AN ANALYSIS OF COHESION IN LAOTIAN COLLEGE

STUDENTS' WRITING

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

AROONRAT PREAMSIRIAMPAI

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Arts degree in English

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การวิเคราะห์คำผูกพันในงานเขียนของนักศึกษาลาวระดับวิทยาลัย

บทคัดย่อ
ของ
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งานวิจัยนี้เพื่อวิเคราะห์การใช้คำผูกพันในงานเขียนของนักศึกษาลาวระดับวิทยาลัยโดยใช้
ทฤษฎีคำผูกพันของ ฮอลลิเดย์ และ ฮัซซาน (2519) ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล จุดมุ่งหมายของงานวิจัย
เพื่อ (1) เปรียบเทียบคะแนนสัมฤทธิ์ของข้อสอบชุดแรก และข้อสอบชุดหลังเพื่อดูการพัฒนาด้าน
การเขียนของนักศึกษา (2) เพื่อศึกษาความหนาแน่นของการใช้คำผูกพันในข้อสอบชุดแรก และข้อ
สอบชุดหลัง (3) เพื่อศึกษาความหนาแน่นของการใช้คำผูกพันในงานเขียนของนักศึกษาที่ได้
คะแนนสูง และศึกษาที่ได้คะแนนต่ำในข้อสอบชุดแรก (4) และในข้อสอบชุดหลัง ข้อมูลของงาน
วิจัยครั้งนี้คือข้อเขียนหัวข้อที่ 2 ของข้อสอบ (IELTS) เพื่อเข้าเรียนและจบหลักสูตร เขียนโดยนัก
ศึกษาลาวจำนวน 19 คน ผู้วิจัยเลือกงานเขียน จำนวน 6 ชิ้น จากจำนวน 19 ชิ้น เป็นงานเขียนที่ได้
คะแนนต่ำสุด 3 ชิ้น และคะแนนสูงสุด 3 ชิ้น ส่วนงานเขียนอีก 6 ชิ้นในข้อสอบชุดหลังเลือกจาก
งานเขียนของนักศึกษาที่ผลงานได้รับเลือกในข้อสอบชุดแรก ผลการวิจัยบ่งชี้ว่าคะแนนสัมฤทธิ์
และค่าความหนาแน่นของการใช้คำผูกพันในข้อสอบชุดหลังสูงกว่าข้อสอบชุดแรกอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ
ที่ระดับความเชื่อมั่นที่ .05 อย่างไรก็ดี ผลการวิเคราะห์ไม่พบความแตกต่างของความหนาแน่นของ
การใช้คำผูกพันในงานเขียนที่ได้คะแนนสูง และงานเขียนที่ได้คะแนนต่ำ ทั้งในข้อสอบชุดแรกและ
ข้อสอบชุดหลัง สาเหตุหลักสามารถอธิบายได้ว่านักศึกษาลาวโดยเฉพาะกลุ่มที่ได้คะแนนต่ำ
สามารถพัฒนาทักษะการเขียนได้ดีอย่างชัดเจนในการทำข้อสอบชุดหลัง

AN ANALYSIS OF COHESION IN LAOTIAN COLLEGE

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AN ABSTRACT

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Aroonrat Preamsiriampai. (2003). *An analysis of cohesion in Laotian college students' writing*. Master's Project, M.A. (English). Bangkok. Graduate School. Srinakharinwirot University. Advisor Committee: Mrs. Tuanta Laosooksri. Dr. Nitaya Sukseareesup, Mr. Gregory William Jones.

This study was to analyze cohesive devices used by Laotian college students in writing. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory was applied in this study. The objectives were (1) to compare the pretest and posttest achievement scores, (2) to examine density of cohesive devices used in the selected pretest and posttest papers, (3) to study cohesion density found in good and poor writings in the pretest and (4) to do so in the posttest. The writing data were the entry and exit IELTS writing tests task B produced by 19 Laotian students. Six out of 19 pretest writings including the three lowest-scored and the three highest-scored papers were selected. The six selected students' exit IELTS test papers were chosen as the posttest. The findings revealed that the achievement scores and cohesion density of the posttest were significant higher than those of the pretest at the .05 level. However, significant differences in cohesion density between the good and poor writings in both the pretest and posttest were not found. The plausible explanation was Laotian students, especially low-scored students. obviously developed their writing skills in the posttest.

The Master's Project Committee and Oral Defense Committee have approved this

Master's Project as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in

English of Srinakharinwirot University.

Chair of Master's Project

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(Mrs. Tuanta Laosooksri)

The Chairperson of the Graduate Program

....Chair

(Assistant Professor Dr. Tipa Thep-Ackrapong)

Oral Defense Committee

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This Master's Project has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the Master of Arts Degree in English of Srinakharinwirot University.

...................................Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

(Associate Professor Supha Panjaroen)

October 2003

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

It is commonly known that competence in English writing is one of the most necessary skills required in both the academic world and job opportunity. Most people, especially, English-as-a-foreign-language students, realize the importance of English writing and try to improve their skills. However, most EFL students believe that if they develop the grammatical competence or expand vocabulary knowledge, their writing can be improved. They do not realize that cohesion is an important factor that helps develop writing skill and indicates the maturity of writers.

Cohesion, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), contributes linkage of words or sentences in semantics and references. It is an important key to administrate textual unity. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory is recognized widely and applied to study in many areas of language study. It is also used in investigating students' writings. One of those is Witte and Faigley's (1984) research, which used cohesion theory to study essays produced by university freshmen. Witte and Faigley (1984) studied English native speakers' writings, and they strongly point out that the good writers' essays contain higher density of cohesive devices than those of poor writers, so the richness of cohesive devices can indicate the quality of writing. Farghal (1992) investigated EFL students' writings and stated that cohesion could differentiate skilled and unskilled writers as well as administrate the harmony within the text.

To produce a good writing, cohesion is an important element of which students should be aware. In this study, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory was applied to investigate Laotian college student's writings. The data were the writing tests of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) done by Laotian students who won Australian Government Development Scholarships (AusAID). The IELTS is a world recognized English language assessment that can accurately indicate an English level of a student. The informants were required to sit in the IELTS test twice within an interval of 16 months. This study aimed to compare the IELTS writing scores and the density of cohesive devices used by Laotian students in their writing. It was expected that the findings would throw light on how the good and poor Laotian students used cohesive devices in their writings.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were as follows.

1. To compare the pretest and posttest scores achieved by 19 Laotian students in assigned writing tasks.

2. To examine the density of cohesive devices used in the six selected pretest and the six selected posttest papers

3. To study the density of cohesive devices used by good and poor writers in the pretest.

4. To study the density of cohesive devices used by good and poor writers in the posttest.

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest achievement scores.

2. There is no significant difference in cohesion density between the selected pretest and posttest papers.

3. There is no significant difference in cohesion density between the low-scored and high-scored writings in the pretest.

4. There is no significant difference in cohesion density between the low-scored and high scored writings in the posttest.

Significance of the study

The results of the research are beneficial as follows:

1. They can be used in the cohesion analysis and assessment of the writing of other students.

2. The results can be used to formulate guidelines in lesson preparations in the teaching of English writing to other EFL students.

Scope of the study

1. The data were collected from the entry and exit IELTS tests obtained from 30 Laotian students studying in an English for Academic Purposes program at a college in Laos.

2. The IELTS writing consists of two written tests, A and B. The first task, which takes 20 minutes, requires the student to interpret a chart or a table, and the student has to write at least 150 words. The second task requires the student to write a discussion text of a minimum of 250 words on his/her opinions or arguments about a given qualitative topic. The time allocated to this is 40 minutes. In this study, the students sat for two IELTS tests, held at an interval of 16 months. A comparison was then made of the students' Task B attempt because this task required the students to express their own ideas reasonably and understandably, so they needed to employ many cohesive devices in this task. Consequently, only Task B attempt was the focus of this study. No comparison was made of their Task A attempt. In this study, all 30 informants were required to write an essay under the topic "Happiness" in the entry test, and did "The Childcare Service" in the exit test.

Definition of terms

    1. **Cohesive Devices**, (Halliday and Hasan, 1976) refers to ties which connect sentences throughout the context. They are divided into five major groups:

A. **Reference** refers to pronouns, demonstratives and articles and comparatives

B. **Substitution** refers to a group of words such as <u>one</u>, <u>do</u>, etc. which is used to replace a noun, a verb and a clause. The substitution consists of nominal, verbal and clausal substitutions.

C. **Ellipsis** is like substitution, but it uses nothing to replace a verb, a noun or a clause in the context because it has already appeared in the previous sentence. Similar to substitution, ellipsis is segmented into nominal, verbal and clausal ellipsis.

D. **Conjunctions** are composed of additive, adversative, causal, temporal and continuative.

E. **Lexical cohesion** is a set of vocabulary which includes same root, synonym, super-ordinate, general items and collocation.

All above terms are further discussed in the review of the related literature.

    2. **The International English Language Testing System (IELTS)** is a recognized English proficiency test jointly organized by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examination, British Council and IDP IELTS Australia, a global non-profit organization providing Australia education services. The test covers four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. The IELTS score is used as a standard assessment indicating achievement of an English level considered acceptable for admission to academic institutions or for job recruitment.

3. **T-Unit or terminable unit** (Hunt, 1970) is used to measure the syntactic development of children's writing. A t-unit consists of a main clause with subordinate clauses or phrases. A complex sentence is counted as a t-unit while a compound or a compound-complex sentence is counted as two or more t-units. For example:

My mother went to the market (1 t-unit)

My mother went to the market, /and my father went to work. (2 t-units)

My mother went to the market while my father went to work. (1 t-unit)

To sum up, this study aimed to investigate Laotian college students' writings by using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory. The data were collected from entry and exit IELTS writing papers. The research results were expected to be a guideline for EFL teachers developing teaching of writing.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The review of the related literature falls into two parts: cohesion theory and its applications. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory with examples, is presented in the first part. The second part focuses on the application of cohesion theory as applied to the students' writing.

1 Cohesion Theory

Cohesion links sentences together grammatically or lexically and makes relations within discourse. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory consists of five major groups: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Each element is subdivided into 19 subcategories.

Reference

Reference is used to refer to persons, objects, places or times appearing in the text. It is classified into three types: personal, demonstrative and comparative.

1.1 Personal reference is a group of pronouns including personal pronouns, possessive pronouns and possessive adjectives such as I, she, its, ours etc.

For example:

A woman is standing under a tree; she wears a red dress.

All books on the shelf are mine.

1.2 Demonstrative reference is a pronoun which refers to a noun mentioned in a sentence; moreover, demonstrative ties identify the distance and time in the text. Members of this group are <u>this</u>, <u>those</u>, <u>that</u>, <u>those</u>, <u>the</u>, <u>here</u>, <u>now</u>, <u>there</u> and <u>then</u>.

For example:

Don't carry the books around. Please leave <u>those</u> on the shelf.

The demonstrative <u>those</u> refers to <u>the books</u> in the previous sentence.

Buy her a red rose on Valentine's Day. <u>The rose</u> symbolizes love.

The demonstrative <u>the</u> refers to <u>a red rose</u> from the previous sentence.

