



## An Analysis of Cohesive Devices in a Descriptive text

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### Abstract:

This article analyses the use of cohesive devices focusing on their contribution to textual cohesion. Cohesive devices analysed include personal references, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion in a descriptive text about 'sister.' In this case, the research is structured using the discourse analysis method that examines language use in a 'beyond the sentence' context. Thus, the analysis first finds the text to be analysed, then breaks down the text based on its clauses. After that, each clause is analysed whether any cohesive devices are found. After analysing, the researcher counts and makes a percentage of how many cohesive devices, which are found, appear in the text. The findings show that personal reference is the most prominent cohesive device with a total of 44.1%, which has a role to maintain the focus of the main subject. In addition, lexical collocation, with a total occurrence of 22.1%, is used to strengthen the quality of explanation. Meanwhile, additive and adversative conjunctions are used to ensure the logical flow and coherence of the text. This analysis underlines the importance of cohesive devices to achieve textual clarity, unity and reader comprehension, especially in descriptive writing.

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex language skills to acquire, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, because it requires the integration of vocabulary, grammar, and the ability to organize ideas coherently (Marlina, 2024; Taye & Mengesha, 2024). In contemporary society, effective writing is essential not only for academic achievement but also for professional communication, information documentation, and social interaction (Uzun, 2024). Many learners encounter difficulties in conveying ideas logically, resulting in fragmented and unclear texts that challenge readers' comprehension. Investigating how cohesive devices can enhance the interconnectedness of ideas in writing is therefore socially significant. Cohesion provides continuity and logical flow across sentences and paragraphs, facilitating the accurate transmission of meaning to the reader (Rzayeva, 2023). Without cohesion, readers may misinterpret, overlook, or fail to grasp the intended message. Hence, research into cohesive devices in descriptive texts can contribute to both pedagogical strategies and broader societal communication needs, providing empirical insights into the mechanisms that enable learners to construct coherent and understandable written discourse (Hardiana et al., 2024; Jashari, 2026).

The primary issue motivating this study is the persistent difficulty EFL learners face in producing cohesive and comprehensible descriptive texts. Many learners struggle to link sentences logically, resulting in texts that are disjointed and less communicative (Albelihi, 2022; Nkereuwem et al., 2023). This problem often stems from limited knowledge of cohesive devices, insufficient punctuation use, and underdeveloped grammatical skills. Previous studies have highlighted that inadequate cohesion negatively affects text quality, reader comprehension, and overall academic performance (Ghasemi, 2013; Zaheer et al., 2024). These challenges have broader implications because poor writing skills may restrict learners' academic success, professional opportunities, and social communication. This research, therefore, seeks to analyze the use of cohesive devices in descriptive texts to understand how these devices enhance logical sentence organization and improve text clarity. By examining cohesive patterns, the study aims to provide practical insights for developing strategies that enable learners to construct coherent, logically connected texts and thereby improve their overall writing proficiency.

Existing literature emphasizes that cohesive texts demonstrate clear and logical internal relationships, allowing readers to follow the writer's line of thought effectively. Rzaeva, (2023) define cohesion as the semantic connection between elements that creates textual unity. Handayani, (2025) underscores the importance of cohesive devices, such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion, in enhancing writing quality. Indriani & Asfia, (2023) further explains that these devices contribute to idea development and logical argumentation within the text. Hall & Liebenberg (2024) identifies cohesion and coherence as essential indicators of how sentences collectively convey a unified meaning. Empirical studies (Yarangga et al., 2023) demonstrate that mastery of cohesive devices significantly affects academic writing skills, particularly in achieving coherent and understandable texts. Nevertheless, most prior research has focused on general English writing and has seldom addressed descriptive texts in EFL contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how cohesion functions specifically in this genre. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by offering a detailed, context-specific analysis of cohesive devices in descriptive writing.

Further investigation reveals that previous studies have inadequately identified the dominant types of cohesive devices in descriptive texts. Many studies concentrate on grammatical aspects while neglecting semantic and pragmatic cohesion (Fauzi et al., 2024; Hayashi et al., 2019). Consequently, prior research has not fully illustrated how cohesion facilitates logical flow and conceptual unity within descriptive writing. This study aims to classify the most frequently used cohesive devices and examine their functional role in creating coherent discourse. By understanding patterns of cohesion, educators and learners can enhance writing skills more systematically and efficiently (Halima & Suprpti, 2022). Additionally, this research provides practical contributions by offering a foundation for teaching strategies that integrate text analysis, ensuring learning approaches are evidence-based, contextually relevant, and pedagogically effective in promoting writing proficiency.

