



## **Appraising the Impacts of Cohesion and Coherence in Benin SS3 EFL Learners' Writing Productions: A Linguistic Perspective**



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### **Article history:**

**Received:** 20 April 2018

**Accepted:** 30 August 2018

**Published:** 27 September 2018

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### **Keywords:**

*Coherence;*

*Cohesion;*

*EFL learners and teachers;*

*Language communicative approach;*

*Operational solutions;*

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### **Abstract**

This article aims at exploring and investigating linguistic coherence and cohesion in Benin EFL learners' writing productions. Delivering this objective leads to putting forth two hypotheses. The first is that academically-oriented Second Language Learners need to develop L2 writing skills. In addition to that, Second Language (L2) teachers also need to know how to teach L2 writing (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). But more often than not, most of EFL teachers find writing a complicated skill to teach. This mindset, in one way or the other significantly affects students learning outcomes. The ongoing research paper has gone about a field investigation through graded writing composition tests papers. The sampled study population has consisted of sixty (60) English language learners in Senior Secondary Three (SS3). Out of this handful but gender-inclusive (*i.e.*, male and female) respondents, the findings reveal that very few students in the classroom, have succeeded in producing effectively understandable writings. One of the reasons behind such poor capacity is that little time is devoted to teaching writing skill during English language classes. Since writing is perceived by both EFL teachers and learners as a complex skill which requires mental effort in addition to the lack of adequate training in it, this article comes up with the conclusion that EFL learners' writing productions could be improved with teachers devoting more time and effort to its teaching. This paper eventually suggests some operational solutions to improve learners' ability to write coherent and cohesive texts.

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**1. Introduction**

Venturing to scrutinize EFL learners' writing productions in a French-speaking country like Benin can be perceived either as ambitious or as a pretentious project for this certainly raises the controversial issue of knowing which skill EFL teachers really and effectively teach their learners and how is that taught for a valid evaluation. Of course, 80% EFL teachers (this statistic figure emanates from the supervisory activities carried out by national inspectors) throughout the school year do reading comprehension for their professional qualification. This is evidence showing that little attention is attached to writing activity though it constitutes the second segment in an exam paper, not only at the school level but also at the national as well. It has then been observed that the writing skill considered as productive one which gives learners opportunity to use the language and display their creativity is hardly taught. Therefore, it becomes clear that scrutinizing learners' writing productions to see how coherent and cohesive they are in a French-speaking environment like Benin requires a thoughtful effort.

Actually, [Muslim \(2014:105\)](#) asserts: "*Writing well is really a big challenge for both native and non-native students. In general, it is much bigger with the students of English as a foreign language*". This assertion highlights the fact that learners find it more and more difficult to write, or produce understandable and convincing texts due to the weak and little experiences they cumulate throughout their academic training. It is easy to blame technological progress which offers learners a number of opportunities like ready, formulating sentences which they can send out at a click on their keyboards. However, the input most of the teachers represent for students in different training centers is not satisfactory, that is to say, it does not commensurate and matches the expectancy. Moreover, the syllabus availed to teachers in schools do not allow to enhance attitudes towards writing skill.

The field study mainstreamed into the ongoing article has scrutinized EFL learners' writing productions, not in terms of style or language interference. The motivation behind it is tailored by an appalling observation. As a matter of fact, after ten years of teaching practices in different schools (public and private), one still observes that reading EFL learners' productions give the impression of going through randomly collected sentences sounding ungrammatical, non-coherent and non-cohesive. In order to check this hypothesis, a corpus of writing productions by EFL learners has been gathered for description and analysis. The rationale behind this is to uncover if these learners have any knowledge of the linguistic coherence and cohesion devices and how they use them in their writing productions to make their writings sound coherent, cohesive, and meaningful. Some suggestions and recommendations have also been made to awake and call the students' attention to the necessity of redeveloping the basics of their writing. In the move to deliver the set objective, the following paragraph provides some conceptual clarifications in addition to the theoretical framework guiding and serving as the backbone to the whole development.