A: Does Kim still live in this house?

B: No, she isn't <u>here</u>?

The demonstrative <u>here</u> refers to the house.

1.3 Comparative reference shows identity, similarity and difference. It is used to compare two things in the context. Halliday and Hasan (1976) separate comparative reference into two major groups: general and particular.

A general comparison identifies the similarity or difference of two objects. Members of this group are <u>same</u>, <u>equal</u>, <u>similar</u>, <u>different</u> etc.

For example:

This forged painting looks <u>similar</u> to the original.

A particular comparison illustrates the quality and quantity of things. It is used to compare a specific characteristic between two items.

For example:

Someone believes that Jill is <u>smarter</u> than Jack.

From the above example, <u>Jill</u> and <u>Jack</u> are compared in respect of smartness.

2. Substitution

The second cohesive type is substitution. Members of this group include <u>do</u>, <u>does</u>, <u>did</u>, <u>one</u>, <u>ones</u>, <u>same</u>, <u>so</u> and <u>not</u>, which are used to replace nouns, verbs and clauses in the text. The difference between a reference and a substitution is that a reference expresses semantic features while a substitution lies within lexical-grammatical domain. There are three kinds of substitution, which are nominal, verbal and clausal.

2.1 Nominal substitution

<u>One</u>, <u>ones</u>, <u>same</u> are in this category. The items are used to replace nouns in the text.

For example:

<u>This shirt</u> is too tight for you. Please try that <u>one</u>.

The nominal tie <u>one</u> replaces <u>this shirt</u> from the previous sentence.

Mary bought <u>a nice red car</u>; Pete bought <u>the same</u>.

The nominal tie <u>the same</u> replaces <u>a nice red car</u>.

2.2 Verbal substitution

Verbal substitution is to use <u>do</u> to replace a presupposed verb.

For example:

Nobody <u>achieves</u> such a very high score as she <u>does</u>.

The substitution <u>does</u> is used to replace <u>achieve</u>.

2.3 Clausal substitution

Clausal substitution is to use <u>so</u> or <u>not</u> to replace the entire presupposed clause.

For example:

      A: I think <u>he is absolutely guilty</u>.

      B: I think <u>so</u>.

The substitution <u>so</u> substitutes <u>he is absolutely guilty</u>.

3. Ellipsis

Ellipsis is to omit a noun or a verb in another sentence. Similar to substitution, ellipsis is also divided into nominal, verbal and clausal.

3.1 Nominal ellipsis

For example:

      <u>Three thousand soldiers</u> have died on that battlefield, and the commander will send another <u>two</u>.

<u>Three thousand soldiers</u> are omitted; <u>two</u> refers to <u>two thousand soldiers</u>.

3.2 Verbal ellipsis

For example:

      John <u>should have run</u> to school, but he <u>didn't</u>.

The word <u>should have run</u> refers to <u>he did not run</u>.

3.3 Clausal ellipsis

For example:

> A: Will you find a new condo?

> B: No, I won't.

The word won't refers to the whole clause I won't find a new condo.

4. Conjunction

Conjunctive cohesion is a device which links sentences or paragraphs based on the semantic relation. It is a signal word to express the relationship between sentences. Conjunctive cohesion is divided into five types: additive, adversative, causal, temporal and continuative.

4.1 An additive tie is used when a speaker wants to add another point in the context.

For example:

> Peter is a talented student; moreover, he has a good sense of humor.

The second sentence shows an additional point to the first one.

4.2 An adversative tie is opposite to the additive one. It shows a contrast between two contexts.

For example:

> Matthew promised to go to the party, but he did not.

The second sentence contrasts with the previous one.

4.3 A causal tie occurs when the writer wants to express the causality or purpose in the context. Members of this group are <u>so,</u> <u>because,</u> <u>thus,</u> <u>therefore,</u> <u>consequently</u> and more.

For example:

Anna did not like hamburgers, <u>so</u> she chose noodles.

4.4 A temporal tie manages sentences or paragraphs sequentially. A group of temporal relations include <u>before,</u> <u>after,</u> <u>then,</u> <u>next,</u> <u>firstly,</u> <u>secondly,</u> <u>finally</u> etc.

For example:

Cooking Tum Yum Kung is very easy. <u>First of all,</u> boil a pot of water.

4.5 A continuative tie is grouped as a miscellaneous type. This device makes sentences connect smoothly. Members of this group are <u>now,</u> <u>of course,</u> <u>well,</u> <u>anyway,</u> <u>surely,</u> <u>after all</u> etc.

For example:

A: I went to a Chinese restaurant last week.

B: <u>Well,</u> let's try the Thai canteen over there.

5. Lexical cohesion

The last major group is lexical cohesion, which is involved with the choice of vocabulary. Lexical cohesion is categorized into reiteration and collocation. Reiteration is further subdivided into same root, synonym, super-ordinate and general item. Collocation focuses on associations within a set of words.

5.1 Reiteration is further divided into:

5.1.1 Same root is a repetition of a word in the same context. The word might be used with the same or a different function. For example, the word <u>a child</u> might be used as a singular noun, a plural noun or an adjective in the text: <u>a child</u>, <u>children</u> or <u>childish</u>.

For example:

> This <u>child</u> seems different from all the <u>children</u> in your class.

The words <u>children</u> is from the same root, <u>child</u>.

5.1.2 Synonym and Near Synonym means a word which expresses the same or similar meaning to another such as <u>dislike</u> and <u>hate</u>, <u>a man</u> and <u>a guy</u>.

For example:

> John had no <u>work</u>. He looked the classified advertisement up to find a good <u>job</u>.

<u>Work</u> and <u>job</u> are synonyms.

5.1.3 Super-ordinate refers to a collective word containing many words in its group.

For example:

> A monitor, keyboard and mouse are <u>computer hardware</u>.

> <u>Computer hardware</u> is the super-ordinate of a <u>monitor, keyboard</u> and <u>mouse</u>.

> > The earth and the moon are in <u>the solar system</u>.

> > <u>The solar system</u> is the super-ordinate of <u>the world and the moon</u>.

5.1.4 General item refers to a word expressing the board meaning of things.

For example:

> Some rich people easily spend money for things.

The word things is a general item for any kinds of goods or services, which rich people buy.

5.2 Collocation refers to a group of words which is found in the same situation or set in the same series.

For example:

> He is very good at the violin and the piano.

The violin and the piano are in the set of the musical instrument.

> He majored in English when he was studying in a university.

The words to major in and a university are collocation. They appear in the same situation.

In brief, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory consists of five major types which can be subdivided into 19 subgroups. Reference is subcategorized into personal, demonstrative and comparative references. Substitution as well as ellipsis are separated into nominal, verbal and clausal categories. Conjunction is divided into five subcategories: addictive, adversative, causal, temporal and continuative ties. The last type is lexical cohesion which is classified into reiteration and collocation. Reiteration collocation can be segmented into same root, synonym, super-ordinate and general item. The second part is the review of the related literature focusing on the applications of the theory.

2 Application of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory

Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory is recognized by many linguists worldwide. The framework has been applied to study cohesion of English, Arabic or Thai. This literature reviewed emphasizes the studies of students' writing within Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework.

Witte and Faigley (1984) used Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive taxonomy to analyze University of Texas freshmen's writing. After the informants were assigned to write an essay under the topic "Changes in Behavior", ten out of 90 essays, which were rated the highest scores and the lowest scores, were chosen. The researchers found that high-rated essays contained denser cohesion, especially in reference and conjunctive categories, than did the low-rated ones. In addition, in the text-span analysis, they remarked that the high-rated writers tended to use more immediate and mediated cohesive ties than did the low-rated ones while the low-rated essays were found with more mediated-remote and remote ties than were the high-rated ones. According to the research results, the researchers pointed out that the good writers tended to use more cohesive ties than the poor ones.

McCulley (1985) studied the relationship between Halliday and Hasan's cohesive index and the primary-trait assessment of writing quality and coherence. He investigated papers produced by 17-year-old students during the 1978 – 79 academic years in the United States. There were two raters to score the papers by applying the primary-trait assessment. One hundred and twenty out of 493 samples were randomly selected. Twenty papers served the score scale of the primary-trait assessment (1 to 8 scale). The score points 1 – 2, and 7 – 8 were combined. The research results demonstrated that both coherence and lexical cohesion, especially in

respect of the use of synonym, hyponym and collocation, were significant factors in

making writing quality judgement.

Neuner (1987) conducted a study at Canisius College to compare cohesive

ties and chains in good and poor writing. About 600 college freshmen were assigned

to produce essays during a summer term, and 20 high-rated and 20 low-rated papers

were taken as the data. After analyzing the data, he pointed out that cohesive ties

were not relevant to the writing quality. However, the research results showed that

the mature writers had more varieties of word choices than the poor writers. The

researcher concluded that cohesive chains, or lexical cohesion, was definitely

involved in the writing judgement.

Crowhurst (1987) also applied the theory to study the cohesive use in different

students' grades and in different modes of writing. The participants were the

students in sixth, tenth and twelfth grades from two high schools and four elementary

schools in a Canadian city. The students had to write both a narration and an

argument composition. Thirty-five papers of each grade and each mode were

randomly selected as the data. The researcher found that the students at a higher

level tended to use more collocations and synonyms than those at a lower level; on the

other hand, the younger grades tended to produce more causal and temporal

conjunctions and repetitions than the older.

Jafarpur (1991) studied the relationship between the holistic rating and the

scoring based on cohesive use. The data were 38 compositions produced by EFL

learners at Shiraz University in Iran. The data consisted of nine papers from

advanced levels, 12 from intermediate levels and 17 from the low levels. The

researcher concluded that there was a correlation between the holistic rating and the use of cohesive ties found in the advanced group only.

Johnson (1992) studied and compared cohesion and coherence in compositions written in Malay and English. The purposes of the study was to find out the relationship between the number and type of cohesion and coherence patterns used in the compositions and to compare the patterns of cohesion and coherence written in Malay and in English by native speakers of both languages. The data consisted of 20 compositions written in Malay by Malaysian teachers, 20 in English by American teachers and again 20 in English by Malaysian teachers. The samples taken from three groups were rated by an English speaker and a Malay speaker in order to group each of them into 10 weak and 10 good writings. The compositions were done under the same topic at a specific time and length. The findings indicated that there was a relationship between cohesion and coherence in the compositions in English produced by native speakers and in Malay. The researcher found that all three groups mostly employed lexical cohesion in their texts. In addition, the English compositions written by Malaysian teachers contained more density in semantic cohesion than the other two data. However, in this group, the researcher did not find differences in the use of cohesive devices between good and poor writings.

Field and Oi (1992) investigated conjunctive cohesion in essays written by English native speakers and Cantonese speakers. The study was to prove whether Cantonese students employed more conjunctive cohesion than English native speakers. The researchers collected 29 samples done by 11-year English speakers from a school in Sydney, Australia, and took 67 L2 writing samples from two Anglo Chinese Schools (C1, C2) which taught students in English and one Chinese Middle

School (C3) which taught in Chinese. The students were required to write an essay under the same topic for at least 300 words. The number of internal conjunctive cohesion (ICC) was counted. The findings showed no significant difference in conjunctive cohesion used between L1 and L2 essays. The researchers found that Chinese students used more conjunctive items than did the English speakers. Moreover, in comparing C1, C2 with C3, significant differences between the two International Chinese and the traditional school were found. In overall frequency of conjunctive cohesion, adversative conjunctions dominated the highest proportion followed by additive, causal and temporal conjunctions respectively.

