

## TEACHERS' APPLICATION OF COHESION THEORY TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' WRITTEN DISCOURSE COMPETENCE

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### Article Info

#### Article History

Received: October 2025

Revised: January 2026

Accepted: March 2026

Published: April 2026

#### Keywords

Cohesion theory;

Discourse analysis;

Writing skills;

Instructional practices;

Discourse competences;

### Abstract

*This study investigated teachers' instructional practices of applying the theory of cohesion in teaching writing skills to develop grade 11 Ethiopian students' written discourse competence. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. The study employed a descriptive research design. Classroom observation was used to collect the data. The data was analyzed thematically based on the qualitative data analysis framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2021). The theme of the data was developed based on the elements of cohesion: conjunction, references, ellipsis, substitution, and lexical cohesion. The study revealed that the majority of teachers limited the students' exposure to conjunctions. Additionally, it was found that nearly all of the teachers rarely use strategies that could help students comprehend and employ cohesive devices in their writing. Instead, they avoided the communicative activities and concentrated on distinct sentence-level tasks. Hence, it is essential that the teachers expose the students to cohesive devices fully. The teachers should also employ different techniques that facilitate the students' ability to employ cohesion in their writing. Textbook writers should also expose the students to different types of cohesive devices. They should also employ various activities that enhance the students' ability to use cohesive devices in their writing.*

**How to cite:** Burayou, Z., & Disasa, R. (2026). Teachers' Application of Cohesion Theory to Develop Students' Written Discourse Competence. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 14(2), 570-581. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v14i2.18231>

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing a comprehensible text requires multifaceted knowledge. It is more than constructing grammatically correct sentences. To produce a meaningful written or spoken text, language learners need knowledge of discourse competence (DC), which refers to the ability to combine linguistic elements and language structure to produce a coherent and cohesive written or spoken language (Salian, 2021). Specifically, it is selecting and sequencing words, phrases, clauses, and sentences to produce a coherent and cohesive text, which is appropriate to a certain communicative context. DC is essential for the development of students' receptive and productive language skills. Students with excellent DC better understand and produce text (Matiso & Tyantsi, 2023). DC is an integral component of communicative competence (Abdijalilovna, 2019). It has some subcomponents, of which cohesion and coherence are the most important. These elements of DC foster language learners' ability to produce a coherent text. Sun (2020) affirms that cohesion and coherence are the two determinant qualities of a text. These terms are related, but they are not the same. Cohesion refers to the connection of a word, phrase, or sentence to the other. It is a surface link created with cohesive devices. Unlike cohesion, coherence is the internal connectedness of ideas in a text (Waller, 2015). That is, coherence deals with hanging one idea on the other.

In fact, cohesion has been the subject of extensive research. Latifah and Triyono (2020), for example, looked at CDs in authentic texts. The outcome showed that authentic writings just frequently use cohesive devices. Others looked at how teaching CDs affects students' written discourse, and their writing performance improved as a result (Gorjian & Alipoor, 2015). Meseret (2017) and Kebede, Mezegebu, and Getnet (2023) conducted quasi-experimental studies in Ethiopia, which revealed that the treatment had a positive impact on the students' writing and reading abilities, respectively. Likewise, Masadeh (2019) looked at how the students used CDs in their writing. The findings demonstrated how poorly the students used CDs in their written texts. Ethiopian students also showed an inability to employ cohesion properly in their writing (Abebayehu, 2020; Ermias & Sree, 2019).

Obviously, writing cohesively and coherently requires generating ideas and linking one idea to the other. Cohesion is one of the elements that help to form links among the constituents of a text. However, foreign language learners lack the skill of using cohesion properly in writing. One of the causes of the problems may be insufficient training the students received. Hence, it is essential that English language teachers train the students in the use of various cohesive devices in their writing. The teachers can use various activities that enhance the students' ability to use cohesive devices properly in their composition (Othman, 2019). Zaheer and Sharma (2024) suggest that integrating cohesion into writing instruction promotes students' use of cohesive devices in their writing. They can identify and develop sensitivity to using cohesive devices in their writing (Ying, 2021). To assist students in writing cohesively, EFL/ESL teachers are supposed to introduce students to different types of cohesive devices. Chen (2019) also suggested that English teachers should give attention to their students' proficiency with cohesive devices and text production.