The novelty of this study lies in its systematic focus on cohesive devices within EFL descriptive texts, distinguishing it from previous research that has predominantly adopted a generalized approach without attention to specific text genres (T. Handayani et al., 2024; Malik et al., 2024). This study emphasizes how cohesion facilitates the seamless connection of ideas, enhancing reader comprehension. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence supporting curriculum development, text evaluation, and teaching strategies tailored to descriptive writing. Unlike previous

studies, this research incorporates a comprehensive analysis integrating grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions of cohesion. By doing so, it addresses a practical gap in EFL writing pedagogy, guiding teachers and learners in effectively applying cohesive devices to improve text clarity and coherence. Furthermore, the study contributes to theoretical advancement by reinforcing cohesion and coherence principles in a genre-specific EFL context.

This research addresses the following questions: which cohesive devices are most prevalent in EFL descriptive texts, and how do these devices contribute to textual coherence? It is posited that effective use of cohesive devices enhances writing quality, facilitates reader comprehension, and supports learners' academic and professional communication. The analysis is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of cohesion in connecting sentences and paragraphs and for providing empirical guidance on applying cohesive strategies. The study contributes both theoretically and practically, extending understanding of textual cohesion while offering actionable insights for teaching writing. Through systematic analysis, the research identifies patterns that enable learners to construct coherent, logically connected texts and informs curriculum design, assessment, and pedagogical approaches in EFL instruction.

The study contributes to advancing knowledge on cohesive devices in descriptive writing and their practical application in teaching. The findings demonstrate the empirical importance of cohesion in linking sentences and paragraphs, allowing readers to follow the writer's reasoning effortlessly. By identifying dominant cohesive devices, this research enables educators and learners to tailor instructional approaches to enhance structured writing. Moreover, the study reinforces established theories of cohesion and coherence, applying them to descriptive texts within EFL contexts. This contributes to curriculum development, text evaluation, and teaching materials design, offering practical strategies to improve learners' writing proficiency. By highlighting effective patterns of cohesion, the research bridges theoretical understanding and classroom application, promoting evidence-based writing instruction.

In conclusion, cohesive devices play a pivotal role in establishing idea continuity in descriptive writing, significantly influencing text quality and reader comprehension. By focusing on the identification and functional analysis of cohesive devices, this study provides practical and theoretical insights, addressing gaps in prior research that has seldom explored genre-specific cohesion. The findings support the development of targeted teaching strategies, enabling learners to construct coherent and comprehensible texts. This research demonstrates that idea unity and effective cohesion are essential for producing communicative, structured, and accessible writing. The study's outcomes offer a foundation for future research and classroom applications, enhancing both the teaching and learning of writing in EFL contexts.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a focus on Discourse Analysis. The rationale for selecting this design is that Discourse Analysis allows the researcher to investigate language use in contexts that extend beyond individual sentences, enabling an examination of meaning patterns within larger linguistic units such as paragraphs or entire texts (Lim, 2025; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). This approach is particularly suitable for analyzing written descriptive texts, as it emphasizes how cohesion, lexical choice, and grammatical structures contribute to the overall coherence and meaning of the text. By applying this design, the research can explore both the

structural and functional aspects of language, including how ideas are connected, how meaning is constructed, and how readers interpret the text. The design facilitates a comprehensive understanding of language as a social and communicative phenomenon, making it appropriate for studies aimed at revealing both linguistic patterns and their implications for teaching and learning writing skills (Bantugan, 2025; Monaro et al., 2022).

Data for this study are collected from written descriptive texts produced by EFL learners. The primary technique involves purposive sampling to select texts that are sufficiently representative in terms of length, topic, and complexity. Each text is examined to identify cohesive devices, sentence structures, and lexical patterns that contribute to textual coherence. The data collection process includes careful transcription and organization of the texts, ensuring that all relevant linguistic elements are retained for analysis. In addition, secondary data sources, such as grammar and writing textbooks, previous studies on cohesion, and linguistic reference materials, are used to support interpretation and contextual understanding. This combination of primary textual data and supporting references enables a thorough investigation of the cohesive properties and structural patterns within the descriptive texts.

