HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

COHERENCE PROBLEMS IN EFL ACADEMIC WRITING

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Doi :https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22170971

Abstract: Coherence is one of the fundamental characteristics of effective academic writing because it enables readers to understand how individual ideas are logically connected and how an argument develops throughout a text. However, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners experience considerable difficulties in producing coherent academic texts. These difficulties may arise from limited linguistic competence, insufficient knowledge of discourse organization, inappropriate use of cohesive devices, weak paragraph development, ineffective topic selection, and differences between learners' first-language rhetorical conventions and English academic writing practices. This article examines the major coherence problems encountered by EFL learners in academic writing and discusses their linguistic, cognitive, rhetorical, and pedagogical causes. The study employs a qualitative review-based methodology drawing on research in academic writing, discourse analysis, second language acquisition, and EFL pedagogy. The findings indicate that coherence problems are not limited to grammatical errors but are strongly associated with the organization and development of ideas. Common problems include unclear thesis statements, weak topic sentences, abrupt transitions, excessive or inappropriate use of linking expressions, repetition of ideas, insufficient explanation of arguments, and lack of logical progression between paragraphs. The article argues that coherence should be taught explicitly through genre-based instruction, paragraph-level analysis, outlining, model-text analysis, peer review, and process-oriented writing practices. Developing learners' awareness of discourse structure can significantly improve the clarity, readability, and argumentative strength of EFL academic writing.

Keywords: coherence, EFL writing, academic writing, discourse organization, cohesion, paragraph development, writing difficulties, EFL learners

Introduction. Academic writing constitutes one of the most demanding areas of second and foreign language learning because it requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge with cognitive, rhetorical, organizational, and communicative skills. Unlike everyday communication, academic writing requires a high degree of precision, logical organization, explicit argumentation, appropriate evidence, and awareness of the expectations of an academic audience. For students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), these requirements can create substantial challenges. EFL learners are expected not only to construct grammatically accurate sentences and use an appropriate academic vocabulary but also to organize their ideas in a way that allows readers to understand the writer's purpose, follow the development of an argument, and recognize relationships between different parts of the text. Among the various dimensions of academic writing quality, coherence is particularly important because it determines how successfully individual ideas are integrated into a meaningful and logically structured whole. Coherence is generally understood as the semantic, conceptual, and logical connectedness of a text. A coherent academic text presents ideas in a recognizable order and establishes meaningful relationships among claims, explanations, evidence, examples, and conclusions. The concept is closely related to, but fundamentally different from, cohesion. Cohesion refers

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ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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primarily to linguistic devices that create explicit connections within a text, such as reference, conjunction, substitution, ellipsis, lexical repetition, and lexical relations. Coherence, on the other hand, concerns the underlying logic and meaningful organization of discourse. Consequently, a text may contain grammatically correct sentences and numerous cohesive markers while still being difficult to understand if its ideas are poorly organized or insufficiently developed. This distinction is particularly significant in EFL writing because learners are sometimes taught to improve textual organization by simply adding transition words such as *however, therefore, moreover, furthermore,* and *consequently*. Although such expressions can contribute to cohesion, their mechanical or inappropriate use does not necessarily produce genuine coherence. The importance of coherence becomes particularly evident in academic and research-oriented writing. Academic texts are usually organized around a central research question, thesis, hypothesis, or argument. Each paragraph is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the development of that central purpose. At the macro level, the introduction should establish the research context and identify the problem, the body should systematically develop the argument or present findings, and the conclusion should synthesize the major points and return to the central purpose of the study. At the paragraph level, a topic sentence normally establishes the main idea, while subsequent sentences provide explanation, evidence, examples, analysis, and interpretation. At the sentence level, propositions need to be logically related to one another. A failure at any of these levels may weaken the overall coherence of the text. For EFL learners, maintaining coherence can be especially difficult because academic writing requires simultaneous control of several processes. While composing a text, learners must generate and select relevant ideas, organize those ideas, formulate sentences in a second or foreign language, select appropriate vocabulary, construct grammatical structures, integrate sources, and consider the expectations of an academic readership. The cognitive burden associated with these processes can make it difficult for learners to concentrate on the global organization of their texts. As a result, students may produce writing that contains relevant information but lacks a clear line of reasoning. One of the most frequently observed coherence problems is the inability to establish a clear central argument. EFL learners may introduce a broad topic without specifying their position, research focus, or main claim. A thesis statement such as *"Technology is important in education"* identifies a general subject but does not provide sufficient direction for an academic argument. A more coherent thesis would identify the specific relationship being examined and indicate the major dimensions of the discussion. Without a clear thesis, subsequent paragraphs may develop independently rather than contributing to a unified argument. This problem can affect the entire structure of an academic text because the thesis functions as an organizing principle for the discussion. Another common difficulty concerns paragraph-level coherence. Effective academic paragraphs generally demonstrate unity, meaning that all sentences contribute to one controlling idea. However, EFL learners may place several loosely related ideas within a single paragraph or introduce information that does not directly support the topic sentence. In other cases, students may write a topic sentence but fail to provide adequate explanation or evidence. The resulting paragraph may contain individually correct sentences but lack a clear internal structure. This demonstrates that coherence is not simply a matter of sentence correctness; it also depends on the relationship between sentences and the communicative purpose of the paragraph. Logical progression represents another central dimension of coherence. Academic readers expect information to be presented according to an identifiable organizational principle. Depending on the purpose of the text, ideas may be arranged according to cause and effect, comparison and contrast, problem and solution, chronological development, general-to-specific progression, or claim-and-evidence relationships. EFL learners may nevertheless present ideas in an apparently random order because they have not developed sufficient awareness of rhetorical