Meisuo (2000) applied Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework to study cohesive devices in expository writing. One hundred and seven second-year students majoring in English from two Chinese universities were research informants. The students were required to write an essay in the expository mode of at least 250 words within an hour. After investigating all the data, the researcher found that lexical devices took the largest proportion of the cohesive devices, then conjunction and reference respectively. Regarding text-span classes, the research results illustrated that immediate and remote ties mostly occurred in the data. However, the researcher did not find a relationship between the use of cohesive devices and writing quality.

In conclusion, in the first part, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory is summarized. The second part is the applications of the cohesion theory. Witte and Faigley (1984), McCully (1985), Neuner (1987) and Crowhurst (1987) indicated significant relationships between cohesion and writing quality. Jafarpur (1991), Johnson (1992), Field and Oi (1992) found this relationship in only some groups, but Meisuo (2000) did not find any relationship of writing quality and the use of cohesive

devices. Even though there are some research results showing that the use of

cohesive devices does not involve the writing quality, some researchers strongly point

out that some types of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion are compatible with

writing development. For example, McCully's (1985) study indicated that the lexical

cohesion was related to coherence, and Neuner's (1987) research results showed that

good writers tended to use lexical chains more efficiently than the poor ones.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the method to conduct the research. First of all, the informants' background is provided. Next, the research procedures and data analysis are presented.

1 Informants

The informants of this study were 30 Laotian students ranging in age from 18 to 35 years old. The informants' education background ranged from high school certificate to a bachelor's degree. They won scholarships offered by the Australia government (AUSAID), the selection of which was based on academic performance, the IELTS score (4.0 or higher) and the interviewers' judgment.

2 Procedures

The informants were required to take the entry IELTS test on August 8th 2001, and then they had to enroll in English for Academic Purposes Program at a Laotian College during January, 10th – December, 13th, 2002 to develop English skills and to achieve the English proficiency test score required by Australian institutes. All informants sat in the exit IELTS test on November 28th, 2002. The research data were the writing part of the entry IELTS test, which was considered the pretest, and the exit IELTS test, the posttest. The English course description was included in the appendix.

In the pretest, 19 out of 30 papers were selected because only 19 papers were under the same topic. Two English native speaking raters marked the writing based on the IELTS profile score band. The IELTS band scale is from 1 to 9, which can indicate the level of the student's English proficiency. The score band is included in the appendix. The scores given by the two English-speaking raters were compared. Then the three highest-scored papers (6 - 7) and the three lowest-scored ones (4 – 4.5) in the pretest were selected. After that the six selected students' posttest papers were chosen. The raw data are included in the appendix.

3 Data analysis

The pretest score and posttest scores given by the two raters were computed to find the inter-raters' reliability of the scores. The data were analyzed by applying the Pearson Product Moment Correlation called Pearson's correlation for short run by SPSS/PC+.

The writing was segmented into t-units. The number of t-units and cohesive devices found in each text were calculated. The standard t-test run by SPSS/PC + was applied in the statistical analysis as following.

2.1   An analysis to find a significant discrepancy between the pretest and the posttest achievement scores.

2.2   An analysis to find a significant discrepancy of cohesion density between the selected pretest and posttest.

2.3   An analysis to find a significant discrepancy of cohesion density between the high-rated and the low-rated papers in the pretest.

2.4 An analysis to find a significant discrepancy of cohesion density between the high-rated and the low-rated papers in the posttest.

Briefly, in this study, Laotian students' writing was investigated. Research participants were assigned to sit for the IELTS test twice, at an interval of sixteen months between the pretest and posttest assessments. Nineteen of 30 papers in the pretest written on the same topic were selected as data, as were 19 selected for the posttest. In the next step, two raters applying the IELTS rating scale marked the pretest and posttest papers. The inter-raters' reliability of the two raters' scores on both tests was computed. A t-test run by SPSS/PC+ was used to analyze any significant difference between the achievement scores between the pretest and posttest of the 19 writers. Then, six selected pretest and six selected posttest samples were examined to establish, if any, the difference between the density of cohesive devices found in the respective samples. After that, the three highest-rated and the three lowest-rated papers in the pretest were compared to analyze the discrepancy and density of cohesion devices used. Then, the three low-scored students' posttest and the three high-scored student's posttest were compared. A similar process was undergone for the posttest.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the research findings are presented. Firstly the inter-raters' reliability of the pretest and posttest scores given by the two raters is presented in tables 1 and 2.

Next, table 3 show the findings to fulfill the first objective: to compare the pretest and posttest scores achieved by Laotian students in assigned writing task.

Tables 4 – 6 present the findings to satisfy the second objective: to examine the density of cohesive devices used in the six pretest and the six posttest papers.

After that, tables 7 – 12 present the findings to satisfy the third objective: to study the density of cohesive devices used by good and poor writers in the pretest.

Finally, tables 13 – 18 present the findings, which fulfill the fourth objective: to study the density of cohesive devices used by good and poor writers in the posttest.

Tables 1 and 2 present the inter-raters' reliability of the pretest and posttest scores. The mean scores, standard deviations and correlation values are provided in the tables.

Table 1 The Inter-Raters' Reliability of the Pretest Score by the Two Raters

Inter-reliability Of Pretest Scores	N	Mean	SD	Correlation
Rater 1	19	4.4211	.607	.810**
Rater 2	19	4.3984	.684	

Table 1 presents the inter-raters' reliability of the two raters' pretest scores. The correlation is .810, so the scores are statistically reliable.

Table 2 The Inter-Raters' Reliability of the Posttest Scores by the Two Raters

Inter-reliability Of Posttest Scores	N	Mean	SD	Correlation
Rater 1	19	5.79	.713	.843**
Rater 2	19	6.29	.384	

On table 2, the correlation value of the posttest scores is .843, which is higher than the acceptable level of .80. This result indicates inter-reliability between the posttest scores given by the first and the second raters.

In short, there is inter-reliability between the two raters' scores for both the pretest and posttest because the correlation values of the pretest and the posttest scores are higher than the level of .80. The pretest and the posttest achievement scores marked by the two raters are acceptable.

Table 3 illustrates the discrepancy between the pretest and posttest

achievement scores which is answerable to the first null hypothesis.

Table 3 A Statistical Analysis of the Pretest and Posttest Scores

Test	No. of Students	Mean	SD	t-test value	P
The Pretest	19	4.4737	.6609	8.166***	.000
The Posttest	19	6.1053	.5671		

Table 3 illustrates the results of the statistic analysis of the pretest and posttest

achievement scores. The statistic results show that the posttest mean score (6.1053) is

higher than the pretest mean score (4.4737). The mean scores indicate that the

posttest score is greater than the pretest score. Moreover, the t-test indicates a

significant difference between the pretest and the posttest scores. The data result

rejects the first null hypothesis. Regarding the statistics, it can be interpreted that the

students have developed their writing skills in the posttest.

Tables 4-6 show the findings which are answerable to the second null

hypothesis. A comparison of cohesive devices found in the six pretest and the six

posttest is provided in table 4. Tables 5 – 6 reveal a comparison and a statistic

analysis of cohesion density in the pretest and posttest.

Table 4 A Comparison of the Number of Cohesive Devices Used in the Pretest

and Posttest.

Types of Cohesion	Pretest		Posttest	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Reference	71	17.19	197	22.01
Substitution	1	0.24	-	-
Ellipsis	1	0.24	-	-
Conjunction	61	14.77	63	7.04
Lexical cohesion	279	67.56	635	70.95
Total	413	100	895	100

Table 4 presents the frequency of all cohesion categories found in the six

pretest and the six posttest papers of all the six papers; three are of the highest scores

and the other three are of the lowest scores. In the pretest, 413 cohesive devices

which consist of 71 references (17.19%), one substitution (0.24%), one ellipsis

(0.24%), 61 conjunctions (14.77%) and 279 lexical items (67.56%) are found. In the

posttest, 895 cohesive devices, which are 197 references (22.01%), 63 conjunctions

(7.04%) and 635 lexical cohesive devices (70.95%) are found. Substitution and

ellipsis are not found in the posttest. In the table, the students use twice as many

cohesive devices as they do in the pretest.

Lexical cohesion takes the largest proportion of cohesive devices used in both

pretest and posttest. This finding supports Crowhurst's (1987) research which has

revealed that repetition of lexical ties is most commonly used in all writing data.

Neuner's (1987) research indicates that the lexical cohesion affects the quality of

writing. The skilled writers use more lexical ties than do the unskilled ones.

Table 5 A Comparison of Cohesion Density in the Pretest and Posttest

Data	Number of Students	T-Unit	Cohesive Devices	Cohesion Density No. of Cohesive Device / No. of T-units
The pretest	6	111	413	3.72
The posttest	6	136	895	6.58

Table 5 reveals density of cohesive devices used in the pretest and the posttest.

In the pretest, 111 t-units with 413 cohesive devices make 3.72 of cohesion density.

In the posttest, there are 136 t-units with 895 cohesive devices, and the cohesion

density was 6.58. This indicates that the students used more cohesive devices in the

posttest than they did in the pretest.

Table 6 A Statistical Analysis of Cohesion Density of the Pretest and Posttest

Data	Number of Students	Mean	S.D	t-test value	P
The pretest	6	3.64	.462	5.718*	.000
The posttest	6	6.7	1.23		

From table 6, the mean score of cohesion density of the pretest is 3.64, and the standard deviation is .462. The mean score of cohesion density of the posttest is 6.7 and the standard deviation is 1.23. Again, the mean score of cohesion density of the posttest is higher than that of the pretest, and the statistics indicate a significant difference in cohesive density between the pretest and posttest at the level of .05. Based on the statistical data, the second null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The t-test illustrates that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest at the level .05.

The results show that six students dramatically increased the use of cohesive devices in the posttest. Noticeably, the posttest achievement score is significantly higher than that of the pretest score, and the cohesion density in the posttest is much increased. These findings strongly indicate that the use of cohesive devices in all student writings relates to the quality of their writing.

The findings support Witte and Faigley's (1981) research, which has revealed that the cohesion density of good essays is higher than that of the poor ones. The results imply that cohesion density involves the writing development. The more the students improve writing skill, the more cohesive devices are used.

In short, tables 4 – 6 show discrepancies of cohesion density between the six

pretest and the six posttest. The data results reject the second null hypothesis at the

level .05. Next, the three lowest scores and the three highest-scores papers in the

pretest are compared.

In tables 7 - 12, the findings of the use of cohesion in the three lowest-scored and the three high-scored papers in the pretest are presented, and table 12 shows a statistical analysis of cohesion density of the low-scored and high-scored papers in the pretest.

Table 7 A Comparison of Reference Found in the Low-Scored and High-Scored Papers in the Pretest

	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
Types of reference	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1. Total References	18	100	53	100
1.1 Personal	12	66.67	35	66.04

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

One man works with a company,
in his office, he has to do many
things....