However, the teachers' practice of teaching cohesion was not well studied. Despite cohesion being a well-studied area, only a few scholars (Ais, 2023; Vivekmetakorn & Kaewbangpood, 2014) examined teachers' practices of employing cohesive devices in teaching writing so as to help students become more proficient in written discourse. Ais (2023) employed interviews to learn about teachers' experiences of teaching cohesiveness through essay writing. This finding relied only on the participants' self-reports. Vivekmetakorn and Kaewbangpood (2014) conducted a relevant study. They examined teachers' practice through classroom observation. The result revealed that during writing lessons, teachers helped students develop grammatical and lexical cohesion. These researchers did not examine the strategies teachers employ in presenting cohesion to the students. Additionally, the literature review showed that scant knowledge is now available about how teachers apply the theory of cohesion to help students become more proficient writers. Therefore, this study would add information to the existing scant literature.

Furthermore, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there were no studies that examined the teachers' practices of integrating cohesion in writing instruction in the context of this study, Ethiopian. Therefore, this study provides essential information for teachers, textbook writers, and researchers. Secondary school teachers could be the primary beneficiary of this study. The study could encourage the teachers to integrate cohesion in writing. This study could also inform textbook writers to put emphasis on the treatment of cohesion in the four language skills. Teacher educators could also benefit from this study. They could use the result of this study as input to train their trainee teachers how to create a coherent text. Furthermore, this study could also provide some initial points for other researchers.

Hence, this study sets the following research question to describe the teachers' practices of addressing cohesion in writing lessons to promote the students' ability to write coherently. What is the teachers' practice of integrating different types of cohesion in writing lessons?;

and How much do the teachers employ different techniques that promote the students' ability to use cohesion in their written composition?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive research design, which enables researchers to describe the actual phenomenon as it was happening. In line with this point, Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state that descriptive research design enables researchers to describe and portray behaviours as they naturally occur. Accordingly, this study also described the cohesive devices the teachers presented to the students. Additionally, it portrayed the strategies the teachers implemented in teaching cohesion to enhance the students' use of cohesive devices in their writing. For this reason, a descriptive research design was utilized.

### **Research Participants**

The participants of this study were grade 11 English language teachers found in Nekemte town. The schools were selected purposively. The purposive random sampling technique was used to choose three public schools. This sampling technique helps to select research participants when there are information-rich cases. Palinkas et al. (2015) explain that purposeful random sampling is used in qualitative sampling to select research participants from a purposefully defined stratum or pool of eligible participants. Gray (2017) also explains that purposeful random sampling is used to select the research participants when there are large pools of cases that are equally information-rich. Similarly, there were many public secondary schools in the town that could provide rich information about the phenomenon under investigation. Hence, this sampling technique was employed to select the schools. The teachers in each secondary school were chosen via criterion sampling. The teachers' experience and level of education were used as criteria to select the teachers. Hence, experienced teachers who had an M.A. in TEFL participated in the study.

### **Research Instruments and Data Collection**

The data was gathered via classroom observation, which has the potential to generate firsthand and thick information. Many researchers used reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion as a framework in conducting studies related to cohesion (Chanyoo, 2018; Ahmad, 2019). In this study, the classroom observation was conducted based on the elements of cohesion, namely conjunction, reference, ellipsis, substitution, and lexical cohesion. These were used as a framework to observe the types of cohesive devices the teachers introduced to the students. Some researchers introduced different techniques of teaching cohesion, such as discourse analysis, feedback, and modeling (Alfalagg, 2020; Fayzullaevna, 2021; Yin, 2017). Hence, the extent to which the teachers employ these strategies was used as a guide for describing the teachers' practices of introducing cohesion to the students.

