate our observations. The argument comes from William (1989) who conducted a comparative study to show how patterns of cohesion and text development differ in English and Arabic. The approach he adopted was quantitative. The cohesion analysis supported by statistical evidence revealed among a variety of differences (We selected mainly those aspects of cohesion which relates to the present study's concern) that:

- Arabic seems to use a higher proportion of pronouns than English.
- English displays more use of cohesive synonym items than Arabic.
- Arabic displays more lexical string repetition than English.
- Arabic displays more repetition of clause structure than English

(From the Abstract of William's Ph d, 1989: ii).

Given such observations, one can safely assume that the scope of differences between the TL and the MT seems to bear considerable variance in terms of the perception of the phenomenon of reiteration. Therefore, we realize the need for further comparative studies to either substantiate or reject these observations.

#### **4.1.1 The Relationship between students' Perception and Their Actual Production of Lexical Reiteration Ties in Writing:**

Likewise, the students' perception of reiteration suggests underlying facts about the present state of affairs. In fact, students' responses to the questionnaire have made at our disposal plausible reasons that should significantly promote our understanding of the learning context. The subjects' declaration of the hardships that shape the writing activity, although this has to do with a nucleus unit of writing i.e. the paragraph, indicate the several demands that EFL academic writing makes on student writers. Thus, the preliminary point to consider in the subjects' perceptions is the acute difficulty they encounter when writing. To this end, we would like, in this context, to demonstrate how some of the aspects that shape such difficulty can explain the actual prevailing situation of students' use of lexical reiteration ties.

In fact, when engaged in writing, students face a number of problems that we deem closely associated with the present state of affairs. These problems can be classified into three main categories: problems related to vocabulary, problems related to cohesion in general and problems linked to instruction.

In the first place, most of the subjects agree that what really hinders the smoothness of their process of writing is its interruption by the need of finding the vocabulary that adequately fits the requirements of the context. Therefore, they feel the handicap of being subject to repeating the same lexical item again and again, the most frequent avoiding strategy they have recourse to, is substituting the preceding lexical content with a reference pronoun. Furthermore, students do explain this hindrance by mentioning that this situation is caused by a significant shortage in their vocabulary knowledge. However, this deficiency is not without reasons. According to writing instructors, the reasons for this imbalanced lexical choice depend much more on students' bad learning habits; like lack of reading habits, lack of practice and so on. Therefore, according to them, it is up to learners to expand their repertoire of lexical items and, hence improve and vary the reiteration ties used through adopting a systematic and regular learning practice.

However, this is not the whole story, there are other determining factors. Thus, the second type of problems has to do with cohesion and its perception by students. The results of the present study indicate that the latter concept is synonymous of using conjunctions. In fact, right the beginning of our investigation, some students, more precisely (4/14) consider finding the appropriate connecting words or expressions the most challenging of all the steps of the writing activity. That is why, when asked to list the main cohesive devices they know, students state a very limited number of cohesive devices which constitute chiefly the category of conjunction. Moreover, the main list tends to be repetitive among the subjects as the same set of cohesive devices is repeated from S1 to S14. What is more is the fact that the other types of cohesive devices, including lexical reiteration ties tend to occupy no space in the students' perception of the concept of cohesion. Thus, there seems to be a consensus among the

subjects regarding the fact that linkage and unity in texts is solely guaranteed by the grammatical devices of cohesion.

Nevertheless, the subjects in the present study do exhibit some kind of awareness regarding the stylistic and the cohesive effect of vocabulary. According to the results presented earlier, the students revealed their consciousness that what makes writers vary repetition via using other semantic relations is to yield cohesive and coherent text besides the stylistic beauty resulting from such variation. This is theoretically speaking. However, when it comes to practice, students did not transfer this awareness into their writings since they lack many of these cohesion tools. One reason for this, perhaps relates to the type of instruction adopted by the teacher. In this context, it is worth noting that the subjects' teacher of writing is among the teachers who advocate an implicit instruction for lexical cohesion in the light of the teachers' questionnaires' data.

By implicit instruction, the teacher means the question that requires students to find in the text synonyms or antonyms for a given word which is usually integrated in reading comprehension. Yet, the analysis of cohesion demonstrated the failure of students to employ these tools as lexical cohesion devices in writing. Therefore, we can safely assume that this discrepancy between students' perception and their production can partly be attributed to the type of instruction. In other words, the prevalent situation reflects that this type of instruction, i.e. the implicit instruction of lexical ties has enabled students to notice such use at the receptive level (the level of reading), yet the productive level (the level of writing) has not sufficiently benefited from such instruction. As a result, this leads us to reach the third category of problems which has to do with instruction.

Given the present study's findings, our sample of first year students did not hesitate to support our suggestion for an integration of an explicit instruction of lexical reiteration ties. We believe that students at this level of language proficiency need to be equipped with the variety of cohesive devices that are available in the English language. More importantly, this consciousness raising should be targeted and focused. Undoubtedly, a significant way for making notions such as synonymy and

hyponymy particularly useful to learners is to show them how such relations occur over sentence boundaries in texts. Thus, an explicit instruction tends more likely to be the lost piece of the jigsaw in our EFL context.

#### **4.2. The Relationship between the distribution of Lexical Reiteration Ties and Writing Quality:**

As far as research question (2) is concerned, it attempted to find out the relationship that may exist between the distribution of lexical ties and overall writing quality. According to the results obtained from the research tools, and more precisely from analyzing the written output of the student participants, our comparative framework demonstrated that there is a significant difference in the cohesion behaviour of good and poor student writers in terms of employing the different types of lexical reiteration. The findings can be summarized in the three following points:

- High-rated papers contain more lexical cohesive devices than the low-rated papers.
- The lexical cohesive devices used in the low-rated papers are mainly repetition of the same item.
- Good writers vary their repetitions and explore effectively the semantic relation of synonymy than the poor student writers.

Prior to discussing the nature of the discrepancy between good and poor writers in terms of the distribution of the cohesive devices in question, we would like to shed light on an equally significant point that tends to emerge from our comparative framework, namely the density of cohesive ties. In fact, the comparison indicates that good papers are much denser in cohesive devices than the poor ones. However, such characteristic was a matter of disagreement among researchers who were interested in investigating the usefulness of cohesion frequency analysis in differentiating proficiency in the written output of learners of English as a second /foreign language. For instance, Anderson (1989 cited in Celce Murcia 2000:206) found out an inconsistent relationship between the frequency with which cohesion was used and the holistic evaluation results. Similarly, Lindsay's (1984 cited in Celce Murcia 2000:206)

findings indicated that what matters is linguistic accuracy and appropriate use of cohesive markers rather than simply the overall number of cohesive ties used which should be required in assessing writing samples. In simple terms, skilled writers did not necessarily use more cohesive ties, rather they did tend to employ them appropriately while unskilled writers did not.

The observation in the aforementioned studies suggests an inconsistent relationship between the density of cohesive ties and writing quality. On the other hand, Witte and Faigely's (1981) pioneering work came up with different findings. Indeed, their results tend to match the present study's findings. The common point is the realization that good papers are much denser in cohesion than poor papers. However, it is important to state that the present study is limited to deal with one type of cohesion in differentiating high- from low-rated papers, while Witte and Faigely's analysis of cohesion involved the taxonomy of cohesive devices as it appears in Cohesion in English (1976). Nevertheless, their observation has proved to be more inclusive given the present research results.

Furthermore, the present findings tend to be in line with previous research as they accentuate the redundancy found in the paragraphs that are said to be of poor writing quality. In fact, according to Witte and Faigely (1981:197), the present state of affairs reflects a discrepancy between the invention skills of the two groups of writers. While the better writers exhibit a better command of invention skills that enable them to elaborate and expand the concepts they introduce, the poorer writers seem to be deficient in these skills. This explains why poor writers' paragraphs are full of lexical and conceptual redundancy. However, this lack of invention is caused by factors that are not beyond control. In the light of Witte and Faigely's interpretation, this situation is attributed to lack of working vocabularies. They explain their point of view in the following way:

Analyses of cohesion, thus, measure some aspects of invention skills. The low-rated essays stall frequently repeating ideas instead of elaborating them. Our analyses also suggest that the writers of the low-rated papers do not have working vocabularies capable of extending, in ways pre-requisite for good writing, the concepts and ideas they introduce in their essays.

Indeed, skill in invention, in discovering what to say about a particular topic, may depend in ways, yet unexplored on the prior development of adequate working vocabularies, the lexical items required to extend, explore, or elaborate the concepts they introduce, practice in invention can have only a limited effect on overall writing quality (Witte and Faigely 1981:198)

However, this is not to claim that repetition of the same item has an entirely negative effect on writing quality. Rather, the existence of some repeated lexical items is deemed as a “virtue” since such redundancy contributes to a great extent to the cohesion of a text as it is recognized to be so in being the first sub-category of lexical reiteration in Cohesion in English. The idea is that the redundancy in the low-rated papers tends to be a “flaw because writers failed to supply additional information at the point where it would be expected to appear” (Witte and Faigely 1981: 198). Therefore, this goes counter the quality of the text.

