

Cohesion Errors in Writing among EFL Junior Middle School Students

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Abstract—English writing, as a senior form of language using, has irreplaceable value in daily life. For students, meeting the general requirements in the English language learning means to use English in writing skillfully. The purpose of this study is: (1) to analyze the text of junior middle school students' English writing; (2) to explore the use of text cohesion in their compositions; (3) to collect the most common mistakes and types of errors. Through the classification and analysis of various types of errors, it is hoped to help students reduce the use of cohesion errors, improve the writing abilities and provide some suggestions for English writing teaching. Based on the analysis of the 40 students' writings and their use of cohesion devices in compositions, we find that the use of the conjunctions in the data are unevenly distributed, and for most 9th grade students, their use of conjunctions are not diversified enough because of their lack of vocabulary storage. It is finally suggested that teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of students' English thinking mode and the explanation of cohesive knowledge in the teaching of writing.

Keywords—cohesion error; English writing; EFL; junior middle school

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the understanding of the English Curriculum Standards (2011 Edition) which is developed by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, the junior middle school students' English writing should reach five levels of writing standards at the end of the nine-year compulsory education. The five levels of writing standards are:

- Be able to collect and prepare material according to the writing requirements;
- Be able to draft short texts, messages, etc., and modify them with the guidance of teachers;
- Be able to use the common conjunctions to express the relation of order and logical;
- Be able to give a simple description of characters or time;

- Be able to write out simple paragraphs or instructions based on the given chart or table.

From the five levels of writing standards, we can see that there is such a requirement that students should be able to use the common conjunctions to express the relation of order and logic. That is to say junior middle school students should be able to use the common conjunctions correctly in their own writing in the stage of compulsory education. Therefore, in order to test whether the students' writing abilities have reached the target or not, and to provide some references and suggestions for the teaching of English writing, this study intends to help the students be able to use conjunctions to express the order and logic relations as the research object, and to analyze the connections of students writing compositions.

With the acceleration of the process of internationalization and the deepening of the reform of education and teaching, English writing has been expected highly. Now there also has a change in English teaching of middle school, from the previous pattern that only pay attention to the correct and accurate expression of vocabulary and grammar gradually turning to pay attention to students' communicative competence. However, this change makes the students become weak in mastering vocabulary gradually, and finally the problem of poor content and poor coherence constrains the students' abilities of using English language. This phenomenon shows that we have not paid enough attention to the problem of discourse, and the lack of cohesion is the most serious problem. In particular, when English writing is mentioned, some students do not know how to start and what to do, or the articles they wrote lack coherence of the whole chapter, and the logic is in a state of chaos. Therefore, it becomes even more important to improve students' English writing abilities.

So, this research embarks from the five writing requirements of the "English curriculum standard", analyzing the junior middle school students' English writing text and explores the usage of the connection based on the discourse cohesion theory. And we are expected to find out the usage of cohesion and to detect whether the students have reached the objective that can use conjunctions to express order and logical relation from the five grade writing standards or not by analyzing and collecting data of the junior middle school students' English writing texts. Besides,

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we are also expected to give some useful advice in improving the teaching of English writing in junior middle school.

Writing is not only the embodiment of the comprehensive abilities of language, but also the process of re-creating to the learned knowledge. Writing ability is one of the most important factors that affect students' English proficiency. However, it is not an easy task to improve their writing abilities. Most of the students cannot express their views clearly when they are writing, so there is no continuity in the whole composition, it is loosely organized. In the junior middle school, the teachers have not paid much attention to teach the writing skills, which leads to the students' writing abilities and logical thinking ability cannot get a good improvement.

Therefore, according to the five writing requirements, and based on the connection concept in the theory of cohesion, and combined with the application of cohesion in writing both at home and abroad, it has important theoretical and practical significance to analyze, discuss and research the junior middle school students' writing texts.