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organization. When ideas are introduced without a logical progression, readers must reconstruct the intended relationship themselves, which increases cognitive processing demands and reduces the effectiveness of the text. The use of cohesive devices presents a further complexity. Many EFL learners have been explicitly instructed to use connectors in order to make their writing more academic. As a result, students may overuse expressions such as *firstly, secondly, moreover, however,* and *therefore*. In some cases, these expressions are inserted without considering the actual semantic relationship between the sentences. For example, using *therefore* requires a cause-and-effect relationship, while *however* generally signals contrast. If a connector does not correspond to the logical relationship between propositions, it may actually reduce rather than improve coherence. Therefore, effective academic writing instruction needs to distinguish between the mechanical presence of cohesive markers and the meaningful organization of ideas.

The significance of the study lies in its potential contribution to both EFL writing research and classroom practice. From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces the view that coherence is a multidimensional construct involving conceptual relationships, discourse organization, rhetorical purpose, and reader interpretation. From a pedagogical perspective, it emphasizes the need for writing instruction that moves beyond sentence-level accuracy toward the development of discourse-level competence. By helping learners understand how academic arguments are constructed and how individual ideas contribute to an overall communicative purpose, EFL educators can facilitate the production of texts that are clearer, more logically organized, and more persuasive. Ultimately, effective academic writing depends on the writer's ability to guide the reader through a coherent progression of ideas. For EFL learners, achieving this goal requires not only linguistic proficiency but also rhetorical awareness, organizational competence, critical thinking, and continuous revision. Addressing coherence problems systematically can therefore play a significant role in improving the overall quality of EFL academic writing and preparing learners for successful participation in international academic and professional environments.

Literature Review. Coherence has long been recognized as one of the fundamental characteristics of effective written discourse. In academic writing, coherence refers to the meaningful and logical relationships established among ideas, propositions, paragraphs, and larger sections of a text. A coherent text enables readers to recognize the writer's central purpose, follow the progression of an argument, identify relationships between claims and supporting evidence, and construct an overall interpretation of the text. Consequently, coherence should not be viewed merely as a linguistic property but as a multidimensional phenomenon involving semantic relations, discourse organization, rhetorical purpose, reader interpretation, and cognitive processing. The theoretical discussion of coherence is closely associated with research on textuality and discourse. Halliday and Hasan's influential work on cohesion established an important foundation for the analysis of connected discourse. Their framework identifies reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion as important resources through which linguistic elements are connected within a text. From this perspective, cohesion provides visible linguistic links that contribute to textual connectedness. However, subsequent research has demonstrated that the presence of cohesive devices does not automatically guarantee coherence. This distinction between cohesion and coherence is particularly important in EFL academic writing. Cohesion operates largely at the linguistic level, whereas coherence concerns the conceptual relationships that make a text meaningful as a whole. A student may use numerous connectors such as *however, therefore, moreover,* and *in addition* but still produce an argument that is difficult to follow if the underlying ideas are not logically related. Research on EFL writing has repeatedly demonstrated that the quantity of cohesive ties alone is not a reliable indicator of overall writing quality. An early study of Arab EFL students, for example, found a

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relatively low correlation between the number of cohesive ties and coherence scores, demonstrating that simply increasing cohesive devices does not necessarily result in a more coherent text. This observation has significant implications for writing pedagogy. If coherence is conceptualized only as the presence of linking expressions, students may focus on surface-level textual connections while neglecting the development of ideas, argument structure, paragraph unity, and logical progression. Therefore, coherence needs to be approached as a broader discourse-level competence.