*Conceptual clarification and a brief theoretical orientation*

Teaching requires the training and development of different skills in learners. Among those skills ranges writing which is, in fact, the process of using symbols (letters of alphabet, punctuation, and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. It involves the teaching of spelling, vocabulary, sentences structures and grammar, punctuation, proper layout, coherence, cohesion and the organization of content clearly and effectively. In other words, writing is a complex and dynamic activity which not only combines the teaching of language components but also the use of cohesive and coherent devices for the production of meaningful sentences. In this perspective, [\(Hinkel, 2004\) quoted in Annab \(2016: xiii\)](#) states that: "...it [writing] requires an attainment of sufficient linguistic proficiency."

What is worth noting here is that being proficient in a language is not a sine qua non for producing successful pieces of writings? There is a difference between speaking and writing. As contended by [Raimes \(1983\) quoted in Annab \(2016:2\)](#) "*speaking...is learned at an early age without any systematic instruction, and writing has to be*

*taught at school.*” Teaching writing skill is academically achieved through a process the guidance of which starts with paragraph writing. In the context of this study, [Wren and Martin \(2011:315\)](#) see a paragraph as “...a number of sentences grouped together and relating to one topic; or, a group of related sentences that develop a single point.” The idea behind this is that a paragraph is not just about a group of words put together. The sequence ‘a group of related sentences’ shows that there is an internal organization which helps ideas developed in a paragraph hold together. This internal organization gears towards language properties such as cohesion and coherence.

As a matter of fact, cohesive devices can be viewed as the set of ties and connections that exist within texts. It also refers to relations of meaning that exist within a text, and that defines it as a text. In other words, it is the formal link or text cues that glue text elements together and guide the reader to comprehension. [Yule \(2010:143\)](#) assumes that “An appropriate number of cohesive ties may be a crucial factor in our judgments on whether something is well written or not.” As such, cohesion can be classified into subclasses. Therefore, one can distinguish:

- a) Textual cohesion which deals with the relations of meaning that exist within a text.
- b) Discourse cohesion which is about the relations of meaning between elements of the discourse. Discourse cohesion reveals some factors different from textual cohesion, as spoken discourse is more situational and contextual.
- c) Linguistic cohesion is the links of meaning determined by the text’s inner elements such as lexicon, pronouns, conjunctions etc. Linguistic cohesion totally depends on the text.
- d) Pragmatic cohesion is determined by non-linguistic elements from outside the text. In other words, pragmatic cohesion is governed by knowledge of the real world or context.
- e) Explicit cohesion is related to formal manifestations of cohesive markers.
- f) Implicit cohesion is the one implied in the context.

Whatever the subclasses may be, cohesion is partly expressed through grammar and partly through vocabulary, which can be referred to as grammatical and lexical (Lexico-grammatical) cohesion with conjunction on the borderline of the two. In term of conjunctive relations, one can mainly distinguish four types exemplified as follows:

- a) Additive: and, or, furthermore, similarly, in addition
- b) Adversative: but, however, on the other hand, nevertheless
- c) Causal: so, consequently, for this reason, it follows from this
- d) Temporal: then, after that, an hour later, finally, at last.

The use of these linguistic devices to connect sentences plays an important role in connected discourse. It is then clear that to link and bind sentences together one needs cohesion which utilizes cohesive ties to correlate, inter-relate sentences and makes them interdependent. As a result of that, a text becomes a single piece, not a mixing of unrelated and independent sentences.

In spite of the fact that cohesive ties within a text give us some insights into how writers structure their texts, they would not be sufficient to enable us to make sense of what we actually read. We need then to consider another linguistic device described in terms of coherence. In fact, coherence is the characteristic of a text to establish links in meaning within and between texts. It is concerned with the content of a text, the meaning of it is attempting to convey. According to [Van Dijk \(1977\)](#) coherence is “a semantic property of discourse based on the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences.” In other words, coherence puts forth people’s ability to make sense of what they perceive or experience in the world. Coherence has many aspects:

- a) Product-based coherence studies the analysis of coherence cues in static texts. As readers, we need to identify text cues and coherent organization to facilitate the understanding.
- b) Process-based coherence investigates the role of coherence in communication processes, focusing on either coherence building or coherence design; when writing, we have to come up with the way to construct a sense of being a whole so as to effect successful communication.
- c) Author-based coherence is the way the writer makes use of linguistic means to express his/her ideas in a coherent manner taking into account his/her own culture, background and viewpoints.
- d) Reader-based coherence: the reader being different from the writer and not having absolutely the same background, he/she must try to retrieve coherence from the text by using his/her own tools. As a result, the reader’s coherence may be different from the author’s coherence.