### **Data Analysis**

The actual teaching-learning practices were recorded and transcribed according to the principles of intelligent transcription. This technique was employed because it enhances the readability of the transcribed data. Consequently, some words were added, while the others that do not affect the meaning and the contents were omitted (Rincon, 2018). Braun and Clarke's (2021) qualitative data analysis framework was employed. The data was coded and categorized thematically, grounded on the components of cohesion theory. For instance, he, she, they, etc., were coded as pronouns. "This," "that," "these," and "those" were coded as demonstratives. These codes were categorized under the sub-theme of cohesion, which is reference. In short, the coding and thematic categorizations were done deductively based on the classification of cohesion elements: reference, conjunction, substitution, ellipsis, and

lexical cohesion. The teachers' techniques for addressing cohesion were also thematically categorized according to the strategies they used to teach cohesive devices, namely discourse analysis, providing feedback, modeling, and offering opportunities for practice.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The following section presents the teachers' practices of exposing students to cohesion. The section also introduces the teachers' use of different techniques in addressing cohesion in writing lessons. The analysis of data from classroom observation unveiled two major findings. Firstly, almost all of the teachers introduced only conjunctions. They did not address the other types of cohesive devices, such as references, ellipsis, substitution, and lexical cohesion. Secondly, the teachers hardly employed various instructional techniques, like discourse analysis, the use of authentic texts, and providing feedback, to foster the students' ability to use cohesion in their writing. These findings are presented as follows.

### Teachers' Practices for Exposing Students to Cohesion

Table 1

Types of Cohesion Introduced to the Students

Teacher	Types of Cohesion Introduced
Teacher 1	conjunction
Teacher 2	conjunction
Teacher 3	conjunction
Teacher 4	conjunction
Teacher 5	nothing

Table 1 shows the types of cohesion the teachers introduced to the students. Accordingly, it was observed that teacher one (T1) was addressing sequencing words and expressions, which are subtypes of conjunction. In the case of teacher two (T2), the observation was conducted while he was also presenting sequencing words and expressions. Likewise, teacher three (T3) was observed while he was introducing discourse markers. The fourth teacher (T4) was observed while he was teaching essay writing. The teacher attempted to integrate conjunctions into the writing lesson. Teacher five (T5) was also observed while he was presenting essay writing. In this observation, it was noted that the teacher did not integrate any type of cohesion in teaching writing. Therefore, it was possible to note that, except for conjunctions, the teachers did not expose the students to other types of cohesion.

### Teachers' Practices of Presenting Cohesion

Table 2

Teachers' Techniques of Presenting Cohesion

Technique	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
employed discourse analysis	✓	X	X	X	X
Presented cohesion in context	✓	X	X	X	X
Encouraged practicing using cohesion in classroom	✓	X	X	✓	X
Modelled using cohesion	✓	X	X	✓	X
Provided feedback on the students use of cohesion	X	X	X	X	X
Explicitly teach cohesion	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Compared coherent vs incoherent texts	X	X	X	X	X
Highlighted the use cohesion in genre	✓	X	X	X	X

✓ - implemented    X - not implemented

Table 2 indicates that T1 employed different techniques in teaching cohesion. The following extracts depict the teacher's techniques of presenting sequencing words and

expressions in a writing lesson. Firstly, the teacher raised the students' awareness via questions before proceeding to the detailed part of the lesson. Hence, the students were able to list some of the expressions.

*T: what are sequencing words or expressions.*

*S: ... (inaudible)*

*T: speak it loudly.*

*S: First, second, third.*

*T: Good. Another! What are sequencing? Sequencing words help us understand the order of events that are happening in narrative texts. Sequencing are words that..... (inaudible). Sequencers are words that help us order of events. Sequencing words tell us things like what happened first, next, third, finally. Again it refers to the order in which events happen.*

The teacher also tried to contextualize the presentation of the lesson by relating it to the students' experience. That is, the teacher asked the students to mention what they did in sequence before they went to school. Together, the teacher and the students mentioned some of the activities, as shown in the extract below.