The High-Scored Paper

For example, to enter a university
some students might not have
chance to choose the subject they
like, but some have to study the
subject that their parents choose.

Table 7 (continued).

	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
Types of Reference	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
1.2 Demonstrative	5	27.78	13	24.53

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

As we know, <u>every body in the world wish to be happy in their life</u> but <u>this</u> can not be easily.

The High-Scored Paper

However, some people argue that money is the most necessary factor in achieving happiness. Being independent, having a free life is <u>the main factor</u> in having truly happiness

| 1.3 Comparative | 1 | 5.55 | 5 | 9.43 |

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

..and <u>the most</u> important thing when we have problem we should relax:......

The High-Scored Paper

Moreover, every people work as hard as they can for earning more money. For example, farmers, gardener or poor people work <u>harder and harder</u> to earn more money

Table 7 reveals the frequency of reference ties found in the three low-scored and the three high-scored papers in the pretest. There are 18 references used in the low-scored papers including 12 personal pronouns (66.67%), five demonstratives (27.78%) and one comparatives (5.55%). In the high-scored papers, there are 85 reference ties which consist of 35 personal pronouns (66.04%), 13 demonstratives (24.53%) and five comparatives (9.43%).

Table 8 A Comparison of Substitution Found in the Low-Scored and High-Scored Papers in the Pretest

Types of Substitution	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
2. Total Substitutions	-	-	**1**	**100**
2.1 Nominal	-	-	1	100

For example:

<u>The High-Scored Paper</u>

For example, to enter to a university some students might not have chances to choose the subject they like, but <u>some</u> have to study the subject that their parents choose.

2.2 Verbal	-	-	-	-
2.3 Clausal	-	-	-	-

Table 8 illustrates the occurrence of substitution found in the low-scored and high-scored papers in the pretest. Only one nominal substitution is found in a high-scored paper.

Table 9 A Comparison of Ellipsis Found in the Low-Scored and High-Scored

Papers in the Pretest

Types of Ellipsis	The Low – Scored Papers		The High – Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
3. Total Ellipsis	-	-	**1**	**100**
3.1 Nominal	-	-	-	-
3.2 Verbal	-	-	-	-
3.3 Clausal	-	-	1	100

For example:

The High-Scored Paper

Some people might have chances
to follow their dream but some
people might not.

Table 9 illustrates one clausal ellipsis found in a high-scored paper in the

pretest.

Table 10 A Comparison of Conjunctions Found in the Low-Scored and High-Scored Papers in the Pretest

Types of Conjunction	The Low – Scored Papers		The High – Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
4. Total Conjunctions	**19**	**100**	**42**	**100**
4.1 Additive	8	42.1	23	54.76

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

Nowadays, we are very difficult to life because our world has a lot of populations and there are many people want to do the same thing

The High-Scored Paper

There are many people accept that happiness is considered very important if life and there are many factors in achieving happiness.

4.2 Adversative	5	26.32	7	16.67

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

He is very stress from his work, but when we meet a problem we should not stress

The High-Scored Paper

On the other hand, money is one thing that comforts our lives.

Table 10 (continued).

Types of Conjunction	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
4.3 Causal	3	15.79	5	11.9

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

...your benefit is not useful, so we
are happy and smile

The High-Scored Paper

There are many people who have
to work and responsibilities, so
they don't have enough time to
find out their happiness.

4.4 Temporal	3	15.79	5	11.9

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

Second thing, we should not think
about the problem in the
future,.....

The High-Scored Paper

In conclusion, having a free life or
being able to do whatever we want
make people enjoyable to live

Table 10 (continued).

Types of Conjunction	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
4.5 Continuative	-	-	2	4.76

For example:

The High-Scored Paper

If we have a clear schedule for ourselves, of course, we will be able to have happiness with things…

Table 10 illustrates that there are 19 conjunctive ties in the low-scored papers including 8 additive ties (42.1%), five adversative ties (26.32%), three causal ties (15.79%), and three temporal ties (15.79%). There are no continuative ties used in the low-scored papers. In the high-scored papers, there are 42 conjunctive ties which are 23 additive ties (54.76%), seven adversative ties (16.67%), five causal ties (11.9%), five temporal ties (11.9%) and two continuative ties (4.76%).

Table 11 A Comparison of Lexical Cohesion Found in the Low-Scored and

High-Scored Papers in the Pretest

Types of Lexical Cohesion	The Low -Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
5. Total Lexical Ties	**77**	**100**	**202**	**100**
5.1 Same Root	61	79.22	173	85.64

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

I think everybody know <u>happiness</u>
but I believe not many people
know and touch <u>happiness</u>

The High-Scored Paper

Some people think that <u>happiness</u>
is "Money" For example, when
people make a profit on sales or
they win the lottery, they are
<u>happy</u>.

5.2 Synonym	2	2.6	11	5.45

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

Nowadays, we are very difficult
to life because our world has <u>a lot
of</u> populations.

in his office he has to do <u>many</u>
things

Table 11 (Continued).

Types of Lexical Cohesion	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
For example:				
The High-Scored Paper				
Some people think that the most important factor to achieve happiness...				
Some people argue that the most significant thing is money				
5.4 Super-Ordinate	1	1.3	1	0.5
For example:				
The Low-Scored Paper				
Nowadays, we are very difficult to life because our world has a lot of populations. (Populations is the super-ordinate of people, man which appear in the text.)				
The High-Scored Paper				
For instance, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, or every product we use we use money to buy them. We can buy a big house, modern car or travel around the world...... (Product is the super-ordinate of the things we can buy.)				

Table 11 (Continued).

Types of Lexical Cohesion	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
5.5 General Item	5	6.5	4	1.98

For example:

<u>The Low-Scored Paper</u>

In his office he has to do many
<u>things</u>, ...
(<u>Things</u> generally refers to any
jobs he is assigned in the
workplace.)

<u>The High-Scored Paper</u>

For example, farmers, gardeners
or <u>poor people</u> work harder and
harder to earn more money to
improve the qualities of lives.
(<u>Poor people</u> generally represents
anyone who earn less wages.
They can be a workers, a farmer
etc.)

Table 11 (Continued).

Types of Lexical Cohesion	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
5.6 Collocation	8	10.38	13	6.44

For example:

The Low-Scored Paper

He works from 8:00 am to 12:00
pm and start work again from
1:30 pm to 4:30 pm
(Am and pm are collocation.)

The High-Scored Paper

For example, to enter to a
university some students might
not have chances to choose the
subject they like, but some have
to study the subject that their
parents choose.
(Students, the subject are
collocate with a university.)

Table 11 reveals that there are 77 lexical ties in the low-scored writings which include 61 same roots (79.22%), two synonyms (2.6%), one super-ordinate (1.3%), five general items (6.5%), and eight collocations (10.38%). In high-scored writings, 202 lexical ties are found. The frequency of lexical ties is 173 same roots (85.64%), 11 synonyms (5.45%), one super-ordinates (0.5%), four general items (1.98%) and 13 collocations (6.44%).

Table 12 A Statistical Analysis of Cohesion Density of the Low-Scored and High-Scored Papers in the Pretest

Data	No . of Students	Mean	S.D	t-test value	P
The Low-Scored Paper	3	3.403	.5168		
				1.356	.247
The High-Scored Paper	3	3.877	.3137		

Table 12 presents a statistical analysis of cohesion density between the three low-scored and the three high-scored papers in the pretest. The mean score of cohesion density of the high-scored papers (3.877) is somewhat higher than that (3.403) of the low-scored papers. However, a significant difference of cohesion density of the low-scored and high-scored papers is not found at the level of .05, so the third null hypothesis is retained.

Although the high scored students employ more cohesive devices than do the low-scored students, a discrepancy of cohesive devices used between the low-scored and high-scored writings is not found. This finding does not support Witte and Faigley's (1984) research results which indicate that the good essays contain more cohesion density than the poor essays.

Next, comparisons between the low-scored and high-scored papers in the posttest are presented.

Tables 13 – 16 are comparisons of cohesive devices found in the low-scored

and the high-scored papers in the posttest. Six posttest writings are specifically

selected from the same pretest students' writings. Table 16 shows a statistical

analysis of the density of cohesive devices used in the posttest.

Table 13   A Comparison of Reference Found in the Low-Scored and High-

Scored Papers in the Posttest

Types of reference	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1. Total References	100	100	97	100
1.1 Personal	33	33	28	28.87

For example

The low-scored paper

In modern society, women
involve in the workplace more
recently. Their knowledge and
capabilities are devoted to work.

The high-scored paper

As a matter of fact, while
employees gain benefits,
employers are also the
beneficiaries of the situation and
perhaps they are the main
beneficiaries.

Table 13 (continued).

Types of reference	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.2 Demonstrative	67	67	66	68.04

For example:

<u>The low-scored paper</u>

<u>This money should use to help their economic necessity.</u>
Moreover <u>this</u> is fair for other women who is single and tax-payers.

<u>The high-scored paper</u>

the government of the United States has provided fund to build childcare centers for working parents. <u>This</u> can benefit women..

1.3 Comparative	-	-	3	3.09

For example:

<u>The high-rated paper</u>

However, it is reported that employees with children possibly perform <u>less</u> productive in the workplace......

Table 13 shows that, in the low-scored papers, 100 references including 33 personal pronouns (33%) and 67 demonstratives (67%)are found; in the posttest, there are 97 references which consist of 28 personal pronouns (28.87%), 66 demonstratives (68.04%) and three comparatives (3.09%).

Table 14 A Comparison of Conjunctions Found in the Low-Scored and High-

Scored Papers in the Posttest

Types of Conjunction	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
4. Total Conjunctions	**20**	**100**	**43**	**100**
4.1 Additive	6	30	19	44.19

For example:

The low-scored paper

Moreover, they can use the plenty
of the capabilities that they have
to participate in career.

The high-scored paper

Moreover, it is employers'
responsibility to be concerned for
employees' welfare.

4.2 Adversative	6	30	9	20.93

For example:

The low-scored paper

By contrast, opponents of the
given statement believe that
working mothers should take
responsibility for their
childcare...

The high-scored paper

However, it is undeniable that
their children need to be looked
after.

Table 14 (continued).

Types of Conjunction	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
4.3 Causal	8	40	11	25.58

For example:

The low-scored paper

<u>Therefore</u> the government gain benefits from this.

The high-scored paper

<u>Therefore</u>, I completely agree with the given statement.

4.4 Temporal	-	-	4	9.3

For example:

The high-scored paper
<u>In conclusion</u>, I strongly rekon that happiness is considered very important in life.

Table 14 presents the frequency of conjunctive ties found the low-scored and high-scored papers in the posttest. The table illustrates that the low-scored papers contain 20 conjunctive ties which are six additive ties (30%), six adversative ties (30%) and eight causal ties (40%). There are not any temporal and continuative ties found in the low-scored papers. In the high-scored papers, there are 43 conjunctive ties including 19 addictive ties (44.19%), nine adversative ties (20.93%), 11 causal

ties (25.58%) and four temporal ties (9.3%). A continuative tie is not found in the

high-scored papers.

