

**ENHANCING COHESION IN THAI POSTGRADUATE  
STUDENTS' EXPOSITORY WRITING  
THROUGH FEEDBACK DELIVERY AND REVISION**

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# ABSTRACT

## ENHANCING COHESION IN THAI POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' EXPOSITORY WRITING THROUGH FEEDBACK DELIVERY AND REVISION

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This study investigated the effects of teacher written feedback and students' revision on the use of cohesive devices in expository compositions written by thirty Thai postgraduate students enrolled in a 16-week writing course at a Thai university. The teacher written comments, including corrective, advisory and indicative comments, were provided to the students' cause-effect, comparison/contrast and classification essays. The feedback on cohesion in this study dealt with form, content and, most importantly, essay organisation. Each of the essays from this experimental group was provided with a combination of teacher written comments focusing on the improvement of cohesion. The students revised their initial drafts in response to the teacher written feedback provided.

Sixty pre-test and post-test essays were written by the students from both the experimental group and the control/intact group, and 180 expository essays and revised drafts were written by the students from the experimental group. All the essays were analysed by Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion analysis model and Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis model. Statistical analysis was conducted to examine the differences in the use of cohesive devices between the pre- and post-test essays and between the initial and revised drafts. The results revealed a significant improvement of cohesion in the writing of the experimental group, particularly referential, conjunctive and lexical cohesive ties. The pedagogical implications regarding the teachability and the positive effects of teacher written feedback and essays revision were derived on the basis of the research results.

The students' revised drafts were examined in terms of the student moves in response to the teacher written comments provided to their initial drafts. The investigation revealed the students' revision patterns: complete, partial and no correspondence to the teacher comments. The findings showed that most of the students who had



received the teacher written feedback successfully revised their initial drafts in response to the feedback and their cohesion skills were improved.

The student questionnaire and interviews, used as triangulated studies, revealed the participants' positive attitudes towards teacher written feedback, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing. Based on the findings in this section, the students found teacher feedback helpful for the improvement of their writing skills especially the use of cohesion, although they also expected to receive teacher feedback on grammatical accuracy. The findings also indicated that revision motivated the students to write more confidently in English and contributed to students' awareness and development of cohesion in their writing.

Insights gained from the present study are (1) that even though cohesion is a useful linguistic element that contributes to well-connected writing, it may not be adequate as a means of measuring overall writing quality, (2) that teacher feedback should be personalised to cater for each individual student's needs and each problematic writing situation, and (3) that both feedback and revision play a crucial role in raising awareness regarding the use of cohesion in L2 writing.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **1.0 Background**

“English is now the dominant or official language in over 60 countries and is represented in every continent” (Crystal: 1997: 106). English is considered to be the global language and is a vital means of communication for millions of people around the world. In the era of globalisation, it has been regarded as the international language of the present time (Baker: 2003) as well as “the dominant language of world communication” (Crystal: 2002: 7). With the new technological inventions and developments such as the telephone, the facsimile, and the Internet, which have facilitated communication between people from all walks of life, English has been mostly used as “most of the scientific, technological and academic information in the world is expressed in English and over 80% of all information stored in electronic retrieval systems in English” (Crystal: 1997: 106).

Due to demographic trends, new technology and international communication, English is undergoing rapid change, which will affect both written and spoken communication. Graddol (1997) reveals major trends of language use, claiming that English is most widely studied as a foreign language and increasingly required for high-skill jobs everywhere in the world, although its competition with other indigenous languages is becoming more and more intense. Therefore, the need for the English language to be multilingual will be enhanced (Graddol: 1997, 2006). English will be mainly used not only by native speakers but also by those who speak English as a second or foreign language. In fact, the former are or will soon be outnumbered by the latter. Graddol (1999) states:

The decline of the native speaker in numerical terms is likely to be associated with changing ideas about the centrality of the native speaker to norms of usage. [...] Large numbers of people will learn English as a foreign language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and they will need teachers, dictionaries and grammar books. But will they continue to look towards the native speakers of authoritative norms of usage?

(Graddol: 1999: 67-68)

Thailand is no exception to this situation as an increasing number of Thais in various fields of work use English to communicate, both orally and in writing, with people from other nationalities. Even though English is not the first or second language in Thailand, a large number of its inhabitants now use English as a foreign language in their work and studies. As explicitly stated by Crystal (1997: 106), “organisations wishing to develop international markets are under considerable pressure to work with English.”

In Thailand, the role of English is significant in both academic and social contexts. This situation has been true for a number of years. Wongsothorn et al. (1996) point out that among foreign languages, English is the most widely taught as a foreign language in Thai schools and universities. English is the most significant foreign language which is taught in schools starting from the first year, and for those students who wish to pursue higher education, the English proficiency test is one of the core requirements in their university entrance examination apart from Thai (O’Sullivan and Tajaroensuk: 1997).

In addition, English is also regarded as the language necessary for international communication and has been used in various contexts including business, tourism and mass media (Wongsothorn et al.: 1996). A sound knowledge of English is also required for high-ranking positions in private firms (Foley: 2005; Smyth: 2001).

As can be seen, English has an eminent status in Thailand, and a high proficiency of English provides not only educational and career-related opportunities but also access to the latest technology and cross-cultural communications. Moreover, advanced skills in English are viewed as the key factor leading to professional advancement (Foley: 2005;



Wongsothorn et al.: 1996). As Smyth (2001: 343) explains, “Thais have a very positive attitude towards learning English. Competence in the language is seen as both a mark of sophistication and a passport to a more prosperous life.”

### **1.1 Background Information of the Study**

As the study was carried out in a Thai academic setting involving Thai first-year postgraduate students, background information relating to the study regarding Thailand as well as English Language Teaching (ELT) in Thailand is helpful to establish the context of the study.

In Thailand, English has become an increasingly important language for both academic and commercial purposes. It was only recently that an awareness of the importance of English writing skills has begun to emerge. Like those in some other Asian countries, Thai EFL students have had only a few opportunities to develop their writing skills systematically and effectively. The major reason is that the requirements of the university entrance examination in Thailand have centred on grammar and reading comprehension skills. In addition, syllabi for the English subject in Thai universities have focused primarily on reading skills, which are believed to help students understand textbooks written in English. As a result, students do not pay much attention to English writing until they graduate from universities and need to pursue their studies in an English-speaking country or communicate with international people in and outside their workplaces. Thai postgraduates then need special preparation, particularly for the writing section, if they are to take the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) before they can be accepted into a postgraduate programme in a university in the United Kingdom, the United States of America or Australia. Also, a large number of Thai executives and workers usually encounter critical problems if their work requires them to write business documents in English. This trend, therefore, has served as an inducement for Thai EFL writers to reconsider the role of writing proficiency.

English proficiency tests for international students, like IELTS and TOEFL, include some writing tasks and require examinees to write at least one well-organised and well-developed essay. This suggests that examinees need to demonstrate their writing ability beyond the sentential level. Because English writing courses are not available or adequate at many Thai universities, many Thai students need to take writing courses at private language centres which offer preparatory courses for the IELTS or TOEFL tests. In those courses, students have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with English writing and hope to develop effective writing skills for academic purposes.

Likewise, executives and workers in both public and private sectors take courses at language centres to improve their skills in business writing. These EFL learners are usually interested in strengthening their ability to write letters, memoranda, e-mail, reports and proposals in English. They expect to have more exposure to a wide range of business documents, particularly their effective samples, and be able to create some documents on their own. Writing, therefore, has received greater attention from Thai students and business workers alike. When there is more interest in English writing, Thai universities, as well as private language institutes, have become aware of the need to develop a syllabus that is aimed at enhancing learners' writing skills. Also, Thai EFL instructors have become more alert in preparing themselves for English writing classes.

## **1.2 The Educational Context in Thailand**

Located in the heart of the Southeast Asian mainland, Thailand occupies an area of 513,115 sq.km. and extends about 1,620 kilometres from north to south and 775 kilometres from east to west. Thailand borders the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Union of Myanmar to the North, the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Gulf of Thailand to the East, the Union of Myanmar and the Indian Ocean to the West, and Malaysia to the south (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008).



Divided into four main geographical regions: Northern, Northeastern, Central and Southern, Thailand consists of 76 provinces and its capital city is Bangkok. The nation is ruled by King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) under a constitutional monarchy.

Buddhism is the predominant religion in Thailand while other major religions include Christianity and Islam. 94.2 per cent of Thai citizens are Buddhists, 4.6 per cent are Muslims and 0.8 per cent are Christians, with the rest being Confucius or Hindus (National Statistical Office, 2002: 25).

There has been controversy as to the origins of the Thais. They used to be deemed to have originated in Northwestern Szechuan in China about 4,500 years ago and later migrated down to their present homeland. However, after the discovery of remarkable prehistoric artifacts in the village of Ban Chiang in the Nong Han District of Udon Thani Province in the Northeast, it came to realisation that Thais most probably originated here in Thailand and later scattered to various parts of Asia, including some parts of China. The nation was known to the world as "Siam" until 1939 and again between 1945 and 1949. Then, on May 11, 1949, there was an official proclamation that the name of the country was changed to "Prathet Thai", or "Thailand", by which it has since been known. The word "Thai" means "free", and therefore "Thailand" means "Land of the Free" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008).

The population in Thailand is approximately 62 million, of which around 6 million live in the capital city, Bangkok. The national and official language is Standard or Central Thai (McKay, 1992) while English is widely used in major cities, particularly in Bangkok and in business circles (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008). Major dialects are spoken in the North, the Northeast and the South. Other languages spoken in various parts of Thailand include Chinese, Malay, Lao and Khmer. Standard or Central Thai is mainly used as a medium of instruction in most schools and universities across the country.

Although Thailand has no official second language, the most important foreign language used for international communication is English (Wongsothorn et al., 1996: 89), which has long been taught as a required subject in most schools and universities (Foley: 2005).

Thailand is currently undergoing the Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011), one of the series of strategic and economic plans to be used as a framework and guidelines for national development.

### **1.3 The History of the Educational System in Thailand**

It could be said that Thailand initiated its educational system in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when the Thai alphabet was invented by King Ramkamhaeng (The National: 1997). However, formal education was then provided only for princes, aristocrats and the clergy, who were supposed to be literate and served the country using the language communicating with the palace. Commoners were taught general knowledge and Buddhist principles by monks in Buddhist temples. Only Thai was used in instruction.

English was first taught in the palace at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Only members of the Royal Family were allowed to study English in the first school, which was established in the palace. It was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that schools were open for ordinary Thai children. Then, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first Thai university, Chulalongkorn University, was established. During that time, the English subject was taught in both schools and universities.

Since 1996, English has been a compulsory course in all levels of education as stipulated by the Ministry of Education (The Ministry of Education: 1996). English received more attention in the National Education Department Plan and came to be recognised as a significant language in Thai education. During the globalisation age, the language plays a vital role in international communication and is learned by a large number of Thais both in formal and non-formal institutes.



Students in all universities in Thailand are required to take at least two English foundation courses during their first year of study. The main objective of most English courses offered in Thai universities is to develop students' reading and grammar skills. Writing skills are not emphasised or sometimes are not even included in English syllabuses. If writing is taught, only sentence writing skills are focused on.

#### **1.4 The Educational System in Thailand**

The present educational system of Thailand has been influenced by the 1997 Constitution and the 1999 National Educational Act, which provided guidelines and directions in educational development. The 1997 Constitution played a part in enhancing Thai people's awareness over the issues of their rights and contributions in politics, while new concepts regarding educational reform feature in the 1999 Act. As stated by Office of the Educational Council (2004: 15-16): "the state will improve education to be in harmony with economic and social change" and "all Thai people will have an equal right to receive basic education for at least 12 years, of quality and free of charge."

As initiated by the 1999 National Education Act, Thailand has been undergoing transformation during the swiftly growing economic development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In accordance with the 1999 Act and 2002 Bureaucratic Reform Bill, some bureaucratic changes have been introduced to Thai educational administration and management as a consequence of the merger of the three agencies of Ministry of Education, the Ministry of University Affairs and the Office of the National Education Commission into one Ministry, the Ministry of Education (MOE). The MOE has since been in charge of all levels and types of education in Thailand (Office of the Educational Council, 2004: 37-39).

The MOE consists of five main bodies which have specific responsibilities under the Ministry's administration and management at the central level. Below is the list of the administrative bodies and their duties:

1. The Office of the Permanent Secretary is responsible for managing general administrative works; coordinating activities within the Ministry, performing other official functions mandated by law.
2. The Office of the Education is responsible for proposing the National Education Plan which integrates religion, art, culture and sports into all levels of education.
3. The Office of the Basic Education Commission is responsible for proposing policies, development plans, standards and core curricula for basic education.
4. The Office of the Higher Education Commission is responsible for proposing policies, development plan and standard for higher education.
5. The Office of the Vocational Education Commission is the main organisation responsible for technical and vocational education and training in Thailand.

(Office of the Educational Council, 2004: 38-39).

With the main goal of promoting education in Thailand, the MOE turned the nation into a learning society in which people at all ages and levels could continue their lifelong learning. The education system in Thailand is divided into three main categories: formal education, non-formal education and informal education (Office of the Educational Council: 2004). In the following section, only a discussion about formal education is provided as this type of education is most directly related to the present study.

Formal education in Thailand, which is provided in both public and private schools all over the country, is divided into two main broad categories: basic education and higher education. Basic education covers 3 years of the pre-primary level, 6 years of the primary level, 3 years of the lower secondary level, 3 years of the upper secondary level and 4-6 years of higher education prior to the Bachelor's degree level (the Office of the Education Council: 2004: 22). Formerly, compulsory education covered only 6 years of the primary level (Grades 1-6). However, as stipulated in the 1999 National Education Act, compulsory education was to extend to another 3 years of the lower secondary level (Grades 7-9).

Higher education is divided into two levels: associate degree or diploma levels and degree levels. This type of education is generally provided in universities, colleges or institutions. It normally takes two years to complete studies at the level of associate degree or diploma level. Courses offered at this level generally involve vocational or



teacher education and can also be found in dramatic art and fine art colleges and colleges of physical education (Office of the Educational Council: 2004: 21). However, it is also possible for holders of associate diplomas to continue their education at the undergraduate level after completing the diploma courses with another two years of studies.

For those who finish Grade 12 and wish to pursue degree courses before they obtain the first professional qualification or a Bachelor's degree, it usually takes them 4-6 years to complete their studies at this level. This depends largely on individual students' fields of study, most of which normally take students 4 years to complete. Nevertheless, certain fields of study require more years for completion. For example, five years of study are required for students in the fields of architecture, graphic arts or pharmacy, while those in the fields of medicine, dentistry or veterinary science need at least six years to complete their studies (Office of the Educational Council: 2004: 23).

Thailand is now following a 15-year National Education Plan (2002-2016), which was prepared by the Office of the Educational Council (OEC). The plan plays a major role as a key framework for further development regarding all aspects of basic education, vocational education, higher education, art and culture. The National Education Plan, which aims to transform Thailand into a learning society, has three main objectives: to create a knowledge-based economy and society, to promote continuous learning and to involve all segments of society in designing and decision-making concerning public activities (Office of the Educational Council: 2004: 19).

### **1.5 English Language Teaching in Thailand**

The high demand for foreign language learning mainly resulted from the economic boom which took place in the 1980's, when more contacts with foreign firms were needed and individuals thus needed to improve their language communication skills. It is since then that English has been recognised across the nation as "a tool to gain access to modern technology" and "the key to professional advancement" (Wongsothorn et al.: 1996: 95).

English has so far gained most popularity among foreign languages learned and used in Thailand. Other foreign languages that are also offered in the Thai educational system include French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Pali and Sanskrit. McKay (1992: 35), in his discussion about the role of English in Thailand, points out that “English has no particular status in the country; officially it is considered to have equal status with other foreign languages. In reality, however, it has a very special role” (McKay: 1992: 35). This point of view is advocated by Wongsothorn et al. (1996), indicating that “only English is taught in most language classes at all class levels” (95).

As stated by Foley (2005: 224), “English language instruction in Thailand dates back to 1824 during the reign of King Rama III.” At that time, however, only higher court officials and administrators were allowed to learn the language. The significance of the English language had not been realised in Thai education until 1921, when English first became a required subject for all Thai students pursuing their studies above Grade 4. Then, English education gained more popularity with a particular focus on international communication, although rote learning and grammar translation were the major teaching methods and the later introduction of an audio-lingual method was not well accepted. In the subsequent years, between 1977 and 1980, new concepts in language teaching brought about many changes in the national curriculum with the ‘communicative approach’ being incorporated into the syllabus (Foley: 2005).

English has also been considered very significant in bureaucratic policies and plans, such as the National Economic and Social Development Plans, the National Education Acts and Plans. Thananart (1996: 68) points out that “Since the teaching of English was first introduced, English has never dropped in its importance within Thai society.” The Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) and the 1996 English curriculum require that English be taught from Grade 1 onwards. “To provide Thai students with the opportunity to continue their English learning without interruption from primary to secondary education” was the main purpose of the 1996 curriculum (Wongsothorn et al.: 1996: 95).



English education at schools in Thailand is divided into four levels: the Preparatory Level (Grades 1-3), the Beginning Level (Grades 4-6), the Expansion Level (Grades 7-9) and the Progressive Level (Grades 10-12) (Foley: 2005).

The learning and teaching of foreign languages, especially English, are promoted in a more “communicative” direction through a number of schemes such as the English Programme (EP) and mini-EP programmes. These programmes are carried out with the main goal of integrating the use of English as a full or partial Thai national curriculum subject (Ministry of Education: 2006).

Foley (2005: 225) points out that the new English curriculum is based on the four concepts known as the 4Cs: Culture, Communication, Connection and Communities. The new curriculum has set out approximately 800-1,000 sessions (20-30 minutes each) for students at primary level, while a higher number of 1,200 sessions (50 minutes each) is required at the secondary level. According to Foley (2005), standards, guidelines and formal assessments are provided in the national curriculum for all subjects except English. While teachers of all other subjects are required to follow the guidelines in the syllabus strictly, English teachers are allowed to prepare their own course materials and choose their own teaching methods. However, the teaching of English is expected to reflect real-life situations in students’ own communities to the extent that it can be applied and implemented in actual use (Foley: 2005).

At the higher education level, both public and private universities have also undergone a dramatic change. Under the new curriculum, most undergraduate students are required to fulfill 12 credit hours in English courses with six credits required for Foundation English courses during the first year of enrolment and the other six required for courses in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses as specified by a particular major subject (Wiriyachitra: 2002). At this higher level of study, more emphasis is placed on independent work, autonomous learning and self-access learning (Foley: 2005). Wiriyachitra (2002) believes that self-access learning centres, as

well as the use of Information Technology (IT) and the Internet, play a significant role in English language teaching and learning at universities.

One of the most important needs that must be satisfied during educational reform is teacher development. Regular professional training is necessary for English teachers so that they can keep themselves up-to-date regarding their professional development in addition to current teaching methodologies (Wiriyaichitra: 2002). Some of the regional and international organisations that provide teacher training programmes include SEAMEO Regional Language Centre in Singapore, the British Council, USIS and ThaiTESOL.

## **1.6 The Particular Context of this Research**

This research was conducted with permission of the Language Institute, Thammasat University, where the researcher has been working as a full-time lecturer. Like other universities, Thammasat University offers a wide range of academic programmes including undergraduate, postgraduate and diploma programmes in various fields of study. In this university, English is taught as both a required subject and an elective course. A variety of English courses are offered by the Language Institute to cater for students' language needs regarding both academic and specific purposes. This section presents the brief history of the Language Institute and the English instruction in this Institute.

### **1.6.1 The Language Institute, Thammasat University**

Founded in 1933, Thammasat University was originally known as the University of Moral and Political Sciences with its main objective of teaching the principles and application of democracy to the general public, particularly political leaders or civil servants. The political revolution in 1932 brought about a change in constitutional monarchy and led to the adoption of the parliamentary democracy (Ministry of University Affairs: 1992). As a result, since its foundation in 1993, Thammasat University, the



second oldest university in Thailand, has expanded continuously and now comprises fifteen faculties with both undergraduate and postgraduate schools with a wide range of disciplines including both arts and sciences.

Major undergraduate courses offered at Thammasat University are Commerce and Accountancy, Dentistry, Economics, Engineering, Journalism and Mass Communication, Law, Liberal Arts and Medicine (Thammasat University: 1999). Postgraduate programmes which are offered at Master's degree level include Business Administration, Economics, Law, History, Library Science, Mass Communication, Political Science, Social Work, Sociology and Anthropology, Thai, Linguistics, Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Applied Statistics, Community Development, English Language and Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Some of the postgraduate programmes are offered both in Thai and in English, e.g. Master's degree in Economics. A bilingual doctoral programme in Business Administration was initiated in 1993 as a joint programme co-organised by Thammasat University, Chulalongkorn University and the National Institute of Development Administration (Thammasat University, 2008).

The Language Institute of Thammasat University (LITU) was officially established as an autonomous institution on December 27, 1985. It enjoys the same status as that of a Faculty although its main duty is to teach English skills to all students of Thammasat University. With its status being equivalent to a department or faculty, LITU mainly offers English language courses for general and academic purposes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and it also provides English training programmes and academic services for the public. The courses and academic services offered by LITU include:

1. Foundation English courses for first-year undergraduate students
2. English for Specific Purposes for second-to-fourth-year undergraduate students
3. Remedial English courses for postgraduate students
4. Postgraduate programmes in English for Careers and Teaching English as a Foreign Language
5. English training courses for Thammasat University staff and other governmental and private agencies
6. English academic and career-related courses for the general public

## **7. Testing services including the Thammasat University's Graduate English Test (TU-GET)**

**(Language Institute, Thammasat University: 2008)**

The major responsibility of the Language Institute is to provide instruction and training with regard to general English skills and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The general English skills are mainly taught in the three foundation courses which are mainly offered at the Rangsit Campus. While one of the three courses is a required remedial course for students who obtain low scores in English from the University Entrance Examination, the other two courses are required for intermediate and upper-intermediate students who obtain relatively high scores in English from the University Entrance Examination. However, those who receive exceptionally high scores are exempted from these three foundation courses. In each academic year, there are approximately 100 sections of the foundation courses and in each class, there are approximately 50 students. Core course books compiled by a group of instructors from the Language Institute are available for these courses. Each of the core course books is a skill-based, integrated English course book even though reading skills receive the most emphasis.

Apart from the foundation courses, the Language Institute also offers a wide range of courses in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) specially customised for sophomores, juniors and seniors from diverse faculties and departments. For instance, English for Sociologists and Anthropologists is a compulsory course for students from the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, although students from other faculties are also allowed to take it as an elective course. Most of the ESP courses are offered at the Rangsit Campus and are aimed at developing students' integrated language skills related to specific fields of study. Each of these courses focuses on the teaching of all English skills although a few courses, such as English for Airline Business, mainly focus on the development of aural and oral skills. Like those for the foundation courses, course books for the ESP courses were compiled by faculty members of the Language Institute. Each year there are approximately 60 sections of the ESP classes and in each class, there are approximately



25 students. All the students who can enroll in ESP courses are required to pass the foundation courses or are exempted from them.

At the postgraduate level, remedial English is offered for students who do not meet the requirements regarding the English score during the admission process. In other words, all applicants in any postgraduate programme offered by Thammasat University are required to sit for an English proficiency test or TU-GET (Thammasat University's Graduate English Test). Should any candidate who is accepted into a postgraduate programme receive a score below 550 in the TU-GET test, he or she will be required to enroll in two remedial English courses, the first of which focuses on reading skill development and the second of which emphasises the development of the writing skills. Each year there are approximately 10 sections of the English remedial classes for postgraduate students, and there are approximately 30 students in each class. All the students who enroll in these two courses are required to pass them with the minimum percentage of 55. Successful students receive a P (pass) and those who fail the courses receive an N (non-pass).

Then in 1997, the Language Institute launched two postgraduate programmes: the Postgraduate Programme in English for Careers (MEC) and the Postgraduate Programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (MTE). Each year approximately 100 students are accepted into the MEC Programme and approximately 30 students are accepted into the MTE Programme. Since these two programmes are postgraduate programmes, all the qualified candidates need to hold a Bachelor's Degree. In addition, almost all the students in these two programmes are employed and work in a variety of fields including business administration and education. Students need to pass the Postgraduate English Test (TU-GET), the English Proficiency Test prepared by the Language Institute, and the Programmes' Admission Tests. The former consists of 100 multiple-choice questions divided into three parts: grammatical structure, vocabulary and reading comprehension. The latter mainly consists of tests of sentence writing and paragraph writing. Then the candidates who pass the written tests need to attend and successfully pass the interviews. Each of these two postgraduate programmes has its own syllabus and English is the

medium of instruction in both programmes. While writing is a required course in the MEC Programme, there is no writing course for students in the MTE Programme.

The required course in English writing offered by the MEC Programme is mainly aimed at developing students' academic writing skills essential for their advanced studies in the programme and their future work. The subjects in the current study were some students enrolled in this course. Regarding the background of the subjects, all of the students in the current study were exposed to a much longer period of formal training in writing in Thai (both paragraph and composition levels) when they were at school and university. They began their Thai writing lesson in the third year of primary school. Throughout six years of secondary school, they received more rigorous training in composing different modes of writing such as narration, description, exposition and argumentation. At university, the students' formal training in writing in Thai continued but varied from university to university and from major to major. Most universities or departments required one year of advanced writing in Thai, while a few universities or departments required two or more years of advanced writing in Thai. Despite the variation, it can be generally assumed that with twelve years of formal training in writing in Thai from primary school to university, the students obtained a fairly large amount of writing experience in Thai.

#### **1.6.2 The Teaching of English Writing at the Language Institute of Thammasat University (LITU)**

At the LITU, the English writing skill is included in all undergraduate courses as a minor component of each course. Because the main objective of most English courses in both foundation and ESP levels is to develop students' reading skills (and in some courses, speaking and listening are emphasised), writing skills then receive relatively less attention. When writing is taught, only sentences or short paragraphs are practiced. Grammar is the primary focus in the teaching of writing in these courses. Students' writing is examined and marked mainly on the basis of grammatical and syntactic accuracy.



At the postgraduate level, the teaching of writing in a remedial course (TU006) is product-oriented. During the course, students are required to compose several paragraphs according to topics provided in the course book (compiled by an instructor from LITU). For each piece of writing, only a single draft is required. Then each draft is examined, marked and then returned to the student writer without any further revision. Besides, for each piece of writing, only corrective feedback on grammar is provided.

The early writing course in the Postgraduate Programme in English for Careers (MEC) followed the syllabus of the remedial English course for postgraduate students (TU006). Even though multi-paragraph essays were taught and practiced in the MEC course, the primary focus was on grammatical and syntactic accuracy. Content and organisation were not emphasised, and no instruction of cohesion and coherence was provided. Each piece of writing was composed only through a single draft and was marked and returned without any further revision. Corrective feedback on grammar was mainly provided; little or no feedback regarding cohesion and coherence was delivered.

### **1.7 Cohesion and Coherence in ESL/EFL Writing**

When students present their ideas in writing tasks, they need to ensure a text flow through a sequence of sentences, as this is a criterion in the evaluation of any English proficiency test. Thus, writers' attention should be directed to the ideas they wish to express, as well as the sentences they use to express those ideas (Holloway: 1981). Sentences need to be connected to each other; thus, unrelated sentences will be difficult or impossible for the reader to understand the sequence. The reader will find it hard to make sense out of them (Brostoff: 1981). To enhance the connectedness of sentences in a text, writers may use "cohesion" to join ideas between sentences to create texture (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

Cohesion, which provides connections between ideas in sentences, was introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1976), who were primarily concerned with the means by which sentences are connected in a text. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), a paragraph is a semantic unit, rather than a grammatical structure, and the various sections of a

paragraph are linked together by cohesive ties. These ties are regarded as linguistic features that offer texture to a text:

A text has texture, and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text... If a passage of English containing more than one sentence is perceived as a text, there will be certain linguistic features present in that passage which can be identified as contributing to its total unity and giving it texture (2).

The study of cohesion and coherence has long been of interest to many scholars, but it was not until after the 1960's that research in these issues began to receive greater attention from linguists, rhetoricians and TESOL practitioners. Many writers of ESL/EFL writing textbooks are aware that cohesion is an essential element of effective, well-organised writing, thereby including some information about cohesion in their textbooks. They usually define and discuss cohesion, as well as coherence, to help students write more cohesively or coherently. They also provide some exercises so that students can improve their use of cohesion.

Interest in cohesion and coherence research has grown tremendously in the past many years. Though they are closely related concepts, they are also distinctive. Both cohesion and coherence provide connectivity in text or discourse and facilitate understanding. However, cohesion refers to the syntactic and semantic connectivity of linguistic forms at a surface-structure level (Connor and Johns: 1990: 14; Crystal: 1991: 60 – 61; Halliday and Hasan: 1976: 4-14) while coherence involves the “principle of organization postulated to account for the underlying functional connectedness or identity of a piece of spoken or written language (text, discourse)” (Crystal: 1991: 60). In other words, cohesion deals with superficial textual connectivity, but coherence involves organisational and content-based connectivity. The mutual dependency between coherence and cohesion presents a continuum of gradability related to textual connectivity: a good text must be both coherent and cohesive; a poor text achieves neither coherence nor cohesion. For instance, in his writing on the authenticity of reading texts, Macaro (2003) used several types of cohesive ties to achieve coherence and therefore his paragraph was both cohesive and coherent. In the sample paragraph below, referential



cohesive devices are underlined, conjunctive cohesive devices are italicised and lexical cohesive devices are boldfaced.

Teachers should certainly continue to explore the possibilities offered by **authentic** texts. *However*, **authenticity**, in the strict sense of ‘written by native speakers for native speakers’, is unnecessarily rigid as a criterion, *although* this level of **authenticity** might be an ultimate goal with advanced learners. *On the other hand*, with the right kind of classroom-based support, **genuine** and even **authentic** texts can be introduced quite early on in a limited way. *However*, these have to be balanced by the introduction of specially constructed texts which do build up the learner’s vocabulary knowledge and syntactic awareness (148).

However, there are also a number of texts that could be coherent but not cohesive or cohesive but not coherent.

The introduction of Halliday and Hasan’s work *Cohesion in English* (1976) made the study of cohesion and coherence become more interesting to linguists. This particular work was the first to present a systematic study of cohesion from a textual perspective. The concept of cohesion was defined by Halliday and Hasan as being “a semantic one” with cohesion occurring “where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another” (4). Thus, cohesive ties constitute texture, which distinguishes a text from a non-text. With texture, a text forms a unified whole, whereas a discourse without texture is not considered as a text simply because it does not form a unified whole.

In Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) view, meanings can be held together in the connected sentences in various ways, and the structure of meaning created by the writer is called “cohesion”. According to them, cohesion is an indicator for a unified text and not a combination of unrelated sentences. It is important, though, to note that cohesion does not concern content. Halliday and Hasan (1976) assert that “cohesion does not concern what a text means; it concerns how the text is constructed as a semantic edifice” (26). In other

words, cohesion usually plays a crucial role in connecting ideas in a paragraph but does not contribute to the global flow of a text across paragraphs.

In their study, Halliday and Hasan present a taxonomy of various cohesive ties such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion (See Chapter 2 for details regarding cohesive ties as classified by Halliday and Hasan [1976]). Then, their concept of cohesion was defined by Grabe (1985) as “the means available in the surface forms of the text to signal relations that hold between sentences or clausal units in the text” (110). Similarly, the concept was defined by Enkvist (1990) as explicit links that help the reader understand the semantic relations of a text. According to Enkvist (1990), explicit cohesive devices can be regarded as the overt markers of textual relationships.

In addition to these early studies, other linguistic works have also contributed significantly to this particular issue, though their focus was mainly on coherence or on the relationships between cohesion and coherence (e.g. Carrell: 1982; Charolles: 1983; Cooper: 1986; Fitzgerald and Spiegel: 1986; Hasan: 1984; Phelps: 1985; Tierney and Mosenthal: 1981). In terms of specific language skills, there have also been numerous studies undertaken on the role of coherence in reading (e.g. Allison: 1989; Fulcher: 1989; Slatin: 1990). Another important area that has been studied is coherence and writing (e.g. Bamberg: 1984; Connor and Johns: 1990; Lovejoy and Lance: 1991; Vande Kopple: 1982, 1983, 1986). Though both “cohesion” and “coherence” are derived from the Latin word *cohaerere* meaning “to stick,” they possess distinctive features. While cohesion deals with the inter-sentential semantic relations, coherence involves the overall connectedness of the ideas in a text rather than only semantic relations between sentences. In a broader sense, coherence also deals with discourse as it is regarded as “the internal set of consistent relationships perceived in any stretch of discourse” (Winterowd, 1975: 225). From another point of view, the distinction between coherence and cohesion relates to memory stores, where a coherent text promotes the continuity of senses in the reader (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). Whereas the reader’s long-term memory



deals with coherence, his or her short-term memory deals with cohesive ties, which serve textual functions in the superficial organisation of the text.

Cohesion is related primarily to the degree to which a sentence is linked to the next one; on the other hand, coherence makes connections of the entire concept of a text. In order to achieve coherence in writing, the writer needs to master adequate skills in making each paragraph cohesive, a stepping stone to a coherent text. Several studies suggest that L2 writing is generally shorter, less cohesive, less fluent and contains more errors than L1 writing (Hyland: 2003). Thai L2 writers, as well as other non-natives of English learning ESL/EFL writing, are usually provided with training in the paragraph level prior to the essay level and therefore need to familiarise themselves with cohesive ties so that they can produce cohesive texts.

In Thailand, written academic discourse plays a more crucial role in disseminating information among professionals and university students. Even though most Thai students start learning English at the elementary level and study English throughout their school years, even advanced learners at a high proficiency level of English have problems with academic writing at the level of text organisation and cohesion (Jogthong: 2001). In the tertiary level, students assigned to write essays receive comments or corrections focusing on grammar, organisation and/or content that do not address the connectedness of a text (Todd, Khongput and Darasawang: 2007). Teachers tend to provide comments on language, organisation and content without understanding “the aspect of a text prompting a comment” (11). At the Language Institute of Thammasat University, both undergraduate and postgraduate students in a writing course are usually assigned to write paragraph-level texts and receive instruction and corrections for grammar and other local use of language. A few comments are given regarding content and organisation, particularly textual cohesion and coherence.

## **1.8 Feedback in L2 Writing**

One way to help improve students' writing ability involves an L2 teacher providing feedback on their written works. The issue of feedback on L2 acquisition and learning has been extensively discussed, and there has been a lot of research regarding whether and how feedback delivery helps improve second language writing (e.g. Allwright and Bailey: 1991; Carroll, Swain, and Roberge: 1992; R. Ellis: 1994; Gass, 1997; Lightbown and Spada: 1990; Long: 1996). However, the effects of feedback on the improvement of writing skills, both at the sentence level and at the discourse level, have been numerously investigated and researched even though the results of these studies are still inconclusive and sometimes contradictory (e.g. Ferris: 1997; Frantzen: 1995; Semke: 1984; Sheppard: 1992). From these various studies on feedback delivery, it is safe to say that researchers and scholars still have non-unified views on what effects different types of feedback may have on L2 writing and what can constitute appropriate feedback for writing improvement.

Many researchers (e.g. Leki: 1992; Raimes: 1983a; Reid: 1993) believe feedback plays a crucial role in helping student writers improve their writing skills. For instance, in an attempt to justify that feedback is conducive to better writing, Sommers (1982) states,

Comments create the motive for doing something different in the next draft; thoughtful comments create the motive for revising. Without comments from their teachers or from their peers, student writers will revise in a consistently narrow and predictable way. Without comments from readers, students assume that their writing has communicated their meaning and perceive no need for revising the substances of their texts (149).

However, researchers do not seem to have consensus on the type(s) of feedback to be delivered to student writing. Some of them (e.g. Campbell: 1998; Sommers: 1982) suggest that in writing, feedback should address both global and local issues, though content, ideas and organization should receive more attention. Others (e.g. Ferris: 1997; Sheppard: 1992) suggest that feedback involving meaning or content is more useful than feedback involving only a surface level including features such as grammatical errors,



spelling and mechanics. Still others (e.g. Kepner: 1991; Robb et al: 1986; Semke: 1984) maintain that corrective feedback is only marginally conducive to the improvement of writing or to the reduction of the number of errors. In an aggressive viewpoint, Truscott (1996) asserts that grammatical correction can bring about harmful effects and therefore should be avoided in the teaching of writing. Some studies, nevertheless, reveal that corrective feedback can promote accuracy in student writing (Frantzen: 1995; Sheppard: 1992) and others reveal that L2 writers expect their errors to be corrected explicitly (Enginarla: 1993; Leki: 1991a; Saito: 1994) although teacher written feedback may not directly improve their writing. Students' preference for grammatical feedback probably has resulted from their previous grammar-based learning (Schulz: 1996). These different views on feedback may be due to differing beliefs regarding characteristics of good writing and the meaning of writing development. Some researchers focus their attention on writing at the discourse level whereas others are more interested in improvement at the sentential level. However, there has been no particular evidence of the study of feedback on cohesion in L2 writing.

According to surveys of students' feedback preferences, ESL writers are very positive about teacher written feedback and consistently rate comments and corrections on all aspects of their texts more highly than other forms including peer feedback and oral feedback in conferences (Leki, 1991a; Saito, 1994; Zhang, 1995). Although its contribution to students' writing development is still doubtful (Hyland and Hyland, 2006a: 3), writing teachers often feel that it is necessary to respond to student errors, especially grammatical ones. This type of feedback is usually welcome by many ESL students, particularly those from cultures where highly directive teachers are valued. Such students would "expect their teachers to notice and comment on their errors and may feel resentful if their teachers do not do so" (Hyland and Hyland: 2006a: 3). In addition, form-focused feedback proves to be effective after being delivered over a period of time (Fathman and Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 2002) and when accompanied by classroom instruction (White, Spada, Lightbown and Ranta, 1991). In a longitudinal study by Chandler (2003), it was found that over one semester, both underlining and direct correction reduced grammatical and lexical errors in students' subsequent writing. Even



though feedback alone is unlikely to be responsible for long-term language improvement, it is a highly significant factor.

Ferris (2002) suggests that teacher feedback customised to students' knowledge and experience is a helpful technique for students so that they may avoid future problems and errors in writing. Some researchers in writing (e.g. Leki: 1992; Raimes: 1983a) believe that providing feedback proves to be one of the important methods that help students improve their written work. Reid (1993) suggests that feedback needs to be provided in enough detail so that students can act and commit to change in their writing (218). Sommers (1982) advocates feedback delivery stressing that comments create the motive for revising; without them, student writers will revise in a 'consistently narrow and predictable way' and assume that their writing communicates successfully (149). Leki (1991a) maintains that teacher feedback is important because, based on several studies on student attitudes towards feedback, many students want errors in their writing to be corrected and they will feel frustrated if no teacher feedback is provided to their writing.

As described in 1.6.2, students enrolled in a writing course at Thammasat University also need teacher feedback for their essays. However, the feedback most teachers provide is confined to local error correction especially grammatical errors. No specific feedback or comments have been tailored for the improvement of cohesion or organisation in their writing. Therefore, a research study on feedback that can enhance cohesion in students' essays will enable students to write more effectively in their revisions or future writing.

## **1.9 Revision in L2 Writing**

For the past few decades, the process-oriented approach to writing has been more and more interesting to researchers. In this approach, writing, which is considered a recursive process, includes revision as a crucial part of its process. Revision, according to some researchers and scholars, can be regarded as the principal aspect of the composing process. For instance, Murray (1978: 85) stated that "writing is rewriting" and Barlett (1982: 345) suggested that "revision seems to be an essential component of virtually



every attempt to construct a model of the writing process.” Because writing is essentially a recursive process, revision may occur at any stage during the process (Bridwell, 1981; Flower and Hayes, 1981). When revising drafts, writers make changes to many aspects in their writing, both locally and globally. According to Nold (1979), revision involves correcting lexical and syntactic errors, changing faulty meanings and fallacious ideas, making additions or substitutions to clarify the intended meaning, deleting, reordering or restating to make grammatical sentences more readable, and correcting errors in diction that make the intended meaning unclear. During the revision process, writers usually encounter discrepancies between their intended meanings and actual writing output.

In the context of L2 writing, this paradigm of writing instruction has been investigated in a number of studies. However, even though the process-oriented approach to writing is theoretically popular, its applications in the L2 context are not common and widespread (Susser, 1994). In Thailand, for instance, many writing classes still rely on the traditional approach to teaching writing, which is product-oriented and is mainly concerned with form. According to Tagong (1991), the method of teaching writing in schools in Thailand was product-oriented and “only one draft was required for grading without any rewriting” (123). Students’ first drafts were essentially equivalent to their final drafts and writing teachers provided comments on surface features rather than on the content or meaning. Language teachers “would be less likely to abandon more traditional views of teaching writing and more likely to resist the de-emphasis on grammar...” (Leki: 1992: 7).

Early studies on L2 revision processes were conducted in conjunction with the researchers’ attempts to observe revisions as part of the composing processes of L2 writers (Krapels: 1990; Raimes: 1985; Zamel: 1982, 1983). It was not until the late 1980s that researchers began to examine revisions as an independent process and possible constraints and factors affecting students’ revisions had been investigated (Porte: 1996). Recent studies on revisions have included both ESL and EFL contexts with students of different degrees of writing proficiency.

Regarding L2 revision processes, more-skilled L2 writers were found to be able to make meaning revisions early and engage more in meaning-oriented revisions than in surface-oriented revisions (e.g. Zamel: 1983). On the other hand, less-skilled writers were found to make more surface-oriented revisions than meaning-oriented revisions, although in some studies, unskilled writers were also capable of revising for meaning (e.g. Raimes: 1985). Revising strategies are transferable across languages and revisions could result from or be influenced by various interrelated factors including educational, cultural and personal backgrounds (Porte: 1996).

The act of composing is a hierarchical rather than a linear process (Nold: 1979; Flower and Hayes: 1981). Revision, in turn, is part of a process that can occur and recur in any stage from planning to final editing. Therefore, it is important that writing students revise their drafts in response to teacher feedback so that they can sharpen their skills and improve their written work both during their revision and for their future writing. At the Language Institute of Thammasat University, students usually are not instructed to revise or rewrite their initial drafts, which are normally treated as students' final drafts. The drafts are returned to students with a certain amount of teacher feedback, mostly focusing on grammar, and no revision of the drafts is required. A research study on the effects of revision on the improvement of student writing proficiency will be of much use to the development of a writing syllabus at the Institute.

### **1.10 Purpose of the Study**

This study was undertaken with three main aims:

1. To investigate the effects of feedback delivery and essay revision on the improvement of the use of cohesion in English expository essays produced by Thai EFL postgraduate students
2. To investigate how teacher written feedback on cohesion contributed to the use of cohesion in students' expository essays



3. To examine the students' perceptions and attitudes towards teacher written feedback, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing

Five research questions were addressed and intended to be answered in this study:

1. Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' expository writing after the end of the writing course?
2. Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' revised drafts?
3. What effects does teacher written feedback have on the students' writing?
4. How do the students who receive feedback on cohesion respond to teacher written feedback?
5. What perceptions and attitudes do the students who receive teacher feedback and revise their essays have towards their own writing skills, the teacher feedback and the revision process?

### **1.11 Significance of the Study**

This study proves to be useful for the teaching of second language writing with an emphasis on the use of cohesion. It represents the first attempt to study how teacher feedback and revision specifically contribute to the improvement of the use of cohesion in student writing. It also pioneers the experimental study conducted with postgraduate students learning English writing in a Thai university.

To elaborate, very few research studies conducted an experiment on the effects of teacher feedback and revision on the use of cohesion in student writing. Lee (2002), for instance, was among the few researchers that investigated the teaching of coherence and its effects on student writing and student awareness of what effective writing should entail. However, no feedback on coherence was incorporated in this study. Although there has been a fair amount of research that focused on the use of feedback to improve student writing proficiency (e.g. Ferris: 1997; Frantzen: 1995; Semke: 1984; Sheppard: 1992) and a lot of research regarding whether and how feedback delivery helps improve second

language writing (e.g. Allwright and Bailey: 1991; Carroll, Swain, and Roberge: 1992; R. Ellis: 1994; Gass: 1997; Lightbown and Spada: 1990; Long: 1996), there has been no research that focused on the use of feedback that can particularly enhance the use of cohesive devices in L2 expository writing.

In addition, the present study contributes to the existing body of literature in the field of writing in a second or foreign language as it sheds light on whether students improve cohesion in their writing through written feedback and revision. While cohesion is usually ignored by Thai instructors marking students' essays, this study has revealed that the language feature can be improved through a writing process.

The present study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches so that the findings obtained were adequate to explain linguistic changes or phenomena that occurred in student writing, particularly after the delivery of feedback and the revisions. It is also possible that the methodology and analysis used in this study to investigate the use of cohesive devices by postgraduate students in Thailand would contribute to the investigation of the use of cohesive devices in student writing in other contexts.

Furthermore, the present study investigated the students' perception and attitudes towards their own writing skills, the teacher feedback and the revision process. Questionnaires and interviews, which were also employed as research tools, were used for triangulation in this study.

Finally, the findings of this study will be used as a basis for pedagogical implications. They can serve as useful information for planning EFL/ESL writing lesson plans and syllabuses, and improving the teaching of writing to Thai students, especially those studying at the university where the present study was carried out. For these reasons, it was hoped that the results of this study would add new information to fill gaps in the existing body of knowledge regarding the effects of feedback and the revision process on the use of cohesion in EFL/ESL student expository writing.



## 1.12 The Operational Definitions of Terms

The definitions of terms used in this study are provided in this section.

1. *Cohesion* refers to textual cohesion as described by Halliday and Hasan (1976). It is achieved through the use of five types of cohesive ties.
2. *Cohesive ties or cohesive devices* are the links by which cohesion is established. The classification of cohesive ties in this study was based on Halliday and Hasan (1976)'s model. There are five major categories of cohesive ties: *reference*, *substitution*, *ellipsis*, *lexical cohesion*, and *conjunction*. Details are provided in Chapter 3, section 3.5.4.1.
3. *Links* refer to lexical repetitions that, based on Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis model, were categorised into eight types: *simple lexical repetition*, *complex lexical repetition*, *simple mutual paraphrase*, *simple partial paraphrase*, *complex paraphrase*, *substitution*, *co-reference* and *ellipsis*. Details are provided in Chapter 3, section 3.5.4.2.
4. *A bond* is a connection between a pair of sentences that has the number of links at or above the threshold of three links in each text.
5. *Teacher written feedback* refers to the written comments provided to students' expository writing (initial drafts). They are divided into six types: *corrective site comments*, *corrective and advisory site comments*, *advisory site comments*, *indicative site comments*, *advisory end comments*, and *indicative end comments*. Details are provided in Chapter 3, section 3.5.5.2.1.
6. *Expository essays* refer to writing assignments the participants completed during the study. The three essay modes for exposition were *cause-and-effect essays*, *comparison/contrast essays*, and *classification essays*.

7. *Revision* refers to the act of revising initial drafts performed by the participants in response to the teacher written feedback.

### **1.13 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents the background and rationale for the present study. It describes the need for this study, the related research gaps to be investigated, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and the operational definitions of the major terms used in this study. Then the next chapter presents a review of related literature addressing the issues of the writing approaches, cohesion, feedback and revision mainly in L2 contexts.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This study examines the effects of feedback delivery and essay revision on the improvement of the use of cohesion in English expository essays produced by Thai EFL postgraduate students, investigates how teacher written feedback on cohesion contributed to the use of cohesion in students' expository essays, and examines the students' perceptions and attitudes towards teacher written feedback, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing. The purpose of this chapter was to provide foundations for the understanding of this study by reviewing extensive discussion of theories and important topics related to it. The first part provides the general overview of teaching second language writing, in which various aspects of teaching L2 writing, whether product-oriented or process-oriented, were presented. The second part presents the discussion of theoretical framework and research studies concerning the different facets of cohesion and coherence in language teaching and learning. The third section involves the discussion of research studies on the process-oriented approach to teaching writing and the revision process. The last section presents the rationale and research studies on types of feedback delivered to L2 writing and their effects on the quality of the subsequent output.

#### **2.1 General Overview of Teaching Second Language Writing**

Beginning as a subfield of second language studies during the 1960's, ESL/EFL writing has become increasingly interesting to ESL/EFL teachers and researchers. In Asian countries including Thailand, as well as European and other western countries, English writing and its instruction have been among the main concerns of both teachers and non-native students as the need for English in written communication has grown significantly over the past decade. Demand in the language use has been arising from students

furthering their education in English-speaking countries, students joining international schools or universities in their own countries, and postgraduates working for organisations that require them to use English in writing.

There are a number of approaches to teaching ESL/EFL writing that have been known to many teachers and researchers of English writing. Among those approaches are two major ones that have been applied in classrooms and extensively researched: the product and process approaches. Product-oriented approaches focus on the final product, the coherent, error-free text. These approaches focus on grammatical correctness on the sentence level. On the other hand, process-oriented approaches, as the title indicates, see writing as a cognitive process (e.g. Emig: 1971; Flower and Hayes: 1981; Labov: 1970) focusing on the steps involving prewriting, drafting and redrafting a piece of work. Studies on these two major approaches to teaching and researching second/foreign language writing play a vital role in the understanding of how students' writing competency can be improved and assessed.

### **2.1.1 Product-oriented Approach**

Proponents of product-oriented approaches to writing regard writing as textual products or autonomous objects. Texts can function acontextually and ideas in texts are believed to be transferable mainly through language. Meanings are encoded by the writer and can be decoded by a skilled reader. No ambiguities should exist in interpretations because all writers and readers strictly conform to homogeneous practices (Hyland: 2002). In this section, various approaches to teaching writing with a focus on product are presented.

#### **2.1.1.1 Writing as Sentence-level Structure**

In this approach, a reader's role is primarily that of a teacher, an examiner, an editor, or a proofreader. The reader's main interest is not in the quality of ideas or expressions, but in the correct use of formal linguistic features (Kroll: 1997). The criteria of good writing often include presentations of facts and vivid exposition. From this perspective of



writing, learners are expected to demonstrate their knowledge of form in their texts, which are created through their awareness of the system of rules. Writing instruction is then focused on training in grammatical accuracy. Writing is viewed as an instrument for teaching grammar and a general knowledge of language. Foreign or second language writing “mainly involves linguistic knowledge and the vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns, and cohesive devices that comprise the essential building blocks of texts” (Hyland: 2003). The main teaching method used by this approach was controlled composition, the philosophy of which “grew directly out of the audio-lingual method: students are taught incrementally, error is prevented, and fluency is expected to arise out of practice with structures” (Reid: 1993: 24). This type of composition needed no particular context and focused on sentence-level structure. Exercises mainly consisted of copying, combining, substitution exercises that were designed to facilitate the learning of sentence structures by providing students with “no freedom to make mistakes” (Pincas: 1982: 91).

Hyland (2003) indicates that a four-stage process that shows a focus on language structure as a basis for the teaching of writing includes:

1. ***Familiarization***: Learners are taught certain grammar and vocabulary, usually through a text.
2. ***Controlled writing***: Learners manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables.
3. ***Guided writing***: Learners imitate model texts.
4. ***Free writing***: Learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay, a letter, and so forth.

In addition, in this perspective, correction is the major type of response the teacher provides for a piece of writing. Teachers normally view student writers’ texts as final products to mark or grade; therefore, students understand that “the major function of writing is to produce texts for teachers to evaluate, not to communicate meaningfully with another person” (Nunan: 1991: 88). Indirect assessments such as multiple choice or error identification tasks are also claimed to be reliable measures of writing skill. This

approach disregards the fact that communication, not absolute accuracy, is the purpose of writing.

Hyland (2002, 2003) maintains that syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy are not the main features contributing to writing development, nor are they the most effective measures of good writing. Many students who can produce grammatically and structurally accurate sentences are unable to craft appropriate written texts. Furthermore, fewer errors in student writing, although considered as evidence of progress, may indicate that the writer avoids taking risks and will not be able to reach beyond a current level of competence. Specifically, an exclusive emphasis on formal features of texts as a measure of writing ability is inadequate to enable the writer to effectively respond to particular communicative setting. Written tasks then cannot be autonomous because they take part in a particular situation and display that situation in their pages.

#### **2.1.1.2 Writing as Discourse-level Structure**

In the product-oriented approach, texts can also be regarded as discourse. Also labelled “current-traditional rhetoric” or “a functional approach”, this approach sees functions as the means for achieving the end, or purpose, of writing. Certain communicative functions are performed by particular language forms, and “students can be taught the functions most relevant to their needs” (Hyland: 2003: 6).

One of the main aims of this approach is to enable students to create different types of paragraphs effectively through the production of sentences, supporting sentences, and transitions. Writing students practice free writing through reordering sentences in scrambled paragraphs, selecting appropriate sentences to complete paragraphs, and writing paragraphs from provided information. Students may also read and analyse a model and then create a piece of writing of their own applying the structural knowledge gained. At a more advanced level, students are asked to list and group facts relevant to a provided topic, devise topic and supporting sentences from these facts, formulate an outline, and craft their compositions based on the outline. Certain structural entities, e.g.



Introduction-Body-Conclusion, are the major components of texts, and students are taught to write with particular organisational patterns or modes (normally narration, description, and exposition), “with exposition typically seen as the most appropriate for use by university-level second language writers” (Silva: 1997: 14).

In this perspective, learning to write mainly involves sharpening skills in identifying, internalising and executing prescribed patterns. Students mainly perform rearranging, completing, or writing in their tasks using the provided or self-generated content. However, unfamiliar patterns of expression used by the students often confuse the reader. Academic writing is the main focus of this approach, and teachers are viewed as the judges of student writing.

#### **2.1.1.3 Linguistic Approaches to Written Language in a Discourse**

Linguistic analyses play a crucial role in examining written language used in a discourse. Studies involving writing as discourse-level structure have sought to discover how writers use patterns of language options to construct coherent, purposeful texts. A major early contribution came from Prague School, whose focus was on functional sentence perspective, the ways in which clauses are structured to represent the writers’ assumptions about what is known (given) or new to the reader. Halliday (1994) and other Systemic linguists expanded this concept of theme-rheme structure.

##### **2.1.1.3.1 Theme and Rheme**

Often used by European researchers to refer to “old or known” information and “new or unknown” information respectively, theme and rheme are investigated in an area of discourse analysis referred to as “information structure.” In this type of text structure, described as the ‘point of departure’ (Halliday: 1994: 38), *theme*, or what the writer is talking about, and *rheme*, what he or she is saying about it, work harmoniously to form series of coherent ideas in a text (Bloor and Bloor: 1995). Clauses are organized by the writer in the way that thematic choices are related to ideas presented in the theme or

rheme of an earlier clause. Writers put the theme first and this orients the reader to what is about to be communicated. The rheme, the rest of the clause, tells the reader something about the theme (McCarthy: 1991). In this way, the reader can use old information as a context to facilitate his or her understanding of the new information. A brief, simplified analysis of *theme* and *rheme* is shown in the following instances:

(1) The teenager went into the pub. She was astonished by the very small number  
(a) (b) (a) (c)  
of patrons in there.

(2) The teenager talked to her friends. They tried to persuade her to join their  
(a) (b) (b) (c)  
party.

In both (1) and (2), the first sentence is divided into two parts: theme (a) and rheme (b), either of which can be the context of old information for the second sentence. In instance (1), the thematic information in the second sentence (she) earlier occurs as the theme of the previous sentence (the teenager). In instance (2), the theme of the second sentence (they) is the rheme of the previous sentence (her friends).

The notion of theme and rheme reveals a close relationship between grammatical structure and discourse function. Students can be taught this notion so that they will be able to write more coherently. Then, with the principles involving discourse analysis, language can be taught through the presentations of variations in clause structure in relation to discourse functions (McCarthy: 1991: 59). Students gradually assimilate the structure of clauses in a foreign language as they learn its grammar. The study of different structural options for the creation of texts will, therefore, be of much use for language learners.

The theme and rheme text structure is based on the principle of *Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP)*, which postulated that any sentence can be divided into two parts in terms of their communicative function. The first part is *theme*, which indicates something



that is being talked about, representing the starting point in an utterance (Halliday and Matthiessen: 2004). Theme contains information which has been mentioned earlier in the text. Theme also functions as the subject of a clause and occurs at the beginning of the clause (Eggins: 1994; Martin and Rose: 2003). The other part of a sentence is *rheme*, which presents a statement about the starting point, or theme. While *theme* contains the familiar or old information, *rheme* contains the unfamiliar or new information. Martin and Rose (2003) proposed that once *theme* in a sentence is identified, *rheme* can then be easily identified as it is everything else in the sentence which does not form part of the theme.

Applying the FSP to the analysis of texts, Danes (1974) distinguished three basic patterns of theme-rheme development in texts: (1) *simple linear progression*, where the theme is identical to the rheme of the preceding sentence; (2) *continuous theme progression*, where the theme is identical in a sequence of sentences; and (3) *derived theme progression*, where sentences are related to an extra theme called hypertheme.

Eggins (1994) and Martin and Rose (2003) classified themes according to their functions:

1. Topical theme, which functions as the subject of a clause. Every clause contains one topical theme and the remaining clause constituents form the rheme.
2. Hypertheme, which functions as the topic sentence. Hypertheme provides orientation to what is to come, i.e. the frame of reference, and predicts how the text will unfold.
3. Hypernew, which refers to any new information that accumulates from the hypertheme. While *hypertheme* tells us where we are going, *hypernew* tells us where we have been.
4. Macrotheme, which are higher level themes predicting hyperthemes. Layers of information develop the text expanding the ideational meaning. Macrotheme precedes the topic sentence—sometimes in the form of a paragraph—explaining and orientating the reader on what to expect.

5. Marked theme, which can include circumstantial elements such as place or time, or they may be participants that are not the subject of a clause. Marked themes are often used to signal a new phase in discourse, a new setting in time, or a shift in major participants.

#### 2.1.1.3.2 Clause Relations

Another group of researchers, particularly Hoey (1983), have studied the rhetorical functions of particular discourse units and tried to identify the functions of different parts of a text and how they fit into the entire text. Their main focus is on the relationships between clauses within written texts, without considering the purpose for which they were written (Tribble: 1996). Knowledge of how texts are structured internally is required. The text is organised with a set of typical textual patterns signalled by specific lexical markers (cohesive ties) or with the usual stages of development of different text types. In this Clause Relation perspective, patterns are labelled *problem-solution*, *hypothetical-real*, and *general-particular*. The researchers demonstrate that, even without explicit signposting, readers can easily draw the semantic connections between clauses, sentences or groups of sentences through recognisable text patterns (Hyland, 2002). For instance, in a general-particular text, the reader would expect to find the introductory part of the text more general and the following supporting parts more specific, so that the pattern is complete.

#### 2.1.1.3.3 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Current theories of discourse analysis revolve around the notion that forms express functions and vary according to context. Emerging from this is the theory of language called *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL), developed by Michael Halliday (Halliday: 1994; Halliday and Hasan: 1989). Its theoretical framework explains “the interrelationships between culture, society, and language use” (Coffin, 2001). His central concept related to this framework is *register*, which indicates the relationship between text and context. Halliday stresses the need to look into the context in which a text is



produced while the text is analysed and/or interpreted. The major question he poses is “which kinds of situational factor determined which kinds of selection in the linguistic system?” (Halliday: 1978: 32). In addition, the concept suggests that there are major variables that determine how text meanings are interpreted (Martin 1997). It is “a useful abstraction linking variations of language to variations of social context,” and “there are three aspects in any situation that have linguistic consequences: field, tenor, and mode” (Eggins: 1994: 52). *Field* refers to the type of social action, or what text is about. It is “what is happening to the nature of the social action that is taking place.” *Tenor* refers to the role relationships, or who is involved in a particular situation. It is concerned with “the nature of the participants, their status and roles.” Finally, *mode* is the symbolic organisation of the discourse, or what the language is doing. It involves “what it is that the participants are expecting language to do for them in that situation” (Halliday and Hasan: 1989).

Registers provide sets of texts with similar meanings, and some of them have predictable features that help us identify a close relationship between situational contexts and the texts they give rise to. Some types of documents such as legal contracts conform to more restricted conventions of lexis and grammar, while others like business letters contain a wider range of meanings and forms. Register analysis of linguistic texts has helped us to uncover how language is manoeuvred to construct meaning, and therefore has received popular application in discourse analysis and language teaching pedagogy.

#### **2.1.1.3.4 Genre**

Emerging from this perspective is also genre analysis, which focuses on socially recognised ways of using language. This concept has been developed into three broad approaches. *A Systemic Functional View* sees genre as “the system of staged, goal-oriented social processes through which social subjects in a given culture live their lives” (Martin: 1997: 13). An ‘*ESP*’ perspective, which was developed by a group focusing on constructing English for Specific Purposes written texts, sees genres as a set of structured communicative events connected by broad communicative purposes shared by the

members of specific discourse communities (Swales: 1990). The following is a detailed definition of genre within the field of English for Specific Purposes, provided by Swales (1990):

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. The rationale shapes the schematic structure of discourse and influences and constrains choice of the content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as ... narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realised, the exemplar will be viewed as prototypical by the parent discourse community. The genre names inherited and produced by discourse communities are imported by other constitute valuable ethnographic communication, but typically need further validation (58).

According to the definition above, genres vary in terms of their complexity and rhetorical purpose and the mode or medium through which they are expressed. They are defined and used within discourse communities. In addition, the '*New Rhetoric*' group views genres as typical rhetorical actions that are accomplished by the forms of discourse and as responses to recurring situations or contexts (Coffin: 2001).

Genre, or context of culture, can be understood as "the general framework that gives purpose to interactions of particular types, adaptable to the many specific contexts of situation that they get used in" (Eggins: 1994: 32). Texts, therefore, derive their meanings not only "from the meaning contained within the discourse," but also "from the meanings of genre, or the meanings about the conventionalised social occasions from which texts arise" (Leckie-Tarry: 1993: 33). "Texts belonging to the same genre can vary in their structure," while "the one aspect in which they cannot vary without consequence to their genre allocation is the obligatory elements and dispositions of the GSP [genre specific potential]" (Halliday and Hasan: 1989).



Genres are useful in our daily life because they provide us with resources that help us respond to various recurring situations appropriately. Such situations range from shopping lists to job applications, and they are elucidated by genre analysts for the teaching of writing. Genre has typical patterns of rhetoric and organization, and it determines the style of the language to be used (Harmer: 2001). Therefore, genre-based teaching can enhance learners' awareness and understanding of the conventions of writing so that they could craft well-formed texts that are appropriate to readers. To achieve this goal, writing students should learn to use appropriate linguistic features both within and beyond the sentence, and teachers should provide students with an explicit grammar (Hyland: 2002). Genre-based grammar focuses on how an entire text is structured and organised in relation to its purpose, audience, and message. It also emphasises the structure and organisation of all parts of the text, including paragraphs and sentences, so that an effective text can be produced for written communication (Knapp and Watkins: 1994). Martin (1989) proposes 'factual genres', which include *procedure* (how something is done), *description* (what something is like), *report* (what a class of things is like), and *explanation* (reason why a judgement is made). These genres are identified by the structure and repeated patterns of transitivity, reference, conjunction, etc., so that students writing expositions, for example, may be taught to use a *Thesis-Argument-Conclusion* structure (Rothery: 1989).

*An example of school genre (exposition)*

Thesis: A good teacher needs to be understanding to all children.

Argument: He or she must be fair and reasonable. The teacher must work at a sensible pace. The teacher also needs to speak with a clear voice so the children can understand.

Conclusion: That's what I think a good teacher should be like.

(Rothery: 1989)

However, genre pedagogy has such a text-intensive focus that students might see genres as a set of rules. Consequently, genres can be taught as moulds into which meanings are poured, rather than as ways of making meanings (Hyland: 2002: 22). The explicit

teaching of genres may restrict students' creativity through conformity and prescriptivism, and the dominance of genres could restrain students from shaping their own experiences (Dixon: 1987; Sawyer and Watson: 1987). Genre pedagogy is based on the belief that explicit awareness of language, rather than experiment and exploration, plays a vital role in learning. Thus, students are usually excluded from social interaction when crafting texts. Obviously, a static, decontextualised pedagogy poses dangers as far as students seeking to develop their writing skills are concerned. Writing, therefore, should be situated in the audiences and contexts for which it is produced.

#### **2.1.1.3.5 Limitations of the Product-oriented Approach**

The product-oriented approach views the writing process as a linear one. In this orientation, writing is conceptualised as a sequential completion of separate tasks (Reid: 1982). This approach focuses on a composition which is made up of a series of parts—words, sentences, and paragraphs. Students are asked to complete a set of predetermined tasks or exercises, mainly putting or rearranging words into grammatical sentences. This is simply a grammar exercise in a controlled context, rather than an act of composing. This approach emphasises the students' ability to memorise and apply grammar rules. When required to craft a paragraph or a composition, the students simply follow a fixed organisational pattern or mode. They are asked to complete tasks that emphasise syntactic accuracy. Language proficiency is the major element that determines the writing competency, while the acts of discovering ideas and creating meaning do not receive attention.

Writing teachers who observe this view simply spot and correct grammatical and mechanical errors without providing appropriate response to student writing. Their major function is to reinforce a set of grammar rules, and their feedback, which is focused on grammatical errors, fails to help students explore and generate ideas in writing. Overlooked is reader-based discourse with target audience and purpose for writing.



In summary, the product approach to teaching ESL/EFL writing is inadequate considering students' writing skill development. Teachers should be aware of the drawbacks and limitations of this approach so that they would find a better alternative to teaching writing and familiarise themselves with the alternative teaching method. Also, they should reconsider their role in the language classroom, being a facilitator rather than a judge or an examiner. As a consequence, they should not be excessively obsessed with students' grammatical and syntactic errors while responding to student writing. As clearly shown in the objectives of this study (see Chapter 3, section 3.2), writing teachers should realise that the content and organisation of a text are of superior significance and learn how to teach and provide feedback in a way to help students create more meaningful and better organised paragraphs or essays. Writing teachers should also understand that writing does not merely involve producing a text for evaluation or grading. Rather, writing involves a process through which students need to brainstorm, generate ideas, negotiate meaning, organise details, and revise their drafts. Obviously, more communication and interaction between teachers and students during the writing process is essential. To achieve this goal, ESL/EFL teachers should be given the opportunity to receive training regarding process writing skills, and textbooks used in writing classes should meet the needs and objectives of process writing.

### **2.1.2 Process-oriented Approach**

Another approach to teaching writing, known as the process approach, primarily focuses on the writer, rather than the text. This notion of writing regards writing as a process of discovering meaning and developing organisation (Matsuda: 2003). It involves what good writers should do when approaching writing tasks. Pedagogical methods have been formulated to help learners acquire effective writing skills. In this section are discussions of various perspectives and techniques involving the process approach to writing.

### **2.1.2.1 Writing as Creative Expression**

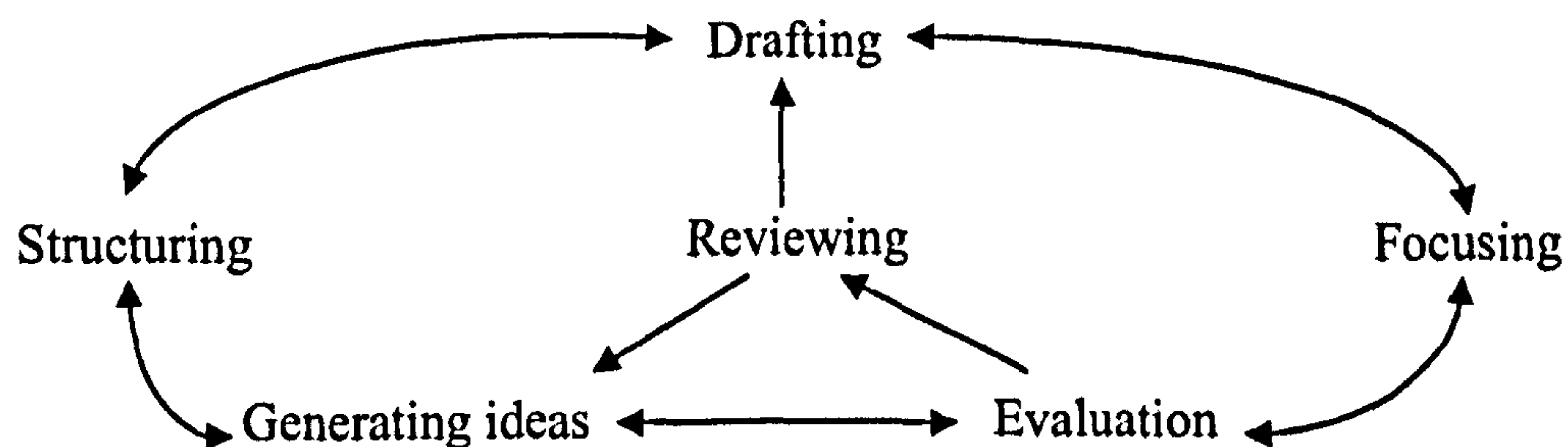
The process-oriented approach to writing evolved from the Expressivist view of writing, which sees writing as a creative activity. In other words, writing is considered as an act of personal expression and discovery in which the process plays a role as important as that of the product. This view refutes the notion that writing is the demonstration of correct grammar and usage; therefore, it focuses on how writers develop their writing skill with the help of the teacher as a facilitator who provides writing students with encouragement and cooperation. According to this perspective, “writing is learned, not taught, so writing instruction is nondirective and personal” (Hyland: 2003: 24), and free imagination, the major feature of good writing, is encouraged among apprentice writers (Carter: 1997; Celce-Murcia and Olshtain: 2000). However, with such notions, the definitions of good writing as proposed by this school are vague and are based on an asocial view of the writer. There are no thorough considerations about the cultural differences in the value of ‘self-expression’, the social consequences of writing, the distinctions in the writing processes of mature and novice writers, and the variations in personal inhibition (Hyland: 2002). This view of writing, despite its limitations, has contributed to the growth of research studies involving a cognitive view of writing.

### **2.1.2.2 Writing as a Cognitive Process**

Writing as a cognitive process is the perspective that focuses on the cognitive aspects of writing, and research in this view is principally based on the theories of cognitive psychology. This approach views writing as a non-linear, recursive process (Emig: 1983; Zamel: 1983). Advocates relied on a research-based, audience-focused, context-based approach to the process of writing (Reid: 1993, 1994). Nunan (1999) suggests that the most vivid and pragmatic introductions to process writing are by White and Arndt (1991), who view writing as a complex, cognitive process that requires sustained intellectual effort over a considerable period of time. They suggest six recursive procedures involved in the production of a text (See Figure 1).



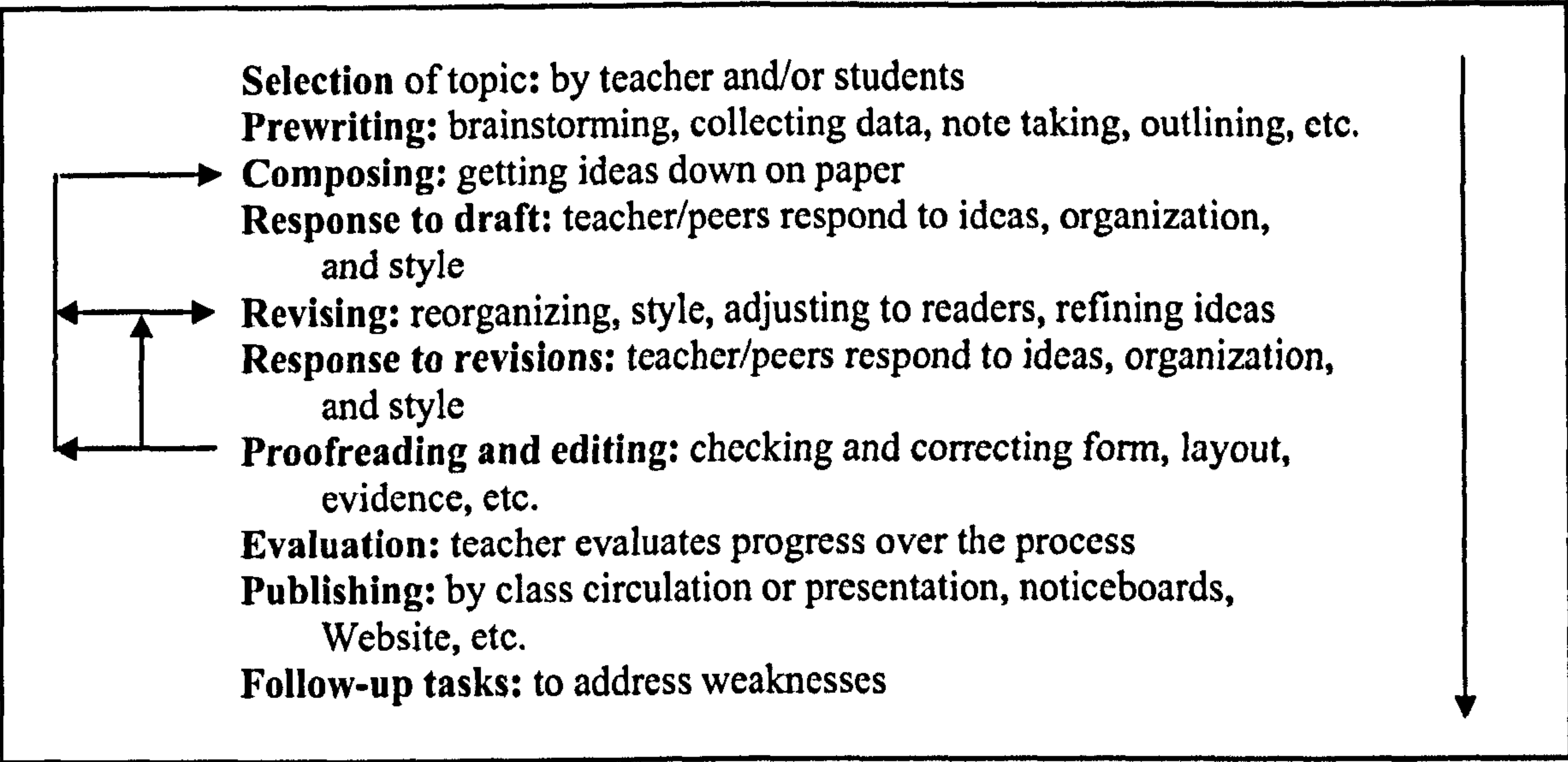
**Figure 1 Procedures involved in producing a written text**



From *Process Writing* (p. 4), by R. White and V. Arndt, 1991, Harlow, United Kingdom: Longman.