- e) Local coherence refers to the connectedness on the micro-level of the text, such as sentences.
- f) Global coherence denotes the accordance with the main topic and conformity to certain patterns and genres, it is based on the whole text.
- g) Textual coherence deals with the links of interactions between parts of a text in connection with a given topic.
- h) Discourse coherence is the interdependence of different elements in a discourse contributing to unity.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The ongoing research work which stands as a true field study follows the principles of both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. Indeed, those have allowed going through some theories, data collection techniques, data analysis technique following the specific chronological order. Doing that also includes applying research design, research procedure (in the form of algorithms, Pseudocode, or other), how to test, and data acquisition [1]-[3]. The description of the course of research should be supported references, so the explanation can be accepted scientifically [2], [4].

Tables and Figures are presented center unlike shown below and cited in the manuscript.

The data analyzed in this paper were collected during the first term evaluation of the school year 2017-2018, that is, three months after official school resumption. The investigation is mainly based on cohesion and coherence in Sèmè-Podji Secondary School SS3 students' writings. Actually, this school is located on the administrative jurisdiction of Sèmè-Podji Municipality in the Ouémè region. Sèmè-Podji is one of Benin's border towns to Nigeria. Due to economic reasons, the English language is somehow present since so many inhabitants, young and elderly people, trade with Nigeria. The school is a public secondary institution including Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary levels (JSS1, JSS2, JSS3, JSS4, SS1, SS2, and SS3) with about 2,300 students dispatched into 50 pedagogical units. As pointed out earlier, the target population of respondents here is made up of SS3 learners. Not all of them are concerned but for statistical reasons, only one-fifth of a class has been sampled; thus twelve (12) copies have been analyzed. The rationale behind the choice of this category of learners is the fact that this study is, contrary to the previous ones based on beginners or intermediate students, focusing on learners who can be regarded as advanced learners 'with a minimum of seven years learning English). Coping assignments with coherence problems in writings at an early age or stage is a key to help EFL learners master the language since learners and teachers could be given what they need to better writing teaching and production. Such measures will prevent learners from accumulating weaknesses which may worsen in upper forms. In other words, it is better to focus on young learners, detect their coherence problems in writing, study them, and find solutions in order to equip them to be able to convey meaningful messages through writings.

In addition to the learners' writing productions and in views of having a conclusive and proof-reliable/dependable study, some instruments including questionnaires to students as well as to teachers have also helped in the collection of data. The objective of the questionnaire to teachers is to collect information on their teaching practices and their opinion on their learners' writing. As for learners, they have been questioned on whether they are taught coherence and cohesion. The most important instruments used to check coherence and cohesion in their writings are coherence rating scale and cohesive ties identification form. The following sub-section goes about the analysis of the students' compositions by scrutinizing, disaggregating, reporting, tabulating, and commenting on the various data related to cohesive ties and coherence. All the data are statistically compiled with frequency worked out and the percentage calculated (Astawa, *et. al.*, 2017, Suryasa, *et. al.*, 2017).

## 3. Results and Discussions

### *Findings of the Analysis of Cohesive Devices and Coherence in EFL Learners' Writing Productions*

This segment deals with data generation, collection, analysis, and discussion of the findings.

### 3.1 Analyzing Data generated through the EFL Learners' Writing

For the sake of in-depth analysis of the learners and teachers behaviors regarding writing skill, it has been absolutely necessary to collect two types of data. The first batch has been harvested through the coherence and cohesive devices analysis in the writing productions generated by the SS3 students during the third term exam of the year. Indeed, those are the copies produced by the “almost-university students”, that is the secondary students already on the last river shore, thus in the last year of secondary school. The second batch of data has been generated through the administration and distribution of questionnaires to the two respondent groups at stake when it comes to teaching writing composition in secondary school. Those are the knowledge dispensers- the teachers and the knowledge seekers- the students.

