

INVESTIGATING THE TYPES AND FREQUENCY OF COHESIVE DEVICES IN EFL STUDENTS' WRITTEN DIALOGUE

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to understand the use of cohesive devices in written dialogues produced by EFL students at State High School 4 Semarang. A total of sixteen dialogues written by students were analyzed using Halliday and Hasan's theories through a descriptive qualitative approach supported by frequency counts to identify grammatical and lexical cohesion. Among the various categories, lexical cohesion appeared most frequently, followed by reference and conjunction. Substitution and ellipsis, on the other hand, appeared only a few times. Repetition was the most frequently found in the texts, indicating that students generally rely on word repetition and reference to maintain the flow of conversation and connect ideas in each response. These findings help provide an overview of how EFL learners create cohesion and build continuity in written dialogues. This can also support the teaching of writing skills at the discourse level.

Keywords: Cohesive devices, Discourse analysis, EFL learners, Lexical cohesion, Written dialogue

INTRODUCTION

Writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is more than just the creation of grammatically correct sentences. Students should be able to convey ideas clearly and be mindful of language accuracy. To achieve effective communication, ideas within a text need to be connected in a meaningful way. This link is often referred to in terms of cohesion and coherence. Cohesion is the semantic and linguistic ties that hold the various parts of a text together, while coherence is the overall logical structure that allows the reader to understand the text as a whole (Ali, 2021; Crossley & McNamara, 2011). Cohesion and coherence are important features that assist readers in comprehending the relationships between ideas and sentences in an EFL context (Emilia et al., 2018; Jassim, 2023). In addition, the ability to write cohesive, coherent texts is also

regarded as one of the communicative competence aspects of students in secondary school in Indonesia (Farida & Rosyidi, 2019).

Though cohesion and coherence have been established as being important in writing, it seems that there are still many EFL learners who struggle with addressing these aspects in their writing. In many classrooms, it is found that writing teaching pays more attention to the grammatical rules and other apparent language features than to the organization of the discourse (Li & Chen, 2026). Therefore, students can construct grammatically correct sentences but still have difficulty connecting ideas meaningfully. In addition, it has also been reported that EFL learners are often experiencing problems in applying cohesive devices such as reference, conjunction and lexical cohesion, which affect the comprehensibility of the written text and thus the quality of the written product (Alqasham et al., 2021; Khalil & Abu-Ayyash, 2023). These findings point to the fact that difficulties with cohesion are not merely a matter of technical language skills, but are also very much related to students' ability to construct meaning through discourse.

Students may exhibit these challenges in their written work. EFL students may overuse certain lexical items, use references inappropriately, or misuse conjunctions, which can weaken the connections between ideas. Therefore, readers may be able to grasp individual sentences, but may not be able to read the text as a whole. Qualitative evidence also indicated that students often find it difficult to keep the logical connections and produce cohesive utterances, thereby affecting the coherence (Wang et al., 2024). All of these issues highlight the importance of understanding the way learners employ cohesive devices to create connected and meaningful discourse.

Cohesion is a crucial aspect of language learning, not only linguistically, but also in terms of fostering understanding and communication. In written and spoken discourse, cohesive devices can be used by learners to structure ideas, provide continuity and communicate meaning more effectively (Bahaziq, 2016). Cohesion in writing may be achieved through the following types that are identified within the framework of Halliday and Hasan (1976) which are reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Investigating their use of these devices could help gain insights into the discourse competence of the learners and their competence to produce coherent discourse.

Dialogue is a type of discourse that needs more attention in cohesion research because, unlike an essay, dialogue progresses through exchanges of words between participants rather than through a continuous, single text. In a dialogue, each contribution is connected to the others, and each one responds to and influences the ongoing exchange. Hence, it is necessary to ensure continuity during the whole exchange process. The cohesive devices help to establish the

continuity of the discourse from one turn to another, to keep the topics coherent and to ensure the overall coherence of the dialogue (Gómez González, 2010, 2013).