Flower and Hayes (1981) also state that composing involves a wide range of mental activities and seeks to explain individual differences in writing strategies. Immature writers and expert writers are supposed to employ different approaches to composing tasks. Apprentice writers use a reduced version of the composing model used by experts and can develop their writing proficiency or competence through instruction in expert strategies. The model of writing processes that involves the planning-writing-reviewing framework established by Flower and Hayes is the most widely accepted by L2 writing teachers (Hyland: 2003). As shown in Figure 2: planning, drafting, revising, and editing in the writing process are recursive and non-linear. Writers “discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel: 1983: 165). Teachers developed a new attitude towards giving responses to student writing and discovered a new way of providing feedback. Further, teachers no longer act as examiners or editors, but rather as consultants, facilitators, or assistants. Students are provided with extensive help so that, during an act of composing, they can produce coherent, meaningful, and creative texts.

**Figure 2 A process model of writing instruction**



From *Second Language Writing* (p. 11), by K. Hyland, 2003, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Among other cognitive models, the most significant is Bereiter and Scardamalia's (Furneaux: 1998), which focuses on the developmental view of writing. The researchers suggest two important models: Less skilled writers are involved in a knowledge-telling model, whereas more skilled writers operate at the level associated with a knowledge-transforming model. The former model indicates that novice writers plan and revise less often than expert writers, and they mainly generate content from their internal resources (Hyland: 2002), thus primarily producing a simple narrative. The latter suggests how skilled students can analyse problems and set goals when approaching a writing task. According to this model, expert students can "reflect on the complexities of the task and resolve problems of content, form, audience, style, organisation, and so on within a content space and a rhetorical space, so that there is continuous interaction between developing knowledge and text (Hyland: 2002). Nevertheless, these models are unable to clearly explain why student writers make certain choices and how or when they make a cognitive transition from one stage to another (Hyland: 2002, 2003).



In the process approach, invention techniques are incorporated in the teaching of writing to help students “discover and engage a topic” (Myers: 1997: 1). These techniques, sometimes called “prewriting techniques” are conducive to the improvement of students’ writing skills. Such techniques as freewriting, listing, wh-questions, clusters, and looping can help students formulate and organise initial thoughts so that writers can choose the ideas that interest them or that are worth developing (Leki: 2000). After this stage is achieved, writing students can move on to the planning and composing process. It is during this stage that response to or feedback on student writing can be provided as an intervention, either from teachers or peers. Writing students can then revise their preliminary work to refine their ideas, adjusting content and organisation to the needs of their readers. Further feedback can be given to the resulting draft upon the completion of this phase. Subsequently, during the final stage, students proofread and edit their work, focusing their attention on grammatical and mechanical errors, layout, evidence, and so on.

A large number of process-based models used in second language writing and researching rely heavily on *think-aloud protocols*. These models allow writers to conduct self-reports while crafting a writing task; in other words, writers “spoke their thoughts as they composed or planned their writing” (Reid: 1993: 8). The researchers tape-recorded the writers’ composing-aloud thoughts and analysed them to discover what was going on in the mind of the writers (Brookes and Grundy: 1991). In a lot of research studies, the writing process of both experienced and inexperienced adult writers has been examined and it was found that “there are many kinds of writing processes and that composing is not necessarily linear” (Reid: 1993: 8). However, think-aloud protocols are criticised as inadequate to provide a clear picture of the complicated cognitive activities involved. Hayes and Flower (1983) point out that conscious reporting of unconscious processes would be extremely difficult. Hyland (2002) also indicates that many cognitive processes are routine and internalised operations which are often completed without any conscious recognition and therefore not available to verbal description. Although verbal protocols might be helpful and can yield some insights into “learner-internal processes in relation

to written feedback, they should be employed and interpreted with care” (Sachs and Polio: 2007: 68).

### **2.1.3 Providing Feedback to Student Writing**

The emergence of the process-oriented approach calls for a totally different feedback system. It “emphasises a process of writing and rewriting where the text is not seen as self-contained but points forward to other texts the student will write” (Hyland: 2003: 177). Although providing feedback to student writing can be a tedious chore for teachers and feedback itself can be a bore or a threat on the students’ part, appropriate response to students’ texts can contribute significantly to the improvement of students’ writing skills. Ferris (2003b) reports the findings of student survey research that are supported by various empirical evidence and longitudinal text analyses: “Students say that they value teacher feedback, that they pay attention to it, and that it helps them to improve their writing” (30). The major types of feedback for student writing to be discussed here include *teacher written feedback, teacher-student conferencing, and peer feedback*.

#### **2.1.3.1 Teacher Written Feedback**

Because writing is considered as a complex developmental task and a recursive process, the process approach focuses more on how a text is crafted through the discovery of meaning than on the production of error-free sentences or paragraphs. In this approach, written feedback is given to both content and form during all phases of writing, i.e. from the initial stage during which ideas are generated to the final stage where the entire discourse is revised. With this method, texts were improved considerably both in grammar and in content (Fathman and Whalley: 1990). Written comments on student writing may take various forms; however, those “that take the form of a paraphrase of the ideas expressed, praise, questions, or suggestions are more productive than an end comment like ‘Only fair,’ ‘Good,’ or ‘Needs more work’.” (Raimes: 1983a: 143). In addition, like L1 students, ESL writing students should be given praise and told what to do to improve their work. Specific suggestions, step-by-step directions, and questions for



alternative options should be provided so that students know how to revise their papers more effectively (Raimes: 1983b). Hyland and Hyland (2001) stress the importance of praise as a mitigation strategy to soften criticisms and suggestions given to student papers. Hedging devices, question forms, and personal attribution are also effective feedback techniques to motivate student writers.

Hyland (2003) suggests the most common techniques of teacher written feedback: *commentary, rubrics, minimal marking, taped commentary, and electronic feedback.*

*Commentary*, consisting of handwritten marginal or end comments on the student paper itself, can be perceived as response to student writing rather than its evaluation. While comments in the form of comprehensive end notes can summarise main points regarding the overall quality and general observations of the paper, those in the essay margins are “immediate and proximate” (Hyland: 2003: 180) and therefore can help students understand the problematic areas precisely. However, commentary written in students’ first language might as well be useful for non-achievers who would find explanations in English too complicated and too difficult to understand.

*Rubrics*, an alternative form of commentary, involves using cover sheets on which criteria for writing assessment are set out alongside with writing students’ performances in relation to those criteria. While they may be inadequate in terms of the range of issues that can be addressed, they exhibit clear marking schemes and serve as a useful instrument for explicit grade assignments.

*Minimal marking*, a type of “in-text, form-based feedback,” (Hyland: 2003: 181) involves teachers’ indicating the location and type of error on the student paper using a set of correction codes to help students identify their own mistakes and find out how to correct them. Although this feedback technique appears less intimidating than direct correction, it is usually difficult to categorise some errors, thereby making correction ambiguous and confusing for both teachers and students. Additionally, with respect to reducing long-term errors, describing the type of error has been found to be inferior to direct correction

and simple underlining of errors, which can help students produce accurate revisions and are considered by students to be the fastest and easiest ways of error correction (Chandler: 2003).

*Taped commentary*, which can be used as an alternative to marginal comments, requires teachers to tape-record their remarks and write numbers of reference on different parts of the student paper so that students can listen to teachers' corresponding comments (Hyland: 1990). Although this type of feedback is time-saving and helps students who need listening practice and prefer aural learning styles, teachers who speak the same mother tongue as their students might feel uncomfortable with this method and may even waste more time preparing scripts before starting the voice recording.

Lastly, *electronic feedback*, which involves providing feedback through e-mail or through other computer-based or online functions, provides alternative means of written feedback with various types of tools available. These computer-based tools "offer teachers greater flexibility in their responding practices, but ultimately convenience is likely to be the deciding factor in which are used" (Hyland: 2003: 183). While they would be confined to a particular means of feedback when evaluating paper-based compositions, writing teachers can select or combine electronic functions as they provide written feedback through the use of computers.

In addition, teachers can find it less tiring to use online functions for giving feedback to student writing. With a number of software programs available, teachers can spend less time grading essays. On the students' part, they would find feedback from their teachers less intimidating and, on the contrary, more encouraging with electronic responses that they are more familiar with. Nevertheless, teachers who are unfamiliar with or unskillful in utilising computers as instructional media would find this method threatening and unreliable particularly when having to handle a large number of writing papers.

In the process approach, where students are required to produce multiple drafts, appropriate comments should be provided during the various stages of writing. Teacher



response to a first draft will be to provide helpful comments on its progress and suggestions as to how it can be improved in subsequent drafts. For a final draft, comments regarding “what we liked, how we felt about the text, and what they might do next time if the students are going to write something different” should be provided (Harmer: 2001: 111). When asked to produce multiple drafts, “students claim to prefer comments on ideas and organisation in earlier drafts and on grammar in later drafts” (Hyland: 2003: 179). Ferris (2003a) suggests that feedback be delivered at intermediate stages of the writing process because students can improve their writing in subsequent revisions based on the teachers’ feedback. Final draft feedback should consist of praise and summative suggestions for students to consider for their future assignments (Ferris: 2003a; Hyland: 2003).

#### **2.1.3.2 Teacher-student Conferencing**

Teacher-student conferencing involves discussing a paper with the student, in person. It can supplement one-way teacher written feedback by providing opportunities for students to clarify and negotiate the meaning of texts through dialogues with their teachers to clear up matters that cannot be handled by written feedback alone (Cohen: 1990). Even though this technique can be “extremely time-consuming” and impractical in some teaching situations, it is the only way to discover what was on the student’s mind as he or she was writing (Raimes, 1983b). A well-structured conference “calls for careful and detailed response by the teacher in order to help the student test and apply suggestions and comments before the final drafts and the graded evaluation” (Reid: 1993: 220). However, successful conferences require students who actively participate in the interaction, ask questions, clarify teachers’ responses, and negotiate meaning (Hyland: 2003; Reid: 1993). This method can not only help students to improve their writing in subsequent drafts but also contribute to the development of writing skills to be applied in later assignments (Patthey-Chavez and Ferris: 1997).

Yet this type of feedback has drawbacks that concern both teachers and students. On the part of teachers, oral conferences “consume considerable amounts of time and require

good interaction skills” (Hyland: 2003: 193). On the students’ part, problems involve a lack of experience and interactive skills, inadequate aural comprehension skill, and cultural inhibitions about asking or arguing with teachers who are normally perceived as authority figures (Ferris: 2003a; Hyland: 2003; Patthey-Chavez and Ferris: 1997). Other shortcomings involve teachers’ monopolising conferences, low-achieving students’ simply responding with “Yeah” or “Um-hmm” to avoid being more involved in the conferences, and teachers’ simply helping students figure out their handwriting in written feedback (Cohen: 1990).

### **2.1.3.3 Peer Response**

Developed from L1 process-oriented classes, peer response has become an alternative form of feedback provided for ESL student writing. This method of feedback involves students’ receiving feedback from their peers regarding form or content in their writing. Peers, arranged as a group of readers, interact with writing students as an audience, or real-world readers, to gain more understanding of their texts and share attitudes with writers concerning the topics and facts presented (Reid: 1993). Peer review, as suggested by various proponents of this feedback technique, has a number of benefits (Ferris and Hedgcock: 1998):

1. Writing students can play active roles in their learning process.
2. Writing students can receive feedback from various sources and from authentic audience.
3. Writing students can understand readers’ needs from their peers’ comments and questions.
4. Reading students responding to peers’ writing can develop critical skills necessary for the revision of their own writing.
5. Reading students providing response can perceive peers’ strengths and weaknesses in writing, then gaining more confidence as student writers.

(170-171)



Hyland (2003) maintains that peer response contributes to writing and learning as social processes that call for authentic social interaction. In addition, students who provide peer response can enhance their own critical and analytical skills useful for the revision of their own writing (Leki: 1990).

However, according to Ferris and Hedgcock (1998), based on various teachers' and researchers' concerns, peer response also has several drawbacks and limitations with regard to both writing students and those giving response:

1. Students feel uncomfortable with peer feedback due to their misunderstanding of the purposes of the technique.
2. Students from certain cultures, especially "collectivist" ones, can be unsatisfied with peer feedback activities because they are more interested in group development than individual success.
3. Students, as L2 learners and apprentice writers, are incapable of providing helpful feedback for their peers. (170-171)

Furthermore, because students are rhetorically inexperienced, they may only be able to provide feedback concerning sentence level issues, and not those addressing content and organisation (Hyland: 2003). Being untrained, they may also provide vague and unhelpful comments, or even critical and satirical ones (Leki: 1990).

Despite certain shortcomings, feedback plays a crucial role in developing writing skills in the process approach. Teachers should be able to select the feedback techniques that are most appropriate for their students and their learning situations. That is, feedback should be provided in order that students can improve content and organisation, as well as form, in their writing, particularly through multiple-draft revisions. This will, in turn, lead to students' long-term improvement as students gain self-confidence in writing and become experienced critics of their own works. With the teacher's role being active as a reader, not an authority, throughout the writing process, this student-centered, process-oriented approach manages to accommodate individual differences among students while enabling

each novice writer to become actively involved in the process of creating a meaningful, purposeful, as well as grammatically acceptable, text.

In summary, the process approach focuses on how a text, or a product, is produced, with its major concern on content and organisation (discourse). It seeks to improve students' writing proficiency through changes in teachers' and the students' roles and attitudes. While the teacher should act as a supporter, writing students should act as independent writers. In this approach, collaboration between students and teachers is necessary to develop writers' skills over several drafts (Furneaux: 1998). Providing response or feedback is one of the most crucial components of this approach. Language accuracy can also be enhanced in this approach, particularly during the revision and editing stages, when the students can consult dictionaries or a corpus of linguistic texts to improve grammatical patterns, collocations, and word choice.

However, researchers still lack a complete understanding of how learners approach a writing task or how they learn to write. This is because "process models are hampered by small-scale, often contradictory studies and the difficulties of getting inside writers' heads to report unconscious processing" (Hyland: 2003: 13). In addition, psychological factors may not be the only principal factors to be considered as far as the writing skill is concerned, either theoretically or pedagogically. An overemphasis on the cognitive processes may obscure the social and cultural aspects of writing, which should be incorporated into this orientation.

## **2.2 Cohesion and Coherence**

The terms "cohesion" and "coherence" are perceived and defined differently by different linguists. For some, the two terms are interchangeable or imply each other; for others they are independent of one another.

Cohesion is the main source of coherence between sentences and it may also be a source of coherence within sentences. It was brought to light by Halliday and Hasan (1976),



whose major concern is to investigate how sentences are linked in a text. For them, the various parts of a paragraph are connected together by cohesive ties:

A text has texture, and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text... If a passage of English containing more than one sentence is perceived as a text, there will be certain linguistic features present in that passage which can be identified as contributing to its total unity and giving it texture (2).

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), the writer is able to hold together meanings in the related sentences in a number of ways, and cohesion is created to establish the structure of meaning. They also claim that cohesion is a factor that indicates whether a text is well-connected or merely a group of unrelated sentences. It should, however, be noted that though involved with meaning between sentences, cohesion does not deal with content of a text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) explicitly state that “cohesion does not concern what a text means; it concerns how the text is constructed as a semantic edifice” (26). That is, although cohesion usually plays a role in a paragraph, it does not effect the global flow of a text across paragraphs.

Gutwinski (1976) defines cohesion as the relations obtained among the sentences and clauses of a text. Features such as anaphora, subordination and coordination are considered to be cohesive. They are related to the textual connectivity of sentences and clauses even though they themselves do not constitute cohesion. These relations are signaled by lexical and grammatical features that reflect discourse structure and patterns of organisation. These represent superficial relations that organise a text. Coherence, in Gutwinski’s (1976) view, however, refers to a more global concept, to unity, or togetherness of a text:

A paragraph is said to have coherence when its sentences are woven together or flow into each other. If a paragraph is coherent, the reader moves easily from one sentence to the next without feeling that there are gaps in the thought, puzzling jumps, or points not made (27).

Widdowson (1978) studied coherence and cohesion from a pragmatic perspective. He believes that “cohesion” is “the overt relationship between propositions expressed through sentences”, while “coherence” is defined as “the relationship between the illocutionary acts” (28). He proposes that when we converse, we express a propositional meaning and perform an illocutionary act. We not only convey the meaning but also perform a pragmatic function. This is a major difference between cohesion and coherence. Thus, a text may have both cohesion and coherence, or just coherence without cohesion. For example:

- (3) A: What are the students doing?  
B: They are doing math exercises.
- (4) A: What are the students doing?  
B: I have just arrived.

The conversation in item (3) is both coherent and cohesive. The cohesive device is the reference item “they.” In the conversation, B gives a direct response to A’s question. On the other hand, the conversation in item (4) is coherent but not cohesive, since no cohesive device is used. In the conversation are the illocutionary acts: A requests B for information and B states the reason why he cannot comply with the request.

In Widdowson’s (1978) view, cohesion and coherence are derived from propositional and illocutionary developments. He suggests that the speaker communicates by selecting appropriate sentences on the basis of his or her knowledge of what the listener needs to know or wants to know. This knowledge may determine the form of communication and requires the speaker to use the appropriate propositions to produce illocutionary acts. According to Widdowson, appropriate sentences in regard to context “express propositions in such a way as to fit into the propositional development of the discourse as a whole” (Widdowson: 1978: 25).



While cohesion is seen as the overt, linguistically signaled relationship between propositions, coherence is viewed by Widdowson as the relationship between illocutionary acts. The utterances are not considered coherent unless the actions performed by the utterances are recognised. Discourse involves the context and needs to be interpreted through the understanding of discourse structures and the use of many strategies; for example, to comprehend discourse, we interpret the discourse assuming that if one thing is said after another, the two things are related in some way.

Schiffrin (1987), in her study of discourse markers, claims that coherence is regarded as a connection between utterances with discourse structure, meaning, and action being combined. In her view, cohesion is available in both various types of discourse. Cohesion can be identified in a dialogue where communication can be completed by the interaction between both the speaker and the hearer, such as question/answer pairs (9). To Schiffrin, cohesive devices do not produce meaning but they are clues used to locate meanings. They are devices that accommodate the understanding of a dialogue serving as clues used by speakers and hearers to find the meanings underlying surface utterances.

Discourse coherence, according to Schiffrin (1987) is dependent on “a speaker’s successful integration of different verbal and nonverbal devices to situate a message in an interpretive frame and a hearer’s corresponding synthetic ability to interpret such cues as a totality in order to interpret that message” (39). With regard to coherence, discourse markers are part of participants’ linguistic tools that facilitate oral communication: they contextualise speakers’ messages and enable hearers’ to draw inferences from speakers’ underlying strategies and intentions. Discourse markers are both verbal and nonverbal features for the participants who “jointly integrate forms, meanings, and actions to make overall sense of what is said” (39).

Schiffrin (1987) also finds that discourse markers do not produce sequential relations but provide contextual integration of a continuous conversation by choosing interpretations from possible meanings that are provided through conversations displaying those relations. She, however, argues that markers do have meaning, but “whatever meaning



inheres in the marker itself has to be compatible with the meanings of the surrounding discourse” (318). Schiffrin also points out that the organisation of arguments is possible even without markers. She presents the notion of discourse relationship proposing that markers are not compulsory when a conversation moves on within their contexts and “the potential meaning relationship between them is already constrained” (319). Sometimes, the meaning or semantic relations of propositions is adequately clear for listeners or readers to identify the relations of meanings held between two discourse units without the presence of markers.

Blakemore (1987) describes the major component of discourse as “the linguistic form of the utterance, contextual assumptions and the assumption that the speaker is being relevant” (44). The textual unity theory, found in van Dijk (1972, 1973), Grimes (1975), Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Longacre (1983), views discourse as semantic units formed by cohesive sentences. According to Blakemore (1987, 1992), interpreting an utterance involves establishing both its explicit and implicit content. The explicit process involves establishing what proposition the utterance has actually expressed, whereas the implicit process involves establishing extra proposition. From his viewpoint, the principle of textual unity theory is inadequate to account for the role cohesive elements play in the interpretation of utterances. The relevance theory, as viewed by Blakemore, is more comprehensive and has advantages over the textual unity theory in that it can account for cases where a hearer’s interpretation is not actually based on the proposition expressed, but rather on the non-linguistic features or contextual features. Blakemore also points out that everyday utterances are often elliptical; that is, a complete proposition derived from isolated utterances such as “Any e-mail?” in a daily conversation is recoverable and interpretable by hearers. The sequential semantic relations of propositions include membership, part-whole, possession, topic and comment. Discourse coherence directly interacts with a hearer and is not evidence for the presence of discourse grammar. Blakemore also claims that there may not be only one particular contextual meaning a speaker wants his or her hearer or reader to recover. Even incoherent discourse can be relevant when interpreted under shared contextual assumptions. From her point of view, utterances are understood when the speaker makes coherence exhibited in a text become



relevant to the hearer and the hearer assumes that the speaker is being relevant—consequently, more than one interpretation of discourse is recoverable by a hearer or reader. In such a case, the hearer or reader is given considerable responsibility for interpretation from the speaker or writer so that an utterance conveys a wide range of assumptions, “while in other cases, the speaker’s intentions are more specific” (1987: 51).

Van Dijk (1977) treats coherence as a “semantic property of discourses, based on the interpretation each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences” (93). Inter-sentential coherence connections, in van Dijk’s point of view, “are based not only on the sequential relation between expressed and interpolated propositions, but also on the topic of discourse of a particular passage” (95). He further claims that the normal ordering of meaning relations is based on constraints of semantic information distribution and on general cognitive principles of perception (107). Cohesion does not lead to coherence, but coherence does not suffice to make a text coherent while there must be some additional linguistic property (like cohesion) that makes a text coherent. Micro-coherence is the linear or sequential relations between propositions, and the macro-coherence is the global or overall coherence of a discourse in terms of hierarchical topic progression. The speakers or writers can manipulate the topic/comment organisation by “particular stress assignment or cleft sentences” (115). By doing so, “nearly any grammatical category can be assigned comment function while the rest of the sentence becomes topic” (115).

Grimes (1975) has studied how information management produces or effects cohesion. According to him, “the cohesive structure of language is that the speaker, in addition to having to decide on the content of what he is talking about and how it is to be organized, decides also how much of it he thinks his hearer can take in at one time” (273-274). The speaker tends to construct information blocks so that information is packaged. For example, a statement can be divided in the following way:

(5) *This/ is the first time/ we have ever/ tried this kind of food.*

In item (5) above, the italicised words present new information and in each information block there is a centre, which is “that part of the block in which new information is concentrated” (280). Grimes also suggests that how often new information is introduced affects the length of information blocks; that is, “a high rate tends to go with many short information blocks, while a low rate tends to go with longer information blocks” (297). Grimes claims that cohesion occurs when information is formed into sequential larger units in discourse.

Similar to Grimes, Lovejoy and Lance (1991), in their study of written discourse, show that cohesion can be achieved through applying the concept of theme-rheme. This movement represents how information is managed. According to Lovejoy and Lance, *theme* is “the ‘point of departure’ for the presentation of information,” and *rheme* “constitutes the information the writer wishes to impart about the theme” (256). These two elements are presented alternatively in a text to form a connected text. While *theme* conveys information that is initially introduced in discourse, *rheme* presents specific information regarding the theme. As this movement continues, ideas in a text or discourse are expected to flow along smoothly and are easier for the reader to understand. While old information (theme) is presented as background information in each statement, new information (rheme) is introduced to clarify the information in the theme. As suggested by Lovejoy and Lance (1991), the concept of *thematization* involves placing any syntactic structure in the initial position of to introduce the point of departure of a sentence, as in item (6):

- (6) *By the usual tests of the freedom of practitioners to govern entry and exit from the field...*, journalists are not as autonomous as, for example, physicians and attorneys. (264)

In item (6) above, a prepositional phrase is placed in the theme position to mark topicality. *Rhematisation*, however, involves placing a syntactic structure that may be used as the subject of a sentence and the theme of that sentence.



- (7) *It* has been predicted that the economy growth will increase only slightly.

In item (7), *rhematisation* involves using the impersonal “it” as the subject of the main clause. The rest of the sentence is the theme. According to Lovejoy and Lance (1991), *rhematisation* sometimes involves placing reference pronouns in the final position of a sentence where attention is also received.

As another concept introduced by Lovejoy and Lance (1991), *pseudothematisation* involves using a modifier of the subject as the theme of a sentence. The possible structures that can receive focus in a sentence are quantifiers, predeterminers, and modifiers, as in items (8) and (9).

- (8) Forty percent of the population has a Chinese origin.

- (9) Most of the books the librarian ordered are quite expensive.

The pseudothematised modifiers in the above examples receive focus because they present contrastive or specific information. The quantifying phrases “Forty percent of the population ...” and “Most of the books...” in items (8) and (9) help the reader to understand the specific information about “the population” and “the books” in regard to the number conveyed in each sentence. That is, the percentage of forty in sentence (8) reveals that it is not all population that has a Chinese origin. The quantifier “most” in sentence (9) reveals that it is not all the books ordered by the librarian that are quite expensive; it means “most of the books” instead of “all books”.

Enkvist (1978) distinguishes between two types of semantic connection: (1) connection through cohesion in the surface level and (2) connection through coherence in the profound level. In this instance, cohesion and coherence do not imply each other. It is, therefore, possible that a text can be cohesive but not coherent and vice versa; and it is also possible that a text is both cohesive and coherent. For example,

(10) Have you met Virasuda Sribayak? She was here yesterday.

Item (10) is both cohesive and coherent. The two sentences are related through the pronoun she and there is also a semantic relation between them.

(11) Liverpool shot a goal. The whistle blew.

Item (11) does not have any cohesive elements but it is semantically coherent. Therefore, it is coherent without being cohesive.

(12) Grandfather died. I shall see him tomorrow.

Item (12) is cohesive but not coherent. It contains the cohesive element him but it is not pragmatically appropriate.

A text, in Enkvist's view (1978), must have surface cohesion as well as overall coherence. In addition, for a text to be perceived as being coherent, its sentences must "conform to the picture of one possible world in the experience or imagination of the receiver" (126), and a message must provide adequate signals for the listener or the readers to make connections for the understanding of a text.

Enkvist (1990) defines coherence as "the quality that makes a text conform to a consistent world picture and is therefore summarisable and interpretable" (14). In Enkvist's view, coherence is primarily related to the nature and property of the text. Like Enkvist, Brown and Yule (1983) also highlight the difference between the underlying coherence and the superficial cohesion. In their view, coherence is much more significant: "...formal cohesion will not guarantee identification as a text nor, ..., will it guarantee textual coherence" (1983: 197).



Brown and Yule (1983) believe that coherence depends primarily on the interpretation of linguistic messages. As a result, the listener or the reader will try to interpret a sequence of sentences as being coherent, even when there is no explicit cohesive element to signal a relationship:

Within chunks of language which are conventionally presented as texts, the hearer/reader will make every effort to impose a coherent interpretation, i.e. to treat the language thus presented as constituting "text". We do not see an advantage in trying to determine constitutive formal features which a text must possess to qualify as a "text." Texts are what hearers and readers treat as texts. (199)

Charolles (1983), like Brown and Yule (1983), proposes that coherence mainly involves the interpretation of discourse. In her view, people tend to see and interpret things and human actions as being related. They have an ability to make connections between propositions. However, she believes cohesion is a useful signal in the interpretation of discourse. Cohesive elements are believed to benefit the hearer or reader, though it can be said that they have no value in themselves unless they are perceived:

No text is inherently coherent or incoherent. In the end it all depends on the receiver, and on his ability to interpret the indications present in the discourse so that finally he manages to understand it in a way which seems coherent to him—in a way which corresponds with his idea of what it is that makes a series of actions into an integrated whole. (95)

By contrast, Morgan and Sellner (1980) emphasise the role of content within a text. According to them, cohesion is concerned with content but it has some linguistic consequence. Carrell (1982) also contends that cohesion does not bring about coherence, for "mere coherence of content does not suffice to make a text coherent" while "there must be some additional linguistic property (like cohesion) that makes a text coherent" (482). Cohesion is therefore the effect and not the cause of coherence. Relying on schemata, readers can themselves perceive coherence even in discourse that contains very few cohesive elements or none at all.

From a textual perspective, Hoey (1991) examined how lexical cohesive elements would make a text organised. He examined how lexical features and syntactic repetition would contribute to cohesion. His study is focused on the text organisation which can be achieved through the inter-relationship between cohesion and coherence. Within this general framework, cohesion is regarded as an element that accommodates coherence. When a text is cohesive and coherent, it will enable the reader to process information more rapidly. Hoey claims that “cohesion is a property of the text and coherence is a facet of the reader’s evaluation of a text” (12).

According to Hoey (1991), lexical repetition as a major cohesive device constructs a matrix and creates a net of bonds in the text. He proposes that lexical repetitions can show the relatedness of the sentences within the texts. He classifies lexical repetitions into eight types: *simple lexical repetition*, *complex lexical repetition*, *simple mutual paraphrase*, *simple partial paraphrase*, *complex paraphrase*, *substitution*, *co-reference* and *ellipsis*.

*Simple lexical repetition* is identified by a link between two lexical items, the first of which is repeated in a subsequent sentence without great change in form. However, *complex lexical repetition* is identified by a repetitive link between two lexical items that, though sharing a morpheme, are not totally identical or that are identical with different grammatical functions. *Simple paraphrase*, whether mutual or partial, is identified by a link between two lexical items, one of which can substitute for another. *Complex paraphrase* refers to two lexical items which are related to one another without sharing a lexical morpheme (e.g. antonym). As Hoey’s (1991) lexical analysis is another major model used for analysing data in this study, details and examples of these types of reiterative links are presented in Chapter 3, section 3.5.4.2.

The other three types of reiterative links (i.e. substitution, co-reference and ellipsis) proposed by Hoey (1991) are identical to those proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Details and examples regarding these cohesive ties will be presented in 2.2.3.



Tannen (1987, 1989) focuses her attention on syntactic repetition as a cohesive tie. She claims that repetition serves a variety of functions including production, comprehension, connection, and interaction (1987: 605; 1989: 48). The function of repetition can be illustrated by the following example:

And he knows Spanish,  
and he knows French,  
and he knows English,  
and he knows German,  
and he is a GENTLEMAN.

(1989: 50)

Repetition of “and he knows” places emphasis on the man’s multi-language proficiency and repetition of the pronoun “he” confirms the identification of the same man in the text.

From another point of view, the distinction between coherence and cohesion relates to memory stores, where a coherent text promotes the continuity of senses in the reader (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981).

Johns (1986) divides coherence into two types: text-based and reader-based. By her definition, text-based coherence refers to an inherent feature of the text, which involves cohesion and unity. This type of coherence involves how sentences are linked and how text is unified. Reader-based coherence, on the other hand, requires successful interaction between the reader and the text. In this type, coherence is based on the degree of compatibility between the reader’s expectations and the intended meaning through the underlying structure of a text.

Connor and Johns (1990) describe coherent text “as text in which the expectations of the reader are fulfilled” (1). The reader uses his or her knowledge of the world to interpret a text, expecting that his or her knowledge will correspond to the organisation and argument of a text (Carrell, 1988). Readers depend on this kind of knowledge to anticipate information that will be subsequently presented. Interacting with the reader, a coherent text accommodates the reader’s expectation of sequential logical ideas, contributing to the reader’s comprehension and the clear meaning of a text. By the same token, as logical ideas are presented through well connected words and sentences, the writer helps the reader interpret and process information in a text more easily. (Tannen, 1984).

Although the study of discourse topic is an unwieldy area, it constitutes an important aspect of cohesion and coherence as a hierarchical organisation of the discourse. Lautamatti (1987) has examined how the reader is able to understand a text and the discourse theme or topic. Coherence, according to her, is based on a clear sentence topic. Using the terms *topic* and *comment*, she proposed an approach to the analysis of textual flow.

Lautamatti (1987) defines the term *topic* as what the sentence is about and the term *comment* as information about the topic. All sentence topics are related in certain ways to the global discourse topic of the text. The patterns of relations between discourse topics, and subtopics are called *topical development of discourse*. This development is represented as three types of progressions: (1) parallel progression, with the identical topics in the subsequent sentences; (2) sequential progression, with the comment of the preceding sentence becoming the topic of a new one; and (3) extended parallel sequence, representing a parallel progression that is interrupted by sequential progression.

Grabe (1985) also examined the characteristics of coherence, claiming that coherence establishes the relationship between propositions leading to the overall theme. He proposes the pragmatic function of coherence. He identifies three features that are essential to coherence: a discourse theme, a set of relevant assertions relating logically



among themselves by means of subordination, coordination, and superordination; and an information structure imposed on the text to guide the reader in understanding the theme or the purpose of the author.

Givon (1983) has achieved the most outstanding results in the study of topic continuity. He proposes a three-level framework for topic continuity: *thematic continuity*, *action continuity*, and *topics/participants continuity*. He suggests the study of *referential distance*, *topic persistence* and *potential interference*. However, Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP) provides another theoretical framework for studying the management of information flow and the organisation of discourse. Most Functional Sentence Perspectivists hypothesise that the primary communicative function of the topic expresses the given information in a sentence. Such information is closely related to preceding sentences. On the other hand, the comment primarily expresses the new information. Such information is not expressed in or derived from prior sentences. The information flow, therefore, moves from topic to comment, reflecting the movement of the mind because it processes information most effectively if given information or background information precedes new information.

Danes (1974) claims that FSP is concerned with two basic aspects: information packaging within and across clause boundaries and hierarchical organisation of a text. He proposed three basic patterns of sequential development of a text: simple linear progression (the theme and the rheme are identical), continuous theme progression (the theme remains the same in a series of statements) and derived theme progression (sentences are related to hypertheme). He distinguishes between two structures of text: *information focus* and *thematization*. These structures are related to the basic patterns of sequences. The former involves "the organisation of text into discourse units, while the latter frames each clause into the form of a message about one of its constituents" (107).

Accordingly, theorists of FSP are concerned with the analysis of the sentence into parts that have a function in the total communication process. For instance, an English sentence is often considered to involve topic and comment. The sentence topic often

correlates with the grammatical subject and the comment often correlates with the grammatical predicate, which bears the sentential focus. A discourse that correlates with FSP should be more readable and cohesive than one that fails to observe FSP. Connections between themes involve series of sentences regarding identity chains, partial identity, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and meronymy. Connections between rhemes involve the repetitions of identical propositions in adjacent sentences. While patterns of theme and rheme connections can account for only some part of a text, diversity of patterns deal with an entire text. Additionally, whereas the framework of a theme and rheme connections characterise patterns within text types, coherence in contextual genres is not accounted for in different text types. The theme and rheme approach fails to deal with coherence in various contextual and propositional situations. A comparison of the following three versions of a discourse illustrates this point:

- (13) a. *Ramayana* is an example of an Indian epic. *An epic* usually includes a long narrative. *This story* is well-known among literary scholars...(AB-BC-CD)
- b. *Ramayana* is an example of an Indian epic. *Ramayana* includes a long narrative. *This Indian epic poem* is well-known among literary scholars...(AB-AC-AD)
- c. An example of an Indian epic is *Ramayana*. A long narrative is usually included in an *epic*. Literary scholars know it well...(AB-CB-DB)

Items (13a) and (13b) are cohesive. They follow the principles of similarity and proximity: coreferentiality and referential distance. Item (13c), however, violates these principles because of the greater referential distance of similar NPs than in (13a) and (13b). Item (13c) does not follow a cohesive pattern of information arrangement. Item (13a) observes these principles in that it follows the AB-BC arrangement of information where new information designated as "B" in a preceding sentence



becomes the given information also designated as “B” in the following sentence. Because new information typically appears near the end of the sentence and given information appears near the beginning, the proximity of cohesive semantic elements is the foundation of the AB-BC pattern. Item (13b) also demonstrates cohesion through the repetition of lexical items and the use of synonymy. In terms of FSP, item (13b) follows the AB-AC arrangement of information in which the given information designated as “A” in each sentence remains identical. Because given information typically appears near the beginning of the sentence, the syntactic placement of the similar semantic elements at the sentence-initial position is the foundation of the AB-AC pattern.

As evident from the above discussion, linguists do differ in their perception of cohesion, coherence, and the relationship between the two. For some, cohesion brings about coherence; for others, cohesion results from coherence. Van Dijk (1977), who perceives cohesion as part of coherence states that “coherence is a specific phenomenon of a set of coherence phenomena in natural language” (10). Coherence can be established by many aspects of language including elements such as connectives, implications, verb frames, property relations, condition-consequence relations, general-particular relations, and other sentential semantic relations. De Beaugrande (1985), in contrast, considers cohesion and coherence as two of the seven properties of text while the other five include intentionality, acceptance, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality. Cohesion and coherence differ in a significant way and their distinction can be made mainly from the fact that while the former refers to the ways in which different parts of a text relate to one another, the latter refers to the ways in which the content of a text relate to the real world.

However, the theory of cohesive ties introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1976) was modified into a theory of cohesive harmony (Hasan: 1984; Halliday and Hasan: 1989). Due to the limitations of the use of cohesive ties to analyse texts as coherent and well-written, Hasan (1984) formulated a new theory to account for the fact that cohesion contributes to coherence. In her new approach, coherence is not determined by the type and quantity of cohesive ties that appear in a text, but it is mainly characterized by the degree and frequency with which these ties interact with each other. According to this



theory, there are two cohesive ties which can interact with each other: those that form identity chains, expressed through the use of pronominal cohesion and those that form similarity strings, expressed through substitution, ellipsis, repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy. Interaction does occur when one member of a string or a chain is in the identical relationship to more than one member of another string or chain. For instance,

- (14) Matthew could no longer work here. *He* skipped a lot of work.

Item (14) presents two sentences which are connected by a cohesive tie established between a proper noun, or an antecedent, and pronoun reference. Hasan considers such interaction between chains and strings *cohesive harmony*. This type of interaction is realised through the relationship between participants and actions expressed in sentences. The chain in the example above represents the semantic relation of participants (the antecedent and the pronoun reference) and a string connects the actions in the two sentences. In this context these two propositions can be considered hyponymous (one is an instance of the other). The chain and string in item (14), therefore, interact through the semantic relation of *material processes* (*work* and *skipped*) and *actors* (*Matthew* and *he*). Items that involve or represent interaction between a chain and a string are considered as central tokens though there are other sentence elements that do not produce chains. Hasan proposes that the higher the proportion of central to non-central tokens, the more coherent the text is likely to be.

Nevertheless, cohesive harmony has certain limitations. Even though the theory of cohesive harmony can account for the coherence of experiential meanings realised in chain interactions, it fails to account for coherence of interpersonal meanings reflected through the formality of a text. Furthermore, it does not account for redundancy typically expressed through pronominalisation that would contribute to cohesive harmony but not to the overall coherence and connectedness of the text. This cohesive analysis also ignores organisational order of clauses as their cohesive harmony index stays the same no matter the order in which they follow each other. Consequently, one of the drawbacks of



cohesive harmony lies in its lack of sensitivity to the placement of cohesive ties. In other words, it accounts for lexical and referential cohesion without reference to text organisation or text flow.

### **2.2.1 Cohesion and Coherence in English Texts**

Communicating ideas in an organised fashion is crucial because it can help messages to get across more easily. Such an ability, of course, varies according to speakers and writers of any given language, and probably also varies across situations for any given speaker or writer. Organisation of a set of propositions requires more than simply expressing the ideas in a particular sequence. It is generally necessary to indicate through the use of various linguistic devices how one statement relates to another, or how the elements in one statement relate to what has been discussed previously. It is this connectivity that exists among the sentences in a text or paragraph, or in a piece of unified discourse. Nunan (1999: 117) defines discourse as “a stretch of language consisting of several sentences that are perceived as being related in some way.” According to Schiffrin (1994), a formal definition of discourse is “a unit of coherent language consisting of more than one sentence,” and functional definitions characterise discourse as “language in use.” Celce-Murcia (2000: 4) proposes an integrated definition of discourse: “an instance of spoken or written language that has describable internal relationships of form and meaning that relate coherently to an external communicative function or purpose and a given audience/interlocutor.” For discourse to cohere, cohesion must be used. Cohesive ties, or text-forming devices, according to Nunan (1999: 117), “enable the writer or speaker to establish relationships across sentence or utterance boundaries, and that helps to tie the sentences in a text together.”

The following section provides an overview of cohesion and coherence as major linguistic features. The early parts in this section present the definitions, taxonomies of cohesive ties, particularly those proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), and different views pertaining to these linguistic elements. The later parts present various linguistic and applied linguistic perspectives from which cohesion and coherence are viewed.

### **2.2.2 Definitions of Cohesion**

The concept of cohesion has received the most attention from certain linguists working in the area of Functional Sentence Perspective (Danes: 1974; Halliday and Hasan: 1976). The most extensive description of cohesive devices in English to date is the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976). Because their work has served as a reference for subsequent studies of cohesion and is employed as the major analytical framework in this study (see Chapter 3), it merits extensive discussion in this section.

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 4) claim that 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. Cohesion is considered to be a local, text-based, linguistic construct whereby meaning is constructed on the basis of the semantic relations that are motivated between lexical and grammatical items in a text. A text may be a passage of discourse that is coherent with regard to the context of the situation and is thus consistent in register, or is coherent with respect to itself, and is thus cohesive. Texts are distinguished by cohesion from non-texts so that they are understandable to readers or listeners who establish relevance between what was said, is being said and will be said through the appropriate use of the necessary lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. The presence, proportion and interaction of these cohesive devices can determine the cohesiveness of a given text.

While coherence depends on the relationship between the text and the outside context in which it occurs, cohesion occurs when the semantic interpretation of some linguistic element in the discourse depends on another. Cohesion is the “foundation upon which the edifice of coherence is built” (Halliday and Hasan: 1989: 94) and is “an essential feature of a text if it is judged to be coherent” (Parsons: 1991: 415).



### 2.2.3 Taxonomies of Cohesive Ties

Halliday and Hasan's concept of textual cohesion as a semantic relationship between two elements in a text, a 'presupposing' or reference element and 'presupposed' or referent element, is "a linguistic proposal which describes how a text hangs together" (Maclean and Chapman: 1989). In their famous work, *Cohesion in English* (1976), Halliday and Hasan examine the concept of cohesion in great detail, describing it as a "text-forming" component that is closely linked to how the information is structured within a text (27). They intended to discuss the concepts of "text," as distinguished from a mere collection of sentences, and of "cohesion" as a means of forming "text." In their work, "text" is defined as "any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole" (1). A text is a semantic unit rather than a grammatical one. However, a text is realised in the form of sentences. Texture, or the quality of text, involves three major factors: cohesion, the organisation of sentences, and discourse structure (324).

Cohesion, however, differs from text structure in that it works beyond the boundaries of grammatical or rhetorical structure by connecting segments of text semantically to form a unified whole. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 4), "cohesion" refers to "relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as text." In addition, they assert that a well-formed text must exhibit a property of cohesion; in other words, it must be semantically well-constructed and possess coherent linguistic units. To them, cohesion arises by virtue of the relationships between two or more meanings in a text, and such relationships are referred to as "cohesive ties". A tie occurs "between a particular meaning, realised as a surface marker such as a noun or noun phrase, and another instance of that meaning, realised usually by linguistic units such as pronouns and definite noun phrases" (Botley and McEnery: 1996: 5).

Textual cohesion, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), is achieved through the use of five types of cohesive ties. These linguistic devices are the links by which cohesion is established, and they can be found intra- or inter-sententially. The linguists have classified cohesive ties into five major categories: *reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical*

*cohesion*, and *conjunction*, although in Halliday (1994), these cohesive ties have been “further refined” (Nunan: 1999) and have been reclassified into four types, with ellipsis being a subcategory of substitution (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1 Categories of cohesive devices proposed by Halliday and Hasan**

Categories	Subcategories	Examples
Reference	1. Personal	<i>Michael</i> is an aggressive man, and we hate <u>him</u> very much.
	2. Demonstrative	We went to <i>Chiangmai</i> last month, and <u>that</u> was a fantastic city of Thailand.
	3. Comparative	I had <i>three visitors</i> today. The <u>first</u> visitor was the prettiest.
Substitution	1. Nominal	The oldest <i>employee</i> is 58 and the next <u>one</u> is 56.
	2. Verbal	The mother <i>prepared dinner for her family</i> as she always <u>did</u> .
	3. Clausal	She may <i>go shopping</i> , but she didn't say <u>so</u> .
Ellipsis	1. Nominal	We needed some <i>salt</i> , but there wasn't any <u>ø</u> in the cupboard.
	2. Verbal	The meal isn't <i>ready</i> . If it were <u>ø</u> , they would have told us.
	3. Clausal	<i>The money was all stolen</i> . No one knew how <u>ø</u> .



Categories	Subcategories	Examples
Lexical cohesion	1. Same word	There's a <i>student</i> in the room. The <u>student</u> is doing his homework.
	2. Synonym	His <i>job</i> is tedious. He is never fed up with his <u>work</u> .
	3. Superordinate	We flew in a <i>Boeing</i> . The <u>plane</u> was modern and comfortable.
	4. General word	<i>The computer</i> should be replaced. <u>That old thing</u> works erratically.
Conjunction	1. Additive	I tried French food for the first time, <u>and</u> I liked it.
	2. Adversative	Jane went to Sue's home, <u>but</u> she was out.
	3. Causal	She is an efficient secretary, <u>so</u> her boss always admires her.
	4. Temporal	It was getting dark. <u>Then</u> the farmer went home.
	5. Continuative	You don't have to worry. It isn't your problem <u>after all</u> .

(For the first four categories, *presuming* item is italicised; the referent is underlined. In the last category, conjunctions are underlined.)

### 2.2.3.1 Reference

*Reference* is a common cohesive device that consists of “words which don’t have a full meaning in their own right (Salkie: 1995: 64). It is a semantic relation whereby the interpretation of an item depends on something else in the discourse. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 308) define “reference” as “the relation between an element of the text and something else by reference to which it is interpreted in the given instance.” Reference can be categorised into three subtypes. First, *personal reference* is achieved through the use of personal and possessive pronouns, and possessive adjectives. They refer to individuals and objects that are mentioned in some other parts of a text. Another subtype is *demonstrative reference*, which is mainly realised by demonstratives (used both as pronouns and as adjectives). This type of reference can serve to identify a single word or phrase, or a longer text across several sentences, phrases, or even pages. The last subtype, *comparative reference*, is achieved through adverbs and adjectives of comparison. They are used to compare similarities or identities between items in a text. Normally, reference items and the antecedent items co-refer to the same idea. Items (15), (16) and (17) illustrate the use of reference.

- (15) *Dave* is a lazy student. *He* never studies hard.

(The personal pronoun *He* refers to the noun *Dave*.)

- (16) We should wait until *July* to travel. *Then* we can take a summer vacation.

(The pronoun *Then* refers to the noun *July*.)

- (17) As a writing teacher, I would like to emphasise *this*. *Cohesion is very important for text organisation.*

(The demonstrative pronoun *this* refers to the entire following sentence.)

In a text, reference items can function in two ways: they can refer back to someone or something previously named, and they can refer to people or things that will be subsequently mentioned. The former type, pointing backwards, is termed “anaphoric”, whereas the latter type, pointing forward, is called “cataphoric.” In the examples above,



items (15) and (16) exemplify anaphoric reference, reminding readers or listeners of what has been mentioned earlier, while item (17) illustrates cataphoric reference, which prepares readers or listeners for upcoming information that the pronoun refers to.

Nevertheless, when taken out of context, a single sentence with one or more reference items can hardly or never be interpreted, as in sentence (18):

- (18) *He* looked down at *his* chart to enter the planet there, but something distracted *him*; pausing with *his* quill suspended over the parchment, *he* squinted down into the shadowy grounds and saw half a dozen figures walking over the lawn.

The pronouns *he*, *his*, and *him* in the above sentence are not interpretable as it has been extracted from a paragraph which provides context and the antecedent to which pronouns refer. Consider the following paragraph:

- (19) Harry put *his* eye back to *his* telescope and refocused it, now examining Venus. *He* looked down at *his* chart to enter the planet there, but something distracted *him*; pausing with *his* quill suspended over the parchment, *he* squinted down into the shadowy grounds and saw half a dozen figures walking over the lawn.

(From *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J. K. Rowling: 2003: 634)

It is obvious that the pronouns in the second sentence, as well as a personal pronoun in the first one, refer to “Harry (Potter)”. The reader of this paragraph (while reading the novel) can immediately understand the second sentence when interpreting the pronouns with reference to the antecedent in the preceding sentence.

### 2.2.3.2 Substitution

*Substitution* occurs when one linguistic item is replaced by another that simultaneously contributes new information contrasting with the antecedent item. Substitution involves the use of the terms “one(s)” or “(the) same” for nouns, “do so” for verbs, “so” or “not” for clauses, as in items (20) and (21).

(20) Mary owns the blue *car*. The black *one* belongs to Jim.

(The word *one* is the substitute for *car*.)

(21) Pichai thought *the film was great*. His girlfriend didn't think *so*.

(The word *so* is the substitute for *the film was great*.)

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), substitution differs from reference in two important respects. First, while substitution is a formal relation, reference is a semantic one. A substitute item typically has the same grammatical function as that for which it is substituting. For example, in item (20), *one* and *car* have the same grammatical function: both are Head of a nominal group. In item (21), *so* and *the film was great* also have the same structural function; that is, both perform the objective function of a sentence. This application, nevertheless, is not possible with reference. A reference item does not necessarily share the same grammatical or structural function as that for which it is substituting. Consider the following examples:

(22) *John* is intelligent and industrious. *He* will have a bright future.

(23) *John's* new car is very beautiful. *He* must like it a lot.

(24) That new car is *John's*. *He* will drive it to the university today.

The reference item *He* in all three occurrences is a pronoun functioning as Head. *He* refers to *John* whether *John* functions as Head (i.e. equivalent to *he*) as in (22), possessive determiner (i.e. equivalent to *his*) as in (23), or possessive pronoun (i.e. equivalent to *his*) as in (24).



Second, while coreferentiality is central to reference, co-classification is central to substitution. That is, a substitute item and its substituted counterpart refer to different members of an identical class, e.g.

(25) *This game* is boring. I like that *one* better.

In item (25), *one* is not coreferential with *this game*; instead, it refers to another member of the same class of games.

### 2.2.3.3 Ellipsis

Halliday and Hasan (1976) consider *ellipsis* as the equivalent of substitution by zero. Ellipsis refers to “the omission of an item” (88) that is already understood from the antecedent context. An elliptical item is one which “leaves specific structural slots to be filled from elsewhere” (143). In their view, the main difference between ellipsis and substitution is that substitution requires an explicit linguistic form such as *do* and *one* for the presupposed item, whereas in ellipsis, no explicit linguistic form is needed in the slot. Item (26) exemplifies this.

(26) There are only a few *guests* in the party. More  $\emptyset$  are expected to arrive soon.

(The word *guests* is omitted in the second sentence.)

In some contexts, substitution and ellipsis can be used interchangeably, as in the following examples:

(27) Sue might *go shopping this afternoon*. But I don't think she will *do so*.

(28) Sue might *go shopping this afternoon*. But I don't think she will  $\emptyset$ .

In item (27), *do so* functions as a substitute for *go shopping this afternoon*. In item (28), however, the substitute is zero, and the substituted item is *go shopping this afternoon*. In sum, it is Halliday and Hasan's (1976: 148) contention that ellipsis, like substitution, is a

form of presupposition and thus contributes to cohesion in text: “A nominal group that is elliptical presupposes a previous one that is not, and it is therefore cohesive.”

Like Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1994: 309-310) proposes that ellipsis is a cohesive element in text:

The elliptical or substitute clause requires the listener to “supply the missing words”; and since they are to be supplied from what has gone before, the effect is cohesive. It is always possible to ‘reconstitute’ the elliptical item so that it becomes fully explicit.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) see substitution and ellipsis as two different types of cohesive ties. In a later work by Halliday (1994), they are combined into a single category.

Quirk et al. (1985: 707) state that ellipsis is a linguistic device used for reducing redundancy; its major use is to avoid repetition. Nevertheless, ellipsis is also instrumental in connecting sentences together:

Ellipsis plays an important part in sentence connection. If we find what seems to be an elliptical construction, we are usually forced to look back to what was said previously in order to interpret the sentence. We interpret the sentence by reference to what has been ellipated. And we can only know what has been ellipated on the basis of what is present in the preceding context.

#### 2.2.3.4 Lexical Cohesion

*Lexical cohesion* involves the repetition of a noun phrase, or the use of another noun phrase which shares one of several relations with the first noun phrase, such as coreference, synonym, antonym, and part-whole. Halliday and Hasan (1976) divide lexical cohesion into *reiteration* (which involves repetition of a lexical item, use of a general word to refer back to a lexical item, and use of a synonym, a near synonym or a superordinate term) and *collocation*. Lexical cohesion is a cohesive relation whose cohesive effect is achieved by the selection of vocabulary.



Halliday (1994) describes *repetition* as the most direct form of lexical cohesion. Repetition can create cohesion through the application of coreferentiality or by the mere occurrence of repetition (Halliday and Hasan: 1976; Halliday: 1994). According to Halliday (1994: 330), “if we had *Algy met a bear. Bears are bulgy*, where *bears* mean ‘all bears’, there would still be lexical cohesion of *bears* with *bear*.”

In their discussion of cohesion, de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) state that the main purpose for using repetition is “to insist upon relationships among elements or configurations of content within the text” (59). In other words, repetition is used to show the relation of form and meaning within the text. Other major functions of repetition include asserting, affirming one’s viewpoint and conveying surprises.

Like de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), Quirk et al. (1985) state that in ordinary discourse, repetition serves the functions of confirmation and emphasis. However, in certain discourse or text, repetition is generally avoided because lexical items can easily seem obtrusive. In her study of repetition in spoken discourse, Tannen (1987) mentions that repetition creates cohesion in discourse: “...repetition of sentences, phrases, and words show how a new utterance is linked to (an) earlier one(s), and how ideas presented in discourse are related to each other” (575).

In addition, repetition has some functions at all three levels: production, comprehension, and interpersonal. At the production level, repetition facilitates the production process as the speaker formulates a paradigm on his or her mind and then provides the new information for his or her hearer without a necessity to create a new frame whenever new information is added. At the comprehension level, repetition leads to redundancy and reduces the textual information, thus enabling the hearer to process the information more easily. At the interpersonal level, repetition is used to show understanding, approval and acceptance of the speaker’s utterance; it can also keep a conversation going without delivering a lot of information. Stubbs (1983) also emphasises the multi- functions of repetition—to check, to query and to express irony. In his view, repetition is not redundant and it should not be thought of only in terms of propositional meaning.

Apart from repetition, lexical cohesion can be achieved through the use of phrases or lexical items that are related in some way to those in the earlier part of the text. Items (29), (30) and (31) illustrate various uses of lexical cohesion:

- (29) *Mr. Tang* is very concerned about the terrorist threats in his country. *The Prime Minister* will call a meeting with his cabinet members to discuss the problems.

(*The Prime Minister* is the noun substitute for *Mr. Tang*.)

- (30) All *the labourers* have been working arduously this year. The manager plans to give *his workers* a huge bonus.

(*His workers* is the synonym of *the labourers*.)

- (31) The secretary bought *a Mazda* last year. *The door* is already beginning to rust.

(*The door* is a partial coreference of *a Mazda*.)

Lexical cohesion differs from the other types of cohesion in that its cohesive effect is more subtle. As pointed out by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 288):

The effect of lexical, especially collocational, cohesion on a text is subtle and difficult to estimate. With grammatical cohesion the effect is relatively clear: if one comes across the word he, for example, there is no doubt that some essential information is called for, and that the identity of the he must be recovered from somewhere. Reference items, substitutes and conjunctions all explicitly presuppose some element other than themselves.



In lexical cohesion, however, there are no particular lexical items which always have a cohesive function (Halliday and Hasan: 1976). Every lexical item may share a cohesive relation, but by itself there is no indication as to whether it functions cohesively or not. That can be established only by reference to the text.

### 2.2.3.5 Conjunction

*Conjunction* is the type of cohesion that is achieved through the use of coordinating conjunctions, subordinators, adverbials and certain prepositional phrases to connect sentences. Conjunction links two ideas together semantically, where the interpretation of the second idea is based on the understanding of the first one. These ideas may be expressed in clauses, sentences or even paragraphs. Conjunctive relations are usually expressed through the use of conjunctive elements, which may be a coordinating conjunction (like *and*, *but*, *or*), a sentence adverb (like *furthermore*, *however*, *thus*), or a prepositional phrase (like *besides that*, *in addition to that*). Halliday and Hasan (1976) divide conjunctive devices into five categories: *additive* involves adding information, *adversative* involves contradicting or contrasting, *causal* involves explaining causes or effects, *temporal* involves expressing time relationships, and *continuative* involves establishing other relationships. Halliday (1994), however, classifies conjunction into only three broad types: *elaboration*, *extension*, and *enhancement*. In *elaboration*, one sentence clarifies another by specifying or describing it. In *extension*, one sentence adds something new to another by supplying more information or providing an alternative. Finally, in *enhancement*, one sentence qualifies the meaning of another by reference to time, place, manner, cause, condition, or matter.

According to Salkie (1995: 76), connectives can be classified into four basic types: *addition connectives* (e.g. *and*, *or*), *opposition connectives* (e.g. *but*, *yet*), *cause connectives* (e.g. *therefore*), and *time connectives* (e.g. *then*). Examples of conjunctions can be found in items (32) and (33).

(32) He has lived in England all his life, *but* he has never been to Nottingham.

(*But* is the coordinating conjunction joining the two independent clauses in the sentence.)

(33) The student prepared himself very well. *Therefore*, he passed the exam easily.

(*Therefore* is the sentence adverb linking the idea in the first sentence with that in the second one.)

Except conjunction, all the other categories of Halliday and Hasan's classification scheme consist of items which are usually *anaphoric*. That is, while pronominals, substitution items, and lexical items do not express a semantic relation between two sentences, conjunctions contribute to cohesion by explicitly expressing some semantic relation between two propositions. Anaphoric relations involve linking one sentence to another with reference to some concept mentioned in another (usually preceding) sentence for their interpretation.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) distinguish two levels of conjunctive relations: external and internal. "External relation" is the relation that is "inherent in the phenomena that language is used to talk about" (241). In other words, it is the ideational relation of the theme between two successive clauses or sentences. This relation involves the use of certain cohesive ties. "Internal relation", on the other hand, is the relation that is "inherent in the communication process" (241). This relation occurs within the interpersonal component of language. It is "the speaker's own identity on the situation—his or her choice of speech role and rhetorical channel, attitudes, judgment and the like" (240). Consider the following examples:

(34) Mary is not coming. *For* she is seriously ill.

(35) Are you leaving now? *Because* I'd like to talk to you.



In item (34), *for* exhibits the external relation—the relation between the fact that Mary is seriously ill and her absence. In item (35), however, the conjunction *because* expresses the internal relation as it can be interpreted as “I am asking you, ‘Are you leaving now?’ *because* I’d like to talk to you.”

In Halliday and Hasan’s view (1976: 267), these two levels of relation are related, as the internal relation extends from the external one:

... these internal relations may be regarded as an extension of the underlying patterns of conjunctions into the communication situation itself, treating it, and thereby also the text—the linguistic component of the communication process—as having by analogy the same structure as “reality”: that is, as the phenomena that constitute the content, or THESIS, of the text.

Conjunctive elements establish textual cohesion by virtue of the fact that they presuppose the existence of other elements in the discourse (226):

Conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meaning; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in discourse.

In addition, they relate two parts of text and specify the type of relation that holds between them. Consider the following example:

(36) Tom is hardworking. *But* Matt is lazy.

In item (36), the conjunction *but* presupposes the presence of some information in the preceding sentence. In addition, it also connects the two parts of the discourse through the contrastive relation.

While it is obvious that conjunctive elements play a crucial role in relating sentences, such relations can also be implicit or implied, as in the following example.

(37) Pete passed the comprehensive exams. He's very happy.

In item (37), no conjunctive element is present, yet the hearer or reader can infer that the two sentences are linked together through a resultative relationship—his happiness is the direct result of his success in the comprehensive exams. However, sometimes what the hearer or reader infers may not reflect the speaker's or writer's actual intention. For example:

(38) My brother is a lawyer. My sister is a teacher.

In item (38), the hearer or reader may infer either an additive relation (“my brother is a lawyer, *and* my sister is a teacher”) or a contrastive relation (“my brother is a lawyer, *but* my sister is a teacher”). Thus the presence of conjunctive elements makes the intended relationship explicit and more readily accessible, as Quirk et al. (1985: 633) put it: “conjuncts indicate how the speaker ‘views’ the connection between two syntactic units.”

Titscher et al. (2000: 22) describe *conjunctions* as elements that “signal relations or connections between events and situations.” They divide conjunctions into four subtypes: *conjunctions* (linking sentence structures of the same status), *disjunctions* (linking sentence structures with differing status), *contra-junctions* (linking sentence structures of the same status that seem to be irreconcilable, such as cause and unexpected effect), and *subordinations* (used where one sentence structure is dependent on another).

In Halliday and Hasan's (1976) analysis, distance is also a significant characteristic of cohesion. With a low distance, an immediate tie has a presupposed item in the sentence. A mediated tie occurs when the presupposed item is within the preceding sentences and the distance between the presupposed and the presupposing items is medium. A remote



tie, with the highest distance, occurs when the presupposed item has one or more intervening sentences that are not involved in the presupposition (339).

#### **2.2.4 Different Views on Cohesive Ties**

The most significant study of “cohesion” in the English language was conducted by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Their study has influenced a number of subsequent studies on textual relation, and their work on cohesion can be regarded as a starting point for later works that investigate relations in discourse or discourse coherence (Schiffrin: 1987; Blakemore: 1987, 1992). Cohesion refers to a semantic relation between the presupposing and the presupposed elements. The presupposing element cannot be effectively decoded without resorting to the presupposed one (1976: 1). To them, cohesion is a property of a text. In the discourse or text, cohesion occurs when the interpretation of some element depends on that of another. Although Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) *Cohesion in English* can be considered the most comprehensive work, there are considerable non-unified views among other researchers regarding certain cohesive elements.

The first point to be discussed here involves the concept of reference as a cohesive tie. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), in order to be cohesive, a reference has to be “endophoric,” pointing to an element within the text itself. On the other hand, “exophoric” reference is non-cohesive because it involves a referent outside the text. Brown and Yule (1983) do not agree with this concept; they contend that the distinction between endophoric and exophoric reference is very difficult to draw. Below is the reason they provide:

In both cases, we must suppose, the processor has a mental representation. In the one case he has a mental representation of what is in the world, in the other he has a mental representation of a world created by the discourse. In each case he must look into his mental representation to determine reference (201).

Furthermore, Brown and Yule (1983) contend that when encountering the problem of interpreting a reference, it is very unlikely that a reader would keep tracing back along the text until he or she reaches the last point of reference before starting to match it with the referent in the real world.

Similarly, Lyons (1979) argues that anaphora ultimately depends on exophora, or the deictic use of pronouns:

...anaphora rests upon the notion of accessibility in the universe-of-discourse; and accessibility, which reflects salience, is in part determined by recency of mention. Insofar as recency of mention is itself, as we have seen, a deictically based notion and is encoded, in one way or another, in the anaphoric pronouns used in particular languages, anaphora rests ultimately upon deixis (100).

Another point that is worth discussing here involves cohesive relations. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesive relations must be established beyond sentence grammar and therefore involve only relations across sentences. Those within sentences are excluded because sentences are governed by grammatical rules.

However, there are other different points of view. Gutwinski (1976) investigate both intersentential and intrasentential relations that contribute to cohesion in literary texts in order to account for textual relations of both sentences and clauses. Fowler (1981), on the other hand, has a different view, proposing against restricting the use of a sentence as a unit of analysis.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) aim to investigate the textual unity of the English language. They confine themselves to the study of five categories of cohesive ties as lexical and grammatical relations. Nevertheless, other linguists include other categories of cohesion in their investigations. Fowler (1981), for instance, examines alliteration, phonetic figures, and syntactic parallelism in his work. Gutwinski (1976) includes "enation," the relation that occurs when sentences have identical structures, and "agantation," the relation opposite and complementary to enation; that is, the relation that occurs when



sentences with the same vocabulary items have different structures. For example, the relationship of the following pair of sentences is “enation”.

- (39)       a. The little pig went to market.  
              b. This little pig stayed home.

On the contrary, the relationship of the sentences in the following pair is “aganation”.

- (40)       a. She couldn’t do this.  
              b. This she couldn’t do.

However, in the previous studies of cohesion, Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) framework has been adopted by more researchers than that of other scholars who examined cohesion so that it is generally considered as a standard model of cohesion.

### **2.2.5 Cohesion and Coherence in Writing**

Differences between spoken and written language would provide a justification for the importance of cohesion in writing. According to Chafe (1982), writing is generally produced under basically different assumptions from those of speaking. Whereas speaking typically occurs in a face-to-face interactive situation, writing is typically performed in “social isolation” (Chafe: 1982) Academic writing, in particular, is usually produced in accordance with certain conventions that differentiate the two language skills. Based on this difference, Chafe characterised speaking as “involvement” and writing as “detachment”. These two concepts primarily address the speakers’ and writers’ relationships to their audience. Chafe (1982) explained such relationships as follows:

The speaker is aware of an obligation to communicate what he or she has in mind in a way that reflects the richness of his or her thoughts—not to present a logically coherent but experientially stark skeleton, but to enrich it with the complex details of real experiences—to have less concern for consistency than for experiential involvement. The situation of the writer is fundamentally different. His or her readers are displaced in time and space, and he or she may not even know in any specific terms who the

audience will be. The result is that the writer is less concerned with experiential richness, and more concerned with producing something that will be consistent and defensible when read by different people at different times in different places (45).

The essential features of a well-written text are the unity and connectedness, making the individual sentences in the text “hang” together and relate to one another (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain: 2000). This textual relationship is partially a result of coherent organisation of the propositions and ideas presented in writing. In addition, this relationship significantly depends on the painstaking process the writer goes through in order to create formal and grammatical cohesion among paragraphs and among sentences in each paragraph (Cornbleet and Carter: 2001). Therefore, the writer can strengthen coherence, and create global and local unity by employing various devices.

The overall coherence of a longer text depends on the coherence within each paragraph or section of the text. (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). In expository writing, coherence is an essential feature that links ideas or information in different parts of the text so that the reader can understand the entire text more easily. Each sentence in this type of writing is related to both previous and subsequent sentences. In addition, the purpose and the intended audience of an expository text also play a crucial role. For example, a text focusing on the latest developments in biology might take a different form depending on whether it is intended to be included in a popular magazine, a biology textbook, or a scientific journal. Each of these text types follows certain writing conventions; that is, while a popular magazine is intended to convey information to the public in general, a biology textbook and a scientific journal are intended for students who are being introduced to the subject area and scientists who are specialised in the field, respectively. Therefore, coherence can create a logical progression in a text so that the reader can comprehend the text through the connectedness among the propositions presented in the text while relating the information in the text to his or her own knowledge of the world.



In Harris's (1990) study on textual coherence, the organisational functions fulfilled by opening sentences of paragraphs in scientific writing were investigated. Opening sentences were analysed and classified into five different groups: sentences which announce or identify the main topic of a text, those that state a fact or define the main topic of a text, those discussing similarities or differences in regard to the main scientific element discussed in the writing, those that identify a significant previous event, and finally those which point out a false assumption or the lack of evidence for understanding some phenomenon. According to Harris (1990), all these opening sentence types play a role in organising ideas or information in a paragraph, and in some scientific paragraphs there tend to be two sentences that organise ideas or information—the opening sentence and another one that logically follows the opening sentence. All types of opening sentences help the reader read or browse through an easier and more effective interpretation process. Showing consideration for the reader, a skilled writer uses such opening sentences for clearer communication.

#### **2.2.6 Cohesion and Coherence in Reading**

The interpretation of a well-written text during a reading process can be facilitated by the two inherent features of a text: cohesion and coherence. While the writer attempts to create a coherent and cohesive text, the reader utilises these two features to interpret the text. In a reader-based text, the writer is aware of the importance of an intended audience. Cohesion and coherence, therefore, play a vital role in the reading process as they can help the reader to understand the text more rapidly and more clearly.

Cohesion is an explicit feature of the text that enhances its unity and connectedness. It provides surface-level evidence in the form of linguistic ties that are used to form a larger text. These linguistic elements contribute to the interconnectivity between sections in a text. As cohesion relies on the use of grammatical and lexical items, it closely associates with the reader's linguistic competence. The reader may miss cohesive relations if unaware of or deficient in this linguistic area, thus having difficulty interpreting a text.

A “cohesive chain” in a text (Halliday and Hasan, 1976) can be formed through elements that have the same referent or classification. This chain links different parts of a text together to make it unified. To achieve the communicative objective of a text, such cohesive chains can be used as signposts that help organise the text. Since these chains arrange the text into related sections, they “enable the reader to interpret the text more easily and accurately” (Enkvist: 1987 as cited in Celce-Murcia and Olshtain: 2000: 126). The most common discourse strategies that are conducive to cohesion involve temporal, locative, and/or participant/topic-oriented continuity. They also concern the two types of reference: *endophoric reference* and *exophoric reference*. As discussed earlier, the former type of reference relates to anaphoric and cataphoric relations within the text, while the latter type of reference relates to context outside the text. Exophoric reference plays a crucial role in top-down processing, whereas endophoric reference accommodates bottom-up processing.

On the other hand, coherence is the quality that makes a text conform to a consistent world view based on one’s experience and culture or convention, and it should be viewed as a feature related to all three participants in the interactive process: the writer, the written text, and the reader (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain: 2000). Coherence involves ways in which ideas and propositions in a text are presented in terms of a conceptual and cognitive process. It results from the writer’s plan and relates to various types of discourse. It also corresponds to a rhetorical and cultural function, sequence and organisation. Reading, according to Widdowson (1984), is a nonreciprocal activity: “The writer is a participant in that he is enacting a discourse with an assumed and absent interlocutor but he is at the same time detached from immediate involvement...” (77), and similarly, the reader is a nonreciprocal participant when trying to interpret the written text.

The concept revolving around coherence and cohesion is compatible with top-down theories of reading. Based on schema theory, “the coherence of a text is central and cohesion is a linguistic consequence of coherence” (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain: 2000: 125). Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) theory of cohesion was subject to criticism (e.g.



Carrell, 1982) because it posited that cohesion was a basis for coherence. While Halliday and Hasan (1976) was mainly concerned with the language features, schema theorists such as Carrell (1982) dealt primarily with the reading process related to human psychology. Apparently, these linguists were studying the same process but approached it from different perspectives. However, Hasan (1984) changed her position, stating that coherence is an inherent feature of the text indicating “the property of hanging together” (183). Cohesion came to be seen as the foundation of coherence although not sufficient by itself.

Based on reading-oriented theories, a text is considered to be fully coherent if it “makes sense” to the reader. This concept corresponds to the interlocutionary perspective that speakers and writers need to make their intentions clear throughout the text. In terms of interaction, coherence is not only text-based but also reader-based. That is, coherence is derived from the interaction between knowledge presented in a text and the reader’s schemata regarding information and text structures (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain: 2000). Readers, believed to possess schemata and frames of reference, are able to interpret a text when employing these devices. As the reader’s schema matches the text, interpretation becomes easier. In other words, to understand and process information in a text, the reader needs to match the schemata of context and form presented by the writer in the text with his or her own schemata and his or her own view of the world and of the content presented in the text. As a result, coherence is created by the reader during the reading process and “is partially intratextual and partially extratextual” (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain: 2000: 126).

### **2.2.7 Cohesion and Coherence in a Contrastive Rhetorical Perspective**

Rhetorical studies of cohesion and coherence are related to *contrastive rhetoric*, a study initiated by Kaplan (1966) to examine rhetorical variations between English and other languages. Contrastive rhetoric, and coherence and cohesion are examined under the assumption that coherence and cohesion in written discourse differ rhetorically across languages and cultures.

Contrastive rhetoric is based on an understanding of different cultures, languages, and rhetorical conventions. Based on ESL writing, Kaplan's (1966) study posits that paragraph development in a language is different from that in another due to different thought patterns. In Kaplan's view, a correlation exists between thought patterns and paragraph development within a particular culture but varies greatly across cultures. According to his findings, different cultures and languages reveal different thought patterns in writing; for instance, English is linear; Arabic is parallel; Oriental is circular; Romance and Slavic are zigzag.