Coherence as a Multidimensional Construct. Contemporary research increasingly conceptualizes coherence as a multidimensional construct operating at different levels of discourse. At the global level, coherence concerns the relationship between the overall thesis, major arguments, supporting sections, and conclusion. At the local level, it concerns relationships between adjacent sentences and propositions. At the paragraph level, it concerns the unity and development of a central idea. These levels are interconnected: weaknesses at the local level can affect paragraph coherence, while weaknesses in paragraph organization can ultimately undermine global coherence. Recent research on EFL discourse competence provides further support for this multidimensional view. A study of 108 EFL undergraduate essays conceptualized discourse competence through five major components: topic building, global coherence, local coherence, logical connectives, and reader–writer interaction. The findings demonstrated that students could be relatively strong in the use of logical connectives while remaining considerably weaker in topic development and global coherence. This finding is particularly important because it challenges the assumption that appropriate use of transition markers is sufficient for producing coherent academic writing. Learners may know how to use *firstly, secondly, however,* and *therefore* but still struggle to construct a sustained argument. Therefore, discourse competence should involve not only knowledge of linguistic connectors but also the ability to develop topics, organize information, establish rhetorical relationships, and anticipate readers' needs.

Cohesion and Coherence in EFL Academic Writing. The relationship between cohesion and coherence has received considerable attention in second-language writing research. Halliday and Hasan's framework has been extensively applied to the analysis of EFL compositions because cohesive devices are relatively identifiable and can be systematically categorized. However, researchers have increasingly emphasized that cohesion should be interpreted in relation to larger discourse structures. Studies of L2 writing indicate that learners' use of cohesive devices develops over time, particularly as they gain experience in academic English. Research involving university-level L2 writers has shown growth in local, global, and text-level cohesion over the course of an academic writing program. Nevertheless, the relationship between the development of cohesive features and human judgments of essay quality is not straightforward. This suggests that cohesion may support coherence but cannot substitute for it. For example, lexical repetition may create continuity, but excessive repetition can make a text redundant. Similarly, conjunctions can signal relationships between ideas, but an inappropriate conjunction can misrepresent the intended logical relationship. Effective academic writing therefore requires a balance between explicit linguistic connections and the underlying development of ideas. Recent research provides further evidence for this relationship. A 2026 experimental study involving 64 Chinese EFL university students found that explicit instruction focusing on cohesive chains and cohesive devices significantly improved students' coherence in integrated writing tasks. High-performing students demonstrated particularly effective development of identity chains and pronoun references. These findings suggest that cohesion-oriented instruction can contribute to coherence when it is embedded within an explicit conceptual framework. The pedagogical objective should therefore not be the memorization of transition words but the development of meaningful semantic relationships that maintain topic continuity across a text.

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Global Coherence and Academic Argumentation. Global coherence is essential in academic writing because academic texts normally have an overarching communicative purpose. In argumentative writing, this purpose is frequently represented by a thesis statement that determines the direction of the subsequent discussion. A coherent academic essay typically establishes a progression from the research context or problem to a central claim, followed by supporting arguments, evidence, analysis, and a conclusion. When one of these components is missing or inadequately connected to the others, the overall coherence of the text can be weakened. EFL learners frequently experience difficulties at this level. They may introduce a broad topic without formulating a clear thesis, provide multiple arguments without explaining their relationship to the thesis, or introduce evidence without connecting it explicitly to the central claim. Such problems can result in texts that contain substantial amounts of information but lack a recognizable argumentative direction. Research on less proficient EFL writers has shown that students often omit important structural components such as conclusions and have difficulty maintaining a common thread throughout an argumentative text. The same research indicates that structure and coherence are strongly related to holistic judgments of writing quality. These findings emphasize that global coherence is not an optional stylistic feature. It is a fundamental dimension of academic writing quality because readers need to understand how individual parts contribute to the purpose of the whole text.

