Analyzing Errors in Unity, Cohesion, and Coherence within Written Essays of Libyan EFL Pre-Service Teachers in the English department at University of Tripoli

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Abstract

Libyan pre-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) study in a four-year college program to graduate and join in-service teachers across the country. Despite intensive writing courses during their undergraduate studies, they face significant challenges in writing well-structured, cohesive, and coherent essays. This study aims to identify and analyze errors related to unity, cohesion, and coherence in academic essays written by Libyan EFL pre-service teachers at the University of Tripoli. Utilizing a qualitative design, data were collected through convenient sampling of five essays written by five Libyan participants. The analysis focused on identifying errors that lead to incoherent and disconnected paragraphs, based on criteria for textual unity and the theoretical framework of the study. The findings revealed frequent issues with unclear topic sentences, multiple main ideas, faulty references, incorrect use of conjunctions, over-reliance on repetition, and lack of appropriate transitions. These insights aim to enhance writing instruction and improve the quality of academic writing in Libyan higher education.

Key words: *Unity, Cohesion, Coherence, Errors*

لطلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة طرابلس تحليل الأخطاء في الوحدة والتماسك والترابط في المقالات الاكاديمية

برنامج الدراسات العليا، قسم اللغة الانجليزية، كلية اللغات، جامعة طرابلس، طرابلس، ليبيا[1,2]،اسراء عمر سنوقة[1] ، بسمة شهوب الأحمر [2] ،

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى تحديد وتحليل الأخطاء المتعلقة بالوحدة والتماسك والاتساق في المقالات الاكاديمية التي كتبها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية في جامعة طرابلس. باستخدام تصميم نوعي، تم جمع البيانات من خلال عينة مريحة من خمس مقالات كتبها خمسة مشاركين ليبيين. ركز التحليل على تحديد الأخطاء التي تؤدي الى فقدان الاتساق وفقدان العلاقات بين الفقرات، استنادا الى معايير الوحدة النصية والإطار النظري للدراسة. كشفت النتائج عن مشاكل متكررة مع عبارات موضوعية غير واضحة، وأفكار رئيسية متعددة وارتباطات خاطئة، واستخدام غير صحيح للروابط والاعتماد المفرط على التكرار، ونقص التحولات المناسبة. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تعزيز تعليم الكتابة وتحسين جودة الكتابة الاكاديمية في التعليم العالي الليبي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوحدة، التماسك، الترابط، الأخطاء

Introduction

Academic writing is widely considered an essential component of students' educational pursuits, particularly at the college level. EFL university students are expected to showcase paragraph-level unity, cohesion, and coherence in their writing, as they are aligned with producing research papers, articles, and proposals. Nonetheless, achieving this level of proficiency is not a straightforward process and these pre-service teachers still frequently exhibit various types of errors in unity, cohesion, and coherence, resulting in structurally flawed paragraphs that lack coherent progression and logical flow (*Zaim & Ningsih*, 2019). Elabbar (2011) mentioned

that academic writing presents substantial obstacles for Libyan EFL pre-service teachers, who struggle with writing well-organized paragraphs.

Regarding the unity, cohesion, and coherence, Ahmed, Adam (2024) claims that unity is achieved when the writers maintain focus on a singular idea throughout the entire paragraph. Cohesion, on the other hand, encompasses linguistic elements that enable the text to be unified and easily understood (Wang, 2014). These cohesion devices, such as pronouns, conjunctions, and lexical repetition, contribute to the overall coherence and flow of the text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). However, Coherence is demonstrated by the logical organization of supporting sentences and thoughts and considered as one of the essential requirements of an effective paragraph, along with unity, cohesion, and continuity (Faradhibah & Nur, 2017). Odell, et al. (2001) explained that when a paragraph exhibits coherence, the ideas are arranged in a logical progression, allowing the reader to move seamlessly from one idea to the next.