*T: Say what you did today just starting from morning. What did you do?*

*S: ... (inaudible)*

*T: what? First, you woke up, then. Second, just say something, please. You woke up from the bed, then what did you do?*

*S: ... Inaudible*

*T: went to toilet. Thirdly,*

*S: ... (Inaudible).*

*T: washed your face. Fourth*

*S: ... (inaudible).*

*T: ate breakfast. Next... beginning*

Next, the teacher wrote a short paragraph, which survives as a model by joining the lists. Here is how the paragraph begins. "First of all I woke up, and then I went to toilet. After that I washed.... Finally I want to school". Then the teacher underlined the sequencing words and expressions used in the text. This helps to bring the use of cohesive devices in writing to the students' attention. Next, the teacher asked the students to state what the underlined words are. The students answered correctly. They replied that the underlined ones are sequencing words and expressions.

Further, the teacher loudly read a short text entitled 'Miten and me visited Rome last summer'. The text begins like this: First of all we flew from New York to Rome in first class. It was fantastic. As soon as..... Then, he asked them to mention the sequencing words and expressions found in the text. The extract below shows that the students were able to mention almost all of the sequencing words found in the text.

*T: That is, yes? Did you write? Let me see you, ok. Yes, try to tell please?*

*T: Number one?*

*S: First of all*

*T: Second*

*S: as soon as,*

*T: wait; let the others try*

*T: yes,*

*S: next, immediately, and then*

*T: thank you very much, Six*

*S: suddenly,*

*T: suddenly, yes please! Seven*

*S: Next*

*T: next, good, you didn't miss! Last one*

*S: during. Yes, while, and the last one, what is the last one?*

*S: Finally.*

*T: Finally. Good. Thank you. Do the rest please in the same way as the example given. You are going to write a short story.*

The data shows that T1 employed different techniques that foster the students' understanding of the functions of sequencing words. It also depicts some limitations. For instance, the lesson was finished without more practice in the classroom. There were more than sixty students in the classroom. However, only a few of them tried to write a story using sequencing words. The teacher also did not provide any feedback on the students' written work. Finally, the majority of the students did not participate in the story-writing activity in the classroom. Nevertheless, the teacher gave a story-writing task as homework. This kind of writing activity deprives the students of the chance to get feedback. The data also reveals that, except for conjunctions, the teacher did not expose the students to other cohesive devices such as reference, ellipsis, and lexical devices.

On the other hand, table 2 reveals that T2 did not employ different techniques that foster the students' learning of cohesion. The classroom observation was conducted while the teacher was introducing sequencing words and expressions. Explicit teaching was the only strategy that the teacher used. The teacher introduced the lesson as follows.

*T: What is sequencing mean? Who can try to give the meaning of sequencing?*

*S: ... [Silence]*

*T: Sequencing means one follows after the other. This is the meaning. Linking words and expressions are used to join different parts of sentences. ... Some sequencing words are the following: previously, at the time, next, as soon as, later on, immediately, after that, while, next, before, same, when, finally, at first, first. It continues.*

The above quote shows that the students failed to explain what sequencing words are. The extract also reveals that the teacher did not make different attempts to help the students give definitions of sequencing words and expressions. For example, he did not provide examples to show the functions of sequencing words and expressions. The teacher himself defined what sequencing words are. Next, he listed down some examples of sequencing words. In doing so, the teacher never engaged the students in discourse analysis activity to show them cohesive devices appear in authentic texts. Furthermore, the teacher neither made a sentence himself nor asked the students to do so with the cohesive devices he listed. This data indicates that the teacher did not employ in the introduction different techniques that facilitate the students' further learning. Following the introduction, the teacher moved on to a sentence-joining exercise as follows:

*T: I will give you some example concerning this one.*

*I had my breakfast. I left the house.*

*Look at the sentences. Look at the example. You can use sequencing words. ... [inaudible]. You can write this sentence in this way depending on the time using sequencing words. This is representing prior.*

*Prior to leaving the house, I had my breakfast.*

*... [Inaudible]. What Sequencing word. Prior is a sequencing word.*

*I had my breakfast and after that I left the house.*

*First I had my breakfast; then i left the house. This is sequencing word.*

The above extract reveals that the teacher explained the use of sequencing words to join a pair of sentences. The teacher also joined some pairs of sentences with sequencing expressions. Eventually, the teacher introduced the sentences below and joined them with a

sequencer. Later, the teacher asked the students to join the same sentences using another sequencing expression.