On the other hand, the present research revealed that good student writers’ written output exhibits that they do have recourse to synonymy to reiterate what has already been stated. As a matter of fact, good student writers were proved to be the good explorers of synonyms to achieve lexical reiteration in writing. By doing so, they attempt to approach genuine English written discourse where such use is quite common (McCarthy 1991, Celce Murcia 2000). Therefore, good written products display more use of cohesive synonym items than the poor ones.

Having compared the high-and low-rated papers in terms of their content of the different sub-categories of lexical reiteration, there remains one conclusive point to be drawn to end up our discussion of the present comparative framework. In the light of the attained results, then we assume that we could substantiate the fact that exploring the variety of lexical reiteration ties is a further underlying crucial ingredient of good writing quality.

#### **4.3. The Place of Lexical Cohesion in Writing Classes:**

By shedding light on this aspect of teaching practice, we seek to understand why first year students use lexical reiteration ties the way they do actually. It is hoped that by

involving writing instructors, the factors that contribute to such use would emerge and help us come up with deeper exploratory insights. In the light of the results presented earlier, the teaching trend that writing instructors of first year classes advocate to promote cohesion is characterized by:

- A tendency towards concentrating on the grammatical devices of cohesion as being of paramount importance in contributing to the cohesion and coherence of writing.
- Little attention is paid to the cohesive effect of vocabulary in writing.
- Lexical cohesion is almost ignored in writing classes let alone for a limited implementation in some classes where an implicit instruction is advocated.
- Teachers' belief that the inadequate use of the variety of lexical reiteration ties is to be accounted for in first year students' deficient vocabulary knowledge that results from their reluctance to read.

First of all, the present study reveals that grammatical cohesion has been the core concern of teachers of first year writing classes. Undoubtedly, the contribution of the grammatical devices of cohesion in building the cohesion of a text cannot be challenged or even under-estimated. Thus, teachers' concern in highlighting this type of cohesion seems reasonable. The idea is that teachers' assumption that the suitable panacea to remedy the deficiencies that prevail in the written productions of student writers as far as cohesion is concerned should revolve around emphasizing the core grammatical connectors of the language without recourse to lexis seems questionable. In this respect, the present study underlines students' displayed awareness as regards the role of grammatical connectors in achieving cohesion. What is more is students' belief that cohesive devices are synonymous of conjunctive ties. Although there seems to be a great significance in exploring the scope of grammatical words via classroom exercises like "a cloze", in attaining cohesion "it is within the semantic networks established by lexical cohesion that teachers might find more extensive ways of using cloze to exploit the discourse structure of written language" (Carter and Mc Carthy 1988:162).

Closely associated to our findings, Liu's (2000) observations tend to match ours. In fact, the researcher has equally noticed researchers' as well as teachers' tendency towards highlighting the area that covers the mastery of functional connectives such as conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs, it follows that they overlooked a crucial condition on the well-formedness of a text: content lexical ties. Her awareness of the shortcomings of such deficient tendency has urged her to draw writing teachers' attention to this issue through suggesting a series of exercises that have proved to be useful in striking the balance in using cohesive devices. This classroom work is treated under the heading of pedagogical implications below.

Moreover, even in some writing classes where lexical cohesive devices have not totally been neglected, the situation is not that satisfactory. In other words, teachers who opted to advocate an implicit instruction of lexical ties seem to overlook the role of awareness-raising to the cohesive effect of the occurrence of the different semantic relations of synonymy, hyponymy, and general words in texts. In fact, the analysis of cohesion conducted in the present study has clearly demonstrated that students' written output exhibits a relatively limited use of the alternative tools of reiteration. In other words, treating semantic relations such as synonymy as if they occur in a vacuum while they are components of cohesive and coherent texts is more likely to make students miss a significant fact about the role of vocabulary in cohesion.

In sum, writing teachers should seek to make learners aware that synonyms are not merely tools for understanding new words that they come across in class, or they are some useless supplementary and abstract notions for establishing lexicons and thesauri. Instead, learners should be taught not to belabour those synonyms that are there to be used just like any other linguistic device in the process of producing cohesive and coherent discourse.

As a matter of fact, an explicit instruction is more likely to enhance students' use of lexical cohesive devices. However, such claim needs to be the result of an experimental study that should elicit the effect of an explicit

instruction of lexical ties on students' writing cohesion. Nevertheless, we believe that our descriptive exploratory study was not without significance. We sought in the present study to bring data from our first year writing classes that should help us detect points of strengths and more importantly points of failure to help improve our writing syllabus so as to make it more congruent with the demands of English written discourse.

## **Part Two: Pedagogical Implications**

### **Introduction:**

In the first place, the findings of the present exploratory study highlight the student writers' imbalanced lexical reiteration patterns which were proved to be dominated by a preference of repetition of the same lexical item at the expense of the other devices of lexical reiteration. What is more, the results of this descriptive research tend to confirm the importance of varying the devices of lexical reiteration in writing and that it is a vital variable that can affect writing quality considerably. In other words, the significantly higher proportion of synonyms in the high-rated papers reflects the good writers' willingness to vary repetition and thus, get approximate to written English discourse.

#### **4.4.1. Implications for Writing Instruction:**

Recently, ESL /EFL teachers have been heartened by the insights of research done on Discourse Analysis to avoid the teaching of isolated sentences as realizations of linguistic structures. The present tendency has emerged as a reaction against the previous prevailing situation which has clearly been described by Zamel as follows:

What is particularly striking about these ESL teachers' responses... is that the teachers overwhelmingly view themselves as language teachers rather than writing teachers, they attend primarily to surface level features of writing and seem to read and react to a text as a series of separate sentences or even clauses, rather than as a whole unit of discourse. (Zamel, 1985:86 cited in Celce Murcia 2000:141)

As a result, they have started to incorporate into the curriculum activities that are meant to raise the students' awareness to the contribution of cohesive ties to the overall organization of the text. It follows that an important place was allocated to the cohesive resources that are available in English in the writing curriculum. However, the insights of the present study have demonstrated that the focus in the EFL writing classroom was limited to deal with the grammatical devices of cohesion with little attention being paid to lexical ties. This observation was previously made by many researchers like Liu (2000) who noted that the focus in ESL classrooms has gone into highlighting the functional connectives instead of providing help in expanding students' vocabulary and facilitating understanding of the acquired lexical items. Her awareness of probable implications of this deficiency has led the researcher to feel an urgent need to propose a series of exercises that may prove useful in addressing this concern. These exercises are tackled below.

A further support for advocating an explicit instruction of lexical ties comes from Schmitt (2000) who encourages the implementation of lexical ties and explains his point of view in the following way:

When teaching learners about the organization of language, it is probably useful to introduce them to the idea of lexical cohesion. This approach is already standard practice in Discourse Analysis and exercises from this discipline would be very useful to get students thinking about vocabulary not as discrete words, but as interrelated members of cohesive discourse. (Schmitt, 2000:113)

An analysis of cohesion such as the present one can be of vital help for writing instructors since it puts at their disposal patterns of cohesion that are created by their students. These patterns can be the starting point for writing instructors for a more informative decision-making. They should, for instance, present students with modal paragraphs that exhibit a variety of lexical cohesive devices, notably those that have not been used before by students. In this context, the present study has shown that first year LMD students have overused the first type of lexical cohesion ties, namely reiteration of the same item. The

instructors should pay more attention to the teaching of the other lexical cohesive ties such as synonymy, superordinate and more general words through demonstrating their contribution to the organization of fundamental units of written discourse like the paragraph.

In addition, a further effort needs to be made by writing teachers to complement their understanding of the various lexical repetition devices that are available in written Arabic style and even Berber. This will probably enable them to diagnose and treat the rhetorical challenges that the Algerian students face with the written English discourse. Hinging on the proficiency level of the learners, writing instructors can then introduce some contrastive rhetoric implications in the teaching of a genuine English writing. For example, they may underline the fact that repetition may be used and encouraged as a rhetorical device in Arabic but transferring this device when writing in English may be a source of redundancy and, hence bad written style.

Being familiar with the rhetorical differences between the student writers' native language and the target language should supply writing teachers with a more objective background when assessing students' writing. In other words, the evaluation should be more informative in terms of devising objective and non-judgmental criticisms.

### **Suggested Exercises for Expanding Students' Use of Lexical Cohesive Devices:**

Though not exhaustive, the purpose of this section is to present adequate classroom practice that should assist students to improve and vary their use of lexical reiteration devices. The objective is to familiarize first year LMD students with the variety of lexical ties that are available in English. To this end, we choose to begin with a series of exercises that were suggested by Dilin Liu, a professor at Oklahoma City University, who claims that these exercises were tailored to meet the lexical needs of the context. In other words, lexical items are presented as synonyms, antonyms, superordinates and hyponyms in such a

way so as to provide a close relationship to one another. The following respect is an attempt to tackle these remedial tasks under three distinct types. The other innovative contribution is proposed by Carter who attempts to explore the cloze procedure to be made more sensitive to patterns of discourse in texts and, thus, provide a basis for more cohesive and coherent writing.

On a practical ground, the first suggested type of exercises is deemed to be less demanding in terms of preparation since the teacher may merely ask students to look for synonyms for a given word, find hyponyms for a superordinate, or determine the superordinate for a series of hyponyms. An alternative is to have students classify a fairly large number of words, whether these are known or new words, either as synonyms or superordinates/hyponyms.