Previous studies have mainly focused on the cohesion of essays, reports, and other academic texts (Tabari et al., 2023; Khalil & Abu-Ayyash, 2023; Zhang & Zhang, 2023). But there is less research that focuses on cohesive devices in dialogic discourse. It is still unclear how students of English as a foreign language (EFL) develop cohesion in written dialogue, in which meaning is built through interaction over several turns. Subsequently, the present study focuses on the usage of cohesive devices in written dialogue texts written by EFL learners at SMA Negeri 4 Semarang to overcome this gap. In particular, the study aims to identify the types of cohesive devices used by the students and their frequency in the text. This study expands on existing research on cohesion in the essay genre by analyzing written dialogues. It is hoped that the results of this study will shed more light on the uses of cohesive devices in dialogic discourse and will provide implications for teaching writing in EFL.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion is becoming more important as a structural phenomenon as well as a semantic one, because it joins ideas in clauses and sentences so they can be more unified in the text (Ali, 2021; Jassim, 2023). This approach is consistent with systemic functional linguistics, which considers language as a system of meaning co-constructed by the communicative functions of language (Emilia et al., 2018; Muttaqien et al., 2019).

Theoretically, cohesion is described as the semantic relations that bind elements of text together via cohesive devices so that they can act like cohesive wholes (Ali, 2021; Bahaziq, 2016). This relationship is not limited to grammatical structure but also involves how meaning is developed through connections between linguistic units (Gómez González, 2013; Jassim, 2023). Recent research considers cohesion among a range of important linguistic characteristics relating to writing quality as well as dimensions of language development (Crossley, 2020; Tian et al., 2024). This, however, is not a linear relationship. Cohesion alone cannot account for the quality of text (Crossley & McNamara, 2010, 2011), as coherence, which represents the reader's cognitive understanding of the connection between unit(s) of text, is equally important in writing quality. As such, cohesion should be regarded as a part in the same system for discourse construction rather than an isolated part of writing that impacts quality.

Types of Cohesive Devices

From a conceptual perspective, cohesion is commonly categorized into grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion is realized through devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction, which explicitly signal relationships between linguistic elements (Bahaziq, 2016; Maulida et al., 2020). Reference occurs when the interpretation of one element depends on another element within the discourse. Substitution and ellipsis assist in minimizing redundancy by replacing or omitting linguistic elements so long as the meaning remains clear based on the overall context, whereas conjunctions act as connectors that bind ideas together through logical relationships such as addition, contrast, cause, and sequence.

Furthermore, lexical cohesion is defined as the semantic relationships between lexical units that help with the continuity of a topic and maintain textual unity (Gómez González, 2013; Khalil & Abu-Ayyash, 2023). In this study, lexical cohesion is reviewed through repetition, synonymy, and collocation. Repetition refers to the recurrence of the same lexical item, synonymy involves the use of different words with similar meanings, and collocation refers to lexical items that tend to occur together within a particular context. These categories provide the framework for identifying and classifying cohesive devices in students' written dialogue texts.

Cohesion, Coherence, and Writing Quality

The relation between cohesion, coherence and text quality is a complex interaction among three interdependent attributes of language. While cohesion offers explicit linguistic indicators that help readers identify the relationships between thoughts, coherence refers to general interpretability and rational structure experienced in the mind of the reader (Crossley & McNamara, 2010, 2011; Tsunemoto & Trofimovich, 2024).

Cohesion as a linguistic concept refers to any language form that connects an element of the text with another to assist meaning in what is both said and inferred during reading, it has been reported to enhance comprehensibility by strengthening text processing in EFL contexts (Abdi Tabari et al., 2023; Tian et al., 2024). Furthermore, cohesion has also been associated with writing performance and language development (Wang et al., 2024; Zhang & Zhang, 2023) which suggests that it plays a larger role in the building of discourse competence.

However, the mere existence of cohesion does not only determine its effectiveness, but also the adequacy and variance of its usage may break textual wholeness instead of helping (Maulida et al., 2020).