### 3.2 Analysis of cohesive ties in the learners' writings

Table 1  
Showing the distribution of cohesive ties in learners' writings

	Number used	Number Correct
Personal	176	83
Demonstrative	38	16
Comparative	00	00
Total	214	99

As table 1 above exudes, out of 214 uses of reference devices, 176 are personal, 38 demonstrative and no comparative. One can also notice that 99 references used are correct even though they are awkwardly positioned in ways that do not contribute to the cohesion either because they are exophoric or because a singular item has been used to refer to a plural referent etc.

In text 1, it can be read:

*One can know we are sick when the symptoms of that disease...*

In the foregoing sentence, the inclusive plural first person pronoun *we* mean that the writer is comprised but nowhere in the text. Recoverable reference “*We*” has no referent of that sort inside the text. This can then imply that *we* are exophoric, referring to people in real life.

Moreover, in the last sentence of text 2 it is read:

*“If people are suffering from an STD, we should help that person by giving him advice, tell him to make consultations, take his medicines every day.”*

As it can be noted, the items *that, him, his* are supposed to refer back to the performer of the action described in the sentence, that is *people*. But surprisingly enough, the plural form *people* is used to refer back to the singular items *that, him, his*. This use of reference is not correct, thus does not contribute to cohesion.

Regarding coherence in the writings, it has been checked with five clues according to Halliday's coherence criteria. They have just been checked through their presence but not through grade since the objective of the study is not to determine the quality of reference, but rather the use or not of reference devices. The presence of coherence devices in the learners' writing productions is summarized in the table below:

### 3.4 Analyzing coherence in the Learners' Writing Productions

Table 2  
Reporting coherence in learners' writings

Items	Number of writings comprising it	Percentage
Effectiveness of introduction and conclusion	03	7.5%
Relevancy to topic	18	45%
Elaboration of ideas	25	62.5%
Organization into paragraph	30	75%
Presence of writer's point of view	10	25%

As shown in table 2 above, the most used coherence device is *organization into paragraph*, followed by *elaboration of ideas* and *relevancy to the topic*. The least used appears to be *effectiveness of introduction and conclusion*. It can then be assumed that the learners' writing productions lack coherence devices. As such, sequences like *AIDS is dangerous, AIDS kill much people, Me, I don't have AIDS, AIDS is STD* quoted from the different learners' productions do not help to know that the topic is STD in general. One can imagine that the text is about AIDS. Besides, the way the ideas are elaborated does not make the productions enough coherent. Moreover, the organization of the texts in a paragraph is not respected. This is the example in text 1, whereby instead of having a single paragraph we have two as if the writing were an essay.

### 3.5 Analysis of the responses generated through questionnaires

As we said above, some questionnaires have been designed and distributed to learners and teachers as well. The aim is to check the learners' mastery of coherence and cohesion and also to see if teachers really teach their learners coherence and cohesion. In this vein, not all the questions on the questionnaires will be treated here. The analysis considers those which have something to do with coherence and cohesion that is the correlation between the teaching of writing techniques and the use of coherent and cohesive devices in writing a meaningful text/paragraph. As such, the results of our investigation are summarized in the table below:

Table 3  
Reporting learners' opinion about writing sessions' frequency and their knowledge of coherence and cohesion

Questions	Frequency		Percentage	
	Yes	No		
Does your teacher often teach you writing techniques?	10	30	25%	75%
Do you know what coherence and cohesion are?	11	29	27.5%	72.5%

As shown in table 3 above, 25% of the learners recognize that their teacher teaches them writing techniques whereas 75% of them consider that he/she does not often teach them writing. Concerning the learners' knowledge of coherence and cohesion, the same remark is made whereby 29 (i.e.72.5%) confess they have no knowledge of coherence and cohesion.