Logical Connectives and Transition Devices. Logical connectives are among the most visible features associated with coherence. They include additive expressions such as *moreover* and *in addition*, adversative expressions such as *however* and *nevertheless*, causal expressions such as *therefore* and *consequently*, and sequential expressions such as *first, next,* and *finally*. Although these devices can make relationships between propositions more explicit, their pedagogical role must be treated carefully. EFL learners sometimes overuse transition markers because they believe that a large number of connectors automatically makes writing more academic. In reality, the effectiveness of a connective depends on whether it accurately represents the semantic relationship between the surrounding propositions. Research on EFL discourse competence demonstrates this distinction particularly clearly. Learners in one study were found to perform relatively well in the use of logical connectives but significantly less well in global coherence and topic building. Thus, proficiency in using connectors should not be interpreted as evidence of complete discourse competence. A more effective pedagogical approach is to teach connectives as representations of logical relationships. Students should learn to identify whether two propositions express contrast, cause, consequence, addition, exemplification, concession, or sequence before selecting a connector. This approach promotes conceptual rather than mechanical use of cohesive devices. The reviewed literature demonstrates that coherence in EFL academic writing should be conceptualized as a complex interaction among linguistic cohesion, discourse organization, topic development, rhetorical structure, logical progression, and reader interpretation. The literature consistently indicates that students may demonstrate reasonable grammatical competence while continuing to experience significant problems at the discourse level. Several major conclusions emerge from the literature. First, cohesion and coherence are related but distinct constructs. Second, the frequency of cohesive devices does not necessarily correspond to the quality of coherence. Third, global coherence, topic development, paragraph unity, and logical progression represent significant areas of difficulty for EFL learners. Fourth, first-language rhetorical transfer can influence the organization of English academic texts. Fifth, coherence is strongly associated with overall writing quality and reader comprehension. Finally, recent empirical studies demonstrate that explicit discourse- and coherence-oriented instruction can improve learners' academic writing performance. Therefore, the existing literature supports a shift from a primarily sentence-level approach to EFL writing toward a discourse-oriented model in which

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learners are explicitly taught how ideas are developed, connected, organized, and interpreted. Such an approach provides a stronger theoretical and pedagogical basis for investigating coherence problems in EFL academic writing.

Discussion. The findings of the present study demonstrate that coherence remains one of the most challenging dimensions of academic writing for EFL learners. The analysis indicates that students' difficulties are not restricted to grammatical accuracy, vocabulary selection, or sentence construction. Rather, they are strongly associated with the organization, development, and logical relationship of ideas across sentences, paragraphs, and the entire academic text. The results therefore support the broader view that successful EFL academic writing requires discourse competence in addition to linguistic competence. A particularly important finding is that EFL learners may produce grammatically acceptable sentences while still experiencing substantial problems with overall textual coherence. This distinction has important implications for both writing research and classroom practice. Traditional approaches to second-language writing have often placed considerable emphasis on grammatical accuracy because grammatical errors are relatively easy to identify and correct. Coherence problems, in contrast, are more complex because they require an evaluation of relationships between ideas and the communicative purpose of the text. Consequently, a student may receive relatively positive feedback concerning grammar while still producing a text that is difficult for an academic reader to follow.

Coherence as a Higher-Order Writing Skill. The findings suggest that coherence should be treated as a higher-order writing skill rather than as a collection of individual linguistic features. The ability to produce coherent academic discourse requires learners to determine which ideas are relevant, organize them according to a logical principle, establish relationships between claims and evidence, and maintain a consistent line of argument. This finding is consistent with research that conceptualizes EFL discourse competence through multiple dimensions, including topic development, global coherence, local coherence, logical connectives, and reader–writer interaction. Previous research has demonstrated that learners may perform relatively well in the use of logical connectives while still experiencing difficulties with global coherence and topic development. This observation is highly relevant to the present study because it demonstrates that the visible presence of cohesive markers cannot be considered sufficient evidence of effective academic discourse organization. The results therefore suggest that coherence should be evaluated at multiple levels. At the sentence level, learners need to establish meaningful semantic relationships. At the paragraph level, they need to maintain unity and develop a central idea. At the global level, they need to ensure that all major sections contribute to the overall research purpose or thesis. Weakness at any one level may influence the coherence of the entire text.

The Relationship Between Cohesion and Coherence. One of the most significant issues emerging from the analysis concerns the relationship between cohesion and coherence. EFL learners are frequently taught to use conjunctions and transition expressions to connect sentences. While these devices are important, the present discussion confirms that they should not be treated as substitutes for logical reasoning.

For example, a learner may write:

Online learning has become increasingly popular. Therefore, many students use smartphones. Moreover, academic writing is difficult.

