論　文

Written Discourse Analysis

—— Cohesive Devices and Online Tools for Improving L2 Writing ——

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Abstract

In any language, there is a major difference between one's ability to excel at spoken discourse versus written discourse. Native speakers, and even native teachers (NT), don't naturally write well. While native speakers generally master spoken discourse simply by growing up in their own country, writing is definitely an acquired skill that requires both understanding and practice.

In order to be a proficient L2 writer one has to better understand text organization, writing conventions, and a range of effective cohesive and coherent devices. This paper employs a before/after approach from a student text. The author offers his own revision of the student text in order to show the efficacy of text analysis.

First, the paper reviews a number of devices in written discourse including cohesion, conjunction, collocation, reiteration, ellipsis and substitution. Then two theoretical frameworks are examined: 1) the problem/solution structure, and 2) the question/answer structure. Next, it discusses pedagogical implications for both higher and lower level L2 writers. Finally, it will introduce current online technology that can provide students with immediate feedback that both motivates and allows students to quickly see areas to target for further improvements in their own L2 writing.

keywords: written discourse, cohesion, coherence, online technology, L2 Writing

Introduction

Unlike speaking, where the native teacher (NT) often displays a near-perfect command of English just by growing up in their own country, good writing demands a completely different set of acquired skills. Writing is a learned skill, and a challenging one at that. Zinsser rightly points out, "Good writing does not come naturally...Writing is hard work. A clear sentence is no accident. Very few sentences come out right the first time, or even the third time. Remember this in moments of despair" (1998).

In order to lead students to becoming better writers, teachers need to acquire both an understanding of theories of writing, as well as a specific set of teachable writing skills which can be found in the study of written discourse (WD). WD offers theoretical frameworks that can help the teacher to understand "how different texts are organized and how the process of creating written text is realized at various levels" (McCarthy, 1991, p. 147). Beyond simply improving one's own writing, this theoretical

knowledge is essential in order to become a better teacher of L2 writing.

This paper will begin by reviewing some basic writing devices, and look at parts of applicable theoretical frameworks useful in teaching L2 writing at the university level. Then, I will analyze one student's essay that presents an interesting challenge. The text is not rife with grammatical errors, and the message is quite accessible to the reader. This kind of student needs challenging yet clear feedback in order to raise their writing to the next level. In order to show the reader an example of what I believe young L2 writers can achieve, I will offer my own revised version of the essay showing what I believe any young university L2 writer can attain in revising their own essays.

Finally, the paper will address several implications derived from this text analysis that may be pedagogically useful when teaching first-year university students the basics of essay writing. The paper will conclude by advocating that written discourse analysis is a great opportunity for teachers to extract practice from theory. This form of personal professional development can be highly motivating for teachers on the road to better teaching, and of great value to some of our students who are expected to write extensively in English.

Background

Jaworski and Coupland state that linguists seem to agree that discourse, at the very minimum, is "language in use" (1999, p. 3). The study of spoken discourse and written discourse have both grown tremendously within the field of linguistics in the past few decades. Jaworski and Coupland contend that there is now great interest in how discourse is not only reflecting social order, but "shaping social order and shaping individuals' interaction within society" (1999, p. 3). This paper focuses on written discourse analysis, which according to McCarthy is the study of the relationship between language and context. He explains that "discourse analysis is not a method for teaching language; it is a way of describing and understanding how language is used" (1991, p. 3).

Written discourse analysis relies on the major concepts of cohesion and coherence when approaching a text. Thornbury points out that "the exact relationship between cohesion and coherence is a matter of contention" (2007). Thompson further states that the "relationship is both complex and controversial… over the role of cohesion in the creation of coherence" (1994, p. 59). Even though Carrell argues clearly that cohesion is not coherence, and that Halliday and Hasan themselves may have "missed the target" in their view that cohesion leads to coherence, they seem to have won the long term debate because most writers now use the Halliday and Hasan cohesion theory, within the broader Systemic Functional Linguistics, to approach written text analysis (McCarthy, 1991; Thompson, 1994; Eggins, 1994; Coffin, 2001; Er, 2001; Martin, 2001; and, Fairclough, 2003).

