

Cohesion in ESL Classroom Written Texts

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the extent to which ESL (English as a Second Language learners) have been able to achieve cohesion in their written texts by examining the cohesive devices used by the students during their continuous writing sessions at school. The data used were drawn from seventy final year students of Ooni Girls High School in Osun State Nigeria. The elicitation technique was an essay writing exercise in which the students were given two essay questions which would enable them to demonstrate their knowledge of cohesive devices in English. An analysis of the data revealed that the students lacked competence in their use of cohesive devices despite the fact that they had been exposed to intensive teaching of English for six years in the secondary school.

Keywords: Cohesion, Coherence, ESL Learners

1. INTRODUCTION

Human beings use language to communicate experience and because language does not exist in a vacuum, it is contextualized and subjected to the natural processes of change. As social beings, human beings interact at various levels of language and culture in different speech communities. The profile of a language may change in various ways if it becomes associated with another language which has a dominant political and economic power.

Commenting on the outcome of most language contacts, Elugbe and Omamor (1991: 02) note that:

1. termination of a language contact may occur on the grounds that communication is impossible
2. employment of dumb barter (where participants transact business without actually talking to one another)
3. one group may learn the language of the other under prolonged contact
4. both groups may make an imperfect attempt at communicating in each other's language, leading to a pidgin in due course.(as the case in Nigeria and some other countries of the world.)

All the four outcomes that Elugbe and Omamor mentioned happened in Nigeria at one point in time or the other but the last one is still very much with us. The introduction of English to Nigeria has been traced to the advent of the missionaries and freed slaves from Sierra Leone in the 14th century who

interacted with fellow Nigerians when they came back. As a result of this interaction, many Nigerians wanted to learn the White man's language and some of these attempts led to improper mastery of the English language which some people refer to as 'pidgin English'

In Edo, Delta and Rivers states of Nigeria, pidgin is widely spoken while in Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa communities, pidgin is considered a trade language. Some of the factors that have evoked a negative reaction against Nigerian pidgin are:

1. Nigerian pidgin sounds like bad English.
2. Nigerian pidgin is believed to be the language of the politically marginalized, economically deprived and socially disadvantaged people in the society.
3. The high failure rate in English language and poor communication skills are often blamed on the corrupting influence of Nigerian pidgin.

Elugbe (1995: 284)

If any community gives 'pidgin' a standardized form and assigns functional roles, it then becomes 'creole' (that is, 'pidgin gone native') but this has not happened in Nigeria because of the arguments against pidgin English.

In Nigeria today, the English language has become a very important second language. Thus, it is the language of government, education, communication with the outside world, inter-ethnic communications, the mass media, business and commerce. It is also the principal medium of instruction in the Nigerian educational system. Understandably then, a lot of scholarly attention has been accorded the problems connected with the effective teaching and learning of English in Nigeria. Some of these attempts were made by scholars like Tomori (1963), who investigated the attainment of some primary six pupils in written English composition and comprehension to be able to make suggestions for improvement in the teaching and learning of English in the country's primary schools. Afolayan (1968) worked on the linguistic problems of Yoruba learners and users of English, especially at the various linguistic levels, (grammar, phonology etc). Others are Banjo (1969), Adetugbo (1969), Bamgbose (1969), Oluikpe (1974), Olagoke (1975), Aboderin (1980) Aremo (1982) Akande (2002, 2003) and Asiyanbola (2003), all of whom have been concerned with the problems of teaching and learning English effectively in Nigeria and have given suggestions for improvement.

The Nigerian learner of English is already a linguistic adult by the time they start learning English, unlike the native speaker who acquires the language as a child. Since the Nigerian learner already has a language to cater for the needs, English is therefore learned as a second language and the learner naturally transfers some features from the mother tongue to the second language. Such features may hinder or facilitate the learning of the second language. Apart from this, the learner may encounter some problems as a result of lack of competence, inexperience and lack of dedication to duty of the teachers, coupled with the learner's predisposition and attitude towards learning a second language. This

has resulted in many Nigerian learners of English not attaining the status of a coordinate bilingual.