Identifying and analyzing the errors made by EFL learners is crucial to providing strategies that can assist students in improving their writing. Researchers actively study the mistakes made by second and foreign-language learners, referring to this field as error analysis. Error analysis can be used as a teaching tool or to prepare teaching materials to (a) determine a person's level of language proficiency; (b) determine how a person learns a language; and (c) gather information on typical language learning challenges (Intan 2019).

Accordingly, the present research endeavors to identify and analyze the errors in unity, cohesion, and coherence exhibited by Libyan fourth-semester EFL pre-service teachers at the English department of the University of Tripoli. The ultimate goal of the study is to help enhance academic writing instructions at the higher education level in Libya.

Statement of the problem

Writing poses a significant problem for Libyan EFL pre-service teachers, as they struggle to construct well-organized paragraphs in their academic writing (Elabbar, 2011). Particularly, achieving unity, cohesion, and coherence in their writing might be difficult, resulting in generally low writing performance among Libyan EFL learners.

Questions of the Study

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

1) What types of unity-related errors are evident in the paragraphs written by Libyan EFL pre-service teachers enrolled at the University of Tripoli?

2) What are the specific cohesion and coherence errors that Libyan EFL pre-service teachers at the University of Tripoli demonstrate in their written paragraphs?

Purpose of the study

The study aims to identify and analyze the errors in unity, cohesion, and coherence that the Libyan EFL pre-service teachers make when writing essays.

Significance of the study

This study has the potential to assist Libyan pre-service teachers in improving their writing skills by identifying and addressing these errors. Additionally, the findings of the study might help the English department

instructors at the University of Tripoli in developing their teaching methods and syllabus design, ultimately promoting the development of writing skills through a focus on unity, cohesion, and coherence. The study findings can significantly benefit the researchers by providing a clear understanding of the specific areas where Libyan students have difficulties in writing essays, helping them suggest more intervention and teaching strategies.

Literature Review

Definitions of Error

Errors are typically characterized as linguistic aberrations from a language's standard form that occurs when a student is unaware of the correct form. These are not the same as mistakes, which happen when a student knows the right form but is unable to produce it correctly because of things like inattention or distraction. While mistakes are random and usually recognized and fixed by the student once noticed, errors are frequently systematic and reveal holes in a learner's knowledge (Corder, 1967; James, 1998).

Definition Error Analysis

Error analysis refers to the systematic technique of identifying, classifying, and interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by learners in a foreign language (Karim & Mohammed, 2018). It involves analyzing errors to inform learners of their areas for improvement and assess their language competence (Erdoğan, 2005). Furthermore, errors were viewed as problems to be eliminated, but they are now recognized as valuable learning tools that provide insights into learners' language proficiency and strategies (Corder, 1967; Monnipha, 2014).

The Concept of Unity in Essay Writing

The concept of unity in paragraphs is central to effective academic essay writing, as it describes the cohesive development and focused nature of a well-constructed paragraph (Zemach & Rumisek, 2003). A unified paragraph discusses a single, consistent topic from the beginning to the end, without introducing unrelated ideas (Oshima & Hogue, 2006).

Several key features determine the unity of paragraphs within an essay:

1) The topic sentence must present the main controlling idea, excluding any details or information that are not explicitly relevant to the topic sentence (Zemach & Rumisek, 2003).

2) The paragraph should maintain a singular, well-defined main idea, with the content of the supporting sentences carefully controlled to provide detailed information about this central focus and avoiding multiple foci (Maria, 2015).

3) All the supporting sentences must directly explain and reinforce this central focus (Maria, 2015).

By strictly following these principles of unity, academic writers can develop united focused paragraphs that effectively communicate.

The Concept of Cohesion in Essay Writing

Cohesion refers to the linguistic devices that connect the various components of a text, creating a sense of unity and continuity for the reader. It is the tool that establishes coherence in a text, connecting the ideas embedded within sentences and across paragraphs, ensuring that the text flows smoothly and the different

parts are well-coordinated (Halliday & Hasan, 2014; Afrianto, 2017). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), Cohesion is essential for both the construction of meaning by readers and the creation of comprehensible texts by writers. An English native speaker can easily identify whether a set of sentences are unrelated or do not form a unified whole.