The data collected from the learners oblige us to summon the actors in charge of teaching the learners. To be practical, the questions related to the teachers' academic, professional qualifications and their teaching experience are left unanalyzed. To the question to know whether their learners are good at writing, the results of the investigation are summarized in the table below:

Table 4  
Reporting how good the learners are at writing

Question	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Are your students good at writing?	05	13%	34	87%

According to the foregoing table, almost all the investigated teachers accordingly admit that their learners are not good at writing. The percentages of their answers confirm the learners' opinion which proves that EFL teachers do not always teach writing techniques to their learners. This explains the learners' weaknesses noted in their writing productions which are summarized in the table below:

Table 5  
Showing learners' weaknesses in writing

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Vocabulary	34	87.17%
Cohesion	32	82.05%
Coherence	30	76.92%
Structure	28	71.79%

According to the data captured in table 5 above, students have four main problems with writing. The first is vocabulary (87.17%), followed by cohesion (82.05%), coherence (76.92%) and weaknesses related to structure come in the last position. The absence of these linguistic features in the learners' writing results in the production of fragmented say unrelated sentences. This linguistic reality deprives writing productions from its prior characteristic, the one of being a productive skill. As assumed by Nation (2009) quoted in Briesmaster and Etchegaray (2017:187) "Being a successful L2 writer involves making the right decisions in order to express meaning in a foreign language." In other words, the unity of a text requires the consideration of its internal organization. Learners need then the elements that make a text to stand as a whole. This is why when teachers are asked to know what aspects of coherence and cohesion they know and teach their learners, the substance of their answers is tabularized below:

Table 6  
Aspects of coherence and cohesion knew to teachers and teach their learners

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Referencing with pronouns	32	82 %
Use of topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding the sentence	30	77%
Use of connectives	30	77%

As shown in the table, the most known aspects of coherence and cohesion to teachers are the ones related to pronouns referencing (82%), writing of topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence (77%) and the use of connectives (77%). The investigation then reveals that the actors in charge of the learners have knowledge of coherence and cohesion. The only problem is the frequency of their teaching during class sequences. The investigation has also shown that the most known cohesive device to teachers is pronoun referencing, which confirms the learners' knowledge as noted in table1 so far. All this analysis made, we now turn to the discussion of the findings.

### 3.6 Discussion of the Findings

Writing is an academic skill that requires a considerable effort while taught to EFL learners. This view is shared among scholars and our investigation with the students of form4 of CEG Sèmè-Podji has unveiled their inability to produce coherent and cohesive texts. The inquiry into these learners' writing productions has revealed an inappropriate use of cohesive ties/devices and a remarkable ignorance of the basic principles that guide the

production of a coherent paragraph/text. From experience, a written piece is a logical sequence of ideas holding together and that makes sense. As contended by [Murry and Hughes \(2008:45\)](#) “a good writer ‘sticks’ their ideas together so that they act as links in a chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the connections become unclear and the argument structure breaks down.” It consequently follows from this assertion that writing is a complex task that calls for certain aspects to be followed. As such, coherence and cohesion are the most two essential linguistic aspects that make a text a text (create texture). If cohesion refers to relations of meaning that exist within a text, coherence, according to [Shannon \(2011:11\)](#) “is the element which allows the reader to move easily from one idea to another.”

The inquiry into form4 learners’ writings has revealed that the most frequent cohesive ties they make use of are personal references (176) followed by demonstratives (38). The high proportion of the personal references in their writings shows that students are aware of its importance in creating cohesiveness. As far as comparative references are concerned, this study has found none in the writings. This can be explained by the fact that comparative forms of adjectives are more complicated than personal pronouns, possessive adjectives, and demonstratives. Out of the 214 uses of reference found in the learners’ writings, 82.24% are personal and the remaining 17.76% are demonstratives, that is to say, students are more used to pronouns and possessive adjectives. Unfortunately, whatever the reference used by students, more than the half of it (53.73%) is not correctly used. It means that students are somehow aware of some cohesive ties but using them to write cohesively generates anxiety during evaluation. When closely considered, we come to question learners’ metacognitive ability in putting into practice what has been taught them. Actually, [Briesmaster and Etchegaray \(2017:186\)](#) contend that metacognition is “a process whereby the learners evaluate the effectiveness of the cognitive strategies implemented when carrying out a task.” If the learners of form4 of CEG Sèmè-Podji are not successful in writing, either they are not enough mature to face this kind of exercise or the teachers fail in their professional responsibility and as such bear the learners’ failure upon their shoulders. In reference to what has been said, the results in table3 confirm our point of view, at least the last part of it. Actually, 75% of the learners recognized that their teachers do not often teach them writing techniques. Likewise, 72.5% of them assume that they have but little knowledge about coherence and cohesion. Corroboratively, 87% of the teachers admit that their learners are not good at writing. All these realities can be explained by the fact the teachers’ academic and professional training are biased and consequently they cannot successfully teach something they themselves do not master. [Ahmed \(2010:213\)](#) who has conducted similar studies with Egyptian students has this to say: “...teachers tend to use traditional teaching techniques such as lecturing, reading aloud, and book reading; they are frequently indifferent to students’ communication in class, and students report negative attitudes towards essay writing as a difficult course.” It is then clear that learners’ fear of writing originates from the fact that many teachers insist on communicative approach while over evaluating the teaching of language components.