From the theoretical perspective, this study is to explore the junior middle school students' cohesion usage in English writing, mainly on conjunctions that are commonly used to express order and logical relation in junior middle school, by doing this to enrich the study of linking words in the teaching of writing in junior middle school.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Studies on Cohesion Theory*

Halliday (1962) proposed the concept of "cohesion" for the first time in 1962. In his book *Patterns of Lexis in Text Cohesion*, he claims that cohesion refers to the semantic relations in a text which makes the text coherent. He thinks relations of meaning that exist within the text can be defined as a text. Halliday and Hasan also state that cohesion is necessary though not sufficient condition for the creation of text. "A text is a passage of discourse, which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself and therefore cohesive". That means they think cohesion is the foundation of coherence, which is the most important prerequisite to the text. Coherence, or texture according to Halliday and Hasan, is the combination of semantic configurations of two different kinds: register and cohesion.

But for other linguists, there are some different points. For example, Brown and Yule (1983) claimed that the coherence of the text comes to form the arbitrary interpretation of the reader or hearer. Besides, cohesion is best defined as "the overt, linguistic-signaled relationship between propositions" (Widdowson, 1978, P. 31). And coherence, on the other hand, is defined as the relationship between illocutionary acts (Widdowson, 1978, P. 28). And according to Stenton and Sambert, coherence is "the relationships which link the meanings of utterances in a discourse or of the sentences in a text." In the book *Grammar*

and *Composition*, "That means that the sentences should be so closely connected to one another that they flow smoothly without gaps between them or jumps in logic. When the sentences of a paragraph flow smoothly, one growing out of the other, the paragraph is said to be coherent. Coherence is the quality of being integrated, logically consistent and intelligible".

The author prefers to Halliday and Hasan's view that "cohesion is the concrete semantic relations of the text, and coherence is the effect these relations produce" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Because these devices help to build a whole coherent text. Cohesion as a semantic concept concerns the relations of meaning existing within a text. Although in *Cohesion in English*, Halliday does not give a clear definition of coherence, he gives us the definition of texture, which is similar to coherence. "The concept of texture is entirely appropriate to express the property of 'being a text'. A text has a texture, and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text".

Hu Zhuanglin (1994) published the book *Discourse Cohesion and Coherence* in 1994. In the book, he puts forward some new ideas on discourse cohesion and coherence. In the book, he enlarges the scope of cohesion. He adds the same structure relationship and regards transitivity as a kind of cohesive tie. For the first time he advances that cohesive ties also existed in sounds and tunes. And he regards textual structure as a cohesive tie. Besides, he thinks social symbols play an important role in coherence. Zhang Delu (1992, 1993a) makes a research on the conditions of discourse coherence. And he discusses the restrictive functions of context, information structure, theme structure and cohesive systems. He gives another study on the relationship between cohesive range and discourse coherence. He (2000) puts forward some of his own views in recent years in the area of coherence. In 1996, Zhu Yongsheng holds the views that cohesion should be seen as a possible means to make sure the cohesion of a text instead of a pre-condition in coherence. And he agrees to improve Halliday and Hasan's cohesion theory, especially their classification of cohesive devices. Wang Quanzhi (2002) points out that coherence should not relate to cohesion completely. The factors including the general structure of the text, the thematic structure and information structure together determined a text.

According to above materials, it can be concluded that many scholars have done lots of research and contribution in the aspect of cohesion theory. From these studies, we can see that the research of the cohesion is very complex, and there are many definitions of the cohesion. A lot of scholars are mainly concentrated in the study of cohesion in English writing in senior high school and university level, but to improve the students' English writing ability, the research on cohesion theory in writing in middle school is also of great significance. The middle school stage is the foundation, if we want to have a better fight to the superstructure, the foundation must fasten. The author finds that there are few studies on cohesion and junior middle school students' English writing; therefore, it is necessary and important to study the use of cohesion in English writing in junior middle

schools, especially the use of conjunctions in junior middle school English writing.

B. Studies on Cohesion Theory and Writing Quality

Halliday and Hasan (1976), and Mc Cully (1985) argued that cohesion is a key strategy for coherence and it plays an important role in the quality of writing. Many studies have been done to prove the point of view. For example: Mc Culley (1985) used 493 compositions which are from the NAEP exam (1978-1979). After the research, he insisted that the good compositions used more cohesive devices. Therefore, there is correlation between the cohesive devices and the writing quality. Fitzgerald and Spiegel (1986) analyzed the writings of sixth and seventh grader to find the evidence for the relationship between cohesion and coherence. Noremment (1994) analyzed 30 college students' compositions. He made a comparison between Chinese writings and English writings on narrative topics to prove that cohesive devices contribute to the writing quality.