Researchers have extensively studied the various cohesive devices that writers utilize to achieve this cohesion within a text, enabling it to be understood as a unified whole (Halliday & Hasan, 2014). In line with the literature, writers can employ several primary cohesive devices to establish cohesion at the paragraph level, including:

1) Pronoun reference is a linguistic concept where pronouns are used to establish connections between sentences and refer back to previously mentioned entities, such as people, objects, locations, or ideas (Rullyanti & Anggeraini, 2018). This pronominal referencing allows writers to create cohesive and coherent discourse by using pronouns to link ideas and maintain continuity throughout the text.

2) Substitution is a linguistic device where a writer replaces a word with an alternative term to avoid repetition and maintain a cohesive flow in the text. It involves replacing one linguistic item with another that contributes new information, while maintaining the same structural function as the original term (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Adiantika & Floranti, 2018).

3) Ellipsis is a grammatical device used by writers to omit parts of a sentence that can be inferred from the context, resulting in a more concise and cohesive text where the omitted information is still understood by the reader.

4) Conjunctions play a vital role in written communication by establishing logical relationships between sentences, enhancing the overall coherence of the text. These connectors serve to combine and link various elements of thought, facilitating the reader's understanding of the ideas presented. Conversely, the improper use of conjunctions can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in comprehending the written material, as the logical flow and connections between ideas may become unclear or ambiguous (Geraldine, 2020).

5) Lexical cohesion refers to the strategic use of related words, such as synonyms, antonyms, or terms from the same lexical field, to establish connections throughout a written work (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Morris & Hirst, 1991). This can be achieved through "reiteration" (repetition or use of synonyms) or "collocation" (other types of lexical relations), which collectively contribute to the overall structure and continuity of the text.

6) Transition words and phrases, which are essential components in establishing cohesive and logical connections between sentences and ideas within a text. They help guide the reader by signaling the relationship between different parts of the written material, whether it is indicating sequence, comparison, contrast, addition, or conclusion. (Rullyanti, & Anggeraini, 2018).

Research has shown that the careful and intentional use of these diverse cohesive devices can significantly improve the overall comprehension and coherence of a text, enabling readers to better understand the written material (Siregar, 2014).

The concept of Coherence in Essay Writing

Coherence is a fundamental aspect of effective written communication, as it enables the clear and logical organization of ideas, allowing readers to follow the flow and connections between the writer's thoughts (Birthous, 2011). According to Johns, (1986) text analysts generally define coherence as a theoretical construct in text structure that refers to the underlying relations between assertions or propositions, and how they

contribute to the overall discourse theme. As El-Aswad (2002) highlights, "A paragraph is coherent when it maintains relevance among the sentence units" (p. 123). In other words, coherence involves the ways in which a text makes sense to readers through the relevance and accessibility of its concepts, ideas, and theories (Hyland, 2006, p. 311). It is crucial for a text to be comprehensible to the reader, and is essential at both the paragraph and overall text level, as it enables the reader to follow the writer's thought process and grasp the intended meaning (Briesmaster & Etchegaray, 2017).

Coherence in writing is achieved through several interconnected techniques, as outlined by Oshima and Hogue (2006), Johns (1986):

1) Maintaining a clear focus through the repeated use of central nouns and pronouns is essential to guide the reader and facilitate comprehension of the writer's ideas.

2) To maintain clarity and engagement, writers should avoid excessive repetition of the same nouns and instead utilize varied phrasing and lexical diversity, while still maintaining a clear focus through appropriate pronoun use.

3) The organization of the writing, with sentences and ideas arranged in a logical manner, helps guide the reader through the text and communicate the writer's message in a clear and coherent way. The writer should organize the overall structure of the text well, hierarchically, coordinately, and subordinately arranging concepts around a central discourse theme or thesis.

4) Transitional signals, such as "furthermore" and "as a result," are incorporated to logically link ideas and guide the reader through the text.