After discussing the misuse of the text-based features noted in learners’ writing productions, we now turn to coherence. As said above, coherence is the element which allows the reader to move easily from one idea to another. In other words, this means that a coherent writing is recognized in its organization and unity through the writing of a topic sentence, some supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. This is at least what is expected from learners of form4. Our inquiry into the issue has revealed that there are clues of coherence in the investigated learners’ writings.

In fact, this investigation has shown that the most present in the organization in a paragraph; 75% of them know how to organize a paragraph. The second criterion of coherence found in the writings is the elaboration of ideas. In the writings, we have noticed that 62.5% of the students could develop ideas, explain them, and give examples to illustrate. The least used coherence criteria are the effectiveness of an introduction and a conclusion and the presence of the writer’s point of view. Since a topic sentence is necessary for a paragraph and even an essay to be easily understood, students’ weakness at producing a logical introduction makes their writing really tough to understand. Moreover, relevancy of a topic is an important criterion in texts as well as a conclusion, to sum up ideas otherwise texts look like meaningless jumbled sentences. As contended by [Halliday and Hasan \(1976\)](#) quoted by [Hellalet \(2013:54\)](#) “If a passage of English containing more than one sentence is perceived as a text, there will be certain linguistic features present in that passage which can be identified as contributing to its total unity and giving it texture.” Considering the foregoing assertion and the learners’ difficulties in writing a coherent text, the definition Halliday and Hasan made of a text is not clear to the learners. As such, the onus lies on the teachers to identify their learners’ language problems and ensure that they find solutions to them. Of course, an important percentage of the investigated teachers recognize that they have knowledge of some coherence aspects and teach them in class. Surprisingly, 72.5% of students say they don’t know about cohesion and coherence. Moreover, only 7.5% of students

succeed in elaborating an introduction and writing a conclusion. This can be explained by the frequency of the writing activities during class sequences and the performance of students in the lesson.

Another manifestation of their inability incoherence is the poor quality of connectivity between ideas although they are able to develop ideas. Most of the investigated learners recognize that they are unable to link ideas, connect them logically to express addition, contrast, etc. A misuse of a linking word can introduce irrelevancy to the topic. Approximately 80% of teachers (table 5) acknowledge students' writings are hindered by cohesion and coherence errors. From the foregoing discussion, it is simply difficult for teachers to understand their learners' productions and assess/evaluate them accordingly. As such, the coherence contract between the writer and the reader (Hellalet, 2013) is unsuccessful and simply leads to misunderstanding.

However, students' difficulty with writing cohesive and coherent texts is somehow due to their teachers. Actually, teaching is a professional activity requiring abilities, knowledge, and practices in pedagogy. Even if academic qualifications give teachers access to classes and to learners, it is only a formal training in teaching that can give them tools to transfer required knowledge to students. Unfortunately, most of the teachers we have investigated are holders of academic qualifications viz. license and master. The situation is worse in some areas whereby some holders of license in geography or sociology find themselves teaching English. Under these circumstances, teachers' non-qualification in teaching means probably poor quality teaching leading to poor quality of knowledge transmission in all skills. The occurrence of this phenomenon in the educational system constitutes a loss for learners, parents and globally for the system. In addition to teachers' lack of professional qualification, about 80% (table 6) of them acknowledge all they know on coherence is referring with pronouns, topic sentences, supporting and concluding sentences and the use of connectives. Other cohesion and coherence devices seem unknown to them. At last, writing is not a usual activity done in classes; most teachers focus on reading, speaking and listening activities as confirmed by our investigation. As a whole, form 4 students have a problem with coherence and cohesion in writings, teachers do not really contribute to improving their writing skills. In this perspective, in order to find a way out, we have made some key recommendations.

