# Grammatical and Lexical Cohesion Analysis in Thesis Abstracts of Libyan English Department Students at University of Zawia

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe and analyze the grammatical and lexical cohesion present in the thesis abstracts written by Libyan students enrolled in the English department at the University of Zawia, Libya. The study employs Halliday and Hasan's (1976) grammatical and lexical cohesion theory to dissect the grammatical and lexical cohesion within the students' abstracts. The research sample comprises abstracts from two students' theses. The findings reveal the presence of three grammatical cohesion devices in the abstracts: reference, substitution, and conjunction. Notably, reference, especially demonstrative reference, emerged as the most prevalent form of grammatical cohesion across both abstracts. In terms of lexical cohesion, four cohesive elements are identified: repetition, synonyms, antonyms, and collocations. Among these, repetition emerges as the most frequently employed lexical device in both abstracts.

Keywords: Grammatical Cohesion, Lexical Cohesion, Thesis

# تحليل التماسك النحوي والمعجمي في ملخصات رسائل طلبة قسم اللغة الانجليزية الليبيين بجامعة الزاوية

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**ملخَّص البحث:**

يهدف هذا البحث إلى وصف وتحليل التماسك النحوي والمعجمي الموجود في ملخصات الرسائل العلمية التي كتبها الطلاب الليبيون المقيدين بقسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة الزاوية بليبيا. استخدمت الدراسة نظرية التماسك النحوي والمعجمي لهاليدى وحسن (1976) لتحليل التماسك النحوي والمعجمي داخل ملخصات الطلاب. تتكون عينة البحث من ملخصات لرسالتي طالبين. تكشف النتائج عن وجود ثلاثة أدوات للتماسك النحوي في الملخصات: المرجع، والابدال. وادوات الربط. والجدير بالذكر أن المرجع، وخاصة التوضيحي ظهر باعتباره الشكل الأكثر انتشارا للتماسك النحوي عبر كلا الملخصين ومن حيث التماسك المعجمي، تم تحديد أربعة عناصر متماسكة وهى التكرار والمترادفات والمتضادات والمتلازمات، ومن بين  هذه العناصر يظهر التكرار باعتباره الأداة المعجمية الأكثر استخداما في كلا الملخصين.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:**    التماسك النحوي، التماسك المعجمي، الأطروحة .

## 1. Introduction:

Writing, as one of the fundamental English language skills, serves as a pivotal means for students to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Scholars such as Harmer (2004), Brown (2010), and Haninda and Bram (2022) assert that writing is a crucial skill that enables learners to communicate their perspectives effectively through written communication. However, not all students possess the ability to write proficiently, making it imperative for English department students, especially those pursuing postgraduate studies, to acquire the skill of crafting coherent paragraphs. This skill is paramount given the diversity of texts these students are required to produce, including essays, presentations, papers, and theses – a pivotal component of their academic journey (Butler, 2007: 10).

In the postgraduate realm, the writing process often involves the creation of a thesis, a multi-stage endeavor that encompasses the development of an abstract. Crafting an abstract requires students to harmonize different facets of the text to create a communicative and comprehensible piece of writing. This endeavor demands proficiency, as highlighted by scholars such as Alexandrov and Hennerci (2007), Russo (2020), and Gutti (2012), who define an abstract as a concise encapsulation of the entire thesis, offering a succinct overview of its contents. Alxandrov (2007) emphasizes the extraction and synthesis of data presentation and interpretation, while Gutti (2012) underscores the need for a condensed representation of the full thesis.

In light of this, postgraduate students must exercise meticulous attention when composing their abstracts. Coherence and cohesion are of paramount importance, demanding more than a mere assortment of phrases, clauses, and sentences. Instead, students must sustain the logical flow of ideas across sentences, clauses, and paragraphs (Liferny, 2020). To achieve this, they employ 'cohesive devices,' encompassing both lexical and grammatical elements. Lexical devices encompass diverse vocabulary choices, while grammatical

components include pronoun references, demonstratives, comparisons, substitutions, ellipsis, and conjunctions (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Tanskanen, 2006; Eggins, 2004).

Scholars unanimously recognize the significance of cohesion devices in facilitating reader comprehension and meaning generation (Novitasari, 2018). Hyland (2007) emphasizes how adept use of cohesion aids writers in guiding readers' anticipations and reactions to their work. Halliday and Hasan (1976) further posit that cohesive ties enable readers to discern the functional and semantic connections within texts, unraveling their organizational structure.