Based on the assumption that different cultures have their own perceptions of how to present ideas in texts and thus produce different patterns of text organisation, many studies explore the differences in academic texts produced by second language writers. Genre analysis and text linguistics have been conducted on written discourse that is expected to reveal the writer's cultural elements. Kaplan and Ostler (1982, as cited in Jogthong, 2001: 11) studied texts with different discourse patterns. They argued that English expository prose had a linear rhetorical pattern that consisted of:

A clearly defined topic, introduction, body which explicates all but nothing more than the stated topic, paragraphs which chain from one to the next, and a conclusion which tells the reader what has been discussed...no digression, no matter how interesting, is permitted on the grounds that it would violate unity (14).

Nevertheless, Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric has been both challenged and supported by researchers and ESL practitioners. Matalene (1985) observes that in order to attain Chinese literacy, Chinese characters must be learned mainly through memorisation. Chinese rhetoric stresses the importance of achieving "social harmony" and maintaining the conformity to the Chinese literary and writing tradition, which requires memorisation of set phrases, idioms, and proverbs from classical sources. Chinese writing, therefore, is heavily influenced by such rhetorical traditions and writing conventions.



Furthermore, Hinds (1983) studied English and Japanese expository prose and coherence features. The results of his study revealed the differences in rhetorical organisational patterns. For instance, the main thesis is not foregrounded in the Japanese expository writing while English prose usually presents, explicitly or implicitly, the main thesis. Also, clarifications are not explicitly provided in the Japanese text, and thus, an English-speaking reader might regard the text as incoherent and unacceptable due mainly to the difficulty in processing and understanding the text. By comparing the written texts from the two different cultures, he found that English essays that followed the Japanese organisational patterns would be considered to be less coherent than essays written with English organisational patterns.

Hinds (1990) also studied coherence in texts produced by writers from different cultures. He found that most Asian writers failed to make the purpose of their writing clear at the beginning and that fewer connective statements were used, especially in Japanese texts. This indirect style of writing was dissimilar to the writing composed by native speakers of English who usually state an explicit purpose at the very beginning of a presentation and provide transitional statements to form a coherent text. This type of text organisation was therefore considered unusual or ineffective in the viewpoint of English-speaking readers.

Ventola and Mauranen (1991) investigated cohesion, thematic development, and reference in writings of Finnish scientists and compared them with those of English-speaking scientists. From this study, they found fewer connectors in the Finnish scientists' writings thus leading to less cohesiveness. By comparing some scientific paragraphs written by both Finnish and English-speaking scientists, the researchers also found that fewer demonstrative references were used in the Finnish writings and the introduction of main ideas was presented later in the texts, rather than earlier in the texts.

Though Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric has been strongly supported and adopted, it has also received a lot of criticisms. Leki (1991b), for example, criticised Kaplan's theory as one based on intuition rather than sound research methods. Connor (1996)

observes that Kaplan's theory takes into account only the writing product while neglecting the writing process. Connor suggested that only investigating the thought patterns as a factor affecting ESL writing is inadequate, and contrastive rhetoric should also examine cultural differences, linguistic differences, writing conventions, as well as genre differences.

Kaplan (1987, 1988) further studied rhetoric beyond thought patterns. Specifically, he investigated discourse types, genre types, and cultural conventions governing the act of writing and approaches to the instruction and learning of writing (process vs. product). In terms of pedagogical implications regarding writing, Kaplan (1988) claims that contrastive rhetoric should raise awareness towards and promote attention to the knowledge of the morphosyntax of the target language (TL), the knowledge of the writing conventions of the TL, the knowledge of audience expectation in the target culture, and the knowledge of the subject matter.

Recognising the multidimensionality of contrastive rhetoric (CR), Connor (1996) developed another theoretical framework with a primary goal to search for "relevance for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction and practical use" (7). This framework was not confined to only undergraduate fundamental English writing but dealt also with more specialised types of writing. She claims that CR should involve various aspects including contrastive analysis, error analysis, and interlanguage analysis. Historical evolution of CR by Kaplan involves the study of languages, genres, and authors; text linguistics; cultural studies; translation studies; and genre studies tied with discipline-specific writing. The relationship between contrastive rhetoric and coherence involves the analysis of the organisation of a text within a culture and genre, and in-text variations across cultures and genres.



### **2.2.8 Cohesion and Coherence from TESOL Perspective**

In addition to theoretical studies of coherence and cohesion, empirical studies in TESOL have also yielded remarkable results. The major orientation is towards text organisation that facilitates ESL readers and writers, and the adaptation of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model. Carrell (1984), for example, did a research study on expository discourse proposed by Meyer (1982). Through an empirical study of 96 participants in an English program specially designed for foreign learners, she found that of all discourse types: description, causation, collection, problem/solution, and comparison, "certain types of expository organization may be generally more facilitative of recall for ESL readers than other types. The more tightly organised comparison, causation, and problem/solution types tend to be more facilitative of recall of specific ideas from a text than is the more loosely organised collection of description" (464). She also found that "there are interesting differences among the native language groups represented in the study: Spanish, Arabic, and Oriental" (441).

Carrell (1982) also studied the correlation between coherence and cohesion with respect to Halliday and Hasan's model. She reviewed various criticisms that seemed to show that Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory operates on "the superficial surface structure of a text in establishing the cohesive ties" (482), while neglecting the underlying propositional units. Not only was Halliday and Hasan's model criticised on the basis of theoretical concept, it was also criticised on empirical grounds. Criticisms from empirical studies show that the use of cohesion was affected by a writing topic and "causal and adversative cohesive elements were recalled better by readers from the passage of their own native culture than from the passage of the foreign culture" (485). It is also claimed that Halliday and Hasan's model and analysis "fail to take the contributions of the text's reader and are incapable of accounting for textual coherence." (479).

Morgan and Sellner (1980) challenge Halliday and Hasan's claim that that some linguistic elements (like cohesion) are required to make a text coherent; also, mere coherence in content does not suffice to make a text coherent. They argue that "coherence

of a text is a matter of content which happens to have linguistic consequences” (Carrell: 1982: 482). Examining a coherent biography of Churchill, Morgan and Sellner (1980) claim that “one would expect frequent mention of words like “Churchill,” “he,” “him,” “his,” and so on” and that “the source of coherence would lie in the content, and the repeated occurrences of certain words would be the consequence of content coherence, not something that was a source of coherence” (179).

Morgan and Sellner (1980) also cast doubt on Halliday and Hasan’s notion of lexical cohesion. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), lexical cohesion occurs when the same lexical items are repeated in a text or when lexical items that are related in certain ways can make mutual links. However, in Morgan and Sellner’s view, this notion collapses entirely when the concept of lexical cohesion is extended to chains of related lexical items in a text. In their view, chains of words like “actor—play—stage—rehearsal—script” would be coherent in a text as long as their use is indicative of a common overall topic, not just chains of related lexical items.

Ehrlich (1988), however, points out that previous studies of cohesion in second-language acquisition are inaccurate because simply counting the number of cohesive devices to assess the overall cohesion of texts is insufficient. The frequency of such cohesive devices has failed to measure cohesion accurately because the restrictions on the distribution of cohesive devices in English have been neglected (111). She claims that it is not the frequency with which cohesive devices occur but the appropriateness of these devices in the context and “their distribution throughout the text that determine their effectiveness” (113). She discusses two types of constraints on the use of cohesive devices: *cohesive discourse* depends on reference to NPs which are prominent or “in focus” within discourse, and *semantic connectors* connect the proposition of a sentence to that of another (114-116).



### **2.2.9 Cohesion and Language Teaching/Learning**

Cohesion plays a vital role in teaching writing. Many applied linguists propose that, as an important component of a writing course, it should be explicitly taught to both English native speaker and non-native speaker students.

Witte and Faigley (1981) are strong proponents of the teaching of cohesion. In their research study, they found the higher density of cohesive ties in the high-rated essays than in the low-rated essays. Specifically, in the low-rated essays a cohesive tie occurs once every 4.9 words, whereas in the high-rated essays, a tie occurs once every 3.2 words (195). They also found that in the low-rated essays students tend to repeat ideas without elaboration and use relatively fewer conjunctions, reference, and immediate ties. Based on the findings in this study, it is suggested that cohesion may be useful in distinguishing between stages of writing development:

...cohesion analysis measures more sophisticated aspects of language development than do error analysis and syntactic analysis. Cohesion analysis also gives us some concrete ways of addressing some of the differences between good and poor writing, differences which heretofore could not be explained either to ourselves or to our students in any but the most abstract ways (199).

Although Witte and Faigley (1981) found that cohesion is a measure of good writing and that it should be taught even to native speakers, they posited that a cohesive text could hardly be coherent. In their view, the reader will have to be able to create a realistic picture for a particular text to make it coherent. Thus a writer should create not only textual cohesiveness but also pragmatic unity, “a unity of a text and the world of the reader” (201). They pointed out that an emphasis on cohesion analysis may be misleading because well-formedness of text can be defined by other factors like appropriateness of a particular text to its context, which includes such factors as “the writer’s purpose, the discourse medium, and the audience’s knowledge” (199).

McCulley's (1985) study of persuasive papers written by English speaking high school students supported Witte and Faigley's results. The results revealed that only some features of textual cohesion proposed by Halliday and Hasan contribute to the overall writing quality of texts according to expert readers. In line with Witte and Faigley, he concluded that lexical cohesion such as synonyms, hyponyms, collocations are useful ties contributing significantly to the measures of writing quality.

Zamel (1983) also considers cohesion as an extremely important component in language teaching. Cohesive devices "turn separate clauses, sentences, and paragraphs into connected prose, signaling the relationships between ideas, and making obvious the thread of meaning the writer is trying to communicate" (165). She posits that cohesive devices are crucial in writing and to teach them, three most important issues to consider are what organisational relationships they express, which rhetorical relationships are appropriate in which context, and their grammatical restrictions.

Examining L2 students' essays, Zamel (1983) found that ideas in their essays were not presented clearly because cohesive elements were not used or they were misused. Cohen (1979) found that L2 students learning English had difficulty understanding cohesive markers in their reading.

Widdowson (1979), while suggesting the study and the teaching of discourse as a useful approach to communicative language teaching, stresses the importance of cohesion in writing: "The importance of work on grammatical cohesion is that it is a description of the devices which are used to link sentences together to form text and provide the language teacher with an inventory of points he or she must incorporate into exercises to develop a knowledge of this aspect of language use" (55).



### **2.2.10 Text Types as a Context-sensitive Approach to Coherence**

Text type approaches to coherence examine longer texts and seek to determine how semantic relations are combined to form larger hierarchical meaning patterns. Different from semantic relations theories that view coherence in terms of clausal connections, text type approaches had an underlying assumption which reveals their correspondence to semantic-relations analyses that relations between parts of a text are similar to relations between clauses.

One of the most outstanding works on text types is Hoey's (1983) analysis of the problem-solution pattern. The assumption underlying Hoey's method is that "there is something in the discourse itself that helps the listener or speaker to perceive the structure" (33). That is, relations between series of clauses are signaled in discourse. Hoey presents the Problem-Solution pattern which can be achieved through the mapping of semantic relations of Cause-Consequence and Instrument-Achievement onto a larger discourse pattern of Situation-Problem-Response-Evaluation. In this model, Hoey does not focus on superficial features of cohesion or emphasise the importance of implicit semantic relations but attaches equal importance to both semantic relations and grammatical or lexical signaling of connectedness: "the emphasis is placed on the ways in which the surface of the discourse...contains sufficient clues for the reader/listener to perceive accurately the discourse's organisation" (33).

Other researchers on text type include Jordan (1997) and Tribble (1996) who present a list of textual patternings such as narratives, instructions, descriptions, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, and definitions. However, a major difficulty in text type research involves the systematic description of types of textual organisation and a consistent categorisation and differentiation between various types.

### 2.2.11 Cohesion in Corpus Linguistics Perspectives

Hoey (2004) proposed the theory of lexical priming, used to describe cohesion and semantic relations in a text, stating that “texts normally manifest cohesion, though there is no agreement about the relationship of cohesion to coherence, and texts manifest semantic relations amongst their parts, though there is no agreement as to how best to characterise these semantic relations” (7). He claims that lexical items are primed for cohesion, and cohesive characteristics exist in the inherent property of lexical items. Hoey (2004) categorises priming into two types. Firstly, each lexical item is primed to occur in cohesion chains or to avoid such chains; the priming involves “the availability of an item for participation in cohesion” and has nothing to do with the nature of the cohesion (Hoey: 2004: 9). The other type of priming relates to the nature of the priming: “those items that are primed to occur in cohesive chains or ties may also be primed to occur in chains constituted in particular kinds of ways” (9).

Corpus analyses of spoken and written English provide useful information regarding the use of cohesion in English and can determine the rate at which each cohesive tie occurs. For instance, the coordinating conjunction *and*, one of the most frequently used words, occurs at the rate of approximately 27,000 times per million words (Hinkel, 2004). The conjunctions *but* and *so* are also quite common, with rates of approximately 5,000 occurrences each (Leech, Rayson, and Wilson: 2001). Coordinating conjunctions are commonly used to conjoin parallel phrases and simple sentences, although *but* is the least common in academic texts. In academic writing, slightly over 30% of all occurrences of *and* combine simple sentences, with the large majority of these features found in parallel constructions (Biber et al.: 1999). Therefore, when cohesion is to be developed between sentences in formal academic texts, using coordinate conjunctions may not be an effective way to proceed. In fact, L2 writers tend to overuse *and*, *but*, and *so* (Hinkel: 2004). However, correlative conjunctions such as *both...and*, *either...or*, and *neither...nor*, widely popular in the teaching of ESL grammar, are usually rare in any types of discourse (Carter and McCarthy: 2006). Biber et al. (1999), for instance, found *nor* to be less common than all other coordinators in academic prose. In addition,



according to their analysis, *both...and* occur with frequency rates of 0.1%, *either...or* with the rates of 0.05%, and *neither...nor* hardly at all.

### **2.2.12 Research Studies on Cohesion and Coherence in L2 Writing**

The existing dichotomy between cohesion and coherence is evident in the conflicting results reported in studies which investigated these two constructs and attempted to integrate them into a unified theory to account for writing quality. For example, Tierney and Mosenthal (1983) analysed the correlation between coherence scores and the number of cohesive ties used in compositions written by ESL students. The participants, who were enrolled in rhetoric classes, were randomly provided with two different scenarios and subsequently were assigned to write two essays. In the first writing scenario which was more familiar, the participants watched a film on a writer before writing essays, whereas the participants in the other writing scenario which was unfamiliar watched a film on another writer before writing a biographical essay and developing the theme of evil in an essay. The participants were provided with the outlines to follow in writing essays. The purpose for this provision was to control the content and the structure of the written work. After that, three teachers holistically rated the essays and subsequently ranked them on the basis of coherence. The results, which were derived from the statistical analysis that was used to compare the rankings of coherence in the essays and the use of cohesive devices in the two scenarios and on the two different writing topics, revealed no significant interaction effect regarding the use of cohesive devices although a significant interaction was gained for coherence rankings. As there was no causal relationship between cohesive ties and coherence rankings, cohesion analysis was considered to be a poor index of coherence or writing quality.

In another study, Connor (1984) examined the difference in the cohesive density in argumentative essays composed by two English native speaking writers and two advanced ESL writers (whose mother tongues were Japanese and Spanish). The participants were asked to write expository essays. Two L1 English postgraduate students holistically rated the six essays for coherence and reached 100% agreement in their



ranking. The essays were analysed in terms of the percentage of occurrences of cohesive devices they contained. Connor found that being cohesive, ESL texts might not be coherent, and that there was no difference in cohesive density (reference or conjunction) in essays composed by the English native speaker student and the ESL students. These results, however, contradict Witte and Faigley's (1981) findings that show differences in the frequencies of grammatical cohesive devices in good versus poor essays (see 2.2.9), but support Tierney and Mosenthal's (1983) conclusion that cohesive density did not discriminate levels of coherence in writing. In addition, Connor suggested that ESL essays lacked lexical variety and elaboration, and a high percentage of repetition and conjunction were used. On the other hand, L1 English texts exhibited greater lexical variety with a higher percentage of collocation and less repetition.

McCulley (1985) investigated the connection between cohesion and writing quality in his analysis of 120 argumentative essays composed by high school students. In this study, he attempted to find out whether there existed a correlation between primary trait ratings of writing quality, coherence ratings based on a scale provided by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1978-1979, and the use of cohesive devices in the student essays. Each essay was analysed in terms of cohesion by two coders using Halliday's and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy, and it was also rated on the basis of writing quality by two full-time teachers from the English Department. With a high level of interrater reliability regarding both cohesion and writing quality, the results obtained from the statistical analysis revealed that writing quality did not correlate with the total number of cohesive ties used in the essays. However, there was positive correlation between writing quality and the NAEP coherence rating, and between writing quality and specific cohesive ties including demonstratives, nominal substitution and ellipsis, repetition, synonymy, hyponymy and collocation.

It was obvious that McCulley (1985) attempted to resolve the conflicting results obtained by Witte and Faigley's (1981) (see 2.2.9) and those obtained by Tierney and Mosenthal's (1983) and Connor (1984) (see above). The significant differences he obtained from his study suggested that, with an adequately large sample size, and cohesion analysis was



conducted at the finest level of analysis, significant differences between good versus poor essays would be revealed. The results of his study also revealed that certain cohesive ties (e.g. demonstratives, nominal substitution and repetition) contributed to the positive assessment of writing quality, and suggested that lexical cohesive devices primarily made a more important contribution to coherence.

Neuner (1987) analysed twenty good essays versus twenty poor essays written by college freshman students. The essays, which were produced after instruction and practice, were of the expository mode and were randomly selected from a larger set of essays. Each of the selected essays was holistically rated by two readers, and cohesion analysis was conducted by three coders on each essay. *T*-tests were used to analyse the statistical distinction between the good essays and poor essays in terms of the use of cohesive devices, cohesive distance and chain length. Results revealed that the frequency or percentage of cohesive ties did not correlate with writing quality, and there was no significant difference in cohesive distance between good and poor essays. Longer cohesive chains, greater lexical variety, and effective word choice were essential features of well-written essays. The results obtained from Neuner's (1987) study account for the lack of difference in cohesive density in good versus poor essays.

In another study, Field and Oi (1992) compared the use of conjunction in argumentative essays composed by Australian high school students and Cantonese high school students. The essays were not rated for coherence or writing quality. *T*-tests were used to analyse the distinction in the use of conjunction in the essays composed by English native speaker students and non-native speaker students. Results showed that the L2 English essays contained significantly more conjunctions than did the L1 English texts. This finding contradicts Connor's (1984) finding that there was no significant difference in the use of cohesive devices in L1 in comparison to L2 texts.

P. Johnson (1992) analysed the use of cohesion in sixty essays. Twenty were written in L1 Malay, twenty in L1 English and twenty in Malay ESL. Two native English readers and one L1 Malay reader rated the essays written in English; one L1 English reader and



one L1 Malay reader rated the essays written in Malay. *T*-tests were used to analyse the distinction in the use of cohesive devices and cohesive distance between the good essays and the poor essays. Results showed that there was no significant difference in the degree of cohesion or cohesive distance between the good essays and the poor essays. Additionally, results revealed that the good L1 Malay essays contained more cohesive devices used for repetition than the poor ones. This finding advocated McCullen's (1985) conclusion that writing quality correlated with the use of repetition in expository essays. Also, it was found that more tokens of referential ties and conjunctive ties were located in well-written native English essays suggesting that there were differences in the use of cohesive devices with regard to specific types of cohesive ties. The result of Johnson's (1992) study indicated that good and poor essays might be similar in terms of the frequencies of cohesive devices but differ significantly in terms of specific types of cohesive devices they contained.

Norment's (1994) study analysed 126 expository and narrative essays written in L1 Chinese and Chinese ESL in terms of the use of cohesive devices. The participants consisted of high-proficiency and low-proficiency writers divided up into groups according to their scores on the essays produced within a four-week period. The L1 Chinese and Chinese ESL essays written by L1 Chinese college students were randomly selected and rated by three L1 Chinese and three L1 English doctoral students who received training on rating essays. Frequencies and percentage of occurrences of cohesive devices and ANOVA were used to analyse the data. With a high level of interrater reliability, results showed that high-proficiency students (both Chinese and English) used more cohesive devices in their writing; the most frequently occurring cohesive devices were repetition, pronouns and conjunction.

In the most recent study, Lee (2002) conducted a classroom inquiry in which she provided instruction of coherence to first-year students at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The participants completed the pre- and post-revision tasks which were analysed in terms of cohesive devices, information structure, topical development, propositional relations, macrostructure and metadiscoursal features. Four out of the 16



participants conducted six protocols while they were revising their drafts. The protocol data were translated, transcribed and coded with the coding scheme that contained categories including the coherence topics covered in the lessons and any other topics that arose from the data (i.e. purpose, main idea, audience, context of situation, macrostructure, information distribution, propositions, cohesion, metadiscourse, content, language use, syntax, mechanics and length). Inter-coder agreement was conducted with 90% agreement being reached. All the 16 students were also asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the study to assess the instruction of coherence throughout the course. A group interview was conducted with the four students selected for in-depth protocol analysis to find out their views regarding the teaching and learning of coherence and writing.

In Lee's (2002) study, results revealed all positive findings from all types of data: product, process and perception data. Firstly, regarding the product data, based on the findings from topical structure analysis, in post-revision texts, the participants elaborated on the sentence topics more than the pre-revision texts and produced coherent writing. The results of the independent readers' judgments of the pre- and post-revision drafts also suggested that the participants improved the overall coherence after revisions. Secondly, based on the findings from the protocol data, the results suggested that during the study, the participants were concerned with coherence during revision and attended to the various aspects of coherence taught prior to revisions. Finally, based on the findings from the perception data, the results showed that the participants apparently had developed a better understanding of writing and felt that the teaching of coherence had provided them with resources useful for their writing.

All in all, a study of cohesion, though theoretical in nature, can provide significant insights for applied linguistics, especially in language teaching. Despite drawbacks and criticisms, it is a useful tool to encourage second language learners to produce texts that are well connected and coherent. Cohesion can help student writers to avoid producing a discursive or unorganised text. Because most non-native student writers are quite concerned about grammar and syntactic errors in their writing, the teaching of cohesion

will enhance their understanding that writing a text is not simply writing with syntactic accuracy. They should develop awareness towards writing as a means of communication and, through explicit instruction, teacher feedback and essay revision, learn to craft reader-based, well-organised prose. Lessons on cohesive ties can raise students' consciousness and give them insights into how they can express their thoughts with clear directions and create their text in an effective manner. Then feedback focusing on the use of cohesive ties will encourage and consolidate L2 students' learning of cohesion, and through the revision process, students should be able to improve their writing skill, particularly with regard to cohesion.

### **2.3 Perspectives and Studies on Instructed Second Language Acquisition**

Cognitive psychology has brought about debates over the role of explicit versus implicit language learning and the question as to whether such learning occurs through the conscious processing of information or through unconscious processes when people are exposed to language input (Bialystok: 1994; N. Ellis: 1994). Krashen (1981) claimed that formal instruction does a little to promote language acquisition; it is natural exposure that contributes more significantly to language learning and acquisition. Formal grammar instruction is believed to enable language learners to learn explicit rules of grammar and not to use language forms correctly, and that an interface between these two types of knowledge did not exist as they were different systems in the brain.

Evidence from studies on the first language acquisition led to the claim that if formal instruction is not necessary for L1 learners to learn languages, it is not necessary for L2 learners as well (Krashen: 1981). Similar notions were also applied to Universal Grammar (UG) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It was argued that "if UG is accessible to learners, then L2 learning, like L1 learning, occurs mainly through the interaction of UG principles with input" (Nassaji and Fotos: 2004).

Current research in SLA, however, has resulted in the reevaluation of grammar in the L2 classroom. First of all, Schmidt (1990, 1993) suggests that "noticing," his theory



involving conscious attention to form, is a necessary condition for language learning. Noticing or awareness of target forms plays a crucial role in L2 learning (Bialystok: 1994; N. Ellis: 2002; R. Ellis: 2002). Because it has been agreed that language learners are unable to process target language input for both meaning and form concurrently, they need to notice or become aware of target forms in input. However, learners tend to process target input for meaning only and fail to attend to specific forms, thus leading to failure to process and acquire them.

Furthermore, there has been empirical evidence that L2 learners pass through developmental sequences. Pienemann (1984) developed *teachability hypothesis*, which posits that developmental sequences can result through instruction if the teaching of language features is compatible with the L2 learner's readiness to the next developmental stage of language proficiency (Lightbown, 2000). This hypothesis suggests that while certain developmental sequences are not subject to alteration through formal instruction, other structures can be learned through teaching any time they are taught. Regardless of age, certain structures can never be taught.

Due to a large body of research revealing the inadequacies of teaching approaches emphasising meaning-focused communication, form-focused grammar instruction received renewed interest. Extensive research by Swain and other researchers indicated that the students in French immersion programme did not achieve accuracy in certain grammatical forms, even though they had undergone long periods of exposure to meaningful input (Nassaji and Fotos, 2004).

Moreover, evidence from a large number of laboratory and classroom-based studies show the positive effects of grammar instruction. For example, Lightbown and Spada (1990; 1993) investigated the effects of explicit instruction on the development of certain forms in the target language and their results revealed the positive effects. Nassaji and Swain (2000) also studied the effects of corrective feedback on L2 learner errors and found significant positive effects on learners' accuracy. In addition, Norris and Ortega (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on the effectiveness of L2 instruction. While

explicit instruction includes presenting rules for a structure, describing and exemplifying the structure in focus, implicit instruction usually consists of communicative exposure to the target form and the deduction of grammar rules is needed. The study revealed that explicit instruction contributed to substantial, durable learning of target language structures when compared to implicit instruction.

However, there exists controversy over the relative importance of explicit grammar instruction. This is mainly due to the complicated relationship between teaching and learning; that is, the way something is taught is not directly related to the way it is learned. Krashen (1993), for instance, describes the effects of grammar instruction as “peripheral and fragile” (725) as he does not advocate explicit instruction in language acquisition. He contends that teaching explicit knowledge about grammatical structures may never lead to the acquisition of implicit knowledge, which underlies unconscious language comprehension and production. Truscott (1996) also strongly disapproves of explicit instruction, asserting that its effects are short-term and superficial; also, grammar instruction alone may not enhance genuine knowledge of language.

Even some advocates of explicit grammar instruction suggested that although form-focused instruction results in learning, it may not directly lead to implicit knowledge or to immediate changes in the learner’s interlanguage (R. Ellis, 2002). Though not rejecting the value of explicit instruction, N. Ellis (2002) suggests that language learning requires extended, continuous practice that cannot be achieved through the instruction of a few declarative grammar rules (175).

Despite the negative views against grammar instruction, it is suggested that learners can use instructed forms as part of their interlanguage system (Nassaji and Fotos, 2004). Learners are provided with opportunities to relate form and meaning in their production of language. According to Spada (1997), formal instruction which focuses on communicative exposure to grammar features helps learners develop their awareness towards linguistic forms and use them more accurately in future. R. Ellis (2002) suggests that with extensive grammar instruction that is sustained over a long period of time,



learners' implicit knowledge can be developed as measured by performance on free production tasks, and forms that are quite difficult for L2 learners can also be enhanced. Current research stresses the importance of instructed grammar forms through meaningful communication used as intervention in a task-based communicative curriculum (R. Ellis, 2003). According to Skehan (1998), explicit instruction provides input that facilitates "noticing" by raising awareness of specific language features, and the more frequent a salient language form is instructed or reiterated, the more opportunities for noticing exist.

In conclusion, current research indicates that L2 learners need opportunities to encounter and produce grammatical structures which can be taught explicitly or introduced implicitly through frequent exposure. Form-focused explicit instruction, even though it does not guarantee learning or acquisition, is still necessary so that learners' consciousness can be raised and, through extensive practice, their use of forms can improve. Cohesive ties, which are concrete forms in texts, should be introduced through explicit instruction and feedback in a way that promotes form-meaning relationships. With the influence of cultural rhetorical and discourse traditions in L2 writing, extensive and persistent instruction in L2 grammar and the complex feature of L2 texts are required (Hinkel, 2002). In addition, according to Hinkel (2002), instruction in L2 writing should include explicit instruction on grammar, lexical forms and rhetorical patterns as exemplified by authentic text and discourse, and grammar should not be treated separately from the teaching of writing. In the recent approaches to grammar, therefore, emphasis is placed on the need for provision of extensive exposure to, as well as focus on, the target forms to promote their acquisition.

## **2.4 Process-oriented Writing Approach**

The word "process" first appeared in the first language composition literature during the early twentieth century. This concept can be explained briefly as individual-centred liberal progressivism (Susser: 1994). Dewey (1938), who introduced and described the notion that learning is a "process" and learning occurs by doing, proposed that "learning



must be rooted in conditions of experience and arouse an active quest for information and new ideas” (97). He also introduced progressive models to a traditional school structure. Progressive education involved an aggressive reform movement that was determined to make a significant change in American education, which had been dominated by the traditional intellectual concept which strongly and continuously emphasised standardised and objective knowledge. Therefore, Dewey’s educational philosophy and practice mainly contributed to the shifting of “the center of gravity;” that is, the shifting from the teacher, the textbook, and so on to the child. He was a proponent of student-centered schools whose emphasis was placed on the interests of students and on the concept of learning by doing. In other words, teaching must ensure the benefits to be gained by students and must invoke both creativity and reflection on the results of teaching.

Another learning theory was formulated by Vygotsky (1978), who posits that social interaction is a prerequisite for learning. Vygotsky introduced several key concepts that explained the ways in which the social world contributes to learners’ thinking. Related to Vygotsky’s (1978) theory, learning can occur by means of social activity within the learner’s *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*. The concept of ZPD is based on the insight that when learners are assisted and guided by other people with respect to a difficult task, the learners can often think in more advanced ways than if they had to complete the whole task themselves (Vygotsky, 1978). ZPD is defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (86). The essence of this concept and its significance for ESL instruction lie in the relatively different perspective that is obtained by contrasting a student’s performance alone with his or her performance in collaborative activity. Therefore, learning occurs whenever communicative regulation (inter-psychological state) is transformed into thinking-based regulation (intra-psychological state); that is, learning is the genuine internalisation of social interactional processes and hence their transformation into cognitive processes (Vygotsky, 1978).



Vygotsky (1978) emphasised that human learning was always mediated through other people such as parents, peers, and teachers. So as to accommodate their interactions with each other and with their social contexts, humans use *cultural tools* (e.g. speech and computers). These originally social tools were used initially by humans to communicate with others and subsequently to mediate their interactions with themselves to help them think. In other words, humans internalise the use of these language tools and artifacts. This concept is based on the assumption that thought is “inner speech,” which can be learned through direct verbal communications with other people and then it can be internalised into silent conversations with the speakers themselves. Writing can be said to evolve from such inner speech, or thought, into external social speech.

Bruffee (1984) further developed the Vygotskian perspective on thought and language. He contended that thought, writing, and talk were closely connected. According to him, thought is “internalised public and social talk,” and writing is “internalised conversation re-externalised” (641). In this sense, peer review or peer feedback is useful as it can provide social context in which students can share ideas verbally and subsequently internalise the process of writing and revision. From a Vygotskian perspective, therefore, a major role of schooling is to create social contexts so that learners can master and develop conscious awareness of the use of cultural tools.

*Social scaffolding*, a learning theory formulated by Wood et al. (1976), is analogous to the process by which buildings are constructed. Scaffolds are metal structures usually built next to a building so that workmen, standing on them, can work high above the ground while constructing the basic structures of buildings. The complete basic structures can support the workers and then the scaffolding can be removed. In social scaffolding, in the like manner, more capable learners can provide themselves with a temporary framework that helps them to think, reflect and contemplate in more advanced ways with support. Then, after a while at this higher level, learners can work at the higher level without the external support. When learning is an intentional act, or requires efforts, scaffolding provides a frame within which a learner can learn.

In summary, these views on learning enable us to understand the nature of learning and interactions of learners and between a teacher and learners when they are involved in an experiential activity. Thus they form the theoretical framework for the understanding and discussion of the process approach to writing, in which feedback from teachers and from peers play a crucial role during the revision processes.

#### **2.4.1 Paradigm Shift in First Language Writing**

In the early 1970s, a new approach to writing emerged from research in cognitive psychology. Emig (1971) performed case studies to investigate the composing process of young students as a new ground in writing research. To achieve her main research objective, she initiated the “think-aloud protocol” technique for gathering information about student writing processes. In her study, she met each student four times and, in an interview, inquired and investigated his or her writing process and made observations as each student composed aloud while writing. Her innovative research study revealed some basic differences between “extensive” writing and “reflexive” writing. While “extensive” writing was defined as the type of writing assigned by the teacher, “reflexive” writing was defined as the type of writing which allowed students to make choices of their topics. The results of her study revealed that students generally wrote with their teachers as audience, that prewriting resulted in longer reflexive writing than extensive writing, that little contemplation was provided for the finished product but more revision was performed in reflexive writing, and evaluation of extensive writing was based on surface criteria. One of her most significant observations was that writing was not produced in a straightforward linear sequence as proposed in the traditional paradigm. Rather, writers produced an essay in a recursive process. The findings reflected the cognitive aspect of the writing act and focused on the use of the process approach.

Researchers’ interest in the process approach shifted from the written product to the writing process. Perl (1979), Pianko (1979) and Sommers (1980) are examples of researchers who looked at the composing processes of basic student writers to find out about problems that they faced as they composed. Perl (1979) studied the composing



processes of unskilled college writers. She attempted to develop a method of operationalising the composing process as a sequence of observable behaviours. Perl used the think-aloud protocol during the students' composing process. Using her own research instruments, she described the student moves during the composing process and then coded each perceivable behaviour and charted it on a continuum. The results of her study indicated that the EFL writers did not concentrate much on prewriting activities; they spent only a few minutes working on prewriting. Perl found that these students were not able to prolong their thoughts while composing and tended to interrupt their own thinking, leading to "truncated writing process" (321). Furthermore, it was found that writers attempted to use language to clarify meaning during the complicated act of writing. Her findings advocated the view towards writing as a recursive process and also revealed how editing became the predominant activity and how writers did not attend to the global discourse.

Pianko (1979) investigated the composing processes of college freshmen writers, who were classified according to class status, age and gender. Each student was required to complete one writing assignment per week over a five-week period. These EFL writers were asked to compose essays of description, narration, persuasion and argumentation. Observations and videotaping were made on each individual participant at least once during the five-week period while he or she was composing. She obtained a number of interesting findings from this study. Among those was the fact that the writers did not attend to the prewriting stage, spending less than two minutes on this process. Similar to Perl's (1979) study reported above, the students in Pianko's (1979) study did not concentrate on the prewriting process and focused more on editing for language. The most important finding in this study involved differences between traditional and remedial students. In contrast to remedial students, traditional freshmen paused more while composing, performed more prewriting activities, and were able to reflect more on their products than their counterparts.

Sommers (1980) compared the revising strategies of 20 college freshmen and 20 experienced writers. The writers produced three drafts and were interviewed after each



draft was completed. The findings of her study revealed that experienced writers attended to overall meaning and produced more effectively at the discourse level. On the other hand, inexperienced writers attended to meaning only at the sentential level and did not focus on meaning at the discourse level. It seemed that the inexperienced college writers regarded writing as a linear process of translating thoughts onto the page without any need for reformulation. They tended to avoid repeating key ideas and tried to discard lexical repetition by substitution or deletion, whereas experienced writers regarded repetition as a cue to identify problems at a deeper level and tried to strengthen their own writing.

Another theory of composing is the cognitive process theory proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981), whose model attempts to reveal how writers perform complicated and recursive mental acts during the general stages of composing. Three major elements in this model include the writer's long-term memory, the task environment and the writing processes. Each of these components is defined primarily by the elements it is composed of. Each component affects and is affected by the other components. The written text is produced through planning, translating and reviewing through the operational stages during the writing process. These stages are managed by a control mechanism called *monitor*. Finally, during the planning stage, there exist three subcomponents—generating ideas, organising information and setting goals. Subsequently, in the actual text production, the ideas generated and derived through planning are translated into language and then reviewed and revised by the writer.

This theory of the writing process brought about extensive research using protocol analysis. It also drew criticism regarding assumptions on which the theory was based. For instance, Cooper and Holzman (1985) criticised Flower and Hayes's model as being inadequate as it apparently ignored a broad range of activities that writers engage in during the writing process. According to the researchers, writers were unlikely to have the same processing preferences and possess the same cognitive abilities. Rather, writing is involved with a number of processing-model options, and different writers will approach a writing task employing different processing strategies.



The methodology of Flower and Hayes's model was also criticised. The protocol analysis approach was considered an invalid methodology for the study of the writing process. As an example, Cooper and Holzman (1983, 1985) and Dobrin (1986) described some excerpted protocols as being too disciplined or lacking in affective tone. They also claimed that the protocol analysis was neither methodologically appropriate nor carefully controlled. Besides, the research setting was also criticised. Even though the participants were encouraged and willing to share the authentic steps in their composing processes, there are normally Hawthorne effects as a result of the laboratory situation. According to Kantor, Kirby and Goetz (1981), ecological validity was the major concern in laboratory experiments of composition writing. They suggested that ethnography would be more methodologically appropriate than an experimental design so that the artificiality would be avoided and replaced by thick descriptions of contextual phenomena, based mainly on data collected through participation observation.

The critics (e.g. Cooper: 1986; Faigley: 1986; Kantor, Kirby and Goetz: 1981; Witte: 1992) of Flower and Hayes's cognitive model of the writing process contended that writing was a context-based cognitive process and that the social context was very important. Therefore, the writing purpose needed to be defined according to a particular context so that a notion is applicable in the classroom as it is in the real world. Writing should be interpreted from the perspective of the social context and not as a product of a single individual.

In summary, writing had been considered to be a mechanical activity in which writers would express their ideas in a particular format. However, this view of writing was changed. Rather than a format-driven activity which students engaged in simply by crafting products, writing came to be viewed as a creative activity that accommodated the discovery of meaning. In addition, students received more attention with respect to their writing processes. The new focus, therefore, emphasised EFL/ESL student writers' writing processes and composition research in classroom contexts.

## **2.4.2 Research on the Second Language Writing Process**

In the following section are research studies that have addressed similar research questions or have been similarly designed. There are four main perspectives involving these studies: (1) research focusing on comparisons of the writing processes of first language and second language writers, (2) research focusing on the use of the first language in the L2 writing process, (3) research focusing on second language writing instruction, and (4) research focusing on feedback in second language writing.

### **2.4.2.1 Studies on Similarities and Differences between First Language and Second Language Writing Processes**

There has been a trend toward employing the strategies of first language writing instruction in the teaching of second language writing. This notion has emerged from the implicit assumption that second language writing is similar to first language writing in nature. Zamel (1982) was the first researcher to discover that the writing processes of her ESL student writers were like those of the subjects described in first language studies. She concluded that L2 composing processes suggested that L1 process-oriented writing instruction might also be effective for teaching second language writing. Zamel's (1983) study of six advanced L2 students lent support to the claim that L2 writers compose in a manner similar to their L1 counterparts. She found that unskilled L2 writers performed like unskilled L1 writers and that the lack of composing competence in the first language was reflected in learners' L2 writing ability.

However, there were several researchers (Arndt: 1987; Campbell: 1990; Raimes: 1983a, 1985, 1987) who believed that L1 writing and L2 writing are different. Raimes (1985) compared inexperienced ESL writers and inexperienced L1 writers. She analysed the composing processes of eight of her ESL students in an ESL course. The subjects, composing orally while writing two different narrative texts, were interviewed after they had finished each essay. The results indicated that her subjects' writing ability did not correspond to their language competence, a recurring finding in second language writing



research. Based on her observations, she found that most of her subjects had very little planning before or during the writing stage, a behaviour similar to that of unskilled L1 and L2 writers (Perl: 1979; Zamel; 1983). She also found that her subjects were primarily concerned with putting their ideas about a topic down on paper, paid less attention to revision and editing than she had expected, and were not as concerned with accuracy as had been thought. In addition, in another study, Raimes (1985) found that her subjects wrote more, displayed more commitment to the writing task, and produced more content while paying less attention to errors than Perl's (1979) subjects. Raimes used a writing task that Pianko (1979) had used in her study and adapted Perl's (1979) coding scheme to analyse the protocols derived from the composing-aloud sessions.

Based on her further study, Raimes (1987) concluded that L2 and L1 writers were different in that L2 writers put their efforts in editing and correcting their work (458). She then asserted that there were differences between L1 and L2 writers although similarities between them also existed. Therefore, she suggested adaptations be made for L2 writing instruction, rather than the complete adoption of L1 writing instruction in L2 writing classes. Her findings revealed that the act of L2 writing is somehow different from that of L1 writing, and that the two processes may also be similar in certain ways.

Like Raimes, Arndt (1987) found that there were slight differences between L1 and L2 writing processes, especially with respect to vocabulary. Using Perl's (1979) analysis scheme, Arndt discovered that the writers as a group demonstrated very different writing processes, and that these processes were not related to the writers' level of writing proficiency. According to Arndt's findings, L2 writers needed more help with the demands of writing-as-text.

Campbell (1990) was another researcher who investigated the differences between L1 and L2 writers. In Campbell's (1990) study, both the products and the composing processes of L1 and L2 writers were examined. It was found that L2 writers paid less attention to planning and depended more on reading than L1 writers.

To summarise, the early research on L2 writing processes focused on the similarities between L1 and L2 writing. Researchers, therefore, adopted L1 teaching strategies for the teaching of L2 writing. In the more recent research, however, the differences between L1 and L2 writing have received more attention than the similarities between them (Silva: 1997). Researchers have also examined factors that affect L2 writing processes, such as the use of the first language in the instruction of second language writing.

#### **2.4.2.2 The Use of a First Language in Second Language Writing**

Besides language competence, other factors also affect the development of L2 writing. One of these factors is the use of L1 in L2 writing. Lay (1982), in her study of the writing processes of L2 writers, analysed her subjects' writing and recorded in audiotapes composing-aloud protocols of four adults, Chinese-speaking ESL students. She also conducted interviews with her subjects in regard to their writing backgrounds and current attitudes toward writing. While composing in the second language, Lay's subjects included their native language into their second language writing processes. This study indicated that when more native language switches occurred during the composing processes, "the essays were of better quality in terms of ideas, organisation, and details" (406) in comparison to the same compositions without native language switches. Additionally, native language switches can be induced by some writing topics (406). According to Lay's (1982) study, therefore, the use of a first language plays a positive role in second language writing.

Friedlander (1990) studied the role of L1 use in L2 writing, particularly with regard to generating content. His study indicated that ESL learners who used their first language in planning could plan better and produce essays of better quality. Furthermore, Friedlander's data indicated that translating did not constrain writers, either in time or quality, as they produced L2 texts.

Cumming (1987 as cited in Krapels: 1990) studied the L1 use of all six of his Francophone Canadian adult subjects as they generated content for their three tasks:



personal, expository, and academic writing. Cumming's data included composing-aloud tapes, observational notes taken during the students' writing, external raters' holistic evaluation of the subjects' first language writing expertise, and subjects' performances on an ESL proficiency test. Based on Cumming's observation, while the inexperienced L2 writers consistently used their first language to generate ideas, the expert writers used their first language both to generate content and revise style, particularly with regard to diction.

Zamel (1982) investigated the influence of L1 writing processes on L2 writing processes. In her study, while most of her subjects did not depend on translation as they composed in English, the most proficient subject of all her eight subjects, who was a postgraduate student, incorporated translation into her L2 writing process.

#### **2.4.2.3 Second Language Writing Instruction and Second Language Writing Studies on the Process-oriented Approach**

From the 1940s to the 1970s, structural linguistics and behavioral psychology had a great influence on language learning (Raimes: 1983a). Sentence structure and the sound system of the target language were the main focuses of the language teaching syllabuses. Most traditional methods of teaching ESL writing developed from the teaching of grammar (Kelly: 1984). Writing was not viewed as a goal of language learning but rather as an adjunct of grammar, as well as syntactic correction. Activities involving writing included copying sentences, dictation, and translation.

In the 1960s, audio-lingual methods were introduced as a new means of language instruction. The primary focus of these methods was on oral communication and the goal of writing instruction was to reinforce structural drills. The most widespread method for teaching writing was controlled composition. Practice on changing tense forms or completing unfinished sentences was believed to improve students' writing skills. Audio-lingual practitioners believed that oral competence would automatically lead to writing competency (Richards and Rodgers: 1986).

In the 1970s writing began to be viewed as a communicative skill rather than a language skill; as a result, language educators focused more on writing-based writing instruction (Reid: 1993). Influenced by the studies on L1 writing, ESL writing instruction emphasised the rhetorical modes in academic writing, e.g. cause-effect and comparison/contrast. ESL writing teachers then believed that good writing was that which conformed to a predetermined ideal model. Models for writing were extracted from works created by famous and well-known writers. In this approach, writing was a form of imitating different rhetorical modes, and there was an emphasis on error-free sentences and the final written product. ESL writing teachers believed that models provided powerful input, and large amounts of 'self-motivated' reading, rather than the teaching of writing skills, were believed to provide plenty of comprehensible input and enhance the skill of writing more effectively (Krashen: 1985 as cited in R. Ellis: 1990). However, this model approach was not very effective and became less popular as L2 writing teachers and researchers began to question the amount of input that was absorbed and used by students in their writing, although it still appears in some ESL textbooks (Kelly: 1984).

Another major approach to ESL writing is a functional-notional approach. That is, the texts designed for teaching ESL writing to advanced students look at the typical language functions that college students will encounter in their writing tasks, which include defining, classifying, comparing and contrasting, describing processes, expressing purpose, and explaining cause and effect. The theoretical assumption behind this approach is that language functions occur in all disciplines. However, the emphasis of this approach is on form and the final product of writing rather than the process of writing.

During the 1980s, the focus on the product-oriented approach to teaching was shifted to the process-oriented approach. This new view of teaching writing emerged from research on how people actually write. The process-oriented writing approach was initially taught to native speakers so as to promote students' thinking and self-expression (Raimes: 1983a). In this approach, writing is a complex, recursive and creative process. By the late



1980s, the teaching of writing using the process approach became the mainstream of ESL writing instruction.

The process-oriented writing approach has also been adopted in Asian settings recently. Several studies focused on how Asian teachers and students in various settings responded to the process approach to writing. The findings of these studies revealed mixed effects.

Brock (1994) used teacher diary data to study the process of change and reaction to change of Hong Kong secondary school teachers. From his study, it was found that the ESL teachers resisted to the implementation of the process approach due to structural and environmental constraints they encountered, e.g. large class size, pressures from the public examination, and cultural problems.

In another study, Pennington, Brock and Yule (1996) investigated ESL secondary school students' reactions to the process-oriented writing approach implemented by their English teacher, a native speaker of Cantonese. Responses to questionnaires revealed varied reactions to the lesson units across eight classes of Cantonese-speaking students. Two groups of academic high achievers from all-girl classes evaluated the experience positively, whereas two groups of low achievers from mixed-gender classes evaluated it negatively. The other four classes gave mixed evaluations of the experience. In the two classes in which the students' response was positive, the English teacher had fully adopted the process approach by integrating elements of the process writing into an overall teaching routine. On the other hand, in the two classes where the students' response was negative, the teacher focused on traditional language exercises and grammatical accuracy and elements of the process approach were not effectively integrated into the teachers' instruction. The results from these studies exhibit the diversity among teachers' and students' varied attitudes towards change.

There have also been several studies on the implementation of the process-oriented writing approach in tertiary Asian settings. Both positive and negative responses to the process approach were reported. Jones (1995) investigated how Chinese college ESL

students in Taiwan responded to the process-oriented writing approach taught in business writing classes over a two-year period. Like Brock (1994), Jones found that the majority of his 60 participants preferred the traditional teacher-centred methods of teaching and were not satisfied with peer editing activities and keeping journals.

However, positive effects of the process-oriented approach were found in studies concerning tertiary Asian settings. Tyson (2000) conducted action research with Korean college students in writing classes at two major universities in South Korea over a period of four years. Using questionnaires, students' reflective writings, and other ethnographical techniques, he found that the process-oriented writing approach motivated the students to create longer and more effective essays with more confidence. The subjects found some process-based techniques useful. These techniques included prewriting activities, writing multiple drafts, peer editing and self-editing. In addition, the instructor's comments on early drafts that focus more on content and organisation than on grammar, and group activities which encourage interaction and sharing of ideas among students were conducive to the development of the students' writing.

In summary, studies on the adoption of the process-oriented writing approach in ESL classes have shown positive effects of the approach when a first language was used. Recent studies carried out in Asian settings have revealed mixed results in the context of ESL/EFL writing education.

## **2.5 Revision in the Process-oriented Writing Approach**

Since the 1960s, the new trend in teaching and researching writing has brought about a shift in pedagogical approaches and research focus from the product-oriented approach to process-oriented approach to writing. Initially, this new approach received attention from teachers and researchers of L1 writing and its composing processes (Ferris and Hedgcock: 1998; Raimes: 1985). Later in the 1980s, there was a heightened interest in the composing processes of L2 writers (Silva: 1989). The new paradigm in teaching writing emerged with an emphasis on the writing process, rather than a product. As stated



by Zamel (1982: 196), “before we know how to teach writing, we must first understand how we write.” Writing teachers were encouraged to pay more attention to the process of writing so that student writers can develop essential thinking skills vital for effective communication (Susser: 1994). Despite the fact that research on and pedagogical approaches to L2 writing were developed through insights from L1 writing studies (Kroll: 1997), differences between first and second language composing processes exist, and these differences are embedded largely within the nature of the complexity of L2 writers and texts (Leki: 1992).

### **2.5.1 Revision as a Stage of Process-oriented Writing**

In the process-oriented approach, writing is seen as a recursive process which consists of prewriting, writing, and revision. Of all these stages, revision can be regarded as the major and most important stage of process writing as it is usually through the revising process that student writing can be improved with the help of various types of feedback. Revision, according to Reid (1993: 233), literally means “seeing again”, and “revision seems to be an essential component of virtually every attempt to construct a model of the writing process” (Barlett: 1982: 345). Because writing is essentially recursive, revision may take place at any point during the composing process (Flower and Hayes: 1981), where writers generate, reformulate, and refine ideas in an attempt to discover and approximate intended meanings (Zamel: 1982, 1983). In addition, writers process revisions internally through mental operations and externally through actual text changes (Bridwell: 1981; Sommers: 1980). During the revising stage, writers make both local and global alterations to their texts. As noted by Nold (1979, as cited in Fitzgerald, 1987):

[Revision] is not just correcting the lexicographic and syntactic infelicities of written prose...It also includes (1) changing the meaning of the text in response to a realisation that the original intended meaning in somehow faulty or false or weak..., (2) adding or substituting meaning to clarify the originally intended meaning or following more closely the intended form or genre of the text..., (3) making grammatical sentences more readable by deleting, reordering, and restating..., as well as (4) correcting errors of diction, transcription and syntax that nearly obscure intended meaning or that are otherwise unacceptable in the grapholect (483).



Therefore, revision plays a crucial part in the composing process, enabling writers to rework their crafts throughout the entire writing process. During the revision process, writers can perceive and detect dissonance between their intended meanings and actual written output. They can operate revision at the level of mental processing as well as at the level of alterations made to texts. These alterations involve both meaning and content modifications, and grammatical and lexical corrections.

### **2.5.2 Studies on Second Language Revisions**

Early research in L2 writing was largely obtained from the inquiry into students' composing processes. For instance, Zamel (1982) studied the composing processes of eight case studies of L2 writers, who were identified as "proficient" university students as they passed all ESL writing courses and were successfully completing the writing assignments in university-level content area. Zamel collected data from her retrospective interviews with the students; specifically, she asked her subjects questions about their composing processes. The data revealed that the students produced multiple drafts and made both meaning-based and surface-based changes. The interviews also revealed that the students paid more attention to meaning early in the revision process before moving towards superficial revisions at the subsequent stages of writing. It was also found in this study that the students' initial drafts contained several paragraphs that were removed and revised, and the students proofread and polished texts as they were producing the final drafts of their writing.

In another study, Zamel (1983) examined the composing process of advanced ESL students who had completed a freshman composition class and were then enrolled in an intermediate composition class. She found from her data, derived from her case study methodology, that her advanced ESL students operated revisions throughout their composing processes. This confirmed the non-linearity in the process-oriented writing approach, in which revisions may be recurrent. In addition, from her advanced student group, which consisted of more skilled and less skilled writers, Zamel also found that the more skilled student writers were aware of the significance of revision for meaning and



therefore started their revisions early, while among the less skilled writers, the least skilled student mainly paid attention to correcting surface minor errors as this phase and made only slight revisions to improve meaning.

Dissimilar to Zamel, Raimes (1985) employed the think-aloud protocols in her study of the composing processes of unskilled ESL writers. She found, surprisingly, that her student writers apparently were not attentive to superficial grammatical errors but were more attentive to ideas to be presented in their writing. Even though the findings reflected her false expectation regarding the unskilled writers' revision process, she believed that these unskilled ESL students were less attentive to surface revisions because they were not threatened by the thought of error as they were aware that, as language learners, they would inevitably produce errors and use the target language imperfectly.

Raimes (1987) conducted a further study in which she investigated both the writing processes and written products of eight ESL student writers in remedial and non-remedial courses. In this study, she examined the students' writing processes using the think-aloud protocols and examined students' written products using Perl's (1979) analysis scheme. The findings pertaining to the students' revisions mirrored much of the results reported in her previous studies (1985). It was found that the student writers made more meaning and content revisions than surface revisions, and they were found to have revised and edited their compositions while attempting to generate and refine ideas. In terms of the differences between revisions made by remedial and non-remedial students, Raimes reported that the non-remedial students performed more revisions and editing than the remedial students did.

### **2.5.3 L2 Revision Research on Factors Affecting Students' Revisions**

In addition to the studies concerning second language revision processes and strategies described above, some researchers incorporated an investigation of factors affecting L2 students' revisions in their studies.

As an example, Porte (1996) investigated revision strategies employed by 15 native Spanish-speaking student writers, who had a low proficiency of English. Using Faigley and Witte's (1981) taxonomy of revisions, the researcher analysed the students' essays and subsequently conducted post-writing interviews to examine "self-imposed" and "context-imposed" restrictions on their revisions. Porte found that while these underachievers made meaning-based revisions, they also tended to revise their writing with respect to superficial features to a great extent, findings contradicting those reported by Raimes (1985). In this study, Porte also presented some possible factors affecting the students' revisions, including the students' and the instructors' awareness towards the importance of writing features in second language writing and the students' experience regarding learning in their writing classes

In another study, Porte (1997) investigated factors affecting L2 revisions performed by 71 native Spanish-speaking students, who were college writers with a low proficiency of English. Porte gathered data from his semi-structured interviews with the students, enquiring about what they experienced in earlier revising activities, how they perceived the revision process, how they ranked various surface and content features in the revision process, and how the way they ranked those features did not meet the expectations of a teacher from their previous experience. From this study, Porte found that most of the EFL students seemed to regard revision as a means of making surface changes. In addition, he found that few of the students had been explicitly instructed how to revise their drafts in their previous writing experience. Some other interesting findings in Porte's (1997) study are that most of the students believed that their performance was mainly evaluated on the basis of grammatical accuracy, that the student writers considered vocabulary and content as significant components in their essays, and that the teacher would tend to correct grammar and vocabulary in their writing rather than make comments on content.

In summary, students' revisions were initially examined through the researchers' observation of the composing processes of L2 writers, and subsequently through the investigation of revisions as an independent process. Since then revisions across languages and possible factors affecting students' revisions have also been examined.



Subsequently, the investigations of students' revisions were not confined to advanced students but there have been studies that included both ESL and EFL contexts with students of different degrees of writing proficiency.

However, native English-speaking and second language student writers shared certain similarities and differences in terms of the learning of writing. Regarding L2 revision processes, highly proficient ESL/EFL writers were able to attend to revisions for meaning during an early stage and focused more on meaning-oriented revisions than on surface-oriented revisions. Nevertheless, although less-skilled or unskilled writers were found to revise more at the superficial level than the skilled writers, findings from some studies indicated that less-skilled or unskilled writers were also capable of meaning-based revision. Studies also reported that revising strategies could be transferred across languages and suggested that educational, cultural, and personal backgrounds played a crucial role in how student writers revised their drafts and how attentive they were to surface or meaning revisions. The contributing factors affecting the ways ESL/EFL writing students performed revisions varied across cultures and learning contexts.

## **2.6. Feedback in Second Language Writing**

Feedback plays a crucial role in L2 process-oriented writing. Though deemed as a valuable tool that promotes learning and writing skills, feedback on writing has brought either positive or negative effects on student writers. Research on feedback in writing has so far yielded mixed results with regard to the response to feedback.

### **2.6.1. Roles of Feedback in L2 Learning**

Feedback in L2 learning can be regarded as a type of input that provides both positive and negative effects on L2 learners (Sharwood Smith: 1991). There was considerable evidence from many empirical studies which suggest that comprehensible input (Krashen: 1985) seems inadequate for L2 adult learners in various contexts. Additionally, the need to communicate with native-like English proficiency is not the goal of learning.

Feedback plays an important role in helping learners use language more accurately. Chaudron (1988) provides numerous insights into how significant feedback would be to students' development. According to him, feedback should be delivered by the teacher to the student on a regular basis. Apart from linguistic accuracy, students' classroom behaviour and knowledge can also be developed through feedback delivery (Chaudron: 1988). Additionally, feedback can be used for improving learners' target language as well as other subject matter knowledge.

Negative feedback received attention by several researchers who believed that language learning may have been hindered by learners' lack of determination to learn and of an attempt to produce language precisely. Schmidt (1990), Swain (1995), and White (1987), for example, believed that negative feedback could be used to convey the message to the learners to let them know that their production of the target language was imprecise. Through negative feedback, learners should "notice" the difference between what they know and what they communicate or want to communicate so that they can acquire the target language more successfully. However, the role of negative feedback cannot be overestimated. As suggested by Long (1996), negative feedback should be employed to facilitate learners' L2 acquisition where "positive evidence will be insufficient" (430).

Many researchers showed particular interest in the impact of feedback on the acquisition of L2 and conducted research studies related to this issue. For example, Long et al. (1988) investigated the effects of "models" and "recasts" on the acquisition of some syntactic structures in Japanese and Spanish. In these experimental studies, a pre-test, post-test, and control group design was used. In the study focusing on the acquisition of some specific Japanese structures, the order of adjectives and a locative construction were examined, and 24 adult learners of Japanese who were enrolled in a Japanese course in a college were the participants in this study. In the study focusing on the acquisition of some specific Spanish structures, the adverb placement and the direct object topicalisation were studied, and 30 undergraduate volunteers from Spanish classes in a college were the participants in this study. In these two experimental studies, the treatments used included a language communication game and two communication tasks



respectively. In the Japanese-oriented study, an oral picture-description task was used as the pre-test and the post-test, whereas in the Spanish-oriented study, a grammaticality judgment task was added. The “model” and “recast” treatments in these studies of implicit feedback mainly differed in that in the former study, the students were allowed to produce an utterance before receiving the feedback, whereas in the latter study, the students were asked to repeat the correct utterances produced by the teacher. The findings from the Japanese-oriented study revealed that a few students from both experimental groups and the control group improved on their use of adjective ordering, and some students from the experimental groups improved on their use of a locative structure, whereas none of the students in the control group improved on the use of this structure. Nevertheless, scores the students received on the two target structures revealed that there was no significant difference between the two experiment groups, and that there was also no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. On the other hand, in the Spanish-oriented study, the post-test results showed that the two experimental groups gained significantly better scores than the control group regarding the adverb placement, even though the “recast” group performed significantly better than the “model” group in regard to this structure. However, there was no improvement in both groups regarding the direct object topicalisation. Additionally, more participants who received the “recast” treatment improved on the use of the adverb placement than those who received the “model” treatment. The participants in the control group, however, showed no improvement in the use of adverb placement. The results from these studies suggested that implicit feedback, to a certain degree, could facilitate L2 acquisition.

As another instance, Mackey and Philp (1998) reported a positive effect of “recasts”. In their experimental study, the effects of recasts on the production and development of question forms of L2 adult learners were investigated. The pre-test, post-test, and control group design was employed. Before the treatment, the pre-test was given using tasks the researchers had prepared. During the experimental period, three conversational tasks were completed between the participants and the researchers and research assistants for three days. After the treatment, the post-test, which was prepared in the same manner and

format as the pre-test, was administered during the week when the experiment ended. Two post-tests were also administered later: one in the following week after the first post-test and the other three weeks after the second post-test. The results revealed that the participants who were exposed to interaction with intensive recasts as their treatment could generate more target structures than those who were exposed to interaction without intensive recasts. Although this study showed the positive effects of this type of implicit feedback, the results suggested that recasts would be helpful only for learners who were ready to develop linguistically and then acquire the target structures.

### **2.6.2 Feedback in L2 Process-oriented Writing Approach**

Feedback plays a crucial role in developing students' writing skills in the process-oriented approach. Chaudron (1984) emphasises that feedback is important in that it helps writers to discover that "good writing involves an interaction between their ideas, the expression of the ideas, and their reader's perceptions and reactions to the expression" (2).

Feedback delivered for both L1 and L2 writing can take various forms depending on which mode of feedback is provided (e.g., written or oral), how the feedback is given (e.g., codes, error correction, audiotape, or conferencing), who provides the feedback (e.g., teacher, peer, or computer), and what the focus in feedback is (e.g., content and ideas, organization, or sentence-level errors). Campbell (1998) suggests that types of feedback to be delivered are determined by the stage of the writing process in which the student writer is, and that the decision to use one type or another is based on all of the intervening teaching circumstances.

### **2.6.3 Teacher Feedback and Peer Feedback**

A large amount of research has investigated the effects of teacher and peer feedback on students' language development. For instance, Chaudron (1984) compared the effects of teacher and peer feedback on students' language proficiency and examined the attitudes



toward these two types of feedback of ESL students who had different levels of language proficiency. Being implicit, teacher feedback guided the students to correct forms rather than giving a model. Teacher feedback in the study addressed problems such as grammar, mechanics, and content. For peer feedback, guided questions addressing linguistic and mechanical problems were used, and the students wrote about the benefits and drawbacks of their peers' writing. In this study, there was no significant difference between the two groups that received different methods of feedback. While the students did not improve their writing through revision, they apparently developed positive attitudes toward peer feedback even though they were not certain about its usefulness as a means of facilitating the revision of their writing.

Research on feedback can be divided into two major types: studies on teacher feedback and studies on peer feedback. The following section elaborates on teacher feedback and peer feedback respectively.

### **2.6.3.1 Teacher Feedback**

Teacher feedback may take one of the two major forms: teacher-student conferences and teachers' written feedback. While the former is less popular and therefore has not been of much interest to researchers, the latter is the most traditional method in responding to student writing and has been more commonly used; also, there has been considerable research into it. The results from research studies have revealed different results depending on the nature of the studies. In this section, only teachers' written feedback will be discussed.

#### **2.6.3.1.1 Negative Response to Teacher Written Feedback**

Early research studies have revealed some negative effects of teacher written feedback used in the process-oriented writing approach. First language researchers have attempted to find out why teachers' written feedback has failed to improve students' writing skills. Hillocks (1986) and Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) examined teachers' comments and

students' revisions and reported that teachers' written comments failed to improve students' subsequent revisions. This failure could have been attributed to teachers' ineffective comments which were too general or too specific and emphasised only surface features.

The results were similar in second language research studies. L2 writing still had errors even though ESL teachers had attempted to fix them by using written comments. Zamel (1985) analysed 15 teachers' written comments on 105 students' essays. She found that the teachers misinterpreted the students' texts and gave comments in such a way that their subsequent revised versions became less coherent. In addition, the teachers tended to focus on sentence level local errors and neglected the meaning-based problems. Many of the teachers' comments were vague and confusing.

Cohen (1987) studied the students' perceptions of teachers' feedback in relation to their subsequent actions. He found that 20 percent of the students in his study ignored the teachers' comments, particularly when they received a negative assessment. From his study, Cohen also found that the students had a limited repertoire of strategies to respond to the teachers' comments: most of them simply made a mental note of the comments. His findings suggested that inexperienced ESL students did not know how to make use of the teachers' comments when trying to revise their drafts.

Another factor that possibly leads to the failure of the teachers' feedback is the mismatch between students' and teachers' preferences for comments. Cohen (1987) and Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) reported that received more feedback on grammar while they in fact preferred to receive more feedback on content. Leki (1991a) also examined students' preferences for the types of feedback in their writing. She found that ESL students regarded error correction as being as important as revisions, and these students strongly wished that their grammatical errors had been marked by their teachers even though they showed a growing interest in content and organization. This revealed that these ESL students still had impractical expectations about feedback as they wished all errors to be marked and corrected by their teachers. This mistaken notion of equating revisions with



correcting surface errors and the unrealistic expectation for perfect grammar might lead to a lack of improvement in students' revisions.

#### **2.6.3.1.2 Positive Response to Teacher Written Feedback**

While earlier research provided primarily negative evidence regarding the effectiveness of teachers' feedback, more recent studies showed that teachers' feedback had a positive effect on students' writing proficiency and resulted in improvement in students' writing. Leki (1990) reported that ESL students valued teacher feedback and expected to receive feedback from their teachers. Zhang (1995) investigated various sources of feedback and found that teacher feedback was far more affectively beneficial than peer feedback and self-feedback. The results of her study showed that the affective advantage of peer feedback in L1 writing did not apply to L2 writing.

Ferris (1995) examined in detail students' reactions to teacher feedback and the relation between teachers' comments and students' revisions in a multiple-draft setting. From her earlier study, the students found the teacher feedback useful for their revision; that the students tended to carefully read their essays and respond to teacher comments on the initial drafts rather than on the final drafts; and that the percentage of the students who reexamined their papers according to teacher feedback was higher than that reported in Cohen's study (1987). Ferris's later study (1997) examined teacher feedback according to four major criteria: length, type, use of hedges, and text-specificity. The results showed that most of the feedback used by the teachers in this research study had positive effects. These teacher comments included limited grammar feedback with general comments on grammar and underlined certain error patterns, marginal comments functioning as requests for information or for revision, and focused text-specific comments that provided clear directions for the revision tasks.

There have been studies on strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of teachers' comments. Connor and Farmer (1990) employed the technique of topical structure analysis as a revision strategy for L2 learners. In this study, students were asked to circle

the topic of each independent clause in their writing and analyse the pattern of the development of the topics. The students then were able to see the connection of topics between sentences and the degree in which they introduced new topics. The researchers concluded that the student writers who were exposed to this method could better revise their writing on the global coherence level.

The technique of paragraph analysis, originally suggested by Brannon and Knoblauch (1984), involves students' examining the topic of each paragraph so that the students become aware of the overall structure of their texts. This research procedure is beneficial for ESL writers as it enables students to see the organisation of their own writing (Leki: 1992).

Many other feedback techniques were also claimed to be effective. Leki (1992) proposed an approach in which teachers had to provide feedback only on certain aspects of content and form without giving comments on all written errors or problems. Jenkins (1987) asked students to produce written dialogues in response to the teachers' comments.

The success of these feedback strategies seems to suggest the inadequacy of the good intention of teachers providing comments on students' writing. In fact, specific techniques that require students to identify certain characteristics of their own text (Connor and Farmer: 1990) can strengthen students' ability to revise their own writing. Hyland and Hyland (2006b: 223) suggested that negotiating an interpersonal relationship between a writing teacher and a writing student during feedback delivery is very important as a positive relationship between them can facilitate the development of the student's writing. Therefore, teachers should be aware that customised response to writing is needed for each individual student. In addition, teachers' comments are not only useful for students' writing skill development but also helpful in changing students' attitudes towards writing and in turn leading to their improvements. Writing teachers need to ensure that they "monitor feedback so that it is consistent, clear, helpful, and constructive" (223).



Despite inconclusive results, teacher written feedback has proved to be very useful in the EFL context. Written feedback can be provided in the form of comments, praises and suggestions. In the surface level, feedback can be provided so that errors can be corrected, marked or indicated by teachers. Written feedback is considered appropriate for L2 learners with limited language proficiency (Arndt: 1993). Students can refer to the teacher comments as frequently as they need and written comments are less embarrassing if negative.

#### **2.6.3.2 Peer Feedback**

The effect of peer feedback in L2 writing has recently become a source of controversy among researchers. The possible effect of peer feedback might vary according to learners' level of proficiency and cultural backgrounds.

##### **2.6.3.2.1 Positive Results Regarding Peer Feedback**

According to many L1 researchers, peer feedback motivates students to revise their writing with provisions of realistic questions and responses from authentic readers (James: 1981). Peer feedback not only contributes to audience awareness but also to the students' critical thinking skills. Furthermore, peer feedback encourages students to consider multiple and mutual reinforcing perspectives and equips students with the power to express themselves (Lamberg: 1980).

Despite the positive results of peer feedback from L1 writing studies, it is still a debatable issue regarding whether L2 writers gain equal benefit from this type of feedback. There are several researchers who advocate peer feedback and believe that L2 students could derive similar benefit if teachers employ the peer feedback procedure carefully and give students substantial training.

Mittan (1989) reported that he successfully helped college ESL students with peer feedback in his writing class. He stated that training provided for the students and the integration of peer feedback procedures played a major role in ensuring the effectiveness of the peer feedback technique. Stanley (1992) compared two advanced groups of students using peer feedback. The experimental group spent much more time on peer feedback training than the control group, resulting in the effectiveness of revisions the students performed during the study. The results from this study showed that the experimental group was able to provide more peer responses to writing and produce a higher number of revisions than the control group.

The effectiveness of peer response was also investigated from the point of view of perceptions. In studies conducted by Davies and Omberg (1987), and Mangelsdorf (1992), questionnaires and interviews were analysed, with the results positively supporting the advantages of peer review sessions in which students were encouraged to clarify, generate and develop ideas, and improve the organisation and style of their writing. Mendonca and Johnson (1994) examined the effectiveness of peer feedback with their findings revealing that peer review enhanced an awareness of audience, an essential element of good writing.

#### **2.6.3.2.2 Negative Results Regarding Peer Feedback**

Although positive comments from students seemed to confirm teachers' and researchers' perception that peer feedback was beneficial to student writers, problems arose in many settings, especially in heterogeneous collaborative groups. A major problem that the student writers experienced during the peer review process involved the questionable quality of the responses, and feedback which was too broad, useless and even incorrect. This problem was due to the students' lack of L2 knowledge or the knowledge in specific content areas (Allaei and Connor, 1990). Also, responses which were too critical and straightforward caused discomfort (Nelson and Murphy, 1992). On the evaluator's part, the student who gave feedback felt uncomfortable when making negative comments; they feared that their honest comments would be too critical and discourage their peers'



feelings (Allaei and Connor, 1990; Mangelsdorf, 1992). Another problem involves revision; the student writers were uncertain that they could make proper changes to their texts so as to accommodate their peers' comments in their revisions (Nelson and Murphy, 1992). In addition, students who gave comments felt that their limitations in terms of language skills constrained them in providing adequate and appropriate feedback in the peer response process (Allaei and Connor, 1990).

Some research studies focused more on the input and dynamics of peer response on revisions. Because the social group dynamics could influence students' responses to peer feedback, a group of researchers investigated how interactions in peer response sessions were performed and what impact they had on revisions. Nelson and Murphy (1992) analysed a group of students who wrote essays over six different collaborative sessions. In their earlier study, they found that the students incorporated a large amount of their peers' comments and suggestions into their revisions. The interactions generated social roles among the students, e.g. roles of the weak writer, the best writer and the mediator. In the subsequent study in which the same set of data were used, the researchers examined types of interactions. The result of the study indicated that "when writers interacted with their peers in a cooperative manner, they were more likely to use their peers' suggestions in revising. When writers interacted with their peers in a defensive manner or did not interact at all, they were less likely to use the peers' comments" (140).

Mendonca and Johnson (1994) also attempted to illustrate the nature of peer interaction in relation to revision. Investigating how the students incorporated their peers' suggestions in their texts, the researchers used frequency counts to analyse the instances of revisions. They found that more than half of the students incorporated their peers' comments into their revisions; only a few of them did not use their peers' comments; and the rest made revisions without discussing these changes with their partners in the peer response sessions.

In their studies on the use of peer responses by the L2 writers, Nelson and Murphy (1992, 1993) and Mendonca and Johnson (1994) found that most students used a fair amount of their peers' comments. However, Connor and Asenavage (1994) reported opposite findings. They found that only a few revisions in their study were produced as a result of peer response; some revisions resulted from the teacher's comments; and just more than half of the revisions resulted from the writers themselves and other sources. It was not clear, however, why very few revisions were initiated by peer comments in this study. In another research design, think-aloud protocols or interview procedures could be used to find out about students' decision-making strategies and their perceptions of different feedback techniques.

Different expectations of students from different cultural backgrounds were also investigated (Allaei and Connor: 1990). The researchers found that expectations regarding the amount of talk, the interlocutors' role and the politeness strategies could contribute to considerable discomfort in collaborative peer response groups with heterogeneous students. Carson and Nelson (1994) underscored two cross-cultural issues in the dynamics of ESL groups: individual versus collective goals of groups and in-group versus out-group relationships. From their study, collectivism-oriented students collaborated so as to benefit the entire group, whereas individualism-oriented students expected to work collaboratively in their team only to serve the needs of the individuals. In addition, students from collective cultures exhibited cooperative behaviours while working with in-group individuals expressing harmony, cooperation and consensus (i.e. students from the same culture). These differences in cultural orientation might cause problems when students from different cultures have to work together in collaborative peer response groups.