Li Bin (2009) analyzed the writings through the qualitative analysis of cohesive devices and he found many cohesive problems in the use of conjunction, lexical devices, and reference. Xiang Chengdong (1994) wrote a book to discuss the causes of errors, strategies and foreign language learning. Li Aiwen analyzed the cohesive errors in college students' writings. Tian Pinjing (2006) analyzed cohesive devices of college students' writings and gave some suggestions on the teaching of English writing. Zhou Yibing (2011) researches non-English majors' students and chose 100 samples to study and the results show that there are relations of cohesive devices and the writings quality. Some of the devices are higher in good compositions and others are higher in bad writings. He found some features and how to help the students use the cohesion devices correctly.

In a word, it can be seen from the research both aboard and domestic scholars that the study of cohesive devices has been a considerable work in this area. These findings have great contributions and profound influence to future surveys. However, because the education backgrounds are different and most of the subjects of the researches are college students, there are few research focusing on the middle school students with lower English level, it is necessary to do further research for applying cohesion to teaching so as to satisfy the new needs.

III. THEORETICAL BASIS

A. The Definition of Cohesion

There are many kinds of definitions of cohesion, as well as the researches on the definition of cohesion. The definition of cohesion mainly used in this study is defined by Halliday and Hasan. Halliday and Hasan (1976) argues that cohesion is a semantic concept, which is defined as the relationship between discourse and the meaning of text. They also point out that cohesion refers to the non-structural relationship of the idioms, that is to say, the language elements in the text are combined into an organic whole, which can achieve the integrity of the discourse. Cohesion is

a semantic relation between a component and another in a discourse, which can be realized by means of language. In other words, cohesion does not refer to the existence of a certain category of items, but the relationship between a project and another project. If one part of a discourse plays a key role in the understanding of the other, there is a cohesion connection between the two parts.

B. The Classification of Cohesive Devices

Halliday (Halliday & Hasan, 1985) claims that cohesion includes two categories: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. The former includes reference, substitution, conjunction and ellipsis, the latter includes reiteration, synonymy, antonym, hyponymy and collocation. They are called cohesive ties (devices). Table shows the classification of cohesive devices concretely.

TABLE I. THE CATEGORIES OF THESE TIES ARE DIVIDED BY HALLIDAY AND HASAN (1976, 1985A).

Cohesive Devices	
reference; substitution; conjunction and ellipsis	reiteration; synonymy; antonym; hyponymy and collocation

As can be seen from "Table I", cohesive devices can be divided into two categories: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion is divided into reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction these four sub categories, lexical cohesion includes reiteration; synonymy; antonym; hyponymy and collocation. The sub categories of the grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion are discussed below.

1) *Grammatical cohesion*: In discourse, the use of grammatical cohesion can play the role of linking sentences into a text. As can be seen from the above table, grammatical cohesion includes four parts: reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. The following is a brief description of these four parts, and provides a theoretical framework for the following discussion.

a) *Reference*: According to Halliday (1985), a participant or circumstantial element introduced at one place in the text can be taken as a reference point for something that follows. And referential relationship may be grouped into three types: personal reference (her, he, him, it, I, she, they, their etc.), demonstratives (this/that, these/those, there and the), comparatives (words that show similarity or difference, such as the adjectives same, similar and different etc.).

Personal reference is reference by means of function in the speech situation through the category of PERSON (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, P. 38). The category of personal reference includes 3 types: personal pronouns, possessive determiners and possessive pronouns. Personal pronouns are used to refer to people and objects as well. Here we mainly talk about referring to people (e.g. I, you, he, she, we, they, him, them etc.). In writing specific reference, people prefer to use generic reference instead of concrete examples. Possessive determiners are the possessive case of personal pronouns, such as, your, his, their, her, etc.. Possessive

pronouns are equal to possessive determiners plus nouns in syntax, such as, mine, hers, his, theirs etc..