In light of these considerations, the imperative of crafting cohesive and coherent abstracts is evident. Achieving this involves leveraging various lexical and grammatical devices. Hence, the researcher's primary objective is to analyze both lexical and grammatical cohesion within postgraduate students' thesis abstracts. This study adopts Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory to dissect abstracts written by English department majors at the University of Zawia. The analysis focuses on identifying prevalent types of lexical and grammatical cohesion employed by these students in their thesis abstracts.

## 2. The objectives of the study

This study aims to:
1. Find out the types of lexical cohesion are found in the students' abstract;
2. Examine the types of grammatical cohesion are found in the students' abstract;
3. Investigate the types of lexical and grammatical are widely used in the students' abstract.

## 3. The research questions

This study is sought to answer the following questions:
1. What types of lexical cohesion are found in the students' abstract?
2. What types of grammatical cohesion are found in the students' abstract?

3. What types of lexical and grammatical cohesion are widely used in the students' abstract?

## 4. Literature review

This section contains the theoretical framework regarding cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and some relevant studies.

### *4.1. Cohesion*

Cohesion is a term that can be defined as the links between the text and its meaning. According to Matthews (2007: 62), cohesion refers to "the connection between successive sentences in texts, conversations etc., in so far as it can be described in terms of specific syntactic units". Also, Richards and Schmidt (2013:94) describe cohesion as "the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different component parts of a text. Cohesion might exist within or between sentences in a text". In addition, Tanskanen (2006:7) says that "cohesion refers to the grammatical and lexical elements on the surface of a text which can form connections between parts of the text". Moreover, Halliday and Hassan (1976:299) point out that "cohesion expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another ". The authors propose that cohesion is accomplished when "the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another, the one presupposes the other" (p. 4). Depending on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory, cohesion is divided into two broad types: grammatical and lexical. Grammatical cohesion includes reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunctions whereas lexical cohesion contains reiteration and collocation (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). The following table illustrates the grammatical and lexical cohesion.

Table 1: Grammatical and lexical cohesion

| Cohesive devices | Devices | Sub-type |
|---|---|---|
|  | Reference | • Personal reference<br>• Demonstrative reference<br>• Comparative reference |

| | Gramm atical | Substitution | <ul><li>Nominal substitution</li><li>Verbal substitution</li><li>Clausal substitution</li></ul> |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Ellipsis | <ul><li>Nominal ellipsis</li><li>Verbal ellipsis</li><li>Clausal ellipsis</li></ul> |
| | | Conjunction | <ul><li>Additive conjunction</li><li>Adversative conjunction</li><li>Causal conjunction</li><li>Temporal conjunction</li></ul> |
| | Lexical | <ul><li>Reiteration</li><li>Collocations</li></ul> | |

4.1.1 Grammatical cohesion can be defined as the utilization of grammatical elements to connect different parts of sentences, enhancing the comprehensibility of the text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) categorize these grammatical tools into four groups: reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions.

To begin with, the term "reference" pertains to linguistic elements whose meaning or identity relies on other elements within or outside the text (Halliday, 1994; Eggins, 2004). Reference can be broadly divided into two primary types: "exophoric reference" and "endophoric reference." Exophoric reference necessitates readers to deduce the intended meaning by considering elements beyond the text itself, within the shared context between the reader and the writer. For instance, in the sentence "Is that the one you were talking about?", understanding the words "that" and "you" requires the reader to look beyond the sentence. Conversely, endophoric reference encompasses information that can be inferred from the immediate textual context. For example, in the sentence "When I looked at the dog, it barked at me and ran off," the pronoun "it" serves as an endophoric reference, connecting back to the previously mentioned "dog" within the text. Nevertheless, endophoric reference can be further divided into two subtypes:

*Anaphoric reference*: This involves referring to an entity that has been introduced earlier in the text. For instance, consider the sentence "Tom was looking for a boat because he wanted to cross the river."

*Cataphoric reference*: This refers to a referent that will be introduced subsequently in the text. For instance, consider the sentence "It doesn't fit. The skirt is too long."