Table 15 A Comparison of Lexical Cohesion Found in the Low-Scored and

High-Scored Papers in the Posttest

Types of Lexical Cohesion	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
5. Total Lexical Ties	**244**	**100**	**391**	**100**
5.1 Same Root	179	73.36	317	81.07

For example:

The low-scored paper

Therefore, it is government
responsibility to provide free
appliances…

Supporters of the given statement
claim that the state should be
responsible to supplies free
facilities……

The high-scored paper

 Proponents of the given
statement believe that it is the
responsibility of the governments
to subsidize or provide fund to
look after the children of working
mothers because they have a
financial power.

Most governments received
money as a form of taxation……

Table 15 (Continued).

Types of Lexical Cohesion	The Low-Scored Papers		The High-Scored Papers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
5.2 Synonym	11	4.51	13	3.33

For example:

The low-scored paper

I totally agree with the idea that...

Therefore, I completely agree with the given statement.

The high-scored paper

...others claim that it should be the employers' responsibility to look after children.
Supporters of the given statement contend that it is the government's responsibility of take care of children....

5.3 Super-ordinate	1	0.41	2	0.51

For example:

The low-scored paper

In modern families, both husbands and wives have to work because of economic nessity. In my own experience, when my mother had my brother and she had also to work.
(families is the super-ordinate of mother and brother.)

Table 15 (Continued).

Types of Lexical Cohesion	Low-Scored		High-Scored	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
For example:				

The high score paper
They should spend some amount
of money to help facilitates those
working <u>mothers</u>. For instance,
the government of the United
States has provided fund to build
childcare centres for working
<u>parents</u>.

(The word <u>parents</u> is a super-
ordinate of <u>mothers</u>.)

5.4 General Item	2	0.82	2	0.51

For example:

<u>The low-rated paper</u>

I believe that when <u>citizens</u> have
problem big brother, governments
have to

(<u>Citizens</u> refers to anybody who
has some problems.)

Table 15 (Continued).

Types of Lexical Cohesion	The Low-Scored Paper		The High-Scored Paper	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
For example:				
The high-scored paper				
If governments take the responsibility to provide facilities to look after children of working mothers, they will able to encourage women to work more effectively, and the governments can play a significant role in looking after children who will become capable human resources in future generation.				
(Generation refers to children of working mothers.)				
5.5 Collocation	51	20.9	57	14.58
For example:				
The low-scored paper				
Supporters of the given statement believe that working mothers can work afficently in the work force				
By contrast, opponents of the given statement believe that working mothers should take responsibility for their childcare				
(Supporters and opponents are collocation.)				

Table 15 (Continued).

Types of Lexical Cohesion	The Low-Scored Paper		The High-Scored Paper	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
For example:				
The high-scored paper				
Employers have financial support which employees have generated for the company or an organization hence, some amount of money that working employees have generated for employers should help provide childcare for their children.				
(Employers and employees are collocation.)				

Table 15 illustrates the frequency of lexical ties used in the low-scored and high-scored papers in the posttest. In the low-scored paper, there are 244 lexical ties: 179 same roots (73.36%), 11 synonyms (4.51%), one super-ordinate (0.41%), two general items (0.82%) and 51 collocations (20.9%). In the posttest papers, there are 391 lexical ties. Same roots still dominate the highest proportion in this group (81.07%) followed by 57 collocations (14.58%), 13 synonyms (3.33%), two super-ordinates (0.51%) and two general item (0.51%).

Table 16 A Statistical Analysis of Cohesion Density of the Low-Scored and

High-Scored Papers in the Posttest

Data	No . of Students	Mean	S.D	t-test value	P
The Low-Scored Paper	3	6.58	1.114		
				.216	.840
The High-Scored Paper	3	6.82	1.574		

Table 16 shows a statistical analysis of cohesion density of the low-scored and

high-scored papers in the posttest.   The findings show that there is no significant

difference of cohesive density between the low-scored and high-scored papers in the

posttest at the level of .05; therefore, the fourth null hypothesis is maintained. The

discrepancy of cohesion density used by the low-scored and high-scored students is

not found.

Based on the results, cohesion density cannot differentiate the good and poor

writers in the posttest.   Noticeably, similar to the pretest findings, the high-scored

students apply more cohesive devices in their writing than do the low-scored students.

However, the number of cohesive devices does not affect the discrepancy of cohesion

density between the two different groups, and the findings do not support Witte and

Faigley's (1984) research results which state that the writing skill affects cohesion

density in the text.

In conclusion, this study is to investigate the use of cohesive devices in Laotian college students' writing. The inter-raters' reliability of both pretest and posttest achievement scores is analyzed by applying the Pearson's correlation analyzed by SPSS/PC+. The correlation scores of the pretest and posttest scores of the two raters are higher than the acceptable level of .80, so the scores are acceptable.

Then the pretest and posttest scores achieved by 19 Laotian students are analyzed. The t-test indicates a discrepancy between the pretest and posttest achievement scores; the first null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Next cohesion density of the six selected pretest and the six selected posttest papers is examined. The statistics shows that cohesion density of the posttest papers is significantly greater that that of the pretest ones, so the second null hypothesis is rejected. However, there are not any significant differences in cohesion density between the three-lowest scored and the three highest-scored papers in both the pretest and the posttest; hence, the third and fourth null hypotheses are maintained.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the objectives of the study are addressed and discussed. Plausible explanations are provided. Then, the applications and the limitations of the study are discussed. This is followed up by recommendations for further studies.

The objectives of the study

The study aimed to fulfill the following objectives.

1. To compare the pretest and posttest scores achieved by Laotian students in assigned writing tasks.

The findings indicated a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores at the .05 level. The posttest achievement score was dramatically higher than the pretest, which was interpreted as indicating that the students developed their writing skills in the intervening period between the pretest and the posttest. As the results, the first null hypothesis, which was that there was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest score, was rejected.

2. To examine the density of cohesive devices used in the six selected pretest and the selected six posttest papers

The data results showed that the posttest papers were found more cohesive devices than did the pretest papers. The frequency of references and lexical ties substantially increased in the posttest. Moreover, cohesion density in the posttest significantly raised compared to the pretest at the .05 level. Based on the statistics,

the second null hypothesis, saying that there was no significant difference in cohesion density between the selected pretest and posttest papers, was rejected.

3. To study the density of cohesive devices used by good and poor writers in the pretest.

The findings showed that the good writers employed more cohesive devices in their writings than did the poor ones. However, a significant difference in cohesion density between these two groups was not found, so the third null hypothesis: there was no significant difference of cohesion density found in the low-scored and high-scored papers in the pretest, was maintained.

4. To study the density of cohesive devices used by good and poor writers in the posttest.

The findings showed that cohesion density in the poor-scored papers was somewhat greater than that of the higher-scored papers; however, a significant difference of cohesion density between high and low scored papers in the posttest was not found. Therefore, the fourth null hypothesis, which stated that there was no significant difference of cohesion density found in the low-scored and high-scored papers in the posttest, was also retained.

Discussion

The findings of this study strongly suggest that, in general, these Laotian students developed their writing skills and clearly employed more cohesive devices in the posttest, and especially so in respect of the use of lexical cohesion and reference. The statistical data showed that there was a relationship between the students' writing improvement and the frequency of cohesive devices used; the more the students developed their writing skills, the more cohesive devices were found in the texts.

This research supported Witte and Faigley (1984), McCully (1985), Neuner's (1987) studies. Witte and Faigley (1984) explored ten out of 90 essays which were rated the highest and the lowest scores. They found that the high-scored essays had significant density in reference and conjunction. McCulley (1985) investigated 120 papers serving 1-8 rating scale. The research revealed that lexical cohesion, especially, synonym, hyponym and collocation involved writing coherence. It could be concluded that lexical cohesion involved writing quality judgement. Neuner (1987) studied cohesive ties and chains in 600 college freshmen's essays. The researcher found that the good writers employed more varied choices of words in the writing than did the poor writers. The researcher concluded that lexical cohesion was a strong indicator of writing quality.

However, in this study when investigating cohesion between the low-scored and high-scored groups, significant differences of cohesion density were not found in both the pretest and posttest. This result did not support Witte and Faigley's (1981) research. The plausible explanations were the poor-scored students could develop writing skills and employ a very much higher use of cohesive devices in the posttest. Moreover, the high-scored students produced more t-units than did the low-scored

ones. The number of t-units divided by the number of cohesive devices was cohesion density. In this study, the good students wrote many t-units in their pretest and posttest, so the number of t-units compensated for the number of cohesive devices used in their papers and affected cohesion density. Even though the highly-scored students employed more cohesive devices than did the lower-scored ones, cohesion density between the two groups was not much different because the statistical results could not indicate any significant difference of cohesion density between the low-scored and high-scored papers in both pretest and posttest.

In short, the findings showed a linear relationship between the achievement scores and cohesion density of the pretest and posttest papers, so it could be interpreted that the richness of cohesive devices contributed to the students' writing development. The significant differences of cohesion density between the low-scored and high-scored papers in the pretest and the posttest were not found.

Application

1. EFL teachers can apply the research result for teaching of English writing. This study strongly indicates a linear relationship between the richness of cohesion density and students' writing development, as manifest in the posttest. When EFL teachers give students some examples of how the use of cohesive devices affects writing scores, students will realize the importance of cohesion in the writing of their texts, and they are more empowered to produce quality writing.

2. The study can be a guideline for EFL students to improve their writing skills. Regarding the findings, the Laotian students employed many cohesive devices, especially lexical cohesion and reference, as clearly seen in the posttest. When Laotian students developed their writing skills, cohesive devices found in the text also increased. The way Laotian students developed the use of cohesive devices can be used as a guideline of writing development for other EFL students.
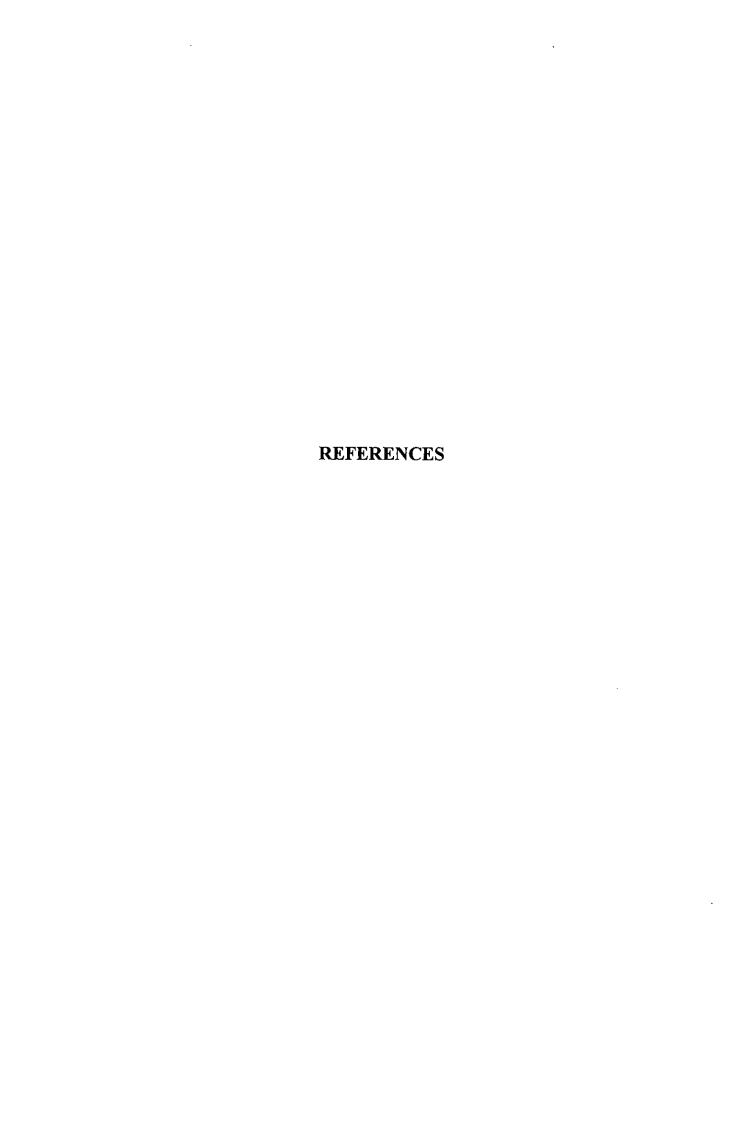
Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations.