As Johns (1986) suggests, by conscientiously incorporating these key coherence-enhancing strategies, writers can construct more cohesive and compelling academic texts that effectively convey their ideas.

Theoretical Framework

Corder's Error Analysis Theory (1974) had revolutionized the understanding of learners' errors, reframing them as valuable insights into the learners' linguistic development rather than mere mistakes. This innovative perspective had profoundly influenced subsequent research on second language learning and shaped language teaching methodologies that emphasize the constructive analysis and addressing of learners' errors.

According to Gagné 's instructional design theory (1985), unity in writing is an essential component of effective communication. According to Gagne, unity occurs when all elements of a text contribute to the development of a single main idea or thesis. This theory emphasizes the importance of clear, focused writing in which every sentence and paragraph supports the central argument or purpose of the text.

Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion Theory (2014) identifies various cohesive devices used in writing, such as "*reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion*". These devices help link ideas within a text, making it coherent and easy to understand.

De Beaugrande and Dressler's theory (1981) of coherence in discourse emphasizes that coherence is achieved when the text makes sense to the reader through logical connections and the consistency of meaning throughout the text. Coherence relies on the reader's ability to interpret the relationships between different parts of the text, which are often implicit.

Corder's Error AnalysisTheory, Robert Gagne's theory, Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion Theory, and De Beaugrande and Dressler's Theory of Coherence in Discourse not only offer insights into the nature of writing errors but also highlight the importance of unity, cohesion and coherence in creating effective written texts.

Previous Studies

There are several conducted studies related to unity, cohesion, and coherence by many researchers. For example, Ahmed (2019) conducted a study to analyze the errors of unity and coherence made by Saudi EFL students in their writing paragraphs. The researcher selected 30 EFL Saudi students to contribute to the study. Using analytical methods to examine the errors in written paragraphs Ahmed found out that Saudi EFL students' insufficient performance in writing was a result of the lack of knowledge about techniques of unity and coherence, also he discovered that the mother tongue interference of EFL students is also a factor behind the errors in unity and coherence. He suggested that students should receive plenty of writing practice plus consistent and thorough monitoring of their writing activities.

Attelisi (2012) carried out a study to assess the impact of instructing students in topical structure analysis (TSA) on the writing skills of Libyan EFL students at the Faculty of Arts, Department of English, in Baniwaleed, Libya. The research aimed to determine if TSA instruction improves writing coherence and to explore students' perceptions and handling of this technique. The study involved 63 third-year EFL university students. Attelisi's research highlights the importance of differentiating between unity, cohesion, and coherence, stating that understanding these distinctions is crucial for enhancing writing quality, especially in EFL and ESL contexts. The findings suggest that teaching TSA enhances students' comprehension of coherence and its significance in writing.

Additionally, Ahmed and Abdel Hamid (2010) revealed that many of research papers from the Arab world had brought attention to problems with coherence in students' English writing. These papers investigated the challenges students had with coherence and cohesiveness in EFL essay writing in Egypt. According to these studies, common issues that lead to incoherent and deviant writings include excessive repetition, improper use of parallel structures, inappropriate sentence lengths, limited-phrase diversity, and misuse of cohesive devices. Furthermore, studies have shown that pupils from Yemen and Morocco similarly struggle with clarity and cohesiveness in their written English.

Alsied (2018) conducted a study that examined the common writing errors of Libyan EFL students at Sebha University, analyzing descriptive essays from 70 first and second-year undergraduates using a quantitative approach. The findings revealed a range of errors, including grammatical, discourse, lexical, and spelling issues, with the most prevalent related to sentence structure, agreement, articles, punctuation, coherence, cohesion, and lexical choice. Analyzing these errors is crucial for identifying the students' key challenges and informing pedagogical interventions to improve their overall writing proficiency.