Demonstrative reference is realized by demonstrative pronouns, definite articles and demonstrative adverbs. Demonstrative pronouns include *this*, *these*, *that* and *those*; the definite article is “the”; demonstrative adverbs are *here*, *there*, *now* and *then*. “This” and “these” commonly refer to someone or something near in the context, while “that” and “those” refer to something far.

The third class of reference is comparative, which includes adjectives, and adverbs that show identity, similarity or difference (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, P. 76). Apart from the expression such as *same* and *different*, a variety of adjectives and adverbs can also express comparative relations of some sorts. Such as, *so*, *as*, *equal*, *such*, *similarly*, *other*, *otherwise* and *likewise*, etc.

b) Substitution: Substitution is to use the words of the same nature to replace the words in the text in order to avoid duplication, and to make the context closely linked, and also to make the expression more concise. There are three categories of substitution: nominal substitution, verbal substitution and clausal substitution. Nominal substitution refers to replace the other noun phrase with the substitute words (mainly including one, ones, the same, etc.) that can be used as the central word of a noun phrase. Verbal substitution refers to replace the verb phrase with the verb substitution words (usually acted as an appropriate form of the word do). Clausal substitution refers to replace the clause with the substitute words (mainly including so, not, etc.). For example:

—This dress is so beautiful. I want to buy one. (Replace the word dress with the word one.)

—Did you use to play the piano?

—Yes, I did. (Replace the phrase used to play the piano with the word did.)

—Every night we hear strange noises outside. Police think it might be wind. But I don't think so. (Replace the clause it might be wind with the word so.)

(New target English Go for it, 9th Grade, 2006)

c) Ellipsis: Halliday and Hasan think that ellipsis is simply “substitution by zero” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). It means an item can be elliptical if its structure need not express all the features that have gone into its make-up-all the meaning choices that are embodied in it. In other words, the essential characteristic of ellipsis is that something, which is present in the selection of the underlying options, is omitted in the structure. The sub-categories for ellipsis are clausal ellipsis (ce), verbal ellipsis (ve), and nominal ellipsis (ne). Nominal ellipsis refers to the omission of the central word in the noun phrase, the omission of the central word and partial modification, and even the omission of the whole noun phrase. Verbal ellipsis refers to the omission of the verb in the verb phrase or the omission of the whole verb phrase. Clausal ellipsis refers to that part of the whole

sentence or the whole clause is omitted (mostly appear in the question and answer). For example:

—I want some names of Chinese food. Do you know some---? (some names of Chinese food is omitted.)

—You can help clean up the city parks.

—Yes, I'd like to---. (help clean up the city parks is omitted.)

—Have you ever been late for school?

—Yes. (---) (A whole clause is omitted, that is I've been late for school.)

(New target English Go for it, 9th Grade, 2006)

Ellipsis is a prevalent predominant phenomenon in verbal communication; nevertheless, people will not fail to communicate effectively. Ellipsis cohesions are seldom found in writings, but more in dialogues. Therefore, this paper does not discuss this kind of errors.

d) Conjunction: “Conjunction elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, P. 227). Hu Zhuanglin (1994) thinks that the conjunction refers to the connection between the two adjacent sentences or sentence group.

Conjunction is concerned with the ways in which different parts of a text fit together. These parts may be anything from clauses of a stretch of text to chapters of a book. The connections between the parts may be signaled in some way, through the use of conjunctions such as: although, but, and, so, on the other hand, and however. Besides conjunctive elements of these, Halliday and Hasan divide conjunctions into additive, adversative, causal and temporal.

Additive refers to after finishing or writing a paragraph, there is room for expansion, you can add some additional information on this basis. Such as the extension and affirmation of the preceding sentence, or a comparison or contrast with the previous statement. This type of conjunctions contains and, and also, furthermore, thus, besides, moreover and so on. Adversative refers to the meaning of this sentence is exactly the opposite of the previous one. If the previous statement is positive, the latter will be negative; and if the former is negative, the latter will be affirmative. This type of conjunctions contain but, however, though, although, yet and others. Causal refers to the relationship between cause and effect in various ways. This type of conjunctions contains because, so, as a result, for etc.. Temporal refers to the connection semantics that can react the sequence of events or events that occur at the same time. This type of conjunctions contains first, then, next, finally, last and so on. For example:

—There is a bank on the second floor. Take the escalator to the second floor and true right. (Additive, and)

—It will take a long time to walk to the downtown. But you can take a bus. (Adversative, but)

—I'm late for school, because I got up late this morning. (Causal, because)

—You can finish your work first. Then, go check with your teacher. (Temporal, first, then)

(New target English Go for it, 9th Grade, 2006)

The defect of this kind of classification method is not all the connectives can be classified. So, in the book *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday gave up the incipient method of division, and a more reasonable and scientific method which takes the logical semantic relationship as the breakthrough point have been adopted. The new classification method refers to the elaboration, extension and enhancement. And each class is divided into several sub classes that belong to this class, so that the coverage area of each type can be significantly expanded, the meaning can be more complete, applicability can be significantly enhanced. Thus it shows that this pattern of evolving is not a simplification, but a more detailed and comprehensive improvement.

2) *Lexical cohesion*: Hu Zhuanglin (1994) believes that lexical cohesion refers to the semantic relationship among some of the vocabulary appeared in the discourse. The relationship may be repetition, synonymous reiteration or antisense contrast. Liu Chendan (1999) believes that lexical cohesion refers to establish a chain in a text to achieve its coherence through the choice of words, so as to establish the continuity of the text. Hoey (2000) believes that lexical cohesion refers to the main means of planning mechanism. Halliday and Hassan put the lexical cohesion relations into two categories: reiteration and collocation.

a) *Reiteration*: Reiteration is the repetition of a lexical item, or the occurrence of a synonym, or near-synonym, a super-ordinate or a general word, sometimes in the context of reference; that is, where the two occurrences have the same referent. Simple lexical repetition occurs when a lexical item that has already occurred in a text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, P. 319).

They think that all types of repetition link have in common and these links are that they allow a speaker or writer to say something again in order that something new may be added into the text. There are some textual items which form links, such as personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and modifiers, etc.. They serve the same function that the writer can say something again.

b) *Collocation*: Whether the collocation occurs within the sentence in general sense or above the sentence, both of them can create the cohesion.

Collocation is the other part of lexical cohesion, which is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur. It can be extended that the basis of lexical relationship between features as a cohesive force, and there is cohesion between any pairs of lexical items standing

to each other in some recognizable lexical-semantic relation. Halliday and Hasan's treatment of collocation is textual: lexical ties are independent of structure and may span long passages of intervening discourse.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Sample

This study takes the junior middle school students' English compositions of Cangzhou City as the research object. The number of students in that class is 40, and the English proficiency level of the students in that class is the best among others. They have the same teacher and use the same textbook.

Three qualified middle school teachers participated in the composition appraisal work. They have taught middle school students for many years and they have much experience in teaching. They came from the same school as the students, so they are familiar with the students and their English proficiency level. So they could give the reasonable suggestions.

B. Instrumentation

All data for this study derive from the writings of the subjects in a junior middle school in Cangzhou City. The researcher asks students to write a composition with 120 words within 30 minutes by looking at the pictures they received (In appendix). Students can choose any title which is suitable for the composition. The reason why I chose it is that the topic of the pictures is not very hard to most students and they can use different kinds of cohesion devices to describe the pictures. The reason why choosing the genre of narrative on this composition is the genre of narrative is most often used in various kinds of tests. To assure the reliability, I invited 3 qualified teachers who are experienced in teaching work for many years. They can concretely and objectively revise the compositions. 40 compositions were gathered analyzed according to Halliday and Hasan's cohesive taxonomy. And 40 samples were formed.

C. Research Procedure

In order to analyze the compositions, first, we will show how many cohesive devices of each type of cohesion it includes. Second, it is necessary to classify the errors committed in each type of cohesion. The writer and 3 qualified teachers count cohesive devices manually. The cohesive devices and cohesive errors were identified and highlighted.

D. Data Collection

9th grade students were asked to take the writing exam. When the test finished, the teacher collect all the students' writing texts. Three experienced teachers took turns reviewing these compositions, and then collecting and analyzing the data. By doing this, we can have the statistics for the amount and proportion of error using in conjunctions. All the sentences with cohesion devices and cohesion errors have been marked

clearly according to an error coding scheme, and then counted them and set them down.