1. The different topics of the pretest and the posttest might have caused different use of cohesive devices.

2. The number of selected data was very small.

3. Only the second task of IELTS writing was investigated. The first task was not included in this study.

4. This study did not cover other grammatical and structural considerations more specifically related to traditional grammar analysis.

Suggestions for Further Studies

1 This study focused on cohesion in the students' writing. There should be a study of grammatical errors and coherence in Laotian college students' writing.

2 Due to the limitation of the number of data, further studies could accommodate more informants.

3. There should be an analysis of cohesion in IELTS or other English proficiency tests done by Thai students.

4. There should be a study of cohesion in ESL students' English speaking skill.

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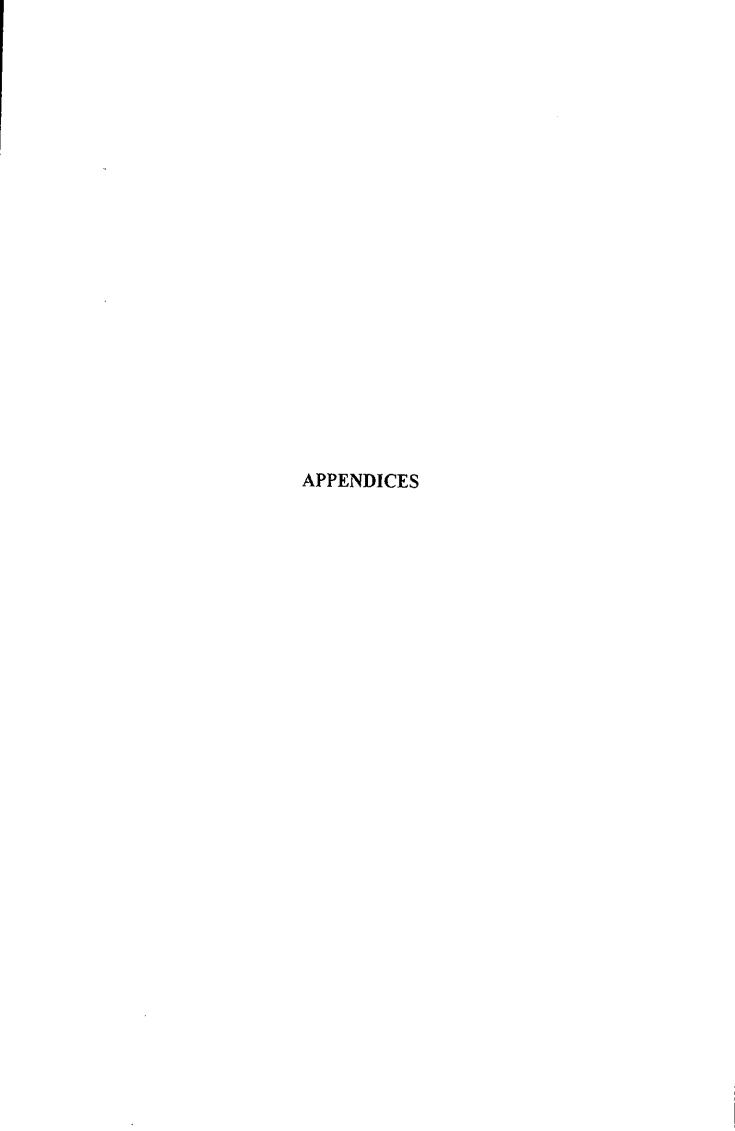Farghal, M. (1992). Naturalness and the notion of cohesion in EFL writing classes.
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ประสานมิตร.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

The pretest papers

The first low-scored paper

Happiness is a very good word when we hear this word use can smile and think to place, to people that we miss. I think everybody know happiness but I believe not many people know and touch happiness because they spend time for work for business untill forget relaxing, forget happiness is very important. In life, I want to tell everybody "don't gorget your family your daring "spend time with them" Sometimes it's difficult, if you are not happy your benefit is not useful, So we are happy, smile to proble, don't worry about you future only do well today. if you haven't got money, your try to find job if you haven't got friend, you smile and speak with your nabourhood or have a pet.

We should have time for smell flower, talk with friend, have diner with familly, shopping. We can find happiness in everywhere, and don't serious with your proble come one.

The second low-scored paper

As we know, Every body in the world wish to be happy in their life but, this can not be easily. Because every one was born on different family, different place and status, thus some people was born in a poor family, some people was born in a rich family. This is the big problem.

It is difficult to define usually the cause is money most people belive that money is every they belive they can buy everything for them to make them happy. But less people belive that work is the real happiness because every one was born in the world must struggle and look for something which it make them happy Exactly such as real love, real friend and real lifestyle.

The third low-scored paper

Nowadays, we are very difficult to life because our world has a lot of populations and there are many people want to do the same thing such as we want to get a better job....etc. So it is very hard to be happy.

First thing that make people stress, it is their daily life for example: One man works with a company, in his office he has to do many things, he works from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm and Start work again from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm. He is very stress from his work, but when we meet a problem we should not stress because it may be distroy our happiness.

The things that will make we happy, they are: first we should sovl our problem step by step. Second thing, we should not think about the problem in the future, and the most important thing when we have problem we should relax: try to take time for travel; do the thing that we like such as: gardening, fishing,....etc, and it will make you happy and have a greatful life.

The first high-scored paper

Every human being wants to be happy. Every human being wants to achieve happiness. Some people think that the most important factor to achieve happiness is having our own lives or being able to do whatever we want. However, some people argue that money is the most necessary factor in achieving happiness.

Being independent, having a free life is the main factor in having truly happiness because it allows us to do whatever we want. In our lives, there are many interesting and challenging things that we've always wanted to do. Some people might have chances to follow their dreams but some people might not. The people who are able to try to reach their goals will be able to find happiness. For example, to enter a university some students might not have chances to choose the subject they like, but some have to study the subject that their parents choose. We can see that those students who are forced to do things have many problems with their lives or studies and it's hard for them to find the happiness. Another example is that we can see the employees who work in the job they like, they are doing a great job for their lives. It is correct to say that the important........happiness is having a free life. Some people argue that the most significant thing is money because people mainly live lives by money and all people are working hard for it. Everybody needs to use money and we can not live lives easily with out money. For instance, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, or every product we use we use money to buy them. We can not buy a big house, modern car, or travel around the world, which make people happy, with out money. Moreover, every people work as hard as they can for earning more money. For example, farmers, gardeners or poor people work harder and harder to earn more

money to improve the qualities of lives. It's suitable to say that money is the main factor in achieving happiness.

In conclusion, having a free life or being able to do whatever we want make people enjoyable to live their lives. On the other hand money is one thing that comforts our lives. I strongly believe that both money and freedom are vital and neccessary. If missed one of those life would find many hard obstacles before succeeding in achieving truly and permanetly happiness.

The second high-scored paper

In our society, people have a lot of demands. One of their demands is the happiness. There are many people accept that happiness is considered very important in life and there are many factors in achieving happiness.

There are some difficulties to define with the statement. First, there are many people who have to work and responsibilities, so they don't have enough time to find out for their happiness. For instance, people who work in the city, they have to go to work and they don't have enough time to make themselves happy or they aren't able to do things that they would like to do. Another difficulty is that people need too many things to make them happy or they want to have many things which will gain happiness to themselves, for example, most people think that money is very important thing that they want to have, they will be to buy many things if they have a lot of money, in fact, while they are finding for money, they lose their happiness, because they have to work really hard. Some people wants to have money a lot, so they choose bad jobs such as prostitutes, thiefs, robbers....although they can get money easily and fastly, surely, they don't have happiness about their behaviours.

To achieve happiness, there are some important factors. First, we have to divide time for ourselves in working, studying, entertaining and so on. If we have a clear schedule for ourselves, of course, we will be able to have happiness with things that you are doing right now, by this I mean, we shouldn't expect our happiness to much, but we have to try our best for everything, then the result will become well and you will achieve happiness at last, for example, when you study in schools, you don't' like some subjects and you found out that makes you unhappy, the way that you should do is trying hard with your difficulties and then you will be succeed.

In conclusion, I strongly rekon that happiness is considered very important in life. We all need happiness, but our happiness is sometimes different, so I think that if everyone can find their happiness, surely the world must be perfect, peaceful and fun.

The third high-scored paper

Happiness is one of the most significant desire of human beings. However, happiness can be defined in many different ways depending on people's thoughts.

Some people think that happiness is "Money." For example, when people make a profit on sales or they win the lottery, they are happy. People will be very happy as long as they have a lot of money.

Some people think that happiness is "Pride." For instance, people need recognitions, rewards rather than money. These people will be happy if they satify their needs by obtaining recognitions and rewards.

Some people are happy when they are in a warm family as well as society. Their motivations are to be with friends and family and they will be happy.

As far as I concern, I think that everybody in this world clearly demand for happiness. To live and have a happy life in the society, you need to know what are your motivations and try to satify those needs. To make the world a better place to live is to be happy and not to be worried.

In conclusion, happiness is the most oritical desire of humans as the meaning could be defined into many different ways depending on the circumstances. In my opinion, I think that people will be happier and will have happier lives if they think in happy ways, and do happy things. Furthermore, I would suggest all people that "No worry, be happy", I think this statement would help people have a happier thinking and happier life.

APPENDIX 2

The posttest papers

The first low-scored student's posttest

In modern society, women involve in the workplace more recently. Their knowledge and capabilities are devoted to work. As a result women are the main factor to contibute to the strong economy. There is a contentious issue about how to help these women in terms of their child care. Supports of the given statement claim that the government should provide staff and facilities to take care of working mother's children because it help mothers to work more productive while others argue that mothers should be responsible for their child-care because they can afford as a result of their salary.

Supporters of the given statement believe that working mothers can work afficently in the work force if the government help their childcare cost – working mothers will be not worried about their childcare because they recognized that their children live in safe places with good staff that the government provide. Moreover, they can use the plenty of the capabilities that they have to participate in career. Therefore the government can gain benefit from this. Working mothers work more effective is the main rationale why the government should take responsibility for childcare, they claim.