The identification of content lexical ties in the second category of exercises is distinguished by adding text-structuring words or general words and asking students to sort them out, or determine the lack of such ties in a written passage. The highly recommended sample is the students' written productions. Moreover, such an exercise is best conducted through pair or group work where students are asked to identify the use or lack of content lexical ties in each other's papers and come up with valuable peer feedback for improvement.

A further type of exercises, namely the third, is meant to promote the students' ability to employ content lexical ties in their writings. This can be achieved via several forms to be made suitable for students at different levels. For instance, an exercise that provides students with a series of pictures and asks them to depict their content in writing. In this example, students have to come up with the appropriate content lexical ties that may serve as cohesive devices for their descriptive writing.

For Carter (1988), what matters is to find the most effective ways of underlining the important role played by vocabulary in connectivity. The

immediate objective is to yield clear implications for the teaching of writing. So far, the prevailing concern of writing teachers in their attempt to remedy the deficiencies that prevail in the written production of student writers as far as cohesion is concerned, has revolved around highlighting the grammatical connectors of the language which have been assumed to be the panacea for such a thorny issue. One limitation to such a tendency is that the emphasis is mainly on the function of grammatical words, there is little attention paid to the unique contribution of lexical words in the organization of a text.

Therefore, in the light of Widdowson's distinction between text and discourse, a writing activity like a cloze that is merely based on the grammatical cohesive relations would be a text cloze and not a genuinely discourse cloze (Widdowson 1978:23). Although there seems to be a great significance in exploring the scope of grammatical words in attaining cohesion, Carter states that: "... it is within the semantic networks established by lexical cohesion that teachers might find more extensive ways of using cloze to exploit the discourse structure of written language" (Carter and Mc Carthy 1988:162).

Of an equal importance to our interest in implementing lexical cohesive devices in the EFL syllabus is the process-oriented activity that Bensemmane (1993) proposed to enhance the use of lexical cohesive devices of cohesion and coherence by readers when inferencing unknown meaning. Indeed, this exercise may be seen as the outcome of the several insights she gained as a result of conducting an extensive empirical study on lexical cohesion in EFL reading. Although the activity addresses the receptive skill of reading, we deem it relevant to incorporate in the first year LMD syllabus where reading and writing are taught integratively. By doing so, we believe that any improvement in learners' reading, as a result of such an activity, should help enhance the students' awareness to the use of this type of cohesive devices in writing. The author states the steps of the activity as follows:

Students are given a text and are asked the following questions: "What are the lexical relations in the text (co-text) or outside it (context) that can help you

deduce the meaning of the underlined words? When you have worked them out, fill in the table provided”. (Bensemmane 1993: 79).

#### **4.4.2. Implications for Writing Course book Designers:**

Another insightful implication that can be drawn from the findings of the present research is its potential usefulness for language pedagogy, addressing in this respect materials’ writers. In fact, this study is meant to draw their attention to a sensitive step in their process of constructing materials of which they are in charge. In other words, materials’ writers who choose to create their own texts or who oversimplify naturally occurring ones should be aware that altering or disturbing the lexical patterns of texts may result in an unnaturalness and inauthenticity in terms of natural discourse demands, thus, the outcome will be a failure to yield a genuine discourse. Therefore, repetition should be one of the foundational criteria that textbook designers shall consider and be aware of while constructing their materials to be taught (McCarthy, 1991). In this context, Hyland (2003) has clearly expressed this issue as follows:

Clearly there are important reasons for selecting authentic texts as genre modals. Careful needs’ analysis will have led to the genres students must learn to identify and create in their target contexts ..... simplify a text involves altering its syntax and lexis to improve readability or to highlight a given feature, and this also alters the fundamental nature of the genre. There are considerable difficulties in maintaining cohesion, coherence and rhetorical structures when rewriting and texts that are created artificially as teaching materials to emphasize one particular element are only likely to distort others. (Hyland, 2003:92-93).

#### **Conclusion:**

One implication of the present study is that “if cohesion is better understood, it can be better taught” (Witte and Faigely 1981:201). Actually, in the majority of college writing classes, cohesion is taught through implicit or explicit ways. The latter is attained by means of exercises, classroom instruction, or comments on students’ papers. In fact, several types of classroom exercises that were not

intentionally designed to enhance cohesion do actually require that learners create cohesive ties. According to Witte and Faigely (1981), open sentence-combining exercises constitute an instance of such exercises which provide much practice in building cohesive ties as they do for the mastery of syntactic structures. For instance, an open sentence-combining exercise about Charlie Chaplin might consist of a series of sentences starting with the name Charlie Chaplin. Such type of activities would, at least, entail that students vary most of the occurrences of Charlie Chaplin to be orderly and yield a text that makes sense. It follows that students who work on the basis of contextual clues or from their background knowledge of Chaplin might equally use phrases such as “the comic genius” or “the little tramp”, which involve the different devices of lexical reiteration, to substitute for the proper name of Chaplin. (Witte and Faigely 1981:201).

# Conclusion

## **Introduction:**

The present corpus-based study has exhibited insightful data on the student writers' most preferred lexical reiteration ties. Mainly, the pattern of reiteration that the group of the subjects have produced is characterized by a significant dominance of same item repetition along a marked deficiency in employing the variety of the alternative tools of reiteration. Equally, the data gathered from the present research drew our attention to an underlying relationship between the overall quality of writing and the frequency of certain categories of lexical reiteration. The present recapitulating conclusion is meant to highlight the most important aspects of the study in the light of the limitations encountered and the suggestions provided for further research.

## **1. Limitations of the Study:**

Though the present study yields a quantitative analysis of lexical cohesion used in first year students' writing, particularly paragraph writing from different perspectives, the study appears to be limited by a number of factors. Possible limitations of the present research involve the following aspects:

1. One limitation of this study lies in the use of analysis schemes. Our attempt to examine the use of lexical cohesive devices in students' paragraphs was carried out solely in the light of Halliday and Hasan's taxonomy of cohesion (1976). In this respect, we would like to mention that even though alternative modals do actually exist; the present analysis scheme was adopted because it was clear, plausible, not too complicated and widely acknowledged in an analysis of cohesion. Besides, this seminal modal is widely taught and advocated in several ESL/EFL writing course books. Thus, the results and discussions in this study would be reduced to the use of this modal as an analysis scheme.
2. Within the modal of Halliday and Hasan advocated in the present study, lexical cohesion in texts is presented as being of two types: Reiteration and collocation.

Another limitation involves the fact that this study was limited to investigating the use of lexical reiteration ties rather than the whole framework of lexical cohesion. Many previous studies acknowledge that lexical cohesion through collocation is “the most difficult type of cohesion to analyze because items said to collocate involve neither repetition, synonymy, superordinate, nor mention of general items” (Witte and Faigely 1981:193). More importantly, lexical items that are said to collocate “share the same lexical environment” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:286) making it difficult for researchers to limit all the possible lexical relationships that may exist in a text. Nonetheless, this should not hide the fact that we would have missed insightful findings by overlooking this category of lexical cohesion. More precisely, when studies like Witte and Faigely’s have indicated that lexical collocation tends to be the sub-category of lexical cohesion that best reflects overall writing ability, “as well as disclosing distinctions among written texts that represent different discourse modes and purposes” (Witte and Faigely 1981:200).

3. Another limitation involves the fact that the current study tackled only cohesion rather than coherence. In fact, this study was carried out on the assumption that after all, when we look at cohesion in a text, concerns on coherence are not far away. However, studies have revealed that cohesion does not guarantee coherence. Besides, while the scope of the present study is reduced to one aspect of cohesion, coherence tends to be the preliminary condition of discourse. Therefore, insights of the present research seem to be limited to deal with the aspect of textual cohesion..
4. The current study was conducted on the basis of Canale and Swain’s (1980) modal which incorporated discourse connectedness in two senses; firstly, as coherence of meaning, or content and, secondly; as the use of cohesive devices like pronouns, synonyms, repetitions, etc. However, as Bachman observes, “other conventions for analyzing discourse may not taught formally at all, either because they are not fully understood or because they are simply too complex to teach” ( Bachman 1990:88). Statements like this point to a need in models of such kind to deepen the understanding of discourse from a foreign language

teaching perspective. Thus, there is a need to know what other ways of organizing discourse there are in addition to global structuring and cohesive devices, and to see whether and to what extent these are language –specific, and finally, whether these are simple enough or can be depicted simply enough to be teachable in foreign language classes.

5. Another limitation includes the genre of data which was mainly taken from students' expository paragraphs. Other modes of writing e.g. narrative and argumentative genres were not involved in the present study. Given the fact that each genre of writing possesses specific types of rhetorical structures, hence the distribution of lexical cohesive devices that was examined in this study is commonly found in expository writing. Therefore, those prevailing in other modes of writing were not covered in the study. In this respect, it should be stressed that Halliday and Hasan(1976) have clearly stated that:

A particular text, or a genre may exhibit a general tendency towards the use of certain features or modes rather than others: for example, in certain types of narrative, where the continuity is provided by the doings or the personality of one individual, it would be interesting to know whether this is reflected in a predominance of reference to that individual as a cohesive device.( Halliday and Hasan 1976:332)

6. This study is also limited to investigating the use of lexical cohesion devices by a group of EFL first year LMD students who could be regarded as being only a small population in EFL contexts. Researchers working with EFL student writers in other contexts might observe different processes. Other researchers may argue, for instance, that the selected sample does not fit for being below the language proficiency level required since being first year students may suggest reduced exposure to the foreign language. Hence, it would have been quite interesting if, for instance, second or third year students' written output has been scrutinized for lexical cohesion devices. Alternatively, students' use of lexical cohesive devices could have been equally investigated by means of a longitudinal study or different samples taken from the three levels of the license degree. Therefore, the limited size of the sample (14 students only) reduced the

representativeness of the population and limited the external validity, i.e. the generalisability of the results of the study.