*I have something to eat. I get home.*

*As soon as I will get home, I will have something to eat.*

*T: Now rewrite this one by using ... rewrite. Karaa biraatiin barreessaamee. [write in another way]. We can write. Karaa biraatin barreessuu dandeenya sikuweensiingi gargaaramne. [We can rewrite in another way using sequencing words]. How we can write? Kitaaba keessan irra jiraa banaamee. Kitaaba keessan keessa jira gaaffichi. Kitaaba keessan irraa qophaa'e iddoo biraatti fayyuma hin deeminaa. [The question is from your textbook. Open your textbook at]. Who try revise the sentence in another word using sequencing words. Try. Try. Mee yaalamee. Try. Student try. Lama lama ta'aatii [try in pair]. Try. Rewrite the sentence. Jijjiruu dandeenyaam. [We can change]. You can change the tenses, you can change the time, you can change the sequencing words,*

*S: ... [Silence].*

*T: First I will get home and then I will have eat something.*

*This sentence has different meaning or the same? Ilaalame. [Look at it]. This sentence has different meaning or the same?*

*As soon as I will get home, I will have eat something.*

*First I will get home and then I will have eat something.*

*These two sentences have the same meaning.*

However, the students were unable to connect the sentences. They were all silent. The teacher told the students to try in pairs. Nevertheless, no one took the initiative to join the sentences. As a result, the teacher joined the sentences himself. The extract shows that the teacher asked the questions and answered them. The students' lack of joining the sentences with the sequencers reveals that they did not grasp the lesson.

Table 2 and the extracts above show that T2 did not implement different techniques to foster students' use of cohesion in their written language. For instance, the teacher did not employ the discourse analysis activity incorporated in the students' textbook listening section, which asks students to identify sequencing words and expressions in the listening text. Instead, T2 simply provided a definition of sequencing words and expressions. This definition was not well explained and supported by examples or authentic texts. Moreover, the teacher focused mainly on joining discrete sentences. Many students were unable to join a pair of sentences using sequencers even by the end of the lesson. In spite of these difficulties, the lesson was finished. However, the objective of the lesson was to equip students with the ability to use sequencing words and expressions to create coherent spoken and written stories. These targeted activities were left aside. Furthermore, T2 did not introduce other types of cohesive devices that help to produce a coherent spoken or written discourse.

When the observation was conducted, T3 was addressing 'discourse markers'. As table 2 reveals, the teacher did not use different strategies for teaching discourse markers. The teacher implemented only explicit teaching. The detail was presented below.

Firstly, the teacher gave a short note to the students on discourse markers. Then, he explained the lesson. The extract below shows the explanation given by the teacher.

*Discourse markers (DMs) are the words which connect two sentences or two texts or two ideas. Listen me carefully. Give me your attention. Do not write. Listen me. DMs are words that mean it is one of the parts of speech in English which we used to connect two idea or two texts or two sentences what I mean. DMs are the words which are connect two idea or two sentences or two texts. That means we can use as conjunction. DM means we can take as conjunctions as but, so that, although. These are connectors or discourse markers.*

The above extract demonstrates the teacher's attempts at defining what discourse markers are. He tried to clarify the definition. He also provided some examples of discourse markers. In providing the definition, however, the teacher did not offer examples to show how discourse markers are used to join ideas or sentences together. The teacher also did not use authentic texts, which better show the use of discourse markers to join sentences. The definition and illustration given were not clear in enhancing the students' understanding of linking words.