Cohesion in EFL Writing

Many studies focused on the use of cohesive devices in EFL writing. Studies over the past few decades generally claim that learners rely on grammatical cohesion, especially reference and conjunctions, but substitution and ellipsis are less used (Afrianto, 2017; Inayah et al., 2024; Maulida et al., 2020). Other studies emphasize the functions of lexical cohesion especially repetition and collocation in writing quality, however, learners use a restricted range of lexical patterns (Amperawaty & Warsono, 2019; Khalil & Abu-Ayyash, 2023). While these studies shed light on how learners use cohesion in their writing, most have been restricted to formal written disciplines, such as essays and scholarly texts.

The frequent use of reference and conjunction in EFL writing may be related to their communicative functions in connecting ideas and maintaining continuity across discourse. Compared with substitution and ellipsis, these devices are generally more visible and more frequently practiced in language instruction, making them more accessible to learners (Afrianto, 2017; Inayah et al., 2024). Nevertheless, learners often encounter difficulties in using these devices appropriately, which may affect the overall connectedness of their texts.

Cohesion Accross Different Discourse Types

Cohesion has been explored with a wider range of discourse types, for example, spoken interaction and digital communication, outside traditional formal writing contexts. Research in spoken discourse reveals that lexical cohesion, especially repetition, is important for keeping the topic thread of a conversation going (Gómez González, 2010; Putri & Dewi, 2025). Research on digital forms of communication too has revealed new patterns of cohesion influenced by the affordances of technology such as hashtags and mentions functioning as cohesive markers (Muttaqien et al., 2019). These results indicate that cohesive device usages are discourse-context sensitive and genre specific. But even in the face of this increasing appreciation for situational change, much of the research on cohesion continues to be informal monologic writing, leaving interactive forms of discourse decidedly under-researched.

Dialogue represents a particular discourse context because meaning is constructed through interaction between participants rather than through the continuous development of ideas by a single writer. Unlike essays, dialogue requires speakers to respond to previous utterances while contributing new information to the ongoing exchange. Consequently, cohesive devices may function not only to connect ideas within individual turns but also to maintain continuity across multiple turns of interaction. This characteristic makes dialogue a relevant context for investigating how learners establish cohesion in communicative discourse.

While a number of studies have contributed to the understanding of cohesive devices in EFL writing, most of them have been conducted on texts of

monologic academic genres such as essays (Abdi Tabari et al., 2023; Khalil & Abu-Ayyash, 2023; Zhang & Zhang, 2023). Spoken interaction and computer-mediated communication have been shown to influence the patterns of cohesion (Gómez González, 2010; Muttaqien et al., 2019; Putri & Dewi, 2025). But little attention has been paid to written dialogue, where meaning is built by interacting across several turns. Therefore, it remains unclear how the cohesive devices are used by EFL learners in the dialogue texts in written discourse. The gap is the foundation of the present study, which investigates the types and frequency of cohesive devices employed by the EFL learners in the written dialogues.

METHOD

Research Approach and Design

The study was a descriptive qualitative content analysis that analyzed the use of cohesive devices in students' written dialogue text. The cohesive devices found in the dialogues were sorted into their types and qualitatively analyzed. A further way of illustrating this was by indicating within the data how many times each device was used by applying a frequency counts. The study, which used a mixture of qualitative analysis and simple frequency calculations, was capable of describing both the variety and the distribution of the cohesive devices used by the students.

Research Site and Time

The study was carried out in SMA Negeri 4 Semarang in July 2025. The data was taken as a part of an assignment given in the class that asked the students to write dialogues on social media. The students were given about one week to prepare before presenting them in class and submitting the written dialogues to the teacher for evaluation.

Participants

The subjects were 35 students in the grade 11 level of English class of SMA Negeri 4 Semarang. The class was selected purposively because the students had already done a dialogue writing task, whose data was used for the present study. Students were able to collaborate in the process and created sixteen written texts of dialogue. Pairs of students wrote thirteen dialogues, and three dialogues were written by groups of three students.