From among the many opinions on cohesion and coherence, Thornbury simplifies matters the most. He states, "a text is cohesive if the elements are linked together, and it is cohesive if it makes sense" (2007, paragraph 1). He demonstrates by example (ibid.) that a text may be cohesive but incoherent: "I am a teacher. The teacher was late for class. Class rhymes with grass. The

grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. But it wasn't." As well, Carrel shows that a text may be coherent while lacking any obvious cohesive links: "The picnic was ruined. No one remembered to bring a corkscrew" (1982, p. 483). Thornbury summarizes, "cohesion is a formal feature of texts (it gives text its texture), while coherence is in the eye of the beholder… thus cohesion is objectively verifiable, while coherence is more subjective" (2007, paragraph 3).

Therefore, it seems that whether one approaches it from either a cohesion or a coherence point of view, the potential of written discourse analysis according to McCarthy is that, "the more we can learn from discourse analysts as to how different texts are organized and how the process of creating written text is realized at various levels… the more likely we are able to create authentic materials and activities for the classroom" (1991, p. 147).

The Student Text

There are generally two kinds of texts produced by two kinds of students in my writing classes. The first is by the lower-level student who is not ready to handle the "difficulties of coping with global planning when one is under great stress encoding at the sentence level" (McCarthy, 1991, p. 164). This student is satisfied with what they are getting in class: a lot of writing practice, tailored feedback, and plenty of encouragement. The second type of text comes from higher-level students who have worked very hard to get to a reasonably competent lexico-grammatical level, but sometimes begin to coast unless they are given higher-order discourse challenges. In order to prevent these students from becoming complacent at their more advanced level, McCarthy offers solutions by saying that higher-order discourse features "do lend themselves to direct teaching intervention… [by way of focusing on] discourse-signaling vocabulary, appropriate use of conjunctions … [and] reference and ellipsis/substitution" (ibid., p. 166). Higher-level type students present the more immediate challenge to this author because there is a pressing need to find ways to motivate them by challenging them. For that reason, a higher-level text will be analyzed.

The text is written by Sachika (pseudonym), a very enthusiastic third-year high school student who wants to pursue further English study in university. The text is the result of a weekly homework assignment for the purpose of developing students' writing fluency and raising their confidence writing on a wide variety of issues. This time the topic is Your Future. Students are told to concentrate for about 30 minutes on the homework; however, the number of words and paragraphs are not predetermined. In her writing class with a Japanese teacher of English (JTE) for the past two years she had only translated sentences and memorized vocabulary. This year with a NT, Sachika has, so far, focused on paragraph writing and story writing in a process writing approach. She can usually write 200-250 words in a 10-minute free writing exercise that she has done in numerous classes. Her text is shown in Table 1 with each sentence numbered for reference purposes:

Analysis of the Text

Knowing what kind of feedback to give the

Table 1

Original Text by Sachika

My Future
(1) Every time I consider what my life would be, I get confused with this problem. (2) Nobody can predict what will happen in the future. (3) Therefore I can't explain my life. (4) However, I have some hopes for my future. (5) So I just write about my desire.
(6) I like English. (7) I was shocked when I studied English for the first time because I could realize that there were different languages from Japanese completely. (8) From that time, my insight got wider. (9) And I also like different cultures. (10) When I visited New Zealand, which was the first foreign country for me, I was extremely moved by various habits. (11) I wonder why different cultures were emerged in the same planet. (12) And I suppose why various habits were born from the same human beings. (13) Maybe answers for these questions never exist. (14) This mystery tempts me into English world and never release me from it.
(15) As a result, I want to learn English and feel cultural things in the future. (16) So I want to enter an university involved with English. (17) My life will be so precious if I can pass examinations.
(18) If I can't succeed this way, I want to go to a university concerned with law. (19) I'm interested in social problems especially judgment.
(20) Now there is no time to waste. (21) All I can do is just studying. (22) Other ways were never left. (23) So I try much harder and harder. 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(232 words)