In summary, the important findings on group dynamics in relation to peer response revealed that positive attitudes toward interactions in groups seemed to ensure the production of revision (Nelson and Murphy: 1992, 1993); that different cultural backgrounds might bring about debates and unease in cross-cultural interactions in peer groups (Allaei and Connor: 1990; Carson and Nelson: 1994). They also revealed



potential problems with the peer response technique in the context of a diversity of cultures. Therefore, teacher favour the use of peer feedback should be aware of these potential problems.

#### **2.6.4 Comparison Studies**

Due to the lack of consensus among researchers on the most efficient source of feedback, some researchers have recently compared the two methods of giving feedback. Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) compared teachers' written feedback with peer feedback in revisions to find out which of the two techniques was more effective. The results of the study, which took place during a ten-week term, revealed that students who had received peers' oral/aural feedback scored significantly higher than those who had received teachers' feedback in the control group. On the other hand, Zhang (1995) discovered that teacher feedback was preferred over peer and self feedback, and the writing students who had received written feedback from their teachers had greater improvements in their revisions than those who had received peer feedback. Arndt (1993 as cited in Ferris: 2003b: 113) found that the students in her study highly valued both teachers' written feedback and face-to-face writing conferences with teachers, but that they only preferred peer feedback in the "team writing" context.

#### **2.7 Form-focused Feedback in L2 Writing**

An important issue in providing feedback to L2 writing concerns whether form-focused feedback, either direct or indirect, enhances students' writing. According to some researchers (e.g., Bates et al.: 1993; Boshier: 1990; Bowen et al.: 1985; Graham: 1987; Hendrickson: 1980) form-focused feedback at the sentence level is helpful and can be considered a form of meaningful input that helps learners understand better about L2 and deal with their own language problems. Because students usually cannot identify their own errors both in form and meaning, they need assistance from other people such as teachers or peers. Also, it has been suggested that fossilisation is likely to occur as a result of absence of correction. Furthermore, if not corrected, the errors will become more

difficult to be handled. Therefore, feedback on form, even negative feedback, may be necessary (Bosher, 1990; Graham, 1987). From Leki's (1992) study, it was found that there was a decrease in the number of errors that the ESL students made after receiving the teacher's feedback, explanations about their errors, or both. Drawing the students' attention to accuracy will also help them to conform to the high standards of academic and professional writing.

Another group of scholars argue that error correction does not help in reducing the errors or improving the writing skills. Truscott (1996), for example, argues that the L2 students cannot improve their writing as a result from error correction, and grammar correction contributes to "pseudolearning," a surface-level form of linguistic knowledge. He also maintains that error correction is not useful because the teacher is hardly able to find all related errors, to identify them precisely, and to avoid overcorrection in student writing. Moreover, error correction may have harmful effects on the learners' attitudes and motivation regarding their learning of L2 writing. Finally, he argues that error correction will result in the learners' spending too much time on accuracy rather than on other useful perspectives of writing (e.g. content). Truscott then concludes that "grammar correction has no place in writing courses and should be abandoned" (328). According to Leki (1992), error correction may not be effective enough to help students produce fewer errors in their writing because the feedback may not be understood by the students; the feedback may be too confusing; the students may be overwhelmed by cognitive demands while writing; the students' level of proficiency development may not be advanced to receive new information, or (5) the amount of correction may be overwhelming.

## **2.8 Explicitness of Teacher Written Feedback**

Ferris (2002) divides feedback into two types: *direct feedback* and *indirect feedback*. While the former involves a process in which a teacher provides explicit corrections for errors, the latter involves a process in which a teacher provides advice or suggestions using either verbal forms or visual forms such as giving codes or underlining errors. These two types of feedback differ mainly in the degree of explicitness of error



correction. As discussed in Semke (1984) and Ferris and Roberts (2001), some researchers are doubtful about the effects of explicit error correction, while others suggest that implicit feedback (e.g., giving codes, giving symbols, providing marginal feedback or locating errors) can be employed as an alternative to error correction. Indirect feedback seems to be more useful as it involves students' responsibility for their own learning and more effective in improving their own proficiency than explicit or direct feedback (Ferris and Hedgcock: 1998).

### **2.8.1 The Most Explicit Feedback**

The most explicit feedback normally involves the direct correction of errors that the teacher locates in the student's writing. This type of feedback is considered useful where an error cannot be treated. Ferris (2002) suggests that in addressing errors that students are unlikely to correct due to the unavailability of rules students can consult, such as word choice and awkward phrases or sentences, teachers should provide direct feedback, i.e. a correct word or an appropriate idiomatic expression. A danger of this type of feedback involves students' liability to copy the teacher's correction without learning from their errors. Thus, direct or explicit feedback should be used with great care.

### **2.8.2 Less Explicit Feedback**

According to Ferris (2002), this type of teacher written feedback calls for students' efforts in identifying types of errors by decoding a code the teacher provides. For example, the teacher might write "w.t." on a verb that is used with an incorrect tense (i.e. "w.t." stands for "wrong tense."). In such a situation, therefore, students need to learn and understand what their errors are, using the information from feedback. Specifically, they need to make use of their own linguistic knowledge or consult various sources of information including language textbooks or dictionaries to help themselves correct their errors. This type of feedback usually involves the use of a code in the vicinity of an error without the provision of straightforward corrections of the error.

### **2.8.3 The Least Explicit Feedback**

The least explicit feedback involves the use of uncoded feedback provided to an error in student writing. Receiving this type of feedback, the writing student needs to identify the type of error he or she has produced and come up with the correction he or she should provide, without a hint or suggestion from the teacher. However, this type of feedback can encourage students to employ problem-solving strategies while making revisions; therefore, it may be more useful or appropriate for advanced learners (Ferris: 2002), who can resolve grammatical problems as their proficiency increases (Kubota: 2001).

## **2.9 Metalinguistic Feedback**

Even though common among L2 writing teachers, explicit correction proves ineffective in helping writing students improve their writing skills (Robb et al.: 1986; Semke: 1984). As described in 2.8.2, less direct feedback in the form of codes or symbols can be used to avoid the direct correction of an error. This type of feedback is available as an alternative to written corrective feedback (Bowen et al.: 1985; Leki: 1992; Raimes: 1983b, 1991; Wingfield: 1975). Writing teachers may write codes or symbols at the margin, or in the vicinity of the circling or underlining they make in response to errors, or they may only write codes or symbols at the margin without producing any marks against the errors. In such a situation, the students are required to identify the errors and correct them by themselves. It is believed that the students will be encouraged to pay more attention to error correction, and will be able to tackle future problems regarding their own errors more effectively and to correct their own errors themselves (Bosher: 1990; Keh: 1989).

Using metalinguistic feedback involves students in their own learning while the teacher does not need to explain or resolve every problem that students have. Indirect or implicit ways of providing grammatical feedback, so that students need to identify their errors and correct them by themselves, seem to be a more effective approach to improving the students' overall accuracy than direct corrections of student errors. Students should locate errors and improve their own accuracy without explicit error corrections. However, they



should be clearly explained regarding used codes so that they are comprehensible to students and specific enough to prevent misunderstanding or confusion. Though indirect, when feedback is adequately clear with understandable details, the students will be able to do their self-correction on grammar (Makino: 1993).

## **2.10 Research on Form-focused Feedback and Metalinguistic Feedback in L2 Writing**

Studies on form-focused feedback have revealed its positive effects on L2 writing. Fathman and Whalley (1990) studied the effectiveness of teacher feedback that focused on both form and content. In their study, the participants were 72 students in intermediate ESL college composition classes, who had similar levels of language proficiency even though they were from various first language backgrounds. After being randomly divided into four groups, the participants were assigned to write essays. Each group received one type of feedback: grammar feedback with all grammatical errors being underlined and no correct forms being given, or content feedback with positive comments or short general suggestions being given, or grammar-content feedback, or no feedback. Using the feedback provided, the students were required to make revisions on their initial writing. In order to examine the effects of feedback on grammatical accuracy and the content of the writing, the grammar scores, which were based on the number of grammar errors, were used to measure accuracy, whereas the writing content was measured by the content scores based on holistic scoring. The results showed that all groups of the participants improved significantly in the area of content. Nevertheless, the number of grammar errors significantly decreased in only two groups: the group that had received grammar feedback and the one that had received grammar-content feedback. According to Fathman and Whalley (1990), feedback also had an effect on length as it was found that the group that had received no feedback had longer rewritten versions even though there might be no connection between length and writing quality. Based on the findings from this study, the researchers concluded that the students improved their writing during the revising activities after receiving either form-focused feedback or content-focused feedback, or both types of feedback, and that feedback on grammar did not have an adverse effect on the content in student writing.



The differences between direct and indirect feedback delivered to writing were also investigated. Robb et al. (1986) studied the effects of explicit and implicit feedback on writing quality. Their participants were Japanese freshmen who were divided into four groups and each group was given a particular type of feedback, i.e. correction, coded, uncoded, or marginal feedback. "Correction feedback" addressed all lexical, syntactic, and stylistic errors. Then the participants in this group examined the corrections and copied them in their rewritten versions. The participants did not have to identify errors and figure out the corrections by themselves. Regarding "coded feedback," the participants were required to identify the codes the teacher provided in an attempt to correct their errors. In another group, the students responded to "uncoded feedback," provided without the identification of errors. The students were required to make use of their linguistic competence to discover the corrections for their errors. In the last group in this study, the students responded to "marginal feedback," which the teacher used while writing in the margin the number of errors found in each line of the students' writing. The students had to locate the exact errors in each line and correct them using their own linguistic knowledge. The results indicated that direct feedback did not enhance the quality of student writing. Therefore, the researchers suggested that the teacher respond to student writing with comments that would encourage student writers to go back to the earlier stages of composing.

Different types of feedback have been studied in relation to the development of L2 writing skills. Kepner (1991), for instance, conducted an experimental study on types of written feedback that would lead to the improvement of quality in student writing, and on a written feedback model which would contribute to the development of higher-level writing skills. In her study, the participants consisted of 60 students in an American college studying Spanish as an L2. Two types of feedback were used in the study: *message-related comments* and *traditional surface-error corrections*. In the former type, the researcher summarised the main points of the commentary from the reader's point of view, provided an assessment of the message, made enquiries concerning unclear points in the students' writing, or provided suggestions in regard to how the writing could be



improved. In the latter type, the researcher located errors and made corrections on all sentence-level errors. The findings revealed that the students who received the message-related comments wrote significantly better, reflecting higher language proficiency. On the other hand, the students that received surface-error corrections in the treatment still made errors not significantly fewer than those produced by the former group. Kepner concluded that explicit error corrections did not contribute to the improvement of the accuracy and the quality of L2 writing of either more or less proficient students.

### **2.11 Studies on Input, Interaction and Output**

In order to understand the acquisition of a second language, researchers have examined learners' linguistic input, feedback on their writing, interaction and subsequent output. Some early studies revealed that the amount of input pertaining to the target language was related to proficiency in that particular language (Selinger: 1977), and the quality is an essential element of Second Language Acquisition.

Long (1996) theorised that not only comprehensible input (Krashen: 1985) but also interaction with native speakers is necessary for acquisition, as a result of the negotiation of meaning. Adjusted or modified input can involve changes in sentential length, complexity, word choice and word order, which make the language comprehensible. Modified input can also include the use of repetitions of words, comprehension checks (e.g., "Do you know what I mean?"), clarification requests (e.g., "What do you mean by that?") and confirmation checks (e.g., "Do you mean this...?").

This concept of interaction can be applied to the activity that occurs when a teacher provides written feedback on students' initial drafts and the students modify their drafts in response to the teacher feedback. The written interaction can include similar opportunities for learners to receive input made comprehensible and to modify their output.

In addition to input and interaction, feedback on a learner's production is also believed to facilitate acquisition. Schachter (1983) proposes that feedback can provide information to the learner about the reader's ability to comprehend the learner's message. She believes that feedback, if noticed or understood, can provide useful language information to the learner while making connections between their current interlanguage and the second language. Feedback can also provide metalinguistic information that may help learners form and check their hypotheses about the second language. According to Schachter (1983), teacher written comments on features of students' written language are also considered part of important feedback conditions of SLA theory (Gass: 1990).

Swain (1985) argues that in addition to the three factors: comprehensible input, interaction with modified output, and feedback on production, opportunities for modification of a learner's output also facilitates acquisition. That is, production provides opportunities for students to receive feedback on their production and to analyse language while working to produce modified output. It is evident that opportunities to modify output are available to any student who makes revisions in response to the feedback provided through teacher written comments on the content and language usage in student writing.

It can be claimed that students and teachers do not negotiate meaning only through spoken interaction but through modifications of input and output in writing as well. In other words, when a teacher writes comments on writing, he or she can induce a negotiation for meaning, can provide meaningful input that is made comprehensible through modifications (in the form of expansions, examples, etc.) and written feedback on students' interlanguage, and can offer opportunities for the possible modification of output on the part of the students.

The results of empirical research reviewed above are inconclusive, and it is difficult to decide which feedback technique is most effective for ESL/EFL students. In addition, research has yielded different results regarding what should be the essence of feedback and concerning the effects of different feedback types. Nevertheless, it is important that



both feedback on content and feedback on accuracy be used to improve ESL students' writing competency. Feedback should first be used to draw the student writers' attention to the content of writing while their grammatical and syntactic errors should not be ignored. Kroll (1997) suggests that writing proficiency involves both *syntactical competence*, defined as "the facility to use the grammatical system of standard edited English in such categories as sentence structure, word form, word order, verb form, etc." (231), and *rhetorical competence*, which includes the knowledge appropriate approach and length of topic, effective use of paragraphs, consistency of point of view, logical sequencing of ideas, and appropriate use of coherence and cohesion.

While there are several types of feedback that can be delivered to L2 writing, the most common type is teacher written feedback. ESL students normally rely on their writing teachers' feedback or corrections in revising their compositions. Although some comments given by the teacher are unclear or confusing, the writing students feel more comfortable and confident to follow their teacher's corrections or suggestions on their essays than their peers' comments or their own feedback. However, what should be the focus of teacher feedback may depend on many factors including the course objectives, the students' needs, the students' language proficiency, and the rationale behind the teachers in providing feedback to student writing. Students' individual differences such as aptitude, motivation, and anxiety are also important factors the teacher should consider as he or she responds to the students' writing (Dekeyser: 1993). Furthermore, Leki (1990) contends that the type of feedback techniques to be used is determined by the roles the teacher usually plays. These roles are concerned with the teacher being a real reader, a coach and an evaluator. One irony associated with teacher feedback is that although it appears that this type of feedback is useful for student writing, the actual effect of teacher written feedback is still unclear due to the small amount of research on this issue. Dekeyser (1993) concludes that "little clear research evidence exists that could inform decision-making on error correction in L2 writing" (503). Therefore, it is still questionable that teacher feedback genuinely contributes to the development of the student writing in their revised versions or that it has any affective effect on the students. Leki (1990) suggests that more research in L2 writing is needed "to look not only at



teachers' written response but at combinations of classroom settings, course goals, and grading procedures in order to discover what forms our responses can most profitably take" (66).

Even though ESL/EFL writing students expect their teacher to give feedback mainly on their grammatical errors right in the beginning stages of their drafting, feedback on content, rhetoric, and organisation should take priorities so that the students can develop ideas that they plan to include in their writing more clearly and accurately and can avoid writing clear, well-organised, but inaccurate ideas (Campbell: 1998). After providing comments on content, rhetoric, and organisation, the teacher then can move on to the sentence-level problems of grammar, spelling, and mechanics. These features in writing are considered less important and should not receive feedback until the students' written ideas are in good shape (Campbell: 1998).

Obviously, research reviewed above has not led to a unified or definitive conclusion about feedback in L2 writing. However, though yielding inconclusive findings, these studies have provided us with insights into and understanding about feedback in L2 writing from various perspectives. More research needs to be conducted so that a full and comprehensive understanding of the uses and functions of feedback in L2 writing can be developed.

## **2.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents the theoretical background to cohesion in writing, the process-based approach to writing, revision in the process-based approach, feedback on students' writing and research studies related to these issues. The present study focused on the provision of teacher written feedback to students' expository writing to enhance their use of cohesive devices. Revisions of the initial drafts were also made in response to the teacher feedback. The main objectives of the present study were to investigate the effects of teacher written feedback and essay revision on the use of cohesion in English expository essays written by Thai EFL postgraduate students and to examine the



students' perceptions and attitudes towards teacher written feedback, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing. In the next chapter, the research methodology for this study is presented.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Methodology**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology for the main study, which includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis. By using a triangulated methodology in the study, the researcher believes that cohesion problems that Thai students encounter in their expository writing might be better uncovered. As an overall theoretical orientation, this chapter begins with the definition of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research, the identification of the distinctive features of the two approaches and the establishment of the methodological framework for the main study. Then the chapter presents research design, information about subjects, data and data collection, and procedures for the study. Finally, the pilot study is reported at the end of this chapter.

### **3.1 Theoretical Orientation**

There has been a lot of controversy over the appropriateness of the two major traditional research methodologies: quantitative and qualitative methodologies. (Allwright and Bailey: 1991; Chaudron: 1988; Davis: 1995; Dörnyei: 2007; Nunan: 1992; Nunan and Bailey: 2009). By the early 1980s, the quantitative approach was employed as the dominant research methodology in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research studies because it was believed to help researchers “to gain objective data by controlling human and other extraneous variables and thus gain what they consider to be reliable, hard data and replicable findings” (Davis, 1995: 428). The quantitative approach, according to Dörnyei (2007: 34), is “systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalisable to other contexts.” On the other hand, the qualitative approach was then uncommon as a research methodology in SLA because it was considered to be nonobjective, non-generalisable and lacking in both the internal and external validity, as opposed to the quantitative approach (Chaudron: 1988; Davis: 1995; Nunan: 1992). Many SLA



researchers have only recently called for recognition of qualitative research and formulated qualitative research guidelines for SLA studies (Davis: 1995; Johnson: 1992; Lazaraton: 1995; Nunan: 1992; Seliger and Shohamy: 1989). Qualitative research also has many strong points including “exploratory nature, making sense of complexity, answering ‘why’ questions, broadening our understanding, longitudinal examination of dynamic phenomena, flexibility when things go wrong and rich material for the research report” (Dörnyei: 2007: 34). Many researchers considered this event a new revolution of research in applied linguistics” (Lazaraton: 1995: 455). During that time, many of them also promoted a triangulated approach in SLA, or a mixed-mode design, because the two approaches are not mutually exclusive but complementary (Johnson and Saville-Troike: 1992).

Traditionally, quantitative and qualitative methodologies are variously defined and involve different philosophical assumptions. Essentially, the difference of philosophical assumptions between the two methodologies lies in the view of the nature of reality (ontology). The quantitative approach is often characterised by positivism, objectivity, generalisability and replicability. The assumption underlying quantitative research is that “there is a single tangible reality ‘out there’ fragmented into independent variables and processes” (Lincoln and Guba: 1985: 37). On the other hand, the qualitative approach is often described as naturalistic, holistic, interpretive and non-generalisable and the assumption underlying qualitative research is that “there are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically” (Lincoln and Guba: 1985: 37). Therefore, quantitative researchers contend that “inquiry can converge onto that reality until it can be predicted and controlled,” whereas qualitative researchers believe that “inquiry into multiple realities will inevitably diverge so that prediction and control are unlikely” (Lincoln and Guba: 1985: 37).

The difference between an etic (discrete) versus an emic (holistic) treatment of reality accommodate different epistemological views of truth and knowledge of reality. Because truth is usually measured by validity in scientific research, the quantitative approach is often characterised by internal validity, which is believed to be the best available



approximation of the truth (Nunan and Bailey: 2009). The quantitative research design is aimed to “control or randomise factors which may affect the outcome” to achieve that approximation (Davis: 1992: 605). In other words, in quantitative methodology, the researcher and what is being investigated are discrete, or independent of each other (Lincoln and Guba: 1985). Researchers mainly use data and statistical analysis to achieve generalisations. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, regard reality as a set of mental formulations and present “truth value” in the form of findings and plausible interpretations (Davis: 1992: 605-606). In the qualitative approach, the researcher and what is being researched are inseparable, and influence one another through interactions (Lincoln and Guba: 1985). To strengthen credibility, qualitative researchers often use various research-based procedures including triangulation (i.e., using multiple sources or methods) (Davis: 1992: 606). The major components of qualitative research include *data*, which are yielded from various sources such as interviews, observations, documents, records and films, and *procedures*, which are used by researchers to interpret and organise the data, conceptualise and reduce the data, elaborate on categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, and relating through a series of propositional statements (Strauss and Corbin: 1998). Furthermore, rather than depending on generalisability, qualitative research depends on transferability, which is presumed to transfer a hypothesis to a broader social context (Davis: 1992; 1995; Selinger and Shohamy: 1989).

The two approaches to research have different ontological views of reality, different epistemological interpretations of truth, different objectives to achieve, and different steps to follow; as a result, many researchers claim that “validity in either quantitative or qualitative research is not an absolute notion nor can be ‘proven’. Rather, a high level of validity is a goal to strive for” for both types of research (Johnson and Saville-Troike, 1992: 603).

If a high level of validity is a common goal for both quantitative and qualitative researchers, a combination of the two methodologies would be beneficial. In fact, an integrated research methodology has been more widely used among researchers of applied linguistics. Reichardt and Cook (1979), for instance, claim that quantitative and



qualitative research methods would complement each other “to offer insights that neither one alone could provide” (21). According to Reichardt and Cook (1979), the integration of the two research methods is necessary as research often involves different objectives and requires various approaches, and combining the methods would accommodate the triangulation of the underlying truth. Eisner and Peshkin (1990) also claim that being bimethodological and multimethodological is “a true mark of scholarly sophistication” (7). Berg (1995) shared a similar point of view, advocating and calling for triangulation in research. He claims that mixing research methods allows the researcher to gather a diversity of data, leading to more opportunities for comparison and asserts that comparing data from different sources can shed light on areas that may have remained in darkness if a single method had been used.

Triangulation is a term originally more common in surveying activities, map making, navigation and military practices. It involves the use of three points to draw lines to form a small triangle to locate an unknown point or object. The best approximation of the true location of the new point or object is the centre of the triangle. In research, triangulation is a form of multiple operations mainly regarding methods used in a research study. Later, Berg (1995) further extends the concept to include other pairs of combination, e.g. multiple data-collection technologies, multiple theories, or combinations of these categories of research activities (5). Dörnyei (2007) defines a mixed-methods study as “the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stages of the research process” (163). He further explains that using mixed methodologies in research would be far more effective than using either quantitative or qualitative methodology alone. Such a combination is likely to yield more valid results and stronger conclusions. According to Grant and Fine (1992), mixed methods have been widely used in research studies. For instance, some researchers use qualitative observations supplemented with structured quantitative questionnaires, others mix ethnography and experimental research, while still others combine survey research and qualitative procedures. Despite the criticism of studies that used mixed methods, such studies undoubtedly enable researchers to gain deeper insights into the phenomena under study.

### **3.2 Research Questions**

This research study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of feedback delivery and the revision process in enhancing the use of cohesion in Thai students' writing expository compositions. It is also aimed at investigating the students' attitudes towards teacher written feedback on cohesion, the revision process and the use of cohesion in the writing course. The sources of data are the students' pre-tests and post-tests, their expository essays and revised drafts, the questionnaires, and the interviews. It is expected that the results of this study would help strengthen our understanding of the effects of teacher feedback given to L2 student writing and of revisions performed by the student writers on the improvement of the student writing quality with respect to the use of cohesion. To recapitulate, the purposes of the current study were threefold:

1. To investigate the effects of feedback delivery and essay revision on the improvement of the use of cohesion in English expository essays produced by Thai EFL postgraduate students
2. To investigate how teacher written feedback on cohesion contributed to the use of cohesion in students' expository essays
3. To examine the students' perceptions and attitudes towards teacher written feedback, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing

Five research questions were addressed and intended to be answered in this study:

1. Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' expository writing after the end of the writing course?
2. Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' revised drafts?
3. What effects does teacher written feedback have on the students' writing?
4. How do the students who receive feedback on cohesion respond to teacher written feedback?



5. What perceptions and attitudes do the students who receive teacher feedback and revise their essays have towards their own writing skills, the teacher feedback and the revision process?

### **3.3 Research Design**

The present study is of a quasi-experimental design with one intact group. This was mainly due to the non-possibility of “random selection from the population to the sample” and of “random assignment from the randomly selected sample to the two different class periods” (Nunan and Bailey: 2009: 46). Researchers who are school teachers or university lecturers typically have no resources or no authority to select their subjects randomly from the population or assign them to the two groups randomly. The groups that they conduct an experiment on are usually assigned by the school’s or the university’s administration. (Nunan and Bailey: 2009).

Experimental research has been firmly established in social sciences based on which cause-and-effect relationship can be demonstrated with a high degree of confidence (Connor: 1987; Dörnyei: 2007; McDonough and McDonough: 1997; Neuman: 2003). The term “experiment” can be defined as “modifying something in a situation, then comparing an outcome to what existed without modification (Neuman: 2003: 238). What is modified can be referred to as the treatment or the independent variable, while the outcomes or dependent variables refer to what occurs at the end of the treatment which could be in the form of behaviours, physical conditions or attitudes (Neuman: 2003). In the present study, the independent variables were teacher written feedback and revisions of the initial drafts, and the dependent variables were the students’ use of cohesive ties in their expository compositions.

Also, in this study, a triangulated methodology was adopted as a result of the current scholarly interest in the triangulation of methodology as well as the nature of the present study. Basically, the two major research paradigms, quantitative and qualitative, were synthesized in the use of multiple data-collection procedures. Quantitative methodology

was used when the subjects' writing samples were collected throughout the course. Then when Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model and Hoey's (1991) model were applied—counting different types of cohesive ties—cohesion was quantified. After the mean value of the cohesive ties in each essay set (experimental and control) was calculated, *T*-test was used to quantify the differences in the use of cohesion between the experimental group and the control group, and between the initial drafts and the revised drafts produced by the experimental group. Another quantitative method was employed when questionnaires inquiring about the subjects' attitudes towards their writing skills, teacher feedback on cohesion, the revising process and cohesion in writing were distributed and collected for mathematical analysis. Qualitative methodology was applied when interviews were held with the subjects, and their responses concerning their perceptions and attitudes towards teacher feedback on cohesion, the revision process and cohesion in writing were developed for data reduction and analysis (Larsen-Freeman and Long: 1991).

### **3.3.1 Concerns over an Experimental Study**

There are a number of features to be satisfied to ensure the quality of research. As proposed by McDonough and McDonough (1997), some of these features include utility, reliability, objectivity, originality, variety and ethics.

Two key features of social research as proposed by Neuman (2003) are reliability and validity. These two features are considered as “central issues in all measurement” (179). They are what social researchers should aim for in order to increase the level of truthfulness and the credibility of their findings. In an experimental study, the issue of ethical implications is also very important as it is regarded as another dimension of the validity of a study (Dörnyei: 2007; McDonough and McDonough: 1997). In the following section, reliability, validity and ethical considerations will be discussed more thoroughly.



### **3.3.1.1 Reliability**

Neuman (2003) defines “reliability” as “dependability and consistency”. This suggests that a similar research context and situation would yield the same results. McDonough and McDonough (1997) suggest that research reliability be tested by other researchers. Therefore, to make it easier to replicate, all research measures and procedures employed in a study should be made clear to accommodate to other researchers.

Regarding the current study, care has been taken to ensure that all details related to the construction, the implementation, the procedures and statistical figures of all research tools are as complete as possible. The analyses of quantitative and qualitative data are presented and discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

### **3.3.1.2 Validity**

Research can be considered valid when the idea and measures that a researcher conceptualises are matched. Validity suggests the quality of “truthfulness” (Neuman: 2003: 179). In experimental research, there is a distinction between the two types of validity: internal validity and external validity.

#### **3.3.1.2.1 Internal Validity**

Internal validity is an essential element that experimental research needs to have. It can be defined as “the internal logical rigor of an experiment” (Neuman: 2003: 260). That is, a significant difference between the experimental and control groups should be “unambiguously attributable to the treatment” planned and completed by the researchers (Nunan and Bailey: 2009: 68). In order to achieve internal validity, a true experiment needs to eliminate all rival factors that may have an effect on causal findings (Dörnyei: 2007; Wiersma: 1991) as these may affect the dependent variable and weaken the cause-and-effect relationship of experimental research. Such unwanted factors are considered to be threats to internal validity.

As proposed by Neuman (2003: 251-255), there are many common threats to internal validity including selection bias, history, maturation and testing effect. Nunan and Bailey (2009: 60) describes any confounding variable, or any uncontrolled factor, as a threat to internal validity. These issues should be taken into account before and during a research study.

As mentioned earlier, this study sought to investigate the causal relationship between the treatment (feedback delivery and essay revision) and the extent to which it affected the students' use of cohesion in their expository writing both in their revised drafts and in later essays including the post-test essays. As this study is a quasi-experimental research study, no random selection and random assignment were possible before the beginning of the experiment. Consequently, there might have been some possible factors that may have affected the internal validity of this study. For instance, the students in the experimental and control groups may have had considerably different proficiency levels or degrees of motivation. However, to minimise major negative factors threatening to the internal validity of this study, the researcher made certain that both groups consisted of an equal number of students, asked the students in both groups to complete a questionnaire which surveyed their backgrounds, and administered a pre-test.

In the present study, each group (experimental and control) consisted of 30 students. At the beginning of the writing course, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire (adapted from Padgate: 1999) that explored the students' demographic data and educational backgrounds (see Appendix G). Based on the results of the questionnaire, it was found that the students in both groups were similar in the aspects that could have been major extraneous factors or confounding variables to be threatening to the internal validity of experimental research. Firstly, most of the students in the experimental group (60%) and in the control group (50%) *rarely* wrote academic essays when they were in high school. Secondly, most of the students in the experimental group (46.7%) and in the control group (43.3%) *often* wrote academic essays when they were undergraduate students. Thirdly, most of the students in the experimental group (40%) and in the control



group (33.3%) *rather* liked writing in English. Also, the same number of students in both groups (36.7%) liked writing in English *a lot* and an equal number of them (23.3%) *did not* like writing in English very much. Lastly, an equal number of the students in both groups (100%) were not studying English writing at another institute while they were students of the writing course during the experiment.

The students in both groups were assigned to write pre-test essays to discover their proficiency levels, particularly in the use of cohesion. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference in the use of cohesive ties between the two groups. Findings about the pre-test essays will be reported in detail in Chapter 4.

The students later were assigned to compose post-test essays on the same topic as they did for their pre-test. However, a testing effect was less likely in this situation even though they had to take the same test twice. This is due to the fact that a four-month course that the students in both groups attended would leave a substantial time gap in between so that they could write post-test essays with little memory of what they wrote in their pre-test essays. There would then be less risk in the students reiterating their writing when they composed their post-test essays. They would be able to demonstrate their ability to use cohesion without an effect of memorisation.

Based on the discussion above, major threats which would likely affect the internal validity of the current study were minimised; as a result, its internal validity was substantially increased.

#### **3.3.1.2.2 External Validity**

External validity is highly valued in experimental research as it helps researchers generalise their findings in wider contexts and applications. The quality of generalisability is regarded as “a prized attribute of good experimentation” (McDonough and McDonough (1997: 165). According to Neuman (2003), two types of threats in experimental research involve *realism* and *reactivity*.

There are two main concerns regarding the issue of *realism*, i.e. the questions of whether experiments are realistic and whether generalisations from findings can be applied to the real teaching situation (Selinger and Shohamy: 1989). If a treatment in an experimental study, for instance, is so specialised or so expensive, though very effective, it is not likely to be implemented in the “real world” (Nunan and Bailey: 2009: 69). For the present study, the experiment is realistic as it took place in a natural classroom setting. Both groups were also taught by the researcher for the whole term. In addition, the treatment used resembles actual and common practice in language teaching. Finally, it is possible to generalise the findings and draw inferences where similar contexts are established, i.e. providing teacher feedback on the use of cohesion to Thai postgraduate students attending a writing course.

*Reactivity*, or the Hawthorn effect, involves the fact that when the participants are fully aware that they are in experimental research, they might react or perform differently from what they would normally do in real life (Dörnyei: 2007; Neuman: 2003). To lessen this effect, the students in both experimental and control groups were informed that they were part of a research study on the teaching of writing and cohesion in English in a classroom setting while the lessons would be carried out in a normal fashion. The students in the experimental group were required to complete two questionnaires: one at the beginning of the term and the other at the end of the term. They were also informed that the pre-test and post-test scores would not be counted and included in their evaluation. Moreover, in a random fashion, some of the students in the experimental group would be asked to take part in interviews. Being well-informed of the requirements in their classes, the participants could reduce their anxiety.

### **3.3.1.3 Research Ethics**

Ethics is a crucial issue in experimental research as the nature of an experiment can be intrusive or it can manipulate research participants' feelings or behaviours. As a result, it is imperative that the participants not be misled and ethical standards should be observed (Dörnyei: 2007; Neuman: 2003).



Due to the fact that the study was carried out in a real teaching context, extra care was given to ensure that the different methods of teaching writing and enhancing cohesion would not put any member of the groups at a disadvantage. While the students in the experimental group were given feedback on their use of cohesion and asked to produce revised drafts, the students in the control group were taught by the researcher using the teaching method normally employed by other instructors teaching the same course in the Language Institute. Even though the students in the control group were not given feedback on their use of cohesion and were not asked to revise their drafts, they were provided with some materials concerning cohesion in writing and were encouraged to ask as many questions about the materials as they needed.

In addition, all students were asked to sign the informed consent form (see Appendix B) to give permission for their participation in this research. When reference is made to them in this study, they are addressed anonymously through the use of coding system.

### **3.4 Research Setting**

With the permission and cooperation of the administration and the committee of the Postgraduate Programme in English for Careers at the Language Institute, Thammasat University, the research was conducted with 60 first-year postgraduate students of the academic year 2006. The subjects were selected from 99 postgraduate students in the programme and they attended classes conducted at the Language Institute of Thammasat University at Ta Prachan Campus.

#### **3.4.1 Participants**

In this experimental study, the participants were first-year postgraduate students in the MEC Programme of the Language Institute, Thammasat University. A total of 60 students ranging in age from twenty-three to fifty participated in this study. All of them were Thai students enrolled in the required course entitled “Writing Skill Development” during the first semester of the first year of their studies. Half of them (thirty students)

were in the experimental group and the other half (thirty students) were in the control or intact group. All the participants were required to pass the TU-GET test (Thammasat University's Graduate English Test) with a minimum score of 550 (out of 1,000). Providing that they received a score less than 550, they would need to retake the TU-GET test until they earned at least a minimum score; otherwise, they would not be allowed to graduate. In the main study, none of the students had an overseas education as undergraduates and they were not attending any English tutoring classes outside of the University during the time this study was being conducted (see Appendix G).

### **3.4.2 Educational Backgrounds of the Participants**

All students who participated in this study obtained Bachelor's or Master's degrees from accredited educational institutions in Thailand. Even though their majors in their previous studies were varied, they were all pursuing the same educational objectives in the English for Careers Programme: enhancing their English skills essential for their various careers.

Educated under a uniform educational system in Thailand, these students were required to learn English in primary and secondary schools (two years in primary schools and six years in secondary schools). As undergraduate students, they were required to continue studying English (usually general English and English for Specific Purposes or English for Academic Purposes) during the first two years at university. After completing an undergraduate programme, those who pursued postgraduate studies were required to take an English proficiency test before being accepted into the postgraduate school. Once admitted into a postgraduate programme, the students were required to take remedial English courses for two terms. (Had they earned an exceptionally high score in the English proficiency test, they would have been exempted from those English courses at the postgraduate level.) Throughout the entire period of their previous English training, grammar, vocabulary and reading skills were taught for at least seven to eight years, whereas writing in English (both paragraph and composition levels) was taught for only one to four years at the undergraduate levels. Almost no writing was taught in primary and secondary schools.



### **3.4.3 English Proficiency of the Subjects**

The sixty participants were equally divided into two groups: one was an experimental group and the other a control or intact group. The division was made according to the student identification (registration) numbers. The participants achieved relatively high scores in the Graduate English Test (TU-GET), Thammasat University's English proficiency test all students were required to take prior to entering the postgraduate programme. The test consisted of 100 multiple-choice questions measuring examinees' proficiency in the areas of grammar (25 items), vocabulary (25 items) and reading comprehension (50 items). The participants' TU-GET scores ranged from 500 to 840 and their mean was 619.68. Considering the students' test scores, both groups of students in this study had a high level of English proficiency, at least in terms of grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension, though not necessarily high in terms of writing skill, which was not included in the TU-GET test.

Regarding exposure to the English language, none of the subjects in both groups had ever spent time in an English-speaking country for educational purposes and had ever had any experience in a school or university where English was used as a medium of instruction. As reported in 3.3.1.2.1, they did not take an English course at another language school in addition to the course they were taking at the Language Institute, Thammasat University during the time of this research study. Like most other Thai students, the participants generally did not have much opportunity to communicate with others in English outside the classroom.

Concerning their writing skills, Thai students in general were taught in a grammar-based approach and, in their English classes, were frequently assigned to write sentences rather than paragraphs or essays. Table 3.1 presents the participants' background regarding their opportunity to write in English in high school or in college.

**Table 3.1 Frequency of Paragraph and Essay Writing in High School and College**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Writing in high school (no. of students)</b>	<b>Writing in college (no. of students)</b>
1. Never	10 (16.7%)	14 (23.3%)
2. Rarely	33 (55%)	9 (15%)
3. Sometimes	15 (25%)	10 (16.7%)
4. Often	2 (3.3%)	27 (45%)
N	60	60

As illustrated in Table 3.1, some students had some experience in writing English at paragraph and essay levels as they were high school and/or university students. The remainder had little or no experience at all.

The students were adults working for a variety of organisations in Thailand, with a few of them being the owners themselves. Some of them used English in their work and they used English orally and/or mostly in e-mail writing. They were exposed to various styles of English including British English, American English, Australian English, Singaporean English, and English used by other Asians, especially Thais.

**3.5 Procedures**

This study consists of a series of procedures: research procedures, selection of data types, data collection, selection of analytical frameworks and analytical procedures.



3.5.1 Research Procedures

In this experimental study, the experimental group was provided with treatment (intervention) during the research process, while the control group was taught with the conventional method without any treatment. Specifically, the students in the experimental group received teacher written feedback on the use of cohesion in their writing and were then asked to revise their essays using the feedback provided, whereas those in the control group received no feedback on the use of cohesion on their writing and were not required to revise and rewrite their essays. The material used in the experimental group was a course book in essay writing entitled *Engaging Writing* by Fitzpatrick (2005), but the material for the control group consisted of a set of compiled handouts and loose sheets providing lessons on paragraph and essay writing, together with supplementary exercises on cohesion mainly in the sentence level, and scarcely in the discourse level.

The research procedures for the present study are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Research Procedures for the Participants

Experimental Group	Control Group
Pre-test	Pre-test
Focused instruction and exercises (with a focus on discourse-level cohesion)	General instruction and exercises (with a focus on sentence-level cohesion)
Composition writing (#1-3)	Composition writing (#1-3)
Feedback on cohesion	Post-test
Revisions (#1-3)	
Post-test	
Questionnaire	
Interviews	

### **3.5.2 Selection of Data Types**

The data collected for the present study fall into two categories: writing assignments from a writing course and participants' profiles. The first type of data collected was students' writing assignments. Five expository essays that each student composed for the four-month English writing course were collected, with revisions of those essays being collected from the experimental group. The first and the last pieces of writing were used as the pre-test and the post-test respectively. The other three writing assignments covered three academic expository modes: cause-and-effect analysis, comparison/contrast and classification. A total of 300 essays including 90 revised versions written by the participants in the experimental group were used in this study.

The other type of data collected was the participants' profiles, which included the students' responses to questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: (1) the students' perceptions and attitudes towards their own writing skills, (2) the students' perceptions and attitudes towards teacher written feedback, (3) the students' perceptions and attitudes towards revisions of initial drafts and (4) the students' perceptions and attitudes towards cohesion in writing. (A copy of questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.) Students' interview comprised four main parts which were identical to those in the questionnaire. (Interview questions are provided in Appendix C.)

### **3.5.3 Data Collection**

Research data are regarded as only "bits and pieces of information found in the environment" (Merriam: 1998: 67). For these bits and pieces of information to become data in a research study depends on the interest and perspective of the researcher. Data used in this study were obtained from three primary sources: (1) writing samples, (2) student questionnaires and (3) student interviews.



### **3.5.3.1 Writing Samples**

Writing samples consist of (1) the students' pre-test and post-test essays, and (2) the students' expository essays

#### **3.5.3.1.1 Students' Pre-test and Post-test Essays**

Both pre-and post-test essays were used as assessments to examine the students' proficiency in using cohesion in their expository writing. Each student in both the experimental group and the control group was asked to write one pre-test essay at the beginning of the course and one post-test essay when the course ended (i.e. before and after the experiment). To be specific, the pre-test and the post-test were assigned in the first and the last classes of the term respectively. In those two classes no instruction was provided. In the experimental group, the students wrote pre-test essays before they received teacher feedback and revised their essays, and they wrote post-test essays after receiving teacher feedback during the writing course and performing revisions of their essays. In the control group, the students also wrote pre-test essays at the beginning of the course; however, they did not receive any feedback for their writing and were not asked to revise their essays throughout the term. The procedure for the control group was similar to that followed by all writing teachers at the Language Institute, Thammasat University.

The topic assigned to the students in both groups was the same for both pre- and post-test essays. In choosing the topic, the researcher asked an English instructor in the Institute to draw a topic from a box with six small pieces of paper. Among the six topics, two were for cause-and-effect essays, another two for comparison-contrast essays and the other two for classification essays. In a random fashion, the instructor picked up a topic for a cause-and-effect essay: *The Problems of Thailand*. Then this topic was used for both the pre-test and the post-test in this study.

### 3.5.3.1.2 Students' Expository Compositions

Six writing assignments were given to the students in both groups throughout the course. These assignments were based on the writing lessons on six modes of essays: *narration, description, cause-and-effect, comparison-contrast, classification and argumentative*. However, only three expository essays (i.e. cause-and-effect, comparison-contrast and classification) were used in this study. These essays from both groups plus revised drafts from the experimental group were collected to examine the students' proficiency in using cohesion in their writing.

The setting for collecting writing samples was mainly in the classroom for both the experimental and control groups. The setting was natural rather than experimental in that the participants were asked to write their essays as an outside-class writing activity without any research manipulation. The students were asked to write approximately 500 words in each essay and type it up before submission. Each writing task was assigned after the instruction and discussions of the corresponding lesson were completed. Each writing assignment was based on the prompts in the writing course book *Engaging Writing* by Fitzpatrick (2005) (see Appendix D for writing lessons and prompts).

The essays obtained from both groups were handled differently. The compositions written by the students in the control group were examined, marked, and returned to their owners. Only some corrections were made to certain grammatical errors as normally practiced by writing instructors at the Language Institute. The students in the control group were not asked to revise or rewrite their essays.

On the other hand, as the essays collected from the experimental group were being examined, the teacher/researcher provided written feedback regarding the use of cohesion. Various types of feedback, the independent variable in this study, were given to each essay wherever cohesion needed to be added, revised or corrected. The feedback used in this study will be described in 3.5.5. Then in the next class, the students' essays with feedback were returned to the students in the experimental group. They were asked



to revise their essays using the teacher feedback, or comments, then type their revised drafts and submit them for a second examination. While revising their initial drafts, the students were allowed to consult textbooks, dictionaries, their peers, their teacher or any other sources as they wished.

### **3.5.3.2 Questionnaires**

A separate questionnaire was used to collect the students' data focusing on their perceptions and attitudes towards their own writing skills, teacher written feedback on cohesion, revisions of initial drafts and cohesion in writing. Students from the experimental group were asked to complete the questionnaire at the end of the writing course, or the experiment (see Appendix A). Students from the control group were not asked to complete the questionnaire because they did not receive any feedback on their writing and were not asked to revise the initial drafts of their essays.

As the participants were all postgraduate students, their English was good enough to respond to questionnaires in English. The questionnaires were piloted with 15 second-year postgraduate students in the same academic programme to ensure that the language of the questionnaires was clear and the items in the questionnaire were understandable to all respondents. Because the second-year students were assumed to share similar characteristics with the target subjects, some of them were chosen to complete the questionnaires during this study. Then the questionnaire was revised before actual distribution to the participants in the experimental group at the end of the experiment. Providing that clarification on any item in the questionnaires was needed, the researcher was present in the classroom while the participants were completing the questionnaires. Even though the students were encouraged to identify the items that they found ambiguous, none of them asked questions or made comments on the questionnaires.

### **3.5.3.3 Student Retrospective Interviews**

The objective of the interview was to collect qualitative information about students' attention to the feedback, their attitudes towards the revision process and their understanding of cohesion used in their writing. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study because they allowed respondents to elaborate on issues as respondents responded to guiding questions (Dörnyei: 2007).

The interview is considered beneficial because "it permits the respondent to move back and forth in time—to reconstruct the past, interpret the present and predict the future" (Lincoln and Guba: 1985: 273). The interviews were conducted with five participants from the experimental group after the end of the experiment. All the participants volunteered to attend interviews.

A set of predetermined questions which were formulated as opened-ended to elicit the interviewees' own meanings was used. The interview questions (see Appendix C for the interview topic guide) yielded information about the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards their own writing skills, teacher feedback, revisions of their initial drafts and the use of cohesion in writing. The interview began with broad questions such as "Did you enjoy the courses you took this semester?" or "Which course did you enjoy most?" These questions were believed to help the interviewees feel more relaxed and warm them up before an actual interview (Dörnyei: 2007; Erlandson et al: 1993). Moreover, questions such as "In your opinion, what is the main problem of Thai university students in writing an English essay?" were also asked to make the interview more interesting.

The interviews were conducted in a small meeting room at the Language Institute, Thammasat University, at Ta Prachan Campus. Each of the interviewees made an appointment with the researcher and an individual interview was conducted with audio recording. The interviews were conducted in Thai, the interviewees' mother tongue, as requested by the interviewees themselves and also for the clarity in their responses.



However, the code-switching between Thai and English was sometimes used especially when the interviewer or the interviewees referred to a linguistic term whose Thai translation was not available or sounded awkward. The interviews were carried out in an informal manner: both the interviewer and the interviewees were dressed in casual wear and the informal Thai language was used during the interview.

### **3.5.4 Analytical Frameworks for Cohesion and Lexical Analyses**

The present study used two theoretical models in analyzing cohesion in the students' data: (1) Halliday and Hasan's cohesion analysis (1976) and (2) Hoey's lexical analysis (1991). These two models have been used in several research studies for analysing cohesion in L2 students' academic essays. They have made great contributions to the understanding of the cohesion (and coherence) of the English texts. They are also applicable in the teaching of English writing to improve cohesion in L2 students' expository essays.

#### **3.5.4.1 Halliday and Hasan's Model and Operationalisations**

This study follows Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomies for cohesion analysis (see Appendix E). Halliday and Hasan's model presents five parameters for measuring cohesion: *reference*, *substitution*, *conjunction*, *ellipsis* and *lexical cohesion*. These five categories of cohesive ties are further broken down into several subcategories. Reference includes *personal*, *demonstrative* and *comparative reference*; substitution involves *nominal*, *verbal* and *clausal substitution*; ellipsis comprises *nominal*, *verbal* and *clausal ellipsis*; conjunction consists of *additive*, *adversative*, *causal* and *temporal conjunctions*; and lexical cohesion involves the use of *the same word*, *synonym*, *superordinate* and *general word*.

Halliday and Hasan's classification has proved to be a valid and effective model for measuring cohesion. This model was used in both the pilot study and the main study for the analysis of cohesion used in students' essays. The results of the pilot study revealed that *reference* and *conjunction* occurred with the highest frequencies in the students' essays. Also, feedback on these two types of cohesive devices was easier to be given and these two areas in student writing could be improved more easily. However, *substitution* and *ellipsis* were rare in the students' initial drafts. This coincides with the results of other studies (Carter: 1997; Faigley and Witte: 1981; Fitzgerald and Spiegel: 1986; Tierney and Mosenthal: 1983) in which the numbers of *substitution* and *ellipsis* are insufficient in the corpus of student essays. Then these areas of cohesion were excluded from the main study. In addition, due to its complexity and subjectivity, *lexical cohesion* was not analysed by Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model but by Hoey's (1991) model. In this study, therefore, only *reiteration*, a major type of lexical cohesion, was examined, while *collocation* was excluded. As a result, Halliday and Hasan's model is mainly used in the present study to analyse *reference* and *conjunction*.

To facilitate the analysis of the data concerning cohesive ties, Halliday's and Hasan's (1976) model has been operationalised. Below are the types of cohesive devices that were analysed in the main study.

#### **3.5.4.1.1 Reference**

In this study, co-referentiality is measured by examining the three subcategories of reference: personal, demonstrative and comparative. These three specific types of reference are illustrated in Table 3.3.



**Table 3.3 Pronominal Reference**

(Function) Head	Head	Modifier
(Class) Noun (pronoun)	Determiner	Determiner
I, me you we, us he, him she, her they, them it one	mine yours ours his hers theirs n/a n/a	my your our his her their its one's

Table 3.3 presents *personal pronouns* used for personal reference. *Personal reference* is reference by means of function, through the category of person. Noun, pronoun and determiner classifiers denote the grammatical category of personal reference, whereas head and modifier classifiers denote its grammatical functions. Personal pronouns, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), fall into two subcategories in terms of their grammatical class: nominals (I, me) and determiners (mine, my). Personal pronouns also fall into two other categories in terms of their grammatical function: head and modifier. Heads can be NPs on their own assuming independent semantic and pragmatic roles in the morphosyntactic framework, whereas modifiers cannot. Modifiers are structurally dependent grammatical units. No matter which categories they belong to, personal pronouns usually have anaphorical reference to some noun phrases (NPs) in the preceding discourse. The following sentence taken from a student’s writing sample shows pronoun reference as a cohesive tie:

(41) J.K.Rowling makes a smooth transition throughout the story. *She* gives her readers some hints about what is going to happen.

Both “her” and “she” in example (41) refer anaphorically to “J.K.Rowling,” tying the second sentence to the first.

In this study, however, the first- and second-person pronouns (e.g., *I* and *you*) were not counted as cohesive devices, since each of them has no anaphoric or cataphoric reference to another lexical item.

Table 3.4 illustrates *demonstrative reference* (deictic reference) categorised into grammatical class of either determiner or adverb and grammatical function as modifier or adjunct.

**Table 3.4 Demonstrative Reference**

<b>(Function)</b> <b>Modifier/Head</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Modifier</b>
<b>(Class)</b> <b>Determiner</b>	<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Determiner</b>
this, these that, those	here, now there, then	the

*Demonstrative reference* is reference by location, on a scale of proximity. Determiners and adverb classifiers denote the grammatical category of demonstrative reference, whereas modifiers, head and adjunct classifiers denote its grammatical functions. Demonstrative pronouns also share reference with the preceding discourse. An example of a student’s writing in the pilot study illustrates this point:



- (42) Besides the proficient instructors, TU also has many useful learning aids in economic information such as systematically collected economic data released from public and private sectors, economic journals both in Thai and English versions, and the perfect library. *These* beneficial tools will support their students to success in academic study.

In this example, cohesion is established through co-reference between “*These* beneficial tools” and “many useful learning aids.”

Table 3.5 presents the major lexical items used to achieve comparative reference.

**Table 3.5 Comparative Reference**

(Function) Modifier	Submodifier/Adjunct
(Class) Adjective	Adverb
same, identical, equal	identically
similar, additional	similarly, likewise
other, different, else	differently, otherwise
better, more	so, more, less, equally

Table 3.5 presents two types of *comparative reference*: adjectives and adverbs. *Comparative reference* is indirect reference by means of identity or similarity. The adjective and adverb categories denote the grammatical category of comparative reference, whereas the modifier, submodifier, and adjunct categories denote the grammatical functions.

They perform grammatical functions as modifiers and submodifiers/adjuncts. These comparative adjectives or adverbs indirectly connect two referential NPs through comparison. Example (43) illustrates this point:

(43) T-unit analysis is a valid tool for measuring cohesion. F-unit analysis is an *equally* valid tool for measuring coherence.

The adverb “equally” compares the NPs of the two sentences and ties them together.

### 3.5.4.1.2 Conjunction

In this study, conjunction is also examined. Halliday and Hasan (1976) divided *conjunction* into four semantic categories: *additive*, *adversative*, *causal* and *temporal*. *Additive conjunction* refers to the use of conjunction to signify the semantic addition of propositions. *Adversative conjunction* refers to the semantic relation that is “contrary to expectation” (Halliday and Hasan: 1976: 250). *Causal conjunction* signifies the relation of cause. *Temporal conjunction* refers to the relation of sequence in time of two clauses. These four categories of conjunction can also be subcategorised into four groups: *simple*, *complex*, *apposition* and *comparison*. Examples of each of these categories are provided in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Semantic Categories of Conjunction Relations

	Simple	Complex	Apposition	Comparison
Additive	and and also nor, or or else	furthermore in addition besides	that is I mean for instance thus	likewise similarly the same by contrast
Adversative	yet though only but however	in fact actually as a matter of fact but, and	instead rather on the contrary	in any case anyhow at any rate
Causal	so, then hence therefore	for it follows to this end because	then otherwise	in this respect in that regard aside from this



	Simple	Complex	Apposition	Comparison
Temporal	then next	at once thereupon soon	first next finally	up to now to sum up in short

Most of the conjunctions are easily identified. However, the conjunction *and* and *or* cause some problems. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), the words ‘and’ and ‘or’ can be either “conjunctive” or “coordinate”. Playing a conjunctive role, both conjunctions join two clauses and the context may involve a “shift in the participants from one sentence to the next” (235). However, performing a coordinate function, the words *and* and *or* only join two equal parts within a clause with little contribution to cohesion across clause boundaries. In this study, then, the word *and* or *or* or any other word which is used as a conjunction is considered to be a cohesive tie. The coordinate *and* or *or* or any other connector is not considered to be a cohesive tie. Below are examples of these two types of *and*:

- (44) The student wrote a topic sentence, supporting details *and* a concluding sentence.
- (45) The student took a writing course *and* his writing skill was improved.

The *and* in (44) performs a coordinate function, whereas the *and* in (45) performs a conjunctive function.

Therefore, the coordinate “and,” as used in (44), was not counted in this study. On the other hand, the conjunctive “and,” as used in (45) was counted as a cohesive tie in this study.

**3.5.4.1.3 The Coding System for Cohesion Analysis**

In counting cohesive ties in the students’ essays in this study, the researcher ignored spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and errors in using these cohesive ties. A total of seven variables have been used in the data analysis. The coding system used in this study followed the system originally proposed by Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) (see Appendix F). The variables used for identifying cohesive ties in the students’ essays are presented in Table 3.7.

**Table 3.7 Variables for the Coding System**

Variable Codes	Cohesive Ties
R1	Pronominal
R2	Demonstratives
R3	Comparatives
C1	Additive
C2	Adversative
C3	Causal
C4	Temporal

**3.5.4.1.4 Analytical Procedures for Cohesion Analysis**

The analyses of the data in the main study were conducted by the following procedures. First, the researcher used the modified models to code each cohesive tie and count the frequency of different types of cohesive ties in the data. As the students were assigned to compose an essay of 500 words for each mode, the counting of the cohesive ties was done with the first 500 words in an essay; the rest of the essay was not analysed in terms of cohesion. For an essay that consisted of less than 500 words, the entire composition was analysed. The purpose of this counting system was to ensure that the mean values of cohesive ties in all essays were based on the same numbers of words. The data were



expected to reveal variations in the use of cohesion between the experimental group and the control group, and their proficiency levels in the use of cohesion in writing.

Then the statistical analysis of cohesive ties was conducted to test the statistical significant differences in the use of cohesion between the pre-test essays and the post-test essays of each group and across the groups, and between the first drafts and the revised drafts of the experimental group. Text analyses were also used to examine the data in great depth especially when examining the subjects' treatment of various cohesive ties. The statistical procedures were then applied on the data.

To perform statistical analyses of the data for this study, the researcher took great caution in selecting a statistical test appropriate for the data collected. There are primarily four types of data used in most statistical analyses: nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio. Nominal data consist of a set of categories that have different names but do not make any quantitative distinctions between categories. Ordinal data involve a set of categories that are organised in an ordered sequence (ranking order) and measurement is made in terms of size or magnitude. Interval data, however, involve a set of categories (like an ordinal scale) with the additional requirement that the categories form a series of intervals that are exactly the same size (equal-sized intervals) (Gravetter and Wallnau: 1996: 19). Ratio data have all the features of an interval scale, but add an absolute zero point. That is, on a ratio scale, a value of zero indicates none (a complete absence) of the variable being measured (Gravetter and Wallnau: 1996: 20).

In the light of these data categorising criteria, the data in the current study are considered to be ratio data. Although they are not score data, they approximate score data because they involve counts with a possibility of an absolute zero point. Also, to compare two groups, a '*t*-test' is computed "to check whether we have got a generalisable result or whether the score is likely to be merely an artefact of random variation" (Dörnyei: 2007: 215). As a result, independent-samples *t*-tests were selected to measure the mean differences of cohesive ties between essays from the experimental group and those from control groups, i.e. the pre-test and the post-test essays composed by the subjects of the

two groups. Paired-samples *t*-tests were employed to measure the mean differences of cohesive devices between the pre-test essays and the post-test essays from the same group (within the experimental group or the control group) and between the first drafts and the revised drafts produced by the experimental group.

Another rationale for selecting *t*-tests for the present study is that *t*-tests are also appropriate for analysing near-score data. In many fields of behavioral sciences such as psychology and sociology, *t*-tests are often used to measure data other than exact score data. For example, *t*-tests are used to analyse the difference between the number of words recalled within a certain unit of time by two groups of people in an experiment (Gravetter and Wallnau: 1996: 20). Two-sample independent measures *t*-tests were conducted to analyse the cohesive ties of different categories and subcategories as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976).

#### **3.5.4.2 Hoey's Model and Operationalisations**

This study follows Hoey's (1991) model for lexical analysis, which was used to analyse the lexical cohesion in the students' expository essays. This model presents the analysis of lexical cohesion in a text by identifying lexical ties that provide cohesive connections between sentences. According to Hoey (1991), sentences are considered to be "linked" when these ties involve *reiteration* of a lexical item. Inter-sentential links can be determined by the similarity between all the sentences with which each adjacent sentence shares lexical items. Measuring similarity between two sentences is a means by which lexical cohesion in text can be identified, and any two sentences that contain an above-average number of links are identified as "bonded" sentences, contributing to the organisation of a text.

Lexical items, which are words or groups of words with particular meanings, can share semantic relations according to their meanings in certain forms, e.g. synonyms. In this study, Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis model was simplified so that comparisons could be made more easily between essay sets regarding the use of lexical cohesion. In the



analysis of sentences in the students' essays, Hoey's (1991) terms were used and lines were drawn between the items identified as reiterations. Fragments were counted as individual sentences and run-on sentences with comma splices were counted as two individual sentences. After the numbers of links, or reiterations, between pairs of sentences were counted and entered in matrices, the number of bonds in a given text (i.e. a student's essay) was calculated.

#### **3.5.4.2.1 Categories of Reiteration and Analytical Procedures for Lexical Analysis**

In Hoey's (1991) model, reiteration between sentences was classified into eight categories: simple lexical repetition, complex lexical repetition, simple mutual paraphrase, simple partial paraphrase, complex paraphrase, substitution, co-reference and ellipsis.

The types of reiteration analysed in this study included (1) simple lexical repetition, (2) complex lexical repetition, (3) simple mutual paraphrase, (4) simple partial paraphrase and (5) complex paraphrase. The following explanations and examples of these types of reiteration have been taken from Hoey (1991).

*Simple lexical repetition* is identified by a link between two lexical items, the first of which is repeated in a subsequent sentence without "greater alteration than is entirely explicable in terms of a closed grammatical paradigm" (53). For instance, the words "bears" and "bear" in sentence 5 in the following example are simple repetitions of the word "bears" in sentence 3. The only variation between each pair of words is entirely explicable in terms of the singular or plural paradigm.

3. Many wild *bears* have become ‘garbage junkies’, feeding from dumps around human developments....
5. Although some biologists deny that the mind–altering drug was responsible for uncharacteristic behaviour of this particular *bear*, no search has been done into the effects of giving grizzly *bears* or other mammals repeated doses of phencyclidine.

(Hoey: 1991: 52)

*Complex lexical repetition* is identified by a repetitive link between two lexical items that “share a lexical morpheme, but are not formally identical” or which “are formally identical, but have different grammatical functions” (55). For example, the word *drugging* in sentence 4 is a complex lexical repetition of the word *drug* in sentence 1.

1. A *drug* known to produce violent reactions in humans has been used for sedating grizzly bears *Ursus arctos* in Montana, USA, according to a report in *The New York Times*....
4. To avoid potentially dangerous clashes between them and humans, scientists are trying to rehabilitate the animals by *drugging* them and releasing them in uninhabited areas.

(Hoey: 1991: 52)

In this study, *superordinate*, *hyponymy* and *co-reference* were also analysed as repetitions. For example, the words *bears* (hyponymy) and *animals* (superordinate) would be in a repetitive link only if the former precedes the latter in a text. The words *Augustus* and *the Emperor* would also be treated as repetitions (70).



*Simple mutual paraphrase* is identified by a link between two lexical items, one of which “may substitute for another in context without loss or gain in specificity and with no discernible change in meaning” (62). As an illustration, the word *produce* in sentence 1 and the word *causes* in sentence 2 are simple mutual paraphrases.

1. A drug known to *produce* violent reactions in humans has been used for sedating grizzly bears *Ursus arctos* in Montana, USA, according to a report in *The New York Times*. 2. After one bear, known to be a peaceable animal, killed and ate camper in an unprovoked attack, scientists discovered it had been tranquillized 11 times with phencyclidine, or ‘angel dust’, which *causes* hallucinations and sometimes gives the user an irrational feeling of destructive power....

(Hoey: 1991: 52)

*Simple partial paraphrase* is identified by a link between two lexical items, only either of which may substitute for the other and not vice versa. This type of simple paraphrase “works in one direction only” (62). For instance, in the following paragraph, the word *volume* in sentence 1 and the word *book* in sentence 2 are simple partial paraphrase. In this particular context, “the following volume” can be replaced by “the following book”, but “the volume does not purport” does not seem to be able to replace “the book does not purport”.

1. What is attempted in *the following volume* is to present to the reader a series of actual excerpts from the writings of the greatest political theorists of the past; selected and arranged so as to show the mutual coherence of various parts of an author's thought and his historical relation to his predecessors or successors; and accompanied by introductory notes and intervening comments designed to assist the understanding of the meaning and importance of the doctrine quoted. 2. The *book does not purport* to be a history of political theory, with quotations interspersed to illustrate the history.

(Hoey: 1991: 63)

*Complex paraphrase* is identified by a link between two lexical items in one of the three situations.

1. Complex paraphrase is applicable to any pair of words that are *antonyms*, such as happy/unhappy, audible/inaudible and contented and discontented (64).

2. Complex paraphrase may involve a link between two lexical items, each of which shares another link with another lexical item in a given text. For example, if in a text the word *writer* is a complex repetition of the word *writings* and it also is a simple paraphrase of the word *author*, then the link between the word *writings* and the word *author* is that of complex paraphrase (65). Another example is shown by the link between the word *drug* and the word *tranquillized* in the following paragraph. These two words have a complex paraphrase link as a result of the complex repetition link between the word *drugging* and the word *drug*, and of the simple paraphrase link between the word *drugging* and the word *tranquillized*. This type of link is also termed "putative link" (65).



(1) A *drug* known to *produce* violent reactions in humans has been used for sedating grizzly bears *Ursus arctos* in Montana, USA, according to a report in *The New York Times*. (2) After one bear, known to be a peaceable animal, killed and ate camper in an unprovoked attack, scientists discovered it had been *tranquillized* 11 times with phencyclidine, or 'angel dust', which *causes* hallucinations and sometimes gives the user an irrational feeling of destructive power.... (4) To avoid potentially dangerous clashes between them and humans, scientists are trying to rehabilitate the animals by *drugging* them and releasing them in uninhabited areas...

(Hoey: 1991: 66)

3. Complex paraphrase may involve a link between two lexical items in the same way as the second situation but without a "mediator". That is, in this subtype of complex paraphrase, only two lexical items, and not all the three, are present in a text. In such a situation, the missing lexical item, or the mediator, must be able to paraphrase exactly one of the items and repeat the other. If the missing item "were to be substituted for the item it paraphrases there would be no discernible difference in our interpretation of the text" (66).

In the following paragraph, the word *teacher* in sentence 25 can be considered as a complex paraphrase of the word *instruction* in sentence 23. The missing lexical item in this text is *teaching*, which can substitute exactly for *instruction* in this context and which links with *teacher* in terms of repetition.

(23) Some of the greatest political writers have believed themselves to be offering such a system of practical *instruction*, and many students of their works in the past have undoubtedly sought, and may have found in their pages that practical guidance which they have professed to offer. (24) But this is certainly not the advantage which a modern reader can be promised

from a study of their works. (25) This entire conception of politics as an art and of the political philosopher as the *teacher* of it rests upon assumptions which it is impossible to accept.

(Hoey: 1991: 66-67)

As *referential ties* in the students' essays were analysed by Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion analysis model, they were not analysed by Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis model in this study. Also, as discussed in 3.5.4.1, since *substitution* and *ellipsis* are uncommon in the student writing corpus, they were not analysed in this study.

In the lexical analysis of this study, lexical items whose links were identified included all content words, i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, as well as phrases beginning with these parts of speech. Concepts were also included in the analysis where a group of words referred to one psychological construct or collocated, such as *social responsibility* and *true knowledge*. In addition, when any lexical item occurred twice in two different sentences, only one reiteration was counted.

#### **3.5.4.2.2 Analysis of Links and Bonds in Text**

After all reiterative links in an essay were identified, they were counted and entered in a table. Then the entire number of links in the whole essay was identified so that bonds in the essay were calculated. In Hoey (1991)'s model, a bond, which is a connection between a pair of sentences that has the number of links at or above the threshold of links in each text, reveals how sentences in the text are connected. When bonds in the whole text are identified together, a network of bonds is created so the development of the topic throughout the text can be seen.

In this study, the number of reiterative links in each student's essay from both the experimental and control group was identified through the lexical analysis and then was added to the numbers of links in other essays in the same group. Links that were analysed



in this study were divided into two main types: repetition and paraphrase. The mean value of the links in each set of essays was compared with that in another set of essays to find out the difference in the use of lexical cohesion between the pre- and post-tests of each group, the pre- and post-tests between the experimental and control groups, and the experimental group's expository essays and their revised drafts.

Subsequently, the number of bonds generated from the reiterative links in each student's essay from both the experimental and control group was identified through Hoey' (1991) lexical analysis and then the number was added to the numbers of links in other essays in the same group. The mean value of the bonds in each set of essays was compared with that in another set of essays to find out the difference in the usage of bonds between the pre- and post-tests of each group, the pre- and post-tests between the experimental and control groups, and the experimental group's expository essays and their revised drafts.

To clarify how the links and bonds were identified in this study, the extract on the following page is provided as an example. This paragraph has been taken from a student's essay.

(6) The first important cause of recent rise in the rates of divorce is that women have changed roles completely. (7) In the past, men earned the money to support families financially, while women only worked in the home and looked after the children and the family, so women had no money and had to depend on their husband's money. (8) It was too difficult for most women in the past to separate from their husbands. (9) These situations have entirely changed today. (10) The equality between men and women in roles are very clear, thus women can work outside to earn money, whereas men are responsible for some household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing and taking caring of children. (11) It can be clearly seen that women are independent from husbands as they can earn money by to support themselves. (12) Accordingly, the divorce rates have risen.

After all links are identified, they are entered in a matrix so that the number of repetition and paraphrases of each pair of the sentences can be counted. Table 3.8 presents the number of links and the lexical items that are linked in each pair of the sentences in the text. The following abbreviations are used in the matrix:

- sr = simple lexical repetition
- cr = complex lexical repetition
- smp = simple mutual paraphrase
- spp = simple partial paraphrase
- cp = complex paraphrase



Table 3.8 Identification of Links

6					
7 women-women (sr)	7				
8 women-women (sr)	women-women (sr)				
	the past-the past (sr)				
	husband-husband (sr)				
		8			
9 changed-changed (sr)					
completely-entirely (smp)					
		9			
10 women-women (sr)	women-women (sr)	women-women (sr)			
roles-roles (sr)	men-men (sr)				
	earned the money-to earn money (cr)				
	worked in the home-responsible for some household tasks (spp)				
	looked after the children-taking care of children (cr)				
	worked in the home-work outside (cp)				
		10			
11 women-women (sr)	women-women (sr)	women-women (sr)		women-women (sr)	
	depend-independent (cp)	husband-husband (sr)		to earn money-earn money (cr)	
	husband-husband (sr)				
	earned the money-earn money (cr)				
	support-support (sr)				
		11			
12 rise-risen (cr)					
rates of divorce-divorce rate (sr)					



When the numbers of all links in each pair of the sentences have been counted, they are entered in another table so that the numbers of bonds will be identified. A bond is indicated by the number of links in each pair of the sentences at or above the considered threshold of links in each text. The number of bonds can suggest how sentences in a text are connected to one another, and a net of bonds can contribute to the better understanding of a topic a text is written on and shows how the topic is developed throughout the text. The number of links between lexis from Table 3.8 is presented in Table 3.9.

**Table 3.9 Number of Links between Lexis**

	6					
7	<b>1</b>					
		7				
8	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>				
			8			
9	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>			
				9		
10	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>		
					10	
11	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	
						11
12	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Based on the information in Table 3.9, sentences 7 and 8 are in a strong link with three reiterative links between them. So are sentences 7 and 11 with five reiterative links. The strongest link is evident in the connection between sentences 7 and 10, where up to six reiterative links can be identified. From the lexical analysis, it can be seen that sentence 7 has the most number of links with three other sentences in the paragraph. The other sentences in this paragraph can be considered to have weaker intersentential links. Then the number of bonds can be identified by the threshold of links in this text. Hoey (1991)



suggests that a bond consists of at least three links between each pair of sentences. Thus, with the threshold of three, there are three bonds that have been found in this seven-sentence paragraph. Specifically, sentence 7 is bonded to sentences 8, 10 and 11.

Then, the data were analysed for statistical results. Independent-samples *t*-tests were used to measure the mean differences of links and bonds between essays from the experimental group and those from control groups, i.e. the pre-test and the post-test essays composed by the subjects of the two groups. Paired-samples *t*-tests were used to measure the mean differences of links and bonds between the pre-test essays and the post-test essays from the same group (within the experimental group or the control group) and between the first drafts and the revised drafts produced by the experimental group.

### **3.5.5 Application of Teacher Written Feedback**

The present quasi-experimental study was aimed at investigating the effects of teacher written feedback and revisions of student initial drafts on the students' proficiency in using cohesion in their expository writing. The teacher written comments on the students' essays were interventional and the rewriting of their initial drafts was required. The main purpose of the teacher written feedback was to offer corrections or suggestions for improvement, not to appropriate the students' texts. In this study, the unnaturalness of an experimental situation was somewhat ameliorated in that the writing assignments were actual assignments for a writing course and the researcher was the participants' actual teacher. Time pressure was not a factor as the students were allowed to compose and revise their essays outside the classroom; they were able to complete their writing assignments during their own free time.

#### **3.5.5.1 Procedures for Providing Feedback**

In this study, the teacher/researcher provided comments on the students' expository essays regarding their use of cohesion. The expository essays that received feedback on cohesion were three essays completed by the students in the experimental group during

the writing course. The expository essay modes under study included *cause-and-effect*, *comparison/contrast* and *classification* (see Appendix D for writing lessons and prompts). The written comments used as feedback were intended to help the students revise their initial drafts. Some of the written comments corrected cohesion errors; others advised the students about how to correct cohesion errors or improve their use of cohesion in their writing. After the teacher's feedback delivery, the students' initial drafts were then returned to the owners of the essays for revision. The students handed in their revised drafts for further investigation; the teacher provided corrective and/or indirect feedback on grammar and other types of writing problems. Then scores were assigned to students' revised essays.

### **3.5.5.2 Data Analysis**

This section provides an explanation for the analysis of the data with regard to (1) the teacher written feedback given to the students' initial drafts and (2) the students' revisions in response to the teacher written comments in their revised drafts.

#### **3.5.5.2.1 Analysis of Teacher Written Feedback**

The data in this section consisted primarily of the students' initial drafts that had received teacher written feedback on cohesion, and their revised drafts. Then teacher written comments in each essay were analysed in terms of categories of comments determined by the location of a comment and by the function of a comment. The students' revised drafts were subsequently analysed in terms of the students' correspondence to the teacher written feedback earlier provided in their initial drafts. Frequency counts were conducted and percentage was calculated to yield results pertaining to these two types of data.

The location of a comment was involved with whether a comment was placed at the specific point in a student's initial draft that corresponded to the comment or whether a comment was placed at the end of a student's essay. These two locations were referred to as "site" and "end" respectively. Although previous research studies indicated that the



location of the comments had no effects on the quality of writing (Stiff: 1967; Bata: 1972 cited in Fathman and Whalley: 1990: 179), localisation, or pinpointing the source or location of the problem and/or solution, was considered as appropriate feedback on writing (Nilson: 2003). When the location of a problem in a lengthy writing task is specified, a student is offered a second opportunity to detect a problem that may have been overlooked and then is more likely to be able to implement the feedback.