Next, the teacher attempted to discuss the functions of discourse markers. He introduced each function of discourse markers turn by turn. The quote below shows the way the teacher addressed one of the functions of discourse markers, adding information. Adding information - this means, if there is something before, when we add other idea we should take DMs furthermore, moreover. There is some idea before. When we add or when we need to add other information we should take DMs which are furthermore, moreover and in addition. In addition means when we add something on the before we put means. Is it clear?

However, the teacher did not involve the students in such activities when delivering this lesson. In other words, he did not engage the students in activities that could improve their use of discourse markers in writing. Additionally, it was noted that the teacher rarely provided the students with opportunities to practice the use of discourse markers in communication. To put it briefly, the instructor concluded the class without implementing different techniques and giving the students an opportunity to exercise employing discourse markers in written text.

Table 2 discloses that T4 attempted to integrate cohesion in the writing lesson. However, he rarely implemented different techniques that support the students' use of cohesion in their writing. The observation was conducted while the teacher was addressing essay writing. The teacher discussed the essay and how to write a coherent one. Then, the teacher required the students to write an essay about COVID-19 in the classroom. The teacher encouraged the students to use cohesive devices in their essay. First, as the excerpt makes clear, he told the students to utilize cohesion in their essays while they were writing: "So use discourse markers during your writing." Some of the students tried writing the essay. Later, the teacher wrote a short essay on the blackboard to show the students the structure of an essay and their functions. While he was discussing the structure of an essay, he also underlined the cohesive devices "however" and "first" found in the essay.

The input that T4 provided was not enough to boost the students' use of cohesive devices in their writing. Firstly, he told the students to use discourse markers in their essays. The teacher did not provide any feedback on the students' use of discourse markers in their writing. He neither encouraged the students nor asked them to analyze their partners' use of discourse markers in their writing. Similarly, except for underlining the cohesive devices found in the text he composed, the teacher did not provide any information about discourse markers. For instance, the teacher did not ask the students to identify the discourse markers and their functions in the text he wrote. In addition, he did not provide any illustration regarding the functions of the discourse markers found in the text he wrote. This implies that the teacher did not employ different strategies that enhance the students' ability to use various cohesive devices in their texts.

The teacher defined an essay. Then, he explained the structure of the essay. Below is an extract of the explanation.

*Let's see general structure of an essay:*

*The first one is introductory paragraph. Introductory paragraph ....*

*The second structure of an essay is supporting paragraphs or....*

*The last structure of an essay is concluding paragraph....*

After the teacher explained the structure of an essay, he continued discussing the steps of process writing. Finally, he told the students to write their essays at home, following the steps of process writing. Concerning cohesion, there was no information integrated into the writing lesson. Finally, the teacher gave the writing task as homework. This data reveals that the teacher never incorporated the theory of cohesion in a writing lesson.

## **Discussion**

The result of the study revealed that most of the teachers' instructional practices were not in line with suggested techniques of teaching cohesion. For instance, (Fayzullaevna, 2021) proposed teaching cohesion through discourse analysis. However, nearly all of the teachers did not use this technique. The teachers simply introduced CDs in discreet sentences. However, this is in contrast with Fayzullaevna (2021), who highlights that the aim of teaching and learning English would be realized when language is taught in discourse. Similarly, teaching CDs explicitly plays vital roles when it is followed by multiple activities (Manan & Raslee, 2018). However, such exhaustive activities were not employed. Instead, the teachers presented CDs in short, sentence-level examples and proceeded to other lessons without any evidence that the students could use CDs properly in writing.

Additionally, the teachers hardly ever contextualize their CDs presentations. Yin (2017) notes, however, that context helps students learn CDs more effectively. According to Yin, students who are exposed to CDs in all four languages have a better understanding of how to utilize them. Conversely, the teachers used a decontextualized approach while teaching CDs. Students were never given the opportunity to practice writing with cohesive devices. Furthermore, they provide homework for communicative exercises that call for students to compose various texts utilizing suitable cohesive devices. This suggests that they never provide comments on how well the students employ coherent devices in their writing. However, Alfalagg (2020) emphasizes that teachers should provide students precise feedback rather than general ones and carefully review their compositions regarding their usage of CDs. The ability of students to employ CDs in writing may therefore be impacted by such mistreatment of CDs in EFL/ESL classrooms.