By contrast, opponents of the given statement believe that working mothers should take responsibility for their child care because they have enough money to efford it. They claim that they have high salary from working this money should us to help their economic necessity. Moreover, this is fair for other women who is sigle

and tax-payers. Sigle women pay tax in the same rate why the government should use their taxes to help small group of women. Therefore, the working women should pay for their childcare. financial abilities are the main reason why working mothers should provide for their childcare, they claim.

I totally agree with the idea that the government should be responsible for provide for working mothers' children. In my opinion, the money that the government invests in the future. If children get good quality of caring they will be responsible adults in the future. I cannot close my eyes to the fact that working mothers are able to pay for childcare. I believe that their salary that they get may not be able to provid all facilities to their children. Therefore I completly agree with the given statement.

The second low-scored student's posttest

After a long period of social change, women seem to be more significantly advantaged than men in terms of baring egalitarian rights to enter workforce. For these women who have children, however, have some difficulties about balancing between child roaring roles and careerist. Therefore, it is government responsibility to provide free appliances to bring up the children in two income family. Supporters of the given statement claim that the state should be responsible to supply free facilities for working mother to raise their children while opponents of the given statement argue that the private sector should be responsibility to such provision.

Advocates of the proposed argument maintain that It is government responsibility to provide free staff and appliances reasoning that national economy would be significantly strogthen provided that the state supply such staff for working mother. They add that who both parties work, they are not only earning money for themselve but they are also strenthening both local and international economy in terms of spending money whithin companies or workplace. For this reason, these people can agree with the given statement. By contrast there are these who do not accept the given statement reasoning that it should be the company owners' responsibility to provide these facilities. They emphasize that whom these women have already brought about a lot of financial gains to the company the company owners have to pay back their employees somehow. To do this company owner could not only to show their responsibility for their employees but also strengthen relationship and productivity among their workers, they claim. Concerns about relationship and capativity of workers make these people unable to agree with the given statement.

In my view, I partly agree with the given statement because I think it should be done for the moody only. I think fore those who have low wages should be provided such a appliances so as to help them in terms of child nurturing. I acknowledge that the state have to spend a lot of money to implement it. I, however, believe that when citizens have problem big brother, governments have to poor over their people to overcome not just lot them do it by themselve. Theirfore, I could only partly agree with the given statement and suggest that it should be done for the needy only.

The third low-scored student's posttest

In modern families, both husbands and wives have to work because of economic nessity. That is why child rearing is a contentious role in the society. Child-care issue has given rise to question of many people that is it the government's responsibility of provide child-care for the families where mothers are in employment paid? Supporters of the given statement argue that it is the government responsibility to provide child-care for working mothers, while others claim that it should be the employers' responsibilities to look after children.

Supporters of the given statement contend that it is the government's responsibility of take care of children when their mothers work. When women work, it contributes to strengthen nation economic. If they work, it means they can get more income to support their families. When the government provids child-care for them. Moreover they can work effectively because they don't to worry more about juggling between careerist and child-minding roles, they claim. Therefore, they support the idea of the government provides child care.

Opponents of the given statement argue that child-care should be the responsibility of employers because the employers gain a lot of benefit from their employees that is why the employers should take some of their money to provide child-care of their workers. Because when women work they need someone to take some of their responsibility, they believe. Therefore, the private sector should be responsible for child-care for their workers.

I could not agree more with the given statement because when women have to balance between careerist and child minding it will lead to unproductive workers. In my own experience, when my mother had my brother and she had also to work. It

was very difficult for her because she had to prepared milk for my brother before going out to work that is why I went to work late and had to reached home early, that means she did not spend her time at work as effectively as possible, this leads to unproductive work. Therefore, I totally agree with the given statement.

The first high-scored student's posttest

There has been an increasing emphasis on women's rights to have a job outside the house as they now have a role to play in developing the countries. However, there is a problem associated with working mothers that who would be taking care of their children while they are working. One solution for the problem is providing staff and facilities, in other words, children to look after the working mothers' kids. This has been a controversial issue and widely discussed who should take responsibility for providing childcare. Many people believe that governments should be the one who would be responsible for providing childcare services. On the other hand, many people argue that it is employers of those working women who should be taking the responsibility of setting up childcare. I mostly agree with the given statement. Although employers should be concerned for the issue as they are gaining benefits from working mother, the government should be the leader of providing childcare due to the fact they have financial power and it is their important task in developing human resources of the country.

Supporters of the given statement would believe that it is no one else but the government who should be taking control over providing childcare for children of working mother. There are several reasons to support the argument. Firstly, the government has financial power, mainly comes from people's tax, therefore, working mothers deserve to have childcare provided by governments. Secondly, the government has an important role in developing country by enhancing human resources of the country. By providing childcare, working women who have children would be likely to work productively. Looking at a big picture, that productivity

gives contribution to country development financially and economically. Moreover, it would be a win win situation for the country because providing childcare for children would be an excellent investment on the country's future as children are the country's valuable resources in the future Thirdly, if the government provide childcare services, it is likely that the quality of childcare would be concerned by it would be business imperative which the quality is not often considered if provided by employers Those reasons illustrate clearly that the government should take control over subsidizing childcare services.

Proponents of the given statement would argue that it is employers of working mothers to take control over setting up childcare. If employers provide childcare for children of their employees, it is likely that employees, especially female employees who have children, would be able to work more effectively and productively and produce a satisfying piece of work. Absenteeism would decrease while productivity would be likely to enhance. As a matter of fact, while employees gain benefits, employers are also the beneficiaries of the situation and perhaps they are the main beneficiaries. Moreover, it is employers' responsibility to be concerned for employees' welfare. They should be thinking and considering whether their employees are satisfied or have any worries, distractios or stress. It has been demonstrated providing childcare is the employer's duty.

Providing childcare is a contentious issue which has footed in public consciousness. While acknowledging that is the employers should have a role in providing childcare for employees who are working mothers. I mostly agree that the main responsibility lies heavily on the government if we consider all the forms of financial power they have and their main task in developing nations. If the government does not act as a role made of providing childcare. I believe that the

success of providing childcare is out of reach and is what working mothers can only dream of.

The second high-scored student's posttest

Both men and women need to work in order to generate more income for their family. It is economically necessary that women have to work in modern society. However, it is undeniable that their children need to be looked.after. I mostly agree with the statement because althoug employers should take a responsibility to provide facilities to look after the children of working women, the government has adequate financial support to provide these facilities in society.

Proponents of the given statement would argue that governments have financial support which they have received from taxes of working mothers and they should spend some amount of money to help facilitate those working women. For instance, the government of the United states has provided fund to build childcare centers for working parents. This can benefit women because they can pay more attention on working and performing their career more professionally. Moreover, governments need to develop societies in their own country. One objective of the development is to develop human resources. If governments take the responsibility ot provide facilities to look after children of working mothers, they will be able to encourage women to work more effectively and the government can play a significant role in looking after children who will become capable human resources in future generations. Consequently, governments are responsible for providing facilities to take care of children of working women because they have financial support and they need to develop society.

On the contrary, those who oppose the given statement would argue that employers should take a responsibility to help facilitate working mothers. Employers have financial support which employees have generated for the company or an

organization hence, some amount of money that working employees have generated for employers should help provide childcare for their children. If employers provide facilities to look after children of working women, they may be more satisfied. As a result of their satisfaction, working women will probably be able to work more effectively and productively. This will benefit both parties because staff of employers can ensure that their children are put in safe places and employers can generate more income form employees. Therefore, it is a responsibility of employers to help facilitate working mothers by providing childcare because they also have financial support which can motivate their women workers.

In conclusion, people need to make better lives for their family. As a result of this, women have to go to work outside. It is important that their children need to be taken care of property. In my opinion, I mostly agree with the statement because governments have financial support to facilitate people in society, especially governments should help provide facilities to children of working mothers. I acknowledge that employers should take a responsibility to help their staff, but it will be more appropriate if governments try to help people in their country.

The third high-scored student's posttest

Currently, emphasis on equal employment opportunity has been substantially increased in many parts of the world. Specifically, women and working mothers have been increasingly provided with more job opportunity to play a part in workplaces. However, it is reported that employees with children possibly perform less productive in the workplace as they are often entered a dilemma situation between career and family. While acknowledging that there are many valid and divergent opinions regarding this issue, I mostly agree with the idea expressed in the above statements that it is the responsibility and the accountability of governments to provide staff and facilities to look after the children of working mothers because the governments are financially powerful and providing facilities or childcare should be integrated as one of the national development programs. However, others believe that employers should take a responsibility for funding and providing childcare due to the fact that they are among the greatest controllers in the workplace.

Proponents of the given statement believe that it is the responsibility of the governments to subsidize or provide fund to look after the children of working mothers because they have a financial power. Most governments receive money as a form of taxation from their residents. thus, it is the governments' duty to recompensate their residents by providing monetary support to help working mothers looking after their children. Moreover, providing childcare or providing facilities to look after the children of working mothers should be integrated as a national development program if the goal of employment equity is to be achieved. The governments are the most powerful group in the country which has the highest

authority to make decisions. The theory of equal employment opportunity would never be turned into action unless the governments implemented it.

On the other hand, opponents of the given statement would argue that providing staff and facilities to look after or take care of the children of working mothers should be an accountability of their employers or companies' owners because the employers are concerned about productivity in the workplace and companies or organizations are largely affected by employee's performance. To be precise, the employers can play a role in increasing productivity in the workplace by providing their employees with staff or facilities to look after their employee's children as compensation incentives. Thus, employees would be willing to dedicate and perform more effectively in the workplace leading to a more satisfactory outcome.

APPENDIX 3

IELTS Band Interpretation

Who should be responsible for providing staffs and facilities to look after the children of working mothers is a controversial issue today. While I acknowledge that employers should take a part in providing fund and other facilities to their employees, I strongly believe that the governments should be more responsible for subsidizing and providing facilities to look after the children of working mothers as they are financially powerful and they have a duty to develop the nation. Men and women, especially working mothers, would equally shared more opportunities and responsibilities in the workplace and even for more important, they would essentially contribute to the development of the nation provided that the governments provide fund and facilities to take care of the children of working mothers. Band 9 - Expert User

Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.

Band 8 - Very Good User

Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.

Band 7 - Good User

Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.

Band 6 - Competent User

Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

Band 5 - Modest User

Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

Band 4 - Limited User

Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.

Band 3 - Extremely Limited User

Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.

Band 2 - Intermittent User

No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty in understanding spoken and written English.

Band 1 - Non User

Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

Band 0 - Did not attempt the test

No assessable information provided.

APPENDIX 4

The program description

English for Academic Purposes comprising:

Basic English Language Training

EAP 1

EAP 2 including Research and Examination Skills

1. Aims

The program aims to:

- prepare ADS awardees for courses in Australian universities and colleges

- cater for differing intake levels, backgrounds and course selections by providing a modularized English for Academic Purposes Program and a Foundation Studies Program.

- provide training in cross-cultural skills, self-directed learning, studies skills, library skills, computer skills and preparation for the IELTS and/or MUFY Examinations.