The teacher written feedback in this study was classified into six categories of teacher comments. Table 3.10 presents the categories of comments and their applications in this analysis.

**Table 3.10 Categories of Teacher Written Feedback and their Applications**

Categories	Applications
Corrective Site Feedback / Comments	The teacher provides correction.
Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback / Comments	The teacher both provides correction and provides a rule or an explanation of the correction.
Advisory Site Feedback / Comments	The teacher provides a rule, offers a direction and/or labels an area that needs revision.
Indicative Site Feedback / Comments	The teacher suggests that an area needs revision without correcting, explaining, labeling, or directing. The teacher sometimes uses a question to elicit a response to a particular problem.

Categories	Applications
Advisory End Feedback / Comments	The teacher provides, at the end of the draft, a direction and/or explanation for an area that needs revision.
Indicative End Feedback / Comments	The teacher suggests, at the end of the draft, that an area needs revision without correcting, explaining, labeling, or directing. The teacher sometimes uses a question to elicit a response to a particular problem.

Examples of the six categories of teacher written comments are provided in Chapter 5.

**3.5.5.2.2 Analysis of Students’ Responses to Teacher Written Feedback**

This analysis involves the examination of the students’ revisions in response to the teacher written feedback on cohesion in their initial drafts. The analysis of subsequent revision in this study was adapted from the analysis of successful and unsuccessful revisions in students’ essays developed by Conrad and Goldstein (1999). The students’ revised drafts were collected and analysed in terms of their correspondence to the teacher comments. Student moves related to the teacher comments were classified into three types.

1. *Complete correspondence to a teacher written comment* refers to student revision moves that matched the teacher’s purpose for providing a particular comment. Student moves with this type of correspondence took several forms, e.g. adding, deleting, substituting, moving words or phrases, copying a teacher-provided correction and rewriting a sentence or a paragraph.



2. *Partial correspondence to a teacher written comment* refers to student revision moves made when the student attempted to revise an area commented on, but the revision did not match the teacher's purpose in providing the comment.
3. *No correspondence to a teacher written comment* refers to student revision moves that were made when the student did not revise an area commented on by the teacher. In other words, the student made no change in his or her revised draft in response to the teacher comment provided in the initial draft; the student merely copied from the initial draft to the revised draft.

Examples of these three types of correspondence to the teacher written comments are provided in Chapter 5.

### **3.5.6 Analysis of Questionnaires**

A separate questionnaire was used to collect the students' data focusing on their perceptions and attitudes towards their own writing skills, teacher written feedback on cohesion, revisions of initial drafts and cohesion in writing. The results of the questionnaires were analysed by examining the Likert score and the distribution of answers to each question. Responses in the open-ended section were tallied and representative answers were reported in Chapter 6.

### **3.5.7 Analysis of Interviews**

The student responses in the semi-structured interviews were audio-taped, transcribed and analysed in light of salient themes and patterns. Based on this inductive analysis, the data were grouped into categories that reflected the major themes and patterns which had been identified in the transcripts (Brice: 2005). Then the selected student responses were reported in Chapter 6.

### **3.5.8 Inter-coder Reliability**

In this study, inter-coder reliability was conducted to measure agreement between coders as they applied codes to text data. The procedure was applied to the text analysis of cohesive ties (Halliday and Hasan: 1976) and lexical cohesion (Hoey: 1991). Additionally, it was implemented to the analysis of teacher written comments and types of student moves in response to the teacher comments.

To examine the inter-coder reliability of the cohesion analysis of the students' writing, a Thai instructor of English working for the Language Institute of Thammasat University was asked to analyse the students' initial drafts and revised drafts. The instructor earned a Ph.D in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching English as a Foreign Language from a university in the United States of America and mastered a very good command of the English language. She had been working as an English teacher for 21 years.

The researcher and the instructor agreed upon the coding scheme based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) coding system and Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis system for reiterative links and bonds. Then the instructor practiced coding cohesive ties, and reiterative links and bonds on three students' essays. Both the researcher and the instructor examined and compared the other's coding results and discussed the agreements and disagreements regarding the coding systems. Some native speaking teachers at the Language Institute, Thammasat University were consulted when certain language points were disputable. The coder later conducted the actual coding of cohesive ties and lexical cohesion used in students' pre-test, post-test, and expository essays (both initial drafts and revised drafts). Upon the completion of her coding, the coder's results were compared with those of the researcher and the average percentage of the inter-coder agreements on each piece of writing was calculated. The results, presented in Tables 3.11 and 3.12, revealed that the inter-coder agreements on cohesive ties and lexical analysis were very high.



**Table 3.11 Inter-coder Reliability of Cohesion Analysis**

Writing Tasks	Groups	Inter-coder Agreements
Pre-test essays	EXP	91%
Pre-test essays	CNT	95%
Post-test essays	EXP	94%
Post-test essays	CNT	94%
Cause-and-effect essays	EXP	92%
Cause-and-effect revised essays	EXP	89%
Comparison/Contrast essays	EXP	93%
Comparison/Contrast revised essays	EXP	87%
Classification essays	EXP	96%
Classification revised essays	EXP	95%

EXP = Experimental group

CNT = Control group

**Table 3.12 Inter-coder Reliability of Lexical Analysis**

Writing Tasks	Groups	Inter-coder Agreements
Pre-test essays	EXP	83%
Pre-test essays	CNT	81%
Post-test essays	EXP	85%
Post-test essays	CNT	82%
Cause-and-effect essays	EXP	87%
Cause-and-effect revised essays	EXP	81%
Comparison/Contrast essays	EXP	83%
Comparison/Contrast revised essays	EXP	88%
Classification essays	EXP	86%
Classification revised essays	EXP	84%

In this study, the categorisations of teacher written comments and student moves in response to the teacher comments were also examined by inter-coder reliability. Similar to the inter-coder reliability process for cohesion analysis and lexical analysis, that for the analysis of teacher written comments and student moves in response to the comments began with the researcher's and the instructor's agreeing upon the coding scheme of categories of teacher comments and types of student moves. After the coder finished coding the categories of teacher written comments on three students' initial drafts and then the student moves on three students' revised drafts, both the researcher and the instructor examined and compared the other's coding results and discussed the agreements and disagreements regarding the coding scheme. The coder was then given other expository essays (initial drafts) for the actual coding of categories of teacher comments in those essays. Upon the completion of her coding, the coder's results were compared with those of the researcher. After that, the coder analysed the types of student moves in response to the teacher written comments on the students' revised drafts. The average percentage of the inter-coder agreements on each piece of writing was calculated. The results, presented in Tables 3.13 and 3.14, revealed very high concurrences between the researcher's and the coder's agreements.

**Table 3.13 Inter-coder Reliability of Categories of Teacher Written Comments**

Writing Tasks	Groups	Inter-coder Agreements
Cause-and-effect essays	EXP	94%
Comparison/Contrast essays	EXP	97%
Classification essays	EXP	93%

EXP = Experimental group



**Table 3.14 Inter-coder Reliability of Student Moves in Response to the Teacher Written Comments**

Writing Tasks	Groups	Inter-coder Agreements
Cause-and-effect revised essays	EXP	95%
Comparison/Contrast revised essays	EXP	92%
Classification revised essays	EXP	94%

EXP = Experimental group

### 3.6. The Pilot Study

The present study was developed from the pilot study, which had been conducted earlier on a similar topic. The main purpose of the pilot study was to investigate pedagogical approaches to enhancing cohesion in Thai students' expository writing. The linguistic model applied in the pilot study was that proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the cohesion model discussing *co-reference*, *substitution*, *conjunction*, *ellipsis* and *lexical cohesion*.

#### 3.6.1 The Subjects

In the pilot study, the subjects included 60 Thai postgraduate students in the English for Careers Programme at the Language Institute, Thammasat University. All these students were native speakers of Thai who had graduated with Bachelor's or Master's degrees from various Thai universities. Their previous academic backgrounds were varied and their age ranged from 23 to 45. Prior to entering the postgraduate programme at the Language Institute, Thammasat University, they were required to take the University's English Proficiency Test for postgraduate studies (TU-GET) and the programme's admission test. The students all achieved a score of 550 or above, the minimum TU-GET score for admission to postgraduate programmes at Thammasat being 550.

These students took the Writing Skill Development course during their first term of the academic year 2005. The subjects were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. Each student was assigned to write expository essays which were developed through causal analysis, comparison-contrast and classification. There was a pre-test (the first essay) and post-test (the last essay) for both groups.

#### **3.6.1.1 The Experimental Group**

The 30 subjects in this group received explicit instruction on the use of cohesion (treatment). This included lectures, materials, and exercises which were provided consistently during the first half of the semester. After being taught how to craft each mode of essay, as well as the use of cohesive devices, both of general and specific types, the students were assigned to write the first draft of an essay on a topic of their choice. The essay topics were provided in the textbook *Engaging Writing* by Fitzpatrick (2005), used as the core course book. The students in this group were asked to write three expository essays, in addition to the pre-test and post-test essays. The modes of these essays were *causal analysis*, *comparison-contrast* and *classification*.

Upon checking each draft, the teacher/researcher provided comments (feedback) on the organisation of the written text, particularly those addressing the cohesiveness of ideas (intervention). No oral feedback (conferencing) was given due to the large number of subjects in this group. For the data analysis, however, only the students' pre-test and post-test essays were analysed, the expository essays and their revised versions being excluded from the pilot study.

#### **3.6.1.2 The Control Group**

The 30 subjects in this group were exposed to the traditional product-oriented approach to teaching expository writing. That is, they were asked to write pre-test and post-test essays, and three expository essays (on the same topics and with the same modes as those for the participants in the experimental group) and received scores for their writing. They



were shown some of their grammatical errors either explicitly through corrected forms or implicitly through circled or underlined words and phrases. No feedback on the use of cohesion was provided. Like that of the experimental group, the data analysis of the control group used only the students' pre-test and post-test essays, excluding the expository essays the students composed and rewrote during the course.

**3.6.2 Data Collection**

The data for the pilot study were collected during the first term of the academic year 2005 (June – September). A total of 120 essays were collected from the pre-test and the post-test of both groups. That is, 60 essays were obtained from the pre-test of both groups and the other 60 were obtained from the post-test of both groups. Table 3.15 provides details regarding the number of essays used in the pilot study.

**Table 3.15: Essays Used in the Pilot Study**

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Pre-test essays	30	30
Post-test essays	30	30
Total	60	60

**3.6.3 Data Analysis**

The data analysis started after the end of the first half of the term (where the teaching and discussions of expository writing ended). The cohesive elements in each piece of writing were located and identified by the KWI concordancer and by hand. All individual cohesive ties were counted, the elements were grouped into types according to the taxonomy proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and the frequency of each type was recorded. (Examples of cohesive devices are provided in 3.5.4.1, an earlier section of this chapter.) Then, independent-samples *t*-test was used to compare the results of the pre-tests and post-tests and the results of the expository essays from the experimental and

control groups. This statistical test revealed the number of cohesive ties used by the students in the experimental group as compared to the number of cohesive ties used by those in the control group. Paired-samples *t*-test was used to analyse the pre-tests and post-tests of the students in the same group. This statistical analysis revealed the progressive number of cohesive devices used by the same subjects in their expository essays (pre-tests and post-tests).

### **3.6.4 Results**

In the pilot study, an analysis of the data was conducted using Halliday's and Hasan's (1976) model to examine textual cohesion of the students' writing. In the following section, the results are reported in regard to the model's five parameters: *reference*, *substitution*, *ellipsis*, *conjunction* and *lexical cohesion* respectively. For each type of cohesive device, the results of the pre-tests and the post-tests within the experimental group (*n* = 30) and the control group (*n* = 30) and the results of the pre-test essays and the post-test essays between the two groups are reported.

#### **3.6.4.1 Reference**

Reference was analysed according to Halliday's and Hasan's (1976) classification: *personal*, *demonstrative* and *comparative*, although the distinction between anaphoric and cataphoric reference was not made. The results displayed in Tables 3.16 – 3.21 show differences in the use of co-reference in the students' pre-test and post-test essays, both in the same group and across groups.



**Table 3.16: Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	pre-test	20.30	5.17	-8.54	0.00*
	post-test	26.63	7.64		
Demonstrative	pre-test	7.47	2.39	-8.77	0.00*
	post-test	13.70	4.66		
Comparative	pre-test	2.30	1.58	-5.97	0.00*
	post-test	4.33	2.32		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 3.17: Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	pre-test	19.43	5.28	-0.18	0.86
	post-test	19.57	6.58		
Demonstrative	pre-test	8.03	2.59	-1.18	0.25
	post-test	8.57	3.05		
Comparative	pre-test	1.73	1.34	-1.33	0.19
	post-test	2.07	1.55		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 3.18: Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	experimental	26.63	7.64	3.84	0.00*
	control	19.57	6.58		
Demonstrative	experimental	13.70	4.66	5.05	0.00*
	control	8.57	3.05		
Comparative	experimental	4.33	2.32	4.44	0.00*
	control	2.07	1.55		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

With regard to personal reference, the results reveal that the experimental group uses significantly more personal pronouns in their post-test (mean = 26.63) than in their pre-test (mean = 20.30) ( $t = -8.54$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.16). On the other hand, there is no significant difference between the uses of personal reference in the pre-test and the post-test of the control group (see Table 3.17). The results also indicate that the experimental group uses more personal pronouns in the post-test essays than does the control group ( $t = 3.84$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.18).

The use of demonstrative reference in the two groups presents a similar case. Both groups use different numbers of demonstratives both in the pre-test and in the post-test. The experimental group uses considerably more demonstratives in their post-test (mean = 13.70) than in their pre-test (mean = 7.47) ( $t = -8.77$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.16), whereas there is no significant difference between the uses of personal reference in the pre-test and the post-test of the control group (see Table 3.17). There is a significant difference in the use of the demonstratives between the two groups' post-tests ( $t = 5.05$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.18).



The use of comparative reference in the two groups is quite limited although the experimental group uses more ties of this category in their post-test (mean = 4.33) than in their pre-test (mean = 2.30) ( $t = -5.97, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.16). However, there is no significant difference between the uses of comparative reference in the pre-test and the post-tests of the control group (see Table 3.17). From the findings, there is significant variation in the use of comparative reference between the two groups' post-tests ( $t = 4.44, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.18).

Regarding the use of reference ties as a whole, there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in their post-test essays (see Table 3.21). While the former uses a mean of 44.67 reference ties, the latter uses a mean of 30.20 ties. The  $t$  value is 7.25 and the significance level is 0.00 ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed). In the experimental group itself, there is statistically significant distinction in the use of overall reference between the pre-test essays (mean = 30.07) and the post-test essays (mean = 44.67) ( $t = -14.62, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.19). However, in the control group, there is no significant difference (sig.= 0.23) in the use of reference ties between the pre-test essays (mean = 29.20) and the post-test essays (mean = 30.20) ( $t = 1.22, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.20).

**Table 3.19: Comparison of the Use of Overall Reference between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Reference	pre-test	30.07	6.26	-14.62	0.00*
	post-test	44.67	8.51		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

**Table 3.20: Comparison of the Use of Overall Reference between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Reference	pre-test	29.20	5.90	-1.22	0.23
	post-test	30.20	6.86		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 3.21: Comparison of the Use of Overall Reference between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Reference	experimental	44.67	8.51	7.25	0.00*
	control	30.20	6.86		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**3.6.4.2 Substitution**

No substantial difference in terms of the use of substitution was found between the experimental group and the control group, and between the pre-test essays and the post-test essays in the same group of participants. In other words, no nominal, verbal or clausal substitution was found in either test of both groups. The lack of these cohesive ties might be due to the fact that ESL Thai students are not used to substitution as a way of achieving cohesion in writing and that substitution is more commonly found in dialogue, where “the typical sequence is based on pairs, or triads, or longer structures, that are related not so much by ideational as by interpersonal meaning” (Halliday: 1994: 337). Besides, nominal and verbal substitutes do not exist in Thai and there is only a small set of clausal substitutes used in Thai (Chanawangsa: 1986: 76-77).



#### **3.6.4.3 Ellipsis**

No cases of ellipsis were found in either the experimental group's essays or in the control group's essays. As discussed earlier, ellipsis is rare in academic writing (Carter: 1997; Faigley and Witte: 1981; Fitzgerald and Spiegel: 1986; Tierney and Mosenthal: 1983) and more common in dialogue (Halliday: 1994: 337). Therefore, no analysis of ellipsis was necessary and as discussed earlier in this chapter, ellipsis would be excluded from the main study.

#### **3.6.4.4 Conjunction**

Conjunction is used as a cohesive tie between clauses or sections of text so that a meaningful relationship between them can be demonstrated. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), conjunction can be categorised into four subtypes: additive, adversative, causal and temporal. In the pilot study, all these four types of conjunction were identified. The results exhibited in Tables 3.22 – 3.27 show differences in the use of conjunction in the student's pre-test and post-test essays, both in the same group and across groups.

**Table 3.22: Comparison of the Use of Conjunctions between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Additive	pre-test	8.20	4.30	-6.54	0.00*
	post-test	12.83	2.14		
Adversative	pre-test	7.40	1.69	-7.83	0.00*
	post-test	11.73	3.55		
Causal	pre-test	8.33	2.67	-4.81	0.00*
	post-test	12.63	5.05		
Temporal	pre-test	8.67	2.64	-6.38	0.00*
	post-test	14.77	5.95		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 3.23: Comparison of the Use of Conjunctions between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Additive	pre-test	8.50	3.58	0.56	0.58
	post-test	8.17	2.52		
Adversative	pre-test	7.43	1.85	-1.24	0.23
	post-test	8.10	3.22		
Causal	pre-test	7.83	2.46	-2.30	0.33
	post-test	9.13	3.90		
Temporal	pre-test	8.53	2.27	0.31	0.76
	post-test	8.33	3.29		

*p* < .05, two-tailed



**Table 3.24: Comparison of the Use of Conjunctions between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Additive	Experimental	12.83	4.30	4.24	0.00*
	Control	8.50	3.58		
Adversative	Experimental	11.73	3.55	4.15	0.00*
	Control	8.10	3.22		
Causal	Experimental	12.63	5.05	3.00	0.00*
	Control	9.13	3.90		
Temporal	Experimental	14.77	5.95	5.18	0.00*
	Control	8.33	3.29		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

There was some variation in the use of the specific categories of conjunction in the pilot study. All types of conjunctions are almost equally used with significant distinctions between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group and between the post-tests of the two groups. Specifically, while the pre-test of the experimental group has a mean of 8.20 in the use of additive conjunction, the post-test of this group has a mean of 12.83. The *t* value is 6.54 and the significant level is 0.00 (*p* < .05, two-tailed) (see Table 3.22). However, in the control group, there is no significant difference (sig.= 0.58) in the use of reference ties between the pre-test essays (mean = 8.50) and the post-test essays (mean = 8.17) (*t* = 0.56, *p* < .05, two-tailed) (see Table 3.23).

Also, there is remarkable distinction in the use of additive conjunctions between the post-test of the experimental group and that of the control group. Specifically, the control group uses much fewer additive conjunctions (mean = 8.50) than does the experimental group (mean = 12.83) (*t* = 4.24, *p* < .05, two-tailed) (see Table 3.24).

The other types of conjunction are also different in the amount of use between the pre-tests and the post-tests, and between the experimental group and the control group. The

experimental group uses substantially more adversative conjunctions in their post-test (mean = 11.73) than in their pre-test (mean = 7.40) ( $t = -7.83, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.22). However, there is no significant difference between the uses of adversative conjunctions in the pre-test and the post-test of the control group (see Table 3.23). From these findings, there is considerable difference in the use of adversative conjunctions between the post-test essays of the experimental group and the control group. As shown in Table 3.24, the means of the post-tests completed by the experimental group and the control group are 11.73 and 8.10 respectively. The experimental group uses more adversative conjunctions in their post-test essays than does the control group, and there is significant variation between them ( $t = 4.15, p < .05$ , two-tailed).

Regarding the use of causal conjunction, the experimental group has a significantly higher mean in their post-test (12.63) than in their pre-test (8.33) ( $t = -4.81, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.22). On the other hand, there is no significant difference between the uses of causal conjunction in the pre-test and post-test of the control group (see Table 3.23). As shown in Table 3.24, the post-test of the experimental group has more causal conjunctions (12.63) than does the post-test of the control group (9.13). Obviously, there is statistically significant difference between them ( $t = 3.00, p < .05$ , two-tailed).

The last type of conjunction, temporal conjunction, is also used with variation between the pre-tests and the post-tests, and between the two groups. The experimental group uses substantially more temporal conjunctions in their post-test (mean = 14.77) than in their pre-test (mean = 8.67) ( $t = -6.38, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.22). Nevertheless, there is no significant difference between the uses of temporal conjunction in the pre-test and post-test of the control group (see Table 3.23). The results also revealed that there is significant difference between the uses of causal conjunction in the post-test of the experimental group (14.77) ( $t = 5.18, p < .05$ , two-tailed) and the post-test of the control group (8.33) (see Table 3.24).



From the findings reported in Table 3.25, there are significant variations in the use of all types of conjunctions in the post-test essays between the experimental and the control groups ( $t = 8.67$ , sig. = 0.00,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed), and between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group (means = 32.60 and 51.97, respectively) ( $t = -12.80$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.26). However, no statistically significant variation is found in the control group ( $t = -1.84$ ,  $p > .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.27).

**Table 3.25: Comparison of the Use of Overall Conjunctions between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Conjunction	experimental	51.97	9.55	8.67	0.00*
	control	34.07	6.06		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

**Table 3.26: Comparison of the Use of Overall Conjunctions between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Conjunction	pre-test	32.60	4.56	-12.80	0.00*
	post-test	51.97	9.55		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

**Table 3.27: Comparison of the Use of Overall Conjunctions between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Conjunction	pre-test	31.97	4.95	-1.84	0.08
	post-test	34.07	6.06		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

3.6.4.5 Lexical Cohesion

As discussed earlier in this chapter, only certain categories of lexical cohesion were identified and analysed in the pilot study. These included *same word*, *synonym*, *superordinate* and *general word*. Tables 3.28 – 3.33 show results of the use of lexical cohesion in the pre-test and post-test essays of both the experimental and control groups.

**Table 3.28: Comparison of the Use of Lexical Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Same	pre-test	1.13	1.63	-5.48	0.00*
	post-test	2.17	2.10		
Synonym	pre-test	0.73	1.36	-2.64	0.01*
	post-test	1.17	1.21		
Superordinate	pre-test	0.67	1.35	-4.65	0.00*
	post-test	1.70	1.76		
General	pre-test	0.37	0.76	-5.14	0.00*
	post-test	1.13	1.33		

*p* < .05, two-tailed



**Table 3.29: Comparison of the Use of Lexical Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Same	pre-test	0.97	1.45	2.18	0.04*
	post-test	0.57	1.01		
Synonym	pre-test	0.57	0.97	0.21	0.84
	post-test	0.53	0.97		
Superordinate	pre-test	0.53	1.07	0.39	0.70
	post-test	0.47	0.73		
General	pre-test	0.23	0.50	1.00	0.33
	post-test	0.13	0.35		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 3.30: Comparison of the Use of Conjunctions between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Same	experimental	2.17	2.10	3.76	0.00*
	control	0.57	1.01		
Synonym	experimental	1.17	1.21	2.24	0.03*
	control	0.53	0.97		
Superordinate	experimental	1.70	1.76	3.54	0.00*
	control	0.47	0.73		
General	experimental	1.13	1.33	3.98	0.00*
	control	0.13	0.35		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

The results revealed that repetition (same word) is mostly used in the students' essays. The experimental group uses more repetition in their post-test (mean = 2.17) than in their pre-test (mean = 1.13). There is statistically significant distinction in the use of repetition

among the experimental group's students ( $t = -5.48, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.28). However, the control group uses less repetition in their post-test (mean = 0.57) than in their pre-test (0.97) and there was statistically significant variation in the use of repetition between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group ( $t = 2.18, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.29). There is also significant difference between the post-tests of the two groups; that is, the experimental group uses substantially more repetition in their post-test (mean = 2.17) than does the control group (mean = 0.57) ( $t = 3.76, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.30).

The superordinate is the second most frequently used in the students' writing in the pilot study, particularly in their post-test essays. Substantially more superordinates are found in the experimental group's post-test essays (mean = 1.70) than in their pre-test essays (mean = 0.67), with statistically significant distinction ( $t = -4.65, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.28). Conversely, there is no statistically significant variation in the use of superordinates between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group ( $t = 0.39, p > .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.29). There is statistically significant variation in the use of superordinates between the two groups' post-tests with more superordinates used by the experimental group than by the control group ( $t = 3.54, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.30).

With regard to synonyms, the experimental group uses more synonyms in their post-test essays (mean = 1.17) than in their pre-test essays (mean = 0.73), with statistically significant difference ( $t = -2.64, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.28). However, there is no significant difference between the uses of synonyms in the pre-test and post-test of the control group (see Table 3.29). The mean difference in the use of synonyms between the two groups in their post-tests exhibits statistically significant distinction with more synonyms used in the experimental group's essays than in the control group's essays. ( $t = 2.24, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.30).

In the last category of lexical cohesion, general words, it has been found that more general words are used in the experimental group's post-test (mean = 1.13) than in their



pre-test (mean = 0.37) ( $t = -5.14, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.28). However, there is no significant difference between the uses of general words in the pre-test and post-test of the control group (see Table 3.29). The mean difference in the use of general words between the two groups' post-tests is statistically significant with more general words used in the experimental group's essays than in the control group's essays ( $t = 3.98, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.30).

According to the findings in Table 3.31, although the amount of lexical cohesion is quite limited in the students' essays, there are significant variations in the use of all types of lexical cohesion in the post-test essays between the experimental and the control groups ( $t = 7.25, p < .05$ , two-tailed), and between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group (means = 2.90 and 6.17, respectively) ( $t = -8.33, p < .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.32). Within the control group, no significant variation was found; on the contrary, the mean of the post-test essays (1.70) is lower than that of the pre-test essays (2.30) ( $t = 1.71, p > .05$ , two-tailed) (see Table 3.33).

**Table 3.31: Comparison of the Use of Overall Lexical Cohesion between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Lexical Cohesion	experimental	6.17	2.88	7.25	0.00*
	control	1.70	1.77		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

**Table 3.32: Comparison of the Use of Overall Lexical Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Lexical Cohesion	pre-test	2.90	2.38	-8.33	0.00*
	post-test	6.17	2.88		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

**Table 3.33: Comparison of the Use of Overall Lexical Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Lexical Cohesion	pre-test	2.30	2.26	1.71	0.10
	post-test	1.70	1.76		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

The analysis of overall cohesion in the students' essays revealed that, according to Table 3.34, more cohesive ties are used in the post-test essays of the experimental group (mean = 105.23) than in their pre-test essays (mean = 66.80). There is statistically significant variation between the two tests (*t* = -18.21, sig. = 0.00, *p* < .05, two-tailed). However, there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test essays and the post-test essays of the control group (*t* = -1.46, *p* > .05, two-tailed) as shown in Table 3.35.

**Table 3.34: Comparison of the Use of Overall Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p.
All ties	pre-test	66.80	8.37	-18.21	0.00*
	post-test	105.23	13.57		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 3.35: Comparison of the Use of Overall Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
All ties	pre-test	64.70	7.38	-1.46	0.16
	post-test	66.90	9.47		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

A comparison of the use of overall cohesion between the post-test essays of both groups revealed that, according to Table 3.36, significantly more cohesive ties are found in the



post-test essays of the experimental group (mean = 105.23) than in the post-test essays of the control group (mean = 66.90) ( $t = 12.69$ , sig. = 0.00,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed).

**Table 3.36: Comparison of the Use of Overall Cohesion between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
All ties	experimental	105.23	13.57	12.69	0.00*
	control	66.90	9.47		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

### 3.6.5 Limitations of the pilot study

The pilot study, however, is still inadequate and lacking in several research-oriented aspects. First, there was no revision of the students’ essays. After the students received feedback regarding the use of cohesion in their first writing, they were not asked to revise and rewrite it. Even though the underlying assumption was that the students would make better use of cohesion in their subsequent essays, revised first drafts would have yielded more accurate data for the analysis of the use of cohesion. Second, Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) cohesion analysis model was not adequate to measure the use of lexical cohesion in student essays. Another model should be applied so that the cohesiveness of text in terms of lexical cohesion can be identified and enhanced. Finally, there was no triangulation in the pilot study. Becoming aware of the significance of triangulation, the researcher believes that the mixing of data or methods will be useful in the way that “diverse viewpoints and standpoints cast light on a topic” (Olsen: 2004: 3).

### 3.6.6 Discussion

The purpose of the pilot study was to examine how cohesion in Thai students’ expository writing could be improved. The major objectives of the study were (1) to describe the treatment of cohesion in students’ expository essays, (2) to assess the validity of the

theoretical frameworks and (3) to assess the validity of the methodology to be used in the main study.

The research results revealed that after formal instruction and feedback delivery, the overall use of cohesion in students' essays significantly increased. As described above, more cohesive ties were used in the post-test essays of the experimental group than in their pre-test essays (a mean of 105.23 in the post-test versus a mean of 66.80 in the pre-test). This was also true of most specific categories of cohesive ties, whose number statistically significantly increased in post-test essays.

In regard to the analysis of the overall use of cohesion across groups, it has also been found that more cohesive ties were found in the post-test essays of the experimental group than in the post-test essays of the control group (a mean of 105.23 in the experimental group's essays versus a mean of 66.90 in the control group's essays). The number of most categories of cohesive ties was also significantly higher in the experimental group's post-test essays than in the control group's essays.

From the findings, it was found that formal instruction and feedback delivery played a crucial role in enhancing the use of cohesion in students' writing. Formal instruction contributes directly or indirectly to the internalization of different knowledge types and enables the classroom learner to perform a wide range of linguistic tasks (Ellis: 1985: 241). The classroom instruction of cohesion might also have enhanced awareness of the language feature and increased its output (Skehan: 1998). Moreover, response to student writing "is an extremely important component of the endeavor of teaching L2 writing" (Ferris: 2003b: xi). Feedback, which is considered to be a key component of teaching second language writing employed as a central part of instructional repertoires (Hyland and Hyland: 2006a: 15). Feedback on the use of cohesion, therefore, is worthy of implementation so that students can produce more cohesive essays.

The pilot study shows that Halliday and Hasan's Model is an effective tool for measuring cohesion in L2 students' writing. All cohesive ties in the students' essays could be



appropriately coded and categorised using the model, despite some difficulty in classifying some items. The model was then applied to the main study with some modification. That is, the focus was on *reference* and *conjunction* while *lexical cohesion* was analysed by Hoey's (1991) model (see 3.5.4.2). In addition, *substitution* and *ellipsis* were not included in the main study. This was primarily because the first three types of cohesive ties were more commonly and sufficiently used in the students' writing in the pilot study, both before and after the treatment and intervention, whereas the latter two were inadequate in the corpus of students' writing (Carter: 1997; Faigley and Witte: 1981; Fitzgerald and Spiegel: 1986; Tierney and Mosenthal: 1983), even after the treatment and intervention.

The methodology used in the pilot study is largely quantitative. It is a valid and effective method to measure cohesion in writing. However, to increase validity and reliability, other analytical methods and models were also incorporated into the main research study. In order to yield more useful results through examining the data from diverse perspectives, it would be more beneficial to employ a triangulated methodology including questionnaires and interviews. The main study, therefore, would implement mixed methods which incorporated both quantitative and qualitative designs in its analysis.

### 3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the methodology for the main study. This study investigates the effects of feedback delivery and essay revision on the improvement of the use of cohesion in English expository essays produced by Thai EFL postgraduate students. The study also examines the students' attitudes towards their own writing skills, the use of cohesion in writing, feedback delivery and the revision process.

The main study is of quasi-experimental design with mixed methodology. Data were gathered from writing samples of 60 Thai postgraduate students who attended a writing course at the Language Institute, Thammasat University. The cohesive devices and reiterative links and bonds in their expository essays were counted and analysed using *t*-

tests. Questionnaires and interviews were also conducted to examine the participants' attitudes towards the use of cohesion in ESL writing, feedback delivery and the revision process. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse data from questionnaires. Data reduction was conducted for the analysis of interview data. Results of the main study are reported in the next chapter.



## Chapter 4

### Quantitative Study of Cohesive Ties

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the quantitative study of cohesion in students' expository essays. The focus of this chapter is on the subjects' use of cohesive ties in their writing after feedback delivery and revision. The results of data analysis were intended to answer the first two research questions proposed in Chapter 3:

1. Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' expository writing after the end of the writing course?
2. Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' revised drafts?

So that these research questions could be answered appropriately, cohesive ties in students' essays were examined and analysed through the operations of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion analysis model and Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis model. Then the data were analysed using the *t*-tests to find out if there were significant differences in the use of cohesion between (1) the pre-test and post-test essays of the experimental group; (2) the pre-test and post-test essays of the control group; (3) post-test essays from the experimental group and those from the control group; and 4) the first and revised drafts produced by the subjects in the experimental group.

In the present study, as reported in Chapter 3, only three major categories of cohesive ties in the sample data were examined and analysed. Specifically, *reference* and *conjunction* were analysed by Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model and *reiterative links* and *bonds* were analysed by Hoey's (1991) model. Each of these categories was further divided into subcategories in which cohesive ties were quantified and compared.

In this chapter, the findings of statistical analysis are reported in tables, showing the output of the *t*-test analysis. Explanations and interpretations of the findings reported in the tables are also provided.

#### **4.1 Results Regarding Pre-tests and Post-tests Both Within and Across Groups**

In the present study, an analysis of the data was conducted to examine textual cohesion of the students' expository writing. The compositions which were examined in this study included the experimental group's pre-test essays (total number of words: 8,344), the experimental group's post-test essays (total number of words: 14,149), the control group's pre-test essays (total number of words: 8,422) and the control group's post-test essays (total number of words: 12,812). In the following section, the results are reported as regards the two parameters: *reference* and *conjunction* respectively. For each type of cohesive device, the results of the pre-tests and the post-tests within the experimental group ( $n = 30$ ) and the control group ( $n = 30$ ) and the results of the pre-test essays and the post-test essays between the two groups are reported.

##### **4.1.1 The Analysis of Cohesive Ties Using Halliday and Hasan's Model**

The data analysis of the present study began after the end of the term. The cohesive elements in each piece of writing were located and identified by the ANTCONC concordancer and by hand. In the main study, as in the pilot study, all individual cohesive ties were quantified and categorised into types according to the taxonomy proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), and the frequency of each type was recorded. Paired-samples *t*-test was then used to analyse the pre-test essays and post-test essays of the students in the same group. This statistical analysis revealed the progressive number of cohesive devices used by the same subjects in their expository essays (pre-tests and post-tests). Then, independent-samples *t*-test was used to compare the results of the pre-test and post-test essays created by the subjects of each group. This statistical test revealed the number of cohesive ties used by the students in the experimental group as compared to the number of cohesive ties used by those in the control group. Subsequently, in the experimental group, which received treatment, paired-samples *t*-test was used to analyse the students' initial drafts and their revised versions after feedback delivery. The results are reported separately with regard to



*reference* and *conjunction*. Quantification of cohesive ties in each of these categories is reported in detail in the following sections.

4.1.1.1 Reference

The analysis of *reference* involves *personal reference*, *demonstrative reference*, and *comparative reference*. Although the distinction between anaphoric and cataphoric reference was not made, the occurrences of these three types of reference were quantified and *t*-tests were conducted to detect differences in the use of cohesive ties within the same group and between the experimental group and the control group. The results displayed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show the difference in the use of reference in the students' pre-test and post-test essays in the experimental group and no significant difference in the use of reference in the students' pre-test and post-test essays in the control group. Then, Table 4.3 shows the difference in the use of reference in the students' post-test essays between the experimental group and the control group.

Table 4.1 Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	pre-test	7.87	3.126	-26.964	0.000*
	post-test	15.67	3.467		
Demonstrative	pre-test	2.37	1.273	-11.644	0.000*
	post-test	6.33	1.626		
Comparative	pre-test	0.50	0.630	-20.444	0.000*
	post-test	4.00	1.050		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.2 Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	pre-test	8.00	2.626	-0.677	0.504
	post-test	7.77	1.960		
Demonstrative	pre-test	2.53	2.270	-0.528	0.601
	post-test	2.67	2.073		
Comparative	pre-test	0.23	0.504	-1.161	0.255
	post-test	0.10	0.305		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.3 Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	experimental	15.67	3.467	10.864	0.000*
	Control	7.77	1.960		
Demonstrative	experimental	6.33	1.626	7.622	0.000*
	Control	2.67	2.073		
Comparative	experimental	4.00	1.050	19.528	0.000*
	Control	0.10	0.305		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

As shown in Table 4.1, the results of the analysis of *personal reference* revealed that the experimental group used significantly more personal pronouns in their post-test than in their pre-test (*t* = -26.964, *p* < .05). On the other hand, as shown in Table 4.2, the uses of personal pronouns in the pre-test and the post-test of the control group are not statistically different (*t* = -0.677, *p* > .05). The results have also indicated that the experimental group used more personal pronouns in the post-test essays than did the control group (*t* = 10.864, *p* < .05) (see Table 4.3).



The use of *demonstrative reference* in the two groups presents a similar case. While the experimental group used different numbers of demonstratives in their pre-test and post-test essays, the numbers of demonstratives were not significantly different in the control group's pre-test and post-test essays. The experimental group used considerably more demonstratives in their post-test than in their pre-test ( $t = -11.644$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.1), whereas there is no difference between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group ( $t = -0.528$ ,  $p > .05$ ) (see Table 4.2). Nevertheless, significant difference was detected in the use of the demonstratives between the two groups' post-tests. That is, significantly more demonstratives were used by the students in the experimental group than those in the control group ( $t = 7.622$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.3).

The use of *comparative reference* in both the experimental and control groups is quite limited although the experimental group used more comparative ties in their post-test than in their pre-test ( $t = -20.444$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.1). However, there is no significant difference in the use of the comparative ties between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group ( $t = -1.161$ ,  $p > .05$ ) (see Table 4.2). From the findings, there is significant variation in the use of comparative reference between the two groups' post-tests; considerably more comparative ties were used by the subjects in the experimental group than those in the control group ( $t = 19.528$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.3).

Regarding the use of reference ties as a whole, Tables 4.4 – 4.6 exhibit comparisons of the use of overall reference ties between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group and the control group and between the post-tests of both groups.

The findings suggest that the treatments given enhanced the use of reference ties by the subjects in the experimental group in their revisions and later compositions. In other words, the use of references of all types—personal, demonstrative, and comparative—in the post-test of the experimental group is statistically higher than that in the pre-test at the significance level of .05 (see Table 4.4).

In the control group, on the other hand, the results show that the use of all types of references—personal, demonstrative, and comparative—in the post-test is not

statistically different from that in the pre-test at the significance level of .05 (see Table 4.5). This means there is no intervening variable affecting the study.

To compare between the post-tests of the experiment group and the control group, the results show that the use of reference of all types—personal reference, demonstrative reference, and comparative reference—in the post-test of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group at statistical significance level of .05 (see Table 4.6).

**Table 4.4 Comparison of the Use of Overall Reference between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Reference	pre-test	10.73	3.629	-30.649	0.000*
	post-test	26.00	3.922		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.5 Comparison of the Use of Overall Reference between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Reference	pre-test	10.77	3.224	0.517	0.609
	post-test	10.53	2.569		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.6 Comparison of the Use of Overall Reference between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Reference	Experimental	26.00	3.922	18.069	0.000*
	Control	10.53	2.569		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

Overall, the findings presented above revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in their post-test



essays regarding the use of reference ties ( $t = 18.069, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.6). In the experimental group, the use of overall reference in the pre-test essays is lower than that in the post-test essays ( $t = -30.649, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.4). However, in the control group, there is no significant difference in the use of reference ties between the pre-test essays and the post-test essays ( $t = 0.517, p > .05$ ) (see Table 4.5).

#### 4.1.1.2 Substitution

As reported in Chapter 3 (section 3.5.4.1), the pilot study revealed no substantial difference regarding the use of substitution between the experimental group and the control group, and between the pre-test essays and the post-test essays in the same group of participants. This means there is usually only a limited number of substitution ties in L2 students' corpus; therefore, an analysis of substitution was excluded from the main study.

#### 4.1.1.3 Ellipsis

Like *substitution*, no cases of ellipsis were found in either the experimental group's essays or in the control group's essays. Therefore, no analysis of ellipsis was included in the main study (see 3.5.4.1).

#### 4.1.1.4 Conjunction

Conjunction is a cohesive tie used to link ideas between clauses or sections of text so that a meaningful relationship between them can be demonstrated. Halliday and Hasan (1976) categorised conjunction into four subtypes: *additive*, *adversative*, *causal* and *temporal*. In the present study, all the four types of conjunction were examined. The results displayed in Tables 4.7 – 4.8 show the difference in the use of conjunction in the students' pre-test and post-test essays in the experimental group and no difference in the use of reference in the students' pre-test and post-test essays in the control group. Then, Table 4.9 shows the difference in the use of conjunction in the students' post-test essays between the experimental group and the control group.

**Table 4.7 Comparison of the Use of Conjunctions between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Additive	pre-test	2.30	1.264	-30.761	0.000*
	post-test	10.23	1.755		
Adversative	pre-test	2.43	1.569	-18.085	0.000*
	post-test	9.37	2.141		
Causal	pre-test	2.47	1.279	-18.485	0.000*
	post-test	9.17	2.588		
Temporal	pre-test	2.50	1.796	-20.029	0.000*
	post-test	8.60	2.238		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.8 Comparison of the Use of Conjunctions between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Additive	pre-test	3.57	2.285	0.242	0.810
	post-test	3.50	1.907		
Adversative	pre-test	1.53	1.383	-1.248	0.222
	post-test	1.83	1.440		
Causal	pre-test	2.97	2.526	-1.795	0.083
	post-test	3.17	2.306		
Temporal	pre-test	3.47	2.374	-1.186	0.245
	post-test	3.80	2.398		

*p* < .05, two-tailed



**Table 4.9 Comparison of the Use of Conjunctions between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Additive	Experimental	10.23	1.755	14.227	0.000*
	Control	3.50	1.907		
Adversative	Experimental	9.37	2.141	15.989	0.000*
	Control	1.83	1.440		
Causal	Experimental	9.17	2.588	9.482	0.000*
	Control	3.17	2.306		
Temporal	Experimental	8.60	2.238	8.015	0.000*
	Control	3.80	2.398		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

Variation was found in the use of the specific categories of conjunction in the main study. As reported in the pilot study in Chapter 3, all types of conjunctions were used with significant distinctions between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group and between the post-tests of the two groups. As shown in Table 4.7, the results of the analysis of *conjunctions* have revealed that the experimental group used significantly more *additive conjunctions* in their post-test than in their pre-test (*t* = -30.761, *p* < .05). On the other hand, as shown in Table 4.8, the uses of additive conjunctions in the pre-test and the post-test of the control group are not statistically different (*t* = 0.242, *p* > .05). The results have also indicated that the experimental group used more additive conjunctions in the post-test essays than did the control group (*t* = 14.227, *p* < .05) (see Table 4.9).

Regarding *adversative conjunctions*, while the experimental group used significantly different numbers of these ties in their pre-test and post-test essays, the numbers of adversative conjunctions were not significantly different in the control group's pre-test and post-test essays. As shown in Table 4.7, the experimental group used more adversative conjunctions in their post-test than in their pre-test (*t* = -18.085, *p* < .05), whereas there is no difference between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group (*t* = -1.248, *p* > .05) (see Table 4.8). Nevertheless, significant difference was found in the use of adversative conjunctions between the two groups' post-tests. This

means significantly more adversative conjunctions were used in the essays produced by the experimental group than in the control group ( $t = 15.989, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.9).

According to Table 4.7, the experimental group used more *causal conjunctions* in their post-test than in their pre-test ( $t = -18.485, p < .05$ ). However, there is no significant difference in the use of the causal conjunctions between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group ( $t = -1.795, p > .05$ ) (see Table 4.8). From the findings, there is significant variation in the use of causal conjunctions between the two groups' post-tests; significantly more causal conjunctions were used by the subjects in the experimental group than those in the control group ( $t = 9.482, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.9).

As shown in Table 4.7, the results of the analysis have revealed that the experimental group used significantly more *temporal conjunctions* in their post-test than in their pre-test ( $t = -20.029, p < .05$ ). However, as shown in Table 4.8, the uses of temporal conjunctions in the pre-test and the post-test of the control group are not statistically different ( $t = -1.186, p > .05$ ). The results have also indicated that the experimental group used more temporal conjunctions in the post-test essays than did the control group ( $t = 8.015, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.9).

**Table 4.10 Comparison of the Use of Overall Conjunctions between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Conjunction	pre-test	9.70	2.781	-59.411	0.000*
	post-test	37.37	3.728		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed



**Table 4.11 Comparison of the Use of Overall Conjunctions between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Conjunction	pre-test	11.53	5.022	-1.727	0.095
	post-test	12.30	3.631		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.12 Comparison of the Use of Overall Conjunction between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Conjunction	Experimental	37.37	3.728	26.384	0.000*
	Control	12.30	3.631		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

From the findings reported in Table 4.12, there was significant variation in the use of all types of conjunctions in the post-test essays between the experimental and the control groups. That is, the experimental group used significantly more conjunctions in their post-test than did the control group ( $t = 26.384, p < .05$ ). Also, there was a significant difference in the use of conjunctions between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group ( $t = -59.411, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.10). However, no statistically significant difference was found in the post-test of the control group ( $t = -1.727, p > 0.05$ ) (see Table 4.11).

Overall, the findings suggest that as a result of the treatments, the subjects in the experimental group used more conjunction of all types in their revisions and later essays. Specifically, the use of conjunction of all types—additive, adversative, causal, and temporal—in the post-test of the experimental group is statistically higher than that in the pre-test at the significance level of .05 (see Table 4.10).

In the control group, on the other hand, the results show that the use of all types of conjunction in the post-test is not statistically different from that in the pre-test at the

significance level of .05 (see Table 4.11). There is no intervening variable affecting the study.

To compare between the post-tests of the experiment group and the control group, the results show that the use of conjunction of all types in the post-test of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group at statistical significance level of .05 (see Table 4.12).

#### **4.1.2 The Analysis of Lexical Cohesion Using Hoey's Model**

The data analysis of lexical cohesion was conducted on the students' initial and revised drafts to identify the reiterative links and bonds between lexical items in each pair of the sentences in texts (see Chapter 3, section 3.5.4.2). The reiterative links, i.e. repetition and paraphrase in each piece of writing were located and identified by Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis model. Then the number of links and bonds in each essay was recorded. Paired-samples *t*-test was then used to analyse the pre-test essays and post-test essays of the students in the same group and independent-samples *t*-test was used to compare the results of the pre-test and post-test essays composed by the subjects of each group. In the experimental group, which received treatment, paired-samples *t*-test was used to analyse the students' initial drafts and their revised versions after feedback delivery. The results are reported separately with regard to *links* and *bonds*. Quantification of lexical cohesion in each of these categories is reported in detail in the following sections.

##### **4.1.2.1 Lexical Cohesion**

As discussed in Chapter 3, *lexical cohesion* was identified and analysed in terms of reiterative links and bonds that connected sentences in a text. For comparisons between the pre-test and post-test essays both within a group and across groups, and between the students' initial drafts and revised drafts, links (i.e. repetition and paraphrase) were analysed (see Chapter 3, section 3.5.4.2.1 for the categorisation of links and the sub-categorisation of repetition and paraphrase). The sub-categories of links were not statistically analysed in this study due to the fact that, individually, they were not crucial elements that would contribute to the cohesiveness of a text and their



analysis would not reveal how cohesive a text would be. Rather, it was the inter-sentential links and bonds in a text that would disclose significant variation to be found across groups, and within the experimental group before and after the treatment. Tables 4.13 – 4.15 show results of the identification of links and bonds in the pre-test and post-test essays of both the experimental and control groups.

**Table 4.13 Comparison of the Links and Bonds between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Links	pre-test	0.30	0.651	-8.375	0.000*
	post-test	2.77	1.455		
Bonds	pre-test	0.20	0.407	-9.360	0.000*
	post-test	2.60	1.329		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.14 Comparison of the Links and Bonds between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Links	pre-test	0.07	0.254	-0.571	0.573
	post-test	0.10	0.305		
Bonds	pre-test	0.03	0.183	-1.361	0.184
	post-test	0.13	0.346		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.15 Comparison of the Links and Bonds between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Links	experimental	2.77	1.455	9.827	0.000*
	control	0.10	0.305		
Bonds	experimental	2.60	1.329	9.840	0.000*
	control	0.13	0.346		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

The results revealed that the experimental group used significantly more *links* in their post-test than in their pre-test ( $t = -8.375, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.13). On the other hand, no statistically significant variation was found in the use of links in the control group ( $t = -0.571, p > .05$ ) (see Table 4.14). When compared between the experimental group and the control group, more links were found to have been used by the students in the former than by those in the latter ( $t = 9.827, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.15).

Regarding the number of *bonds*, there is a significant difference between the experimental group's post-test essays and in their pre-test essays. That is, more bonds were used in the post-test than in the pre-test ( $t = -9.360, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.13). Conversely, there is no statistically significant variation in the number of bonds between the post-test and the pre-test of the control group ( $t = -1.361, p > .05$ ) (see Table 4.14). However, there is statistically significant variation in the use of bonds between the post-tests of the experimental group and the control group ( $t = 9.840, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.15).



**Table 4.16 Comparison of the Use of Overall Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group**

Experimental (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
All ties	pre-test	21.73	4.177	-54.931	0.000*
	post-test	72.70	6.358		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.17 Comparison of the Use of Overall Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control Group**

Control (N=30)	Test type	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
All ties	pre-test	22.70	5.396	-0.995	0.328
	post-test	23.40	4.854		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.18 Comparison of the Use of Overall Cohesion between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group**

Post-test	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
All ties	experimental	72.70	6.358	33.758	0.000*
	control	23.40	4.854		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

The analysis of overall cohesion in the students' essays reveals that significantly more cohesive ties are used in the post-test essays of the experimental group than in their pre-test essays (*t* = -54.931, *p* < .05) (see Table 4.16). However, there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test essays of the control group (*t* = -0.995, *p* > .05) (see Table 4.17). A comparison of the use of overall cohesion between the post-test essays of both groups revealed that significantly more cohesive ties are found in the post-test essays of the experimental group than in the post-test essays of the control group (*t* = 33.758, *p* < .05) (see Table 4.18).

Overall, the findings suggest that the treatments given to the subjects in the experimental group enhanced their use of cohesion of all types in their revisions and

subsequent compositions. Specifically, the use of cohesion of all types in this study—reference, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion—in the post-test of the experimental group is statistically higher than that in the pre-test at the significance level of .05 (see Table 4.16).

In the control group, on the other hand, the results show that the use of all types of cohesion in the post-test is not statistically different from that in the pre-test at the significance level of .05 (see Table 4.17). Therefore, there is no intervening variable affecting the study.

To compare between the post-tests of the experiment group and the control group, the results show that the use of overall cohesion in the post-test of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group at statistical significance level of .05 (see Table 4.18).

## **4.2 Results Regarding Initial and Revised Versions in the Experimental Group**

In the present study, in which feedback was provided for the (experimental) students' initial drafts and revision was made to the drafts, there was also an analysis of the variation in the use of cohesive ties between the first drafts and the revised versions produced by the students in the experimental group. During the writing course, the students (in the experimental group only) were asked to compose three expository essays (cause-effect, comparison-contrast and classification) and revise them after receiving feedback on the use of cohesion. However, the expository essays drafted by the students in the control group were not examined due to an absence of feedback and revision (treatment).

In the following section, similar to the preceding one, the results of the analysis of the students' initial and revised drafts are reported according to the major parameters in Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model, namely *reference* and *conjunction*, and Hoey's (1991) model, namely *links* and *bonds* respectively. As explained in 4.1.1.3 and 4.1.1.4, *substitution* and *ellipsis* were excluded from this study.



4.2.1 Reference

The results displayed in Tables 4.19 – 4.21 show differences in the use of reference in the students’ initial and revised drafts in the experimental group.

**Table 4.19 Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Cause-Effect Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Reference	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	Initial	9.03	2.810	-14.359	0.000*
	Revised	16.57	4.032		
Demonstrative	Initial	3.30	1.368	-21.060	0.000*
	Revised	8.70	1.705		
Comparative	Initial	0.57	0.679	-13.372	0.000*
	Revised	3.50	1.196		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.20 Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Comparison-Contrast Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Reference	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	initial	10.63	2.906	-8.906	0.000*
	revised	15.33	4.452		
Demonstrative	initial	5.93	1.874	-10.540	0.000*
	revised	12.40	3.390		
Comparative	initial	0.93	0.868	-3.343	0.002*
	revised	1.67	0.959		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.21 Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Classification Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Reference	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Personal	initial	12.47	4.485	-9.997	0.000*
	revised	16.43	4.057		
Demonstrative	initial	6.30	2.054	-17.069	0.000*
	revised	9.57	2.192		
Comparative	initial	2.47	0.860	-12.079	0.000*
	revised	6.37	1.732		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

As shown in Tables 4.19 – 4.21, the analysis of the students’ initial and revised drafts revealed that more *reference ties* had been used in all the revised versions than in the initial drafts. According to Table 4.19, the experimental group used significantly more *personal pronouns* in their revised drafts for cause-effect essays than in their initial drafts (*t* = -14.359, *p* < .05). As shown in Table 4.20, the experimental group also used many more personal pronouns in their revised drafts for comparison-contrast essays than in their initial drafts (*t* = -8.906, *p* < .05). The analysis of reference ties has also indicated that the experimental group used more personal pronouns in their revised drafts for classification essays than in their initial versions (*t* = -9.997, *p* < .05) (see Table 4.21).

In essays of all modes, more *demonstrative reference* has also been found in the students’ revised drafts than in their initial versions. That is, the students used considerably more demonstratives in their revised drafts for cause-effect essays than in their initial drafts (*t* = -21.060, *p* < .05) (see Table 4.19). The results are also similar for comparison-contrast essays where more demonstratives are found in the revised drafts than in the initial drafts (*t* = -10.540, *p* < .05) (see Table 4.20). The analysis of classification essays also revealed that more demonstratives were used in the revised versions than in the initial drafts (*t* = -17.069, *p* < .05) (see Table 4.21).



The use of *comparative reference* in all compositions was quite limited although more comparative ties were used in the students' revised drafts than in their initial versions. From the findings, more comparatives were found in the students' revised versions for cause-effect essays than in their initial drafts ( $t = -13.372, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.19). There were also more comparative ties in the students' revised drafts for comparison-contrast essays than in their initial drafts ( $t = -3.343, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.20). In classification essays, more comparative ties were also located in the students' revised drafts than in their initial drafts ( $t = -12.079, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.21).

Regarding the use of *reference* as a whole, Table 4.22 exhibits comparisons of the use of all reference ties between the initial and revised drafts for all types of essays in the experimental group. While the initial drafts were produced before feedback delivery, the revised versions were created after feedback was provided.

**Table 4.22 Comparison of the Use of Reference between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for All Types of Essays in the Experimental Group**

Essay Types	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Cause-effect	Initial	12.90	1.362	-24.548	0.000*
	Revised	28.77	1.728		
Comparison	Initial	17.50	1.350	-13.889	0.000*
	Revised	29.40	2.078		
Classification	Initial	21.23	1.477	-19.104	0.000*
	Revised	32.37	1.786		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

From the findings in Table 4.22, there is a statistically significant difference in the use of *reference* between the initial and revised drafts for every type of composition. More reference ties were found in the revised drafts for cause-effect essays than in the initial drafts ( $t = -24.548, p < .05$ ). There is also significant variation between the two drafts for comparison-contrast essays. Specifically, more reference ties were found in the revised drafts than in the initial versions ( $t = -13.889, p < .05$ ). Likewise, more

reference ties were used in the revised versions for classification essays than in the initial drafts ( $t = -19.104, p < .05$ ). To sum up, the use of all types of references (personal, demonstrative and comparative) in all expository essays (cause-effect, comparison-contrast and classification) is higher in the revised versions than in the initial versions at the statistical significance level of .05.

### 4.2.2 Conjunction

All the four types of conjunction were also examined. It has been found out that there were substantial differences in the use of these ties between the initial drafts and the revised versions for cause-effect essays, comparison-contrast essays and classification essays in the experimental group. The results presented in Tables 4.23 – 4.25 show differences between the drafts before and after feedback delivery regarding the use of conjunction.

**Table 4.23 Comparison of the Use of Conjunction between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Cause-Effect Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Conjunction	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p
Additive	Initial	3.47	1.252	-25.994	0.000*
	Revised	10.70	1.725		
Adversative	Initial	3.03	1.377	-17.329	0.000*
	Revised	7.13	1.655		
Causal	Initial	3.27	1.982	-27.250	0.000*
	Revised	9.77	2.359		
Temporal	Initial	2.93	1.680	-3.072	0.005*
	Revised	3.57	1.406		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed



**Table 4.24 Comparison of the Use of Conjunction between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Comparison-Contrast Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Conjunction	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p
Additive	Initial	5.47	1.717	-4.175	0.000*
	Revised	7.13	1.943		
Adversative	Initial	5.13	2.315	-8.902	0.000*
	Revised	9.40	2.686		
Causal	Initial	4.40	2.143	-2.728	0.011*
	Revised	6.07	2.303		
Temporal	Initial	5.07	2.196	-2.976	0.006*
	Revised	6.90	2.537		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.25 Comparison of the Use of Conjunction between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Classification Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Conjunction	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p
Additive	Initial	6.63	2.566	-13.176	0.000*
	Revised	11.67	3.763		
Adversative	Initial	6.93	2.406	-5.722	0.000*
	Revised	8.10	1.863		
Causal	Initial	6.03	1.991	-5.137	0.000*
	Revised	6.93	1.574		
Temporal	Initial	7.00	2.533	-5.426	0.000*
	Revised	7.77	2.046		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

There is considerable variation in the use of conjunction in the students' drafts before and after feedback delivery. All types of conjunctions were used with significant distinctions between the initial and revised drafts produced by the subjects in the experimental group. In cause-effect essays, significantly more *additive conjunctions* were used in the revised drafts than in the initial drafts ( $t = -25.994, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.23). There is also remarkable distinction in the use of additive conjunctions between the revised drafts for comparison-contrast essays ( $t = -4.175, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.24). Similarly, the revised drafts for classification essays contained significantly more additive conjunctions than did the initial drafts ( $t = -13.176, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.25).

There are also differences in the number of *adversative conjunctions* that were used in the initial drafts and the revised versions in the experimental group. Substantially more adversative conjunctions were used in the revised drafts for cause-effect essays than in the initial drafts ( $t = -17.329, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.23). Likewise, the students used more adversative conjunctions in their revised versions for comparison-contrast essays than in their initial drafts ( $t = -8.902, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.24). According to the findings, there is also a significant difference in the use of adversative conjunctions between the initial and rewritten drafts for classification essays ( $t = -5.722, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.25).

Regarding the use of *causal conjunction*, there is a significant difference between the students' revised drafts and the initial versions for all types of essays. In cause-effect essays, the students used considerably more causal conjunctions in their revised drafts than in their initial versions ( $t = -27.250, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.23). In comparison-contrast essays, significantly more causal conjunctions were located in the revised versions than in the initial versions ( $t = -2.728, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.24). In classification essays, the revised drafts had a higher number of causal conjunctions than did the initial drafts ( $t = -5.137, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.25).

*Temporal conjunction*, the last type of conjunction under study, was also used with significant variation between the initial drafts and the revised drafts completed by the subjects in the experimental group. In cause-effect essays, the students used



substantially more temporal conjunctions in their revised drafts than in their initial drafts ( $t = -3.072, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.23). Similarly, many more temporal conjunctions were used in the students' revised drafts for comparison-contrast essays than in their initial versions ( $t = -2.976, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.24). The results also show that the students used significantly more temporal conjunctions in their revised drafts for classification essays than in their initial drafts ( $t = -5.426, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.25).

Regarding the use of *conjunction* as a whole, Table 4.26 exhibits comparisons of the use of all conjunction ties between the initial and revised drafts for all types of essays in the experimental group.

**Table 4.26 Comparison of the Use of Conjunction between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for All Types of Essays in the Experimental Group**

Essay Types	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Cause-effect	Initial	12.70	0.720	-32.818	0.000*
	Revised	31.17	0.924		
Comparison	Initial	20.27	1.021	-9.448	0.000*
	Revised	29.50	1.332		
Classification	Initial	26.60	1.330	-16.512	0.000*
	Revised	34.47	1.466		

$p < .05$ , two-tailed

From the findings reported in Table 4.26, there is significant variation in the use of all types of conjunctions between the students' initial and rewritten drafts. In the cause-effect essays, the revised drafts have a higher number of all conjunctions than the initial drafts ( $t = -32.818, p < .05$ ). By the same token, there is a significant difference in the use of conjunction between the revised and initial versions for comparison-contrast essays ( $t = -9.448, p < .05$ ). Also, there is a significant difference in the use of conjunction between the students' initial and revised drafts for the classification essays ( $t = -16.512, p < .05$ ). In summary, the use of all types of conjunction (additive,

adversative, causal and temporal) in all expository essays (cause-effect, comparison-contrast and classification) is higher in the revised versions than in the initial versions at the statistical significance level of .05.

4.2.3 Lexical Cohesion

*Lexical cohesion* was also examined to find out the variation between the students' initial and revised drafts. This type of cohesion, including *links* and *bonds*, was identified in the experimental group's initial and revised drafts. Tables 4.27 – 4.29 show results regarding the use of lexical cohesion in the initial and revised drafts produced by the students before and after the feedback delivery.

**Table 4.27 Comparison of the Use of Lexical Cohesion between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Cause-Effect Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Lexical Cohesion	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Links	Initial	0.27	0.583	-15.559	0.000*
	Revised	1.87	0.776		
Bonds	Initial	0.27	0.583	-11.547	0.000*
	Revised	1.30	0.766		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

**Table 4.28 Comparison of the Use of Lexical Cohesion between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Comparison-Contrast Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Lexical Cohesion	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Links	Initial	0.93	0.828	-4.026	0.000*
	Revised	1.63	1.098		
Bonds	Initial	1.40	0.855	0.000	1.000
	Revised	1.40	0.855		

*p* < .05, two-tailed



**Table 4.29 Comparison of the Use of Lexical Cohesion between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for Classification Essays in the Experimental Group**

Types of Lexical Cohesion	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Links	Initial	1.97	1.680	0.000	1.000
	Revised	1.97	1.406		
Bonds	Initial	2.70	1.343	-3.294	0.003*
	Revised	3.17	1.085		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

The results revealed some discrepancies regarding the use of *links* in the students' initial drafts and revised versions for all types of compositions. According to the findings, the students used more links in their revised drafts for cause-effect essays than in their initial drafts ( $t = -15.559, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.27). There is also statistically significant distinction in the number of links between the revised versions for comparison-contrast essays and the initial drafts ( $t = -4.026, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.28). However, the same numbers of links were located in the initial drafts and the revised drafts for classification essays ( $t = 0.000, p > .05$ ) (see Table 4.29). Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference between the use of links in the two drafts of classification essays.

A larger number of *bonds* were found only in some of the students' revised versions than in their initial drafts depending on the mode of composition. Regarding cause-effect essays, more bonds were located in the revised versions than in the initial drafts with statistically significant distinction ( $t = -11.547, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.27). Similarly, in classification essays, there is statistically significant variation in the use of bonds between the revised drafts and the initial drafts ( $t = -3.294, p < .05$ ) (see Table 4.29). However, in comparison-contrast essays, there is the same number of bonds in the revised drafts as in the initial versions. Therefore, there is no statistically significant variation in the use of bonds between the two drafts of comparison-contrast essays ( $t = 0.000, p > .05$ ) (see Table 4.28).

**Table 4.30 Comparison of the Use of Overall Cohesion between the Initial and the Revised Drafts for All Types of Essays in the Experimental Group**

Essay Types	Version	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Cause-effect	Initial	26.93	0.523	-41.043	0.000*
	Revised	68.33	0.643		
Comparison	Initial	43.30	0.578	-17.973	0.000*
	Revised	66.13	0.934		
Classification	Initial	58.47	0.755	-22.424	0.000*
	Revised	79.53	0.850		

*p* < .05, two-tailed

According to Table 4.30, the analysis of overall cohesion—reference, conjunction and lexical cohesion—in the students’ initial and revised drafts for all types of essays—cause-effect essays, comparison-contrast essays and classification essays—revealed that more cohesive ties were used in their revised versions than in their initial drafts. Firstly, in cause-effect essays, there is statistically significant variation between the revised drafts and the initial drafts (*t* = -41.043, *p* < .05). Secondly, there is also a statistically significant difference between the revised drafts for comparison-contrast essays and the initial versions (*t* = -17.973, *p* < .05). Finally, there is a statistically significant difference between the revised drafts for classification essays and the initial versions (*t* = -22.424, *p* < .05). To sum up, the use of all types of cohesion in all expository essays is higher in the revised versions than in the initial drafts at the statistical significance level of .05.

**4.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter reports the results of the quantitative analysis of the use of cohesion in students’ expository essays. The data analysis was intended to answer the first two research questions in this study:

1. Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students’ expository writing after the end of the writing course?



## 2. Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' revised drafts?

The results of the analysis can be divided into the following categories. Firstly, in regard to differences in the use of cohesive ties between the pre-test essays and post-test essays of the experimental and control groups, paired-samples *t*-test was used for analysing the data. According to the findings, there is statistically significant variation between the pre-test and post-test essays composed by the students in the experimental group, whereas there is no such distinction between the pre-test and post-test essays composed by the students in the control group. In other words, more cohesive ties were used in the post-test essays composed by the students in the experimental group than in the pre-test essays composed by the same group of students. In addition, the average numbers of cohesive ties located in the pre-test essays and the post-test essays composed by the control group showed no significant difference.

Secondly, to investigate the differences in the use of cohesive ties between the experimental group and the control group using independent-samples *t*-test, it has been found out that there is statistically significant distinction between the use of overall cohesion by the experimental group and the use of overall cohesion by the control group. That is, the students in the former group used substantially more cohesive ties in their writing than the latter did.

Lastly, the initial and revised drafts produced by the students in the experimental group were also examined to find out any distinction in the use of cohesive ties. The results obtained through paired-samples *t*-test revealed that there is significant variation in the use of cohesion between the students' initial drafts and their revised versions. In other words, after receiving feedback on the use of cohesion, the students used significantly more cohesive ties in their rewritten versions than in their initial drafts.

In summary, a larger number of cohesive ties were used in subsequent versions (the post-test essays and the revised drafts) after the treatment. Then it can be concluded that instruction of, teacher written feedback on and revisions of cohesion in students' writing enabled L2 student writers to produce more cohesion in their expository essay writing.

The next chapter presents the methods of feedback delivery and the ways the participants responded to teacher written feedback.



## Chapter 5

### Analysis of Feedback Delivery and Essay Revisions

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the utilisation of written feedback by the teacher/researcher on the students' expository essays, particularly their initial drafts, and describes the effects it has on the students' revisions of those drafts. These expository essays, as described in Chapters 3 and 4, include three major modes of exposition: cause-and-effect, comparison/contrast, and classification; it is in this respective order that the students were asked to compose their essays. Teacher written feedback was provided on the initial drafts produced by the students in the experimental group. The feedback was delivered in the form of comments to enhance the use of cohesion in the students' essays especially in their revised drafts and subsequent essays. A total of 704 teacher comments were written on the students' drafts. No feedback or comments were provided on the expository essay drafts produced by the students in the control group.

In reporting the findings for this chapter, data from the written products of the students' drafts will be used. Analysis of these data will reveal the manners in which the teacher decided to deliver particular types of feedback (see Appendices H1, H2 and H3) and ways in which the students used the teacher written feedback to revise their drafts. However, due to the huge amount of data, only a specific number of samples will be used as evidence and illustrations to clarify how feedback resulted in modifications or output in the students' revised drafts. Excerpts used in this chapter were taken from the students' original initial drafts with no corrections of grammatical errors, and only cohesive elements were analysed and reported on. Then after the revised drafts were examined for cohesion, they were rechecked for grammatical errors and ineffective word usage.

The discussions in this chapter are also aimed at answering research questions 3 and 4 presented in Chapter 3, section 3.2: *What effects does teacher written feedback have*

*on the students' writing? and How do the students who receive feedback on cohesion respond to teacher written feedback?*

**5.1 Applications of the Various Types of Teacher Written Feedback and the Students' Revision**

As described in Chapter 3, the teacher written feedback employed in this study is categorised into six types. Table 5.1 shows the six categories of teacher comments and how they are operated.

**Table 5.1 Categories of Teacher Written Feedback and their Applications**

Categories	Applications
Corrective Site Feedback / Comments	The teacher provides correction.
Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback / Comments	The teacher both provides correction and provides a rule or an explanation of the correction.
Advisory Site Feedback / Comments	The teacher provides a rule, offers a direction and/or labels an area that needs revision.
Indicative Site Feedback / Comments	The teacher suggests that an area needs revision without correcting, explaining, labeling, or directing. The teacher sometimes uses a question to elicit a response to a particular problem.
Advisory End Feedback / Comments	The teacher provides, at the end of the draft, a direction and/or explanation for an area that needs revision.
Indicative End Feedback / Comments	The teacher suggests, at the end of the draft, that an area needs revision without correcting, explaining, labeling, or directing. The teacher sometimes uses a question to elicit a response to a particular problem.



In the present study, different numbers of teacher written comments were provided on students' initial drafts. Table 5.2 shows the number of written comments of each type used in this study.

**Table 5.2 The Number of Written Comments of Each Type**

Types of Comments	Frequencies
Corrective Site Feedback	216
Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback	67
Advisory Site Feedback	252
Indicative Site Feedback	132
Advisory End Feedback	15
Indicative End Feedback	22
Total	704

The present study also analysed the correspondence of student moves to the various teacher written comments. Table 5.3 indicates the number of student moves with complete, partial or no correspondence to the comments.

**Table 5.3 Correspondence to Teacher Written Comments**

	<b>Complete correspondence</b>	<b>Partial correspondence</b>	<b>No correspondence</b>	<b>Total</b>
Corrective Site Feedback	213	3	0	216
Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback	67	0	0	67
Advisory Site Feedback	233	14	5	252
Indicative Site Feedback	108	20	4	132
Advisory End Feedback	9	5	1	15
Indicative End Feedback	17	2	3	22
Total	647	44	13	704

According to table 5.3, 647 tokens (91.9%) had complete correspondence to the teacher written comments, followed by 44 tokens (6.3%) with partial correspondence and 13 tokens (1.8%) with no correspondence to the teacher written comments. From the findings, it is obvious that the degree of complete correspondence to both types of Corrective comments was the highest (280 out of 283 or 98.9%), followed by the degree of complete correspondence to the Site comments (341 out of 384 or 88.8%), while the degree of complete correspondence to the End comments was the lowest (26 out of 37 or 70.3%).

Regarding the partial correspondence to the teacher written comments, the most was found in both types of the Site comments (34 out of 384 or 88.5%), followed by the End comments (7 out of 37 or 18.9%), while the least was found in the Corrective comments (3 out of 283 or 1.06%).



Only a few tokens of student moves with no correspondence to the teacher written comments were found in this study. In particular, there were no tokens that had no correspondence to the Corrective comments, there were four tokens (10.8%) that had no correspondence to the End comments and there were nine tokens (2.3%) that had no correspondence to the Site comments.

In the next section, the different types of teacher written comments will be discussed with examples showing the student revisions with complete, partial and no correspondence to the comments.

### **5.1.1 Corrective Site Feedback (CS)**

According to table 5.3, 216 Corrective Site teacher comments (30.7%) out of the total of 704 were used, making this type of feedback the second most frequently used. The comments of this type took the form of addition, substitution or deletion of items in students' drafts.

All of the CS comments were made for surface errors of cohesion or for additions of various categories of cohesive ties. This type of feedback was never used in this study for content revisions. While all CS comments were used only for surface modifications, there were some surface changes that received other types of teacher comments as well. These other surface modifications will be reported on in later sections regarding other feedback types.

In this study, the CS feedback was offered on the basis of the teacher's assessment of individual students' language proficiency and writing abilities. The teacher made a correction or added a cohesive tie where he assumed that an individual student was unfamiliar with a certain use of a cohesive tie or would be incapable of correction of a certain error. For instance, in a student's draft

“...some of Thais' ways of lives are changing and some of good beliefs will be changed based *on cultures*.”

the teacher added the word “other,” a comparative reference tie, between the words “on” and “cultures,” assuming that the student was unfamiliar with the use of “other” in her writing to make a contrast between entities. Also, the teacher provided no explanation regarding the addition of “other,” believing that it would be too complicated for the student to understand.

Another example shows that the teacher provided a correction based on his belief that the student would not be able to make the correction herself. In the following student’s draft

“Globalisation is the increasing of connectivity [that] has inevitably caused number of negative effects on developing countries. *Thailand has been influenced* from the influx of globalisation for decades.”

To make these two sentences more cohesive, the reiteration of “developing countries” is needed. Believing that the student would be incapable of self-correction through any type of feedback other than explicit correction, the teacher decided to insert an apposition “a developing country” between “Thailand” and the verbal group “has been influenced”. Because this correction involves lexical cohesion, a concise and clear-cut explanation would be possible.

In these two cases, even though the teacher did not think the students would understand why the corrections were made, he decided to use the CS feedback to provide a target-like model. This choice of feedback was believed to be more effective than any other as the students were not expected to make accurate revisions independently.