Taking the feasibility of this study and the actual situation of junior middle school students' English Writing into account, the connectives in this study are divided into the following six categories from the semantic logic level. And this paper will analyze the descriptive texts of the junior middle school students from these six categories. So the last step is to categorize the devices.

TABLE II. SIX TYPES OF CONJUNCTIONS

<i>Types</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>Additive</i>	and, also, besides, too, etc.
<i>Adversative</i>	but, however, yet, though, although, etc.
<i>Causative</i>	because, so, for, so that, because of, since, etc.
<i>Temporal</i>	when, until, at the moment, all the time, at the same time, etc.
<i>Order</i>	first, second, then, finally, last, in the end, next, after, etc.
<i>Conditional</i>	if, if not, etc.

"Table II" The data are supposed to be reliable not only because of the amount of the sampled data, but also because of the sampling process. The samples are all original writings without any correction.

E. Data Analysis

In the analysis of these compositions, the study tries to discover the frequency of cohesive devices, the errors committed in samples and the correlation between the usage of cohesive devices and the quality of the writing. Moreover, it is hoped to provide teachers and students with some beneficial suggestions.

First of all, we identify the number of all the cohesion devices in their texts by manual annotation. Then, we can count the number of the wrong use of those cohesion devices. After this, we classify all the cohesion errors according to table 2. Finally, we can get the statistics of the cohesion devices used in various types and the statistics of the wrong use of those cohesion devices. And the error rate can be calculated then.

Through the analysis and the data collected from 40 effective compositions by 9th grade students, we find that the most frequently used conjunctions by the students are the additive type, but its error rate is the lowest. The second highest are as follows: adversative conjunctions, temporal conjunctions, causative conjunctions and order conjunctions.

V. FINDINGS

A. The Error Distribution of the Six Types of Conjunctions in the Writing of 40 Students

Through the analysis and the data collected from 40 effective compositions by 9th grade students, the statistical results of their incorrect use in conjunctions are displayed in the following form.

TABLE III. THE ERROR DISTRIBUTION OF THE SIX TYPES OF CONJUNCTIONS IN THE WRITING OF 40 STUDENTS

<i>Types</i>	<i>The number of conjunctions they used</i>	<i>The number of conjunctions they used incorrectly</i>	<i>Error rates</i>
<i>Additive</i>	124	4	3%
<i>Adversative</i>	86	6	6.9%
<i>Causative</i>	48	6	12.5%
<i>Temporal</i>	50	5	10%
<i>Order</i>	44	4	9%
<i>Conditional</i>	1	0	0

(Only one student has used conditional conjunction, the total quantity is too little that is not suitable for this analysis, so the number is negligible.) "Table III" shows that the most conjunctions used by the students are the additive type, there are 124 words or phrases belong to this type, but its error rate is the lowest, it is just 3%. This just shows that the students have a good grasp of the additive conjunctions. The next highest are as follows: adversative conjunctions, temporal conjunctions, causative conjunctions and order conjunctions. The corresponding error rates are: 6.9%, 10%, 12.5%, 9%. The specific error conditions of these five types of conjunctions will be analyzed in the next section.

B. The Incorrect Use of the Cohesion from Junior Middle School Students in the Description Composition

Using conjunctions is an important and effective way of cohesion in English writing. The use of conjunctions can make the relationship and structure between sentences clear, and thus, the discourse can realize semantic coherence. However, according to the research of many scholars, the problems of Chinese EFL learners in this kind of cohesive device mainly are excessive use of conjunctions, the underuse of conjunctions and error usage of conjunctions. The results of the experiment agree with the above conclusions.

Eg.1 One day, an old lady fell down when she was crossing the street. And her apples were flipping out of the basket. And two children were standing at the road. The girl ran to help the lady. And the boy ran to pick the apples. (Students often use simple conjunctions too frequently in their writings, although the word "and" in the sentence has played the role of conjunction, too much of it will destroy the simplicity this paragraph should be.)