- Assist the Australian Embassy, a Laotian college at Vientiane, and AusAID State and Liasion Officers with, counselling, placement and on-going support of candidates, as requested.

2. Objective

The objectives of the program are to:

- upgrade the English language ability of the participants to a level of proficiency which will enable them to participate effectively in English-medium studies in Australian universities and colleges

- develop language skills for social interaction and daily needs

- develop learning strategies and academic study skills suited to an Australian academic environment

- develop self-directed study techniques in preparation for the independent mode of study in universities and colleges in Australia

- provide training in library and computer skills

- in the case of Foundation Studies, provide the academic content and skills training necessary to enter undergraduate courses

- prepare the EAP participant to sit for the IELTS examination

- prepare the participants for living and studying in Australia

- assist AusAID locally and in Australia to make the experience as positive as possible for Laos students.

3. IELTS Testing and the training program

ADS recipients are IELTS – tested at the time of selection.

The usual range of IELTS scores of students awarded scholarships is from 4.0 to 6.0. This has been managed by providing up to four different entry points throughout the year.

The trend to improve IELTS entry scores and the willingness of ADS awardees to study has in fact reduced the number of intake to 3.

The system of different entry points also provides flexibility for awardees with particular work commitments.

EAP students are re-tested at the end of the year to ascertain appropriate universities and TAFE college entry levels.

Those who do not reach the required IELTS scores generally cannot take up their awards although, in special cases determined by AusAID, additional English Language Training may be provided.

TAFE entry level is 5.5 (6.0 for some specialized courses), undergraduate is 6 (up to 7.0 for specialized courses) and postgraduate is usually 6.5 (in reality, universities take students on scores ranging from 5.5 to 7).

4. Training program methodology

- the program has been designed to:

- take students from basic language and academic skills to task – based research and word – processing skills

- develop independent learning strategies

- prepare students to sit for end – of – course IELTS or Foundation Year Examinations and demonstrate suitable rates of improvement and preparedness of entrance to Australian universities and TAFE colleges

- prepare students to live and study in Australia

It is vital to address the lower levels of some participants, in particular, and the lack of skill development and academic background of Laos students in general. It is also crucial that participants learn how to learn independently and how to communicate effectively, in order to make the transition to study confidently and successfully in the Australian social and academic environment.

5. **Training program content**

English for Academic Purposes

MODULE 1: BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRANING (BELT)

Description

The first module of the training program is designed to give intensive ELT skills

practice to raise those participants with low intake scores to a level of

proficiency where they can participate in an English for Academic Purposes

class.

The general approach will be integrated and skills – based with particular attention

paid to clarifying language structures and functions and developing confidence

listening and reading.

The main aim is to take students from a situation where their ability to communicate

in English in impaired by grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation errors to

one where they are broadly able to convey meaning on most general topics

Content

SPEAKING

Participants will be able to:

- talk on general topics

- perform simple role plays

- ask questions

- take part in simple discussions

- act out cued dialogues

- present clear, simple, well-structured talks

- answer questions

- explain, clarify, give and receive instructions and directions

- seek clarification, ask for exemplification etc.

- work on pronunciation problems

LISTENING

participants will be able to:

- listen for specific information

- transfer information

- predict

- listen for gist

- take simple notes

- improve pronunciation

READING

participants will be able to:

- learn to exploit prior knowledge

- skim and scan

- re-arrange texts to develop awareness of text context

- read for gist

- summarize

- re-arrange texts to develop awareness of text cohesion

- practice speed reading

- develop positive reading habits

WRITING

Participants will be able to:

- fill in forms

- describe people, things and places

- write a simple letter

- write a straight – forward narrative

- compare texts for style, organization and content

- combine sentences

- fill in gaps

- improve grammar, vocabulary choice and punctuation

Materials

Participants will study a general text, specific skills – based texts and a grammar text. These will be supplemented by relevant, interactive exercises using audio and video materials.

MODULE 2: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP 1)

Description

The second module of the training program assumes the participants from module 1 are ready to begin the study of Academic English.

The module is designed to build the basic skills practice by exposing students to more academic materials, developing more sophisticated techniques in the four language macro – skills and introducing word – processing, study and research skills and general examination strategies.

The approach will be blend language skills development with more topic – based activities to encourage wider reading, the making of connections and greater sense of responsibility in gathering and presenting information.

The main aim is to establish more effective communication skills extending the facility of students with greater ranges of topics, grammatical complexity, vocabulary and language functions.

Content

SPEAKING

Participants will be able to:

- discuss a broader range of topic
- take part in more complex role plays
- present talks at a higher level on a wide range of topics
- develop group discussion and meeting skills
- conduct a simple survey and report back
- develop awareness of communication styles and techniques

LISTENING

Participants will be able to:

- identify different accents of English

- listen for specific information on a wider range of topics

- summarize information

- take notes

- complete maps, charts, figures etc, from tapes or dictated information

- take dictation

- infer

- distinguish fact from opinion

READING

Participants will be able to:

- compare and exchange information

- recognize topic sentences

- match topic sentences to paragraphs

- infer, predict, use prior knowledge

- complete questionnaires

- develop more intensive reading skills

- read more widely on a range of topics

- start to appreciate style

WRITING

Participants will be able to:

- proof – read to find mistakes

- understand word order

- join contrasting ideas

- recognize discourse markers

- distinguish fact from opinion

- use reported speech

- combine sentences of a more complex nature

WORD – PROCESSING

Participants will be able to:

- learn the parts of a computer

- start – up a computer

- retrieve, view, print and close and applications program

- exit system and shut – down equipment

RESEARCH SKILLS

Participants will be able to:

- practice gathering and presenting information

- find relevant information on a variety of topics from a variety of sources

- file and retrieve information using simple cataloguing system

Materials

Participants will study a general text, specific skills – based texts and a text on Academic English and Study Skills.

These will be supplemented by relevant, interactive exercises using audio and visual materials.

Examination preparation techniques will be developed using a range of items from internationally recognized tests.

Students will be required to investigate a wide range of materials from a variety of information sources both formal and informal.

MODULE 3: ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES/ IELTS

PREPARATION (EAP2)

Description

The third module assumes participants have consolidated language skills and

    developed a framework for academic study in English to the point where they

    can be given intensive training in:

- Effective Communication Skills

- Learning Strategies

- Cross – Culture Awareness

- Library Skills

- Computing Skills

- IELTS Examination Techniques

The approach will be place more emphasis on independent learning by involving the

    learners in task – based activities. Students will be required to use academic

    texts and journals for research and to participate in seminars and tutorials.

    They will prepare to sit the final IELTS examination by practising specific

    techniques.

The main aim will be to increase students' ability to communicate effectively on a

    range of general, academic, vocational and leisure topics.

Content

SPEAKING

Participants will develop communicative confidence, fluency and a level of

grammatical accuracy in speaking such that errors do not interfere with meaning.

Participants will be able to:

- Take part in tutorial or seminar discussion by:

    formulating questions,

    presenting a clear argument, and

    agreeing and disagreeing appropriately;

- take part in conversation in academic situation such as:

    consultations with tutor/ supervisor, and

    discussions with other students;

- take part in general conversation in social situations in the target contry;

- present a seminar paper; and

- lead a discussion and respond to questions.

LISTENING

Participants will be able to:

- understand academic presentations in tutorials and seminars;

- listen to lectures and take meaningful notes;

- take part in discussions, in both academic and social situations without breakdown of understanding

- infer the meaning of unknown words from context; and

- understand a variety of accents.

- improve pronunciation

READING

Participants will be able to:

- read and understand a range of text types chosen from various sources on topics of general and academic interest;

- scan a text to extract specific information;

- critically analyse texts to:

  identify author's purpose,

  identify text – type,

  identify text schemes e.g. definition, cause-effect, process description,

  distinguish fact from opinion,

  assess relevance to given task,

  understand the use of discourse markers and cohesive devices, and infer the

meaning of unknown words from context and morphological clues;

- read and make notes from discipline-related materials for research purposes; and

- develop strategies to expand vocabulary.

WRITING

Participants will develop an awareness of the factors involved in creating a good piece
of writing.

Participants will be able to:

- construct grammatically accurate sentences;

- construct paragraphs with topic sentences, controlling idea, support/ expansion of
  the topic;

- organise written texts according to the purpose of writing;

- use a variety of text schemes appropriate to given task e.g. definition,
  classification, process description;

- plan and outline a piece of writing;

- draft and re-draft a text; and

- achieve a level of grammatical accuracy such that errors do not interfere with meaning.

Participants will be able to produce the following types of written work:

- notes from lectures /written texts;

- outlines for presentation;

- summary of an academic text;

- expository essay; and

- literature review paper

Learning Strategies

Participants will take as much responsibility as possible for their own learning the framework of the course.

Participate will:

- analyze their own needs and set learning goals;

- regularly evaluate course content and make suggestions and recommendations about classroom activities and materials;

- develop an awareness of their individual learning styles and approaches;

- learn assess their individual strengths and weaknesses;

- develop a program of self-study to:

    identify objectives,

    choose appropriate materials,

    manage self-study time appropriately; and

- learn how to exploit available resources effectively.

Cross-Culture Awareness

Participant will:

- develop and awareness of the attitudes and values of western and Laos culture;

- identify similarities and differences in behavior between westerners and Laos in social and educational settings; and

- develop skills in communicating appropriately in these setting.

Library Skills

Participants will be able to understand the basics of an academic library:

- reference materials;

- classification systems;

- periodicals indexing and abstracting services;

Computing Skills

Participants will develop greater proficiency in word processing learn how to access research material using internet.

Participants will correctly use a standard format for in-text and bibliographical referencing in their written papers.

Examination Techniques

Participants will prepare to sit their final test by practising the following exam-taking techniques:

- working within strict time limits;

- speed-reading techniques;

- Writing: analysing essay titles,

  planning an essay,

  speed-writing,

- Listening: exposure to wide range of listening activities; and

- Speaking: interview techniques – how to make a good impression.

Participants will be prepared to take the IELTS test with an appropriate exit score. In relation to test-taking strategies, students will:

- be able to use a range of test-taking strategies appropriately; and

- gain familiarity with the IELTS test format.

In relation to IELTS-tested language skills, students will be able to:

- listen to monologues and distinguish main ideas form supporting detail;

- listen to short spoken texts and correctly identify a visual representation of the information contained in that text;

- listen to short dialogues and fill missing information in gap-fill exercises;

- complete a flow chart based on a reading passage;

- complete a gap-fill summary of a reading passage;

- complete short answer comprehension based on a reading passage;

- determine whether, according to passage, a series of statement are:

  True

  False

  Does Not Say

or

  Supported

Rejected

Not discussed in the text;

- Interpret charts, graphs, tables and diagrams and write short analytical descriptions of these;

- Draw charts, graphs, table and diagrams and write short analytical descriptions of these;

- Write essays clearly expressing a point of view and supporting that point of view with relevant evidence; and

- Participate in an interview on a range of general topics, pose appropriate questions, form and express opinions.

Materials

Participants will study a general text, specific skills – based texts and a grammar text. These will be supplemented by relevant, interactive exercises using audio and video materials.

VITAE

VITAE

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