7. Also, the scope of the study is limited in examining only writing products for instances of cohesion while neglecting the writing processes that appear in the multiple drafts that learners produce prior to handling their final products. Thus, analyzing these drafts could have brought an in-depth investigation of the subjects' use of this type of cohesive devices.

## **2. Suggestions for Further Research:**

The limitations of the present study have yielded implications for further research in the study of cohesion in EFL students' writing. Several recommendations can be further discussed in relation to the limitations of the present study.

Firstly, since the present study was descriptive and exploratory in nature, its findings should help design further studies of different research methodology. For instance, the implications gained from the present research are more likely to serve as part of treatments that might be given to participants in an experimental group and see whether such an explicit instruction would enhance their use of lexical cohesive devices or not. In other words, an experimental study that seeks to examine the effect of an explicit instruction of lexical ties on a group of EFL learners' writing cohesion should bring further fruitful data for implementation in writing instruction.

Secondly, given that the current study is limited to deal with one skill of language proficiency, namely writing, a further suggestion revolves around comparing EFL learners' reading cohesion with their writing cohesion. As a result, the comparison would identify the nature of the gap between the students' perception and production of cohesive devices. Moreover, if an experimental design is followed, it would be interesting to find out if an explicit instruction of lexical ties can promote writing cohesion; can it do it at a receptive level? Which level would benefit most from such instruction?

Thirdly, the present study is a largely product-based study focussing mainly on students' writing products to examine their use of cohesive devices. Similar process-

oriented studies should also be conducted to examine the processes by which EFL students produce cohesive writing. For instance, a study concerned with feedback delivery as part of the classroom inquiry which takes into account refining students' output in terms of appropriate use of cohesive devices. By conducting such experimental studies, the findings would serve to illuminate whether at the end of the writing course, the students improved their writing skills in the areas of cohesion and directed their attention to the discourse level of texts during revisions.

Finally, the findings of the present research hinted at the cross-lingual variation between English and other languages like Arabic in terms of their perception of lexical reiteration. Therefore, we realize the need for further comparative studies to either substantiate or reject the "hypothesis" that we could formulate by linking the present findings with relevant literature. In addition, the relationship of cohesion to coherence has yielded different views. Thus, we see that such a thorny issue entails further empirical studies that need to be concerned with examining the relationship of cohesion to coherence in an attempt to avoid any emerging overlap.

### **General Conclusion:**

The present study was concerned with investigating EFL learners' use of lexical cohesive devices in writing. This research was carried out as a way to find out how students reiterate lexical items in writing, in terms of the frequently used lexical ties as stated by Halliday and Hasan(1976). In addition, the relationship between the types of lexical reiteration used and overall writing quality was equally sought to help understand how the use of certain types of lexical reiteration affects the quality of writing.

The analysis of cohesion in the present study has shown that first year LMD students have overused reiteration of the same item. The instructors should, thus, pay more attention to the teaching of other lexical cohesive ties. This would help the students use the variety of lexical reiteration ties available in English. Moreover, in the light of the attained results, we assume that we could substantiate the fact that exploring the variety of lexical reiteration ties is a further underlying powerful aspect

that has been proved to determine writing quality. The latter claim is supported by empirical evidence that is derived from comparing two profiles of student writers.

Furthermore, what characterizes the teaching practice provided by writing instructors is its tendency towards concentrating on the grammatical devices of cohesion as being the only crucial ingredient in achieving coherent discourse. As a matter of fact, little attention is, currently, being paid to the cohesive effect of vocabulary in writing, let alone for a limited implicit instruction advocated in some classes.

The findings provide some useful insights, one of which is the need for the students' lexical knowledge to be deepened further. Well-developed lexical knowledge can equip students with the needed working vocabularies that would help them write more lexically cohesive papers. To this end, teachers should stop attributing the failure of students to increase their lexical repertoire to factors relating solely to students' unwillingness. Rather, writing instructors should work hard to find suitable remedial tasks which, hopefully, would deepen their learners' vocabulary knowledge. More importantly, when most of the student participants have explicitly expressed the hardships they face in making the suitable lexical choice when writing.

Having presented the content of our research, there remains one point to be added to end up the present investigation. In fact, even comments like Carrell's (1982) that suggest the complexity of the coherence issue, tend to admit that "we should teach our ESL students the cohesive ties available in English" (Carrell 1982:486). Nevertheless, the present study is not meant to claim that helping students learn to employ lexical cohesive ties appropriately would be the panacea for all the problems related to students' writing cohesion. Therefore, lexical cohesion ties, though important, are merely one of the many tools available to build the network of cohesion and coherence in texts.

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## Appendix 01:

### The Teachers' Questionnaire

Teacher's name :

Years of teaching writing :

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire serves to conduct a study on first year students' paragraph writing and your valuable answers will be of crucial use in the process of data collection.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. (Tick your answers)

1 .How do you describe your first year students' paragraph writing?

- Good
- Average
- Weak

2. Among the following components of discourse competence, select those which generally pose problems to your students in writing:

- Grammatical cohesion
- Lexical cohesion
- Coherence

3 .In terms of instruction, what type of cohesion have you devoted more exercises and classroom practice to reinforce and draw your students' attention to?

- Grammatical cohesion
- Lexical cohesion
- Coherence

4 .What type of instruction have you provided to enhance lexical cohesion in your students' writing?

- Implicit Instruction
- Explicit Instruction
- No Type of instruction

5. As a result of this instruction, how do you evaluate your students' written output according to the following rating scale?

- Above average in terms of overall lexical cohesiveness
- Average in terms of overall lexical cohesiveness
- Almost totally incohesive

6 .What type of reiteration tends to be the most problematic for your students in writing?

- Repetition of the same lexical item
- Using synonyms /antonyms
- Using superordinate /hyponyms
- Using Text \_structuring words

7. What makes the use of such lexical ties problematic to students in your opinion?

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. Do you agree with the claim that an explicit instruction of lexical ties would promote cohesion in students' writing?

- Agree
- Disagree

9. What type of classroom tasks would you like to suggest to improve cohesion in students' writing?

.....

.....

.....

## Appendix 2: The Students' Questionnaire

**Student's name:**

**Group:**

Dear student,

This questionnaire is part of a research project concerned with some aspects of your writing. Moreover, the anonymity of the present document is guaranteed by the researcher. Could you please answer it as honestly as possible? Thank you very much for your cooperation. (Tick your answers)

**1. How do you describe your experience of paragraph writing?**

- Very Difficult
- Difficult
- Slightly Difficult
- Not Difficult at all

**2. What type of difficulties do you usually come across when writing?**

- Organization of Content to achieve coherence
- Finding the appropriate connecting words or expressions to relate your sentences
- Finding the appropriate vocabulary
- Other Difficulties

**3. When you want to use a word or expression that you have already mentioned in the preceding sentence, do you choose to :**

**Repeat it exactly:**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

**Use a Pronoun:**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

**Use a Synonym:**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

**Use a Superordinate:**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

**Use a General Word:**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

**4. Can you list the cohesive devices that are used to link sentences together into one coherent paragraph?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**5. Why do you think writers use a variety of synonyms, superordinates and general words in the texts you are asked to read in class?**

- Teachers want to help you learn new words
- Writers want to avoid many repetitions to achieve good style
- Writers want to achieve good style and create one cohesive and coherent text

**6. To what extent do you find the paragraphs you write corresponding to the paragraphs you read in class in terms of using a variety of synonyms, superordinates and general words?**

- To a great extent
- To some extent
- To no extent

**7. If you answered to some extent or to no extent, why does your writing lack such tools in your opinion?**

- Because no lesson has been devoted to teach you how repetition occurs in written texts
- You have noticed the use of these tools, but you don't know how to use them in your own writing
- Your Vocabulary knowledge is very limited to allow you to vary repetition

**8. Do you see that integrating specific classroom exercises that are meant to teach you the appropriate means that are used to achieve repetition in texts would help you improve your writing quality?**