student about this particular text, or how she could elevate this writing to the next level can be difficult for teachers. The reason is that the text is semantically quite easy to process, and there aren't many glaring grammatical errors: the problem being that the text feels somewhat less than it could be. Luckily, various written discourse theories offer concrete ideas of where to begin the analysis of this text. McCarthy explains that "finding patterns in texts is a matter of interpretation by the reader… and it will often be possible to analyse a given text in more than one way" (1991, p. 161). Therefore, I propose that Sachika's text can benefit from three different approaches: 1) a focus on cohesion, 2) analysis as a Problem-Solution Structure, and 3) use of the Question-Answer System. There are certainly more ways to analyze this text, however these three provide rich feedback opportunities for both the teacher and the L2 writer.

1. Focus on Cohesion.

　Eggins explains, "cohesion refers to the way that we relate or tie together bits of our discourse" (1994, p. 88). In this essay, a lack of cohesion by the L2 writer addresses the feeling that the text is *less than it could be*. The main cohesion considerations for Sachika's text are related to conjunctive relations, reiteration and collocation.

　Conjunctive relations. There are three main types of conjunctive relations according to

　Halliday (in Eggins, 1994, p. 105): elaboration (restate or clarification), extension (addition or variation) and enhancement (extending the meaning from one sentence to another). In Sachika's original text, there are 18 conjunctive relations, whereas there are 32 in the revised text. The revised text displays a 66% increase in the use of these conjunctive relations. Sachika's text uses 11 different conjunctive relations, while the revised text employs 17 varieties. Additionally, seven of Sachika's 18 conjunctive relations (38%) are limited to either "and" or "so" indicates that this is definitely an area of vast potential

improvement. Table 2 and Table 3 illustrates the use of conjunctive relations (Halliday, 1985), whereby (1) (brackets underlined) represents Sachika's text, and [1] [square brackets] represents the revised text:

Table 2

Elaboration and Extension Conjunctives List (Halliday, 1985) with those used in the original text underlined (1) and in the revised text bracketed [1].

Elaboration (restate or clarification)	Extension (addition or variation)
In other words	(4) And [10]
That is (to say)	(1) Also [1]
I mean (to say)	Moreover [1]
For example [1]	In addition [1]
For instance	More
Thus	But
To illustrate	Yet [1]
To be more precise	On the other hand
Actually	(1) However
As a matter of fact	On the contrary
In fact	Instead
	Apart from that
	Except for that
	Alternatively

Reiteration. Defined as "repetition or (reiteration) of the same item" (Bloor & Bloor, 2013, p. 99), it is known to be an important lexical cohesion devices that creates one of the strongest cohesive results in both written and spoken discourse. There are a number of opportunities to exploit reiteration in Sachika's text. For example, one of her original sentences is: "Nobody can predict what will happen in the future. Therefore I can't explain my life."

Initially, the sentence is problematic because of the collocational pairing *explain my life, which* can be misunderstood as justifying one's current situation in life. A much better form of these two sentences, using the reiteration device is, *No one can actually <u>know</u> what will happen in the future, and therefore, I can't <u>predict</u> what will happen in my life*. Another example of reiteration is displayed between the first two paragraphs of the revised text. Sentence (5) promises to share *her <u>dreams</u>* with the reader, *Nonetheless, I do have some <u>hopes</u> for my future, and for that reason, I can tell you*

Table 3

Enhancement Conjunctives List (Halliday, 1985) with those used in the original text underlined (1) and in the revised text bracketed [1].