Data Collection Technique

For this study, data were gathered from the students' written dialogue texts, which were a part of a classroom assignment. As the activity progressed, students were assigned to write a dialogue concerning agreement and disagreement with respect to social media. They were given about a week to accomplish the task, presenting the dialogues in class and submitting the written dialogues. In order to ensure adequate participation, each student was asked to

contribute about 10 turns. Dialogues submitted were then pooled and served as the main data for the analysis.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis supplemented with frequency count. The conversational texts were first analyzed to determine how many cohesive devices were used. The devices found were then categorized according to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework into grammatical cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction) and lexical cohesion (repetition, synonym or near-synonym, and collocation). Following classification, each cohesive device is counted to determine the frequency and distribution of each device in the dialogue texts. The results were then analyzed according to the occurrence of cohesive devices in the data. This analytical procedure is based on previous studies that analyzed cohesion through identification, classification, and frequency (Amperawaty & Warsono, 2019; Inayah et al., 2024).

The dialogue texts were read many times during the identification and classification process to ensure consistency in the analysis. The classification results were rechecked against Halliday and Hasan's (1976) categories to reduce possible errors and ensure that each cohesive device was categorized appropriately.

FINDING

Overall Distribution of Cohesive Devices

The analysis of sixteen written dialogue texts identified 1,396 cohesive devices. Both grammatical and lexical cohesion were found in the dialogues. Table 1 presents the distribution of cohesive devices identified in the data.

Table 1. Overall Distribution of Cohesive Devices

Cohesive Device	Frequency	Percentage
Frequency	561	40.19%
Conjunction	201	14.40%
Substitution	10	0.72%
Ellipsis	30	2.15%
Lexical Cohesion	594	42.55%
Total	1.396	100%

According to Table 1, lexical cohesion was the most frequently occurring category, with 594 occurrences (42.55%). Reference followed with 561 occurrences (40.19%), while conjunction was identified 201 times (14.40%). In comparison, ellipsis and substitution occurred less frequently, with 30 occurrences (2.15%) and 10 occurrences (0.72%), respectively.

Overall, lexical cohesion and reference accounted for the largest proportion of cohesive devices identified in the dialogue texts.

Reference

Reference was the most frequently used grammatical cohesive device in the students' written dialogues, occurring 561 times in total. The distribution of reference categories is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of Reference

Type of Reference	Frequency	Percentage
Personal Reference	432	77.01%
Demonstrative Reference	86	15.33%
Comparative Reference	43	7.66%
Total	561	100%

As already presented in Table 2, out of a total of 561 reference items found, personal reference was the most commonly found, with 432 occurrences (77.01%), while demonstrative reference was found second most frequently, with 86 occurrences (15.33%). Comparative reference came in last place, with 43 occurrences (7.66%). This demonstrates that personal reference is the most frequently used in comparison to all other references.

The data shows that personal references are mostly expressed through personal pronouns such as *I*, *you*, *we*, *they*, *them*, *their*, and *it*. For example, in the line of dialogue "*I think social media is bad for news*" (Dialogue 16), the pronoun *I* is utilized to address the person who is expressing their opinion. The same patterns of language were also seen in the use of *you*, *they*, *them*, and *it*, which were all designed to refer to participants or entities mentioned earlier. This use of personal references keeps the conversation smooth by letting the speaker link their current statements back to what had been said before.

Demonstrative reference was also mainly represented by the items such as *this*, *that*, *those*, and *the*. An example can be seen in the utterance "*That's why parents need to guide them*" (Dialog 13), the word *that* refers back to the preceding statement about children's exposure to online content. Comparative reference appeared less often and was realized through forms such as *same*, *different*, *other*, *equal*, and *greater*, which were used to express similarity, difference, or comparison between discourse elements.

Conjunction

A total of 201 conjunctions were identified in the sixteen dialogues. Four categories of conjunction were found: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. Their distribution is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Types of Conjunction

Type of Conjunction	Frequency	Percentage
Additive Conjunction	101	50.25%
Adversative Conjunction	65	32.34%
Causal Conjunction	34	16.92%
Temporal Conjunction	1	0.50%
Total	201	100%

Results showed that there were 101 additive conjunctions (50.25%) in total, thus the first subtype was the most frequent one. The adversative conjunctions occurred 65 times (32.34%), while causal conjunctions appeared 34 times (16.92%). Temporal conjunctions were the least frequent subtype, occurring only once (0.50%).