In a general sense, cohesive references can be categorized into three main types: personal, comparative, and demonstratives. Firstly, personal reference, as outlined by Halliday and Hasan (1976:37), involves referring to aspects within the speech situation through the "person" category. This includes personal pronouns, possessive adjectives, and possessive pronouns. Secondly, comparative reference is described as an indirect reference based on identity or similarity (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p.37). Similarly, Nunan (1993) concurred that comparative reference relies on identity or similarity and often utilizes adjectives and adverbs for comparing and contrasting in the text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) identified two types of comparisons: general comparison, indicating likeness or unlikeness, and particular comparison, involving quantity or quality expressed through ordinary adjectives and adverbs in comparative form. Lastly, demonstrative reference, as noted by Halliday & Hasan (1976: 37), is an indirect reference based on location proximity. It is divided into determiners (this, these, that, those), adverbs (here, now, there, then), and determiner articles (the).

Substitution, the next cohesive element, refers to the replacement of one word/phrase with another, establishing a linguistic relationship rather than a semantic one (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 88). This consists of three forms:

Nominal substitution, where substitutes function as the head of a nominal group (e.g. "But this one was perhaps the strangest").

Verbal substitution, wherein the lexical verb is replaced by "do" (e.g. "…just as animals do").

Clausal substitution, involving the replacement of an entire clause (e.g. "If so, we could travel together").

Furthermore, ellipsis refers to the omission of an item in a clause or sentence without replacement. It is classified into three types:

Nominal ellipsis, involving missing nouns (e.g. "Boiled [0], please").

Verbal ellipsis, where part of the verb phrase is missing (e.g. "…when I can [0]").

Clausal ellipsis, omitting part or the entire clause (e.g. "Laila is [0]").

Lastly, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 226), conjunctions are cohesive elements indirectly contributing through specific meanings. They are categorized into:

Additive conjunctions (e.g. and, also, furthermore)

Negative conjunctions (e.g. nor, not …either, neither)

Alternative conjunctions (e.g. or, or else)

Complex conjunctions (e.g. moreover, on the other hand)

Afterthought conjunctions (e.g. incidentally, by the way)

Comparative conjunctions (e.g. similarly, by contrast)

Appositive conjunctions (e.g. that is, for instance)

Adversative conjunctions (e.g. but, however)

Causal conjunctions (e.g. therefore, because)

Temporal conjunctions (e.g. then, after, during)

This summarizes the diverse ways in which cohesive references, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions function in text.

### 4.1.2 Lexical Cohesion

In the realm of linguistic cohesion, Halliday and Hasan (1996: 274) introduce the concept of lexical cohesion as "the outcome of the careful selection of vocabulary to create a sense of unity." This form of cohesion is realized through two primary mechanisms: reiteration and collocation. In relation to reiteration, Halliday and Hasan (1976:278) assert that it entails various levels of repetition – at one extreme, an exact recurrence of a lexical item; at the other, the use of a general term to reference back to a specific lexical element. Between these points lie additional forms of reiteration, such as employing

synonyms, near-synonyms, or superordinates. Guided by this understanding, reiteration can be categorized into five distinct types:

Repetition: This involves using the very same word previously mentioned.

Synonym: It involves employing words with comparable meanings. For instance, words like 'child,' 'kid,' and 'baby' are synonymous.

Antonym: This refers to words with contrasting meanings. For instance, 'cold' and 'hot' are antonyms.

Hyponym: This pertains to words representing broader categories, within which smaller subcategories exist. For example, 'pen,' 'paper,' and 'pencil' are hyponyms of the broader category 'stationery.'

Metonym: Here, a word or element is used to symbolize a larger whole, alongside other elements. For example, 'bark,' 'leaf,' and 'branch' are metonyms for the holistic term 'tree.'

The second facet of lexical cohesion is collocation, which Halliday and Hasan (1976: 287) define as a "comprehensive term for the type of cohesion achieved through the consistent co-occurrence of lexical elements that, due to contextual congruence, are inherently linked to each other." Yarmohammadi (1995, p.127) similarly characterizes collocation as the result of "the affiliation of lexical items that frequently emerge in comparable contexts, devoid of any inherent semantic relationship." Examples of collocations encompass expressions like 'bitterly cold,' 'heavy rain,' 'air raid,' 'bird sings,' 'wait for,' and 'badly hurt.'