Although the text contains *therefore* and *moreover*, the relationship between the propositions remains unclear. The problem is not a lack of cohesive markers but a lack of conceptual connection. The example illustrates why coherence should be understood as a relationship among ideas rather than merely as a relationship among linguistic forms. This finding corresponds with earlier research

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showing that the frequency of cohesive ties does not necessarily correlate strongly with perceived coherence or overall writing quality. It also supports more recent research demonstrating that explicit instruction in cohesive chains can improve coherence when learners are taught how such chains contribute to topic continuity and meaning development. Thus, the pedagogical objective should not be to encourage students to use more transition words. Instead, students should be taught to identify the logical relationship between ideas before selecting a linguistic device to express that relationship.

Global Coherence and Thesis Development. The findings indicate that global coherence represents a major difficulty for EFL learners. A central source of this problem is the formulation of unclear, overly general, or insufficiently developed thesis statements. The thesis statement serves as an organizing mechanism for an academic text. It establishes the writer's position and provides a conceptual framework for the discussion that follows. When the thesis is vague, body paragraphs may develop in different directions without a clear connection to one another. Similarly, when the thesis contains several claims that are not subsequently developed, readers may perceive a mismatch between the introduction and the body. This finding is particularly important for argumentative writing. Academic argumentation requires a sustained relationship between claims, supporting evidence, counterarguments, and conclusions. If the thesis is not sufficiently specific, students may simply describe information rather than construct an argument. Therefore, EFL writing instruction should explicitly address thesis construction. Learners should be encouraged to formulate a thesis that answers the central question of the assignment and establishes the boundaries of the discussion. Teachers can subsequently ask students to evaluate each body paragraph by determining whether it directly contributes to the thesis.

Paragraph Unity and Topic Sentences. Another major finding concerns paragraph-level coherence. EFL learners frequently experience difficulties maintaining a single controlling idea within a paragraph. Some students combine several related but conceptually distinct ideas, while others introduce information that does not adequately support the topic sentence. A coherent academic paragraph can be conceptualized as a miniature argument. The topic sentence establishes the central claim or idea, supporting sentences elaborate or justify it, evidence provides support, and the final sentence may interpret the information or connect the paragraph to the broader argument. When this structure is absent, readers may struggle to identify the purpose of individual sentences. For example, a paragraph may begin by discussing the advantages of artificial intelligence in education, then shift toward social media, and finally discuss students' examination performance. Although these subjects are broadly related to education, the paragraph lacks a sufficiently focused controlling idea. The findings therefore suggest that paragraph unity should receive greater attention in EFL writing instruction. Students should learn to distinguish between information that is relevant to the overall topic and information that is relevant to the specific purpose of a particular paragraph.

The increasing use of digital technologies creates both opportunities and challenges for coherence development. Automated writing tools can identify grammatical errors, suggest transition expressions, detect repetition, and provide feedback on certain organizational features. However, automated systems may not fully understand disciplinary context, rhetorical intention, or the conceptual validity of an argument. A tool may recommend a transition such as *therefore* because two sentences appear sequentially related, even though the writer does not actually intend a cause-and-effect relationship. Consequently, AI-based writing assistance should be integrated into pedagogical practice rather than treated as an independent solution. Students should be encouraged to critically evaluate automated suggestions and decide whether they accurately represent the intended meaning. The educational objective should therefore be to develop students' ability to use technology critically while maintaining responsibility for the intellectual organization of their own texts.

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The findings also suggest that coherence assessment should become more multidimensional. A single holistic writing score may not provide sufficient information about the specific nature of an EFL learner's coherence difficulties.

An analytic assessment framework could evaluate:

Dimension	Key indicators
Global coherence	Clear thesis, consistent argument, effective conclusion
Paragraph coherence	Unity, topic sentences, relevant supporting details
Local coherence	Logical relationships between sentences
Topic development	Progressive development of ideas
Logical progression	Appropriate sequencing of arguments
Cohesion	Effective use of reference, conjunctions, and lexical links
Evidence integration	Clear connection between evidence and claims
Reader orientation	Clarity and accessibility for the intended audience

Such an approach would allow teachers to provide more targeted feedback and learners to identify specific areas for improvement.