Comparative Conjunctions	Causal Conjunctions	Conditional Conjunctions	Concessive Relations	Temporal Conjunctions
Likewise [1]	(3) So [1]	In that case	Yet	Then
Similarly	Then [1]	Otherwise	Still	Next
In a different way	Therefore [1]	Under the circumstances	Though	Afterwards
	Consequently [1]	Otherwise	Despite this	Just then
	Hence	(2) If [2]	However	At the same time
	(1) Because [3]		Even so	Before that
	(1) As a result [1]		All the same	Soon
	On account of this		Nonetheless [1]	After a while
	For that reason[1]			(2) When [2]
	After [1]			(1) Every time [1]
				(1) From that time

some of these <u>dreams</u> and how they developed. The topic sentence of the second paragraph, sentence (6) fulfills that promise, *For example, my biggest <u>dream</u> is to use English in my future.*

Collocation. Finally, collocation, or the pairing of words, presents one of the single biggest problems for many L2 writing students. It is a slow and painful process for students to learn which words can be combined together and, moreover, in what context these combinations are used. Thankfully, Fairclough (2003, p. 213) points out that "collocational studies have been considerably advanced by the development of corpus linguistics" with a vast amount of data becoming more available to both teachers and their students. Sachika's text presents a number of collocational problems that are either fixed or replaced in the revised text. They are illustrated in the Table 4 below:

Table 4
Collocations Before and After

Sachika's Text	Revised Text
(1) confused with this problem	(1) confused by this question
(4) write about my desire	(4), (5) tell you some of these dreams
(8) my insight got wider	(8) my world began to expand
(10) moved by various habits	(10), (11) affected by… different customs
(11) various habits were born	(11), (12) totally unique customs have developed

In addition to addressing cohesion within the L2 writer's text, another approach to improving student texts can be seen in a theoretical discourse framework called the Problem-Solution Structure.

2. Analysis as a Problem-Solution Structure

Fairclough calls the Problem-Solution Structure a very common example of higher-level semantic relations (2003). We are all fairly familiar with this structure because it permeates many areas of our daily lives. Most significantly, advertising is often built on the premise that whether you agree or not, you have endless problems for which advertisers have endless solutions ready to sell to you. Furthermore, the Problem-Solution structure can be felt in education, in human relations and in working our way through society in general. Luckily for her, Sachika's text somewhat intuitively follows the Problem-Solution discourse structure as presented by Hoey (in Coulthard, 1994). The text displays a recursive pattern as described in Table 5 below:

Table 5
Basic Structure of Sachika's Text

1st Cycle	
The first half of (1)	Situation
Second half of (1)-(3)	<u>Problem</u>
(4)-(5)	**Response**
(6)-(9)	*Evaluation*
The first half of (10)	Situation
Second half of (10)	<u>Problem</u>
2nd Cycle	
(11)-(12)	**Response**
(13)-(14)	*Evaluation*
(15)-(16)	**Response**
(17)-(22)	*Evaluation*
(23)	**Response**

In Table 6 below, the original text is highlighted in four different ways to show a representation of the progression of the Problem-Solution style essay structure.

The following examples of signaling justify

Table 6

Representation of the Problem-Solution Structure in Sachika's Text

Situation (plain)   Problem (underlined)   **Solution/Response (bold)**   *Evaluation (Italics)*
(1) Every time I consider what my life would be, <u>I get confused with this problem. (2) Nobody can predict what will happen in the future. (3) Therefore I can't explain my life.</u> **(4) However, I have some hopes for my future. (5) So I just write about my desire.** *(6) I like English.* *(7) I was shocked when I studied English for the first time because I could realize that there were different languages from Japanese completely. (8) From that time, my insight got wider.* *(9) And I also like different cultures.* (10) When I visited New Zealand, which was the first foreign country for me, <u>I was extremely moved by various habits. (11) I wonder why different cultures were emerged in the same planet.</u> **(12) And I suppose why various habits were born from the same human beings.** *(13) Maybe answers for these questions never exist. (14) This mystery tempts me into English world and never release me from it.* **(15) As a result, I want to learn English and feel cultural things in the future. (16) So I want to enter an university involved with English.** *(17) My life will be so precious if I can pass examinations.* *(18) If I can't succeed this way, I want to go to a university concerned with law. (19) I'm interested in social problems especially judgment. (20) Now there is no time to waste. (21) All I can do is just studying. (22) Other ways were never left.* **(23) So I try much harder and harder.**   (232 words)