Yes

No

**Brief Illustrations of the main concepts Used in the Questionnaire:**

**Exact Repetition of the same item:**

**E.g.:** I love cats. I have just brought a Persian cat

**Use of a Synonym:**

**E.g.:** Some **pretty** girls came to John's party, but Julie was the **nicest**.

**Use of a superordinate:**

**E.g.:** I love **cats**, they are nice **animals** ( **Animal** is a superordinate for **cats**)

**Use of a General Word:**

**E.g.:** We all **started working**. That seemed the best **idea** (**idea** is a general word)

### **Appendix03: Samples of Lexical Cohesion Found in Students' Papers**

#### **A. Same Item:**

A foreign language- A foreign Language

Learn-Learn

Reasons-Reasons

The World-The world

#### **B. Synonym:**

Benefits- Advantages

Studying- Learning

Gives the chance-gives access

Contributes- Reinforces

Speak English- Communicate in English

#### **C. Superordinate:**

The Learner – A person

**Cohesion Analysis Performed in a High-rated Paper:**

Sentence no	No of Ties	Cohesive Item	Type	Distance	Presupposed Item
(2)	2	A foreign Language	L 1.7	0	Language
		English	L1.6	0	English
(3)	4	Societies	L2	0	Nations
		Populations	L2	0	Nations
		English	L1.6	0	English
		Foreign language	L1.6	0	Foreign Language
(5)	1	English	L1.6	N(1)	English
(6)	2	Knowing English	L2	0	Speaks well English
		Gives opportunities	L2	0	Has more chance
(7)	6	Allows	L2	0	Gives opportunities
		Learn about	L2	0	Open up
		The way they behave and think	L2(incl hyponym)		Cultures(Superordinate)
		Their traditions	L2		Cultures
		History	L2		Cultures
		Nations ( other)	L1.8	R(5)	Nations( Froncophone)

(8)	1	English	L1.6	N(1)	English
(9)	2	Should be learned	L2	0	Has to be studied
		With more interest	L2	0	Seriously

**Cohesion Analysis Performed in a Low-rated Paper:**

Sentence No	No of Ties	Cohesive Item	Type	Distance	Presupposed Item
(2)	2	Before	L1.6	0	Before The University
		The University	L1.7	0	
(3)	2	Studies (before)	L1.8	0	Studies(University studies) before
		Before	L1.6		
(4)	2	The choices	L1.6	0	choose the studies
		The studies	L1.8		
(5)	1	The studies	L1.9	0	The studies

## The Sample of the High-rated Paragraph Analyzed:

Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012

Topic: The importance of English

Nowadays, English is a language that we have to take into consideration. As a foreign language, English becomes more and more studied in many countries around the world, especially Francophone nations. It is not only needed in Anglophone societies, but also in some populations that have English as a second foreign language. It is used in different systems and fields like economy, politics, commerce, and medicine. In addition, the person who speaks well English has more chances to be hired and get an important job like working in institutions, or to become a translator. Furthermore, knowing English gives us opportunities to open up to rich cultures and the whole world. It allows us to learn about the aspects of British and American people, the way they behave and think, their traditions, history, and their perception towards other nations. In short, I think that English has to be studied more seriously in underdeveloped countries. It should be learned from middle school with more interest as it is very useful and international language which always dominates French, German, and Spanish!

## The Sample of the Low-rated Paragraph Analyzed:

University of Algiers  
Reading and Writing

English Division

Full Name :  
Group:

### C- Explain the following words and expressions:

- 1) Had been instructed (line 3) : was ordered to
- 2) Set out (line 10) : hurry
- 3) Would be fired (line 13) : get out from work, left his place in his work

### D- Find an appropriate title to the text: The difficulties of journalism

### Part Two: Writing:

#### Write a 12 line paragraph on the following topic.

- You have spent a year at the university; your current views about studies at the university might be different from your views of studies at the university before this year. Choose two or three major differences and discuss them. Provide convincing examples and details. (contrast)

Before getting in to the university, I had got a totally different view about it, because unlike before, the University's studies now seem so difficult (that's) because of the changed programmes that we have and the waste time we spent in doing strikes. Moreover, the studies before were too interesting and specific, so everyone can choose whatever he likes, but unfortunately, things are changed now, the choices that we have are becoming more and more boring and the studies are all done in general ways. In short, I hope that the studies in our century will develop sooner in order to help our generation to get a better future.

L=1  
T.S. 1  
E=1  
C=10

3/5  
10

you haven't understood the topic well,  
(a contrast bt your previous views & current ones)

Good Luck!

## ملخص الدراسة

### مقدمة عامة:

تعتبر مهارة الكتابة من بين أصعب المهارات اللغوية نظرا للتحديات التي تطرحها خاصة بالنسبة لمتعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. بالإضافة إلى هذا، فإن التحكم في هذه المهارة يعتبر كقياس أساسي للنجاح الأكاديمي لأن التقييم يكون غالبا من خلال الكتابة.

وعليه، فإن أساتذة الكتابة غالبا ما يجدون أنفسهم أمام تحدي إيجاد السبل المثلى لمساعدة الطلبة لمجابهة هذه الظروف المتطلبة من خلال إيجاد إطار تلقيني مناسب يأخذ بعين الاعتبار الأسس الصحيحة لمهارة الكتابة بلغة أجنبية في هذا المقام يعتبر تماسك النص cohesion ووحدته coherence من بين الصفات الأساسية المنوطة بالكتابة الجيدة.

### 1- موضوع الدراسة وأهدافها:

إن موضوع الدراسة المتناولة في هذا البحث هو محاولة لتبيان أنماط التماسك المفرداتي Lexical Cohesion Devices التي يلجأ إليها مجموعة من طلبة السنة الأولى لغة انجليزية كلغة أجنبية أثناء الكتابة وما مدى تأثيرها على نوعية أداءهم الكتابي. لهذا الغرض قمنا بإجراء بحث وصفي استطلاعي مع عينة محدودة العدد (14 طالب) من طلبة السنة الأولى (ل م د) بقسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة الجزائر 2، ترمي الدراسة إلى تحقيق ثلاثة أهداف رئيسية وهي:

1. تحليل الأداء الكتابي للعينة بغرض التوصل إلى أنماط التماسك النصي المفرداتي على ضوء الطريقة المقترحة من طرف الباحثين هاليداي وحسان (1976).

2. بحث العلاقة بين النوعية العامة للنص الكتابي وأنماط التماسك المفرداتي المستعملة من قبل الطلبة.

3. الكشف عن الأهمية التي يوليها أساتذة الكتابة للتماسك المفرداتي Lexical Cohesion.

بالتوازي مع الأهداف الأساسية المسطرة، فإن الدراسة ترمي إلى بحث أداء كل من الأساتذة والطلبة بغرض رسم صورة كاملة ودقيقة الأهمية المولاة لاداءة من أدوات التماسك النصي السائدة في الخطاب الانجليزي المكتوب. لذا، فإن الدراسة تهدف أساسا للإجابة عن الأسئلة الثلاثة التالية:

1. ما هي أنماط التماسك النصي المفرداتي المستعملة من قبل مجموعة من طلبة السنة الأولى (ل م د) في الكتابة؟

2. كيف تختلف النصوص الجيدة والنصوص الضعيفة فيما يخص أنماط التماسك المفرداتي المستعملة؟  
3. هل يولي أساتذة الكتابة نفس القدر من الأهمية للتماسك المفرداتي على غرار التماسك النحوي grammatical cohesion ووحدة النص Coherence في ترسيخ بناء الخطاب المكتوب  
؟Written Discourse

## 2- فكرة شاملة عن المفاهيم الأساسية المعتمدة في الدراسة:

إن نظرية الباحثين هاليداي وحسان (1976) حول الأدوات اللغوية المتاحة لتحقيق تماسك النص وترابطه هي رائدة في هذا المجال حيث أنها اعتمدت في الكثير من الدراسات المهمة بوحدة النص وترابطه كما أنها أصبحت جزءاً لا يتجزأ من العديد من كتب النصوص الموجهة لطلبة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تضم نظرية الباحثين نوعين من أدوات التماسك النصي:

تماسك نحوي Grammatical Cohesion وتماسك مفرداتي Lexical Cohesion ينضوي تحت التماسك النحوي كل من: الحذف الإيجازي (Ellipsis)، الاستبدال (Substitution)، الضمائر (References)، والروابط (Conjunction)، أما التماسك المفرداتي فهو ينقسم إلى نوعين: التكرار (Reitération) والتجاور المفرداتي (Collocation).

اقتصر البحث الذي أجريناه على النوع الاول من التماسك المفرداتي ألا وهو التكرار وأنماطه. أما النوع الثاني التجاور المفرداتي فقد تبين صعوبة اتباعه نظراً للعدد الغير محصور من علاقات المعاني بين المفردات في النص (Semantic Relations) لهذا السبب نجد أن العديد من الأبحاث المجراة في هذا المجال تتحاشى تصنيف هذه العلاقات وتقتصر التماسك المفرداتي على النوع الأول فقط (ماك كارثي MC Carthy 1991).

إن ادوات التكرار في التماسك المفرداتي المقترحة من طرف الباحثين هاليداي وحسان (1976) تضم كل من: التكرار التام Same Item، التكرار بالترادف Synonym، التكرار باسم الصنف Superordinate، التكرار باسم عام General Word.

### تعريف التكرار:Reiteration:

لتوضيح مفهوم التكرار الدال على تماسك النص، نقتبس فيما يلي تعريفا مختصرا مستمدا من مفهوم الباحثين هاليداي وحسان لهذا النوع من أنواع التماسك النصي المفرداتي:

"التكرار هو شكل من أشكال التماسك النصي الذي يضم إعادة استعمال مفردة ما من جهة، استعمال اسم عام للعودة إلى مفردة ما من جهة أخرى وأشكال أخرى بينهما: استعمال مرادف، مرادف قريب أم اسم الصنف". (هاليداي وحسان، 1976، صص278)

### 3- منهجية البحث المتبعة:

بغرض بحث أنواع التكرار المفرداتي المنتهجة من طرف عينة طلبة السنة الأولى لغة انجليزية وكذا الأهمية المولاة من قبل الأساتذة لهذا النوع من أنماط التماسك النصي قمنا باستخدام ثلاث أدوات بحث:

عينيتين من الاداء الكتابي لمجموعة من طلبة السنة الأولى لغة انجليزية (ل م د) واستبيانان إثنان، نهدف في هذا الجزء من الملخص إلى التطرق إلى أهم خصائص منهجية البحث التي سلكتها في إجراءنا لهذه الدراسة. تضم هذه الخصائص: حيثيات الدراسة أسلوب البحث المتبع، خصائص عينة كل من الطلبة والأساتذة وكذا أدوات البحث المستعملة.