Akindele and Adegbite (2005: 146) note that as a result of the problems of acquisition of English, Nigerian English now has a lot of varieties namely:

1. the ethnic varieties (has features of ethnic languages transferred into English at the levels of syntax, lexis, phonology, and semantics)
2. standard English (written model)
3. standard English (hyper formal and tedious)
4. standard English (pedantic and uninteresting)
5. non standard English (verbose and impressionistic)
6. non standard English (interference variety)
7. pidgin English (improper mastery of the English language)
8. technical variety (used in academic discussion or paper, legal document, business report, scientific report and annual general meeting reports of financial institutions. This variety does not lend itself to features of interference).

Of all these varieties, pidgin English seems to be the variety that has negatively affected the acquisition of good spoken and written English in Nigeria.

With the present age of the English language in Nigeria, the attainment level of Nigerian learners and users of the language still leaves much to be desired, both in written and spoken forms, especially in the secondary schools. The current English language syllabi in secondary schools in the South-western states of Nigeria are very comprehensive and extensive and are aimed at making the students achieve a high level of proficiency in the use of the English language, as found in the National Curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools, by:

1. preparing students for tertiary and vocational education as well as the world of work after leaving school; and,
2. promoting a systematic development of both the language skills and the literary knowledge that are considered essential for effective use of English in oral and written communication as well as in learning other subjects in the curriculum.

Students' attention are expected to be directed to the acquisition of the knowledge of the rules of grammar as well as the structural patterns associated with formal and informal varieties of English and use them appropriately. The present write-up on 'cohesion' in the written texts of our subjects therefore becomes relevant as it embraces the means by which texts are linguistically and logically connected.

For the educational system to achieve its educational aims and objectives, learners' work must show some form of cohesion and coherence in their presentation of ideas. In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the students' texts after a number of years of exposure to the English language to

see how far they have been able to achieve cohesion in their written English texts. The objectives of this paper are to:

1. To examine ways by which ESL learners have been able to achieve cohesion in written texts.
2. To suggest ways by which any form of deficiencies can be overcome.

2. THE DATA

The data used for this work were collected from seventy final year students of Ooni Girls' High School in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Being final year students, it is assumed that they have been exposed sufficiently to much of the English syntax. The researcher, therefore, examined cohesion in the written exercises of the students, especially the continuous writing sections. In all, 70 scripts were analyzed. The school has been selected because, on the average, it gives a general picture of the set up of grammar schools in the city of Ile-Ife in Nigeria, in that it runs both the junior and senior secondary school programmes. The pupils are from parents from all walks of life. The school has a population of 520 students and teaching staff strength of 26 with a ratio of 1½ teachers to a class as stipulated by the government. The mode of admission into the school is through the Osun state common entrance examinations and every year, about 120 students get admitted there. The texts analyzed in this paper are from the students' response to a question on letter writing and another one on what it means to be honest. Samples of the data analyzed can be found in the appendix.

3. COHESION IN ENGLISH

For several years, the analysis of cohesion in texts has been a key topic in the study of discourse. Cohesion refers to the relations of meaning that exists within a text. It is part of the system of language which has the potentials for meaning enhancement in texts. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 04) note that cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another. In cohesion, features like repetition of items as well as complex relations of collocation and structural semantic sense connections across sentence boundaries are examined. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 279) present the following as evidence of lexical cohesion in texts; same item, synonymy, near synonymy, superordinate, general word and collocation. For example, there are cohesive ties between the following sentences:

- (a) There is a boy singing a song.
- (b) The boy will strain his voice.
- (c) The lad will strain his voice.
- (d) The child will strain his voice.
- (e) The idiot will strain his voice.