## 4.2. Previous Research

Within the existing body of literature, a plethora of studies have explored the utilization of cohesive elements in abstracts. Researchers such as Ambon et al. (2020), Afful and Nartey (2014), Muhassin (2018), Dania (2018), Episiasi et al. (2022), Suwandi (2016), and Kirana et al. (2020) have delved into this domain. For instance, Ambon et al. (2020) conducted an investigation to discern the various types of lexical cohesion deployed by undergraduate students at the University of Katolik in Indonesia. Their study aimed to identify the dominant type of lexical cohesion employed in students'

abstracts. Analysis of twenty-five abstracts indicated the presence of six types of lexical cohesion: repetition, synonym, antonym, hyponym, metonym, and collocation. The outcome revealed that repetition emerged as the most frequently employed type in the abstracts.

Similarly, Episiasi et al. (2022) focused their research on assessing both lexical and grammatical cohesion within students' abstracts from STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau. Their findings demonstrated the presence of both lexical and grammatical cohesion devices in the abstracts. Notably, repetition emerged as the predominant form of lexical cohesion, while reference was the prevailing grammatical cohesion mechanism.

Furthermore, Afful and Nartey (2014) undertook a study examining the cohesion elements present in abstracts of undergraduate theses at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana. Their objective centered on analyzing grammatical cohesion in these abstracts. Their investigation revealed that the most commonly used cohesive devices were reference and conjunction.

Despite the extensive research in this field, it's important to note that there appears to be a gap in literature regarding the analysis of cohesion within abstracts of postgraduate theses in the Libyan context. Consequently, this study aims to address this gap by thoroughly analyzing cohesion devices within thesis abstracts composed by postgraduate students at the University of Zawia.

## 5. Research Methodology

### 5.1. Research Design

This research employs a qualitative case study approach to achieve its objectives, as advocated by Gall et al. (2007). Scholars in the field highlight that case studies offer a means to comprehensively investigate a phenomenon within its natural context (Gall et al., 2007; Yin, 1994). Creswell (2014: 241) further defines case studies as a qualitative design through which researchers delve deeply into the exploration of a program, event, activity, process, or individuals.

### 5.2. Data Source

The study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to depict the utilization of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices within

postgraduate students' abstracts. Two sets of thesis abstracts were randomly selected, one from 2019 and the other from 2020.

### 5.3. Research Instrument

In this study, the primary instrument is the researcher herself. She plays a crucial role in gathering information from thesis abstracts, as well as in analyzing and organizing the research process. The data collection solely revolves around the abstract section of the thesis documents authored by postgraduate students majoring in the English department at the University of Zawia.

### 5.4. Data Analysis Method

The data analysis process encompasses several stages. Initially, the researcher accessed the library to obtain two randomly selected thesis abstracts written by postgraduate students—one from 2019 and the other from 2020. Subsequently, careful scrutiny of the abstracts was undertaken to identify instances of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. To facilitate analysis, the text lines were sequentially numbered. Following this, prevalent types of lexical and grammatical cohesion were determined. The gathered data were then categorized based on these cohesive device types.

Drawing on the theory proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the researcher initiated the data analysis by identifying and underlining each word associated with various types of lexical and grammatical cohesion. Ultimately, the researcher quantified the frequency of cohesive devices used in the abstracts, with the results presented in tabular form.

### 6. Findings and Discussion

### 6.1. Grammatical Cohesive Devices

### 6.1.1. Reference

Aligned with Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theoretical framework on cohesive devices, the analysis of data revealed that the students did not employ all five types of grammatical cohesive devices to establish coherence within their abstracts. The findings demonstrated that the predominant grammatical cohesive device employed was reference, followed by conjunctions and substitution. Conversely, ellipsis was not detected in the students' abstracts. The utilization of reference is elaborated in Table 2 below.

| Types of cohesive device | Abstract | Reference | Frequency | Line_ No |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| Personal references | 1st | It | 3 times | 2, 12, 25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Their | once | 8 |
| | | Them | once | 3 |
| | 2nd | It | once | 2 |
| Demonstratives references | 1st | That | 5 times | 8, 18, 19, 21, 24 |
| | 2nd | This | 3 times | 1, 9, 11 |
| | | That | 4 times | 17, 18, 20, 22 |
| | 1st | The | 36 times | 1,2,8,9,10,11,12,13…. |
| | 2nd | The | 20 times | 1,2,7,9,10,12,13…. |
| Comparative | 1st | Same | 1 once | 18 |
| | | Similar | 1 once | 13 |
| | 2nd | Different | 1 once | 13 |