### 3-1. خلفيات الدراسة:

إن الحقل اللساني للدراسة المجراة يبدو محدودا نظرا لتركيزنا على معالجة نوع واحد من انواع التماسك النصي ألا وهو التماسك المفرداتي Lexical Cohesion بالإضافة إلى ذلك فقد اصطفينا مهارة الكتابة من بين المهارات اللغوية الأربع (الاستماع، القراءة، الكتابة والحديث) التي غالبا ما تعتمد على هذا النوع من أنماط التماسك النصي لتحسين أسلوب وكذا ترابط النص، فيما يلي نستعرض أهم ما يميز حيثيات تدريس مهارة الكتابة على مستوى قسم اللغة الانجليزية.

في المقام الأول ما يمكن التنويه به هو أن وزارة التعليم العالي قد تبنت نظاما جديدا للتعليم العالي يضم ثلاثة أطوار من التعليم ل (ليسانس)، م (ماستر)، د(دكتوراه)، إن دراستنا قد استهدفت الطور الأول من التعليم العالي (ليسانس) الذي تمتد مدته على مدى ثلاث سنوات. خلال هذه المدة، يتلقى الطلبة تلقينا نظاميا حول أساسيات مهارة الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية على غرار باقي المهارات اللغوية الاخرى. يتدرج التلقين من بنى الجمل والفقرات النصية ليغطي مختلف أنماط الخطاب الكتابي (المقال وأنواعه الرسائل... الخ).

إن الدور الحساس الذي تلعبه مهارة الكتابة في المسار الأكاديمي للطلبة يتجلى بارتباطها الوثيق بباقي المهارات اللغوية الأخرى مما يجعل التحكم في هذه المهارة أساس النجاح في باقي الوحدات. من هنا نجد ان اختبارات الأدب، الحضارة واللسانيات كلها تتطلب اتقانا لمهارة الكتابة. يجدر التذكير أيضا أن النزعة الحديثة المتبناة ضمن برنامج السنة الأولى نظام (ل م د) تدور حول إدماج كل من مهارة الكتابة والقراءة ضمن نفس الوحدة نظرا لميزات هذه الطريقة التي بينتها الدراسات المجراة في هذا المجال.

### 3-2. طبيعة أسلوب المنهجية المتبع في الدراسة:

إن ما يميز دراستنا هو طابعها الوصفي غير التجريبي نظرا لعدم وجود معالجة أو تحكم في متغيراتها إذ أنها ترمي إلى تحديد المتغيرات وبحث أي علاقة ممكنة بين التماسك المفرداتي للنص ونوعية كتابته العامة.

### 3-3. خصائص العينة:

لقد شارك في إنجاز هذه الدراسة 14 طالبا من طلبة السنة الأولى لغة انجليزية بجامعة الجزائر 2، يمتد سن الطلبة من 18 إلى 22 سنة كما أن مستواهم اللغوي يبدو متجانسا إذ من المفترض أنهم تلقوا تعليما في اللغة الانجليزية على مدار (7 سنوات) لقد اختيرت العينة عشوائيا من مجموعة طلبة تضم (30 طالبا) غير أن تقييم الأساتذة قد أظهر احتواء العينة على المستويات الثلاث من الكتابة الضعيفة المتوسطة وكذا الجيدة وعليه فإن يميز عينة الطلبة هو محدودية عددها غير أن الأبحاث والدراسات في مجال الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية قد بينت فعالية تحليل الأداء الكتابي للمتعلمين من خلال دراسات حالة محدودة العدد لما تأتي به من تفاصيل معمقة عن فحوى ومجريات مهارة الكتابة وما تتطلبه من متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية (نجد على سبيل المثال لا الحصر الدراسات التي قامت بها في هذا الميدان كل من زمال Zamel (1983) والتي أنجزت بحثها ضمن عينة تضم 6 طلبة فقط وكذا ريمز Raimes (1985) والتي ركزت في دراستها على 8 طلبة فقط.

لقد أجريت أطوار دراستنا خلال السنة الجامعية 2011-2012، بالتحديد، فقد استهل بحثنا في فيفري واختتم في جويلية 2012. إن الهدف من اختيار هذا الجزء من السنة الجامعية لجمع المعطيات بصفة تدريجية يعود إلى الهدف البيداغوجي لمنهاج وحدة الكتابة للسنة الأولى والذي سطر على أساس أنه عند نهاية السنة فإن طلبة السنة الأولى قد استوفوا التطرق بالتفصيل إلى بنية وكذا أنماط النصوص الكتابية الأساسية المتكونة من فقرة واحدة. فيما يخص أساتذة الكتابة الذين ساهموا في بحثنا هذا فيبلغ عددهم عشرة، يدرس كلهم وحدة الكتابة على مستوى قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة الجزائر -2- خمسة منهم قد قضوا أكثر من عشرة سنوات في تدريس مهارة الكتابة بالقسم وبالتالي فيمكن وصف خبرتهم بالواسعة في هذا المجال أما باقي العينة فتضم أستاذان خبرتهما متوسطة تتراوح من 5 إلى 7 سنوات وثلاث أساتذة استهلوا التدريس منذ حوالي السنة إلى ثلاث سنوات فقط، من المهم أيضا التنويه أن جل أساتذة الكتابة لأقسام السنة الأولى قد تعاونوا وقبلوا الإسهام في هذا البحث.

### 3-4. أدوات البحث المستعملة: Research Instruments

بغرض بحث استعمال عينتنا من الطلبة لمختلف أنواع التماسك النصي المفرداتي، لجانا إلى مجموعة من وسائل البحث للتوصل إلى وصف معمق لبنى التكرار المفرداتي التي غالبا ما يلجأ إليها الطلبة في كتاباتهم. في هذا السياق أدوات البحث المتخذة هي نماذج كتابية عبارة عن نصوص متكونة من فقرة واحدة واستبيانان إثنان.

النماذج الكتابية المستعملة هي عبارة عن نصوص متكونة من فقرة واحدة كتبت من طرف الطلبة في ظرفين مختلفين. العينة الكتابية الأولى عبارة عن تمرين كتابي أسند للطلبة كفرض بيتي والذي يدور موضوعه حول أهمية تعلم اللغة الانجليزية في عصرنا هذا.

يكتسي الموضوع طابعا عاما لا يتطلب من المتعلمين معرفة متخصصة لتحليل فقره في مضمونه. بالإضافة إلى هذا فإنه بإسنادنا لهذا الفرض البيتي نهدف إلى التقليل من ظروف القلق الناتجة عن محدودية الوقت المتاح التي غالبا ما تميز ظروف الاختبارات، يجدر التنويه أيضا أنه لم يكن للطلبة علم بموضوع بحثنا. وبالتالي، فمن المفترض أن استعمال الطلبة لأنماط التماسك المفرداتي كان تلقائيا. فيما يخص العينة الكتابية الثانية فهي تضم إجابات الطلبة على امتحان الكتابة للسداسي الثاني. يرمي موضوع الاختبار إلى التأكد من مدى تحكم الطلبة في نمط الفقرات المحررة على ضوء المقارنة Comparison and Contrat والتي تطرق لها الطلبة في الجزء الثاني من السنة الجامعية. إن استخدام نموذجان كتابيان للأداء الكتابي للطلبة يعبر عن حرصنا على تنوع مصادر المعلومة للوصول إلى نتائج تكون معبرة إلى حد لا بأس به عن أنماط التماسك النصي المستخدمة في إنتاج العينة الكتابية. رغم هذا نجد أن هذه النماذج لا تمثل سوى الحد الأدنى من العينات الواجب اعتمادها للتحليل للوصول إلى بحث موضوعي معمق لهذه السمة من سمات الخطاب الانجليزي المكتوب.

#### 4- الاستبيان The Questionnaire:

نظرا لطبيعة الدراسة الوصفية، لم يكن مناسباً اعتماداً الأداء الكتابي للطلبة كمصدر وحيد للمعطيات. الطريقة المثلى الأكثر استيفاءً لمتطلبات البحث هي إدراج أدوات بحث تستهدف جوانب الدراسة الخفية والتي يصعب إدراكها من خلال تفحص الإنتاج الكتابي للطلبة فقط. لذا، وكتمة لنتائج تحليل الاداء الكتابي للعينة، استبيانان إثنان تم اعتمادهما في هذه الدراسة الأولى وجه للطلبة أما الثاني فأساتذة الكتابة.