The item 'boy' in sentence (b) is considered as a repetition of the same item 'boy' in sentence (a) 'Lad' in sentence (c) is a synonym of 'boy'. In sentence (d), the word 'child' is considered as a superordinate term while the word 'idiot' in sentence (e) is considered a general word.

Another way of looking at cohesive ties in texts is by examining the recurrence of certain words e.g. nouns (anaphoric nouns). These group of nouns fall into certain semantic classes. These are nouns which can be used to sustain an on-going discourse by being used to refer to a stretch of discourse preceding it. It also faces forwards, that is, it must be presented as the given information in terms of which the new propositional content of the clause or sentence in which it occurs is formulated.

Anaphoric nouns operate as organizational signals. They serve to label a preceding stretch of discourse, integrate and align it with the on-going argument and thus represent a position which the writer hopes to have established with the reader e.g. a position of following the text. Some examples of anaphoric nouns are accusation, criticism, refusal, allegation, admission etc. Their functions underline the importance of lexical signals in discourse and demonstrate that signals can be multifunctional. It is possible for a piece of writing to be cohesive without being coherent. Coherence is the hanging together of a text, whereas cohesion is the set of linguistic resources that every language has as part of the textual metafunction for linking one part of a text to another. Every part of a text is therefore both text and context and the ideas in writing should hang together.

4. COHESIVE TIES

This is the demonstration of semantic relations that form the basis for cohesion between the messages of a text. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 04) note that the concept of tie makes it possible to analyze a text in terms of its cohesive properties and it gives a systematic account of its patterns and texture. Cohesive ties can manifest in form of reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Halliday and Hasan (1985: 73) note further that the concept of tie is the most important thing when talking about the texture of a text. Below are examples of some of these ties:

1. a little mango tree is in the garden
2. it has many fruits.

The pronoun 'it' refers to 'mango tree' and this relationship is 'co-referential'. In the following text,

1 and 2 have messages but the pronominal ‘them’ in sentence 2 has neither an anaphoric nor cataphoric reference. Thus,

T, A S 1 & 2

1. I am writing this letter just to tell you what is happy at home.
2. I want to jain them now.

The word ‘happy’ in sentence 1 does not fit into the structure of the sentence. Nevertheless, even if the writer intends to write ‘happening’, sentence 2 would only have a clear cut message with reference to sentence 1 in that the writer is interested in joining the people at home with the belief that something definitely is happening and it is probably a happy occasion. (It is to be noted that the word ‘jain’ instead of ‘join’ as used by the students is a spelling error.) This is in effect exploring the exophoric reference of these two sentences. Sentence 3 has no message at all, and the pronominal ‘it’ has no referent and can not be said to be directly or indirectly connected with either of the two sentences preceding it apart from the fact that it is grammatically wrong. Thus,

T, A S3

3. It many not the people.

Even if it is thought that the pronominal ‘them’ in sentence 2 could be referring to ‘people’ in sentence 3, in which a case of co-referentiality would have been established, there is no established relationship between sentences 2 and 3 in as much as sentence 3 does not seem to have any message. In sentence 4, that is,

T, A S4

4. How is your work go well and she want to be a doctor.

The first part of the sentence could be said to be referring to the friend and the conjunction ‘and’ connecting the second part of the sentence to the first part, but the pronominal ‘she’ has no co-referent and it’s not performing any cataphoric or anaphoric function. On the other hand, the latter part of the sentence that says:

T, A S4^b

5. She want to be a doctor

could be said to have an exophoric reference, the interpretation of which lies outside the co-text and can only be found through an examination of the outside context. But taking into consideration the fact that a continuous writing is expected to be a unified whole, well coordinated and coherent; one would probably say that an exophoric reference here is inappropriate. Although, on another level of thought, a writer reserves the right to keep information to himself or act on the assumption of a shared common socio-cultural background

secret where the implicit meaning of a particular information is understood by both of them though not spelt out in black and white; In T, A S5, the writer concludes by saying,