Table 2 above provides an overview of the various types of references employed in the students' abstracts. Demonstrative reference takes precedence, as it was extensively utilized by the students. Notably, the article "The" emerged as the most frequently used reference, appearing 56 times collectively in both abstracts – 36 times in the first abstract and 20 times in the second. Throughout the paragraphs, "the" is employed exophorically, referring to elements in the external context. For instance, in the first abstract, the article "the" is recurrently present, appearing in almost every line: "the study," "the ultimate purpose," "the students" (line 1), "the impact" (line 2), "the target population" (line 5), "the questionnaire" (line 11), and so forth. The second abstract similarly showcases instances of "the" used in demonstrative references, such as "the approach" (line 1), "the department" (lines 2-3), and "the depth" (line 7).

Additional demonstrative references are present in the abstracts. Specifically, "that" was employed five times in the first abstract and four times in the second. Additionally, "this" appeared three times in the second abstract.

Turning to personal references, three instances of personal anaphoric references were employed to reference items previously mentioned in the text. For instance, in the first abstract, "it" (line 2) references "purpose" (line 1), "it" (line 12) references "questionnaire" (line 11), and "it" (line 25) refers to "use of meter" (line 24). In the second abstract, "it" (line 2) refers to "study" (line 1). Further personal references can be found in the first abstract: "their" (line 8) refers to "students" (at the beginning of line 8), and "them" (line 3) refers to "students" (line 1).

Regarding comparative references, they were the least frequently employed type in the abstracts. In the first abstract, only one instance of comparative reference – "same" (line 18) – was found. In contrast, the second abstract contained two instances: "similar" and "different" (line 13).

Upon analyzing the data, it becomes evident that the students who composed the abstracts tended to emphasize the use of references, particularly demonstrative references such as the article 'the.' This observation aligns with the findings of a study conducted by Amperawaty and Warsono (2019), which demonstrated students' reliance on references, notably demonstratives, as a frequently employed cohesive strategy.

### 6.1.2. Substitution

In addition to reference, the students' abstracts also showcased the presence of another grammatical cohesive device – substitution. The analysis revealed the occurrence of only one instance of substitution in the first abstract. This specific instance is exemplified through the utilization of the word 'one,' which is evident in lines 13 and 14. This particular device falls under the category of nominal substitution, as 'one' functions as the head of a nominal group. In this context, the term 'one,' in both lines (13 and 14), serves as a reference to the noun 'type' stated in the preceding sentence (line 12) – as demonstrated in Appendix 1. The application of substitution, as evident in the data analysis, underscores the students' adeptness in evading repetition and textual redundancy, in accordance with the insights of Dania (2018).

### 6.1.3. Conjunctions

Conjunctions occupy a significant role within students' writing endeavors. Drawing from the data analysis, it becomes apparent that the students employed additive, adversative, and causal conjunctions to establish coherence. However, no instances of temporal conjunctions were identified. Table 3 below offers a visual

representation of the utilization of conjunctions within the students' abstracts.

As evident in Table 3 below, the most prevalent additive conjunctions employed are 'and,' 'also,' 'moreover,' and 'further.' These additive conjunctions are utilized frequently to append additional information and to establish connections between sentences. For instance, in the first abstract, 'and' and 'also' were employed, whereas in the second abstract, 'and,' 'also,' 'moreover,' and 'further' were collectively utilized. Additionally, within the first abstract, a single instance of adversative conjunction, 'whereas' (line 9), was employed to highlight divergent perspectives. In terms of sentence cohesion, causal conjunctions such as 'as' (line 25) in the first abstract and 'therefore' (line 8) in the second abstract were employed. For an in-depth analysis of conjunctions used in both abstracts, refer to Table 3 below.

| Types of conjunctions | Abstract | conjunction | Frequency | Line_ No |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Additive conjunctions | 1st | and<br>also | 5 times<br>1 once | 3, 7, 13, 16, 23<br>20 |
| | 2nd | and | 12 times | 4,6,12,16,18,19(twice) , 20,24,25,26 (twice), |
| | | also<br>moreover<br>further | 1 once<br>1 once<br>1 once | 15, 20<br>21<br>18 |
| Adversative conjunctions | 1st | whereas | 1 once | 9 |
| Causal conjunctions | 1st | as | 1 once | 25 |
| | 2nd | therefore | 1 once | 8 |

Based on the information presented in the above table, it becomes evident that the additive conjunctions were the most frequently employed cohesive devices within the abstracts. This finding underscores the dual function of additive conjunctions – linking sentences to enhance coherence and supplementing information. This observation aligns with the research conducted by Prasetyaningrum et al. (2022), where a study investigating the use of grammatical cohesion in students' theses within the Faculty of Arts,

Humanity, and Education also found that the additive conjunction was the most frequently utilized type.