Students should be taught that some CDs are typical of a certain genre (Yin, 2017). But the results also showed that this topic was never included in the writing classes by the teachers. Furthermore, it is crucial to expose pupils to a variety of CDs (Vivekmetakorn & Kaewbangpood, 2014; Yin, 2017). Conversely, the teachers prioritized conjunctions over other CDs. This result is similar to that of Ais's (2023) finding. Additionally, Yin (2017) emphasizes the significance of instructing students on the structure, function, and placement of cohesive devices. However, it was not observed when the teachers tried to address difficulties like the structure and placement of linking words in sentences or texts, other than providing some highlights regarding their purposes. In general, lack of appropriate treatment of CDs may make it more difficult for students to use CDs effectively in order to produce written texts that make sense.

This study had limitations. Firstly, the data was gathered from a small sample size. The frequency of observation was also low. Therefore, future researchers could conduct further studies on this topic by fixing the weaknesses. The study also contributes to the existing scant literature on cohesion in English language education. It disclosed the problems of teaching cohesion in writing. This study could also remind the teachers to reexamine their practices of teaching cohesion in writing instruction. Textbook writers also use the findings of this study as input in integrating cohesion in writing skills. The findings of this study also provide important information to teacher trainers in addressing cohesion in writing courses.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the teachers' practices of applying the theory of cohesion to develop students' written discourse competence. Hence, the following conclusions were drawn. Firstly, the teachers' lack of exposing students to different types of CDs could affect the students' use of various cohesive devices in their writing. Secondly, the teachers' instructional practices were not effective in enhancing the students' ability to use cohesive devices in writing. Almost all of the teachers were not implementing different techniques that could facilitate the students' ability to use CDs in their composition. Furthermore, the teachers never integrated CDs when they presented different types of writing genres. In other words, they did not inculcate CDs while they were addressing different types of written genres. Therefore, it could impact the students' use of CDs appropriate to a particular genre. The teachers were also not engaging the students in writing tasks in the classroom; they relegated such activities as homework. They also never provide any feedback regarding the students' use of CDs in their writing. Generally, the teachers' instructional practices could not equip the students with important skills and knowledge to employ CDs in their composition.

Hence, teachers should teach cohesion in context instead of at the discrete sentence level. For instance, teachers should provide students with paragraphs or essays, and then they should discuss the cohesive devices used in the text with the students. Teachers should not reduce writing activities to homework. This activity never provides opportunity for the students to get assistance from their teachers or peers. Hence, teachers should let their students practice writing in the classroom using cohesive devices properly. The teachers should also continually guide their students until the students can use cohesive devices properly in their written work. Asking students to use cohesion in their writing is not a guarantee. They should get feedback on their use of cohesion in their writing. Therefore, the teachers should give feedback to the students on their use of cohesion in their writing. Teachers should introduce different types of cohesive devices, including lexical cohesion, ellipsis, references, conjunctions, and substitutions to the students. Teachers should show their students how these cohesive devices create a coherent written text. They should also supervise the students' use of various types of cohesive devices in their writing.

## **FUNDING**

This study received no external financial support. All stages of the research, including design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were completed using the authors' personal resources and institutional facilities available at no additional cost. The study was conducted efficiently through careful planning and a cost-effective approach throughout successfully.

## **INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT**

Participation in this study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection began. Participants were clearly informed about the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, benefits, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Consent indicated agreement to participate under these conditions.

## **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

The data supporting this study are not publicly available because they contain information that could compromise participant privacy and confidentiality. Access may be granted upon reasonable request to the corresponding author subject to case-by-case review and prior approval from the institutional ethics committee ensuring compliance with ethical and consent requirements.

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