As discovered through the questionnaire, most teachers are untrained and don't know much about cohesion and coherence; therefore, it appears important for each teacher to make effort in order to get trained. They should not necessarily wait for the government. They ought to get training on their own means so as to be equipped to do their job better and also for their own professional development. Besides, it is advisable for teachers to devote more time to writing activities. As the saying goes, *practice makes perfect*. Accordingly, if much time is devoted to writing activities, it will impact positively students' productions. Furthermore, students' writings being negatively affected by lack of introduction and conclusion, the bad connection of ideas and bad uses of cohesion and coherence tools, teachers are recommended to teach them the structure of a paragraph viz. topic sentence, supporting ideas and concluding the sentence. This will help students be coherent in a paragraph. Once a paragraph writing is mastered, teachers should move on essay writing where the most important items to be taught are the connectives; that is how to express contrast, restriction, addition, opposition, etc. Such tools will enable students to link ideas correctly and develop skills on coherency. Concerning cohesive devices, some are known to students but they are used wrongly. It is no use teaching them all the cohesive ties at a time, but teachers should focus on the ones already used by students and help them through exercises to make good use of them.

Concerning the students, they are the ones having the key to the problem because whatever the teacher does, knowledge acquisition depends on them. As such, they have to develop reading skills in order to discover how coherent and cohesive writers' productions sound. While reading, they will discover how ideas are expressed, connected together, then related to a given topic. Reading is a skill prior to writing and it helps to improve one's general knowledge and specific writing needs. Another recommendation is to practice writing very often. They should start from sentences writing to essay writing. Cohesion also depends on their knowledge of pronouns, possessive adjectives, lexicon, and others; so learners should study their lessons to have in mind all those useful tools.

Finally, to the authorities in charge of education, they must know that unqualified teachers mean poor teaching and a poor result. Thus, educational authorities and the government should train teachers so as to increase their competences at teaching. It is well known that the massification of schools has favored the increase of teachers, which inevitably enlarges the field of training and requires a surplus of financial effort from the government. In spite of this budget-consuming reality, teachers' training should occupy the first place in the government educational policy. Moreover, since writing appears to be a neglected skill, frequent seminars should be organized to equip teachers with the specific needs in writing. Curricula, as well as time tables, also should be modified in order to give more time to the teaching of writing because the current curriculum is too much reading-oriented. Finally, the

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authorities should provide schools with well-equipped libraries where students can find books to read so as to capture and assimilate the way efficient writers manage.

#### 4. Conclusion

This field research paper has scrutinized a burning issue, exploring coherence and cohesion in SS3 learners' writing productions. The investigation which considered both qualitative and quantitative (or mixed) research methods paradigms has helped to uncover that these intermediate students who are getting prepared to sit for Advanced Level Certificate exam after which some would set their feet to the university still have serious problems in producing cohesive and coherent paragraphs/texts. The data used for digging into the matter at stake in this study have been collected through sampled written productions of the target population, and questionnaires administered to SS3 English learners and teachers. Hypothesizing that various reasons could justify the deplored situation, the ongoing investigation has uncovered that these learners are not good at writing productions because their teachers hardly teach them writing techniques. Moreover, the writing activity is not frequent during class sequences. One could venture to decipher only six (06) writing productions activities all along the school year, that is, only two which are gone about during the two-term exams of each quarter, making the total of six pedagogical assessment activities. It has also been observed that teachers' academic qualification is another factor that weighs in the balance of the learners' writing inability. This study has eventually come up with some recommendations in order to overcome this academic deficiency. If the players at stake, that is the EFL learners and teachers representing the study population put into practice the recommendations herein set forth, there will be a significant improvement in their writing skills.

#### *Conflict of interest statement and funding sources*

The authors hereby certify and declare that they have no competing interest regarding this research work the data collection process of which has been entirely financed by their equity funds.