In light of the data discussed concerning grammatical cohesion, it can be concluded that constructing a cohesive abstract necessitates the incorporation of just two or three out of the four grammatical cohesive devices (reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction). The absence of ellipsis within abstracts does not necessarily imply unfamiliarity or difficulty in its use by the students. Rather, it is plausible to assume that, given most abstracts are written as a single paragraph summarizing the entire thesis, the inclusion of ellipsis is not deemed essential in students' abstracts.

## 6.2. Lexical cohesive devices

### 6.2.1. Repetition

Upon data analysis, it is evident that the students employed four distinct types of lexical cohesive devices within their abstracts: repetition, synonym, antonym, and collocation. Among these cohesive devices, repetition emerged as the most frequently used. To gain a deeper comprehension, we turn to the tables below for a comprehensive overview. For an in-depth analysis of repetition across both abstracts, refer to Tables 4 and 5 below.

**Table 4: Repetition in the First Abstract**

| No | Cohesion item | Frequency | Line - No |
|----|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | improve | 2 | 1, 26 |
| 2 | students | 9 | 1, 5, 8, 9, 11, 15, 18, 24, 27 |
| 3 | randomly | 2 | 5, 16 |
| 4 | distributed | 3 | 13, 14, 15 |
| 5 | both | 2 | 14, 18 |
| 6 | group | 6 | 16 (twice), 18 (twice), 22 (twice) |
| 7 | using | 2 | 2, 12 |
| 8 | applying | 2 | 10, 13 |
| 9 | proved | 2 | 18, 19 |
| 10 | significant | 2 | 19و 21 |
| 11 | difference | 2 | 20, 21 |
| 12 | learning | 2 | 12, 27 |
| 13 | experiment | 3 | 14, 15, 21 |
| 14 | pre-test | 2 | 7, 17 |
| 15 | Post-test | 4 | 9, 19, 20 (twice) |

Referring to Table 4 above, it becomes evident that the student's preference for repetition is pronounced within the first

abstract. For instance, a notable instance is the repetition of the term 'students,' which appears nine times. Similarly, the word 'group' is reiterated six times, followed by 'post-test' which recurs four times. Moreover, 'distributed' and 'experiment' each repeat three times, while the remaining words listed in the table are each mentioned twice. It is noteworthy that repetition manifests in various grammatical forms, encompassing nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns.

**Repetition in the Second Abstract**

To explore repetition within the second abstract, refer to Table 5 below.

| No | Cohesion item | Frequency | Line - No |
|----|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | knowledge | 8 | 4, 7, 8, 9, 18, 22, 24, 27 |
| 2 | Reading | 8 | 2, 6, 10, 15, 17, 20, 21, 27 |
| 3 | comprehension | 8 | 2, 6, 10, 15, 17, 20, 21, 27 |
| 3 | dimension | 3 | 6, 9, 22 |
| 4 | vocabulary | 9 | 4, 5, 7, 9, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25 |
| 5 | combination | 2 | 30, 24 |
| 6 | findings | 2 | 16, 21 |
| 7 | demonstrate | 2 | 17, 22 |
| 8 | breadth | 4 | 4, 19, 20, 24 |
| 9 | depth | 4 | 5, 19, 21, 24 |
| 10 | correlated | 2 | 5, 19 |

Referencing Table 5 above, it becomes apparent that the student behind the second abstract employed a more restrained use of repetition compared to the student responsible for the first abstract. Repetition was predominantly employed with the terms 'vocabulary' appearing nine times, 'knowledge' eight times, 'reading' eight times, 'comprehension' eight times, 'breadth' four times, 'depth' four times, and 'dimension' three times. For the remaining listed words, each instance was repeated twice throughout the text. However, the form of repetition within this abstract is limited to nouns and verbs.