In addition to providing correction for items the teacher thought the students would not be able to revise, according to the analysis of feedback delivery, the teacher also provided correction for the surface errors that were considered minor and not worth distracting the students while revising their initial drafts with the task of self-correction. Again, the teacher provided the correction as a target-like model. An example of teacher correction of a minor error is the teacher correcting a personal reference tie, a type of grammatical cohesion. In the sentence,



“Since Thai people are adaptable to globalisation, we enjoy living among the changes caused.”

the teacher changed the personal pronoun “we” to “they” to refer to “Thai people” anaphorically. This substitution prevented distraction during revision and in this case the teacher believed that the student would understand why the correction was made.

Regarding the students’ response to the CS feedback, the data analysis reveals the students’ complete correspondence to the comment; in other words, in most cases of CS, the students copied the teacher’s corrections, whether they involved addition, substitution or deletion of cohesive ties. There were only a few tokens of no correspondence between the teacher’s CS comment and the student’s revised draft. In these cases, the students rewrote their original drafts rather than copy the teacher’s corrections.

### **5.1.2 Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback (CAS)**

In this study, there were only 67 Corrective and Advisory Site (CAS) teacher comments (9.5%) out of a total of 704 teacher written comments provided for students’ initial drafts. This type of feedback, as described earlier, consisted of a correction provided by the teacher in the same manner as the Corrective Site feedback type (i.e. addition, substitution or deletion) and a statement of a corresponding rule or a brief explanation of the correction. The CAS comments were used to deal with surface errors only, similar to the previously discussed CS comments. In this case, however, a concise explanation accompanied a correction with the teacher’s belief that it would help the student understand why the correction was made. An example of this type of feedback is taken from a student’s draft.

“I usually communicate by emails because I *understand better* than communicate by telephones.”

While correcting the above sentence, the teacher added the word “them” between the verb “understand” and the comparative adjective “better”. Then he provided a brief

explanation under the words “understand better” which reads “A pronoun object is needed to refer to the noun ‘emails’”.

Another example of the CAS feedback is derived from another student’s draft. In the sentence

“I found that the employees who are enthusiastic perform better and *moreover* make more profit for their company than the employees who are inactive.”

the teacher provided a correction by deleting the additive conjunction “moreover” with a brief explanation located near the correction stating “This cohesive device is unnecessary because it is similar in meaning to the conjunction ‘and’ and “moreover” usually begins a new sentence or follows a semi-colon.”

Regarding the student response to the CAS feedback, all of the students who received this type of feedback had complete, accurate revision in accordance with the comments on their initial drafts. The students copied the corrections provided by the teacher or the word or phrase that had received the comment was deleted during the revision.

### **5.1.3 Advisory Site Feedback (AS)**

In the present study, the Advisory Site (AS) comments were used the most frequently compared with the other types of teacher written feedback. A total of 252 AS comments (35.8%) were provided on the students’ initial drafts regarding the use of cohesive ties. This type of feedback was specifically used to provide an opportunity for the students to resolve problems related to cohesion in their expository writing. The AS feedback was delivered for one of the three purposes:

1. to identify a problem (e.g. “Inappropriate cohesive device”)
2. to advise (e.g. “You should combine these two sentences using an appropriate cohesive device.”)
3. to explain or give a reason for a change (e.g. “An example is needed to clarify your point.”)



Some of the AS comments were brief and concise, labeling a cohesive problem, while others were much longer, usually explaining a corresponding rule or providing a direction for revision. Some of the AS comments even combined more than one purpose; for instance, they provided an explanation or a reason for revision along with a specific direction for revising a particular section of a draft. For example, the teacher provided the following comment for a student to revise her draft for cohesion between the thesis statement and the body paragraphs.

“The main problem with your organisation is that your thesis statement at the end of your introductory paragraph does not reveal what your body paragraphs will be about [Identification of a problem]. You need to relate those two areas in your essay. So, when you rewrite, include the key words from the topic sentences of your body paragraphs in your thesis statement [Direction for revision]. Your thesis statement will be stronger and clearer if you use an essay map [Explanation for the need for revision].”

The teacher used the AS feedback for cohesive problems that involve both surface-level and content-related areas. The students were expected to reflect on the comment carefully and identify how the problematic areas should be resolved during their revision. This would also involve deleting a sentence or adding another sentence to make the text more cohesive. Surface-level problems that received the AS feedback, however, were those mostly involved with lexical ties and conjunctive ties rather than reference ties. In addition, these surface cohesive problems usually dealt with areas where the students would be able to revise independently. Otherwise, as discussed in 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, the surface errors in the students' initial drafts would receive the CS or CAS comments.

One of the aims for the use of the AS feedback was to draw the students' attention to recent classroom instruction. For example, when a student began each body paragraph of a classification essay without any signals that would indicate the main purpose of each particular paragraph, the teacher then wrote a short statement at the beginning of the first body paragraph to explain a reason for adding some cohesive ties. The comment that the teacher provided was “Some signals are needed to make each topic



sentence clearer and more purposeful. We discussed this in the previous class” This comment was expected to lead the student to add cohesive ties like “first of all,” “second” and “finally” or “the first category,” “the second category,” and “the last category”. This means the student was expected to recall the recent lesson on composing a classification essay while revising her draft. Thus, the teacher’s AS comment in this instance was used as advice, a question, or a reminder of the recent classroom activity.

In addition to being a reminder of a recent classroom instruction, the AS feedback was also utilised to provide opportunities for the students to self-correct. Instead of providing correction directly, the teacher used this type of feedback, which identified areas for revisions of material within students’ developmental range. This included material previously covered in class and rules which had a straightforward form/function relationship. Sometimes this type of feedback was given in the form of question. For instance, the teacher used the AS feedback to enhance the use of a causal conjunction and reiteration to link the following sentences.

“The emergence of countries such as Vietnam and China has taken its toll on the labor in Thailand because foreign companies flood the market to take advantage of the low but highly skilled labor force. *If* the Thai workforce needs to be competitive in the global economy, *the country* would focus on human resources development.”

The teacher added an AS comment stating “You need a transitional device to join these two sentences so they will be easier to understand.” This AS comment was meant to lead the student to add a causal conjunction like “thus” or “therefore” at the beginning of the second sentence. The teacher believed that this comment involved a rule straightforward enough for the student to apply during her revision. Also, this type of cohesive tie had been covered in class. Then the teacher added some suggestions or advice as guidelines for revision. He noted: “The noun ‘the country’ is not appropriate here because we do not know which country it refers to. It seems that in this short paragraph there is no antecedent for the noun ‘the country’.” This comment was intended to help the student recognise an error she had made regarding the noun “the country,” which was confusing and ambiguous in this sentence. The



student was also expected to realise that she should not have used the noun phrase “the country” to refer to “Thailand,” which did not occur in the topical position of the preceding clause. Rather, the student was expected to revise this part of the sentence by changing the common noun “the country” to the proper noun “Thailand” for reiteration and better cohesion.

The teacher also used the AS feedback to provide a direction for the students’ revision and to guide the revision by giving a reason or an explanation. The teacher expected that the students would revise their initial drafts using their language and writing skills, not just by copying the teacher’s correction.

Based on the data analysis, the students generally made complete revisions in accordance with the AS comments, even though some of them made partial revisions or no revisions at all. The following section provides examples of revisions which were the results of the AS comments. These examples are presented according to whether the students’ revisions had complete, partial or no correspondence to the AS comments.

#### **5.1.3.1 Complete Correspondence to the AS Comments**

Most of the student moves had complete correspondence to the AS comments. Out of the 252 AS comments, 233 comments (92.4%) resulted in complete, accurate revisions. This suggests that the teacher’s purpose in using this type of feedback to provide opportunities for self-correction was fulfilled. The following examples illustrate the students’ complete correspondence to the teacher’s comments.

In the following example, the teacher gave an AS comment to promote cohesion in the student’s revised draft. These two sentences began a body paragraph of a cause-and-effect essay.

“Second, I like to work on the Internet. My market is not only some places but the whole world.”

[Comment: You need a conjunction to combine the two sentences to make them more cohesive.]

In this case, the student successfully revised his initial draft by joining the two sentences using the conjunction “because,” generating the sentence

“Second, I like to work on the Internet *because* my market is not only some places but the whole world.”

The teacher simply identified the problematic area for the student, expecting that the “easy” revising strategy (combining sentences) and rule (using a causal conjunction to explain a reason) was within the student’s ability to self-correct.

In another example, an extract from a comparison-contrast essay, the problem involves the use of a personal reference tie to refer to a head noun in the preceding nominal group where a comparison is made between people in the past and those today.

“Human consists of two genders: male and female who plays each own role. Roles have been altering over the time; the role of people in the old day is *differing from people* at present.”

[Comments: The comparison in the last clause is illogical. You seem to compare “the role of people” and “people.” We discussed this during the lesson on an essay of comparison-contrast.]

In the student’s revised draft, she successfully added the reference tie “that” before the noun phrase “people at present” to refer to the noun phrase “the role” anaphorically, generating the sentence

“... the role of people in the old day is differing from *that* of people at present.”



The teacher directed the student's attention to the fact that lacking a personal reference tie in this sentence would make the sentence sound illogical and non-cohesive. Also, this is an example of the teacher's comment reminding the student that this use of reference ties had already been discussed in class regarding composing an essay of comparison-contrast.

Another example of the AS feedback involves content—the addition of details to clarify an argument. The following paragraph has been taken from a cause-and-effect essay composed by a student in the experimental group.

“One effect of globalisation is the advancement of communication technology. The technological revolution has provided a faster way to communicate. Thai people are now able to keep in touch with the outside world affordably.”

[Comments: This paragraph is too short. If you can give some examples to show how Thais can communicate with the outside world, your paragraph will be better developed. Also, think about how you can introduce an example.]

In the student's revised draft, she added three examples introducing the first using the conjunctive expression “for example” and introducing the last using “moreover”.

“One effect of globalisation is the advancement of communication technology. The technological revolution has provided a faster way to communicate. Thai people are now able to keep in touch with the outside world affordably. *For example*, real-time online meetings across the countries are possible via the wireless Internet web camera. Parents can make a live chat with their children studying in the United States. *Moreover*, many young people access the Internet regularly and know what books are now being published in the England or what top hit songs are in the Billboard chart.”

The teacher used AS comments to encourage the student to “elaborate” through apposition (See Halliday, 1994: 324) using a conjunctive expression (“for example,” in this case) for exemplifying her argument that Thai people are now able to contact the outside world conveniently. In this instance, the student also used “extension” for

positive addition (*ibid*); specifically, she introduced a final example using the conjunctive expression “moreover”. This AS feedback led to complete revision of the student’s initial draft and enhanced the use of cohesion, as well as paragraph development.

### **5.1.3.2 Partial Correspondence to the AS Comments**

Only a small number of the student moves had partial correspondence to the AS comments. Out of the 252 AS comments, fourteen comments (5.6%) resulted in revisions that were not completely accurate or cohesive. In these cases, the students’ revised drafts indicated that while the students noticed the comments on their initial drafts and attempted to do what the comments advised them to do, their revision was not successful, failing to match the teacher’s purpose in making the comments.

The subsequent instances indicated that the students realised what the purpose of the comment was and that they attempted to follow the advice; however, the revision did not match the purpose of the comment completely.

In the following example, the student seemed to understand what she was supposed to do in her revision, in response to the AS comment provided at the problematic area. However, in her revised draft she still had inappropriate use of cohesion. These two sentences were taken from a body paragraph of a cause-and-effect essay.

“One aspect of the world information technology, people can communicate to each other easier and quicker than they used to do. By phone or via internet, people can inform news or information swiftly.”

[Comment: You need a cohesive device to link these two sentences.]

In the student’s revised version, she added the word “example” at the beginning of the second sentence. Then the resulting revision is



“One aspect of the world information technology, people can communicate to each other easier and quicker than they used to do. *Example*, by phone or via internet, people can inform news or information swiftly.”

The teacher used the AS feedback to suggest that a conjunctive expression signifying an example is needed to link the two sentences. In this instance, it is apparent that the student realised that she would need an example signal to introduce the second sentence in the extract. However, her revision was not complete or was partially complete because she used only the word “example” instead of the complete conjunctive expression “for example” or “for instance”. In this instance, the student might not have been aware of or familiar with the complete conjunctive expression “for example”.

In another example, an extract from a classification essay, the AS feedback was provided so that the student could combine two clauses more effectively and, as a result, more cohesively. In the following extract, the use of a semi-colon for joining the two clauses in the second sentence is apparently not effective and a cohesive device should be used to link the two clauses more cohesively. Nevertheless, in the student’s revised draft, it seems that her correspondence to the comment was partial and therefore her revision was not effective enough.

“In my work place, passive chief pursers have very polite, meek, and mild attitude all the times. They delegate jobs or responsibilities to subordinates; they usually ask for cooperation with soft tone of voice instead of giving order.”

[Comments: These two clauses should not be joined by a semi-colon. You should use an appropriate cohesive device to combine them.]

In her revised draft, however, the student changed the semi-colon to the conjunction “and”.

“In my work place, passive chief pursers have very polite, meek, and mild attitude all the times. They delegate jobs or responsibilities to subordinates

*and* they usually ask for cooperation with soft tone of voice instead of giving order.”

To enhance the use of cohesion in this instance, the teacher used the AS feedback to identify a problem and then direct the student towards an improved version in her revised draft. Even though it appeared that the student was made aware that her use of the semi-colon was inappropriate and she was supposed to change it to a cohesive device, she was unable to understand the actual relationship between the two clauses. Thus, she simply removed the punctuation mark and added the basic conjunction “and”. It is apparent that the student’s revision in this case was not effective enough although she decided to use a cohesive tie to join the two clauses. To improve cohesion in these two clauses, the student should have used the temporal conjunction “when” to combine them, so that the revised sentence reads:

“In my work place, passive chief pursers have very polite, meek, and mild attitude all the times. *When* they delegate jobs or responsibilities to subordinates, they usually ask for cooperation with soft tone of voice instead of giving order.”

This instance suggests that the student had partial correspondence to the AS comment and made a revision that was only “partially” appropriate. This was probably due to the fact that the student was more familiar with the additive conjunction “and” and did not know how to use the conjunction “when” to establish a temporal relationship between two clauses or ideas.

In the following example, another extract from a classification essay, an AS comment was provided so that the student could revise the topic sentences in her essay, an expository essay, to make it more cohesive. In the following extract, the introductory paragraph is first presented with the last sentence serving as a thesis statement, which reveals the major topics to be discussed in the subsequent body paragraphs. Then the AS comments are provided below the introductory paragraph. (The teacher’s purpose in writing the comments here is to draw the student’s attention to the relationship between the thesis statement and the body paragraphs.) Following the comments are the first sentences of the body paragraphs of the essay, presented in the chronological



order. However, the topic sentence of each body paragraph does not reveal the main topic of the paragraph as introduced earlier in the thesis statement, resulting in a lack of global cohesion in the essay, even though the student used the sequence signals, i.e. *first, second* and *finally*. In the student's revised draft, the student's correspondence to the comment was apparently incomplete; therefore, her revision was still not very effective.

“School is the place to educate students and also the place for new technologies. I have been teaching for more than fifteen years and notice that there are three categories of teachers when using technologies as criteria. *There are teachers who are ready to adapt themselves to new technologies, teachers who are somewhat ready to do, and teachers who are not ready for the new technologies.* (The last sentence serves as the thesis statement of this essay.)

[Comments: You can make your essay more cohesive by rewriting the topic sentence of each paragraph. The topic sentences should reiterate the major points presented in the thesis statement.]

First, these teachers are usually in their twenties or in the early thirties. Most of them have knowledge in computer and can operate it effectively.....

Second, these teachers are usually in their late thirties to mid forties. These teachers have limited knowledge in technologies and computer.....

Finally, these teachers are usually in their late forties to fifties and get used to using traditional method of teaching such as merely talking and writing on the blackboard or the whiteboard.....”

In the student's revised draft, the topic sentence of each paragraph was revised. However, it seemed that the student did not fully understand how to revise her topic sentences according to the AS comments provided. Even though she revised the cohesive device used at the beginning of each body paragraph, she did not add to the

topic sentences the major points she included in the thesis statement. Following is her revision of the topic sentences.

*“For the first category, these teachers are usually in their twenties or in the early thirties. Most of them have knowledge in computer and can operate it effectively.....*

*For the second category, these teachers are usually in their late thirties to mid forties. These teachers have limited knowledge in technologies and computer.....*

*Finally, for the third category, these teachers are usually in their late forties to fifties and get used to using traditional method of teaching such as merely talking and writing on the blackboard or the whiteboard.....”*

The teacher used the AS feedback to give directions to the student regarding how to improve her topic sentences and explain why they should be modified. Even though it appeared that the student was aware that she was supposed to make some changes to her topic sentences to make her entire essay more cohesive, she simply changed the sequence signals “first,” “second” and “finally” to “for the first category,” “for the second category” and “for the third category” respectively. Consequently, her correspondence to the feedback could be considered to be partial and her revision was regarded as being incomplete and not sufficiently cohesive. In fact, the student only changed each sequence signal to a nominal group signifying sequence using the head noun “category”.

In order to improve cohesion in these topic sentences, the student should also have repeated or restated the major points she had introduced in the thesis statement, so that following the thesis statement, the topic sentences read:

*“School is the place to educate students and also the place for new technologies. I have been teaching for more than fifteen years and notice that there are three categories of teachers when using technologies as criteria. There are teachers who are ready to adapt themselves to new technologies,*



*teachers who are somewhat ready to do, and teachers who are not ready for the new technologies.*

*“In the first category are teachers who are ready to adapt themselves to new technologies. These teachers are usually in their twenties or in the early thirties. Most of them have knowledge in computer and can operate it effectively.....*

*For the second category, teachers who are somewhat ready for new technologies are usually in their late thirties to mid forties. These teachers have limited knowledge in technologies and computer.....*

*Finally, those who are not ready or who deny new technologies are usually in their late forties to fifties. These teachers are used to using traditional method of teaching such as merely talking and writing on the blackboard or the whiteboard.....”*

In this way, the essay would have achieved more global cohesion, with the clearer relationship between the thesis statement and the topic sentences. This example, therefore, suggests that the student had partial correspondence to the AS comment provided and made a revision that was only “partially” appropriate. This was probably because the student did not fully understand that to enhance global cohesion in essay writing, she should have reiterated the major points that she had included in the thesis statement by repeating or restating each of them in the topic sentence of each body paragraph.

### **5.1.3.3 No Correspondence to the AS Comments**

There were five tokens of student moves (1.98%) that had no correspondence to the AS comments which the teacher provided on the students’ initial drafts. In each case, the students made no revision in response to the feedback.

In the first example, the teacher gave an AS comment so that the student would use a lexical tie to promote cohesion in her revised draft. These two sentences began the introductory paragraph of a comparison-contrast essay.

Marriage is a serious commitment. People try to remain together whether they are healthy or sick, rich or poor, happy or unhappy.

[Comment: Cohesion between these two sentences should be enhanced. You need a cohesive device to link them together more closely.]

In this case, the student did not make any changes to these two sentences as she revised her initial draft. In other words, she left them as they were, instead of using a lexical tie like “a married couple” in place of “people” or adding a clause with a lexical tie to make the two sentences more cohesive; for example,

Marriage is a serious commitment. *When two people get married, they* try to remain together whether they are healthy or sick, rich or poor, happy or unhappy.

To find out why the student made no revision in response to the AS comment in this instance, the teacher asked her later on, and the student said she did not know how to and was not sure which cohesive device would be the most appropriate to link these two sentences.

In this situation, the student had no correspondence to the teacher's AS comment probably because she found that this problematic area was too difficult for her to resolve, or the teacher's comment was not clear or directive enough, or the student was simply unable to identify the problem involving cohesion between these two sentences.

In another example, the teacher also gave an AS comment so that the student would revise her thesis statement in the introductory paragraph of a classification essay. The problem with the thesis statement is that it was too broad and did not reveal the major



points to be discussed in the subsequent body paragraphs, which affected the global cohesion of the essay.

“..... From the two-year experience of working here, I have concluded that my colleagues can be classified according to the genres of music they prefer. After observing their behavior, I found that there are colleagues who liked different genres of music.”

[Comment: You should rewrite the thesis statement to make the entire essay more cohesive. Think about some useful cohesive ties.]

In this case, the student did not make any changes to the thesis statement at all when she revised her initial draft. Instead of adding the key word or phrase that would appear in the topic sentence of each body paragraph, the student simply did nothing to the thesis statement and later turned in a revised draft without a change in this part. In fact, the student should have added to her thesis statement the major points that she would further discuss in the body paragraphs of her essay. If she had, her thesis statement would read:

“From the two-year experience of working here, I have concluded that my colleagues can be classified according to the genres of music they prefer. After observing their behavior, *I have found that there are colleagues who prefer sophisticated music, who prefer easy-listening music and who prefer heavy music.*”

To find out why the student had no correspondence to the teacher's AS comment in this case, the teacher asked her later on, and the student said she did not think she would need to revise her thesis statement because she thought it was clear enough and her essay was adequately cohesive. It was quite obvious, therefore, that the student did not grasp the notion of including the major points to be discussed in body paragraphs in a thesis statement, even though this had already been taught and discussed in class.

In summary, the Advisory Site (AS) feedback was the most frequently used by the teacher/researcher, and the student moves had complete correspondence to this type of comment in the majority of cases. The teacher used the AS feedback to provide the students with an opportunity to self-correct and solve problems using their cohesion skills taught in class. In most instances, the teacher was accurate in his judgement of the students' ability to self-correct. However, in the cases where there was not complete correspondence to the comment(s), several explanations are possible:

1. the comment's purpose was not clear enough to the student;
2. the student did not have the relevant language or writing skills, particularly cohesion skills, to revise or correct a problem regarding the use of cohesion in his or her essay;
3. the student had the relevant skill but did not demonstrate it in his or her revision assuming that it would not be necessary to make a revision.

#### **5.1.4 Indicative Site Feedback (IS)**

A total of 132 comments (18.6%) out of 704 teacher written comments could be classified as the Indicative Site type (IS), making it the third most frequently used type of comment after the Advisory Site feedback type (252 tokens) and the Corrective Site feedback type (216 tokens). The IS comments consisted of (1) questions, (2) short phrases, (3) general statements, (4) symbols (such as arrows, circles or question marks).

The difference between the Advisory Site (AS) type and the Indicative Site (IS) type is a matter of degree of specificity in giving the student information about the nature of the teacher's reaction to his or her initial draft. The IS feedback provided less specific information for the student about the teacher's expectations. For instance, to provide positive feedback, the teacher frequently used the word "good" in indicating general praise, but the teacher did not explain why or how the student's writing was considered "good". On the other hand, the teacher sometimes used the words "not cohesive" to indicate that a particular part of a sentence in an essay lacks cohesion; however, he did not provide any reasons or explanations to clarify the comment. That means the teacher used the IS feedback when he believed that the student would be



able to recognise the purpose of the question, the symbol or the general phrase provided without explanation.

Based on the data analysis, the students generally made complete revisions in accordance with the IS comments. However, some of them made partial revisions or no revisions at all. The following section provides examples of revisions which were the results of the IS comments. These examples are presented according to whether the students' revisions had complete, partial or no correspondence to the IS comments.

#### 5.1.4.1 Complete Correspondence to the IS Comments

The majority of the student moves (108 out of 132 moves or 81.8%) related to IS comments had complete correspondence. In the following example, the teacher gave an IS comment to promote cohesion in the student's revision. The sentence below has been taken from the third body paragraph of a cause-and-effect essay.

"The last reason for Thailand's weak economy is because *they* have a carefree attitude that they learn from elders."

*Who?*

[Comment: The last reason for Thailand's weak economy is because *they* have a carefree attitude that they learn from elders.]

As shown in the example above, the teacher, using a symbol and a question, circled the personal pronoun "they" and wrote the question "who" above it. In this sentence, the use of "they" was inappropriate because there was no antecedent for this reference tie nor was there any noun or noun phrase that this pronoun would cataphorically refer to. With the IS comment in this instance, it was expected that the student would be able to change the pronoun to a more effective alternative without any explanation provided.

In this case, the student successfully revised this sentence by replacing the pronoun "they" with the noun phrase "Thai people".

**“The last reason for Thailand’s weak economy is because *Thai people* have a carefree attitude that they learn from elders.”**

The teacher simply asked the question “who” to raise the student’s awareness regarding the use of personal pronouns, and in this case the student move had complete correspondence to the teacher’s IS comment.

In another example, an extract from a classification essay, the problem involves the use of a conjunctive tie to link ideas in two sentences discussing how to lead a successful life. While the first sentence suggests against an obsession with the past and past experiences, the second sentence advises that one place an emphasis on the present.

“..... If we obsess with the past too much, the bad past experience will give us  
tensions, worries, anger, stress, etc. Moreover, we should live in the present  
and do our best today.”

[Comment: No verbal comments were offered to this inappropriate use of conjunctive tie. Instead, the teacher circled the conjunction “moreover,” which does not link the two sentences semantically, and then he put double question marks above the conjunction.]

In the student's revised draft, she successfully changed the conjunction "moreover" to the conjunction "therefore," as shown in the following extract:

**“..... If we obsess with the past too much, the bad past experience will give us tensions, worries, anger, stress, etc. *Therefore*, we should live in the present and do our best today.”**

The teacher's use of double question marks to hint an error might have led the student to revise the two sentences so that they became more cohesive. It seemed that the student became aware that the use of "moreover" in her initial draft was inappropriate.



In her revision, therefore, she replaced the conjunctive tie she had used with a more effective alternative, making the two sentences more readable. Also in this case, the student move had complete correspondence to the teacher's IS comment.

Another example of the IS feedback involves content—the expansion of her ideas to clarify an argument. The following extract has been taken from a cause-and-effect essay composed by a student in the experimental group.

“.....AEON, a financial investor from Japan, is a good example to reflect the globalisation. AEON is well known among the working class workers who work for low wages. *Why??*”

[Comment: No explanatory comments were offered to this sentence. Instead, the teacher put the question “why” and double question marks after the sentence.]

In the student's revised draft, she added a reason to expand and clarify the sentence, explaining why “AEON is well known among the working class workers who work for low wages”. The revised draft is

“.....AEON, a financial investor from Japan, is a good example to reflect the globalisation. AEON is well known among the working class workers who work for low wages *since this is the only way for the poor to obtain the cash with fast approval, no guarantor, no difficulty, and simple documentations.*”

The teacher used IS comments to encourage the student to “expand” by giving a reason (See Halliday, 1994: 324) using the conjunction “because” to explain a reason. This IS feedback led to the complete revision of the student's initial draft, enhancing the use of cohesion, as well as paragraph development.

#### **5.1.4.2 Partial Correspondence to the IS Comments**

A relatively small number of the student moves had partial correspondence to the IS comments. Out of the 132 IS comments, twenty comments (15.1%) resulted in revisions that were not completely accurate or cohesive. In these cases, the students'

revised drafts suggested that while the students noticed the comments on their initial drafts and despite their attempt to revise their first drafts in accordance with the comments, their revision was not successful and did not match the teacher's purpose in making the comments. Sixteen out of the twenty cases (12%) involved the use of lexical cohesion. This section provides a few examples of partial correspondence to the IS comments.

The following examples indicated that the students realised what the purpose of the comment was and that they attempted to follow the advice; however, the revision did not match the purpose of the comment completely.

In the following example, the student seemed to understand what she was supposed to do in her revision, in response to the IS comment provided at the problematic area. However, in her revised draft she still had inappropriate use of cohesion. These following sentences were taken from a body paragraph of a cause-and-effect essay.

“Another reason of Thai vulnerable economy is corruption. Our country loses a tremendous amount of money while the national wealth is illegal transformed into individual benefits. It is a negative image of Thailand.”

[Comment: What does “it” refer to?]

The teacher circled the personal pronoun “it” and put a question (as shown in the comment) under the pronoun. However, in the student's revised version, she changed the personal reference tie “it” to the demonstrative reference tie “this”. The revised draft is

“Another reason of Thai vulnerable economy is corruption. Our country loses a tremendous amount of money while the national wealth is illegal transformed into individual benefits. *This is* a negative image of Thailand.”

The teacher used the IS feedback to suggest that the personal reference tie “it” needs revising, or changing. In this instance, it is apparent that the student realised that she would need to change the word “it” to another word. However, her revision was not



complete or was partially complete because she used only the demonstrative reference tie “this,” instead of a complete noun phrase containing a summarising noun, to anaphorically refer to the preceding situation, which could not serve as the antecedent for “it”. In this instance, the student might not have been aware of, or familiar with, the use of a “general word”—a lexical cohesive tie that could be used to refer to a preceding situation.

To improve cohesion in this extract, the student should have used the general word “problem” to refer to the preceding situation and the verbal expression “has led to” to signify the presentation of an effect. The revised version, then, should be

“Another reason of Thai vulnerable economy is corruption. Our country loses a tremendous amount of money while the national wealth is illegal transformed into individual benefits. *This problem has led to the* negative image of Thailand.”

This instance suggests that the IS feedback delivered to the student’s initial draft so that she could improve her draft might not have been clear enough to help the student find the most appropriate cohesive tie to link the revised sentence to the preceding one. Hence, the student move in this example had partial correspondence to the comment.

In another example, an extract from a comparison-contrast essay, the IS feedback was provided so that the student could join two sentences more cohesively using an appropriate cohesive tie. In the following extract, the text was apparently not cohesive enough, and a cohesive device would be needed to link the two sentences to make them more cohesive. Nevertheless, in the student’s revised draft, it seems that her correspondence to the comment was partial and therefore her revision was still not effective enough.

“In the period of my mother, women occupied jobs in clerical positions. There were technicians, politicians and lawyers that women could not be.”

[Comments: Can you give some examples of “clerical positions”? Do you think you can use some cohesive devices to link the ideas in these two sentences?]

In her revised draft, the student gave two examples of “clerical positions”. However, when she rewrote the second sentence, she simply added the conjunction “but” and a comma at the beginning of the second sentence. After revision, her draft reads:

“In the period of my mother, women occupied jobs in clerical positions *such as secretary and clerk*. *But*, there were technicians, politicians and lawyers that women could not be.”

The student used the cohesive tie “such as” to introduce two examples of clerical positions. In this way, the student elaborated the first sentence through exemplification using a very brief list introduced by “such as”. However, in academic writing, coordinating conjunctions like “and,” “but,” “so” and “or” should not begin a sentence; rather, they should be used in a compound sentence to join two clauses. In this instance, the student used “but” at the beginning of the second sentence in the way a cohesive device like “however” or “therefore” is used.

To enhance the use of cohesion in this instance, the teacher used the IS feedback to help the student reflect on her initial draft and try to identify the problem in the draft. Then it was expected that the student would make a revision to improve her writing. Even though it appeared that the student was made aware that she was supposed to make a change to the second sentence to make the text more cohesive, she did not understand how to combine the two clauses more accurately. Specifically, it seemed that she did not know the writing rule involving the use of coordinating conjunctions like “and” or “but”. Thus, she simply added the adversative conjunction “but” to the beginning of the second sentence to mark the contrastive ideas in the two sentences. It is obvious that, even though the student understood the semantic relationship between these two sentences, the student’s revision in this case was not effective enough because she wrongly used the conjunction “but” to join the two clauses so that the cohesive tie began the second sentence. Nevertheless, to improve cohesion between these two sentences, the student should have added a conjunction that functions as a



cohesive discourse marker, like “however,” and she should have used “repetition” or a “synonym,” a lexical cohesive device to combine them so that the revised sentence reads as:

“In the period of my mother, women occupied jobs in clerical positions such as secretary and clerk. *However*, there were some *jobs / careers* like technicians, politicians and lawyers that women could not take.”

This instance suggests that the student had partial correspondence to the IS comment and made a revision that was only “partially” appropriate. This was probably due to the fact that the student was more familiar with the adversative conjunction “but” and did not know how to use or was not familiar with lexical cohesive ties that could establish a contrastive relationship between two clauses or ideas.

In the following example, another extract from a cause-and-effect essay, an IS comment was provided so that the student could revise the thesis statement in her essay to enhance cohesion between her thesis statement and her topic sentences. In the following extract, the introductory paragraph is presented with the last sentence supposedly serving as a thesis statement. However, the statement did not address the main theme of the essay and did not reveal the major points to be discussed in the subsequent body paragraphs. Then, below the introductory paragraph are the IS comments. (Similar to an example for the AS feedback in 5.1.3.2, this instance also shows the teacher’s purpose in writing the comments below the introductory paragraph to draw the student’s attention to the relationship between the thesis statement and the body paragraphs.) Following the comments are the first sentences of the three body paragraphs of the essay, presented in the chronological order. A lack of global cohesion could be detected through the use of an ineffective thesis statement, even though all the topic sentences seemed to be effective despite the grammatical errors.

“During the past twenty years, “globalising” has greatly affected on the alteration of many developing countries. Thailand has been changed by an influence of globalising apparently as well.

[Comments: Does your introductory paragraph have a thesis statement? It's not clear at all. What is the relationship between your thesis and the topic sentences of the body paragraphs?]

One aspect of the world information technology, people can communicate to each other easier and quicker than they used to do.....

The other aspect of globalise effect makes people realize that how education is important in their lives; they require having higher education in order to get better careers and to earn more salary.....

Final effect of globalising is developing into a new industrial country which has many types of products....

In the student's revised draft, the thesis statement of this essay was revised. However, it seemed that the student did not fully understand how to revise her thesis to make it more effective in accordance with the IS comments provided. Even though she added another statement, which was supposed to be a revised thesis statement, she did not reveal the main theme of the essay and did not include the major points she discussed in the subsequent topic sentences. Following is her revision of the thesis statement (the last sentence in the extract):

“During the past twenty years, “globalising” has greatly affected on the alteration of many developing countries both positive and negative sides. Like others, Thailand, a moderate growing country, has been changed by an influence of globalising apparently as well. *Following are details about globalising.*”

The teacher used the IS feedback, particularly in the form of questions, to elicit the student's response regarding how to improve her thesis statement and to suggest that her thesis and topic sentences should be cohesive. Even though it appeared that the student was aware that she was supposed to revise her thesis to promote global cohesion, she simply added a statement that seemed to suggest that details about her main topic would be provided in the subsequent paragraphs. As described earlier, she



failed to address the main theme and the major topics of her essay through this newly produced sentence. As a result, the student's correspondence to the comment was apparently incomplete or "partial"; therefore, her revision was still not very effective.

In order to improve cohesion between the thesis statement and the following topic sentences, the student should have revealed in her thesis statement the main theme and the major points to be discussed in the body paragraphs, so that the thesis statement of this essay should read:

During the past twenty years, "globalising" has greatly affected on the alteration of many developing countries both positive and negative sides. Thailand has [also] been changed by an influence of globalising apparently as well. *There are several positive effects of globalisation on Thailand including the advancement in communication systems, the educational development and the economic growth.*

With the proposed thesis statement, the essay would have achieved more global cohesion, with the clearer relationship between the thesis statement and the topic sentences.

This instance suggests that the student had partial correspondence to the IS comments provided and made a revision that was only "partially" appropriate. This was probably because the student did not understand that to enhance global cohesion in essay writing, she should have included in the thesis statement the main theme of the entire essay, as well as the major topics to be discussed in the subsequent body paragraphs.

#### **5.1.4.3 No Correspondence to the IS Comments**

Only four tokens of student moves (3%) had no correspondence to the IS comments in this study. In these cases, the students made no revision in response to the feedback the teacher provided on the students' initial drafts.

In the first example, the teacher gave an IS comment so that the student would use a reference tie to promote cohesion in her expository writing. The following extract has been taken from a body paragraph of a classification essay.

*Who are these people?*

“Problem-solving skills are in the second category. I realize that these people can get their jobs done successfully. I was confronted with the significant problem in my previous firm. My team was preoccupied with a long term project that could not be completed in one month. We would be fired if we couldn’t submit our customer’s project by the due date.....”

In this case, the student did not make a change to the noun phrase “these people” as she revised her initial draft. That is, she left it as it was, instead of using a referential tie like “people with these skills” in place of “these people” so that the sentence would read:

“I realize that *people with these skills* can get their jobs done successfully.”

To find out why the student made no revision in response to this IS comment in this instance, the teacher asked her later on, and the student said she did not know how to and was not sure which cohesive device would be the most appropriate to link these two sentences.

In the same example, the teacher also gave an IS comment so that the student would link the ideas between the second and the third sentences in the extract. The problem seemed to be a lack of a conjunctive tie that would link these two sentences to make them more cohesive.

“(1)Problem-solving skills are in the second category. (2)I realize that these

*No clear connection between these two sentences*

people can get their jobs done successfully. (3)I was confronted with the significant problem in my previous firm. (4)My team was preoccupied with a long term project that could not be completed in one month. (5)We would be fired if we couldn’t submit our customer’s project by the due date.....”



In this case again, the student did not make any changes to the second and/or the third sentences when she revised her initial draft. Instead of adding a conjunctive tie that would semantically link the two sentences, the student simply did nothing to the sentences and handed in a revised draft without any change. In fact, the student should have added a conjunctive expression signifying an example to let the reader know that the sentence(s) following the second sentence would present an extended example. If she had, her sentence would read:

“I realize that [people with these skills] can get their jobs done successfully.  
*For example*, I was confronted with the significant problem in my previous firm.....”

To find out why the student had no correspondence to this comment, the teacher asked her immediately after asking her about the previous instance. The student said she did not know how to revise this section and did not know which cohesive device she was supposed to have used to link the two sentences. This response was similar to that given by the student for the previous instance.

In these two instances, the student had no correspondence to the teacher's IS comment probably because she found that the teacher's comment was not clear or directive enough, or the student was simply unable to identify the problem involving cohesion in this sentence.

In summary, the IS feedback provided an opportunity for the students to self-correct, and a majority of cases, the students were able to respond completely to the comments or suggestions. The teacher used the less specific indications of symbols, questions and brief phrases and statements to direct the students' attention towards areas that needed revision. He expected that the students, when receiving this type of feedback, would know how to correct the errors or enhance cohesion in their writing once their attention was drawn to them.

In the cases where the student moves had partial correspondence to the IS comments, several reasons were identifiable, similar to the cases of partial correspondence to the AS comments:

1. the comments were unclear or confusing;
2. the student lacked the language or writing skills, particularly those related to the use of cohesion;
3. the student did not demonstrate the relevant skill involving the use of cohesion in his or her revision.

### **5.1.5 Advisory End Feedback (AE) and Indicative End Feedback (IE)**

The last two types of feedback given to the students in this study are Advisory End comments (AE) and Indicative End comments (IE). These two types of feedback will be reported in the same section. The number of these end comments was small and the difference between them was only a matter of degree between advice or explanation directed to the use of cohesive ties and a general indication of the teacher's overall impression of the students' initial drafts. The AE comments tended to be longer explanations of Site comments, while the IE comments tended to be shorter, more general comments.

Fifteen (2.13%) out of 704 teacher written comments were of the AE type and twenty-two (3.13%) were of the IE type. Four of the nine IE comments were praise or positive feedback. The relatively low number of AE and IE comments suggests that the teacher chose to deal with the problematic areas directly in the text. In fact, the teacher comments at the end of the students' initial drafts were often the paraphrases of a Site feedback type or were of a general nature that gave the teacher's overall impression of the students' drafts.

Following is an example of an AE comment that restated an Advisory Site (AS) comment. As reported in 5.1.3, the following extract has some problems regarding the use of cohesive devices.

“The emergence of countries such as Vietnam and China has taken its toll on the labor in Thailand because foreign companies flood the market to take advantage of the low but highly skilled labor force. *If* the Thai workforce



needs to be competitive in the global economy, *the country* would focus on human resources development.”

Delivering an AS comment, the teacher stated “You need a transitional device to join these two sentences so they will be easier to understand.” In this instance, the teacher also added an AE comment that restated the AS comment on the student’s initial draft. The AE comment is

“When you rewrite this essay, please make sure you use an appropriate cohesive device to link ideas between sentences.”

This AE comment was a paraphrase of the AS comment provided “at site” and was used as a reminder for the student to revise her draft with a specific focus.

In addition to the teacher’s use of End comments to restate Site comments, End comments were also used to give positive feedback or, specifically, a general overall impression of a student’s initial draft, such as (1) “Your cohesion has much been improved!” and (2) “Your essay is very cohesive. You can use many effective cohesive devices in your writing.”

A third use of End comments was to offer general suggestions for revisions that had not been commented on “at site”. Often, modals such as “might” or “could” were used in these end suggestions; for instance, “Your body paragraphs are good; however, there could be more cohesive links between them.” This type of comment was less directive than a Site comment; for example, “More various cohesive devices might be used in your draft.” With the use of modals, the teacher offered some ideas for improving cohesion but did not instruct the student to do so directly.

Similar to the Site comments, most students generally made complete revisions in accordance with End comments although some of them made partial revisions or no revisions at all. The following section provides examples of revisions which were the results of the AE and IE comments. These examples are presented according to whether the students’ revisions had complete, partial or no correspondence to the comments.

#### **5.1.5.1 Complete Correspondence to the AE and IE Comments**

Twenty-six out of thirty-seven End comments (70.3%) were responded to with complete correspondence. As reported in the previous section, many of the End comments were restatements of Site comments, so it is necessary to look at both comments when reporting the correspondence of the student moves. For example, a student received an AS comment suggesting that she provide more examples to illustrate her writing more clearly and that she use some cohesive devices to introduce examples.

The following example and comments have been reported in 5.1.3.1.

“One effect of globalisation is the advancement of communication technology. The technological revolution has provided a faster way to communicate. Thai people are now able to keep in touch with the outside world affordably.”

[Comments: This paragraph is too short. If you can give some examples to illustrate how Thais can communicate with the outside world, your paragraph will be better developed. Also, think about how you can introduce an example.]

Then the related AE comment was provided on the same paper stating: “You should use some examples to make your first body paragraph more cohesive.” This comment was intended to reinforce the AS comment provided earlier. In this example, as reported in 5.1.3.1, the student move had complete correspondence to the comments. However, it is not clear whether either or both comments were related to the correspondence of the student move.

In the following example, where only an AE comment was provided, the correspondence between the comment and a successful revision was much clearer. The paragraph below has been extracted from a comparison-contrast essay. It was the first body paragraph of the essay. The comments provided were applicable to all the body paragraphs; however, only one body paragraph (its initial draft and revised version) is presented.



“The difference between single life and married life is the freedom. Single people have more liberty than married people. They don’t have to take care of someone else. They can go to or travel anywhere in anytime or spend more time on activities that they enjoy. Married people must think carefully before making decision to do something. They have to consider a partner’s feeling or opinion. They will have less free time and lose some privacy. The majority of time will be shared with others.”

[Comments: It seems your body paragraphs lack cohesive devices to link ideas between sentences and between paragraphs. Your referential ties are already good, though.]

In the student’s revised draft, she successfully added various cohesive devices so that the sentences in the body paragraph became more cohesive.

“*Firstly*, the difference between single life and married life is the freedom. Single people have more liberty than married people *because they are responsible for themselves only*. They don’t have to take care of someone else. *As a result*, they are independent and free in life. They can go to or travel anywhere in anytime or spend more time on activities that they enjoy. *In contrast*, married people must think carefully before making decision to do something because they don’t live alone anymore. They have to consider a partner’s feeling or opinion. *Consequently*, they will have less free time and lose some privacy. The majority of *their* time will be shared with others.”

The student employed a variety of cohesive ties to make her draft more cohesive. She added a number of conjunctive expressions to link some sentences, namely *firstly*, *as a result*, *in contrast*, and *consequently*. She also expanded an argument by explaining a reason using the conjunction “because” to introduce the reason and added an effect in the sentence “As a result, they are independent and free in life.” These revisions do involve the improvement of content, as well as the addition of a cohesive device. In the last sentence, the student also added the genitive “their” for anaphoric reference.

This instance suggests that the student had complete correspondence to the AE comment and made a revision that was satisfactorily effective, even though it seemed that the student had overused cohesive devices to join sentences in the paragraphs. It also appeared that the AE comment encouraged the student to think about how to link the discursive ideas in the initial draft more cohesively. This end comment was not a restatement of a Site comment; it was the only time the teacher advised the student to consider enhancing cohesion in her draft and the revision corresponded to the purpose of the comment.

#### **5.1.5.2 Partial Correspondence to the AE and IE Comments**

Seven End comments (18.9%) had partial correspondence to student moves. In the following example, although the student appeared to understand what she was supposed to do in her revision, in response to the IE comment provided at the end of her initial draft, in her revised draft she still had some problems regarding cohesion. These paragraphs were taken from the introductory paragraph and the concluding paragraph of a classification essay respectively.

“For working as a secretary of a chief instructor, I have to take care of various work which can be categorized according to a frequency of work occurred in a year: daily work that needs to be done everyday, occasional events which are taken place two or three times depending on timing; and finally, an annual plan that must be yearly schemed for advanced projects.

No matter what my task is, I always completely finish it on time. Though my whole task does not need to be succeeded in one day, I do it little by little depending on its due date. Being responsible for various kinds of task makes me know how to manage my time.”

[Comment: Your concluding paragraph does not seem to relate to your thesis statement in the introductory paragraph.]

The IE comment was intended to suggest that the student revise her concluding paragraph so that it would be more closely related to the introductory paragraph. In



other words, she was supposed to begin her concluding paragraph with a restatement of the thesis she posed in her introductory paragraph. The underlined part in the introductory paragraph announced the thesis of her essay.

In her revised version, the student added the conjunctive device “moreover” at the beginning of the third sentence, which was supposed to be the closing of the paragraph, and added the prepositional phrase “for different purposes” to the end of the same sentence. The revised version of this paragraph is

“No matter what my task is, I always completely finish it on time. Though my whole task does not need to be succeeded in one day, I do it little by little depending on its due date. *Moreover*, being responsible for various kinds of task makes me know how to manage my time *for different purposes*.”

In this instance, it is apparent that the student realised that she would need to add some words or phrases to make the paragraph become more cohesive. However, her revision was not complete or was partially complete because she failed to rewrite the first sentence of the paragraph so that it would be a restatement of her thesis, in which way her introduction and conclusion would have become more cohesive through the use of lexical ties namely “synonyms” and “repetition.” In addition, her adding the conjunctive device “moreover” and the prepositional phrase “for different purposes” did not seem to make the paragraph more cohesive. The former seemed inappropriate because it failed to establish the semantic relationship between the two sentences that it was meant to link. The latter seemed to be vague and useless as it did not reiterate the major points that had been presented in the introductory paragraph. This instance suggests that an IE feedback could be inadequate to provide an insight for a student to revise his or her initial draft. In other words, this type of feedback, as used in this study, might have been too short or too unclear.

In another example, an extract from a cause-and-effect essay, an AE comment was provided so that the student could revise her body paragraphs so that they would be more effective and more cohesive. In the following extract, more cohesive devices are needed to link ideas between sentences. Nevertheless, in the student’s revised draft, it seems that her correspondence to the comment was partial and therefore her revision

was not effective enough. The following paragraph has been taken from a student's essay. While the AE comment was provided as feedback for all the body paragraphs in an essay, only the first body paragraph is presented below as an example.

“One effect caused by globalisation is Thais' damaged health. They had delicate and nutrient food, but globalisation has had an effect on the restaurant chain. It has changed most Thai eating habits or dietary interests. There is more consumption of fast food or junk food. To be in trend, Thais eat that junk food causing serious health hazard like cancer and heart trouble. There are many infectious diseases transferred from other foreign countries to Thailand because of globalisation. As people and products have traveled around the world, infectious diseases spread into other countries. Many people died from these diseases.”

[Comments: It was rather difficult to read your body paragraphs. You should add more cohesive devices to link ideas between sentences. If you could also give some examples to illustrate some of your points, that would be very useful.]

In her revised draft, the student added some cohesive devices as instructed by the teacher. It was also apparent that the student followed the teacher's advice mainly by giving some examples to illustrate some points.

“One effect caused by globalisation is Thais' damaged health. They had delicate and nutrient food *like shrimp paste and chili sauce with vegetables*. However, globalisation has had an effect on the restaurant chain, so it has changed most Thai eating habits or dietary interests. There is more consumption of fast food or junk food *such as hamburger, pizza, hot dog and cola in fast food restaurants like McDonald's, KFC's and Pizza Hut's*. To be in trend, Thais eat that junk food causing serious health hazard *like cancer and heart trouble*. There are many infectious diseases transferred from other foreign countries to Thailand because of globalisation. As people and products have traveled around the world, infectious diseases *like Bird Flu, AIDS and*



*Malaria spread into other countries such as Thailand. Many people died from these diseases.”*

To enhance the use of cohesion in this instance, the teacher used the AE feedback to explain a problem and then direct the student towards an improved version in her revised draft so that she would use various cohesive devices to link ideas between sentences in the paragraph. Although it appeared that the student followed the teacher’s advice in an attempt to improve cohesion in her initial draft, she did not fully understand how to make her draft more cohesive through the use of various types of cohesive ties and focused mainly on the latter part of the AE feedback provided. As a result, she simply added examples to different parts in the paragraph using the expressions “like” and “such as” to introduce those examples. The student’s revision in this instance is considered to be insufficiently effective due to the limited type of revision she made to improve the cohesion of this paragraph. This instance suggests that the student had partial correspondence to the AS comment and made a revision that was only “partially” appropriate. This was probably due to the fact that the student misinterpreted the teacher’s comment, focusing only on the last part of the feedback, or that she was unable to identify the problem regarding cohesion in her draft, or that she had not acquired other types of cohesive devices that she could have employed in her revision.

#### **5.1.5.3 No Correspondence to the AE and IE Comments**

There were four cases of student moves (10.8%) that had no correspondence to the AE and IE comments which the teacher provided on the students’ initial drafts. Similar to the student moves that had no correspondence to the Site comments, those that responded to the End comments made no revision in response to the feedback. Due to the limited number of tokens of this type, only one example is presented.

In the following example, the teacher gave an AE comment so that the student would promote cohesion in her revised draft by using more cohesive devices to link ideas between sentences in a comparison-contrast essay. The main problem with this essay is a lack of cohesion between the thesis statement and the topic sentences in the body

paragraphs. The following extract consists of the introductory paragraph and the topic sentences of the body paragraphs.

“Since many people adopt western cultures in to Thai society, the way of life in Thailand has been change a lot. The courtship in my time is significantly different from the courtship in my parents’ time in terms of *the way to select a partner, the way of dating and the way to communicate to each other.*

In the past, most Thai people depended on their families. A family, friends or relatives play a vital role in order to introduce a man or a woman to date each other.....

Specific areas were arranged for new lovers. For example, Thai singles usually meet at a house of a woman, so that her parents could take their eyes on both of them.....

Lastly, advanced technology is very helpful for courtship. My father had to write a letter to my mother to keep in touch or drive to her home to have face-to face conversation; whereas, I could contact my boyfriend through mobile phones, e-mails and MSN.....”

[Comment: Cohesion between your thesis statement and topic sentences of the body paragraphs should be enhanced.]

In this instance, the student did not make any changes to the thesis statement (the italicised part in the first paragraph) and the topic sentences as she revised her initial draft. Instead of using some lexical ties such as “repetition” or “synonyms” in her revised topic sentences, she made no revisions at all.

To find out why the student made no revision in response to this AE feedback in this instance, the teacher asked the student. She said she had thought that there was no need to repeat in the topic sentences the major supporting points stated in the thesis statement. She said she had thought this was not necessary for a comparison-contrast essay.



In this situation, the student had no correspondence to the teacher's AE comment probably because she had forgotten what had been discussed in class regarding how to make a connection between the thesis statement and each body paragraph in an expository essay. In addition, she might have completed the revising assignment hurriedly and did not pay enough attention to the feedback. It was also possible that the student was confused by the comment, which might have been too unclear for her.

In summary, the End comments were often related to the Site comments or were overall statements of the teacher's overall impression of the students' initial drafts. It was quite obvious that End comments played a crucial role in enhancing cohesion in student expository writing as most of the student moves had complete correspondence to the AE and IE comments, while there were relatively fewer cases where the student moves had partial or no correspondence to this type of feedback.

## **5.2 Individual differences**

The findings presented in the preceding sections mainly focus on similarities and differences in the way the aggregate of individual students responded to the teacher written comments. Although the purpose of this research was not to conduct case studies on individual students' responses, the next section will briefly examine some of the general patterns of response to commenting by individual students.

Almost all of the students in the experimental group used the comments to revise as they moved along from the beginning to the end of the drafts. According to the findings from the interviews, which will be presented in more detail in the next chapter, one student used the comments as a "checklist" at the end of the revising process. She reread the comments from the beginning to the end when she had completed her revised, or final, draft and rechecked whether or not she had accomplished the purpose of each comment. Another student appeared to "ignore" the comments as some of her revisions had no correspondence to the teacher comments. However, it was clear from her interview that her style was usually to find a comment in her initial draft, stop, read the comment and then revise her draft by changing a word, phrase or complete sentence in response to the comment. She would make no

revision only when she did not know how to or when she believed that her initial writing was already appropriate.

These two examples demonstrate that differences exist among the student approaches to using the comments to revise. Although the main focus of this research was on the group patterns, individual similarities and differences are clear and this may be a fruitful area for further research.

### **5.3 Summary of Teacher Comment Findings**

The type of teacher written feedback used was related in part to the type of cohesion commented on. For instance, all tokens related to referential ties received only CS and CAS comments. This indicates that the teacher seemed to prefer to simply provide corrections for referential ties by adding, substituting, or deleting items where this type of cohesion is concerned. (See 5.1.1.) Most lexical ties received AS and IS comments suggesting that the teacher seemed to prefer to encourage students to revise this type of cohesion on their own through reflection and careful consideration. This was also partly due to the fact that there were usually several ways of revising text where lexical ties were concerned.

The distribution of teacher feedback types according to individual students revealed few extremes. CS comments ranged from zero for one student to twelve for another, with the average of 5.2. The AE and IE comments ranged from zero to two for each individual student, with the average of 0.63. The CAS comments ranged from zero to seven per student, with the average of 3.4. The IS comments ranged from one to five, with the average of 2.8. Finally, the AS comments ranged from two to eight per student, with the average of 4.4. In general, the teacher appeared to have distributed the use of comment types evenly among all the students in the experimental group.

Regarding the student moves to the teacher written feedback, it appeared in this study that the majority of the teacher comments were responded to with complete correspondence in three ways:

1. the students' copying the teacher's corrections
2. the students' appropriately adding a word, a phrase or a clause



3. the students' appropriately making changes to text

With regard to the student moves with partial or no correspondence to the comments, there are several possible reasons for the mismatch:

1. the students did not understand the teacher comments
2. the students were not able to change the language or writing using the teacher comments
3. the students chose not to make a revision

## **5.4 Discussion**

The findings in this chapter revealed that the teacher used more Advisory and Indicative Site and End comments (59.8%) than Corrective comments (30.7%) and Corrective and Advisory comments (9.5%). The Advisory comments and Indicative comments are similar in that both types return the "action" to the students and provide opportunities for the students to manipulate their language resources as they modify output. The discussions in this section will mainly involve two related ideas.

The first idea concerns the teacher's choice of comment types, which reveals a social relationship, based on the teacher's familiarity with the students' linguistic and educational needs and goals, and with the shared classroom activities. The second idea concerns the teacher's interaction through feedback delivery, which is linked to the students' manipulation and modification of the second language. These two notions can be found across the typology of the comments reported on earlier in this chapter. Although interrelated, the two themes will first be examined separately for the purpose of an analysis that focuses on how the teacher bases his choice of comments on his familiarity with the students and how he uses the written comments to engage in interaction that "pushes" the students back to their texts and back to their own writing and language resources to modify their language and writing to promote cohesion.

### **5.4.1 The Student/Teacher Relationship**

According to several researchers (Freedman, 1987; Arndt, 1993; Ferris, 2003b), responding to student writing is a process of “collaborative problem-solving”. That is, both the teacher and the learner negotiate meaning through the student’s drafts and the teacher’s comments. Teacher comments that link feedback to the unique texts of individual learners may also reflect a familiarity with students’ language and writing needs and goals.

ESL teachers can get to know their students better and can thus become more familiar with their ways of thinking and working. This may be possible for several reasons. The first reason is that an ESL teacher may be expected to provide orientations and cultural programming for students that result in increased student/teacher interaction outside the classroom. Also, ESL teachers who design courses for specific purposes, such as English for Business Communication, English for Fine Arts or English for Political Science, are expected to assess their students’ goals and needs for second language use. ESL teachers have a unique opportunity to use their increased knowledge of and familiarity with students to continue the interaction through the written comments on the students’ writing.

In addition to the teacher’s written feedback delivery being part of a social relationship, the data in this study indicate that providing feedback or comments can also refer to classroom instruction. Although there is no direct link between classroom instruction and acquisition of writing or language, Sperling and Freedman (1987) attempted to show that comments that do not have a reference to shared classroom information may be of little help to the student writer. They found that while there was not always a match between comments that referred to classroom information and subsequent revision, there was a definite non-match between comments with a lack of classroom reference and revision. While the present study did not attempt to focus on the connection among classroom instruction, comments and revision, some of the following examples will show that the teacher was aware of classroom instruction and its possible impact on the students’ comprehension of his comments.



In the following sections, the examples will show how the teacher's familiarity with students' goals, needs and abilities, and the teacher's specific references to shared classroom activities impacted his choice of comments.

As seen in the first set of examples, the teacher's use of the pronouns "I" and "you" in the comments indicate the individualised nature of the interaction. The teacher often "talks" to the student to whom he gave comments about the draft rather than simply provide comments about the draft as an isolated product. In addition, the teacher uses information based on his familiarity with students to form diagnosis and prescription.

In the first example, it can be seen that the teacher initially used a Corrective comment because he thought that the Indicative Site (IS) feedback he had provided in the student's previous draft was not helpful enough. The student was unable to revise her initial draft of a classification essay that the teacher commented on using an IS comment. (See 5.1.4.3.) In a subsequent draft of a comparison-contrast essay, the teacher decided to provide a Corrective comment where inappropriate use of cohesion similar to that in her previous essay was detected. In the following extract, taken from the first body paragraph of the student essay, the teacher made a correction to provide a stronger link between the last sentence and the preceding one.

"First, men or women have more freedom today than in the past to select their own marriage partners. Marriage was a family matter in the past. *The process* was arranged by the parents of the bride and groom."

On the draft, the teacher added the phrase "of choosing a marriage partner" after the noun "process" so that these lexical ties would join the two sentences more cohesively. In the student's revised draft, she wrote

"First, men or women have more freedom today than in the past to select their own marriage partners. Marriage was a family matter in the past. *The process of choosing a marriage partner* was arranged by the parents of the bride and groom."

In this instance, then, the student move had complete correspondence to the Corrective comment. The teacher's decision to opt for a simple correction was based on his familiarity with the student's needs and abilities, seeing that his use of an Indicative Site comment might not have helped the student to make a revision regarding the use of lexical ties. In other words, the teacher did not provide the student with an opportunity to do self-correction, based on his assessment of the student's language proficiency level with a focus on lexical cohesion.

In another example, the teacher also used his information about a student's ability to provide an Advisory Site feedback. That is, having learned from marking the student's previous draft and from a discussion with her that she was confused by metalinguistic terms referring to various types of cohesion, the teacher decided to use simple terms to give advice. In the following extract, taken from a body paragraph of a classification essay, the student was advised to make the two sentences more cohesive, and the comment was provided "at site".

"The Measurement Team's task is to identify and combine the data to measure the key performance indicators. There are some members from the Core Team and employees from different departments...."

[Comment: You should remove "there are" and use a noun phrase to refer to the Measurement Team.]

In the student's revised draft, she successfully deleted "there are" and replaced it with the noun phrase "this group", and she also added the verb "contains" as the main verb of this sentence.

"The Measurement Team's task is to identify and assemble the data source to measure the key performance indicators of all objectives on the Strategy map. *This group contains* some members from the Core Team and employees from different departments."



In this instance, the teacher provided the comment that accommodated the student's use of lexical cohesion with an avoidance of metalinguistic feedback on cohesion. This reflected the teacher's choice based on his familiarity with the student.

In the following example, another aspect of the teacher's familiarity with his students is presented. In addition to the teacher recalling information about students' writing and language skill levels, he was also familiar with the students' academic and professional needs, and he addressed this comment to one of those needs. In the Advisory End comment on a student's initial draft of a classification essay, the teacher expressed concern for and directed his comment to the student's need to write with more variety of cohesive devices in his academic essays. The main problem with this student's writing was that she had too many choppy sentences in her essay and used too many anaphoric referential ties especially the personal pronoun "they". If she had joined the sentences with some conjunctive expressions or lexical ties, her essay would have been more readable. The following extract has been taken from only one body paragraph of the student's essay; however, the comment was provided "at end" and was directed to the entire composition.

"Some people can make friends at the first sight. They are able to talk to strangers naturally like they are close friends. They are usually the first who walk to people and start introducing themselves. They often start small talk with list of basic questions like "what is your name?", "where are you from?", "where do you work?", "do you like diving?" and "what do you think about today events?". They learn a lot of information about people expectation, interest, like and dislike. They are able to adapt themselves to people very quickly. They become friends with every one and they also become popular among group members in a very short time. They make people feel comfortable by telling a joke. They do not hesitate to involve themselves in the group work. When they are asked to divide into groups and make a group presentation, they are always eager to be volunteer representatives."

[Comments: Your sentences are quite choppy and they can be boring. You should use other types of cohesive devices in your writing instead of using only the pronoun “they”. Your writing style should be more advanced.]

The teacher wrote the comments specifically directed to the graduate student. To address the student’s academic needs, the teacher was rather straightforward in his comments on the student’s writing style. Because the writer was a postgraduate student, the teacher expected that her writing ability could have been more advanced.

#### **5.4.2 Reference to Recent Classroom Activities**

The next set of examples illustrates how the teacher chose comments to reinforce recent classroom activities. In the first instance, the teacher used an Advisory End comment to draw attention to the writing conventions that had been recently discussed and practiced in class. The following extract, a student’s initial draft of a comparison-contrast essay, consists of (1) the thesis statement taken from the introductory paragraph and (2) the three body paragraphs. This composition was intended to make comparisons between Thai women today and those in the past.

“.....In Thailand women’s roles in the past and at the present time differ in terms of the educational opportunities they receive, the career opportunities they get and the freedom they have in society.

First, the educational opportunities that Thai women receive do differ between the previous and the present time. Today the number of Thai women graduating from university-level programmes is higher. Women can receive an adequate education and be able to use their knowledge wisely Therefore, education of Thai women has developed all the time.

Second, Thai women in the previous time and the present time are different in terms of the career chances. Today, Thai women have to seek employment outside the home. They change their roles from women who spend some money that they get from their parents or husbands to women who earn some money and there are many Thai working women who earn a lot of money for



families. It is clear that career opportunities of Thai women have changed from time to time.

Third, one difference of Thai women's roles is that they have more freedom in society than before. Today Thai women are more sociable. They can dress what they want like fashionable and sexy clothes. Thai women can decide when and whom they want to marry, and how much children they want to have. Thai women have more freedom to voice their opinions or participate in social events such as in political discussion."

[Comments: When you compare two items, you should include both points of comparison in the point-by-point format. In your body paragraphs, you should also describe Thai women's lives in the past to make your supporting details more vivid and cohesive. We discussed this in class last week. You can refer to page 261 in our course book.]

In this instance, the teacher made a reference to a section in the course book that had been discussed in a recent class. He also provided directions that would lead the student to include more details in each body paragraph to make her essay more cohesive.

In another instance, the teacher used a Corrective and Advisory Site comment to draw attention to a usage that had recently been practiced in class and would be practiced again. The following extract is the introductory paragraph in a student's initial draft of a cause-and-effect essay. The main purpose of this composition was to discuss different causes of Thailand's weak economy. Problems affecting this paragraph involved the use of some referential ties and lexical ties, the cohesive devices that had recently been discussed in class. In delivering this feedback, although it is not assumed that learning takes place simply because instruction is given, the teacher does indicate awareness of the possible connection between a shared classroom activity and the comment. While the comment did not explicitly recall the classroom activity for the student, the teacher chose to add the rules recently practiced in class rather than simply provide the correction.

“There are several reasons that make Thailand has a weak economy. *Thailand is one of the developing countries in Asia.* Thailand needs to have a strong economic growth for comparable to international that are developed country. Obviously, we can’t because of many reasons. *It* can be summarize in three factors that has had strongly effects on Thailand’s weak economy.”

While examining the above paragraph, the teacher underlined the sentence “Thailand is one of the developing countries in Asia” and provided a comment stating that this sentence should be added to the preceding sentence using the “appositive”, a writing feature recently discussed in class. Then he circled the italicised word “Thailand” in the subsequent sentence and put the pronoun “it” over the word. A brief Site comment was also provided saying that the word “Thailand” should be changed to the pronoun “it” so that repetition could be avoided. After that, the teacher circled the pronoun “it”, which begins the last sentence, and posed the question “What does ‘it’ refer to?” Again, in this instance, the teacher called attention to certain rules involving cohesion, which had recently been discussed in class. In the student’s revised draft, all the problematic areas had been coped with successfully.

In the subsequent example, the teacher provided an explanation for a rule as he referred to a recent classroom activity. The teacher used an Advisory Site comment to draw attention to the use of a cohesive tie that had recently been taught in class. The following paragraph has been extracted from the first body paragraph of a student’s initial draft of a classification essay, which aimed to discuss different tasks performed by an overseas customer service executive. The student used an inappropriate cohesive device in her draft to illustrate a situation involving this position.

“The first task for the overseas customer service executive is to co-ordinate the customers from countries around the world, the plant, and internal departments in my organization. I have to translate the messages and requirements from the customers into Thai and deliver these Thai messages to the plant in order to help them understand the customers more easily. *Such as*, I have to interpret my customer’s comments that relate to the book samples which I sent to them for approval into Thai for my technical department at the plant. They can



command the workers to change the products that are compatible with my customer's needs."

[Comment: The expression "such as" cannot begin a sentence. We discussed this in class last week.]

The teacher provided an AS comment to the draft to give advice to the student regarding the inappropriate use of the expression "such as," which cannot be followed by a complete sentence. In the comment, the teacher briefly explained a rule and made a very short reference to a recent class activity, implying that the cohesive expression "such as" should be changed to the expression "for example" or "for instance". In the student's revised essay, she successfully corrected this error.

In summary, the teacher's comments are part of the on-going dialogue between the teacher and students which constitutes a social relationship with a role differentiation and with a familiarity that can be enhanced through continued classroom interaction and through the shared information in the commenting and revising activity. The teacher's choice of comment types is embedded in the social relationship and in his familiarity with the individual students and with their shared classroom experiences. The teacher used the information about the students' language and writing proficiency, about their educational and career goals, and about his own level of experience as an ESL instructor to direct his choice of comments to individual students. The next section will focus on how the teacher used interactive comments to help students modify their output.

#### **5.4.3 Comments Providing Feedback, Modified Input and Opportunities for Modified Output**

Freedman (1987) indicated that written comments should address problems within the writer's developmental grasp and should lead to eventual revision without the teacher's intervention. In other words, comments should provide opportunities for students to solve their own writing and language problems—to pull from their own resources. This is clearly related to Swain's (1985) notion that second language students need to be "pushed" to modify their output.

The findings of this study indicate that a teacher can encourage students to manipulate the second language, particularly the use of cohesive devices, by not always providing a model for students, but by providing feedback that poses questions, that gives information about language and writing conventions, and that indicates areas of ineffective cohesion.

The next section is divided into sets of examples that illustrate how the teacher provided (1) feedback on form and content, (2) input with metalanguage information, (3) input with clarification questions and (4) modified input through expansions, rephrasing and examples. In each case, the way the students modified their output in response to the teacher's input is examined.

#### **5.4.3.1 Feedback on Form and Content**

This section presents examples that illustrate how feedback can provide information for students as they make connections between what they have already acquired and the target language, i.e. cohesion.

The first example focuses on feedback on form. Here, the student used a wrong personal reference tie.

“Another category of music that my colleagues love are Fun and Simple music like Pop, Religious, Country and Soundtrack music. *They* who favor this music tend to be shy and artistic.”

[Comment: You used a wrong pronoun. “They” is not followed by a relative clause.]

The teacher provided an Indicative Site comment on the use of a personal reference tie. During the revision process, the student, pushed to rely on her own language resources rather than a teacher model or correction, was able to modify output by changing the pronoun “they” to “those”.



In the next example, the feedback on form is linked to the teacher's use of feedback as a way to encourage modification of output in the areas of content and organisation.

"Finally, the effect of traveling promotions from neighbor countries is decreasing number of traveler to Thailand. Neighbor countries, such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, try to promote their traveling industry by advertising their natural destinations. These campaigns attract many tourists to visit there instead of Thailand. *Earthquake has happened in area nearby our country many times. People are worried about tsunami, an extremely large wave, would be formed again. This should not occur and there will be more tourists coming to Thailand.*"

[Comments: Your mention of "earthquake" and "tsunami" was not related to the preceding part of the paragraph, especially the topic sentence. So you should rewrite these two supporting sentences or revise your topic sentence. And you should also revise the last sentence to make it a more effective concluding sentence, and the pronoun "this" is not clear.]

The teacher provided an Advisory Site comment on the content and organisation of the paragraph with a focus on the relationship among the topic sentence, the supporting details and the conclusion. After the revision, the following draft was produced.

"Finally, the effect of traveling promotions from neighbor countries and *natural disaster* is decreasing number of traveler to Thailand. Neighbor countries, such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, try to promote their traveling industry by advertising their natural destinations. These campaigns attract many tourists to visit there instead of Thailand. *Earthquake has happened in area nearby our country many times. It makes people be worried about tsunami, an extremely large wave, would be formed again. This situation caused foreigners to slow down their plan to visit Thailand.*"

In the revised version, it can be seen that the student decided to revise the topic sentence so that it would cover all the supporting details he presented in the

paragraph. Specifically, he added a hypernym, i.e. the superordinate lexical tie “natural disaster” to provide links with the words “earthquake” and “tsunami” in the subsequent part of the paragraph. In addition, he rewrote the concluding statement so that it was more related to the preceding part of the paragraph, adding another hypernym, i.e. the general word “situation” so that the topical noun phrase in the last sentence (“this situation”) refers to what he previously described in the paragraph (even though he should have used the plural form “these situations” instead of the singular form “this situation”).

As seen in the next example, the teacher’s feedback provided information on organisation that led to the student adding information to her paragraph. Specifically, the teacher gave an Advisory Site comment so that the student would revise her thesis statement in the introductory paragraph of her essay. The thesis statement in this student’s initial draft was too broad and did not reveal the major points to be discussed in the subsequent body paragraphs, which affected the global cohesion of the essay.

“When we mentioned to organization, it usually related our thought to large size company with many departments that work together as a team. Some are big, some are small depends on the size of that organization. I have been working for the computer company as a marketing officer. Our services are installation network; find a solution on your computer problem and maintenance services. My job has to relate with many department, but mainly is to work with marketing team to plot the marketing plan.”

[Comment: Your thesis statement is not clear and not related to the rest of the essay. You should rewrite it so that it states the main purpose of the essay and presents the controlling ideas of this essay.]

The student revised her initial draft of a classification essay by adding a sentence at the end of the paragraph to state the thesis of the essay and the major supporting points to be discussed in more detail in the body paragraphs.



“When we mentioned to organization, it usually related our thought to large size company with many departments that work together as a team. Some are big, some are small depends on the size of that organization. I have been working for the computer company as a marketing officer. Our services are installation network; find a solution on your computer problem and maintenance services. My job has to relate with many department, but mainly is to work with marketing team to plot the marketing plan. *Marketing teams can be classified according to the target groups (class of customer): There are large organization’s teams, small office building’s team, and home residents’ team.*”

The controlling ideas in the thesis statement “large organization’s teams, small office building’s team, and home residents’ team” serve as lexical cohesive devices that link the thesis with the topic sentences in the subsequent body paragraphs. The teacher’s Advisory Site comment in this instance provided feedback on the draft’s organisation; that is, the thesis statement of the essay should have declared the thesis and included clear controlling ideas. The student read the comment and modified the output by adding a statement echoing the teacher’s feedback.

#### **5.4.3.2 Input with Metalanguage**

In addition to feedback on form and content, the teacher also provided feedback with metalanguage that makes available specific information about the second language. This section presents examples of how input with metalanguage affected the way students revised their initial drafts.

In the following example, the teacher provided feedback using the metalanguage involving cohesion.

“.....Open and profitable Thailand marketplace also attracts foreign investors; therefore, there have been hundreds of international joint ventures uplifting local investments’ capacities to become stronger and more competitive. Capital raised by foreign investments can lead Thailand industries to diversify

their goods and service. *It* stimulates domestic demands and local employment. Thailand economic situation, like many countries engaging in globalization, seems to be brightening up.....”

[Comments: The personal pronoun “it” is not clear. There is no particular antecedent for the pronoun. If you want to summarise what you described earlier, you should use a hyponymy (like a general word) with a demonstrative tie like “this” or “that”.]

The Advisory Site comment in this instance provided feedback on the student’s form and provided input in the form of the metalanguage involving cohesive devices, namely “personal pronoun,” “antecedent,” “hypernym” and “a demonstrative tie. The student was supposed to use the course book and her lecture notes to help her in the process of modifying her output and had an opportunity to adjust a hypothesis about usage.

In her revision, as a result, the student replaced the vague personal referential tie with a general word with a demonstrative referential tie “this circumstance”. Her revised draft then reads:

“.....Open and profitable Thailand marketplace also attracts foreign investors; therefore, there have been hundreds of international joint ventures uplifting local investments’ capacities to become stronger and more competitive. Capital raised by foreign investments can lead Thailand industries to diversify their goods and service. *This circumstance* stimulates domestic demands and local employment. Thailand economic situation, like many countries engaging in globalization, seems to be brightening up.....”