6. I hope to hear from you very soon.

It is clear from this text that the writer has not succeeded in telling us what exactly is happening at home and as to whether the message will be understood by the friend is left for the recipient to decide. In T, B S1 which says,

7. I am very happed to write letter to you,

there is a message and sentence 2 is an appropriate follow up to sentence 1. Thus,

T, B S2,

8. How is your sister and children

‘Children’ in the sentence above is not well coordinated. It is not very clear whether the pronominal ‘your’ that governs sister also governs ‘children’ or that the writer is making reference to the ‘children’ of his friend. Even if the sentence is one that has an ellipted part, one would still have to determine which pronominal it should be out of the two possible ones of ‘yours’ and ‘her’ where ‘her’ will be performing another anaphorical function to ‘your sister’. Making an exophoric reference will probably reveal that the word “children” could not be referring to the children of the writer’s friend since the writer is supposed to be a school girl and who would probably have friends of her age group who are not likely to be married yet. Nevertheless, this idea cannot be totally ruled out these days of ‘instant’ everything. In any case, we have had cases of J.S.S. 1 (junior secondary school) students getting pregnant and having babies.

In T, B S3

9. the purpost of letter is come to Ile-Ife

There is a message but the sentence lacks coordination and this makes it impossible to find out whether the writer intends to come to Ile-Ife or she is, trying to invite the addressee to Ile-Ife. T, B S4 and 5 have no messages at all.

In T, B S5

10. P.O. the name of my school friend is seventh day, seventh day secondary school Ile-Ife.

In this stretch of language, the componential relation that ‘the’ expresses is not even that of co-reference but that of a starter in a sentence-initial position, because it is not possible for a grammar school to be the name of a school

friend. The problem of the writer here could be that of ‘omission’ where the appropriate words have not been used. In Text B also, ‘your’ in sentence 2, i.e.

11. How is your sister and children

serves as an anaphoric referent to ‘you’ (friend). ‘And’ also in sentence 2 is the only evidence of a coordinating conjunction in the text and we even need a lot of co-text assumptions to be able to guess what ‘and’ in T.B. S2 refers to. Text A is an example of a text that has evidences of grammatical cohesive ties but no internal structural relationship between the sentences because of lack of coordination between the cohesive ties. In a text, there should be threads of semantic relations and to be effective, both forms of cohesion; grammatical and lexical are important to give each other support. Members of a text should be related to each other to make a unified whole.

In texts C and D, students responded to a question on what it means to be honest. In these texts, there are evidences of both grammatical and lexical cohesive devices. Text C starts with an interrogative, that is, a form of adjacency pairs of a question followed by an answer. ‘This’ in sentence 2 and ‘that’ in sentence 3 have anaphoric reference to the word ‘honesty’ in sentence 1 as in

T. C. S1

12. What do we mean by honesty?

T. C. S2

13. This is the quality of being honest

T. C. S3

14. That is, not telling lies, not cheating or stealing.

Both demonstratives – ‘this’ and ‘that’ also serve as a co-referential points of extension and exemplification. In T, C S4 which reads thus,

15. For example, during the time of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, he was not allowed to rule the country by that time

‘the time of ...’ and ‘that time’ are co-referential although ‘by that time’ could be said to be unnecessarily repetitive. T C S4 introduces the name, Chief Obafemi Awolowo. From this statement till the end of the write up, this name is not repeated. There are instances of the use of pronominals ‘he’, ‘him’, and the word ‘man’ which later occur in the essay all of which refer to ‘him’ (Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a renowned Nigerian politician and lawyer) as in

T, C S9 which reads thus;

16. but when he died, people now realising all what he has been doing

T, C. S10

17. all the truth he told them, all the people he had helped.

In almost all the sentences in this text, there are instances of the use of ‘they’, ‘them’, ‘the people’ which all refer to one and the same set of people and these are the Nigerian people. The writer just finds it convenient to use the pronominals ‘them’ and ‘they’ to replace the general term ‘people’ in the text. In this text therefore, there are different cohesive ties and connectors although the text is not without some grammatical flaws of coordination and punctuation, lexical flaws and orthographical flaws of bad spellings and misfits as in

T, C, S4

18. “.... he was not allowed to nile the country by that time”.