Faradhibah (2017) investigated the difficulties of students in maintaining coherence and cohesion in the English Education Department of Tarbiyah and the Teaching Science Faculty of UIN Alauddin Makassar in Indonesia. The research aimed to analyze the students' writing tests to explore the kinds of difficulties in maintaining coherence and cohesion. The research findings indicated that students encountered challenges in maintaining coherence and cohesion throughout the writing process, particularly in articulating and expressing their ideas, providing supporting details, and employing appropriate signaling, spelling, and punctuation.

Moreover, as Megaia (2023) reported, an investigation was carried out into the inappropriate use of cohesion elements in persuasive essays penned by Libyan EFL students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. The study adopted a qualitative approach based on Halliday and Hasan's cohesion theory. The results uncovered difficulties in reference, lexical cohesion, and conjunctions, along with issues related to structure and content, such as the absence of thesis statements, incorrect punctuation, and conflicting ideas. The research emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the instruction of cohesion features and improving the overall structure and content of essays for Libyan EFL students.

The previous studies have explored the writing challenges of EFL students in various countries, including Saudi Arabia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Morocco, and Indonesia. However, the specific challenges related to unity, cohesion, and coherence in the written essays of Libyan EFL pre-service teachers at the University of Tripoli have not yet been investigated. The unique educational and linguistic environment of this student population at the University of Tripoli remains unexplored in this particular area, representing a significant gap in the literature. Addressing this gap could provide new insights into the writing development of Libyan EFL pre-service teachers, a student population whose writing skills and challenges in achieving unity, cohesion, and coherence have not been the focus of prior research, unlike the EFL students in the other countries mentioned.

Methodology

Research Design
The research study employed a qualitative methodological approach to elicit and analyze the errors gathered through convenient sampling of five essays written by five participants from the university of Tripoli.

Participants

The participant of this study were fourth-semester pre-service teachers in the English department at the University of Tripoli. This group was chosen because they had received foundational training in academic writing since the first semester. The aim was to gather insights on their proficiency and challenges in academic writing to inform improvements in the department's curriculum.

Data collection Instruments
In this study, the researcher assigned the students to write 5 essays on the topic "Causes and Effects of Happiness." within a 45-minute class. The 5 written essays were gathered as an instrument to address the aim of the study.

Data analysis
The essays being used as the instrument for collecting the data were read and analyzed carefully by the researchers to identify errors related to unity, cohesion, and coherence. The errors identified were classified and tabulated to illustrate the specific types of errors in unity, cohesion, and coherence taken from one essay as a sample for each of these three key elements to clarify the analysis process. However, the result and the discussion of this study are still representing the 5 gathered essays.

Errors in Unity

Essay No. 1

Error Type	Example	Description
Irrelevant topic sentences	*"Everyone wishes for have a happy life."* *"Happiness is signifitic to make people continue and keep going in this short life."*	These topic sentences do not directly address the stated essay topic "the cause and effect of happiness." They are too broad or tangential to the main focus.

	"However, Happiness cause can be differen from one person to other and its effects like so." *"The best thing of happiness that it is not shape in a specific zone! It can be more than we image and more than we want."*	
	In the third paragraph, *"To many people happiness can be as a normal thing like every body else."*	This sentence does not effectively introduce the main idea of the paragraph, which discusses various causes of happiness.
Multiple Focus	*"Everyone wishes for have a happy life."* *"Happiness is signifitic to make people continue and keep going in this short life."* *"The best thing of happiness that it is not shape in a specific zone! It can be more than we image and more than we want."*	These sections make broad, general statements about happiness without focusing on the specific causes and effects.
Irrelevant Supporting Sentences	*"The best thing of happiness that it is not shape in a specific zone! It can be more than we image and more than we want."*	This supporting sentences provide general information about happiness without directly addressing the causes and effects, as specified in the essay's topic.