Eg.2 An old lady was crossing the street, suddenly she fell down. Then, the apples in her basket were flipping out. Later, a girl helped the lady to stand up. After this, a boy picked her apples up. Finally, the girl helped the old lady cross the road. (As shown above, students like to use too much order words when they are expressing opinions or hierarchies. In fact, if this kind of words shows up frequently in the reading process, it will attract more readers' attention and distract them from other contents. In other words, it can cause obstacles in achieving fast and accurate reading comprehension. So, excessive use of such cohesive devices will produce the opposite results.)

Eg.3 Lily was very happy today. She helped an old lady to cross the street. Because she fell down. Tom was happy, too. He also helped the woman. He picked her apples up.

Because her apples were flipping out of her basket. (The word “because” in this paragraph should be used to connect two simple sentences, and to form a compound sentence that expresses causal link.)

Eg.4 When an old lady crossing the street today, though she was very carefully, but she fell down after all. Fortunately two children helped her pick up the apples and cross the road. (The use of conjunctions in this sentence is influenced by Chinese thinking mode, we can only choose one word between “though” and “but”).

Eg.5 Today, I saw an old lady fall down when she was crossing the road. And two children helped her. What can I do if I were that boy? At first, I will help her to stand up. Then, I will hold her arm and help her to cross the road. (This student used “at first” and “then” to represent the order, but “at first” correspond to “later” in English, and the meaning of the expression after the word “later” is different from the previous. The word that correspond to “then” in English is “first”, it indicates the order of the development of things. It can be seen from the context that “at first” misused as the word “first”. So, “at first” should be changed to “first”. Therefore, the sequence of events is straightforward.)

VI. CONCLUSION

According to the statistics in chapter 5, the author draws the conclusion of cohesive devices play an important role in English Writing. In the thesis, the author analyzes the cohesive errors in junior middle school students’ English writings on the basis of cohesion theory and detects a number of errors that students commit in their compositions. The result reveals that students’ ability of using cohesive devices is under development. That means students usually have problems in usage of cohesive devices. Even worse, students sometimes use these conjunctions incorrectly.

So, in order to meet the requirements of the new curriculum standards for the students of 9th grade better and improve students’ writing level at the same time, teachers should pay attention to the teaching of writing in the following aspects:

- Teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of students’ English thinking mode in usual writing teaching. Some students are deep influenced by the habitual patterns of Chinese thinking mode, so they will be used to structure the writing ideas with Chinese thinking which causes their written expressions are not ideal. Therefore, teachers should guide the students to think in English, only in this way can students improve their writing ability obviously.
- Teachers should pay attention to the explanation of cohesive knowledge in the teaching of writing. Through the research, we find that the students know little about the classification of conjunctions, and the conjunctions used in their texts are also very single and simplistic. Therefore, teachers should involve some knowledge about discourse cohesion in the future teaching and let the students know the

basic knowledge of cohesive devices, so that students can have more choices in the coming days and enrich their vocabulary knowledge at the same time.

It is hoped that teachers will be able to understand the problems in the writing of the students and ameliorate these issues in the later teaching process, meanwhile, help students improve their writing ability by training them not only the diction ability, but also the writing skills.

The use of cohesion in students’ writing is a complex research topic, and because of the lack of experience and urgent time, there may exist some errors. The following aspects should be improved and noticed in the future similar study.

- The sampling population is not well representative. Because the author only studies one class of students’ compositions, and the size of the sample is small, the final results of the test can’t represent all the 9th grade students. Therefore, does the final conclusion of this study cover the students’ entire writing situation is need to carry on a more deeply research.
- The experimental time is short. Because of some subjective and objective causes, the time of introducing and testing their writing is limited. And all of these have an impact on the final results.
- This test method is mainly to find out the use of cohesion in descriptive writings of English by analyzing the writings of the students. Such test results are not obvious. We should also use several other genres to compare, such as the practical writing and narrative writing etc... And it is better to have a test before the experiment, then teach and explain about cohesion knowledge to the students. After the training, let them have a test for a second time, and then compare the results and try to find whether the cohesion knowledge can help to improve students’ writing proficiency or not. Such a comparative analysis of the effect will be better, the validity will be higher and the credibility will be more reliable.

So, the research on the issue is still immature. In the future research, the author will continue to make up for the deficiencies of this study.

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