Additive conjunctions were mainly realized through items such as *and*, *also*, *too*, *or*, and *even*. These conjunctions were used to introduce additional information, develop new arguments, and present alternative ideas. The conjunction *and* in “*I follow art and travel pages*” (Dialog 3) connects two categories of content, for example. Meanwhile, items such as *also* and *too* were used to introduce supplementary information that extended the preceding statement.

Adversative conjunctions were predominantly represented by *but*, with only a few occurrences of *still*. These conjunctions formed a contrast between propositions and were used whenever participants expressed disagreement or difference of opinion. Causal conjunctions such as *because*, *if* and *so* connected the premises of reasons, conditions and conclusions in conversations. Temporal conjunctions were extremely limited, with only one instance of *later* identified in the entire dataset.

In addition to the major categories of conjunction, four instances of continuatives were identified in the dialogues, consisting of three occurrences of *of course* and one occurrence of *anyway*. These items functioned to facilitate the flow of conversation by signaling agreement or shifts in discourse. However, due to their limited occurrence, continuatives were treated as supplementary findings rather than a separate category of cohesive devices in the present analysis.

Substitution and Ellipsis

Substitution and ellipsis were the least frequent cohesive devices found in the corpus. Only ten instances of substitution and thirty instances of ellipsis were identified throughout the sixteen dialogues.

Table 4. Types of Substitution

Type of Substitution	Frequency	Percentage
Nominal	4	40.00%
Verbal	3	30.00%
Clausal	3	30.00%
Total	10	100%

Upon analysis of substitution, nominal substitution was the most common subtype with four occurrences (40%). Verbal substitution occurred three times (30%) as well as clausal substitution. Nominal substitution predominately occurred through *one* and *ones*, and verbal substitution involved forms such as *do* and *don't*. Clausal substitution was primarily represented by *so* for example, the utterance “*I don't think so*” in (Dialog 16) uses *so* to substitute for an entire preceding proposition instead of stating it explicitly.

Table 5. Types of Ellipsis

Type of Ellipsis	Frequency	Percentage
Nominal	0	00.00%
Verbal	4	13.33%
Clausal	26	86.67%
Total	30	100%

Clausal ellipsis was the most common type of ellipsis, occurring 26 times (86.67%). There were four occurrences of verbal ellipsis (13.33%), while no instances of nominal ellipsis were identified. Ellipsis is mostly found in question-and-answer exchanges as well as brief conversational responses. Alternatives like “*For how long?*”, “*Two days*” and “*What kind of activities?*” show that speakers left out information that could be recovered from the surrounding context. Such omissions allowed participants to speak in brief turns while keeping the conversation flowing.

Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion was the most dominant category identified in the study, accounting for 594 occurrences. The distribution of lexical cohesion is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Types of Lexical Cohesion

Type of Lexical Cohesion	Frequency	Percentage
Repetition	463	77.95%
Synonym/Near-Synonym	21	3.54%
Collocation	110	18.52%
Total	594	100%

The results indicate that the most frequently used lexical cohesive device was repetition, which accounted for 463 occurrences (77.95%). The collocation represented 110 occurrences (18.52%), and the synonymy and near-synonymy represented only 21 occurrences (3.54%). The predominance of repetition in the present study is comparable to Gómez González (Gómez González, 2010), who also identified repetition as the most frequent lexical cohesive device in conversational discourse.

Repetition was mainly realized through recurring lexical items related to the topic under discussion, particularly *social media*, *influencers* and *follow*. For example, the term *social media* also appears multiple times across a few conversational turns and therefore allowed participants to retain topical continuity through the discussion. Similarly, repeated use of lexical items such as *influencers* and *follow* created lexical links between successive utterances and helped maintain thematic continuity.

Synonymy and near-synonymy were identified via semantically related lexical pairs such as *problem–issue*, *free–available*, *benefits–good effect*, and *case–incident*. These lexical relations enabled speakers to restate ideas using different yet closely matching words. While less frequent than repetition, they helped create cohesion through maintaining the continuity of meaning across turns.