each of the four structure elements: The first half of (1) is clearly Situation because of its position at the start of the text, its use of present tense and the lexical signaling of the word *consider* and **Everytime*. One usually thinks about a Situation, and a Situation is normally "indicated over a period of time rather than a point in time" (Hoey, in Coulthard, 1994, p. 37).

The structural element of Problem is clearly indicated by a number of lexical signals: *confused*, *problem*, *nobody*, and *can't explain* in (1) through (3). In (10) *was… moved* denotes the Problem of being forced to think, but *extremely moved* emphasizes that degree, to clearly indicate the breadth of the problem it caused her.

The Solution/Response element (4)-(5), (11)-(12), (15)-(16) and (23) is highlighted again by a plethora of lexical verb signals which address Sachika's thoughts, actions and desires: *have…hopes*, *write…desires*, *wonder why…*, *suppose why…*, *want to learn…and feel things*, *want to enter* and finally, *try... harder.*

The main structural element in this text is the Evaluation structure. Since this is written by a student at one of the first major crossroads in her life, and the topic is *Your Future*, it is no surprise that this element would take the largest portion of the text. (6)-(9), (13)-(14) and (17)-(22) all indicate Evaluation structure. It is replete with a wide range of emotional, often dramatic, lexical signals worthy of the high stakes nature of the university entrance examination *hell* that marks the end of one's high school days in Japan. A *like* leads to both *shock* and *realization*, which results in *insight*. Potentially unanswerable *questions tempt* and *may never release*. *Life will be so precious if…* If not, another plan lies waiting, *No time to waste*, *just studying*, *no other options*, *so I try much harder*. The revised text attempts to remain true to the semantics of the discourse while filling in some additional explicit signaling devices in order to tighten the cohesive relationship between clauses, sentences and the whole text (see visual appendix 8.4)

Finally, a third approach to improving any intermediate L2 writer's essay is to exploit the Question-Answer System.

3. The Question-Answer System

Hoey explains that a monologue can be viewed as a dialogue between a reader and the writer, through the use of a dialogue test (in Coulthard, 1994, p. 42). By treating each sentence of the text as an answer to an assumed question (by the reader), sections of text lacking coherence can be unearthed. Neubauer states that,

> Cohesion is only a guide to coherence, and coherence is something created by the reader in the act of reading the text. Coherence is the feeling that a text hangs together, it makes sense, and is not just a jumble of sentences (in McCarthy, 1991, p. 26).

There are a number of instances in Sachika's text where it can be tightened cohesively including some unwritten, but implicit ideas. Hoey explains that in practice, "questions involve an introduction into the discourse of what is not explicit" (in Coulthard, 1994, p. 42). Table 7 illustrates this point clearly:

This technique is extremely useful for Japanese L2 writers because the Japanese writing carries so much implied meaning. Things are not spelled out to the reader in the way a well-written English text should do so. This is one reason why Japanese student's writing seems vague very often.

The Revised Text

The revised text in Table 8 is clearly an improvement on Sachika's original text for a number of reasons:

1. A deeper and broader range of conjunctive devices are used.
2. The individual paragraphs are more evenly balanced.
3. The text is fuller through the use of better lexical signaling.

It is by no means perfect, but should obviously appear more textual. Textuality refers to "the feeling that something is a text, and not just a random collection of sentences"

Table 7

Questions leading to explicit answers

Original Sentence:	(6) I like English.
Question:	What does *I like English* have to do with your future?
Revision:	For example, my biggest dream is to use English in my future.
Original Sentence:	(8) From that time, my insight got wider.
Question:	What does *time* mean and how did your insight get wider?
Revision:	After that simple realization in my elementary school days, my world began to expand. (8a) Consequently, I have enjoyed studying English: using foreign music and American movies to improve my studies.
Original Sentence:	(20) Now there is no time to waste.
Question:	Why do you think so?
Revision:	Now there is no time to waste because university entrance exams are just a few months away.
Original Sentence:	(23) So I try much harder and harder.
Question:	Why?
Revision:	So I will just try even harder and harder to make my future bright and meaningful.