‘nile’ here instead of rule, is either an evidence of wrong spelling or misfit. Some of the cohesive ties that are evident are examples of

- (A) Superordinate term e.g. country as in

T, C, S8

19. he helped the country

T, C, S5

20. People did not trust him

The word ‘country’ here is a superordinate term to people.

- (B) Repetition – The word ‘people’ is repeated 5 times in a text of ten sentences.

That is, an average of one word per two sentences. The word ‘country’ is also repeated five times. Through this repetition, a particular focus is put on the country and its people.

- (C) Anaphora – This dominates the text. We have 12 instances of the use of the pronominals ‘he’ and ‘him’ in the whole text. This is a ratio of 1/5 to a line as in

T, C, S9 which reads thus;

21. but when he died, people and realizing all what he has been doing

The writer mentioned only one personality so ‘he’ could not be said to refer to any other person though it occurred many times. All the instances of ‘he’ and ‘him’ and ‘man’ refer to one and the same person.

- (D) Cataphoric reference – There are examples of cataphoric referent ties in sentences 8, 9, and 10 of the text, for example; T C S9 reads thus;

22. but when he died, people now realizing all what he has been doing
T, C, S8
23. ... but the people of the country took not notice of these things he did for the country
T, C, S10
24. all the truth he told them

The expressions ‘these things’ in sentence 8, the expression ‘what he has been doing’ in sentence 9 are ‘the truths’ referred to in sentence 10 all have a cataphoric referent. As to what ‘the truths’ are, the quality of ‘the truths’ or whether they are truths or not is left for the writer to decide, and we will need an exophoric text reference to find out what the truths are. All the instances of these cohesive ties make the text to have a unified whole.

Text D opens with an explanation of what it means to be honest in sentence 1 and goes ahead to exemplify by means of a practical description in sentence 2. Thus, we have the following:

- T, D, S2
25. For example, one day I’m going to the market
I saw one man dropped from taxi.
T, D, S3
26. As he dropped.

In T, D S4, there is a part repetition of one of the sentences, which in Africa seems to follow the pattern of story telling by professional story tellers who repeat phrases and sentences for emphasis which manifests the presentation of a form of working imagination of ideas as in T, D S3 and 4

27. As he dropped
28. As he dropped

The story teller through his repetition tries to introduce some form of imagery into his business of story telling to make it vivid and interesting. This method whenever it occurs in the work of ESL learners shows a form of structural transference of ideas in sentences typical of ESL speakers, who think that because, repetition is for emphasis, it can be used in any situation, especially for all cases of continuous writing. The relevance of repetition of words etc is however supported by Halliday and Hasan (1985: 81) who note that:

The repetition of the same lexical creates a relation simply because a largely similar experiential meaning is encoded in each repeated occurrence of the lexical unit.

Other examples of structural cohesion are seen in T, D S4 – 7 which write thus;

- 29. As he dropped we too struggling to enter taxi
- 30. I saw a bag containing of money on the ground
- 31. I called that man back that your money is on the ground
- 32. And the man came

Here, sentences 30 and 31 have examples of lexical cohesive devices of repetition where the words ‘money’, ‘man’ and ‘ground’ are repeated to make the narration vivid. ‘One man’ in T, D S2 is a blank reference, ‘that man’ in sentence 31 above is performing a particularizing function as the narration progresses, and this refers to the man with the bag of money while ‘the man’ in sentence 32 still refers to the same man but now with a definite reference, location and position. The number ‘one’, the demonstrative ‘that’ and the definite article ‘the’ all recur before the word ‘man’ progressing in the function of particularization until the particular individual is pinned down. The pronominal ‘he’ is also used as an anaphoric referent tie to ‘man’ in the text.