Errors in Cohesion

Essay No. 2

Error type	Example	Description
Faulty Pronoun Reference	"People should look after themseleves, by being happy. When you wake in the morning, first thing to do pray to Allah."	The pronoun "you" shifts between referring to the general "people" and the specific "you" (the reader). This creates ambiguity.
	"Another example, social media, some people claim that they're happy but in person they're not."	The pronoun "they" is used to refer to "some people", but it's unclear if it's the same people who claim to be happy on social media
Inappropriate Substitution	*"One of the positive side of happiness is to be sociable and try to communicate with people. It bring happiness."*	The word "side" should be "aspect" or "benefit" for more appropriate terminology. Additionally, the verb "bring" should be "brings" to match the singular subject "It".
Ellipsis Misuse	None	
Poor Use of Conjunctions	*"Also, sports such as soccer. It brings extiment and a bit kind of a musement."* (Paragraph 4)	The conjunction "and" is missing between "sports such as soccer" and "it brings excitement".

	"When you wake in the morning, first thing to do pray to Allah. After you finish praying, thank Allah for every blessing you have Before you head to school or work, make sure you have one hour to exercise, because it bring joy and remove all he stress in your body." (Paragraph 2)	The sentences are not properly connected with conjunctions. They should be combined with conjunctions like "and" or "then".
Lack of Lexical Cohesion	*"Nowadays, happiness is needed for ourseleves and for our own benefits. There's a lot of causes and effects our happiness. Currently in our generation it is important and contains a lot of positivity." (Paragraph 1)*	The terms "causes" and "effects" are not clearly linked to the specific causes and effects of happiness discussed in the essay. .
	"Currently in our generation it is important and contains a lot of positivity." (Paragraph 1)	The terms "important" and "positivity" are not clearly connected to the specific discussion of happiness in the essay.
	"You should reach out to your friends or relatives, by going out to resturants or café. Also, sports such as soccer. It brings extiment and a bit kind of a musement." (Paragraph 4)	The transition from "reaching out to friends/relatives" to "sports such as soccer" is not smooth, and the terms "excitement" and "amusement" are not clearly linked to the previous mention of sports.
Lack of transitional signals	*"Currently in our generation it is important and contains a lot of positivity." (Paragraph 1)*	The transition from the previous sentence is unclear, as the writer has not provided a clear connection between the current generation and the importance of happiness.
	"you should reach out to your friends or relatives, by going out to resturants or café. Also, sports such as soccer. It brings extiment and a bit kind of a musement." (Paragraph 4)	The transition from the previous sentence about reaching out to friends and relatives to the topic of sports is not smooth, and the writer has not provided a clear connection between these ideas.

Errors in Coherence

Essay No. 3

Error type	Example	Description
Inconsistent use of pronoun	"and many more facilities but money can't buy <u>you</u> happiness" vs. " we see a controcy image of the riche as <u>they</u> are sade" ". and no one can steal <u>your</u> happiness" vs. " everyday <u>we</u> can see and meet people who look happy from the out side"	The essay inconsistently uses pronouns, such as switching between "you", "they", we, your without clear reference, making it difficult to follow the narrative

Lack of key Noun Repetition	The key noun of the essay is the word "happiness"	The word happiness is repeated by the write throughout the essay
Poor Organization	The transition from discussing "expressions of a smile" to "rich people being unhappy" is abrupt and lacks a logical connection.	The essay is poorly organized, with ideas scattered and not logically arranged. There is no clear progression from one point to the next, resulting in a disjointed flow.
Inadequate Transitions	"moreover," "finally," and "but" are used, but more transitions are needed to create a seamless flow between ideas.	The essay lacks adequate transitional devices. Words like "likewise" and "finally" are used, but more transitional signals are needed to guide the reader through the ideas.

Results & findings

The first research question examined the types of unity-related errors evident in the essays under study. The analysis of these five written essays revealed several recurring issues related to unity such as unclear topic sentences, lack of focus and unrelated ideas. Additionally, some paragraphs included multiple main ideas causing confusion and disrupting the unity of the text. Also, some supporting sentences did not directly support the main idea.