Data analysis in this study follows the principles of Discourse Analysis, which focuses on understanding how meaning is constructed in context and how linguistic choices contribute to cohesion and coherence (Alejandro & Zhao, 2024; Dahal, 2023). The analysis examines the texts at multiple levels, including lexical cohesion, grammatical cohesion, referential patterns, and conjunctive relations. Each cohesive device is identified, categorized, and interpreted according to its function in connecting sentences and paragraphs. This method also considers the broader communicative context, including the intended meaning of the writer, potential audience interpretation, and situational factors that influence language use. By applying Discourse Analysis, the study can reveal patterns of cohesion that support textual unity and clarity, providing insights into how language operates not only as a set of grammatical rules but also as a tool for social communication and meaning-making.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### Text

This work analyzes cohesive devices found in written texts. The focus of this work was on the use of cohesive devices in descriptive text, with the aim of understanding how cohesion tools help create cohesion in texts. As a result, the researcher identified the most dominant types of cohesion devices in descriptive text. In this case, the text used is a descriptive text about a sister.

“I have an older sister. Her name is Karina. I call her ‘Kak Karin’ and she is seven years older than me. Although we are siblings, we have some different characteristics and personalities. My sister has black wavy hair, but she dyed it brown. She is 169 cm tall and has long legs. Her skin is tanned because she likes to travel. She also has nice facial features. Her face is small, with round eyes and a pointed nose. People like to see her smile and laugh because she has a gummy smile. My sister is pretty but she always denies it. She is also kind to everyone. She likes to buy me food and ask me to the cinema. Yet sometimes she can annoy my mother. She rarely cleans her room because she is quite busy. She often sleeps a

lot on weekends due to her working schedule which is from Monday to Saturday. My sister is a hard-working person who I adore so much. She is the type of older sister who can be relied on.”

(Source: <https://www.inews.id/news/nasional/5-contoh-descriptive-text-tentang-orang-singkat-beserta-terjemahannya> )

The text was separated into clauses to simplify the identification and analysis of cohesive devices.

**Table 1. List of Clauses in Descriptive Texts about Older Sisters**

No	Clause
C1	I have an older sister.
C2	Her name is Karina.
C3	I call her ‘Kak Karin’.
C4	She is seven years older than me.
C5	Although we are siblings, we have some different characteristics and personalities.
C6	My sister has black wavy hair.
C7	She dyed it brown.
C8	She is 169 cm tall.
C9	She has long legs.
C10	Her skin is tanned because she likes to travel
C11	She also has nice facial features.
C12	Her face is small, with round eyes and a pointed nose.
C13	People like to see her smile and laugh.
C14	She has a gummy smile.
C15	My sister is pretty but she always denies it.
C16	She is also kind to everyone.
C17	She likes to buy me food and ask me to the cinema.
C18	Yet sometimes she can annoy my mother.
C19	She rarely cleans her room because she is quite busy
C20	She often sleeps a lot on weekends due to her working schedule which is from Monday to Saturday.
C21	My sister is a hard-working person who I adore so much.
C22	She is the type of older sister who can be relied on.

**Table 2. Cohesive devices analysis**

No	Clause	Reference (Personal, Demonstrative, Comparative)	Conjunction	Lexical Cohesion (Repetition & Collocation)
C1	I have an older sister.	I (Personal)	•	- older sister (Repetition) - sister (Lexical item)
C2	Her name is Karina.	Her (Personal)	•	name (repetition: semantic cohesion with “Karina”)
C3	I call her ‘Kak Karin’.	I, her (personal)	•	Kak Karin (Synonymic Repetition with Karina)
C4	She is seven years older than me.	- She, me (Personal) - older (Comparative)	•	•
C5	Although we are siblings, we have some different characteristics and personalities.	- we (personal) - siblings (comparative)	Although (Adversative)	characteristics, personality (Collocation: traits)

C6	My sister has black wavy hair.	My, sister (personal)	•	black, wavy hair (Collocation)
C7	She dyed it brown.	She, it (Personal)	•	dyed, brown (Collocation)
C8	She is 169 cm tall.	She (Personal)	•	tall (Lexical item)
C9	She has long legs.	She (Personal)	•	Long legs (collocation: descriptive)
C10	Her skin is tanned because she likes to travel	Her, she (Personal)	because (causal)	tanned, travel (collocation: cause-effect)
C11	She also has nice facial features.	She (Personal)	also (Additive)	facial features (Collocation: descriptive)
C12	Her face is small, with round eyes and a pointed nose.	Her (Personal)	with (Additive)	face, small, round eyes, pointed nose (Collocation: appearance)
C13	People like to see her smile and laugh.	her (Personal)	and (Additive)	smile, laugh (Collocation: action)
C14	She has a gummy smile.	She (Personal)	•	gummy smile (Collocation: description)
C15	My sister is pretty but she always denies it.	My, she, it (Personal)	but (Adversative)	pretty (Repetition)
C16	She is also kind to everyone.	She (Personal)	also (Additive)	kind (Lexical item)
C17	She likes to buy me food and ask me to the cinema.	She, me (Personal)	and (Additive)	buy food, cinema (Collocation: activities)
C18	Yet sometimes she can annoy my mother.	She, my (Personal)	Yet (Adversative)	annoy, mother (Collocation: family)
C19	She rarely cleans her room because she is quite busy	She, her (Personal)	because (Causal)	cleans room, busy (Collocation: habit)
C20	She often sleeps a lot on weekends due to her working schedule which is from Monday to Saturday.	She, her (Personal)	due to (Causal)	working schedule, Monday, Saturday (Collocation: time)
C21	My sister is a hard-working person who I adore so much.	My, who, I (Personal)	•	- hard-working (Repetition) - adore (Lexical item)
C22	She is the type of older sister who can be relied on.	She, who (Personal)	•	older sister (Repetition)