The use of the conjunction ‘and’ in sentence 32 brings a good climax to the narration of the demonstration of what it means to be an honest person. All the uses of the cohesive ties and connectors make the narration progressive until the end when the aim of the writer is achieved, that is, the fact that the man came back for his bag of money. The table below shows a break down of the grammatical and lexical cohesive ties used in the texts.

Table A. Grammatical and lexical cohesive ties in texts a–d.

| TEXTS | TNWT | PRON | DEMONS | DEF.ART | GRAMMATICAL COHESIVE TIES | TEXTS | REF | SYN | SUPER | IMP.N |
|-------|------|--|--|-------------------|------------------------------|-------|--|--------|---------|--|
| A | 46 | Then I ³ she ¹ you ² it ¹ your ¹ | this ¹ | Nil | | A | nil | nil | nil | Doctor ¹ |
| B | 47 | I ² your ¹ you ¹ me ¹ my ¹ | Nil | the ¹ | | B | Seventh ¹ Day School ² | nil | nil | Seventh ¹ Day School |
| C | 136 | we ¹ He ¹⁰ Him ² they ² them ¹ it ¹ | this ¹ that ² these ¹ | the ¹¹ | | C | people ⁵ country ⁵ honest ³ | people | country | Nil |
| D | 74 | I ⁴ he ² we ¹ your ¹ | that ¹ | the ⁵ | | D | one ² man ³ ground ² money ³ taxi ² | nil | nil | Chief ¹ Obafemi Awolowo |

Key:

| | | |
|---------|---|-----------------------------|
| TNWT | - | Total no. of words per text |
| Pron | - | Pronominals |
| Demons | - | Demonstratives |
| Def.Art | - | Definite Article |
| Conj | - | Conjunctions |
| Cont | - | Continuatives |
| Adj P | - | Adjacency pairs |
| Rep | - | Repetition |
| Syn | - | Synonym |
| Super | - | Superordinate |
| Inst. N | - | Instantial naming |

Table B. Organic relations.

| TEXTS | TNWT | CONJ | CONT | ADJ. P |
|-------|------|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A | 46 | and ¹ (additive) tie | now ¹ | nil |
| B | 47 | and (additive) tie | nil | nil |
| C | 136 | but ² (concession) tie | now ¹ | question ¹ / Answer |
| D | 74 | and ¹ (additive) tie | nil | nil |

Table A gives a total picture of the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices used in texts A-D which is representative of the texts analyzed. Table B gives us an idea of the use of organic relation devices used in the texts. To be effective, lexical cohesion needs the support of grammatical cohesion and organic relational materials to solidify the relationship between the items in a text. It is evident here that the students have not mastered the use of all these ties; hence they have not been able to use a variety of them. Some of the ones that were used lack adequate coordination and sentence links. Just two of the organic relations that are important are used and these occur once in Text A, once in Text B, twice in Text C and once in Text D. This ratio is very small compared to the number of words in the texts. The differences between the texts are statistically significant. Of the grammatically cohesive devices in Text A, 22.2% are anaphorically interpretable. This means that the text is not all that self sufficient. In Text B, 33.3% are anaphorically interpretable. In Text C 94.1% are anaphorically interpretable. This shows that Text C is self sufficient and that it will not be difficult to understand the text. The remaining 5.9% is the 'we' in the adjacency pair that starts the write up. In Text D, 35% are anaphorically interpretable. The remaining percentage of the use of anaphora is accounted for by the use of 'I' in sentence initial position and 'we' that is wrongly used. These percentages were arrived at by putting the number of rightly used pronominals

in a particular text over the total number of pronominals in a text multiplied by 100. Thus;

$$\frac{\text{Rightly used pronominals}}{\text{total no. of pronominals in a text}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Despite the fact that all the texts lack good linkers and have a lot of grammatical errors, the high percentage of the use of grammatical ties in Text C helps in understanding the text. In Text D the use of lexically repeated items help in understanding the text.