Table 8

Text Revised by the Teacher With Additions and Revisions in Bold

My Future
(1) Every time I consider what **I'll become in the future**, I am confused **by this question**.
(2), (3) No **one** can **actually** predict what will happen in the future, **and therefore, I** can't **predict what will happen in** my life. (4), (5) **Nonetheless**, I **do** have some hopes for my future, **and for that reason**, I can **tell you some of these dreams and how they developed.**
(6) **For example, my biggest dream is to use English in my future.** (7) I was shocked when **I began to study it** for the first time because **I had never** realized that there were languages completely different from Japanese. (8) **After** that **simple realization in my elementary school days, my world began to expand.** (8a) **Consequently, I have always enjoyed studying English: using foreign music and American movies to improve my studies.**
(9) **In addition to** English, **I** also **noticed that I** like different cultures **as well.** (10) **My first trip abroad was to** New Zealand **when I was a junior high school student.** (10a), (11) I was extremely **affected** by **seeing many different customs there** and **it led me to** wonder why **such** different cultures emerged on the same planet. (12) **Along those same lines, I have asked myself why totally unique customs have developed in different countries— all** from the same human beings! (13) Maybe **I will never know the answers to these interesting** questions. (14) **And yet,** these mysteries have tempted me into **the** English world and **may** never release me from it.
(15) As a result **of being trapped in this foreign world**, I want to learn **more** English and feel **a whole range of** cultural things in the future. (16) **This leads me to** want to enter a **high-level** university with an **excellent** English **program**. (17) If I can pass the entrance examination **of such a university**, my life **would** be so precious. (18), (19) If I can't **get accepted to a top English program**, then I want to go to a university **to study** law **because** I'm interested in social problems. (19a) **Moreover, I would like to try to help our changing Japanese society as a lawyer or a judge.**
(20) Now there is no time to waste **because university entrance exams are just a few months away.** (21) **Worrying about it won't help:** all I can do is to study. (22) **There are no** other **options** left. (23) So I will **just** try **even** harder and harder **to make my future bright and meaningful.**   (393 words)

(McCarthy, 1991, p. 35). Table 8 reveals the revised text after completion of several forms of text analysis.

Pedagogical Implications

There are many pedagogical implications from the study of written discourse but they must be tailored to the level of the students. As with most issues in EFL teaching, an effective teacher will consider both the context and the level of the students as the most important factors when making decisions. Currently, a number of issues including, *how much to use the mother tongue*, *when to use bilingual electronic dictionaries*, *when is task-based learning most effective*, *who benefits most from the dictogloss activities* – these issues should all be decided based on context and level. There are no blanket statements to answer any of these questions. Therefore, the first consideration in using written discourse analysis to help students is to identify student levels. This author generally takes a lower approach (Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate) and a higher approach (high-Intermediate and above).

Lower-level Students

For lower-level students, the main focus must be on lexico-grammatical meaning of the clause. So many students have been mildly damaged to almost irreparably scarred by rote translation exercises where

overall meaning of the clause, sentence, or paragraph is secondary to simply translating the words. The focus should always be on whole meaning, not just translating parts. Winter advocates "a study of the grammar of the clause in the sentence [and] a study of the basic clause relations" (1994, in Coulthard, p. 46). McCarthy describes grammatical links in written discourse as "reference, ellipsis/substitution and conjunction" (1991, p. 35). Conjunction was a key point in analysing Sachika's essay, however, reference and ellipsis/substitution are also significant for lower level students.