القص من استخدام استبيان الطلبة هو تحديد طريقة فهمهم لأنماط التكرار المتواجدة في النصوص، الأسباب الكامنة وراء استخدامهم لأنماط المتوصل إليها من التحليل وكذا ما مدى مطابقة فهم الطلبة وتصورهم لهذا النوع من أنماط التماسك النصي لإنجازهم الكتابي الفعلي.

استبيان الاساتذة كان بدوره مناسبة لمعرفة نوع التلقين الذي يوجهونه للطلبة لترسيخ هذا النوع من أنماط التماسك النصي في بناء خطاب إنجليزي كتابي حقيقي.

#### 5- طرق التحليل المتبعة Methods of data Analysis:

كما ذكرنا أنفا أن الدراسة تتلخص في إجراء تحليل لأنماط التماسك النصي على ضوء الطريقة المقترحة من قبل الباحثين هاليداي وحسان (1976) والمتبعة في الكثير من الدراسات السابقة في هذا الميدان.

يمكننا التحليل من تصنيف أنماط التكرار المفرداتي الموجودة في النصوص من خلال تشفيرها. وفقا لذلك، فإن لكل صنف من أصناف التكرار المفرداتي رمزه (مثلا: التكرار التام L1، التكرار بالترادف L2 وهكذا) وعليه فإنه في كل جملة قد لجأنا في البدء إلى التعريف بنوع التكرار الموجود من خلال

تشفيره. بعد الانتهاء من استخلاص كل المفردات التي تفيد بوجود تكرار يرمي إلى تماسك الفقرة نمر إلى الفقرة الموالية وهكذا دواليك، بعد الانتهاء من تحليل كل الفقرات الموجودة قمنا بإحصاء كمي لكل نوع من أنواع التكرار المفرداتي على حدى بغرض تبيان الأنماط الأكثر انتشارا وتكرارا، الأنماط النادرة وكذا أنماط التكرار المفرداتي الغائبة تماما في كتابات الطلبة.

#### 5-1. تقييم نوعية الكتابة العامة:

بما أن الهدف الثاني من الدراسة هو إجراء مقارنة بين عينتين من الأداء الكتابي الجيد وكذا الأداء الكتابي الضعيف، كان لزاما إخضاع العينات الكتابية إلى تقييم موضوعي ينتهي بإسناد علامات تفيد بالنوعية العامة للنص. لهذا الغرض تعاون معنا إثنين من أساتذة الكتابة بقسم اللغة الانجليزية بالجامعة.

لم نكتفي باعتماد تقييم واحد للأداء الكتابي للطلبة ، لذلك ارتأينا تقييما أكثر موضوعية يعتمد على رأيين مختلفين مجسدين في علامتين مختلفتين قمنا باحتساب معدلها للتمكن من تصنيف الكتابات إلى كتابات ضعيفة متوسطة وجيدة ويجدر التذكير أن الفرق بين العلامتين لم يتعدى ثلاث نقاط وبالتالي لم يكن هناك حاجة إلى تقييم ثالث.

#### 5-2. تحليل الإجابات عن الاستبيانين:

إن طريقة تحليل إجابات الطلبة والأساتذة عن أسئلة الاستبيانين كانت ترتبط ارتباطا تاما بنوعية الأسئلة المطروحة. لقد اتبعنا تحليلا كميا بالنسبة للأسئلة المقيدة بأجوبة محددة سلفا Close – Ended باحتساب تكرار الأجوبة المتشابهة، من جهة أخرى، قمنا باعتماد تحليل كيفي بالنسبة للأسئلة الغير مقيدة Open – Ended والذي يتبع تحليل محتوى الإجابات.

لقد ارتأينا في هذا الجزء من الملخص تقديم أهم ما ميز منهجية البحث المتوخاة في دراستنا لاستعمال الطلبة لنوع من أنواع أدوات التماسك النصي في الكتابة. في الحقيقة أملنا أننا قد استطعنا ولو بالقدر القليل تجنب أهم نقاط الضعف التي عادة ما تناط بالمنهجيات الضعيفة والتي عادة ما يعاب عليها اعتمادها على وسيلة بحث واحدة أو التركيز على موضوع البحث من منظور الطلبة فقط دون الأساتذة أو العكس.

## 6- تقديم نتائج الدراسة المتوصل إليها:

بعد تحديد أهم الملامح المنهجية لدراستنا، نستعرض فيما يلي النتائج المتوصل إليها. أولاً سنحاول تفحص نتائج التحليل الكمي لأنماط التماسك النصي المفرداتي وتمحيصها لتبيان أنواع التكرار المفرداتي التي استعملت بكثرة من طرف الطلبة، الأنماط الأقل انتشاراً وكذا الأنماط التي لم نصادفها في كتابات الطلبة على الإطلاق. بعدها، وعلى ضوء تقييم الأساتذة للنوعية العامة للنماذج الكتابية التي تم تحليلها من حيث ترابطها المفرداتي قمنا بتصنيف هذه النماذج إلى ضعيفة متوسطة وجيدة. في الواقع لقد مكنا التقييم من التركيز على توزيع مختلف أنماط التماسك النصي المفرداتي وذلك بمقارنة عينة تضم 5 فقرات تمثل الكتابة الجيدة بنفس العدد من نماذج فقرات تم تصنيفها على أنها ضعيفة من حيث نوعية كتابتها العامة أما الجزء الثالث من النتائج فقد خصصناه لتقديم محتوى إجابات الطلبة والأساتذة عن الاستبيان المستخدمين وذلك بشكل وجيز.

### 6-1. تقديم نتائج تحليل إنتاج الطلبة الكتابي من حيث أنماط التماسك النصي المفرداتي المستعملة:

في بحثنا هذا، قمنا بتحليل مجموعتين من النماذج الكتابية الأولى عبارة عن فقرات أنجزها الطلبة كفرض بيتي والذي رمزنا له بالعينة الكتابية أ- . المجموعة الثانية من النماذج الكتابية فتضم نسخ من فقرات أنجزت كإجابة عن موضوع اختبار السداسي الثاني لوحدة الكتابة والذي سوف نرمز له بالعينة الكتابية ب-، وعليه فإن كلتا العينتين الكتابيتين تضم 14 فقرة ليصل مجموع الفقرات التي أخضعت للتحليل إلى 28 فقرة. نذكر أنه باستخدامنا لقياسين بدل قياس واحد نرمي إلى رسم صورة أدق وأعمق لسبل التكرار التي يلجأ إليها الطلبة أثناء الكتابة.

### 6-2. أنواع التكرار المفرداتي المستعملة:

في البداية يجدر التذكير أن نموذج التحليل المتبنى في دراستنا هو النموذج الرائد للباحثين هاليداي وحسان 1976 والذي يضم خمسة أنواع من روابط التماسك النصي غير أن دراستنا ترمي إلى التركيز على نوع واحد من الأدوات اللغوية المتوفرة لتحقيق ترابط النص ووحدته وهو التماسك المفرداتي. ننوه كذلك أن النوع الثاني من التماسك المفرداتي قد استثنى أيضاً من الدراسة نظراً للتعقيدات التي تشوبه. وبالتالي فعند إجراءنا للتحليل ومصادفتنا لهذه الأنواع من الروابط لم نولها اهتماماً ولم نحصها أو نذكرها خلال معالجتنا للمعلومات المستقاة من أدوات البحث المستعملة. فيما يلي نستعرض نتائج التحليل الكمي النهائية الملخصة لما توصلنا إليه من معطيات في هذا الخصوص تظهر الجداول الواردة في الصفحات 72، 73 توزيع مختلف أنماط التماسك النصي في العينتين الكتابيتين "أ" و"ب" على التوالي أما الجدول الثالث ص 73 فيظهر نسب مختلف أنماط النصي التي تم ضبطها في العينتين الكتابيتين

ويستخلص معدلا لتوزيع الأنماط المختلفة في الإنتاج الكتابي للطلبة بصفة عامة، لتوضيح وتجسيد هذه النسب قمنا بتمثيلها في البيان الذي يظهر أسفل الجدول (البيان ص74).

في المقام الأول يظهر البيان أنماط التماسك النصي المفرداتي التي اعتمد عليها الطلبة في تحقيق التماسك المفرداتي في نصوصهم. يظهر جليا تفضيل الطلبة للنوع الأول من انواع التماسك المفرداتي المصنفة من قبل الباحثين هاليداي وحسان وهو التكرار التام. النسبة معتبرة (65.64) إذا ما قورنت بباقي الأنماط. لذا يمكننا القول ان طلبة السنة الأولى يجدون في التكرار التام أو التكرار البسيط الأسلوب الأنجع لتحقيق التماسك المفرداتي في نصوصهم. المرادفات هي ثاني أنواع التماسك المفرداتي المستعملة في تكرار المفردات هذا النمط يشكل 30.25% من مجموع الروابط المفرداتية المستعملة من قبل الطلبة فيما يخص الصنف الثالث من انماط التكرار (التكرار باسم الصنف) فقد لوحظ محدودية استعماله من قبل الطلبة. حيث أن نسبته لا تتعدى 4.10% اما الملفت للانتباه فهو الغياب التام للنوع الرابع من أنواع التكرار المفرداتي حيث لاحظنا افتقار الإنتاج الكتابي لعينة الطلبة المشاركة في دراستنا إلى التكرار باسم عام حيث أن نسبة هذه الأخيرة معدومة 0%.