The second research question looked more closely at the specific cohesion errors demonstrated by participants in their written essays. The main issue identified was the faulty reference, with pronouns often lacking clear antecedents or being used inconsistently, which disrupted the flow of the text. There was frequent incorrect use of substitution and ellipsis, leading to ambiguity and misunderstanding. Improper use of conjunctions was observed, affecting the logical connections between sentences and making the text difficult to follow. Over-reliance on repetition rather than using synonyms or related terms resulted in monotonous and less engaging paragraphs. There was also a lack of appropriate transition words and phrases, which hindered the smooth progression of ideas.

Regarding the specific coherence errors made by the participants, many paragraphs were not logically arranged, making it difficult for readers to follow the progression of ideas. Sentences often lacked relevance to the main topic, and ideas were not presented in a manner that facilitated understanding. There was a tendency to lose focus on the central idea, leading to paragraphs that strayed off-topic and lacked coherence.

Discussion

The analysis of errors in unity, cohesion, and coherence within the written essays of Libyan EFL pre-service teachers at the University of Tripoli revealed several significant findings. These findings corroborate and extend the existing literature on the writing challenges faced by EFL learners in various contexts.

Firstly, the persistent errors in unity observed in this study's participant's essays underscore the ongoing struggle among Libyan EFL pre-service teachers to maintain a singular focus in their paragraphs. This finding aligns with previous research, such as Ahmed (2019), who identified similar issues among Saudi EFL students. The frequent introduction of unrelated ideas suggests a need for more explicit instruction and practice in developing and sustaining a central idea throughout a paragraph. The lack of unity not only disrupts the flow of the text but also impedes the reader's comprehension, indicating a critical area for pedagogical intervention.

Secondly, the analysis highlighted substantial cohesion errors, particularly in the misuse of cohesive devices like pronouns, conjunctions, and lexical repetition. These errors often resulted in disjointed and fragmented texts, making it difficult for readers to follow the logical progression of ideas. The findings are consistent with Megaia's (2023) findings, which also identified similar issues among Libyan EFL students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. Megaia (2023) similarly identified difficulties with reference, lexical cohesion, and

conjunctions, suggesting that these are common challenges for Libyan EFL learners. Both studies emphasize the importance of teaching cohesion features more effectively to improve the overall structure and content of essays

Thirdly, coherence errors were prevalent, with many essays exhibiting poor organization and a lack of logical flow between sentences and paragraphs. This finding is in line with previous studies, such as those by Alsied (2018) and Faradhibah (2017), which found that EFL students often struggle with maintaining coherence in their writing. The essays analyzed in this study frequently lacked clear transitions and logical connections between ideas, resulting in texts that were difficult to understand and follow. This highlights the need for instructional strategies that focus on the development of coherence through the use of clear organizational patterns and effective transitional signals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided a detailed analysis of the prevalent errors in unity, cohesion, and coherence within the written essays of Libyan EFL pre-service teachers at the University of Tripoli. Despite extensive writing instruction, these students continue to struggle with constructing well-organized, cohesive, and coherent paragraphs. The findings highlight that errors in unity often stem from a lack of focus on a single main idea within paragraphs, leading to the inclusion of unrelated information. Cohesion errors were frequently observed in the improper use of pronouns, conjunctions, and other cohesive devices, which disrupted the logical flow and connectivity of ideas. Moreover, coherence errors were identified in the form of disorganized thoughts and poor logical progression, making it challenging for readers to follow the intended message.

Recommendations

The research suggests that educators should incorporate targeted exercises and activities to help students enhance specific writing skills, such as paragraph unity, effective use of cohesive devices, and logical organization of ideas. It highlights the need for detailed feedback from teachers, which could be improved by reducing the number of students in each class for more personalized instruction. Additionally, peer review and collaborative writing exercises are recommended to foster skill development in a supportive setting. A comprehensive, theory-driven approach to teaching writing, based on principles of unity, cohesion, and coherence, is advocated, drawing on relevant theories like Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion Theory. Future research should focus on the specific writing errors of Libyan EFL learners and explore effective teaching methods, while also considering a larger and more diverse sample to better understand the challenges faced by EFL students.

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