The observations outlined above underscore the diverse range of repetition strategies employed by Libyan students within their abstracts. This strategic repetition serves to enhance reader comprehension, maintain focus on the author's intentions, and create a sense of coherence within the text (Arifin and Farida, 2020).

**6.2.2. Synonym**

The analysis revealed that within the first abstract, only a singular synonym was identified, represented by the noun 'results' (lines 17 and 19), which could be replaced by the noun 'findings' (line 23). In the second abstract, synonyms manifested both in noun and verb forms. Notably, within noun forms, 'problems' (line 7) and 'challenges' (line 8) showcased nearly identical meanings. Similarly, 'findings' (lines 17, 21-22) and 'results' (lines 18, 20) shared equivalent meanings. In the realm of verbs, 'explore' (line 1) and 'investigate' (line 11) were synonymous, while 'demonstrate' (line 17) could interchangeably be replaced with 'reveal' (line 18) or 'show' (line 20).

### 6.2.3. Antonym

A solitary instance of antonym usage surfaced within the first abstract, exemplified by the term 'pre-test' (line 17), antithetical to 'post-test' (lines 19, 20), forming a clear opposition (see Appendix 1).

### 6.2.4. Collocation

The findings underscored the integration of collocation phrases within the abstracts. In the first abstract, examples of collocations encompassed 'ultimate goal' (line 1), 'visual aids' (lines 2, 8, 9, 11, 14), 'positive attitude' (line 8), 'teaching vocabulary' (lines 8-9), 'poetic meter' (lines 2, 12), 'significant difference' (line 21), 'target population' (line 5), 'English department' (line 6), and 'reading poems' (line 12) (see Appendix 1). Within the second abstract, notable collocations included 'reading comprehension' (lines 2, 6, 10, 15, 17, 20, 21, 27), 'vocabulary knowledge' (lines 4, 7-8, 9, 18, 19, 22-23, 24), 'different discipline' (line 13), 'teaching reading' (line 2), 'research method' (line 11), and 'foreign language' (line 1) (see Appendix 2).

The analysis of the lexical cohesion data presented above underscores the concerted efforts of both students to employ effective lexical strategies in order to enhance the cohesiveness of their respective abstracts. This endeavor is evident through the utilization of four distinct lexical devices, namely repetition, synonym, antonym, and collocation, all of which contribute to the establishment of cohesion within the abstracts. Among these, repetition emerges as the most frequently employed cohesive technique.

Repetition, as a fundamental technique, serves as a cornerstone in writers' toolbox, enabling the reinforcement of key concepts and ideas. It plays a pivotal role in enhancing the clarity and accuracy of critical phrases within texts, thereby aiding reader comprehension (Kemertelidze, 2013). In congruence with this perspective, the abstracts under scrutiny also incorporate diverse lexical devices, encompassing antonyms, synonyms, and collocations. This observation indicates the students' adept use of terms with opposing or parallel meanings and the adept weaving of word combinations that bear related connotations.

This finding aligns harmoniously with the conclusions drawn by Muhassin (2018), whose investigation into grammatical and lexical markers in thesis abstracts produced by students at State Islamic

University of Lampung highlighted the prominence of repetition as a key device within these academic contexts.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

In summary, the present study was meticulously designed to address the research inquiries and achieve the stipulated objectives. Embracing Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive framework, the study delved into the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices apparent within the abstracts authored by Libyan postgraduate students enrolled in the English department at Zawia University, Libya. A qualitative approach was applied to dissect the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices inherent in the examined abstracts, elucidating the prevalence of specific types and determining the most salient devices within these samples.

The study's findings underscored the existence of three primary grammatical devices—reference, substitution, and conjunction—with reference, particularly of the demonstrative variety, emerging as the most frequently employed device. Intriguingly, no instances of ellipsis were detected in either of the examined abstracts. On the front of lexical cohesion, four distinct devices—repetition, synonym, antonym, and collocation—came into play. Notably, repetition emerged as the dominant device utilized by the students to bolster cohesion.

Collectively, these findings emphasize the essential role of cohesive devices in crafting cohesive abstracts and substantiate the applicability of Halliday and Hasan's framework within academic writing contexts.