بصفة عامة، فان تفحصا سريعا لنتائج التحليل يظهر أن نمط التكرار المفرداتي السائد في الأداء الكتابي للعينة يطبعه ميل الطلبة إلى التكرار التام للمفردات التي استخدمت فيما سبق من جمل مع تنويع طفيف لهذا التكرار من خلال استعمال بعض المرادفات من حين لآخر وذلك بغية تجنب الإطناب في التكرار. ولقد تبين من خلال مقارنة هذه النتائج بما سبق من دراسات في هذا الموضوع أن هذا النمط يشابه النمط الذي ضبط في عينة الكتابات الضعيفة التي أخضعها كل من ويتي وفاجلي (1981) إلى مقارنة مع عينة من الكتابات الجيدة.

إن ما توصلنا له من نتائج لتحليل أنماط التماسك النصي المفرداتي لحد الآن هو محاولة لرصد صورة شاملة عن استخدام الطلبة لمختلف انواع التكرار المفرداتي. لذا، فالتركيز فيما سبق كان موجها للإجابة عن سؤال البحث الأول الذي أثير في دراستنا وعليه فان ما سنتطرق إليه فيما يلي من استعراض لنتائج التحليل سيسلط الضوء على ما نصبو إليه من مقارنة بين الأداء الكتابي الجيد وكذا الضعيف وذلك بغية استنباط أنماط التكرار المفرداتي التي يمكن ربطها بالكتابة الجيدة وكذا تلك التي تطبع الاداءات الكتابية الضعيفة.

### 3-6. مقارنة بين الفقرات الجيدة والضعيفة من حيث أنماط التكرار المفرداتي المستعملة:

إن النوعية العامة للعينات الكتابية التي أخضعناها للمقارنة قد ارتأينا تحديدها من خلال تقييم شامل أقره أساتذة الكتابة على أساس هذا التقييم قمنا بترتيب العينات الكتابية بغية تصنيفها إلى جيدة متوسطة وضعيفة بعد اختيار العينتين الكتابيتين على أساس نوعيتهما العامة نرمي الآن إلى استخراج أهم الخصائص التي يميز كلتا النوعيتين من حيث تركيز مختلف أنواع التماسك النصي المفرداتي وكذا توزيعها.

في ضوء المقارنة المجراة بين عينتين من الاداء الكتابي الجيد وكذا الأداء الضعيف توصلنا إلى أن الأول يحوي عدداً أهم من أنماط التماسك النصي المفرداتي مقارنة بالثاني بالتحديد لقد توصلنا إلى أن مجموع روابط التكرار المفرداتي التي تم ضبطها في عينة الفقرات ذات النوعية الجيدة يساوي ضعف مجموعها في الفقرات الضعيفة إجمالاً. إن ملاحظتنا الثانية تخص توزيع الأنواع الأربعة للتماسك المفرداتي في العينتين الكتابيتين المقارنتين لتوضيح المعطيات المتحصل عليها انظر البيانين ص 83.

يشير التمثيل البياني لتوزيع مختلف أنواع التكرار المفرداتي في العينتين الكتابيتين إلى وجود اختلاف واضح في النمطين المميزين لصنفي الكتابة المقارنين ويخص هذا الاختلاف الأنماط الثلاث الأولى. النتائج تشير إلى ميل الطلبة الذين أسندت لكتاباتهم علامات ضعيفة إلى النوع الأول من أنواع التكرار المفرداتي أي التكرار التام حيث أنها تشكل الأغلبية القصوى 95.45% من مجموع الروابط المفرداتية المستعملة مقابل 56.84% في عينة الفقرات ذات النوعية الجيدة، فيما يخص التكرار بالمرادفات فإن التوزيع يعكس حيث أن عينة كتابات الجيدة تزخر بهذا النوع من الروابط المفرداتية بنسبة 40.20% مقابل 4.54% فقط هي نسبة المرادفات من مجموع المفردات المكررة في الفقرات الضعيفة وعليه، فإننا نجد أن الفقرات ذات المستوى الجيد هي الأكثر غنى بالمرادفات من الفقرات الضعيفة، أما فيما تعلق بالصنف الثالث فعلى ندرته 2.27% في العينة الجيدة فهو غائب تماماً في العينة الضعيفة وعليه يمكننا استخلاص أن توزيع مختلف أنواع التكرار المفرداتي في الفقرات الجيدة يطبعه الغنى والتنوع النسبي مقارنة بالعينة الضعيفة التي تمتاز بارتباطها شبه الكلي بالنوع الأول.

### 3-6. تقديم نتائج الاستبيانين:

#### 1. نتائج الاستبيان الموجه للطلبة:

يهدف استبيان الطلبة إلى تبيان خلفيات استعمال الطلبة للأصناف المتوصل إليها في تحليلنا لأدائهم الكتابي من أهم المعطيات التي استقيناها من استبيان الطلبة هو أن أغليبتهم (14/11) يجدون أن

مهارة الكتابة هي مهارة مطلوبة بوصفهم إياها بالصعبة كما أن أغلبهم (14/11) يجدون أن ممكن الصعوبة يتمحور في إيجاد المفردات المناسبة والملائمة لموضوع الكتابة المطروح.

إلى جانب هذا عند استفسارنا عن الاختيار الذي غالبا ما يلجؤون إليه عند رغبتهم في تكرار مفردة ما فقد أقر الطلبة بميلهم إلى استخلافها بضمير 14/8 بالتوازي مع ذلك، ولدى تمحيصنا في أجوبة الطلبة عن سؤالنا حول أهم الروابط التي يلجؤون إليها لتماسك نصوصهم ووجدتها فقد وجدنا أن معظمها روابط ذات طبيعة نحوية وعن الأسباب الكامنة خلف النقص في الاستغلال الامتل لهذه الانواع فقد اقر الطلبة بان رصيدهم المفرداتي جد محدود ليسمح لهم بتنوع التكرار المفرداتي ونتيجة لذلك فهم 14/14 يشجعون تدريس مختلف أنواع التماسك المفرداتي ودورها في تحقيق وحدة النص وتماسكه.

## 2. نتائج الاستبيان الموجه للأساتذة:

إن استبيان الأساتذة كان مناسباً لمعرفة نوع التلقين الذي يوجهونه للطلبة لترسيخ هذا النوع من أنماط التماسك النصي في الكتابة وبالتالي فقد وظفناه كأداة للإجابة عن سؤال البحث الثالث. إن أهم ما أظهره الاستبيان هو أن جل الأساتذة 10/8 يجدون أن المكونات الثلاث للقدرة الخطابية تشكل عائقاً للطلبة في الكتابة ولدى استفسارنا عن نوع التماسك النصي الذي طالما أصروا على تلقينه للطلبة فقد أقر معظم أساتذة الكتابة (10/7) أن الروابط التماسك النصي ذات الطبيعة النحوية هي التي تلقت الاهتمام المباشر حيث أن معظم النشاطات والتمارين التي وظفوها قد انصبت في هذا المجال باستثناء أقلية (10/3) تساوي في اهتمامنا بالنوعين، بالإضافة إلى هذه المعطيات فقد حاولنا أن نكون أكثر دقة باستفسارنا عن طبيعة التلقين الذي خصه أساتذة الكتابة لتعليم مختلف أنماط التماسك المفرداتي، ولقد أنت إجابات الأساتذة على هذا النحو 10/7 منهم لم يخصصوا هذا النوع من الروابط بأي نوع من التلقين 10/3 فقط أجابوا أنهم قد خصصوا تلقينا غير مباشر.

ولدى استفسارنا عن أهم الأصناف التي تفتقد إليها فقرات الطلبة فقد اتفق الأساتذة 10/10 أنه باستثناء الصنف الأول الأكثر انتشاراً في كتابات الطلبة فإن باقي أصناف كلها نادرة وتكاد تكون منعدمة ويرجع الأساتذة هذا النقص في استخدام أدوات هذا النوع من التماسك النصي إلى عوامل شتى أهمها محدودية المخزون المفرداتي للطلبة الذي يرجعه الأساتذة غالباً إلى نقص في عادة القراءة.

## الخاتمة:

في ضوء النتائج المحققة نأمل أنه قد استطعنا من خلال هذه الدراسة تسليط الضوء على أهمية استخدام مختلف أنماط التكرار ليس فقط في تطوير التماسك النصي للخطاب الكتابي نحسب بل في تحديد نوعية الأداء الكتابي بصفة عامة.

وبالتوازي مع هذه النتائج فقد توصلت الدراسة إلى تبيان الاهتمام المحدود والذي يوليه أساتذة مادة الكتابة لهذا النوع من أنماط التماسك النصي وذلك نتيجة تركيزهم على ترسيخ باقي أنماط التماسك النصي إيماناً منهم بالدور الرئيسي الذي تلعبه هذه الأخيرة في تماسك النص وحدته.

وفي الأخير وانطلاقاً من النتائج المتوصل إليها نأمل أيضاً أنه قد ساهمنا ولو جزئياً في تحسين محتوى منهاج وحدة الكتابة لمستوى السنة الأولى بالجامعة وذلك من خلال اقتراح مجموعة من التمارين الهادفة لجلب اهتمام الطلبة بالدور الذي تلعبه مختلف أدوات التكرار كنمط من أنماط التماسك المفرداتي في تماسك النص ووحدته.