The feedback in the next example also illustrates how metalanguage about a usage rule may help a student acquire the conventions of the second language. Specifically, the student made an error by using both “although” and “but” in the same sentence. According to the conventions of the English syntax, only either of them can be used to join ideas in a sentence, the former in a complex sentence and the latter in a



compound sentence. In this instance, the student also used a wrong referential tie to refer to the singular, noncount noun “this equipment” anaphorically.

“Although this equipment make our lives more convenient *but they* cause a severe damage to our society.”

[Comment: The conjunction “but” would make this sentence ungrammatical because you can use only one conjunction in a sentence with two clauses. And the personal pronoun “they” should be replaced with a more appropriate possessive pronoun. Also make sure the subject-verb agreement is accurate.]

The Corrective and Advisory Site comment was provided in this instance. The teacher circled the conjunctive tie “but” and the pronoun “they” and gave the comment above “at site”. The metalinguistic feedback stimulated hypothesis testing on the part of the student. She later applied the rules of conjunctive and personal referential ties and revised the sentence successfully. In other words, the student deleted the conjunctive tie “but” and changed the pronoun “they” to “it”. It can be seen that the student was able to pull from her own language resources to revise when not presented with a model to copy.

The last example of metalinguistic feedback illustrates how the student, having to modify her output without a teacher model to follow, was able to articulate the issue in her revision. In the following extract, the student compared Thai women’s roles at present and in the past. Several parts in the paragraph are not cohesive due to lack of lexical links between sentences, leading to vague, confusing ideas.

“The first aspect is education opportunities. In the old days, the education was provided only to boys. Throughout history, *boys were sent to a temple* but girls stayed at home. Women had to do household chores to become a charming housewife. It is not wrong to say that a sexual discrimination existed in education. However, the revolution had increased the rate of well-educated women continuously because of constitution. Women in the year 2007 have more chances to study than the past.”

[Comments: You need some lexical cohesive devices to explain why boys were sent to temples so that you can link this idea with the preceding one more clearly. Also, the rhetorical functions of the two underlined sentences are not clear. You need to revise them.]

The teacher provided metalanguage (i.e. “lexical cohesive devices” and “rhetorical functions”) to provide Advisory Site feedback on form and content. The student, to revise this part of her draft, modified her output by adding some words to achieve lexical cohesion and deleting a sentence from her draft. Her revised draft reads:

“The first aspect is education opportunities. In the old days, the education was provided only to boys. Throughout history, boys were sent *to study at* a temple but girls stayed at home. Women had to *learn to* do household chores *from their mothers* to become a charming housewife. However, the revolution had increased the rate of well-educated women continuously because of constitution. Women in the year 2007 have more chances to study than the past.”

Specifically, in the second sentence of the extract, the student added the verbal phrase “to study at” as a lexical cohesive device so it is linked with “education” in the preceding sentence. In the third sentence, she added the verbal phrase “learn to,” again as a lexical cohesive device to be linked with “education”. Then the next sentence in her initial draft (*It is not wrong to say that a sexual discrimination existed in education.*) was removed as it was unrelated to the preceding sentence.

#### 5.4.3.3 Input with Clarification Questions

Clarification questions provide learners with feedback that can enhance the comprehensibility and readability of their message. Such questions can repeat part of the learner’s message and ask about content and form. They can help the teacher encourage interaction because questions naturally spur responses and enable the teacher to facilitate the students’ manipulation of their language resources.



In the following example, the teacher posed a clarification question that repeated part of the student's output and the student modified it with a more specific lexical item.

“Another effect under globalization is that the powerful multinational cooperation heavily affects the growth of the local retailers. Foreign investors have been venturing in the hypermarket business, consisting of a supermarket and a department store, *which is harmful. The expansion of Tesco Lotus and Carrefour* results the domestic retailers in closing their business.....”

[Comments: Who is the hypermarket harmful to? What are Tesco Lotus and Carrefour examples of?]

The student revised her initial draft in response to the teacher's Advisory Site comments or, in this particular instance, questions.

“Another effect under globalization is that the powerful multinational cooperation heavily affects the growth of the local retailers. Foreign investors have been venturing in the hypermarket business, consisting of a supermarket and a department store, *which is harmful to the local retailers. The expansion of the hypermarket, Tesco Lotus and Carrefour*, results the domestic retailers in closing their business. Not only do the rich but also the poor prefer to go to the hypermarket rather than the local retailers nearby because hypermarket attracts customers by offering cheaper prices and conveniences provided with all kinds of household items.”

Specifically, the student added the phrase “to the local retailers” in response to the first clarification question. In doing so, she used “repetition” so that this phrase serves as a lexical cohesive device which links this sentence to the preceding one. Similarly, in the next sentence, the student added a superordinate—the hypermarket—in response to the second clarification question so that the lexical cohesive tie can link this sentence with the preceding one more clearly. In this instance, therefore, the student could improve the readability of her draft.

In the next example, the teacher also posed a clarification question that repeated part of the student's statement. The student was not clear when making a comparison between Thai women's roles today and in the past.

"First, modern women get more opportunity than women in the past. In the old days, most women were uneducated. Society judged that the education was unnecessary for women; only men can study in school....."

[Comment: Modern women get more opportunities in what?]

The teacher intended to elicit a clear comparison between Thai women in the present generation with those in the former generation. The student, in response to this clarification question, was able to provide the comparison as the teacher requested. She also added an argument in another sentence, which was not asked for in the comment, but which indicates that the student was able to take advantage of the opportunity to expand on her production.

"First, modern women get much opportunity *in education* than women in the past. In the old days, most women were uneducated. *They were not allowed to attend school because of* society judged that the education was unnecessary for women; only men can study in school."

In the example above, the student added the phrase "in education" to make her comparison more vivid and at the same time added a lexical cohesive device which links this topic sentence with the subsequent supporting details. Then she also added the clause "They were not allowed to attend school because of" to explain why "most women were uneducated" although the use of "because of" was inappropriate and made the sentence ungrammatical. This instance reveals that the student was able to modify her output using a clarification question as input.

In the following case, the teacher posed clarification questions to ask about form and content.



“The final reason is political uncertainties. After the coup, the investment has been reducing. The investors and business sector continue watching the issue of domestic political stability. Although the Draft Constitution passed through the national referendum on August 19, 2007, *they* still have been waiting for the government to clarify its spending plan, the Foreign Business Acts and the Wholesale and Retail Business Act etc..... ”

[Comments: Can you use any cohesive devices to link these two sentences? Or do you think you can add another sentence between them so that they can be linked more clearly? (content)]

What does the pronoun “they” refer to? What is its antecedent? Can you use another cohesive device? (form)]

The teacher provided these Advisory Site comments to ask questions about content and form. As can be seen from the extract above, the first set of clarification questions addresses the problem regarding the ideas in the two underlined sentences, which are not connected effectively. Then the other set of questions focuses on form, casting doubt on the use of the personal pronoun “they,” which in this case has no clear antecedent.

In response to the first set of questions above, the student added a sentence in an attempt to link the ideas in the two underlined sentences. In the newly added sentence, the student also included some lexical cohesive devices that accommodate semantic links among the three sentences.

To resolve the problem addressed by the second set of questions, the student changed the personal referential tie “they” to a nominal group. Following is the student’s revised draft.

“The final reason is political uncertainties. After the coup, the investment has been reducing. *The coup has deteriorated the foreign investors’ confidence.* Concerning domestic political uncertainties, the investors and business sector continue watching the issue of domestic political stability. Although the Draft

Constitution passed through the national referendum on August 19, 2007, *the investors and businesspeople* still have been waiting for the government to clarify its spending plan, the Foreign Business Acts and the Wholesale and Retail Business Act etc.....”

In the revised version, the student added the sentence “The coup has deteriorated the foreign investors’ confidence” so that “the coup” and “foreign investors” were used as lexical devices to achieve cohesion. Additionally, the student replaced the personal referential tie “they” with the nominal group “the investors and businesspeople,” which serves as a lexical cohesive tie that links the sentence in which it lies with the preceding one. In this instance, the teacher asked specific clarification questions to encourage the student to think about how to make her paragraph cohesive and coherent. Using questions, the teacher could also interact with the student while helping her manipulate the language resources she needed to revise her initial draft.

#### **5.4.3.4 Modified Input with Expansions**

Expansions in the input serve as another way in which the teacher provides language information for the students. Expansions give the students input made comprehensible by redundant information such as synonyms, examples, repetitions and restatements.

In the first example, the teacher used “expansions” to provide input regarding language information. The following extract was taken from a body paragraph of a cause-effect composition.

“One effect is spread of knowledge from city to suburb. People who live in the suburb can get information or news over the media such as telephone, radio, television and internet. People now get information or news more quickly and at the same time as people who live in the city.....”

[Comments: Did you notice that your paragraph is not cohesive? You didn’t explain why “people who live in the suburb can get information or news over the media such as telephone, radio, television and internet.” When you said “people now”, with whom were you comparing these people?]



In this example, the teacher's Indicative Site comment provided modified input in several ways. First of all, the teacher asked a question ("Did you notice that your paragraph is not cohesive?") Then, he provided expanded information about the student's failure to give a reason "why people who live in the suburb can get information or news over the media." Next, he asked another question, which concerned a comparison between "people now" and "another group of people." In the input the teacher provided for the student, he also used "repetitions," quoting some phrases and clauses from the student's initial draft. It appears that the Indicative Site comment provided input made comprehensible to encourage the student to think about how she could make her paragraph more cohesive by responding to the questions and the feedback provided in the comment. In her revised draft, the student was able to modify her output to improve her initial draft in terms of cohesion.

"One effect is spread of knowledge from city to suburb. *Since globalization makes communication becomes easier*, people who live in the suburb can get information or news over the media such as telephone, radio, television and internet. *Different from the past*, those now get information or news more quickly and at the same time as people who live in the city....."

The student responded to the comment "You didn't explain why 'people who live in the suburb can get information or news over the media such as telephone, radio, television and internet'" by adding a clause to explain the reason as suggested in the comment ("Since globalization makes communication becomes easier"). In addition, the student responded to the last question in the comment (When you said "people now", with whom were you comparing these people?) by adding a phrase to show a contrast between "people now" and "those in the past".

The next example illustrates the use of restatement in the teacher's written comment. As reported in 5.1.5, Advisory and Indicative End comments were often modifications of Advisory and Indicative Site comments. In other words, the teacher provided End comments using paraphrases of his Site comments.

End comment: When you rewrite this essay, please join sentences in your paragraphs using various conjunctions and transitional devices. Avoid using many choppy sentences in your writing.

This End feedback was a restatement of a Site comment written on the right margin next to the student's first body paragraph of her cause-effect essay.

Site comment: Your sentences here are too choppy and so it is difficult to follow your thoughts. They can be joined with "however" or "but". Do not use only a comma to join two sentences.

In this example, the teacher modified his input in several ways in his restatement. In the Site comment, the teacher began with an observation ("Your sentences here are too choppy and so it is difficult to follow your thoughts."). Then he gave a direction and provided examples for the student to follow ("They can be joined with 'however' or 'but'"). Next, he added a direction so that the student would avoid doing something inappropriate in academic writing ("Do not use only a comma to join two sentences."). In the corresponding End comment, the teacher first gave a direction for the student to follow ("When you rewrite this essay, please join sentences in your paragraphs using various conjunctions and transitional devices."). Then he provided a direction so that the student would avoid something inappropriate in academic writing ("Avoid using many choppy sentences in your writing.").

Another way the teacher modified his input in this example is by the use of synonyms. The following final example illustrates an Advisory Site comment which was restated in the Indicative End comment with synonyms.

Site comment: This paragraph is too short. If you can give some examples to show how Thais can communicate with the outside world, your paragraph will be better developed. Also, think about how you can introduce an example.

As can be seen in the Site comment above, the teacher used the noun "example" twice, one in the singular form and the other in the plural form, and the verb "show"



once. However, in the End comment, he used some synonyms to reiterate the same issue.

End comment: Please keep in mind that a good, clear paragraph needs illustrations. Using instances to support your paragraph will make your writing more effective.

In this example, the teacher used the words “illustrations” and “instances” as synonyms for “show” and “examples”. Furthermore, the teacher used an imperative sentence (“Please keep in mind that...”) as opposed to the conditional sentence used in the Site comment. The use of the polite form with the word “Please...” tended to “soften” the use of the imperative in this End comment. The modified input in these two comments made language information available to the student as she attempted to modify her output.

#### **5.4.3.5 The Overlap of Input, Interaction and Feedback**

As indicated in 5.4.3, the three aspects of modified input, interaction and feedback were often present in the same comment. These aspects were separately presented and highlighted in sections 5.4.3.1 – 5.4.3.4 above. This section will present some examples to illustrate the inter-relatedness of the three aspects.

In the first example, the teacher’s Advisory End comment shows an example of the combination of the three aspects.

Teacher comment: Your thesis statement is not clear and not related to the topic sentences of your body paragraphs. Please do not use a general statement to state your thesis. You need to be more specific with the major points to be discussed in the body paragraphs. You can also use some lexical cohesive devices to link ideas between the thesis statement and the topic sentences.

In this comment, the teacher was highly redundant in directing the student to create a more effective thesis statement and more appropriate topic sentences. The comment began with a general observation. It then followed up with specific advice for the

student to avoid using a statement too general to be a valid thesis statement. The next sentence reiterated that same idea in a positive way by advising the student to think about the major points she planned to discuss in the body paragraphs and to include them in the thesis statement. Finally, the teacher gave the student a more concrete suggestion of how she could accomplish this by using some lexical cohesive ties that would provide links between the thesis statement and the topic sentences. The teacher used four sentences to essentially emphasise similar information. The reiteration and expansion of input provided the student with a wealth of data in the target language as well as feedback on the student's production.

The next example presents an Advisory Site comment that includes feedback on form, metalanguage about a rule and language input through rephrasing.

Teacher comment: When you use the subordinating conjunctive device "although", you don't need to use the coordinating conjunctive device "but" in the same sentence. Using only either of them in a sentence is enough and correct.

In this instance, the teacher provided language data with specific explanations. He used a follow-up statement to expand on the information, used the metalinguistic terms "the subordinating conjunctive device" and "the coordinating conjunctive device" in his explanation and provided information about a grammar usage related to the use of contrastive cohesive devices.

In the last example, the teacher combined feedback on the student's writing with a clarification question and a direction.

Teacher comment: I don't know what you mean here. Does the pronoun "it" refer to the whole first body paragraph? Please rewrite more clearly, replacing "it" with a more specific noun or noun phrase."

This Indicative Site comment provides interaction with the student by letting her know that her meaning was not understandable, at least to her own writing teacher. The teacher showed his attempt to understand the student's use of the pronoun "it" by



asking a clarification question with a specific reference to a body paragraph of the essay she wrote. He then repeated the information that the student's meaning had not been understood by directing her to rewrite more clearly. This last redundancy, in the form of a complete sentence signifying a polite request, added to the student's target language input.

## **5.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discusses the use of different types of written feedback provided by the teacher/researcher to the students' expository essays. Six types of comments (i.e. Corrective Site comments, Corrective and Advisory Site comments, Advisory Site comments, Indicative Site comments, Advisory End comments and Indicative End comments) were delivered to the initial drafts of the expository essays produced by students in the experimental group. Then this chapter describes the effects the teacher written comments had on the students' revision of their initial drafts. A total of 704 teacher comments were provided on the students' drafts of cause-effect, classification and comparison-contrast essays. No feedback or comments were provided on the expository essay drafts produced by the students in the control group.

A total of 704 comments were given to the students' initial drafts. However, it was found that the students responded to the comments in three different ways: with complete correspondence, with partial correspondence and with no correspondence to the teacher written feedback. According to the findings, 647 tokens (91.9%) had complete correspondence to the teacher written comments, followed by 44 tokens (6.3%) with partial correspondence and 13 tokens (1.8%) with no correspondence to the teacher written comments. From the findings, it is obvious that the degree of complete correspondence to both types of Corrective comments was the highest (280 out of 283 or 98.9%), followed by the degree of complete correspondence to the Site comments (341 out of 384 or 88.8%), while the degree of complete correspondence to the End comments was the lowest (26 out of 37 or 70.3%). The degree of partial correspondence to the Site comments was the highest (34 out of 384 or 8.85%), followed by the End comments (7 out of 37 or 18.9%), while the degree of partial correspondence to the Corrective comments was the lowest (3 out of 283 or 1.06%). In addition, there were no tokens that had no correspondence to the Corrective

comments, there were four tokens (10.8%) that had no correspondence to the End comments and there were nine tokens (2.3%) that had no correspondence to the Site comments.

In summary, the discussions in this chapter have focused on providing comments as part of the important interaction between teachers and students. The comments and the revisions reveal that the teacher took account of each student separately. His choice of comment types is conditioned by his familiarity with each individual student's writing and second language needs, by his familiarity with their academic needs, by his awareness of shared classroom activities and by his extended experience as an EFL instructor.

The teacher's familiarity constitutes a social relationship and is embedded in the interactive nature of the commenting process. The teacher's belief, gained through experience, is that he or she can best help students in their second language writing, particularly the use of cohesion, by establishing a relationship based on his awareness of their educational needs and by providing opportunities for interaction. The teacher written comments are part of and are conditioned by this social relationship and they promote interaction that provides language information and feedback on production.

This study has shown that the teacher's relationship with the students and his interactive comments can be directly related to the students' modification of their output resulting in revised drafts with or without correspondence to the teacher written comments. This relationship conditions the comments, which in turn condition the interaction that promotes the modification of output. The cycle involves the teacher in promoting student output, which then provides the teacher with more information about the students, which he then uses to provide them with modified input. The students can then use the teacher modified input in modifying their output. In the next chapter, findings from student questionnaires and interviews are presented.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Perceptions and Attitudes towards Writing Skills, Feedback, Revision, and Cohesion in Writing**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

For the measures reported in Chapters 4 and 5, focus was mainly product-oriented in evaluating the various drafts of essays composed by the students. However, as noted by Greene and Higgins (1994: 118), “researchers must be particularly cautious in drawing conclusions about students’ abilities from their texts alone.” Therefore, it would be useful for researchers to employ other research tools for triangulation to obtain a more holistic view of the students’ writing over the course of an experimental study. In the main study, then, questionnaire and interviews were also used to elicit the students’ responses concerning their views towards their own writing, teacher written feedback on cohesion and revisions of their drafts. In this chapter, the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire and interviews are presented.

#### **6.1 Questionnaire**

Survey-based approaches to data collection are expected to shed more light on the students’ perspectives and, in particular, their views on the feedback they received and revisions they performed throughout the writing course. Surveys rely on elicitation devices, one of which in second language research is “a procedure for getting research subjects to do or say something in response to a stimulus” (Nunan and Bailey: 2009: 124). Although this aspect has previously been overlooked in studies of second language writing (Basturkmen and Lewis: 2002; Leki: 2001), it now helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between feedback and L2 student writing. As one of the most important areas of measurement in applied social research, survey research encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking questions of respondents (Trochim: 2006).

Students from the experimental group completed the attitude questionnaire (see Appendix A) at the end of the writing course, or the experiment. Students from the control group were not asked to complete the questionnaire because they did not receive any feedback on their writing and were not asked to revise the initial drafts of their essays. In the present study, the questionnaire was designed to gain more in-depth data and receive responses to the following research question: *What perceptions and attitudes did the students who received teacher feedback and revised their essays have towards their own writing skills, the teacher feedback and the revision process?* (i.e. research question no. 5 in Chapter 3, section 3.2)

This research question is subdivided into four sub-questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions and attitudes towards their own writing skills?
2. What are the students' perceptions, preferences and beliefs regarding teacher written feedback on cohesion in their writing?
3. What are the students' perceptions regarding cohesion in their writing?
4. What are the students' perceptions and attitudes towards the revision of essays?

The questions used in the questionnaire were divided into two main types. Firstly, closed-ended questions were asked with Likert scales and boxes to be checked. Closed-ended questions are those "in which the range of possible responses is determined by the researcher and the respondents select from or evaluate the options provided" (Nunan and Bailey: 2009: 130). Then the frequencies of the participants' responses were analysed and the Likert score was calculated to determine whether the participants responded positively or negatively and to discover what they answered regarding issues pertaining to their writing skills, the teacher written feedback they received for their initial drafts, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing. Secondly, open-ended questions were also asked regarding the students' views on the feedback they received for their initial drafts, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing. Open-ended



questions are “items where the actual question is not followed by response options for the respondent to choose from but rather by some blank space (e.g., dotted lines) for the respondent to fill” (Dörnyei: 2003: 47). Then the participants’ responses in this section were classified and grouped together for reporting.

Questionnaires such as these may have been considered to “inherently involve a somewhat superficial and relatively brief engagement with the topic on part of the respondent” and therefore may not elicit responses rich enough as needed in qualitative research studies (Dörnyei: 2003: 14). However, they can help some respondents feel more at ease as they can respond anonymously in writing with no direct conversations with an interviewer. For this reason, questionnaires used for triangulation can also provide rich data when combined with other research tools like interviews (Burns: 1999).

Twenty-five students from the experimental group completed the questionnaire after the end of the writing course. The participants were not required to disclose their names as they completed the questionnaires. Moreover, they were told that their responses would only be used for research purposes, would be kept totally confidential and anonymous, and would not have any (either positive or negative) effect on their grades. In the following section, the results of the analysis of the questionnaires will be presented and discussed.

### **6.1.1 Results**

The questionnaire used in this study was subdivided into four parts. The first three parts of the questionnaire mainly consisted of closed-ended questions. In particular, the first part was aimed at gaining information about the students’ perceptions and attitudes towards their writing skills, both in general areas and in specific areas. The second part of the questionnaire was designed to gather more information as to the students’ views towards feedback on cohesion in their writing. Questions in this part also examined the students’ perceptions, preferences and beliefs regarding teacher feedback. The third part of the questionnaire addressed the students’ perceptions and attitudes towards the

revision process, in which the students revised their use of cohesion in their initial drafts of expository essays. The last part of the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions that asked the students to provide general comments and suggestions regarding feedback on their writing, revising their initial drafts and the use of cohesion in writing.

In the first three parts of the questionnaire, there were also open-ended questions which asked the students to provide additional information to clarify their answers in the questionnaire. Firstly, they were asked to provide reasons for their choices of preferred types of feedback. Then they were asked to indicate the incomprehensible features regarding teacher written feedback and the ways in which they handled those problems. Furthermore, they were asked to describe what they did subsequent to their receipt of feedback on cohesion in their initial drafts. Finally, the students were asked to describe what they disliked about the feedback the teacher provided for their first drafts. The comments obtained from these open-ended questions provided a more complicated and more vivid picture with regard to the students' views towards feedback and revisions.

Based on the survey results, the majority of the students in the experimental group indicated that their writing skills had been improved in all language areas, especially cohesion skills. They also stated that feedback from their teacher regarding the use of cohesion was very useful and they felt that they could use the feedback to improve their writing during the revision process.

The results reported in section 6.1.1.1 seek to answer the first sub-research question provided in section 6.1: "What are the students' perceptions and attitudes towards their writing skills?"

#### **6.1.1.1 Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Writing Skills**

The first set of questions (see Table 6.1) was intended to determine what the students' perceptions are regarding the progress of their writing skills in general and in specific areas after the end of the writing course in the first semester of the academic year. In



terms of their writing skills in general, most of the participants (88%) responded positively (i.e. 24% of them answered “strongly agree” and 64% answered “agree”). Only three participants (12%) were undecided, selecting “neither agree nor disagree”, and none of the participants answered negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).

In terms of the progress of their writing skills subsequent to practice for a period of time, almost all of the participants (96%) also responded positively (i.e. 20% of them answered “strongly agree” and 76% answered “agree”). Only one participant (4%) answered “neither agree nor disagree”, while none of the participants answered negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).

Regarding the students’ motivation of English writing subsequent to practice for a period of time, most of the participants (92%) responded positively (i.e. 40% of them answered “strongly agree” and 52% answered “agree”). Only two participants (8%) answered “neither agree nor disagree”, while none of the participants answered negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).

**Table 6.1 Students’ Perceptions Regarding the Progress of Their Writing Skills in General**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I feel that my writing skills in general have improved since the beginning of the course (the first semester of this academic year).	6 (24%)	16 (64%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
After writing essays for a period of time, I felt my English writing skills improved.	5 (20%)	19 (76%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

**Table 6.1 Students’ Perceptions Regarding the Progress of Their Writing Skills in General (continued)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
After writing essays for a period of time, I felt more encouraged to write in English.	10 (40%)	13 (52%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

In the following section, the students’ perceptions regarding the progress of their writing skills in specific areas were also examined (see Table 6.2). The participants were asked to express their opinions about their writing skills with regard to grammar, vocabulary, cohesion and organisation. Based on the findings, the participants provided positive responses regarding all features of writing skills that they thought they had developed.

In terms of their grammar skills, most of the participants (68%) responded positively (i.e. 4% of them answered “strongly agree” and 64% answered “agree”). Eight participants (32%) were uncertain and answered “neither agree nor disagree”, and none of the participants answered negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).

Similarly, with regard to their vocabulary skills, most of the participants (80%) responded positively (i.e. 24% of them answered “strongly agree” and 56% answered “agree”). Five participants (20%) were undecided, selecting “neither agree nor disagree”, and none of the participants answered negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).



Among all language skills, cohesion skills were perceived as having been developed the most. The results reveal that most of the participants (92%) responded positively (i.e. up to 72% of them answered “strongly agree” and 20% answered “agree”). Only two participants (8%) were uncertain, answering “neither agree nor disagree”, and none of the participants answered negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).

Finally, in terms of organisation, most of the participants (92%) also responded positively (i.e. 36% of them answered “strongly agree” and 56% answered “agree”). Only two participants (8%) were uncertain and answered “neither agree nor disagree”, and none of the participants answered negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).

Overall, the results suggest that the majority of the students in the experimental group have positive perceptions about the progress of their writing skills both in general and in specific areas upon the completion of the one-semester course.

**Table 6.2 Students’ Perceptions Regarding the Progress of Their Writing Skills in Specific Areas**

More specifically, I think that my writing skills have improved regarding each of the following areas.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Grammar	1 (4%)	16 (64%)	8 (32%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
Vocabulary	6 (24%)	14 (56%)	5 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

**Table 6.2 Students’ Perceptions Regarding the Progress of Their Writing Skills in Specific Areas (continued)**

Cohesion	18 (72%)	5 (20%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
Organisation	9 (36%)	14 (56%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

A set of statements in Table 6.3 reveals the students’ attitudes towards learning English writing. Firstly, regarding the students’ enjoyment of writing in English, 92% of the participants responded positively (i.e. 32% answered “strongly agree” and 60% answered “agree”). Only 8% of the participants responded neutrally (i.e. “neither agree nor disagree”). None of the participants responded negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).

Secondly, regarding their development of cohesion skills, the participants’ responses were very similar to those regarding their enjoyment of writing in English reported above. Specifically, 92% of the participants responded positively (i.e. 36% answered “strongly agree” and 56% answered “agree”). Similarly, only 8% of the participants responded neutrally (i.e. “neither agree nor disagree”), and none of them responded negatively (i.e. “disagree” or “strongly disagree”).

On the whole, the participants had positive attitudes towards composition writing in English. The results suggest that they were pleased with writing activities in their writing class and that they felt they had considerably developed their cohesion skills for expository writing.



**Table 6.3 Students’ Attitudes towards English Composition Writing**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I enjoy writing activities in my English writing class.	8 (32%)	15 (60%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I developed writing skills especially cohesion.	9 (36%)	14 (56%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

Table 6.4 presents the students’ perceptions of a writing task to learn various aspects of the language, particularly cohesion. It is obvious that all the participants perceived a composition task as an opportunity to learn and practice “cohesion” and “essay organisation”. As can be seen from the table, with respect to “cohesion”, all of the participants responded positively (i.e. 88% answered “strongly agree” and 12% answered “agree”). None of the participants responded neutrally and negatively. Likewise, regarding “essay organisation”, also all of the participants responded positively (i.e. 76% answered “strongly agree” and 24% answered “agree”), while none of them responded neutrally and negatively. From the findings, it can be said that the students probably perceived “cohesion” and “essay organisation” as the most emphatic features in the writing classes as a result of regular feedback they received and the revisions of initial drafts they were asked to perform regularly.

However, their perceptions of a writing task to learn the other language features differed from those regarding learning “cohesion” and “organisation”. Regarding “vocabulary”, 76% of the participants responded positively (i.e. 28% answered “strongly agree” and 48% answered “agree”). Twenty-four percent of the participants responded neutrally, and none of them responded negatively. In terms of “grammar and structure”, 64% of the participants responded positively (i.e. 20% answered “strongly agree” and 44% answered “agree”). Twenty-eight percent of the participants responded neutrally, while 8% responded negatively (i.e. 8% answered “disagree” or 0% answered “strongly disagree”). Finally, regarding “mechanics”, 60% of the participants responded positively (i.e. 32% answered “strongly agree” and 28% answered “agree”). While 32% of the participants responded neutrally, 8% responded negatively (i.e. 8% answered “disagree” or 0% answered “strongly disagree”).

To sum up, the students perceived a writing task as an opportunity to learn various language features, especially “cohesion” and “essay organisation”. This finding suggests that the students were motivated to improve their language use through “opportunities for learning and practice” (Grabe: 2001: 53).



**Table 6.4 Students' Perceptions of a Writing Task Regarding Learning the Language**

I think a composition task provides me with an opportunity to learn and practice	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Cohesion	22 (88%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
Essay organisation	19 (76%)	6 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
Vocabulary	7 (28%)	12 (48%)	6 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
Grammar & Structure	5 (20%)	11 (44%)	7 (28%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
Mechanics	8 (32%)	7 (28%)	8 (32%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

The results reported in sections 6.1.1.2 – 6.1.1.8 seek to answer the second sub-research question provided in section 6.0: “What are the students’ perceptions, preferences and beliefs regarding teacher written feedback on cohesion in their writing?”

**6.1.1.2 Student Expectations of Writing Teachers**

This section examines the student expectations of teachers who teach them academic writing. Table 6.5 presents what the students expect their teachers to do with their writing. It is obvious that all of the participants expected their teacher to give comments on their writing in all respects. Regarding both “cohesion” and “essay organisation”, all of the participants responded positively in equal numbers (i.e. 92% strongly agreed and 8% agreed with the statement). With regard to “vocabulary”, all of the participants also

responded positively (i.e. 76% strongly agreed and 24% agreed with the statement). It is very interesting to see that, according to the table, all of the participants (100%) strongly agreed that the teacher should correct their grammatical errors, while 64% strongly agreed and 36% agreed that the teacher should correct their mechanical errors. From the findings in this section, it is evident that the students expected their teacher to give feedback to their writing either by providing comments or by correcting errors.

The results reveal that students needed comments on grammar most, followed by comments on cohesion and essay organisation. It can be inferred that students are usually very concerned about grammar and structure when they write in English.

**Table 6.5 Students Expectations of Writing Teachers**

I think the teacher should	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
comment on cohesion	23 (92%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
comment on essay organization	23 (92%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
comment on vocabulary	19 (76%)	6 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
correct grammar errors	25 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
correct mechanical errors	16 (64%)	9 (36%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)



**6.1.1.3 Students’ Attention to Feedback**

This section mainly investigates students’ attention to the feedback their teacher provided for their expository writing. Tables 6.6 and 6.7 present the participants’ responses concerning their attention to feedback. This set of questions involved the comparison of students’ attention to their initial and revised drafts. This comparison was represented in the participants’ answers on the questions pertaining to their attention to feedback on cohesion and the frequency of their referring to initial drafts and teacher written comments in revised drafts.

According to Table 6.6, most of the participants (92%) responded positively (i.e. 80% answered “all” and 12% answered “a lot”). Only 8% of them stated that they paid some attention to the teacher written comments on cohesion. From the findings, it is obvious that students paid full or considerable attention to feedback on cohesion their teacher provided for their writing.

**Table 6.6 Students’ Attention to Feedback on Cohesion**

How much attention do you pay to the teacher comments on cohesion?	All	A lot	Some	A little	None	Total
Comments on cohesion	20 (80%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

Table 6.7 reports how carefully the students paid attention to their essays with the feedback their teacher had provided. Regarding the first statement “when I received my essay back, I read the feedback provided throughout the essay”, all of the participants responded positively (i.e. 72% strongly agreed and 28% agreed with the statement). None of the participants responded negatively to this statement.

With regard to the second statement “I read the feedback on my essays carefully”, all of the participants also responded positively (i.e. 52% strongly agreed and 48% agreed with the statement). Again, none of the participants responded negatively to this statement.

For the third and last statement in this set of questionnaire, “when I received my essays with my instructor’s feedback, I thought about the feedback carefully”, most of the participants (92%) responded positively (i.e. 40% strongly agreed and 52% agreed with the statement). Only two of the participants (8%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

The results in this section reveal that students paid careful attention to the feedback their teacher provided for their initial drafts. That is, after receiving the essays, students read and examined the feedback on their cohesion cautiously.



**Table 6.7 Students’ Responses to Feedback on their Writing**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
When I received my essay back, I read the feedback provided throughout the essay.	18 (72%)	7 (28%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I read the feedback on my essays carefully.	13 (52%)	12 (48%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
When I received my essays with my instructor’s feedback, I thought about the feedback carefully.	10 (40%)	13 (52%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

Table 6.8 explores the frequency with which the students refer to their initial drafts and the teacher written comments in those drafts as they revise their essays. The findings reveal that all of the participants responded positively regarding their referring to the initial drafts (i.e. 84% answered “always” and 16% answered “very often”). By the same token, all of the participants responded positively regarding their consulting the teacher written comments in the initial drafts (i.e. 92% answered “always” and 8% answered “very often”). The results suggest that students consulted teacher written feedback provided in the initial drafts as they make a revision.

**Table 6.8 Frequency of Referring to Initial Drafts and Teacher Written Comments in Revised Drafts**

	Always	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
How often do you refer to your initial drafts?	21 (84%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
How often do you refer to the teacher comments in the initial drafts?	23 (92%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

**6.1.1.4 Students’ Preferences for Feedback**

In this section, the students’ preferences for teacher written feedback were examined. The participants were asked to rank their preference for each type of feedback or teacher written comments provided on their initial drafts. That is, they had to number their preferred types of feedback, with “1” being their most favoured and “6” being the least favoured. Before completing the questionnaire, the participants were given a description and an example of each type of comment. The findings reveal different degrees of the participants’ preferences for the teacher written comments (see Table 6.9). The types of comments presented include Corrective Site Feedback (CS), Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback (CAS), Advisory Site Feedback (AS), Indicative Site Feedback (IS), Advisory End Feedback (AE), and Indicative End Feedback (IE).

The results reveal that the students’ favourite type of feedback was Corrective Site Feedback (64%), followed by Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback (28%) and Advisory Site Feedback (8%). On the other hand, the least favoured feedback type was Indicative End Feedback (56%), followed by Advisory Site Feedback and Advisory End Feedback (16% each), and Indicative Site Feedback (12%).



The results also reveal that Corrective and Advisory Feedback were the second favourite type of comment (52%), followed by Corrective Site Feedback (28%), Advisory Site Feedback (12%) and Advisory End Feedback (8%). The third most preferred type of comment was Indicative Site Feedback (48%), followed by Advisory Site Feedback (20%), Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback (12%), Corrective Site Feedback and Advisory End Feedback (8% each), and Indicative End Feedback (4%). The fourth most preferred types of comment were Advisory Site Feedback and Advisory End Feedback (32% each), followed by Indicative Site Feedback (24%), Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback (8%), and Indicative End Feedback (4%). Finally, the second least preferred types of comment were Advisory End Feedback and Indicative End Feedback (36% each), followed by Indicative Site Feedback (16%) and Advisory Site Feedback (12%).

The results in this section reveal that students favour feedback or comments that provide corrections of their writing. This may be due to the fact that students usually need to be given accurate answers for their writing, so they can be more certain that their rewritten work will be more accurate and earn a satisfactory score.

**Table 6.9 Students’ Preferred Types of Feedback**

Rank	CS	CAS	AS	IS	AE	IE	Total
1	16 (64%)	7 (28%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
2	7 (28%)	13 (52%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
3	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	5 (20%)	12 (48%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	25 (100%)
4	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	8 (32%)	6 (24%)	8 (32%)	1 (4%)	25 (100%)
5	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (12%)	4 (16%)	9 (36%)	9 (36%)	25 (100%)
6	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (16%)	3 (12%)	4 (16%)	14 (56%)	25 (100%)
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	

In this section, the participants were also asked to provide reasons for their choices regarding their preferences for the teacher written comments enquired about in the previous set of questionnaires. Specifically, the students had to write their explanations in the open-ended section of the questionnaire if they ranked any of the feedback types as “1”, “2” or “3”. Table 6.10 presents representative reasons for the preferred types of feedback provided by the participants from the experimental group.

**Table 6.10 Reasons for the Participants’ Choices**

<b>Types of Comments</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
<b>Corrective Site Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is easy to understand and correct errors.</li> <li>• I need to know what the error is so I can correct it accurately.</li> <li>• It is the clearest type of feedback.</li> <li>• I don’t have to figure out how to correct the error.</li> <li>• If the error is pointed out, I can learn quickly how to fix it.</li> <li>• A correction of the error is more helpful than other types of feedback.</li> <li>• Cohesion is confusing, so giving corrections is very useful.</li> <li>• I like to be told what the problem is.</li> <li>• Without corrections, it’s sometimes too difficult for me to guess.</li> <li>• It is the most convenient to know what mistake I make.</li> </ul>
<b>Corrective &amp; Advisory Site Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is good to know how to correct an error and learn from an explanation as well.</li> <li>• I am more confident about the rules for cohesion.</li> <li>• If I don’t understand why it’s wrong, I can’t improve my writing, especially cohesion.</li> <li>• It helped me to understand what I did wrong instead of just guessing the correction.</li> <li>• I can learn the correct form immediately and know which grammar point I should review.</li> <li>• It tells me how to correct and helps me learn specific rules.</li> <li>• It helps the student learn most efficiently.</li> <li>• It saves a lot of time and I can learn more about the rule.</li> <li>• Corrections and clear explanation help learning.</li> <li>• I can know exactly what is wrong and I won’t repeat the mistake!</li> </ul>



**Table 6.10 Reasons for the Participants' Choices (continued)**

<b>Types of Comments</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Advisory Site Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It gives students ideas and they can develop their own strategies.</li> <li>• I can learn better if I figure out by myself, but with some advice.</li> <li>• When I get the hint, I can rewrite by myself.</li> <li>• It forces me to try to think what I did wrong.</li> <li>• It is very useful because we can learn by ourselves.</li> <li>• Giving a correct answer is not challenging enough.</li> </ul>
Indicative Site Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can think more carefully before making corrections.</li> <li>• It allows us to find out how to improve cohesion by ourselves.</li> <li>• It helps students develop strategies for analysis.</li> <li>• I learn more when I figure out how to revise by myself.</li> </ul>
Advisory End Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can improve my organisation.</li> <li>• It helps me rewrite the topic sentence and supporting details.</li> <li>• It allows me to develop my cohesion skills through useful advice.</li> </ul>
Indicative End Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It gives me ideas about how to revise for cohesion.</li> <li>• I can revise more freely.</li> <li>• I can understand the comment very clearly and rewrite with more cohesion.</li> </ul>

#### **6.1.1.5 Students' Comprehension of Feedback**

In this section, the students' ability to comprehend the teacher written feedback was investigated. In Table 6.11, the participants were asked about their degree of comprehension of feedback offered. The results reveal only positive responses from the participants. That is, the largest number of the answers was "76 – 100%" (76%), followed by "51 – 75%" (24%). However, there were no responses for "26 – 50%" and "0 – 25%". Based on these findings, most of the students in this study apparently perceived that they comprehended the teacher written feedback very well, and the rest seemed to understand the teacher written feedback well.

The participants were also asked what percentage of cohesion problems they were able to resolve with the help of teacher written feedback. The results reveal that most of the responses were positive while there were a few negative responses from the participants. That is, the highest percentage of the participants answered “76 – 100%” (60%), followed by “51 – 75%” (28%). The rest answered “26 – 50%” (8%) and “0 – 25%” (4%). Based on the responses, it seemed most of the students felt that they were able to resolve their cohesion problems using the teacher written comments.

The results in this section suggest that students found teacher feedback on cohesion useful and could revise their initial drafts for more effective cohesion using the feedback.

**Table 6.11 Comprehension and Helpfulness of Feedback**

	76 – 100%	51 – 75%	26 – 50%	0 – 25%	Total
What is the approximate percentage of your English teacher’s feedback that you are able to understand and follow?	19 (76%)	6 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
What is the approximate percentage of cohesion problems you are able to resolve with the help of your English teacher’s written feedback?	15 (60%)	7 (28%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	25 (100%)

The next set of questions asks the participants about their ability to comprehend teacher feedback on cohesion. Table 6.12 reports how well the students understood the teacher written feedback on their initial drafts and how useful they thought the teacher written feedback on cohesion was. Regarding the first statement in this set of questionnaire



“When I read my instructor’s feedback, I understood it well”, most of the participants (84%) responded positively (i.e. 8% strongly agreed and 76% agreed with the statement). Three of the participants (12%) stated that they were uncertain as to whether they understood the teacher written feedback (i.e. they answered “neither agree nor disagree”). Only one of the participants (4%) responded negatively to or disagreed with this statement. However, none of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement.

Contrary to the previous statement, the statement “when reading the feedback, I had difficulty understanding it” received mostly negative responses. That is, most of the participants (76%) responded negatively (i.e. 48% strongly disagreed and 28% disagreed with the statement). Five of the participants (20%) stated that they “neither agreed nor disagreed” with this statement. Only one participant (4%) responded positively or agreed with the statement and none of the participants strongly agreed with this statement.

In relation to the statement “I found my instructor’s feedback on cohesion useful”, most of the participants (84%) also responded positively (i.e. 20% strongly agreed and 64% agreed with the statement). Four of the participants (16%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

For the statement “I think that the feedback given to each essay was helpful to improve my writing in subsequent essays”, most of the participants (92%) responded positively (i.e. 48% strongly agreed and 44% agreed with the statement). Only two of the participants (8%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

Regarding the statement “I think the feedback I received was clear”, most of the participants (92%) also responded positively (i.e. 52% strongly agreed and 40% agreed with the statement). Two of the participants (8%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

For the statement “when I found a suggestion in the feedback NOT understandable or difficult to understand, I would try to understand it”, all of the participants responded positively (i.e. 76% strongly agreed and 24% agreed with the statement). None of the participants stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and none of them responded to this statement negatively.

With regard to the statement “I think feedback given to each essay was suitable”, most of the participants (88%) also responded positively (i.e. 12% strongly agreed and 76% agreed with the statement). Three of the participants (12%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

In response to the statement “I feel that feedback on cohesion helped me improve my writing”, almost all of the participants (96%) replied positively (i.e. 36% strongly agreed and 60% agreed with the statement). Only one of the participants (4%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and none of them responded to this statement negatively.

Regarding the last statement in this set of questionnaire “I used feedback on my writing to revise my essays”, most of the participants (92%) responded positively (i.e. 36% strongly agreed and 56% agreed with the statement). Only two of the participants (8%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and none of them responded to this statement negatively.

Overall, the results suggest that students comprehended teacher written feedback on cohesion and found it clear and useful for revision and further writing.



**Table 6.12 Students' Views on the Comprehensibility and Usefulness of Feedback**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
When I read my instructor's feedback, I understood it well.	2 (8%)	19 (76%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
When reading the feedback, I had difficulty understand it.	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	5 (20%)	7 (28%)	12 (48%)	25 (100%)
I found my instructor's feedback on cohesion useful.	5 (20%)	16 (64%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think that the feedback given to each essay was helpful to improve my writing in subsequent essays.	12 (48%)	11 (44%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think the feedback I received was clear.	13 (52%)	10 (40%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
When I found a suggestion in the feedback NOT understandable or difficult to understand, I would try to understand it.	19 (76%)	6 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

**Table 6.12 Students' Views on the Comprehensibility and Usefulness of Feedback (continued)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I think feedback given to each essay was suitable.	3 (12%)	19 (76%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I feel that feedback on cohesion helped me improve my writing.	9 (36%)	15 (60%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I used feedback on my writing to revise my essays.	9 (36%)	14 (56%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

In addition to responding to the Likert-scale questions, the participants were also asked to provide short answers to the question: “is there any feedback or comment that you do not understand or do not know how to follow?” Table 6.13 presents the representative answers the participants provided in the questionnaire. Based on the findings, the students addressed illegible handwriting, difficulty understanding the advice or question in a comment, and inability to identify what was inappropriate in terms of cohesion. The findings were drawn from the participants’ responses in the open-ended questionnaire in this section.



**Table 6.13 Incomprehensible Features Regarding Teacher Written Feedback**

	Is there any feedback or comment that you do not understand or do not know how to follow?
Illegible handwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sometimes the teacher’s handwriting was hard to read.</li><li>• The teacher should give feedback by typing.</li></ul>
Difficulty understanding the advice or question in a comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The comment was not clear.</li><li>• I didn’t understand what the advice was for.</li><li>• I couldn’t understand the question the teacher asked in the feedback.</li><li>• I didn’t understand some terms that the teacher used in his comment.</li></ul>
Inability to identify what was inappropriate in terms of cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I did not know what my problem was.</li><li>• I didn’t know how to revise my cohesion problem.</li><li>• I needed more explanation about my problem.</li><li>• The teacher should provide corrections for the problems.</li></ul>

In this section, how the students handled the teacher written feedback that they did not comprehend was also investigated. The question in Table 6.14 was asked to further examine how the students dealt with the incomprehensible feedback reported in Table 6.13. The participants were asked to give short answers regarding what they would do if they did not comprehend the teacher written comments. The answers shown in Table 6.14 were categorised as “ask someone”, “avoid revision”, “try my best to make a revision” and “do nothing”. Again, the findings were drawn from the participants’ responses in the open-ended questionnaire in this section.

**Table 6.14 Solutions Regarding Incomprehensible Feedback**

	What do you do when you do not understand your English teacher's written feedback?
Ask someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I ask a classmate in my group.</li> <li>• I sometimes ask my colleague who is good at English.</li> <li>• I ask the teacher after class or during a break.</li> </ul>
Avoid revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I just don't rewrite the sentence.</li> <li>• I skip that sentence.</li> <li>• I leave the sentence like that.</li> </ul>
Try my best to make a revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I try to rewrite the sentence as best as I can.</li> <li>• I use my own ability.</li> <li>• I revise in the way I think is appropriate.</li> <li>• I guess what the teacher wants.</li> </ul>
Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing.</li> <li>• I don't know what to do.</li> </ul>

#### **6.1.1.6 Students' Action After Receipt of Feedback**

In this section, the actions the students took after they received teacher written feedback were examined. The participants in the experimental group were asked what they did after receiving feedback other than revising their initial drafts (see Table 6.15). Their responses show that their actions could be classified into four categories: 1) look up explanations or examples in the textbook, 2) make notes about the problem, 3) consider and check what type of cohesion problem they have, and 4) do nothing or simply copy the corrections. It can be concluded from these responses that the students took different actions towards the feedback they received before revising their initial drafts.



**Table 6.15 Actions Taken by Students After Receipt of Feedback**

	What do you do after you read your English teacher's written comments?
Look up explanations or examples in the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I try to find the explanation in the book.</li> <li>• I look for more examples about my problem from the book or from the Internet.</li> <li>• I consult a writing book and handouts about cohesion.</li> </ul>
Make notes about the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I write down the problem in my notebook.</li> <li>• I make some notes about the error.</li> </ul>
Consider and check what type of cohesion problem they have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I check and find out what type of problem I have.</li> <li>• I review the cohesion problem I have and then revise.</li> <li>• I consider my problem and rewrite.</li> <li>• I think about the problem.</li> </ul>
Do nothing or simply copy the corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I rewrite according to the suggestion.</li> <li>• I make corrections immediately.</li> <li>• I copy what the teacher correct.</li> </ul>

#### **6.1.1.7 Degree of Students' Satisfaction with Feedback**

In this section, the degree of the students' satisfaction with the feedback they received was investigated. Table 6.16 presents the findings regarding how the participants were satisfied with the comments the teacher provided on their initial drafts regarding the use of cohesion in expository writing. The results reveal that 16% of the participants were very satisfied with the feedback they received on their writing, 68% were satisfied with the feedback they received and 16% were moderately satisfied. None of the participants provided negative responses regarding the feedback they received on their use of cohesion. Overall, the findings suggest that students were quite satisfied with teacher feedback on cohesion.

**Table 6.16 Students' Satisfaction with the Feedback**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Total
Level of satisfaction	4 (16%)	17 (68%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

**6.1.1.8 Students' Dislikes Concerning Feedback**

In this section, the students' dislikes regarding the feedback on their use of cohesion in expository writing were investigated. The participants were asked to explain specific points they did not like about the comments the teacher provided on the initial drafts they composed during the semester (see Table 6.17). Only twelve comments were given in this part of the questionnaire. The findings reveal the students' responses that addressed four major issues: (1) legibility of the teacher's handwriting, (2) clarity of the teacher comments, (3) difficulty of the feedback and the revision process, and (4) usefulness of the feedback on cohesion. Overall, the students felt that it was sometimes difficult to read the teacher's handwriting, that some comments were not clear enough, that it was difficult to revise, and that some comments might not be useful.

**Table 6.17 Students' Dislikes about Teacher Written Feedback**

	Is there anything that you did not particularly like about the feedback your English teacher provided?
Legibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sometimes I couldn't read his handwriting.</li><li>• Some comments were hard to read.</li></ul>



**Table 6.17 Students' Dislikes about Teacher Written Feedback (continued)**

	Is there anything that you did not particularly like about the feedback your English teacher provided?
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some comments were not clear, so I didn't know how to revise my writing.</li><li>• More than one way of revision was possible.</li><li>• Sometimes the comment was too general.</li></ul>
Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I didn't understand some terms used in the comments.</li><li>• It was stressful to rewrite according to the feedback all the time.</li><li>• It was difficult to revise according to the teacher's suggestions.</li></ul>
Usefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copying the corrections didn't help me learn anything.</li><li>• It was a very time-consuming process.</li><li>• Feedback on grammar should be given at the same time as cohesion.</li><li>• Feedback on cohesion is not as important as feedback on grammar.</li></ul>

The results reported in section 6.1.1.9 seek to answer the third research question provided in section 6.0: "What are the students' perceptions regarding cohesion in writing?"

**6.1.1.9 Students' Perceptions toward Improvement of Cohesion in their Writing**

This section investigates the students' perceptions with regard to the improvement of their use of cohesion in their expository compositions and their views on the use of cohesion in their writing. This improvement was assumed to have resulted from the teacher feedback the students received on their initial drafts. Table 6.18 presents the participants' responses regarding how they felt about the improvement of their writing in the area of cohesion as a result of teacher feedback. The results reveal only positive responses. Based on their perception, most of the participants (72%) "strongly agreed" that the teacher written comment helped them improve their cohesion skills in their essay writing, and the remainder (28%) "agreed" with the statement. It is obvious that students

found feedback on cohesion useful and felt that the feedback contributed to better cohesion in their writing.

**Table 6.18 Students' Perceptions of Improvement of Cohesion in their Writing**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
You feel that your English teacher's feedback helps you improve your ability to use cohesion in essay writing.	18 (72%)	7 (28%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

In this section, the students' views on various aspects involving cohesion were also investigated. Table 6.19 reports students' views on the use of cohesion in writing. Regarding the first statement in this set of questionnaire "after writing essays for a period of time, I felt that I could write in English cohesively", most of the participants (80%) responded positively (i.e. 24% strongly agreed and 64% agreed with the statement). Three of the participants (12%) stated that they were uncertain as to whether they could write more cohesively after a period of their essay writing (i.e. they answered "neither agree nor disagree"). None of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement.

As regards the statement "I feel I understood more about cohesion in writing", most of the participants (88%) also responded positively (i.e. 8% strongly agreed and 80% agreed with the statement). Three of the participants (12%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.



For the statement “I think cohesion is important to writing”, most of the participants (84%) responded positively (i.e. 20% strongly agreed and 64% agreed with the statement). Four of the participants (16%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

Regarding the statement “I think that one characteristic of a good essay is cohesiveness”, most of the participants (88%) responded positively (i.e. 40% strongly agreed and 48% agreed with the statement). Three of the participants (12%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

In response to the statement “I think cohesion can make writing easier to read”, most of the participants (88%) replied positively (i.e. 28% strongly agreed and 60% agreed with the statement). Two of the participants (8%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and one of them (4%) disagreed with this statement. None of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement.

With regard to the statement “I have learned how to make ideas in my writing connect together smoothly”, most of the participants (72%) responded positively (i.e. 12% strongly agreed and 60% agreed with the statement). Six of the participants (24%) were uncertain that they had mastered the way they could connect ideas in their writing (i.e. they answered “neither agreed nor disagreed” with the statement). One of the participants (4%) disagreed with the statement and none of them strongly disagreed with this statement.

For the statement “I tried to make ideas flow smoothly in writing”, all of the participants responded positively (i.e. 40% strongly agreed and 60% agreed with the statement). None of the participants stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and none of them responded to this statement negatively.

Overall, the results suggest that students developed positive views toward the use of cohesion in writing. That is, they understood that cohesion was a crucial element of effective writing and learned how to enhance cohesion in their writing.

**Table 6.19 Students' Views on the Use of Cohesion in Writing**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
After writing essays for a period of time, I felt that I could write in English cohesively.	6 (24%)	16 (64%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I feel I understood more about cohesion in writing.	2 (8%)	20 (80%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think cohesion is important to writing.	5 (20%)	16 (64%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think that one characteristic of a good essay is cohesiveness.	10 (40%)	12 (48%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think cohesion can make writing easier to read.	7 (28%)	15 (60%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)



**Table 6.19 Students' Views on the Use of Cohesion in Writing (continued)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I have learned how to make ideas in my writing connect together smoothly.	3 (12%)	15 (60%)	6 (24%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I tried to make ideas flow smoothly in writing.	10 (40%)	15 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

This section also investigates the long-term effect of teacher feedback on the use of cohesion in expository writing. Table 6.20 presents findings regarding whether the participants think that they would make the same errors in the use of cohesion in subsequent writing after they had received teacher feedback. About half of the participants (52%) thought that they would not repeat the errors in cohesion in their subsequent writing, while 28% thought that they might possibly repeat the errors and 20% thought that they would repeat them. These findings reveal that whereas some students thought that feedback would have a long-term positive effect on their writing, others did not, feeling that they would or might produce errors in cohesion in their subsequent writing.

**Table 6.20 Students' Perception of Effect of Feedback**

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Do you think that you would make the same errors in the use of cohesion in your subsequent writing?	5 (20%)	13 (52%)	7 (28%)	25 (100%)

The results reported in section 6.1.10 seek to answer the fourth (last) sub-research question mentioned in section 6.0: “What are the students’ perceptions and attitudes towards the revisions of essays?”

**6.1.10 Students’ Attention to Revision**

This section mainly investigates students’ attention to revision they perform in response to teacher written feedback, so that their perceptions and attitudes towards the revision process are examined. Table 6.21 presents the participants’ responses concerning their attention to revision of their initial drafts and Table 6.22 presents the participants’ views on the relationship between the revision process and cohesion in their writing. This set of questionnaire focuses on how the students perceive the revision process of their drafts and how the process contributes to their ability to write more cohesively.

Table 6.21 reports students’ attention to revision of their writing. Regarding the first statement in this set of questionnaire “I think that revising each essay is important”, almost all of the participants (96%) responded positively (i.e. 56% strongly agreed and 40% agreed with the statement). Only one of the participants (4%) stated that they were uncertain, answering “neither agree nor disagree”. None of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

As regards the statement “I paid careful attention to revising my drafts”, most of the participants (84%) responded positively (i.e. 36% strongly agreed and 48% agreed with the statement). Four of the participants (16%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

For the statement “I think my writing was improved after each revision”, most of the participants (92%) also responded positively (i.e. 52% strongly agreed and 40% agreed with the statement). Only two of the participants (8%) stated that they neither agreed nor



disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

Regarding the statement “I think my writing was improved after I revised several drafts”, most of the participants (84%) responded positively (i.e. 32% strongly agreed and 52% agreed with the statement). Four of the participants (16%) were undecided, stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

In response to the statement “after revising drafts for a period of time, I felt more encouraged to write in English”, most of the participants (84%) replied positively (i.e. 16% strongly agreed and 68% agreed with the statement). Four of the participants (16%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

With regard to the last statement in this set of the questionnaire “I think revision was helpful to improve my writing”, almost all of the participants (92%) responded positively (i.e. 44% strongly agreed and 48% agreed with the statement). Only one of the participants (8%) was uncertain, answering “neither agreed nor disagreed” with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

Overall, the results suggest that students found revisions of initial drafts important and useful for their writing skill development. Revision motivated them to write more confidently in English and students tended to pay careful attention to revising their initial drafts.

**Table 6.21 Students’ Attention to Revision**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I think that revising each essay is important.	14 (56%)	10 (40%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I paid careful attention to revising my drafts.	9 (36%)	12 (48%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think my writing was improved after each revision.	13 (52%)	10 (40%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think my writing was improved after I revised several drafts.	8 (32%)	13 (52%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
After revising drafts for a period of time, I felt more encouraged to write in English.	4 (16%)	17 (68%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think revision was helpful to improve my writing.	11 (44%)	12 (48%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

The next and last set of questionnaire investigates the students’ views on the relationship between the revision process and cohesion in their writing (see Table 6.22). Regarding the first statement in this set of questionnaire “I focused on cohesion when revising my drafts”, almost all of the participants (96%) responded positively (i.e. 48% strongly



agreed and 48% agreed with the statement). Only one of the participants (4%) answered “neither agree nor disagree”, and none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

Pertaining to the statement “after revising drafts for a period of time, I felt that I could write in English more cohesively”, most of the participants (84%) responded positively (i.e. 32% strongly agreed and 52% agreed with the statement). Four of the participants (16%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

For the statement “I feel that revising for cohesion was useful”, most of the participants (88%) responded positively (i.e. 28% strongly agreed and 60% agreed with the statement). However, two of the participants (8%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, and one of the participants (4%) disagreed with this statement. None of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement.

In response to the statement “I made changes in cohesion as I revised my drafts”, most of the participants (88%) replied positively (i.e. 24% strongly agreed and 64% agreed with the statement). Three of the participants (12%) stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

With regard to the last statement in this questionnaire “I think my writing was more cohesive after revision”, almost all of the participants (96%) responded positively (i.e. 20% strongly agreed and 76% agreed with the statement). Only one of the participants (4%) answered “neither agreed nor disagreed” with this statement, while none of the participants responded to this statement negatively.

The findings in this section suggest that revision contributed to students' awareness and improvement of cohesion in their writing. Students tended to pay more attention to cohesion in their writing subsequent to regular revision.

**Table 6.22 Students’ Views on the Relationship between Revision and Cohesion**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I focused on cohesion when revising my drafts.	12 (48%)	12 (48%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
After revising drafts for a period of time, I felt that I could write in English more cohesively.	8 (32%)	13 (52%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I feel that revising for cohesion was useful.	7 (28%)	15 (60%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I made changes in cohesion as I revised my drafts.	6 (24%)	16 (64%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
I think my writing was more cohesive after revision.	5 (20%)	19 (76%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

**6.1.11 Students’ General Comments and Suggestions on Feedback, Revision and the Use of Cohesion in Writing**

This section presents the participants’ responses drawn from the final part in the questionnaire. The open-ended questions in this part asked the participants to provide general comments and suggestions on three issues: feedback on their writing, revisions of



their initial drafts and the use of cohesion in writing (see Table 6.23). These findings can help us gain insights into how the students in the experimental group view these issues after the treatment. The student responses which were similar were grouped and reported in the same statement. However, because some participants did not complete or only partially completed this part of the questionnaire, the findings were not derived from all the participants.

The results reveal mixed responses from the participants. Regarding feedback on writing, most of the participants' comments addressed its positive aspects including necessity and usefulness, and its negative aspects including lack of clarity and difficulty in understanding. Some of the participants suggested that teacher feedback be clear and involve language features other than cohesion. In addition, they suggested that more feedback be provided on their writing.

With regard to revisions of initial drafts, most of the participants commented that it was a helpful process but could be difficult without effective teacher feedback. Their major problem involved paucity of time to revise drafts as they were all working full-time. A few participants' suggestions were that revision be optional and be accompanied by teacher feedback.

Finally, in terms of cohesion, most of the participants advocated the use of cohesion as they considered cohesive devices as effective tools for essay organisation and the flow of ideas. Some of them thought that cohesion would facilitate reading comprehension and contribute to logical thinking. However, some found certain types of cohesion too difficult to grasp. Several of the participants suggested that they be provided with more practice so they could improve their cohesion skills.

**Table 6.23 Students' Comments and Suggestions on Feedback, Revision and Cohesion in Writing**

Feedback on writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback is necessary.</li> <li>• Feedback can help revising more effective.</li> <li>• Feedback should be clear to help students understand better.</li> <li>• Feedback should not be given only on cohesion.</li> <li>• Feedback on grammar is really helpful for writing.</li> <li>• The teacher's feedback was useful and I can improve my writing skill.</li> <li>• More feedback will be more useful.</li> <li>• Teacher feedback is more helpful than peer feedback.</li> <li>• Some feedback was not clear and too general.</li> <li>• Sometimes it took too long to understand feedback.</li> <li>• Sometimes feedback was confusing.</li> <li>• Feedback is perfect when it provides correction but may be confusing when it only gives an explanation.</li> </ul>
Revisions of initial drafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision is a useful process for improving writing skills.</li> <li>• It is good practice to revise an essay.</li> <li>• Revision is difficult if feedback is not clear.</li> <li>• Revision is possible only with feedback.</li> <li>• It is sometimes boring to revise an essay.</li> <li>• Students have no time to revise their drafts.</li> <li>• Revising can be a time-consuming process.</li> <li>• Revising essays should be optional.</li> </ul>
Cohesion in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cohesion improves writing.</li> <li>• Cohesive devices are useful for essay organisation.</li> <li>• Ideas can flow smoothly with cohesive devices.</li> <li>• Cohesion can help a reader read more easily.</li> <li>• Cohesive devices can help students think more logically.</li> <li>• It is difficult to learn some types of cohesion.</li> <li>• In writing, cohesion is not as important as grammar.</li> <li>• Students can improve cohesion if they can practice a lot.</li> </ul>



## 6.2 Interviews

Another useful qualitative research tool that can be used for triangulation is interview. There are many types of interviewing methods available to second language writing researchers. These include highly structured interviews that use predetermined questions to obtain specific information from the respondents and less structured interviews which include more open-ended questions and more closely resemble conversations with their emphasis on flexibility and exploration (Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor: 2003). In between these two poles on the continuum are semi-structured interviews, which include a mix of more- and less-structured questions (Merriam: 1998). In a semi-structured interview, the researcher may employ a topic guide which outlines the key topics and issues to cover in the interview (Burns: 1999), but the structure of the interview "is sufficiently flexible to permit topics to be covered in the order most suited to the interviewee, to allow responses to be fully probed and explored and to allow the researcher to be responsive to relevant issues raised spontaneously by the interviewee" (Legard, Keegan and Ward: 2003: 141).

Because the present study sought to obtain more in-depth data on the students' perspectives, covering questions that were of interest to the researcher and allowing the students to nominate their own topics of interest, an interview was employed to triangulate other measures used in this research study (see Appendix C for the topic guide). The data from the interview were expected to provide more detailed information from the students' responses given earlier in the questionnaire and to provide more insights into the students' thoughts, feelings and intentions (Seidmann: 2006). In this study, the semi-structured interviews were employed and conducted in Thai so that the participants could discuss and elaborate far more fluently in their mother tongue than in English, their L2. The participants who attended the interviews were willing to spend about 20 minutes responding to the researcher's questions and elaborating on various relevant points discussed during the interviews. This group of students consisted of five students from the experimental group. Students from the control group were excluded

from interviews because they did not receive any feedback on their writing and were not asked to revise the initial drafts of their expository essays.

The interviewer was the researcher himself and the interviews were conducted at the Language Institute, Thammasat University at Ta Prachan Campus. The students were informed that their interviews, which were being used for research purposes only, would be kept completely confidential and anonymous, would be heard by no one other than the researcher and would have no (positive or negative) effect on their grades. In the report of the results in section 6.2.1, the participants in the interviews will be referred to as “S1”, “S2”, “S3”, “S4” and “S5”.

The interviews were audiotaped. Then the interview scripts were transcribed, and salient themes and patterns were noted. Based on this inductive analysis, the data were grouped into categories that reflected the major themes and patterns which had been identified in the questions. However, as the coding of the interview data was done by the researcher alone, some concerns may be raised as to the reliability of the coding scheme, since the most common method for establishing the reliability of such a coding scheme is to conduct an inter-rater agreement coding session. However, according to Brice (2005), this might be problematic when dealing with qualitative interview data. Discussing the difficulties she experienced working with a peer rater, Brice commented:

“...difference in our exposure to the participant (whom I will refer to as Amy from here forward) whose comments are recorded in the transcript that we coded during our interrater agreement coding sessions. I conducted the interview from which the transcript was derived. I was there. I saw Amy’s reactions and heard her voice as she had her answers. I worked with Amy for a long time in a variety of contexts. ... My peer did not have any of this. The transcript did not and could not carry my history with Amy, the context, or the numerous important paralinguistic cues that help people interpret each other’s behaviors and affective states, so there was a significant disparity in our ability to interpret Amy’s responses.” (167)



In other words, since the content of the interview crucially consists not only of the words in the transcript but also of various paralinguistic cues such as tone of voice, facial expressions and other forms of nonverbal communication, any coding done based solely on the words in the transcript will represent only a superficial approach to the data. While relying upon the coding of one individual is not completely unproblematic, the researcher-interviewer does arguably have an advantage over an independent coder with no experience conducting the interview or working with the student. Therefore, the analysis of the interviews based only on the researcher's view would be adequate and reliable enough.

### **6.2.1 Results**

The results of the interviews address the same research question posed for the questionnaire: *What are the students' perceptions and attitudes towards writing skills and the writing process?* (See 6.1). This research question is also subdivided into four sub-questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions toward their own progress over the writing course of the semester?
2. What are their views toward the teacher feedback on cohesion they received on their initial drafts?
3. What are their views towards the use of cohesive ties in their writing?
4. What are their views towards revisions of their initial drafts?

#### **6.2.1.1 Perceptions of Own Progress**

The first set of questions addressed the students' perceptions of their own progress over the course of the semester. As can be seen from the comments below, the students did not perceive their improvement in terms of proficiency levels of English grammar or vocabulary, but rather focused on the gains they had made in organising their texts and

linking ideas throughout their essays. Examples below were taken from the interview transcripts, which were translated from Thai into English.

In Example 1, S1 focused on her ability, by the end of the semester, to write more confidently with clear organisation.

### ***Example 1***

“I think my organisational skills have improved, and I have become more confident when writing an essay. I understand and can distinguish among the different types of essays, such as cause-effect and comparison-contrast. In addition, I have learned about the different elements of a composition; namely, introduction, body and conclusion.”

Example 2 shows that S2 was aware of her improvement in essay writing. She knew what a good essay should consist of and what steps were involved in essay writing.

### ***Example 2***

“I know how to write an essay better. I know that a good essay should consist of three main parts, which are introduction, body and conclusion. And there are several steps involved in essay writing. I have to brainstorm, invent an outline, write a first draft and revise the draft.”

#### **6.2.1.2 Perceptions of Feedback**

Another sub-research question to be answered from the interviews concerned the students' perceptions of the feedback that they had received. As described in Chapters 3 and 4, the students in the experimental group received written feedback from the teacher on the use of cohesion in their expository essays. Many of the students who were interviewed indicated that they wished they could have received more feedback because they believed they would have been able to write better with more feedback from their teacher.



In Example 3, S1 expressed her interest to receive more feedback on her writing in an exchange between her and the researcher-interviewer. (R in the dialogue stands for “researcher”).

### ***Example 3***

S1: I wished I had received more feedback on my writing.

R: Why?

S1: Because if I had received more feedback, I would have been able to write better. If feedback were limited or inadequate, I think I wouldn't be able to write well enough. I would need more guidelines for my revision. With more feedback, I believe I would be able to produce more successful essays.

Example 4 also shows the student's interest in receiving more feedback on her writing, as can be seen from S2's responses in the interview.

### ***Example 4***

R: What did you think about our writing class in general?

S2: Well, uhm, I think the course was very useful, particularly when I received feedback on my work.

R: What did you feel about the feedback you received, then?

S2: Feedback was very helpful. I had a better guideline for revising my draft when I received feedback.

R: Were there any problems about the feedback you received?

S2: Most of the feedback was clear and useful. But maybe, I think the teacher should give more feedback. The more, the better. If students receive more feedback, they should be able to write more effectively. If it (feedback) is too limited or not enough, students will still find it difficult to revise their first drafts or another essay.

Regarding the feedback the students received, they generally held favourable opinions indicating that the feedback helped them improve the quality of their second drafts. S3's and S4's comments in Examples 5 and 6 illustrate this.

#### ***Example 5***

R: How did you feel about the feedback you received before you revised your initial draft?

S3: The feedback provided good advice on what I wrote in an initial draft. I understood my problems very clearly and I knew how to improve the draft.

R: What do you think your writing would have been like without feedback?

S3: I believe my writing would have got worse. The essay organisation could have been much worse. Feedback was really helpful and I did need it. I think other students did, too.

#### ***Example 6***

R: How did you find the feedback you received on your writing?

S4: I found it very clear and useful. I was more careful when I composed a second draft. I tried to follow the teacher's comments cautiously.

R: Did you understand all feedback you received from your teacher?

S4: Mostly yes. But sometimes I didn't understand some comments.

R: What did you do then?

S4: I asked some friends and if none of them understood them, I would ask the teacher (you).

R: What if your teacher hadn't provided any feedback on your writing?

S4: I think my writing wouldn't have improved much. In addition, I would have had no idea about how to improve my writing, ..uh.. my initial draft.



A student added that receiving feedback would help her earn a higher score in her revised draft and later compositions. S3's comments in Example 7 reveal this:

*Example 7*

R: What are some other benefits you gained from teacher feedback?

S3: I think I can gain a better score in my revised draft. Without feedback, I don't think I can revise better. Maybe I would write worse in a second draft.

R: Anything else?

S3: In later essays also. Feedback can help me learn to write better. So I think students can earn a higher score in their subsequent essays.

However, a point could be made here that the students were merely producing the "public transcript" (Leki, 2001), saying what they believed the interviewer, their writing teacher, would want them to say. Also, as students who belonged to the institution where the interviews were held, the respondents could have been concerned about their evaluations at the end of the semester or upon the completion of their studies. In other words, there could have been a halo effect as the participants provided the information that they believed the researcher-interviewer was expecting (Dörnyei: 2007; Mackey and Gass: 2005). Additionally, it could also be suggested that these students, who were willing to spend their time speaking with the researcher-interviewer, may have had more favourable views about the class than those students who did not volunteer to attend an interview (i.e. a Hawthorne effect, Dörnyei: 2007; Mackey and Gass: 2005). Nevertheless, the students were also critical of the feedback they received on their initial drafts. In Example 8 below, S5 indicated that he disapproved of and sometimes ignored some of the feedback he received from the teacher, while in Example 9, S2 took issue with the type of comments she received from the teacher.

### ***Example 8***

- S5: I agreed with some feedback the teacher gave. But I disagreed with some of it.
- R: Can you give me a specific example?
- S5: Yes. I remember one now. When I was told to use the word “however” where I used “on the other hand”, I was confused. I thought both expressions were the same and interchangeable. So I didn’t see why I had to change it.
- S5: What did you do then?
- E: I didn’t change it as the teacher suggested. But I should have asked the teacher to explain that to me.

### ***Example 9***

- R: How did you feel about the feedback you received?
- S2: I liked it. But sometimes it was tough, because I did not receive corrections or explanations. So I had to think very hard about how to revise the sentences.
- R: Can you give me some examples of feedback without explanations?
- S2: For example, the question “why?”. I did not know how to respond to it.
- R: What did you do then?
- S2: I don’t remember. Maybe I could have tried to revise it my own way.

In Examples 10 and 11, S1 and S4 indicated that they wished to receive feedback on their grammar.

### ***Example 10***

- R: Do you have any suggestions about feedback on your writing?
- S1: I think it would be better to receive more feedback on grammar because my grammar is very poor.
- R: Why do you think feedback on grammar is important?



S1: You can write well if your grammar is excellent. Grammar helps our language “look” better.

### ***Example 11***

S4: ..... We should receive feedback on grammar too. I want to know how to use grammar correctly.

R: Did you need to have that kind of feedback?

S4: Sure, because if I want to be able to write good essays, the first step is to have good grammar. So, I think grammar corrections would be very helpful.

### **6.2.1.3 Views towards the use of cohesive ties in writing**

In response to the third sub-research question, the students’ attitudes towards the use of cohesion in writing were also measured through retrospective interviews. The results of this data analysis can yield results regarding the students’ awareness and ability to link ideas in their writing using cohesive ties. These findings can triangulate with the output the students produced after treatment (feedback delivery). From the analysis, the overall results reveal that the students were aware of the importance of cohesion in writing. They apparently had a better understanding of how to organise and join ideas in their writing. It was found that they knew there were many types of cohesive devices that they could choose from to make their writing more cohesive and that cohesiveness helped a piece of writing to be more readable. In Example 12, S5 indicated that, by the end of the writing course, he had understood how to make ideas flow more smoothly in writing.