#### *Statement of authorship*

The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. Besides, the authors have approved the final version of the article.

#### *Acknowledgments*

The authors would like to seize this opportunity to express their thanks to the Headmaster, Principal as well as the English teachers of *Sèmè Podji Secondary School* who have left no stone unturned to facilitate the data collection. Last but not the least, our gratitude goes to all the SS3 English Language Learners who have accepted to fill in the questionnaires and allowed us to use their academic productions as samples serving as the basis for carrying out the research work.

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**Appendices****Selected samples of students' writing productions****Text 1**

People can catch STDs virus through sexual contact, blood transfusion with contaminated sharp objects (blade, razor, needle, and syringe) and from a mother to unborn baby.

One can know they are sick when the symptoms of that disease begin; one can stop the spread of STDS by using condom, being faithful to our partner, by avoiding contaminated objects and through sexual education.

**Text 2**

People can catch AIDS by sexual contacts, blood transfusion, a way of putting healthy blood into a sick or injured person body (syringe, needle, and razor) sitting next to someone, shaking hands, by wearing an infected person's clothes, from insect bites.

They know they are sick when the symptoms of that disease begin. One can stop the spread of STDS by using condoms, being faithful to our partner, vaccine, treatment, abstinence, testing, and prevention methods and through sexual education. If people are suffering from an STD, we should help that person by giving him advice, tell him to make consultation, take his medicine every day.

**Text 3:**

STDs stands for sexually transmitted diseases, they are diseases caused by sexual contacts. AIDS, hepatitis are examples of STDs. STDs are dangerous and kill many people. We must refuse to catch STDs if we don't want to die. In the school, there is a boy, the boy has AIDS because she likes girls. The prevention methods of AIDS are abstinence, condoms, fidelity, don't use contaminated objects. Young people must respect prevention methods to protect themselves.

**Text 22:**

STDs are the diseases people catch during sexual intercourses; they are also called venereal diseases. Some examples of STDs are AIDS, hepatitis, chancroid, syphilis. Venereal diseases are very dangerous and can kill we. The methods of contamination are sex contacts, blood contacts, from an infected mother to her unborn baby, when we are cut by an infected objet. To avoid STDs, we must observe prevention methods like condoms, faithfulness, abstinence. It is also important to test our blood to know the status. I advise you to respect the prevention methods and be in good health. Thank you.

**Text 36:**

AIDS is dangerous, AIDS kill much people. Me I don't have AIDS. AIDS is STD. If you fuck girl you have STD. When you take transfusion you catch STD. The solution of AIDS is condom, many condoms, and abstinence. Me I don't like abstinence. People catch AIDS when we cut hair and when we we cut with razor. STDs is not good if you have STD, you die, and I give you advice: take condom.

**Questionnaire to EFL students**

1. Does your teacher often teach you writing techniques?  
Yes  No
2. Do you know what cohesion and coherence are?  
Yes  No
3. Do you know how to organize ideas not to be out of topic?  
Yes  No
4. Do you know how to link ideas and make good connection between them?  
Yes  No

**Questionnaire addressed to EFL teachers**

Dear colleague,

We are carrying out a research work on coherence and cohesion in form 4 students' writings. Your contribution through answering the following questions will be of great usefulness and is highly expected. Be sure that your identity will not be revealed, neither your answers. Thanks a lot.

1. What is your highest academic qualification?

Baccalauréat   
Maîtrise

DUEL   
DEA

Licence   
Doctorat

2. Are you trained, untrained or being trained for teaching?

Trained

Untrained

being trained

3. How long have you been teaching English?

Less than 5 years

more than 10 years

5 to 10 years

4. Are your students, good at writing?

Yes

No

5. What are their usual weaknesses in writing?

6. Are your learners' writings coherent and cohesive?

Yes

No

7. How many of them succeed in producing coherent and cohesive writings?

10%   
10-20%   
20-30%

30-50%   
50-70%   
70-100%

8. Is writing teaching a frequent activity in your class?

Yes

No




9. Do you teach learners coherence and cohesion?

Yes

No

10. What aspects of coherence and cohesion do you know

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