Collocation was identified through lexical items that co-occur regularly in the same semantic environment. These excerpts include *follow trend*, *check facts*, *solve problems*, *identity theft* and *fake news*. While repetition and synonymy pertain to the lexical similarity among lexical items, collocation is defined by associative relationships between specific pairs of lexical items. Also, these collocational patterns were commonly found in interactions about social media, information literacy, online safety and education which contributed to maintaining topic continuity throughout the dialogues.

DISCUSSION

Dominance of Lexical Cohesion and Reference

Both grammatical and lexical cohesion were found in the students' written dialogue texts. Among all categories, lexical cohesion appeared most frequently,

followed by reference. This pattern shows that the students mainly depended on repeated lexical items and references to connect ideas and maintain continuity during the conversations. In line with Halliday and Hasan's framework, cohesion helped connect different parts of the dialogues so the conversations could still feel meaningful and related to one another (Ali, 2021; Jassim, 2023).

The strong presence of lexical cohesion also resembles findings from earlier studies that highlighted the importance of lexical ties in maintaining discourse continuity. In conversational texts, repetition can help maintain topics, as Gómez González (2011) explained. Similarly, Khalil and Abu-Ayyash (2023) found that repetition and collocation are the most common lexical cohesive devices in the writing of EFL students. Another phenomenon that was found as the most common subtype of lexical cohesion in the present study was repetition. The dialogues included a high frequency of words related to social media, influencers, news, and follow, which maintained consistency in topic coverage between speakers. The repeated words did not have the effect of making the conversations repetitive but rather seemed to hold the topic of the conversations. Crossley (2020) and Crossley and McNamara (2016), also made similar remarks that cohesive relations contribute to the clarity and overall comprehensibility of a text.

One of the surprising aspects of the present results is that the frequency of lexical cohesion was marginally higher than in the overall frequency. It is the repeated use of topic-related vocabulary that indicates that students' cohesion was achieved not only by the use of pronouns and referential expressions. Lexical repetition can therefore be a practical approach to making sure that both the interlocutors keep the same topic of the conversation throughout the interaction, as required in dialogue texts (Gómez González, 2010, 2013; Putri & Dewi, 2025).

Reference also appeared very frequently throughout the dialogues and became the most dominant grammatical cohesive device. Personal pronouns like *I*, *you*, *we*, *they*, and *it* kept appearing because the students were constantly responding to one another during the interaction. In the results of studies carried out by Afrianto (2017), Maulida et al. (2020), and Inayah et al. (2024), there were also similar patterns reported in EFL students' writing with results showing that EFL students had a tendency to use the reference because it helped to maintain continuity without having to repeat the same noun too often. In addition, demonstrative items as *this* and *that* also dominate the dialogue because they are helpful in referring back to the previous ideas, as well as comparative reference that help speakers to indicate similarities or differences in opinion. All of these references are widely used to help the dialogues be connected and coherent (Ali, 2021; Jassim, 2023).

This pattern is a reflection of the differences between dialogue and essays, because unlike in an essay, where it is very common for the writer to use references to combine several ideas into a sentence or paragraph within a text, in dialogue, personal references are used more frequently since speakers are constantly exchanging responses with one another. This explains that *I* and *you* are more frequently found and used in dialogue as their use contributes not only to cohesion within the dialogues but also to the interpersonal aspect of communication.

The Use of Conjunctions in Dialogue Texts

Among the conjunction categories, additive conjunctions appeared most often, followed by adversative and causal conjunctions. Temporal conjunctions, on the other hand, were found only rarely. Many students tended to develop their ideas gradually during the interaction, which explains the frequent appearance of conjunctions such as *and*, *also*, and *too*. Similar patterns were reported by Bahaziq (2016), Inayah et al. (2024), and Jassim (2023), who also found that additive conjunctions are commonly easier for EFL learners to use when connecting ideas in discourse. The predominance of additive conjunctions may also reflect the way dialogue develops through incremental contributions. Rather than presenting a fully developed argument in a single stretch of text, speakers tend to add information step by step as the interaction progresses. As a result, additive relations become more prominent than temporal sequencing or other forms of logical organization.