## Pedagogical Implications:

The findings of this study underscore that while postgraduate students utilized various types of cohesive devices, their emphasis was primarily directed towards the use of a particular device over others. Consequently, it is imperative for EFL lecturers to place emphasis on both grammatical and lexical devices when instructing students on composing thesis abstracts. Achieving this can be facilitated by incorporating diverse forms of referencing. Rather than solely concentrating on demonstrative references, instructors should also integrate alternative referencing styles. Additionally, students can benefit from instruction on word relationships to facilitate sentence

cohesion and the utilization of synonyms and antonyms to mitigate redundancy.

To cultivate a deeper understanding, lecturers may assign students tasks involving the analysis of texts to determine their coherence. This analysis could include identifying references, substitutions, ellipsis, and conjunctions, as well as underlining lexical elements such as synonyms, antonyms, and collocations. Furthermore, lecturers should engage students through text analysis exercises, enabling them to apply their acquired knowledge. Continuous support and constructive feedback are crucial to facilitate ongoing improvement.

**Recommendations for Future Research:**

It is important to acknowledge that the outcomes of this study were drawn from a limited dataset consisting of only two postgraduate students' thesis abstracts. Consequently, the generalizability of these results is limited. To address this limitation, it is strongly recommended that future research replicate this study with a more extensive sample, encompassing thesis abstracts from the same university and potentially including abstracts from other institutions as well. Given that this study predominantly focused on abstract analysis, it is advised that future investigations explore other segments of theses, such as introductions, literature reviews, or conclusions, to gain a more comprehensive perspective.

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# Appendix 1

## ABSTRACT

The ultimate purpose of the study is to improve the students learning of English language. It to investigate the impact of using poetic meter for reading English poems in order to enable them understand, appreciate and read English poetry effectively.

The target population was a sample of 60 students selected randomly from fourth year of English department. Two main instruments have been used which are tests and questionnaires. The pre-test was designed to evaluate the students' comprehension of a poem that is already taught by their teacher. Whereas, the post-test is conducted to check the students' improvement after applying the suggested technique. The second method is the questionnaire, which aims at gathering the students' opinions about using poetic meter in reading poems. It is divided into two types: the first one was distributed before applying the suggested technique and the second one was distributed after the experiment. Both of the questionnaires were distributed to the students under the experiment whom were divided randomly into experimental group and control group.

The obtained results were analyzed statistically. The results of the pre-test proved that students of both groups were at the same level of their previous knowledge. The results of the post-test proved that there was a significant difference of the tests scores in favor of the post-test. The post-test also revealed that there was a significant difference in favor of the experimental group, comparing with the control group.

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The findings of both questionnaires were analysed both qualitatively and qualitatively, which revealed that student generally accept the use of meter as it is the best solution to facilitate reading poems.

The researcher suggests a number of recommendations in order to improve the student's learning and the teachers' teaching of English meter.

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# Appendix 2

## Abstract

This study aims to explore the approaches used by English as a foreign language (EFL) university teachers teaching reading comprehension. It was carried out at the Department of English of Zawia Faculty of Education. There were two major aspects of vocabulary knowledge, breadth of vocabulary (the number of words known) and depth of vocabulary (how well one knows a word), which were correlated to each other and strongly predictive to reading comprehension. Relying on one dimension of vocabulary word breadth might cause problems at the depth level of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, one of the challenges facing Libyan university teachers was to decide the most suitable dimension of vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, this research emphasized reading comprehension teaching techniques at the academic level. To investigate this study, a mixed research method was applied through a questionnaire and an interview. The target sample was 49 EFL university teachers, holding similar university degree in different disciplines of the language. The questionnaire consisted of 19 MCQ items. A semi–structured interview was also conducted to collect data from 8 fourth semester reading comprehension teachers. The collected data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings demonstrate that there is a strong relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. The results further reveal that both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge are strongly correlated and contributed to reading comprehension. The results also show that the combination of breadth and depth is highly beneficial to improve reading comprehension. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that teachers mostly depend on the breadth/size dimension of vocabulary knowledge. The meaning of the new words is generally inferred from the context. Employing a combination of breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge by teachers, will be beneficial to deepen and broaden the horizon of learners' vocabulary repertoire and to furnish a great deal of substitute, associate and collocate words throughout a sound vocabulary knowledge teaching in reading comprehension lessons.

Key words: vocabulary knowledge, word breadth, word depth, reading comprehension.

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