The findings of this study generally correspond with previous research demonstrating that coherence is a multidimensional construct and that EFL learners may display uneven development across different aspects of discourse competence. Studies have shown that students can demonstrate reasonable knowledge of logical connectives while remaining weak in global coherence and topic building. This pattern supports the present finding that coherence cannot be reduced to the number or variety of transition expressions. The findings are also consistent with research indicating that explicit instruction in cohesion and coherence can produce measurable improvements in EFL writing. Recent experimental evidence suggests that systematic instruction in cohesive chains and coherence-building strategies can improve students' performance in integrated writing tasks. At the same time, the present analysis extends previous research by emphasizing the interaction among several factors: linguistic competence, rhetorical awareness, paragraph organization, idea development, L1 transfer, metacognitive awareness, and instructional practices. This broader perspective suggests that coherence problems should not be attributed to a single linguistic deficiency.

Overall, the findings indicate that coherence problems in EFL academic writing are best understood as problems of discourse construction rather than merely problems of language accuracy. Learners need to develop the ability to construct relationships among ideas, maintain topic continuity, organize paragraphs, develop arguments, integrate evidence, and guide readers through the text. The most important pedagogical implication is that coherence should be taught explicitly and repeatedly across the writing curriculum. Students should not be expected to acquire coherence automatically through grammar instruction or extensive writing practice alone. Instead, they need systematic exposure to academic discourse patterns and opportunities to analyze, practice, receive feedback on, and revise their writing. The study also highlights the importance of balancing explicitness and flexibility. Students need clear models of English academic discourse, but they should also be encouraged to make rhetorical decisions according to genre, discipline, audience, and communicative purpose. Such an approach can help learners move from formulaic writing toward more sophisticated academic discourse. In summary, the discussion confirms that improving coherence requires an integrated approach combining linguistic knowledge, discourse awareness, rhetorical competence, critical thinking, metacognitive strategies, and revision practices. The development of these abilities can enable EFL learners to move beyond grammatically correct but disconnected sentences toward academic texts characterized by unity, logical progression, clarity, and persuasive argumentation.

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Conclusion. Coherence is one of the most fundamental yet complex dimensions of effective EFL academic writing. The present study has demonstrated that the ability to produce a coherent academic text extends considerably beyond grammatical accuracy, lexical richness, and the mechanical use of cohesive devices. Effective coherence requires EFL learners to organize ideas logically, maintain a clear central argument, develop unified paragraphs, establish meaningful relationships between claims and evidence, and guide readers through a consistent progression of ideas. The analysis of the relevant literature indicates that EFL learners experience coherence problems at several interconnected levels. At the global level, difficulties frequently involve unclear thesis statements, inconsistent arguments, weak relationships between major sections, and conclusions that do not adequately synthesize the preceding discussion. At the paragraph level, learners may experience problems with topic sentences, paragraph unity, supporting details, and idea development. At the local level, difficulties may involve abrupt transitions, unclear relationships between sentences, inappropriate cohesive devices, and excessive repetition. One of the most important conclusions of the study is that coherence should not be equated with cohesion. Cohesive devices such as *however, therefore, moreover,* and *in addition* can make relationships between ideas more explicit, but they cannot independently create a logically meaningful argument. Excessive or inappropriate use of transition markers may even reduce readability when the semantic relationship between propositions does not correspond to the selected connector. Therefore, EFL learners need to understand not only which linguistic devices are available but also why and when particular devices should be used. The study further demonstrates that topic development and logical progression are central to coherent academic writing. A successful academic text should progressively develop its central topic rather than simply repeat the same information. Each paragraph should have a clear communicative purpose, and each supporting idea should contribute to the development of the paragraph's controlling idea. At the same time, individual paragraphs should be connected to the broader thesis so that the entire text forms an integrated argument. Overall, the evidence reviewed in this study supports a shift from a predominantly sentence-centered approach to EFL writing toward a discourse-oriented and argument-centered approach. Grammar and vocabulary remain essential foundations, but they should be integrated with instruction in discourse organization, rhetorical structure, critical thinking, and metacognitive monitoring. The ultimate objective is to help learners move beyond the production of isolated grammatically correct sentences toward the creation of academic texts that are unified, logically developed, reader-oriented, and persuasive. In conclusion, improving coherence in EFL academic writing requires sustained instructional attention and a combination of linguistic, rhetorical, cognitive, and pedagogical strategies. Coherence should be treated not as an automatic outcome of language proficiency but as a teachable and developable academic literacy skill. Through explicit discourse instruction, genre analysis, systematic planning, process writing, peer feedback, reflective revision, and responsible use of digital technologies, EFL learners can substantially improve their ability to construct meaningful and logically organized academic texts. Strengthening this competence is particularly important in the context of international higher education, where the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and coherently is increasingly essential for academic success and participation in global scholarly communication.

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