### ***Example 12***

“I have learned from this course that an essay should be well-organised so that it is easier for the reader to read it. So we can use cohesive devices to make ideas flow more smoothly. These expressions are very useful devices for a writer to use when he (she)

writes, particularly a long essay. They can help us think more logically and organise ideas better too.”

In Example 13, S2 explained that cohesive ties were numerous and writers could choose one which was appropriate for a particular situation.

### ***Example 13***

“Of course, there are many different types of cohesive ties to choose from. They are numerous enough for a variety of writing situations. For example, we can use a pronoun for reference and we can also use a connector to combine ideas in two clauses. We also have a long list of transitional expressions we can use to link ideas between sentences.”

In Example 14 below, S1 indicated that an essay needed to be cohesive. When an essay is cohesive, it is more readable.

### ***Example 14***

“An essay must be cohesive. When it is cohesive, it is easier to read. Cohesive devices serve as guidelines which can direct the reader from one thought to another.”

#### **6.2.1.4 Perceptions of Revision**

The final sub-research question to be answered from the interviews addressed the students’ perceptions of the revisions of their initial drafts in response to teacher feedback. All the participants in the interviews acknowledged the importance and usefulness of revisions. They indicated that they needed to revise their initial drafts to improve their writing skills. In Examples 15 and 16, S4 and S5 stressed that the revision process was necessary and useful for improving writing skills.



### ***Example 15***

- S4: I believe we can never improve our writing skills without revision. It's difficult to write better if we write only one draft for each essay. When we revise a draft, we learn what our errors are and our writing skills will be improved.

### ***Example 16***

- R: What do you think about the revision process?
- S5: It's really a useful process. When I revised my first draft using feedback, I had a better understanding of my problems and how I could resolve them. If we were told to write only one draft, it wouldn't help much.

A student was asked what she did during the revision process. In example 17, S2 explained this:

### ***Example 17***

- R: What did you do when you revised your draft?
- S2: I studied the feedback the teacher gave first. Then I tried to figure out what I should do to improve my writing. If the teacher gave me a suggestion, it would be faster.
- R: So when you could figure out how to solve the cohesion problem, what did you do?
- S2: I jotted down each solution on my initial draft in pencil. I did that one by one. Then when I finished all, I thought about them all again before typing my revised draft.
- R: If you were not sure about your correction or revision, what did you do?
- S2: I sometimes asked a friend for some advice. But you couldn't trust your friends all the time. Maybe they didn't know the answer either. ...And sometimes they were too busy to help you.

However, revisions of initial drafts posed challenge for all the students as they all worked full-time. Also, they had assignments from other courses they enrolled in the same semester that they took the writing course. In Example 18, S5 made a clear comment on this problem.

### ***Example 18***

- R: What were some of the problems you had when you revised your drafts?
- S5: Time, of course. No time. I work from Monday to Friday and have classes on both Saturday and Sunday. I really had no time to rewrite my essay. I also got assignments from the other classes as well.
- R: How did you cope with this problem? How did you finish revising your draft after all?
- S5: Sometimes I had to stay up late. I finished writing at 2 or 3 a.m. That was really exhausting.

Finally, some of the participants described the difficulty in revising drafts. In Example 19, S3 explained how difficult it was.

### ***Example 19***

- R: Apart from the time constraint, what other difficulty did you have during the revision process?
- S3: It was sometimes difficult to figure out how to solve the problem in the initial draft.
- R: Was that because the feedback was not clear?
- S3: The feedback was clear and I understood it well, but I still didn't know how to improve my writing.
- R: What did you do then?
- S3: So I just guessed the answer.



In the last example, Example 20, S1 explained that revision was more difficult when she dealt with a certain type of feedback.

### ***Example 20***

R: Why do you think sometimes revision was challenging?

S1: Because of the feedback I received. For some types of feedback, it was more difficult to revise your draft.

R: Can you give me an example?

S1: When the feedback was provided at the end and without correction, it was really difficult. I had to spend quite a long time trying to figure out how I should rewrite. Sometimes it meant that I had to rewrite an entire paragraph.

## **6.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter explores the students' perceptions and attitudes towards writing skills, teacher feedback on cohesion, the revision process and cohesion in writing. The questionnaire and interviews were utilised as research instruments to elicit responses from the participants. Then the data were analysed and the findings reported.

The analysis of the data from both the questionnaire and the interviews revealed that the students had overall positive attitudes towards their writing skills, the feedback they received on their initial drafts, the revisions of their initial drafts and the use of cohesion in writing. In terms of their writing ability, the students felt that they had made considerable progress; they were able to craft a well-organised essay more confidently. Regarding the feedback they received on their writing, the students found that the teacher's comments were useful and played a crucial role in improving their ability to use cohesion in academic writing. In terms of the revision process, the students also found that revising essay drafts was a useful activity that contributed to more effective writing skills. In addition, cohesive ties were perceived as helpful tools for linking information in a text and a cohesive text can promote understanding and readability. To sum up, the

students developed a better understanding about writing and possessed positive views toward teacher feedback on cohesion and revisions of essays. The next chapter presents a conclusion, implications and recommendations for future research.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the research findings in response to the research questions presented in Chapter 3. It also provides discussions on the quantitative and qualitative results regarding the effects of feedback delivery and essay revision on the students' improvement of the use of cohesion in English expository essays and the students' perceptions and attitudes towards teacher written feedback, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing. In addition, it also presents the limitations of the present study, implications and recommendations for future research.

#### **7.1 Summary of the Findings and Discussions**

This section provides summaries of the results of this study in relation to the research questions.

##### **7.1.1 Research Question 1: Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' expository writing after the end of the writing course?**

In response to this research question, a summary of the quantitative research findings reported in Chapter 4 is presented. The findings in this section involve the differences in the use of cohesive devices between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental and control/intact groups. Results from the *t*-test revealed that there is statistically significant variation between the pre-test and post-test essays written by the students in the experimental group, whereas there is no such distinction between the pre-test and post-test essays written by the students in the control group. In other words, more cohesive ties were used in the post-test essays composed by the students in the experimental group than in the pre-test essays composed by the same group of students. In addition, the average numbers of cohesive ties located in the pre-test

essays and the post-test essays composed by the control group showed no significant difference. The results regarding each type of cohesive tie are reported in the following section.

#### **7.1.1.1 Results regarding Reference Ties**

Reference ties are divided into three sub-types: personal, demonstrative and comparative reference (Halliday and Hasan: 1976). Regarding the use of reference ties of all types, the findings revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in their post-test essays regarding the use of reference ties. In the experimental group, the use of overall reference in the pre-test essays is lower than that in the post-test essays. However, in the control group, there is no significant difference in the use of reference ties between the pre-test essays and the post-test essays.

The findings suggest that, pertaining to the experimental group, the treatments enhanced the use of reference of all types in the participants' revisions and later compositions. In the control group, on the other hand, the results show that the use of all types of references in the post-test is not statistically different from that in the pre-test at the significance level of .05.

#### **7.1.1.2 Results regarding Conjunctive Ties**

Conjunction ties are divided into four sub-types: *additive*, *adversative*, *causal* and *temporal* (Halliday and Hasan: 1976). The results revealed that there was significant variation in the use of all types of conjunctions in the post-test essays between the experimental and the control groups. The experimental group used significantly more conjunctions in their post-test than did the control group. Also, there was a significant difference in the use of conjunctions between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group. That is, significantly more conjunctive ties were used in the participants' post-test essays than in their pre-test essay. However, no statistically significant difference was found between the pre-test and post-test of the control group.



Overall, the findings suggest that the treatment provided during this study enhanced the use of conjunction of all types in the experimental group's revisions and later essays. On the other hand, the results show that in the control group, the use of all types of conjunction in the post-test is not statistically different from that in the pre-test. To compare between the post-tests of the experiment group and the control group, the results show that the use of conjunction of all types in the post-test of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group at statistical significance level of .05.

#### **7.1.1.3 Results regarding Lexical Cohesion**

In this study, the reiterative links and bonds between lexical items in each pair of the sentences in texts (see Chapter 3, section 3.5.4.2) follow Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis model. The reiterative links were divided into two main types, i.e. repetition and paraphrase.

The results revealed that the experimental group used significantly more *links* in their post-test than in their pre-test. On the other hand, no statistically significant variation was found in the use of links in the control group. When compared between the experimental group and the control group, more links were found to have been used by the students in the former than by those in the latter.

Regarding the number of *bonds*, there is a significant difference between the experimental group's post-test essays and in their pre-test essays. Specifically, more bonds were used in the post-test than in the pre-test. Conversely, there is no statistically significant variation in the number of bonds between the post-test and the pre-test of the control group. However, there is statistically significant variation in the use of bonds between the post-tests of the experimental group and the control group.

#### **7.1.1.4 Results regarding Overall Cohesion**

The analysis of overall cohesion in the students' essays reveals that significantly more cohesive ties are used in the post-test essays of the experimental group than in their pre-test essays. However, there is no statistically significant difference between the

pre-test and the post-test essays of the control group. A comparison of the use of overall cohesion between the post-test essays of both groups revealed that significantly more cohesive ties are found in the post-test essays of the experimental group than in the post-test essays of the control group.

Overall, the findings suggest that the treatments given to the participants in the experimental group enhanced their use of cohesion of all types, quantitatively, in their later compositions (i.e. post-test essays). Specifically, the use of cohesion of all types in this study—reference, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion—in the post-test of the experimental group is statistically higher than that in the pre-test at the significance level of .05. On the other hand, the results show that in the control group, the use of all types of cohesion in the post-test is not statistically different from that in the pre-test at the significance level of .05. Finally, the results show that the use of overall cohesion in the post-test of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group at statistical significance level of .05.

The results also suggest that the independent variables, feedback on cohesion and revision of the initial drafts, as well as instruction, enhanced the students' use of cohesion in their subsequent essays. These variables seem to have had a long-term effect (at least for sixteen weeks) on the students' proficiency in using cohesive devices in their expository writing, even though in this study the writing quality and overall textual coherence were not examined. These findings support Lee (2002)'s results regarding the positive effect of explicit instruction of cohesion during a 42-hour writing course. Her findings also suggest that 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. However, her study did not include feedback delivery as part of the classroom inquiry.

### **7.1.2 Research Question 2: Do teacher written feedback and essay revision enhance the use of cohesion in the students' revised drafts?**

In response to this research question, a summary of the quantitative research findings presented in Chapter 4 is also presented. The findings in this section involve the differences in the use of cohesive devices between the initial drafts and revised drafts



of the experimental group. Results from the *t*-test revealed that there is statistically significant difference between the initial and revised drafts in all modes of essays written by the students in the experimental group. In other words, more cohesive ties were used in the revised drafts written by the students in the experimental group than in their initial drafts.

#### **7.1.2.1 Results regarding Reference Ties**

The analysis of the students' initial and revised drafts revealed that more *reference ties* (i.e. personal, demonstrative and comparative) had been used in all the revised versions than in the initial drafts of all essays including cause-effect, comparison/contrast and classification essays.

#### **7.1.2.2 Results regarding Conjunctive Ties**

Based on the findings regarding the four types of conjunction, it has been found out that there were substantial differences in the use of all conjunctive ties (i.e. additive, adversative, causal and temporal) between the initial drafts and the revised versions for cause-effect essays, comparison-contrast essays and classification essays in the experimental group.

#### **7.1.2.3 Results regarding Lexical Cohesion**

Regarding lexical cohesion, the results revealed some discrepancies regarding the use of *links* in the students' initial drafts and revised versions for all types of compositions. According to the findings, the students used more links in their revised drafts for cause-effect and comparison/contrast essays than in their initial drafts. However, there is no statistically significant difference between the use of links in the two drafts of classification essays.

Based on the findings, similar to the number of *links*, a larger number of *bonds* were found only in some of the students' revised versions than in their initial drafts depending on the mode of composition. In cause-effect and classification essays, there is statistically significant variation in the use of bonds between the revised drafts and

the initial drafts. However, in comparison-contrast essays, there is no statistically significant variation in the use of bonds between the two drafts of comparison-contrast essays.

Overall, the findings suggest that the feedback given to the participants in the experimental group enhanced their use of cohesion of all types, quantitatively, in their revisions. The results show that the use of cohesion of all types in this study—reference, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion—in the revisions by the participants in the experimental group is statistically higher than that in the initial drafts at the significance level of .05.

Similar to the results from the pre-test and the post-test, those regarding the initial drafts and revised drafts also suggest that the independent variables, feedback on cohesion and revision of the initial drafts, as well as instruction, enhanced the students' use of cohesion in their subsequent essays. These variables seem to have had a short-term effect on the students' proficiency in using cohesive devices in their expository writing, even though in this study there is no statistically significant difference between the use of links in the two drafts of classification essays and there is no statistically significant variation in the use of bonds between the two drafts of comparison-contrast essays.

#### **7.1.2.4 Discussion on the Use of Cohesion**

Despite the positive results regarding the enhanced use of cohesion in students' later essays (the post-test) and revised drafts, it is interesting to discuss the patterns of the students' use of certain cohesive devices and the common errors found in this study.

Based on the findings, the most frequently used major category in each set was that of reference. Within that category, however, comparative devices in each set were used the least: from 2% to 6% of overall cohesion. The major change in the relative use of pronominals and demonstratives occurred in the post-test essays, where pronominals increased considerably, and were used more frequently than any other subcategory of cohesion.



The relative percentage of conjunctive devices contributing to overall cohesion dropped slightly in the initial drafts, even though more of them were used in the revised versions. In particular, the use of coordinators (e.g. *and* and *but*) dropped in many initial drafts. This was probably due to their exposure to conjunctive adverbs like 'in addition' and 'however'.

In attempting to explain these patterns in the results, it is necessary to consider aspects of topic development and the structuring of the essays, as well as factors within the learning situation. The higher use of certain cohesive devices particularly *pronominals* and *conjunctive adverbs* could possibly be explained as a pattern of overuse (e.g. Ellis: 1994; Grabe: 2001), with the students choosing to use these cohesive ties for any one of a variety of reasons. The fact that these devices (especially *pronominals*) were used more frequently indicates that most of the students were familiar with the devices on some level. Also, students are exposed to *conjunctive adverbs*, since they often appear in sentences and sample readings in the course book.

The high incidence of *pronominals* in the first drafts can, in part, be attributed to the topics chosen. That is, most students chose to write about a person they knew and, therefore, used a lot of pronouns to refer to that person. Others, who chose an impersonal topic, also used a lot of pronominals in their essays. This was probably due to prior preparation and a longer time period they spent writing their assignments that contributed to the increase of pronominal devices, particularly in place of lexical repetition.

It is interesting to note that this increase in pronominal cohesion occurred despite the fact that several essays contained a few personal pronouns to the total. This was because some of the students chose to write about themselves and primarily used first-person singular or plural pronouns, which were not treated as cohesive devices. These, of course, also contributed to the decrease in lexical repetition, since the pronouns were used at points where repeated nouns could have appeared.

Raimes (1985) suggests that students rarely use certain language features as a result of teaching. For example, the relatively low use of *comparative reference tie* seems to

result in part from the fact that comparison is generally expressed within a single clause, as in:

(46) We can say that to live in the suburbs is *more convenient than* to live in a city apartment.

(47) People in Bangkok are *as nervous as* people are in New York while driving their cars or walking in the streets.

In such instances, the comparative item functions structurally rather than cohesively. Cohesion is, however, often established through a lexical tie formed by the word or phrase following *than* or *as*, which is generally a repetition of an item from a preceding clause. In fact, comparative devices were presented in the students' text, as in most ESL texts, as structural elements completed by *than* or *as* phrases. The relative increase in comparative cohesion in the final set of essays, however, may indicate that the students have learned more about the use of this sort of cohesion and have felt more confident in using it.

An additional factor contributing to the relatively low use of comparative cohesion is the fact that students often expressed comparison or contrast not through comparative reference devices but through *conjunctions* such as *also*, *but*, or *however*, as in:

(48) Bangkok is hot *also* Singapore is hot.

(49) The transportation system in Bangkok is a good one, *however*, it is not convenient to travel in some provinces.

The relatively low use of *simple and complex paraphrase* (as in Hoey: 1991) indicates in part that the students tended to have limited word choice, using repetition to provide lexical ties rather than referring to previously used specific terms with more generalized terms. Hence, the low frequencies of *links* and *bonds* in their essays, negatively affecting the students' writing quality as lexical cohesion is considered a measure of good writing (McCulley: 1985; Witte and Faigley: 1981).



The limited word choice and range of vocabulary may apply also to the students' use of synonyms. The relatively infrequent use of synonyms in these essays suggests a limited range of vocabulary on the part of the students. It is also possible that they are not yet aware of the role synonyms can play not just in cohesion but also in style, by providing variety in word choice. ESL reading texts generally deal with synonyms only as items that can replace other terms in a sentence and as clues to the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary; in writing texts they are rarely even mentioned.

It seems, then, that the high percentages of repetitions can be accounted for by considering three factors which probably influence students' word choice: a tendency to remain at a constant level of generality, limited range in vocabulary, and lack of awareness of the cohesive (as well as stylistic) function served by variety in word choice. In fact, some repetition could be avoided by more use of more appropriate cohesive devices from other categories (e.g., pronouns, substitutions or ellipses) (McCulley: 1985; Witte and Faigley: 1981).

Apart from the frequencies of certain types of cohesion used in the students' essays in this study, common errors the students produced in their writing are also worth discussing. The following discussion will present the major error types, those which occurred in more than one category, followed by a brief discussion of what appeared as minor error types—those which were infrequent or specific to one category of cohesion. In some cases, an error in one type of cohesive device led to or was accompanied by an error in a device from a different category. Certain error types regarding conjunctive devices will be discussed separately since they relate to the nature of conjunctive relations only, and to the fact that conjunctions presuppose segments of text rather than specific items (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

The first type of errors involves *zero-referent items*. The use of a presupposing device with no identifiable referent available in the text was apparently the most common error in cohesion, occurring most frequently in reference devices. The majority of the zero-referent items were demonstrative devices. In only one instance, an adverbial demonstrative was used with no referent. The following example presents the opening sequence of the essay:

- (50) Due to the inflow of globalization, Thai economy is now in danger as we are legally intruded by *those* foreign investors.

In all other instances, zero-referent demonstrative errors involved deictics, particularly the definite article *the*. Specifically, the definite article *the* was used when an indefinite article (a/an or 0) was called for, as in:

- (51) On the other hand, in the suburbs it is very quiet. Each family is living in *the* private house.

- (52) I like the freedom at Thammasat University. It helps me get *the* better knowledge.

In such cases, *the* implies that the following noun has been previously mentioned in the text. However, *the* is used (by the student) with NPs that are introduced for the first time.

Another type of error is concerned with *ambiguity*. Cohesive items frequently appeared in contexts that made more than one interpretation or referent possible. In some cases two possible referents were readily available in the text; for example:

- (53) Since the globalization era emerged into our kind and helpful society, a lot of Thai people have changed. *They* are now more careful about trusting others. In modern society we sometimes cannot rely on *them*.

In some cases, a second possible referent can be an ambiguous item, as in:

- (54) America is the country of rich people. So if *they* build a car to be useful for only five years . . .

Here, *they* could refer to "rich people" but, more likely, it could refer to Americans in general, extracted from "America."



In other cases, a vague reference item is ambiguous. In the following sentence, for instance, it is unclear what the pronoun *it* refers to.

- (55) Thai people feel sorry for the inferiors; whether in lower social status or in difficult situation of others. We tend to give more than we take. We sometimes overdo *it* and a lot of Thais ended up being deceived and mistrusted.

Vague or ambiguous reference was also found in the combination of a deictic and ellipsis. In this case, the referent of the zero-slot was ambiguous resulting in confusion or misinterpretation of the whole phrase, as in:

- (56) The similarities between the two universities are that, first of all, the teachers like to give many exams. Second is that in both places the teachers give a lot of homework. I think that this *0* is good for students.
- (57) Wastefulness is a part of Thai people's life, but it depends from what point of view we are looking at that *0*.

In example (56), this *0* could refer either to "many exams" or to "a lot of homework"; it could also refer to the idea of teachers either giving exams or giving homework. Alternatively, it could refer to both possibilities together, but there is no definite way to be sure unless the teacher asks the student what she meant. Example (57) is somewhat typical of this sort of vague reference expressed by a deictic plus ellipsis. The referent could be a single element in the preceding clause (either "wastefulness" or "Thai people's life") or the whole clause, or it could perhaps be something else, unspecified in the text but known only to the student writer.

*Replacement* can be considered another type of error involving cohesion in student writing. This type of error refers to substitution of an inappropriate item for the required element. In the following instances, a cohesive item was used in a clause where an impersonal subject was required: the demonstrative *that* was used in place

of a grammatical *it* (as in example 58) and *they*, *that*, or *it* was used in place of a structural *there* (as in example 59):

(58) However, I think *that's* not fair for women to do every housework.

(59) I have to monitor an email inbox in order to take a look at every email that customers send us and reply back properly. So far, *they* are three kinds of emails from customers.

It is possible that phonological interference might have led to these errors. In embedded clauses, an ambient *it* can follow *that* as a complement marker (e.g., I think *that it's* not fair...), but when such a sentence is spoken by a native speaker, the *it* is phonologically reduced, and ESL students may not even realize that *it* is there. Also, *they* and *there* are close enough in sound to lead to confusion of the two items on the part of students. This problem also appears in the writing of native speakers, particularly speakers of a nonstandard dialect.

Another type of cohesion error found in this study involves *omission*. Omission of a required cohesive device was relatively rare. In several instances, a demonstrative was omitted at points where it was required in order to indicate anaphoric reference, as in example 60:

(60) I studied in a private university, and now I am studying in a state university. I can see some similarities and differences between *0* two places.

In several instances, however, a subsequent sentence shifted direction so abruptly that an explicit cohesive signal (e.g. adding the conjunctive adverb “however” between the two sentences) was needed, as in example 61:

(61) The single may postpone their marriage, whereas the married might switch to become single parents. Issues we may have to concern are the national trend of population growth.



In other instances, words necessary to indicate structural as well as rhetorical relationships between adjacent clauses were also omitted. In example 62, a student omitted not only a necessary pronominal cohesive tie but also the object of the clause:

- (62) I usually communicate by emails because I *understand better* than communicate by telephones.

Regarding conjunctive ties, students occasionally choose a cohesive signal that is inappropriate for the relationship that holds between two sequences. At times they use a conjunction although there is no relationship to be signaled. Based on the data found in this study, two types of errors were identifiable: (1) the use of a conjunction which signaled a role which did not exist in the text and (2) the use of a conjunction that signaled a relationship that was not expressed by the clause in which it appeared.

The first type of errors involves zero-relation signals. The conjunctive adverb *for example* was frequently used to introduce segments of text that were not understandable as examples of a preceding statement or idea. In some cases, the actual example was delayed; *for example* introduced what might be called background information. In this case, the order of the information and the position of *for example* distorted the relationship, as in example 63:

- (63) The climate in Thailand made it have another kind of culture, and also other costumes. Climate has actually a great effect on a country's life. *For example*, Thailand can be said to have only two seasons: summer and the rainy season. On the other hand, South Korea has four seasons. This first difference made clothes and fashion used in Thailand completely opposite to the ones used in the South Korea.

In other instances, the segment introduced by *for example* was so far from any preceding statement that it could have been exemplifying that the relationship was lost. Problems with *for example* may possibly appear because students are generally instructed to provide support in their essays through examples. Unfortunately, when they try to apply what they are taught, they either don't indicate what they are exemplifying or they structure their essay in such a way that the relationship is lost.

In one essay used in this study, an attempt to apply what had been taught was unsuccessful. Before even indicating what his essay was about, the student started off by stating:

- (64) I want to begin my introduction for this essay with two or three *examples*.

Conjunctions *so* and *but* also caused numerous problems. They were used in positions where in fact no conjunction was necessary and where the unit they introduced did not have a relationship that could be signaled by the conjunction they used. Example 65 illustrates an unnecessary use of *so*.

- (65) Comparing Bangkok and Tokyo . . . is a difficult subject to deal with. Beginning with population, the relation between them is one over a thousand. *So* let us talk first about Bangkok.

- (66) He is the doctor (physician) of a small city in Thailand. *But* because he is alone, he has to work very hard.

In example 66, the conjunction *but* could be considered as a replacement for *and*; the relationship between the two sentences seems to be that of addition rather than contradiction.

The errors discussed above were common cohesion errors produced by the students in this study. However, from the researcher's experience, these errors appear to be common errors produced by most Thai EFL students, forming to a certain extent the cohesive interlanguage of Thai writing students.

### 7.1.3 Research Question 3: What effects does teacher written feedback have on the students' writing?

During the experiment, the six types of teacher written comments were provided to the participants' expository essays. As reported in Chapter 5, section 5.1, there are different frequencies of their delivery on the students' initial drafts. The type of



written comments most frequently used was that of *advisory site comments* (35.8%), followed by *corrective site comments* (30.7%). The other types of written comments used in the respective order of frequency were those of *indicative site comments* (18.8%), *corrective and advisory site comments* (9.5%), *indicative end comments* (3.1%) and *advisory end comments* (2.1%).

These categories of these written comment types served two main purposes in the present study. Firstly, correction was used to provide a target language model and feedback on the form and content of the students' writing with a specific focus on cohesion use. Secondly, advice and indication were used in the form of directions, questions and statements about language usage (i.e. cohesive devices) and expository writing conventions to provide both form-focused and content-focused feedback, and modified input which were intended to facilitate the students' resolution of cohesion-related problems and modification of their output. The researcher/teacher was often able to use the students' input to shape his comments and the students were often able to use the teacher's input to produce modified output.

Positive results were found in the students' writing in relation to cohesion use when the students were required to revise their initial drafts in response to all types of teacher written feedback. These results mirror the results yielded from some previous studies on teacher feedback, especially error correction, followed by students' revisions, concluding that writing accuracy could improve during the revision process subsequent to the students' receiving feedback (Ferris: 1995, 2002, 2004, 2006; Krashen: 1984; Zamel: 1985). A fair amount of empirical evidence also advocates the positive effects of revision subsequent to feedback delivery on students' accuracy in their writing "either in a short term or long term" (Fathman and Whalley: 1990; Ferris: 1997; Chandler: 2003; Ferris and Roberts: 2001). Regarding the use of cohesion, it can also be concluded from the present study that the students improved their use of cohesion as a result of teacher written feedback and revisions at least over the 16-week period of the present study.

The findings also revealed that in the students' revised drafts, cohesion errors were reduced most in response to corrective site feedback, and corrective and advisory site feedback. (see Table 5.3) It can be stated that cohesion in student writing improved



most as a result of this most explicit feedback, which, of course, accommodated the students' revision as they made changes in accordance with the corrections provided; in many cases they simply copied the teacher's corrections on their revised drafts. The results in this study corresponded to Chandler's (2003) results, concluding that direct feedback or correction by the teacher was the most effective of the four types (correction, underlining and description, description, and underlining in this respective order) provided to student writing, as measured by changes in accuracy of the student writing. The superiority of direct feedback over the other feedback types was probably because it is "the fastest and the easiest way for them (students) to revise" (291).

Based on the findings in this study (see Table 5.3), other types of teacher written feedback also had demonstrably positive effects on students' proficiency in cohesion use as measured by the significantly more number of cohesive devices used in the students' later essays and revised drafts. The present study reflected a positive view of the provision of teacher written feedback in which it seems likely to be inferable that instructing students to revise and rewrite their initial drafts after receiving teacher feedback "not only will improve the quality of writing under immediate consideration but will also cause writers to become more aware of and attentive to patterns of errors" (Ferris: 2002: 26). In this study, it can be concluded that teacher written feedback and students' essay revision played a significant role in enhancing the use of cohesion in expository writing. This procedure—feedback delivery followed by revision—has successfully drawn students' attention to the use of cohesive devices and their cohesive writing.

#### **7.1.4 Research Question 4: How do the students who receive feedback on cohesion respond to teacher written feedback?**

In response to the teacher written comments, the student moves reflected three types of correspondence to the purpose of the comments: *complete*, *partial* and *no* correspondence. These correspondences refer to the degree to which a student move resulted in a revision that matched (corresponded to) the teacher's purpose in providing a comment. In this study, the great majority of the student moves had complete correspondence to the purpose of the comment. The fact that there were



only thirteen of all the moves that had no correspondence to the comment (see Table 5.3) suggests that the students consistently put their great efforts in responding to the teacher comments as a way of revising their initial drafts. This, in turn, reflects the students' perception of the teacher feedback as important and valuable as in the Thai culture, teachers' advice or suggestions are mostly expected to be followed. It is also possible that the students relied heavily on the teacher comments because they perceived that using the comments was a practical strategy for their revision task (Raimes: 1985).

Based on the findings reported in Chapter 5, the students who received feedback on cohesion responded to the teacher feedback in different manners. In other words, they had different types of moves in response to the teacher written comments on their initial drafts. This variation can be described in terms of correspondence to the teacher written comments: complete, partial or no correspondence. Results revealed that 91.9% of all tokens of the teacher feedback had complete correspondence to the teacher written comments, followed by 6.3% with partial correspondence and 1.8% with no correspondence to the teacher written comments.

From the findings, the degree of complete correspondence to both types of Corrective comments was the highest (98.9%), followed by the degree of complete correspondence to the Site comments (88.8%), while the degree of complete correspondence to the End comments was the lowest (70.3%).

Regarding the partial correspondence to the teacher written comments, the most was found in both types of the Site comments (88.5%), followed by the End comments (18.9%), while the least was found in the Corrective comments (1.06%).

Only a few tokens of student moves with no correspondence to the teacher written comments were found in this study. In particular, there were no tokens that had no correspondence to the Corrective comments, 10.8% had no correspondence to the End comments and 2.3% had no correspondence to the Site comments.

In this study, the student moves in response to the teacher written comments were similar in that the students all copied the corrections provided by the teacher into their

revised drafts. Moreover, most of the students seemed to have noticed the comments and made revisions related to the comments. The appropriately revised output indicated that the student successfully demonstrated linguistic or rhetorical ability to fulfill the objective of the comment, even though s/he might have sought assistance from any of the potentially helpful resources. In the few cases where the student moves had no correspondence to the teacher comments, several reasons can be offered on the basis of the students' responses in the questionnaires and interviews. Firstly, the student did not understand the comment; secondly, the student did not have the related language or writing skill to revise for better cohesion; thirdly, due to time constraints, the student did not have enough time to revise properly; and finally, they disagreed with the teacher comments provided.

Clearly, the students were able to manipulate the second language in response to the teacher comments. The findings indicate that the students received a great deal of feedback both on form and on content, feedback with metalinguistic information, input with requests for clarification and modified input with expansions. The students' revised drafts revealed that the students were able to use the input to modify their writing by making additions, deletions and substitutions with respect to information in their initial drafts, thereby increasing cohesion in their writing. However, whether these modifications of output indicate a long-term effect on students' language acquisition remains to be proven (cf. Swain:1985).

#### **7.1.5 Research Question 5: What perceptions and attitudes do the students who receive teacher feedback and revise their essays have towards their own writing skills, the teacher feedback and the revision process?**

The findings from both the questionnaire and the interviews reported in Chapter 6 revealed that the students had overall positive attitudes towards their writing skills, the feedback they received on their initial drafts, the revisions of their initial drafts and the use of cohesion in writing.

In terms of their writing skills, the students felt that they had made considerable progress; they were able to write an expository essay more confidently and more



cohesively. The students perceived a composition task as an opportunity to learn and practice “cohesion” and “essay organisation”, the text-level aspects of writing.

Regarding the feedback they received on their writing, the students found that the teacher’s comments were useful and played a crucial role in improving their ability to use cohesion in academic writing. They expected their writing teacher to give comments on their writing in all respects including “cohesion” and “essay organisation”. Some students added in their questionnaires and/or interviews that feedback on grammar would also be helpful, suggesting that they expected to receive feedback on the surface-level errors (Cohen: 1987; Enginarlar: 1993; Leki: 1991a; Zamel: 1985). The results also revealed that the students paid careful attention to the feedback their teacher provided for their initial drafts. In terms of their preference for types of comments, the students’ favourite type of comments was Corrective Site Feedback, followed by Corrective and Advisory Site Feedback and Advisory Site Feedback. Their preferences indicated their need for both the most explicit and less explicit feedback; the former increased the students’ confidence during their revising activities and the latter promoted their self-editing competency based on their acquired knowledge of the target language (Leki: 1991a). Based on the findings, most of the students in this study perceived that they comprehended the teacher written feedback very well, and they found teacher feedback on cohesion useful and could revise their initial drafts for more effective cohesion using the feedback. Regarding their level of satisfaction, the findings suggest that students were quite satisfied with teacher feedback on cohesion.

In terms of the revision process, the students also found that revising essay drafts was a useful activity that contributed to more effective writing skills. The results suggest that students found revisions of initial drafts important and useful for their writing skill development, but with proper feedback. Revision motivated them to write more confidently in English and students tended to pay careful attention to revising their initial drafts. Additionally, the findings suggest that revision contributed to students’ awareness and improvement of cohesion in their writing. Students tended to pay more attention to cohesion in their writing subsequent to regular revision.



Based on the findings from the questionnaires and interviews, teacher written feedback on cohesion and revisions contributed to the L2 learning environment as the students were not writing only in the hope to enhance their grammatical accuracy but to improve content and organisation (see Hedgcock and Lefkowitz: 1994). However, most of the students who were interviewed stated that they wanted the teacher to point out their grammatical mistakes. These findings appear to correspond to those of many previous studies that reflect overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward error correction and corrective feedback on writing of second and foreign language learners (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1996; Leki, 1991a; Schulz, 1996). Schulz (1996) hypothesises that these attitudes may result from previous instructional experiences such as curriculum, testing methods and the myth about the usefulness of grammatical feedback. When a few participants in this study were asked during the interview whether they would still want grammatical feedback even if their writing was not assigned a grade based on grammatical accuracy, they reported that they would still prefer grammatical feedback. The students' responses seemed to indicate that their needs for grammatical feedback were not based on criteria for the evaluation of writing. However, previous instructional experiences as Schulz (1996) posits may still play an important role. The students' preference for grammatical feedback may have been influenced by consistent emphasis on grammar in most English courses that these students, as well as Thai students in general, have taken throughout their education. The interview revealed that some of the participants equated good writing with grammatical accuracy. The students believed that this kind of feedback would be useful for them and would help them to write better.

In summary, as indicated in the literature, students expect and value feedback from their teachers and the absence of feedback could raise student anxiety and frustration, and undermine their confidence in their teachers (Leki: 1992; Ferris: 2002). Consequently, it is advisable that teachers provide feedback in the context of the main objective of a writing course (e.g. whether the primary focus is on writing or language usage) and the amount of time students are expected to devote to grammatical and lexical errors. Teachers can use a combination of explicit and implicit feedback while personalising comments for each individual student on the basis of the student's proficiency and the difficulty of errors. A crucial factor displayed in this study involves what the students did or could do in response to the teacher feedback rather



than simply receive it (Chandler: 2003). It is also interesting to note that in this study revision is worth the L2 teachers and learners' time and effort, in contradiction to Truscott (1996). Using the feedback in their revision, even the direct or explicit feedback, the students attend to both form and their own communicative intent. Furthermore, feedback can help students notice a mismatch between their interlanguage and the target language, thus facilitating second language acquisition. Based on the overall findings in the present study, cohesive ties were perceived as helpful tools for linking information in a text and a cohesive text can promote understanding and readability. The students found feedback on cohesion useful and felt that the feedback contributed to better cohesion in their writing. In summary, the students developed a better understanding about writing and had positive views toward teacher feedback on cohesion and revisions of essays.

## **7.2 Summary of Effects of Teacher Feedback and Revision on Students' Use of Cohesion**

Obviously, positive results can be seen in the students' ability to use cohesion in their writing after the teacher provided feedback on cohesion throughout the course. This result supports Fathman and Walley's (1990) conclusion that teacher feedback results in improvement on both content and form. In addition, as Lee (2002) concludes, cohesion, as a feature of coherence, can be "understood, taught, learnt and practiced in the classroom" (154). Ferris (1997) also values teacher feedback followed by students' revision, which, either minimal or substantial, is believed to improve students' paper.

In this study, the improvement of the students' use of cohesion could result from teacher written feedback and regular revising activities, as well as in-class instruction of cohesion provided by the teacher and extensive writing practice. This can be supported by the qualitative evidence found in the present study. Based on the students' responses in the questionnaire and interviews, it was agreed that feedback on cohesion helped improve their writing especially in the area of essay organisation. It was evident that teacher feedback in the present study did not have a harmful effect on the students' writing proficiency but yielded a positive effect on it (Chandler: 2003). Feedback should also be regarded as a "highly significant factor" that is



responsible for long-term improvement (Hyland and Hyland: 2006a). In addition, the present study reflected a positive view of feedback that causes “writers to become more aware of and attentive to patterns of errors” (Ferris: 2002: 26). It can be concluded from the present study that teacher written feedback played an important role in the improvement of Thai postgraduate students’ cohesion skills, and the revision process in response to the teacher feedback is a means of drawing students’ attention to their writing and learn more about cohesion.

### **7.3 Teachability of Cohesion**

Despite the interlinguistic and intercultural difference between Thai and English, the examination of the sample writing for the present study demonstrates that all the subjects in the experimental group achieved a fairly large degree of cohesiveness in their writing assignments simply because they were exposed to the instruction of cohesive devices, feedback on cohesion in their initial drafts and the revision of their initial drafts. The training during their writing course familiarised the students with the English expository essay writing conventions and enhanced their ability to produce cohesive discourse. Though negative transfer and interlanguage interference might occur in the writing process, further formal instruction in and feedback on features of cohesion would be beneficial to Thai EFL writers to further familiarise them with discourse cohesion conventions and combat the negative transfer and interlanguage interference.

In addition, the ability of the Thai postgraduate students to adjust to Western writing contexts made it possible for them to be open to Western discourse conventions. Many of the writing samples show that the writers expressed their interest in familiarising themselves with academic writing conventions in their own fields. For instance, in an interview with a student from the experimental group, the student stressed the importance of constant practice in academic writing and the consequent probability of improving their writing ability. Their awareness of the importance of academic writing and their interest in it indicate that cohesion in academic writing is teachable to these students and instruction in this area would benefit them in their future interactions with their own discourse communities (Lee: 2002).



Finally, genre-specific cohesive patterns can be identified and taught to Thai students. With fairly adequate knowledge of genre-specific cohesion patterns in Thai, these students had not been exposed to the counterpart patterns in English and they would be more than willing to accept those conventions, if different from their Thai counterparts. Their willingness can also be seen from their deep interest in reading essay models, as mentioned above, to improve their own academic writing. If the students are interested in the genre-specific cohesion patterns, the instruction of genre-specific cohesion patterns would be beneficial to these students' formal training in academic writing.

#### **7.4 Limitations of the Study**

Though the current study provides a comprehensive analysis of cohesion used in Thai EFL students' academic writing, particularly expository essays from different perspectives both quantitatively and qualitatively, the study is limited by a number of factors. Possible limitations of the present study include the following aspects:

1. One limitation of this study lies in the use of analysis schemes. In an attempt to examine the use of cohesion in students' essays, the researcher mainly used Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesion and Hoey's (1991) lexical analysis with a focus on repetitive links and bonds. In this respect, although other alternative models existed, these two analysis schemes were employed because they were clear, not too complicated and widely used in an analysis of cohesion. Therefore, the findings and discussions in this study would be limited to the use of these models or analysis schemes.
2. Another limitation involves the data which were obtained from students' expository essays. No other modes of writing e.g. narrative and argumentative essays were included in this study. Due to the fact that each type of writing possesses particular types of rhetorical structures, cohesive devices that were examined and analysed in this study are commonly found in expository essays, and therefore, those commonly found in other modes of writing were not covered in the present study.

3. This study was limited to investigating the use of cohesion of Thai postgraduate students, who can be regarded as being only a small subset of L2 writers in ESL/EFL contexts. Researchers working with L2 writers in other contexts may observe different processes. Therefore, the limited sample size (60 subjects) reduced the representativeness of the population and limited the generalisability of the results of the study.
4. Still another limitation is that the current study focused only on cohesion rather than coherence. Consequently, the students' writing quality may not have been measured.
5. The study is also limited in examining only writing products for cohesion while neglecting the writing processes in which the subjects produce cohesion or the reader's processes by which the discourse is determined to be cohesive or non-cohesive. The process study would have required different models to apply and would have involved the study of cognitive aspects of cohesion. Nevertheless, this would be an interesting and productive avenue of further research.

## **7.5 Implications of the Study**

The research findings of this study suggest several important pedagogical implications. First of all, the present study measures cohesive ties in students' writing. The overall research results suggest that cohesion is teachable and should be taught in a writing course with intensive practice through revisions so that student writing will be less discursive and, on the contrary, better organised and connected. Cohesion can help students think more carefully and logically as they present their ideas in writing in a step-by-step process.

Another implication derived from this study, however, is that the mere measurement of cohesive ties will not always be adequate to determine the cohesiveness or coherence of the discourse. In other words, density or richness of cohesive ties does not imply overall cohesiveness or writing quality. There are other factors contributing to overall cohesiveness. Since there are no universally accepted methods of teaching



cohesion, instructors can develop their own workable methods, which should primarily be based on empirical research.

In addition, most ESL writers are familiar with some explicit cohesion but few of them are familiar with or good at implicit cohesion. The capability of using implicit cohesion constitutes one of the factors that often distinguishes ESL writing from native speakers' writing. Part of the goal of the ESL writing instruction is to help students to improve their writing ability so that they can produce more native-like discourse.

To improve students' use of cohesion, teachers should also emphasise lexical cohesion to enhance the connectedness of students' texts. As suggested by Schmitt (2000: 113), the teaching of text organisation and lexical cohesion may help students "think about vocabulary not as discrete words, but as interrelated members of a cohesive discourse". Conjunctive and referential cohesion may not be adequate to enable students to create a connected text.

In terms of feedback provided to student writing, teacher feedback can provide students with a sense of audience and offer an additional layer of scaffolding to extend writing skills, promote accuracy and clear ideas, and develop an understanding of written genres (Hyland: 2003). In the context of this study, teacher written feedback should be customised according to their preferences even though a focus should also be on the learning process and language acquisition of writing students. In addition, a combination of all types of written comments should be provided on the basis of the student's proficiency level and the level of difficulty regarding the writing problem being addressed.

With regard to the process-based writing approach, revision is an important activity that can help improve student writing and, in turn, contributes to the development of a better attitude toward L2 writing. Students should be encouraged to revise and rewrite their essays throughout a writing course so that they will be motivated enough to become independent EFL writers who can self-edit and perform self-revision later in their life (e.g. Ferris: 1995). Then, writing would not be only a tedious assignment

that EFL/ESL students are required to complete on a weekly or fortnightly basis or just a piece of material to be marked and used as part of course evaluation.

## **7.6 Recommendations for Further Research**

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

Firstly, since the current study is limited to Thai EFL postgraduate students' writing and is further limited to their academic writing only, it would be interesting to conduct a more extensive study of Thai EFL students in general and of their more extensive writing modes (similar studies can be conducted on other essay modes such as narration, description or argumentation) to present an overall picture of their efforts to compose cohesive English discourse in the Thai context. To conduct such a study, more subjects would be required to participate in the study and more sample data would be needed to increase generalisability.

Secondly, the present study is largely a product-based study, focusing mainly on students' writing products to examine their treatment of cohesion. Similar process-oriented studies should also be conducted to examine the processes by which Thai EFL students construct cohesive discourse. Cognitive aspects of cohesion in writing could be examined to discover how cohesion is produced in the process of writing in the Thai context.

Thirdly, contrastive studies of genre-specific properties of cohesion should also be conducted. Since different genres require different cohesive ties and organisational patterns, the study of genre-specific properties of cohesion would reveal the differences of discourse cohesion types across genres. Though there are increasing interests in genre studies, little research has been done in this field. Efforts made in the study of genre-specific properties of cohesion would be worthwhile and insightful.

Fourthly, the present study focused on explicit cohesion in writing whereas implicit cohesion was not dealt with. More studies on implicit cohesion in Thai students'



writing are needed to determine whether interlanguage interference is at work in the course of writing. As it is reported that the Thai language is marked by parataxis (implicit sentence or discourse connection) (Iwasaki and Ingkaphirom, 2005), the study of implicit cohesion in Thai EFL students' writing would help to identify language transfer or interference. In the same vein, similar studies can also be conducted in relation to proficiency levels. The results can reveal whether high-proficiency-level students would provide more information on implicit cohesion or vice versa. This might produce some insight into semantic and pragmatic aspects of cohesion acquisition.

Finally, more studies are needed on density of cohesion in relation to writing quality. The correlation between richness of cohesion and writing quality should be examined as overuse of cohesion is sometimes characteristic of inexperienced or immature ESL writers.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This study investigated the effects of teacher written feedback and essay revision on the use of referential, conjunctive and lexical cohesive devices in Thai postgraduate students' expository compositions. It was also aimed at investigating the students' attitudes towards teacher written feedback on cohesion, the revision process and the use of cohesion in writing. As this research study was of the mixed-mode type with triangulated studies, the students' expository essays and revised drafts, questionnaires, and interviews were used as sources of data. Inferential statistics, descriptive statistics and data reduction were used to analyse these different types of data. The results of this study revealed that the teacher written feedback and the students' revision of their initial drafts significantly contributed to the improvement of the students' use of cohesion in their subsequent writing (i.e. revised drafts and post-test compositions).

With an aim to fill a gap in research on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and English Language Teaching (ELT), this study focused on the roles of teacher written feedback and the revision process in enhancing cohesion in EFL students' expository writing. While the literature revealed numerous studies on the use of feedback on ESL/EFL students' writing, the linguistic features under study were mainly concerned



with grammatical errors, and direct corrective feedback was the major type of feedback employed in previous experimental studies. No single research study in the field was devoted to the investigation of the effects of the process-based writing approach on the improvement of cohesion in student writing, particularly in the Thai context or any other Asian context. It is the present study that initiated this attempt, utilising various types of teacher written feedback, both explicit and implicit, directed at a number of problematic areas pertaining to the use of cohesion in L2 expository texts. It also further investigated how the students who received feedback on their initial drafts revised their drafts in response to the feedback. Positive results were derived as significantly more precise cohesive elements were used in the students' revised drafts and later essays. Insights were gained into how written feedback should be delivered and customised to satisfy each individual student's linguistic needs. Additionally, meaningful feedback which focused primarily on the use of cohesion did increase the students' attention to the linguistic elements that could facilitate the flow of ideas in a text.

Similar to the product data (students' compositions), the perception data (questionnaires and interviews) revealed the students' positive attitudes towards the teacher written feedback and the revising process, which most of the students regarded as useful tools for enhancing cohesion in their academic writing. Even though feedback on grammatical errors was also needed to improve grammatical accuracy, according to many of the participants in this study, feedback on cohesion was necessary as they became aware of the importance of cohesion and coherence in well-written texts, in addition to the importance of intended purpose and audience, register, and genre-specific writing conventions.

Despite the limited number of participants in this study, the findings are generalisable in the context of EFL writers, especially Asian EFL students. In most Asian cultures where communication processes are non-linear or circular thus leading to discursive writing, the instruction of and feedback on cohesion can be very helpful in English writing classes. Exposure to cohesive texts and cohesive devices in English will enable students in such a context to process and organise their thoughts more effectively in their writing. Then, through intensive practice and regular revising activities, students will be able to present their ideas in a well-connected text that is



easily understood by the reader. The pedagogical focus on this aspect of text and writing will raise students' awareness of readability in writing and contribute to the effective production of coherent texts.

The procedure for feedback delivery and revision used in this study is expected to be applied in some writing courses at the Language Institute of Thammasat University. The results of this application will be further studied for the development of writing syllabuses at the University. In a wider context, the replication of this study and future research in this area will be instrumental in refining pedagogical approaches to teaching writing skills to students in the EFL contexts and providing a venue for the maximum amount of learning.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Thank you in advance for answering this questionnaire, which will provide me with feedback on the Writing Skill Development Course. The results of this questionnaire will help me work towards improving the class during the next academic year. Your answers will remain completely confidential.

Part I: Questions about your writing skills

**Directions:** Please read each of the statements carefully and indicate the answer that best fits your choice.

- SA = Strongly agree
- A = Agree
- N = Neither agree nor disagree
- D = Disagree
- SD = Strongly disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I feel that my writing skills in general have improved since the beginning of the course (the first semester of this academic year).					
2. After writing essays for a period of time, I felt my English writing skills improved.					
3. After writing essays for a period of time, I felt more encouraged to write in English.					
4. More specifically, I think that my writing skills have improved regarding each of the following areas.					
4.1 Grammar					
4.2 Vocabulary					
4.3 Cohesion					
4.4 Organisation					
5. I enjoy writing activities in my English writing class.					
6. I developed writing skills especially cohesion.					



	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. I think a composition task provides me with an opportunity to learn and practice _____					
7.1 cohesion					
7.2 essay organization					
7.3 vocabulary					
7.4 grammar and structure					
7.5 mechanics					
8. I think the teacher should _____					
8.1 comment on cohesion					
8.2 comment on essay organization					
8.3 comment on vocabulary					
8.4 correct grammar errors					
8.5 correct mechanical errors					



**Part II: Questions about the teacher feedback on your writing**

**A. Directions:** Please respond to each of the following questions. Mark the answer that best fits your choice.

	all	a lot	some	a little	none
9. How much attention do you pay to the teacher comments on cohesion?					

**B. Directions:** Please read each of the statements carefully and indicate the answer that best fits your choice.

- SA = Strongly agree  
A = Agree  
N = Neither agree nor disagree  
D = Disagree  
SD = Strongly disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. When I received my essay back, I read the feedback provided throughout the essay.					
11. I read the feedback on my essays carefully.					
12. When I received my essays with my instructor's feedback, I thought about the feedback carefully.					

**C. Directions:** Please respond to each of the following questions. Mark the answer that best fits your choice.

	Always	Very Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
13. How often do you refer to your initial drafts?					
14. How often do you refer to the teacher comments in the initial drafts?					



**D. Directions:** Please indicate your preference for each type of comments you received for your first draft. Choose number “1” for your favorite type of comment and choose number “6” for the least preferred type of comment. You may refer to the definition and an example of each type of comment in the handout provided.

CS = Corrective Site Comment  
 CAS = Corrective and Advisory Site Comment  
 AS = Advisory Site Comment  
 IS = Indicative Site Comment  
 AE = Advisory End Comment  
 IE = Indicative End Comment

15. Rank	CS	CAS	AS	IS	AE	IE
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Now please give reasons for your three most preferred types of comments. That is, please explain why you liked the types of comments you rated 1 – 3.

Types of Comments	Reasons
Corrective Site Comment	
Corrective & Advisory Site Comment	
Advisory Site Comment	
Indicative Site Comment	
Advisory End Comment	
Indicative End Comment	

**E. Directions:** Please respond to each of the following questions. Mark the answer that best fits your choice.

	76 – 100%	51 – 75%	26 – 50%	0 – 25%
16. What is the approximate percentage of your English teacher’s feedback that you are able to understand and follow?				
17. What is the approximate percentage of cohesion problems you are able to resolve with the help of your English teacher’s written feedback?				

**F. Directions:** Please read each of the statements carefully and indicate the answer that best fits your choice.

- SA = Strongly agree
- A = Agree
- N = Neither agree nor disagree
- D = Disagree
- SD = Strongly disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. When I read my instructor’s feedback, I understood it well.					
19. When reading the feedback, I had difficulty understand it.					
20. I found my instructor’s feedback on cohesion useful.					
21. I think that the feedback given to each essay was helpful to improve my writing in subsequent essays.					
22. I think the feedback I received was clear.					
23. When I found a suggestion in the feedback NOT understandable or difficult to understand, I would try to understand it.					



	SA	A	N	D	SD
24. I think feedback given to each essay was suitable.					
25. I feel that feedback on cohesion helped me improve my writing.					
26. I used feedback on my writing to revise my essays.					

**G. Directions:** Please answer the following questions.

27. Is there any feedback or comment that you do not understand or do not know how to follow?

28. What do you do when you do not understand your English teacher’s written feedback?

29. What do you do after you read your English teacher’s written comments?

**H. Directions:** Please respond to the following question. Mark the answer that best fits your choice.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not satisfied at all
30. What is the level of your satisfaction of the teacher feedback?					

Now please answer the following question.

31. Is there anything that you did not particularly like about the feedback your English teacher provided?



**I. Directions:** Please read each of the statements carefully and indicate the answer that best fits your choice.

SA = Strongly agree

A = Agree

N = Neither agree nor disagree

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
32. You feel that your English teacher's feedback helps you improve your ability to use cohesion in essay writing.					
33. After writing essays for a period of time, I felt that I could write in English for cohesively.					
34. I feel I understood more about cohesion in writing.					
35. I think cohesion is important to writing.					
36. I think that one characteristic of a good essay is cohesiveness.					
37. I think cohesion can make writing easier to read.					
38. I have learned how to make ideas in my writing connect together smoothly.					
39. I tried to make ideas flow smoothly in writing.					

**J. Directions:** Please respond to the following question. Mark the answer that best fits your choice.

	Yes	No	Maybe
40. Do you think that you would make the same errors in the use of cohesion in your subsequent writing?			

**Part III: Questions about revision of essays**

**Directions:** Please read each of the statements carefully and indicate the answer that best fits your choice.

- SA = Strongly agree  
A = Agree  
N = Neither agree nor disagree  
D = Disagree  
SD = Strongly disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
41. I think that revising each essay is important.					
42. I paid careful attention to revising my drafts.					
43. I think my writing was improved after each revision.					
44. I think my writing was improved after I revised several drafts.					
45. After revising drafts for a period of time, I felt more encouraged to write in English.					
46. I think revision was helpful to improve my writing.					
47. I focused on cohesion when revising my drafts.					
48. After revising drafts for a period of time, I felt that I could write in English more cohesively.					
49. I feel that revising for cohesion was useful.					
50. I made changes in cohesion as I revised my drafts.					
51. I think my writing was more cohesive after revision.					



#### **Part IV: Comments about your writing course**

**Directions:** Please write your comments and suggestions on the following issues.

**1. Feedback on your writing**

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**2. Revising first drafts**

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**3. The use of cohesion in writing.**

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**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

## **Appendix B: Consent Form**

**Research Topic:** Enhancing Cohesion in Thai Students' Expository Writing through Feedback Delivery and the Revision Process

**Researcher:** Supong Tangkiengsirisin

If you are willing to participate in the above research study, please sign the statement below. Thank you very much for your help. I greatly appreciate your participation in this study.

I have read and understood the information provided in this form, and I am willing to participate in this study. I understand that my data and responses will completely be kept confidential. I also understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Name (Please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **Appendix C: Interview Topic Guide**

### **A. Questions about the students' writing skills**

1. What were your writing skills like before you started the course CR621?
2. What were your writing skills like after the end of the course?
3. How did you enjoy writing during the course?
4. What did you like most about the writing course?

### **B. Questions about feedback on cohesion**

5. What did you think about the feedback provided to your initial drafts?
6. How did you find the teacher feedback on cohesion you received on your initial drafts?
7. What would you like teacher written feedback to be like?
8. How did you deal with teacher written feedback?

### **C. Questions about the revision process**

9. How did you feel about the revision of initial drafts?
10. How did you revise your drafts?
11. What were some advantages of revision?
12. What were some problems regarding revision?

### **D. Questions about cohesion in writing**

13. What did you think about the use of cohesion in writing?
14. How useful is cohesion in writing?
15. What did you think about your ability to use cohesion before you started the writing course?
16. What was your proficiency regarding the use of cohesion after the end of the course?

Appendix D: Writing Lessons and Prompts

Writing Lessons

Lessons	Composition Focus	Language Focus
Writing a Descriptive Paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The paragraph</li><li>• The topic sentence</li><li>• The support</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensory detail</li><li>• Specific information</li><li>• Adding detail with adjectives and noun modifiers</li><li>• Connecting ideas with coordinating conjunctions</li></ul>
Writing a Narrative Paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Narration</li><li>• Recognising adequate development</li><li>• Unity</li><li>• Developing a paragraph</li><li>• Paragraph conclusions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time signals</li><li>• Time clauses</li><li>• Tenses and time frames</li></ul>
Writing an Expository Paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective topic sentences</li><li>• The topic and the controlling idea</li><li>• The supporting points in the three-level paragraph</li><li>• Specific examples</li><li>• Transition words and phrases</li><li>• Concluding sentences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subordinate clauses</li></ul>
Writing a Division Paragraph / Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expanding a paragraph to an essay</li><li>• Outlining the expansion</li><li>• From topic sentence to thesis statement</li><li>• Parallel structure in thesis statements</li><li>• Linking the thesis to statement to the body paragraphs: Cohesion</li><li>• Development of body paragraphs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adjective clauses</li></ul>



<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Composition Focus</b>	<b>Language Focus</b>
<b>Writing a Cause and Effect Essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay introductions</li> <li>• Organisation of body paragraphs and transition signals</li> <li>• Essay conclusions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause-and-effect vocabulary: Conjunctions and transition words</li> </ul>
<b>Writing a Comparison/Contrast Essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlling ideas in thesis statements</li> <li>• Balanced development in the comparison/contrast essay</li> <li>• Cohesion in the comparison/contrast essay</li> <li>• The conclusion of the comparison/contrast essay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vocabulary of the comparison and contrast</li> </ul>
<b>Writing a Classification Essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis statements</li> <li>• Modifying thesis statements</li> <li>• Rhetorical strategies</li> <li>• Development with various rhetorical strategies</li> <li>• Cohesion in body paragraphs</li> <li>• Consistent point of view</li> <li>• Cohesion and redundancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using direct quotations and paraphrasing to include ideas and information from outside sources</li> <li>• Paraphrasing strategies</li> <li>• Correct use of sources</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> </ul>
<b>Writing an Argumentative Essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions for argumentative essays</li> <li>• Developing body paragraphs</li> <li>• Opposing points of view</li> <li>• Conclusions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifiers</li> </ul>

## Prompts for Writing Assignments

Essay Modes	Prompts
Cause and Effect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write about the effects of globalisation on your country, region, or city.</li> <li>2. Write about the reasons why your country has a strong or weak economy.</li> <li>3. Write about the economic effects of an event in your country, region, or city. Some examples of events that can bring about positive or negative economic effects are the following: a new government policy (formal plan action), a treaty (an agreement between nations), introduction of new technology, a war, or an environmental disaster.</li> </ol>
Comparison/ Contrast	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compare single life and married life</li> <li>2. Compare the lives of men and women in your country or culture.</li> <li>3. Compare young people's expectations for marriage and the reality of married life.</li> <li>4. Compare courtship and/or marriage in your parents' or grandparents' times and courtship and/or marriage in your time.</li> <li>5. Compare women's roles in two generations.</li> <li>6. Compare your country with another country in various aspects.</li> </ol>
Classification	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write about a group that you have been part of such as a sports team, a work team, a group of musicians, a class, a club (group members or leaders) or their behaviours.</li> <li>2. Pretend that you are writing a letter of application to a school or an employer. Introduce yourself in the letter to the school admissions office or the employer by classifying the skills or talents that you would bring to the new school or job.</li> <li>3. Classify the responsibilities or duties of a job you have had, or interview someone about the duties of his or her job, and write a classification essay about that person's job duties. Alternatively, classify the types of communication required by a job.</li> <li>4. Classify people according to how they behave in a certain type of situation, such as when they are given a task to complete, when they join a group as a stranger, when they are placed in a competitive situation, or when they are involved in a conflict.</li> <li>5. Classify the pathways to a successful life. Use people you have known in your life as examples.</li> </ol>



## Appendix E: Halliday and Hasan's Taxonomy for Cohesion Analysis

### Summary of Cohesion and Coding Scheme

(Taken from Halliday and Hasan's (1976) *Cohesion Analysis*, pp. 330-339.)

#### Type of cohesion

#### Coding

(1) singular, masculine	<u>he, him, his</u>	11
(2) singular, feminine	<u>she, her, hers</u>	12
(3) singular, neuter	<u>it, its</u>	13
(4) plural	<u>they, them, their, theirs</u>	14
1 (1-4) functioning as:		
(a) functioning as:	<u>he/him, she/her, it, they/them</u>	6
(b) possessive, as Head	<u>his, hers, (its), theirs</u>	7
(c) possessive, as Deictic	<u>his, her, its, their</u>	8
2. Demonstratives and definite article		2
(1) demonstrative, near	<u>this/these, here</u>	21
(2) demonstrative, far	<u>that/those, there, then</u>	22
(3) Definite article	<u>the</u>	23
2 (1-3) functioning as:		
(a) nominal, Deictic or Head	<u>this/these, that/those, the</u>	6
(b) place adverbial	<u>here, there</u>	7
(c) time adverbial	<u>then</u>	8
3. Comparatives (not complete lists)		3
(1) identity	eg: <u>same, identical</u>	31
(2) similarity	eg: <u>similar(ly), such</u>	32
(3) difference (ie: non-identity and dissimilarity)	eg: <u>different, other, else, additional</u>	33
(4) comparison, quantity	eg: <u>more, less, as many; ordinals</u>	34
(5) comparison, quality	eg: <u>as+adjectives; comparatives and superlatives</u>	35
3 (1-5) functioning as:		
(a) Deictic	(1-3)	6

(b) Numerative	(4)	7
(c) Epithet	(5)	8
(d) Adjunct or Submodifier	(1-5)	9

**Note;** Not all combinations of (1-5) with (a-d) are possible; the usual functions are those indicated here in the last table.

## SUBSTITUTION

1. Nominal substitutes		S
(1) for noun Head	<u>one/ones</u>	1
(2) for nominal Complement	<u>the same</u>	11
(3) for Attribute	<u>so</u>	12
2. Verbal substitutes		2
(1) for verb	<u>do, be, have</u>	21
(2) for process	<u>do the same/likewise</u>	22
(3) for proposition	<u>do so, be so</u>	23
(4) verbal reference	<u>do it/that, be it/that</u>	24
3. Clausal substitutes		3
(1) positive	<u>so</u>	31
(2) negative	<u>not</u>	32

3 (1-2) substitute clause functioning as:

(a) reported	6
(b) conditional	7
(c) modalized	8
(d) other	9

## ELLIPSIS

1. Nominal ellipsis	E
(1) Deictic Head	1
i. specific Deictic	11
ii. non-specific Deictic	1
iii. Post-deictic	2
(2) Numerative as Head	3
i. ordinal	12
ii. cardinal	1
iii. indefinite	2
(3) Epithet as Head	3
i. superlative	13
ii. comparative	1
iii. others	2
2. Verbal ellipsis	3
(1) lexical ellipsis ('from right')	2
i. total (all items omitted except first operator)	21
	1



ii.	partial (lexical verb only omitted)	2
(2)	operator ellipsis ('from left')	22
i.	total (all items omitted except lexical verb)	1
ii.	partial (first operator only omitted)	2

**Note:** Where the presupposed verbal group is simple, there is no distinction between total and partial ellipsis; such instances are treated as 'total'. Where it is above a certain complexity there are other possibilities intermediate between the total and partial as defined here; such instances are treated as 'partial'.

3.	Clausal ellipsis	3
(1)	proposition ellipsis	31
i.	total (all propositional element omitted)	1
ii.	partial (some Complement or Adjunct present)	2

**Note:** Lexical ellipsis implies propositional ellipsis, and operator ellipsis implies modal ellipsis, unless all clause elements other than the Predicator (verbal group) are explicitly repudiated.

(3)	general ellipsis of the clause (all elements but one omitted)	33
i.	WH- (only WH-element present)	1
ii.	yes/no (only item expressing polarity present)	2
iii.	other (other single clause element present)	3

(4)	zero (entire clause omitted)	34
-----	------------------------------	----

3 (1-4) elliptical clause functioning as:

(a)	yes/no question or answer	6
(b)	WH-question or answer	7
(c)	'reported' element	8
(d)	Otherwise	9

**Note:** Not all combinations of (1-4) with (a-d) are possible.

CONJUNCTION (items quoted are examples, not complete lists)	C
---	---

**Note:** (E) = external, (I) = internal

1.	Additive	1
(1)	simple: (E/I)	11
i.	additive	<u>and, and also</u> 1
ii.	negative	<u>nor, and...not</u> 2
iii.	alternative	<u>or, or else</u> 3
(2)	complex, emphatic: (I)	12
i.	additive	<u>furthermore, add to that</u> 1
ii.	alternative	<u>alternatively</u> 2

(3) complex, de-emphatic: (I)	<u>by the way, incidentally</u>	13
(4) apposition: (I)		14
i. expository	<u>that is, in other words</u>	1
ii. exemplificatory	<u>eg. thus</u>	2
(5) comparison: (I)		15
i. similar	<u>likewise, in the same way</u>	1
ii. dissimilar	<u>on the other hand, by contrast</u>	2
2. Adversative		2
(1) adversative 'proper': (E/I)		21
i. simple	<u>yet, though, only</u>	1
ii. + 'and'	<u>but</u>	2
iii. emphatic	<u>however, even so, all the same</u>	3
(2) contrastive (avowal): (I)	<u>in (point of) fact, actually</u>	22
(3) contrastive: (E)		23
i. simple	<u>but, and</u>	1
ii. emphatic	<u>however, conversely, on the other hand</u>	2
(4) correction: (I)		24
i. of meaning	<u>instead, on the contrary, rather</u>	1
ii. of wording	<u>at least, I mean, or rather</u>	2
(5) dismissal (I)		25
i. closed	<u>in any/either case</u>	1
ii. open-ended	<u>in any case, any how</u>	2
3. Causal		3
(1) general: (E/I)		31
i. simple	<u>so, then, therefore</u>	1
ii. emphatic	<u>consequently</u>	2
(2) specific: (E/I)		32
i. reason	<u>on account of this</u>	1
ii. result	<u>in consequence</u>	2
iii. purpose	<u>with this in mind</u>	3
(3) reversed causal: (I)	<u>for, because</u>	33
(4) causal, specific: (I)		34
i. reason	<u>it follows</u>	1
ii. result	<u>arising out of this</u>	2
iii. purpose	<u>to this end</u>	3
(5) conditional: (E/I)		35
i. simple	<u>then</u>	1



ii.	emphatic	<u>in that case, in such an event</u>	2
iii.	generalized	<u>under the circumstances</u>	3
iv.	reversed polarity	<u>otherwise, under other circumstances</u>	4
(6)	respective: (I)		36
i.	direct	<u>in this respect, here</u>	1
ii.	reversed polarity	<u>otherwise, apart from this, in other respects</u>	2
4.	Temporal		4
(1)	simple: (E)		41
i.	sequential	then, next	1
ii.	simultaneous	just then	2
iii.	preceding	before that, hitherto	3
(2)	conclusive: (E)	in the end	42
(3)	correlatives: (E)		43
i.	sequential	first...then	1
ii.	conclusive	at first/originally/ formerly...finally/now	2
(4)	complex: (E)		44
i.	immediate	at once	1
ii.	interrupted	soon	2
iii.	repetitive	next time	3
iv.	specific	next day	4
v.	durative	meanwhile	5
vi.	terminal	until then	6
vii.	punctiliar	at this moment	7
(5)	internal temporal: (I)		45
i.	sequential	then, next	1
ii.	conclusive	finally, in conclusion	2
(6)	correlatives: (I)		46
i.	sequential	first...next	1
ii.	conclusive	in the first place...to conclude with	2
(7)	here and now: (I)		47
i.	past	up to now	1
ii.	present	at this point	2
iii.	future	from now on	3
(8)	summary: (I)		48
i.	summarizing	to sum up	1
ii.	resumptive	to resume	2
5.	Other ('continuative')	now, of course, well, anyway, surely, after all	5

6. Intonation	6
(1) tone	61
(2) tonicity	62

## LEXICAL

1. Same item	L 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



## Appendix F: Cohesion Analysis of Student Sample Writing

Variable Codes	Cohesive Ties
R1	Pronominal
R2	Demonstratives
R3	Comparatives
C1	Additive
C2	Adversative
C3	Causal
C4	Temporal

The first important cause of recent rise in the rates of divorce is that women have changed roles completely. In the past, men earned the money to support families financially, while (C2) women only worked in the home and looked after the children and the family, so (C3) women had no money and had to depend on their husband's money. It was too difficult for most women in the past to separate from their (R1: most women) husbands. These (R2) situations have entirely changed today. The equality between men and women in roles are very clear, thus (C3) women can work outside to earn money, whereas (C2) men are responsible for some household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing and taking caring of children. It can be clearly seen that women are independent from husbands as (C3) they (R1: women) can earn money by to support themselves (R1: women). Accordingly (C3), the divorce rates have risen.

Appendix G

Survey of the Students' Background Information

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly. Your answers will be used for a research study to improve the teaching and learning of English writing in the English for Careers Program at the Language Institute, Thammasat University.

Where you are asked to choose ONE answer, please put your entire answer in BOLD.

1. Name:
2. Sex: (Choose ONE answer)

1. Male2. Female
3. Age:

1. 22 – 30 years2. 31 – 40 years3. 41 – 50 years4. 51 years or more
4. Educational background:
- High school diploma  
Institution:  
Year of completion:

Bachelor's degree in  
Institution:Major:  
Year of graduation:
5. How long have you learned English:

1. less than 12 years2. 12 – 24 years3. more than 24 years
6. Have you ever been to a country where you had to use English for communication? (Choose ONE answer.)

1. Yes2. No

If yes, please specify the country or countries you visited, the duration of your stay in the country or countries, and the reason(s) for your visit.

	Country or countries	Duration	Reason(s)
6.1			
6.2			
6.3			
6.4			
6.5			



7. When you studied English *in high school*, how often did you practice writing English paragraphs or essays? (Choose ONE answer.)

1. Never                      2. Rarely                      3. Sometimes                      4. Often

8. When you studied English *in a university*, how often did you practice writing English paragraphs or essays? (Choose ONE answer.)

1. Never                      2. Rarely                      3. Sometimes                      4. Often

9. How do you like writing in English? (Choose ONE answer.)

1. Not at all                      2. Not very much                      3. Rather                      4. A lot

10. Since you have been a student in the English for Careers Program, have you learned English writing at another institute (e.g. a language school, a tutoring school, or another university) or with a tutor in addition to your study in this program at Thammasat University? (Choose ONE answer.)

1. Yes                      2. No

If yes, how many hours do you study each week? (Choose ONE answer.)

1. Not more than 2 hours  
2. More than 2 hours but not more than 4 hours  
3. More than 4 hours but not more than 6 hours  
4. More than 6 hours

11. Since you have been a student in the English for Careers Program, have you learned English writing autonomously through a lesson or lessons which are not part of the writing course you are taking at the Language Institute, Thammasat University?

1. Yes                      2. No

If yes, please respond to the following questions.

11.1 Please specify the self-learning writing lesson(s) that you have used.

11.2 How many hours a week do you spend studying English writing autonomously? (Choose ONE answer.)

1. Not more than 2 hours  
2. More than 2 hours but not more than 4 hours  
3. More than 4 hours but not more than 6 hours  
4. More than 6 hours

12. How do you think your writing teacher can help you improve your writing?  
Please be specific.



## Appendix H1: Sample Teacher Comments

Thailand had the main source of income from agricultural sector because most of Thai people had occupations in rural (inhabitant) After that the international trade, dealing with exchanging goods with many countries, has come and also made an important role in gaining money to trader. The traveling industry is a source attracting many foreigners come in and spent money in our country. But Thailand tends to have weak economy because of major problems.

This cohesive device is not effective

should not be used to

link these

you mentioned one source by already

should use a synonym ??

Should not begin a sentence.

three

You should specify the sub topic in the thesis statement.

First, farmers receive less income because their produces has reduced price. Climate has changes and too much produces flooded into markets. In 2-3 years, weather has much more rising temperature. Thai fruits and vegetables cannot adjust with the atmosphere and fully mature, so they can't be sold in good price. Additionally, there is too much amount of some fruits such as longan in markets. This is forcing farmers to sell in lower price.

What does "this" refer to ??

## Appendix H2: Sample Teacher Comments

Whose last job??

Your topic sentence should be related to the thesis.

^ Last job is current job as a technical sales representative in a trading company.

My main responsibility is to achieve sale target. My duties are presenting products to customers by showing advantages from using our products and finally try to get purchase order. I don't only sell products but also provide knowledge about products. I give any support that customers need including services. I set both training and seminar for better understanding for each customer to each product. I help them to solve problem in production as well. Beside, I contact with suppliers about purchase order, shipment, and technical side and also coordinate between suppliers and customers to fulfill customer's expectation.

How are these two sentences related?

Singular noun

him/her

Can you think of a cohesive device to join them?

My responsibility has been changed from changing job position. Each position ~~admitted~~ provides different duty. In conclusion, there are 3 responsibilities I've held which are working to decide to approve or reject products, making sure that products are in specification, and trying to get sale target.

This statement is very similar to the thesis.

You should rewrite your topic sentences so they are related to your thesis statement.



### Appendix H3: Sample Teacher Comments

You should restate your thesis here. Think about a repetition or synonym in your sentence.  
There are a lot of causes that inspire me to be a teacher. Therefore, I have been a teacher for a long time. Sometimes it makes me feel upset and discouraged. But profession of teaching is concerned with students' cultivation, all teachers will be delighted when they are successful in their lives. Pedagogical profession which many persons deny to be is beneficial in many ways.

How does this idea conclude your essay?

however,  
(You should not begin a sentence with "but.")

Your thesis statement and topic sentences are sometimes not well-connected.