The analysis of the table demonstrates that the descriptive text about the older sister exhibits a strong sense of cohesion through multiple linguistic mechanisms. In terms of reference, personal pronouns such as I, she, her, my, we, and me are used extensively across almost all clauses, maintaining continuity and foregrounding the older sister as the primary topic. Comparative references, exemplified by the word older, appear to indicate relative characteristics, while demonstrative references are absent, suggesting that the text relies predominantly on personal and relational markers to establish textual cohesion. Regarding conjunctions, the text employs a variety of cohesive connectors to articulate logical relationships between clauses. Additive conjunctions, such as also, and, and with, are deployed to sequentially elaborate on physical attributes, personality traits, and actions. Adversative conjunctions, including although, but, and yet,

highlight contrasts or exceptions within the sister’s character, whereas causal conjunctions, such as because and due to, explicitly signal cause-and-effect relationships that clarify reasoning and temporal factors, such as her busy schedule or behavioral patterns.

Lexical cohesion is also prominently featured, manifested through repetition, synonymic repetition, and collocation. Key lexical items, including older sister, pretty, and hard-working, are repeated to reinforce salient characteristics, while synonymic repetition, exemplified by Kak Karin as an alternative reference to Karina, ensures referential continuity. Collocational patterns, such as black wavy hair, long legs, facial features, and working schedule, structure the text semantically, allowing readers to integrate descriptive, behavioral, and habitual information cohesively. Collectively, the interplay of personal reference, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion establishes a logically connected and comprehensible narrative. This integrated use of cohesive devices enables the text to maintain clarity, guide the reader through detailed descriptions, and exemplify effective strategies for producing coherent descriptive writing in EFL contexts.

**Table 3. Summary of Findings**

Cohesive devices	Type	Total	Percentage (%)
<b>Reference</b>	Personal	30	44.1
	Demonstrative	0	0
	Comparative	2	2.9
<b>Conjunction</b>	Additive	6	8.8
	Causal	3	4.4
	Adversative	3	4.4
<b>Lexical Cohesion</b>	Repetition	9	13.2
	Collocation	15	22.1

The quantitative distribution of cohesive devices indicates that personal references constitute the most dominant mechanism, with 30 occurrences accounting for 44.1% of the total. This high proportion reflects the centrality of the subject, the older sister, in maintaining textual continuity. By repeatedly using pronouns such as I, she, her, my, and me, the writer ensures that the reader can easily track the focus of each clause, creating a cohesive narrative that links actions, descriptions, and evaluations of the subject. Comparative references are minimal, with only two instances (2.9%), suggesting that explicit comparisons are secondary to the text’s primary goal of presenting descriptive information. Demonstrative references are absent, highlighting that the text relies heavily on personal and relational markers to establish coherence. These findings reveal that reference cohesion functions as the backbone of textual unity, allowing the writer to maintain focus on the main topic while connecting sentences logically and semantically across the narrative.

In addition to reference, lexical cohesion plays a substantial role, accounting for 35.3% of all cohesive devices, with collocation at 22.1% and repetition at 13.2%. Collocational patterns, such as black wavy hair, long legs, and facial features, reinforce semantic relationships and ensure that descriptive elements are thematically integrated. Repetition, including repeated adjectives and nouns like older sister, pretty, and hard-working, emphasizes salient characteristics and strengthens continuity across sentences. Conjunctions contribute a smaller but meaningful portion, with additive conjunctions at 8.8%, and both causal and adversative conjunctions at 4.4% each. These devices signal relationships of addition, contrast, and cause-effect, guiding the reader through logical

connections between ideas. Overall, the data demonstrate that textual cohesion in this descriptive narrative is achieved primarily through reference and lexical mechanisms, while conjunctions provide structural support, creating a coherent and comprehensible text in which ideas are clearly linked, semantically integrated, and reader-friendly.