It should be stressed that, not all examples of structural and non structural devices as discussed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) have been discussed here. There are some that were not seen in the work of the students as presented in the data. For further discussion of the other cohesive devices, see Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday and Hasan (1985) and for conjunctives, see Halliday and Hasan (1976); Martin (1983) in that the items that serve as terms of a tie form part of some message or messages.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Although repetition according to Halliday and Hasan (1985) is useful because experiential meaning is encoded in each repeated occurrence of the lexical unit, its use must not be over emphasized because its over use makes a text very boring. The repetition of pronominals to an exaggerated extent could be boring and confusing especially where two or more personalities are involved, and unnecessarily repeated phrases could give a text the story telling structure which may not be appropriate for all situations.

In an ESL situation, lexical cohesion and cohesive devices should be specifically taught and students exposed to their uses, since in ESL situations, students have limited exposure to the day to day use of good sentence structures of the English language coupled with the influence of pidgin English. In some cases, the teachers teaching this subject have their various limitations because of the vicious circle of lack of proper exposure to the essentials of the English language. It has however been discovered that over the years, this situation has become worse because of a few added problems of;

1. Non availability of instructional materials in schools.
2. High cost of instructional materials.
3. Over population in schools which do not give room for individualized attention.
4. Lack of basic remedial training for teachers on the job.

Occasionally, workshops are organized by book publishers to advertise their wares, and teachers are invited to such workshops, this has however not helped much because of lack of continuity of such programmes. But on a more serious note, it will do the country Nigeria and other ESL countries a lot of good if the government could organize refresher courses for teachers on the job from time to time. Apart from this, students should be given constant practice and explanation on organization of relevant meanings in relation to each other in a text. The teacher needs to point out semantic consequences of particular patterns of language use and emphasis should be laid on the reading of novels written by native speakers of English where a demonstration of all these devices are made manifest in writing. Students should also be taken through the basic practice of writing simple sentences and doing coordination of messages in a text.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have been able to examine the cohesive devices used in the texts written by some students in a secondary school in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. We have also discovered that, though the students' work show evidence of the use of some of the cohesive devices identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976 and 1985), some of the few used were wrongly used which made it difficult for us to understand the texts. However another reason for the students' inability to use these cohesive devices may not be unconnected with Elugbe's (1995) observation that the high failure rate in English language and poor communication skills can be blamed on the corrupting influence of Nigerian pidgin, the truth of which may not be far fetched.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|--------|---|-----------------|
| T, A S | - | Text A sentence |
| T, B S | - | Text B sentence |
| T, C S | - | Text C sentence |
| T, D S | - | Text D sentence |

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APPENDIX

Text A

1. I am writing this letter just to tell you what is happy at home
2. I want to jain them now
3. It many, not be people
4. How is your go well and she want to be a doctor
5. I want to hear from you very soon.

Text B

1. I am very happed to write letter to you
2. How is your sister and children
3. The purpose of letter is come to Ile-Ife
4. I am very to help in coming Sunday
5. P.O. the name of my school friend is seventh day seventh day secondary school Ile-Ife

Text C

1. What do we mean by honesty
2. This is the quality of being honest
3. That is, not telling lies, not cheating or stealing telling the truth at all times
4. For example, during the time of Chief Awolowo, he was not allowed to nile the country by that time
5. People did not trust him at all, what he was doing people of the country didn't allow him to succeed in it
6. They did not even listen to all what he was saying
7. They thought he was an honest man
8. He helped the country but the people of the country took not notice of these things he did for the country;
9. But when he died people now realising all what he has been doing;
10. All the truth he told them, all the people he had helped.

Text D

1. Honesty means not telling lies, not cheating straight forward to anybody to saying the truth at all times
2. For example one day I'm going to the market I saw one man dropped from taxi
3. As he dropped
4. As he dropped we too struggling to enter taxi
5. I saw a bag containing of money of money on the ground
6. I called that man back that your money is on the ground
7. And the man came