Conjunctions such as *but*, *because*, and *so* also appeared quite regularly in the dialogues. In many cases, the students used *but* when responding to different opinions, especially during discussions involving agreement and disagreement. Meanwhile, *because* and *so* were mostly used when the speakers tried to explain reasons or justify their opinions. Because many of the dialogues focused on discussion topics rather than storytelling, temporal conjunctions appeared only occasionally.

A few continuative items, including *of course* and *anyway*, were also identified. Even though they appeared only a small number of times, they still helped maintain conversational flow and supported the interaction between speakers.

Limited Use of Substitution and Ellipsis

Compared with other cohesive devices, substitution and ellipsis appeared much less frequently in the students' dialogues. Similar results were reported by Maulida et al. (2020), Inayah et al. (2024), and Putri and Dewi (2025), who found that EFL learners tend to use substitution and ellipsis less often in writing tasks. One possible reason is that these devices require a stronger understanding of

context because omitted or substituted elements still need to remain understandable to readers.

Even so, several examples of substitution and ellipsis still appeared throughout the dialogues. Clausal substitution through the use of *so* and short elliptical responses in question-and-answer exchanges allowed students to avoid repeating the same information unnecessarily. In several cases, the omitted information could still be understood easily from the previous utterances. This shows how dialogue texts often rely on shared understanding between speakers during interaction (Gómez González, 2010, 2013; Putri & Dewi, 2025).

The limited use of substitution and ellipsis suggests that students preferred explicit cohesive strategies over implicit ones. By repeating lexical items or using direct references, they may have reduced the risk of misunderstanding, particularly in written interactions where immediate clarification from interlocutors is not always available.

Cohesion and Coherence in Written Dialogues

Based on the findings of this study, the findings are consistent with the previous studies that discussed the relationship between cohesion and coherence, such as those by Ali (2021), Amperawaty and Warsono (2019), and Jassim (2023). The cohesive devices identified in the dialogues appeared to serve different functions, such as repetition, which helps speakers stay on the same topic being discussed, reference, which connects participants as well as previous ideas, and conjunction, which connects arguments and explanations more clearly. Overall, all these cohesion devices made the dialogue easier to follow and understand as a whole conversation.

Contrary to many previous studies, most of which focused mainly either on essays or academic writing, this study examines written dialogues written by EFL learners. As dialogue writing is an interaction between two or more speakers, personal references, repetitions, and additive conjunctions often appear throughout the corpus. These findings give additional understanding of how cohesive devices function in dialogic discourse among EFL learners (Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Gómez González, 2011).

Results also show that the learners tend to rely more on direct and explicit cohesion strategies, such as repetition and reference, than on substitution or ellipsis. By introducing learners to various types of cohesive devices, students can develop more flexible strategies when composing written texts.

Taken together, the findings suggest that cohesion in written dialogues is shaped not only by linguistic competence but also by the communicative demands of interaction. The need to maintain a shared topic, respond to previous utterances, and ensure mutual understanding appears to influence the selection of cohesive devices. This may explain why lexical repetition, personal reference, and

additive conjunctions emerged as the most prominent patterns in the present study (Crossley & McNamara, 2016; Gómez González, 2011).

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed sixteen written dialogue texts produced by EFL students to examine the use of cohesive devices. The data showed that students used both grammatical and lexical cohesion in their dialogues. Among all categories, lexical cohesion appeared most often, especially repetition. Reference and conjunction were also common, whereas substitution and ellipsis occurred much less frequently. The dialogues frequently contained repeated words, personal references, and additive conjunctions, which helped connect ideas and maintain the flow of conversation from one turn to another.

The pattern found in the data suggests that students tended to use repetition and reference more frequently than other cohesive devices. Instead of using substitution and ellipsis, they tended to repeat key words and refer back to people or ideas that had already been mentioned. These strategies allowed the conversation to remain connected and helped participants stay focused on the same topic throughout the dialogue.

This study was limited to sixteen dialogue texts collected from one class at a single senior high school. Because of this, the results should be interpreted within the context of the participants involved in the study. The analysis was also restricted to cohesive devices and did not cover other aspects of writing, such as coherence, language accuracy, or overall writing quality. Future research may use a larger number of texts, involve students from different schools, and examine how cohesion relates to other dimensions of writing performance.

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