## Discussion

Based on the descriptive text, the analysis of cohesive devices shows that personal reference plays the most important role because it occurs 30 times (44.1%). The high frequency of this device demonstrates that the text is primarily devoted to describing the main character, "sister," highlighting her centrality throughout the narrative. Personal references, such as she and her, help maintain subject prominence and reduce unnecessary repetition (Husna et al., 2024; Rodliyah et al., 2024). By comparison, there are no demonstrative references (0%), suggesting that terms like this, that, or these, which typically point to specific elements within the context, are absent. This absence indicates that the text relies on continuous mention of the main subject rather than shifting attention to other contextual elements (Husna et al., 2024; Rodliyah et al., 2024). Comparative references occur only twice (2.9%), indicating limited use of comparisons to highlight similarities or differences, which could have further enriched the descriptive detail (Soysal & Türkmen, 2024; Vivek, 2023).

Conjunctions also play a vital role in ensuring the logical flow of the text. Additive conjunctions, such as and, also, or furthermore, appear six times (8.8%), serving to expand the narrative and create a seamless flow of ideas (Vičić Krabonja et al., 2024; Wolff, 2025). Adversative conjunctions, like but or however, occur three times (4.4%), providing contrasts that clarify opposing details or shifts in perspective (Fridiyanto & Firmansyah, 2025; Samantray et al., 2024). Causal conjunctions, such as because and due to, appear three times (4.4%), linking events or characteristics in a logical cause-effect relationship (Karim et al., 2025; Sugandi et al., 2025). These conjunctions contribute to a dynamic and logically coherent text by signaling transitions between different ideas or attributes.

Lexical cohesion strengthens the descriptive quality through repeated use of related words and phrases. The most prominent lexical device in the text is collocation, with 15 occurrences (22.1%). Collocation involves using words that commonly appear together, creating contextually appropriate expressions that reinforce meaning (Frantz et al., 2025; Mahmood et al., 2025). Repetition, occurring nine times (13.2%), emphasizes salient features such as older sister, hard-working, and pretty, maintaining thematic consistency (Chen & Chang, 2022; Elrayah & Semlali, 2023). Lexical cohesion allows readers to integrate physical, behavioral, and habitual information effectively, producing vivid and coherent descriptions of the subject. Through this cohesive structure, the text maintains clarity, unity, and descriptive depth, ensuring that readers can grasp the intended portrayal.

The findings align with Tjahjono et al. (2025) theoretical framework, which emphasizes the importance of cohesive devices in producing meaningful and connected texts. In this analysis, the dominance of personal reference and collocation demonstrates their pivotal role in descriptive writing (Samul, 2024; Taufikin et al., 2025). These devices ensure that focus is maintained throughout the text, enhancing both coherence and reader comprehension. Cohesive devices thus not only provide textual linkage but also support logical structuring and readability, enabling smooth navigation across ideas

(Jhoni et al., 2023; Moslimany et al., 2024).

However, despite the text's strengths in maintaining cohesion, the analysis suggests areas for improvement. The use of a greater variety of cohesive devices could reduce repetitive patterns and enhance stylistic richness. For instance, incorporating more demonstrative references, varied conjunction types, and semantic alternatives would further strengthen cohesion while improving reader engagement and comprehension (Jaradat & Oudat, 2026; Verma & Kaur, 2024). By diversifying cohesive strategies, descriptive writing can achieve higher clarity, sophistication, and effectiveness in communication (Lukmantoro et al., 2024; Persson, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of cohesive devices in descriptive text shows its important role in ensuring the cohesion and clarity of the text. In this case, personal references dominate the text, which emphasises the centrality of the main subject and avoids unnecessary repetition. Furthermore, lexical collocation consistently contributes to descriptive variation by using contextually appropriate vocabulary. Finally, conjunctions, especially additive and adversative, enhance the logicity and coherence of the narrative, allowing ideas to be conveyed in a smoother flow.

In conclusion, cohesive devices in this descriptive text can effectively create a unified, interesting, and reader-friendly narrative. In this case, balancing repetition with various collocations, references, and conjunctions, this text shows how cohesive devices can contribute to textual clarity and reader comprehension. However, it would be better if the text used a wider range of cohesive devices in order to improve the descriptive power and overall quality of the text.

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