Reference. Reference means, "how the writer introduces participants (people, places and things) and then keeps track of them once they are in the text" (Eggins, 1994, p. 95). Reference items include pronouns, demonstratives and articles (McCarthy, 1991). There are three kinds of references: 1) anaphoric (looking backwards in text), 2) exophoric (looking outwards into the world) and 3) cataphoric (looking forward). For all ESL students, the teacher must understand that whereas the anaphoric references *he/she or them* are quite easy to decode, *it and this* are often much more difficult (McCarthy, 1991). Particularly for EFL Japanese students, it is necessary to note that articles need to be explicitly taught because they don't exist in Japanese, and additionally, that due to interference with L1, Japanese students often confuse *he and she* (McCarthy, 1991). This author agrees that Japanese constantly confuse *he and she*, however it is not clear why this happens. Anecdotal evidence suggests that for Japanese the two words look too similar. The one letter "s" is not significant enough to differentiate the two pronouns.

Regarding exophoric references, an effective teacher will limit the exposure to these because they are often crippling to the student. Recently, one of this author's students, a 14-year old, high-level student, attempted to decode a reading text from a practice test. The student figuratively drowned in a short reading about Watergate, wiretapping and the Democratic National Congress Headquarters. It was a totally unnecessary, depressing experience for both the student and the teacher. Alternatively, cataphoric references hold a future appeal for more mature writers who can use devices such as foreshadowing or leading the reader further into a text.

Ellipsis/substitution. Ellipsis/substitution is the omission of elements normally required by the grammar because the writer assumes they are obvious (McCarthy, 1991). Substitution usually uses the items *one, do, so/not,* and *same.* An example by McCarthy illustrates this, *The children will carry the small boxes, the adults the large ones.* Within the teaching of ellipsis, however, for Japanese students care must be taken because what appears to be completely wrong in English, **The children the small boxes, the adults will carry the large ones* can actually make sense in the Japanese learner's mind when translated, *Kodomo wa chisaii hako, otona wa oki hou wo mochimasu* (Children small boxes, adults big ones will carry).

As long as the teacher is aware of this, and points it out to the students, students usually deal with it quite well. Awareness is the first step towards internalization and learning. In practical terms, McCarthy suggests clause and sentence chaining activities (1991) whereby segment starters are given, e.g. *The*

problem is… One idea could be to…, My opinion about that is…. This author has had success with pair writing, dictogloss activities, and the manipulation of student generated texts. Using four-picture storyboards has led to focused story writing and comparative analysis of texts between students. For sure, there are always opportunities to count and compare conjunctive relations, and use the Question-Answer test to evaluate texts. With each discourse analysis device introduced to the students, there will be some kind of activity to put theory into practice.

Higher-level Students

There is potential to replicate the process shown in this paper. This kind of exercise offers several pedagogical implications for both the teacher and the students. Coffin states, "many approaches to written discourse advocate that students develop an explicit understanding of how written text works" (2001, in Burns and Coffin, p. 119). Painter supports this by pointing out that "learning a new language always involves learning at least something of the ways of operating in the society where that language is used" (2001, in Burns and Coffin, p. 167). This author believes that higher-level students, such as Sachika, are certainly ready, willing and able to consider venturing into discourse-related, organizational devices in order to improve their writing.

According to Coulthard, the heuristic value of written discourse analysis is probably the most important aspect, as it is "heuristically very helpful to begin with an actual text… then propose alternative and preferable textualizations" (1994, p. 3). Further support for the process of discovering and learning

for yourself comes from Baraniuk (TED, 2006), "We do not understand until we do" - a clever double entendre with two meanings: 1) we don't understand until we actually understand, and 2) we don't understand until we take action and do something.

In practical terms, many clausal relations activities dovetail nicely into the process approach to writing (McCarthy, 1991). Of those not already mentioned in this paper, theme-rheme, matching relations, register, phenomenon-reason, tense and aspect all provide opportunities to explore organizational level discourse with higher level students. This author continues to introduce various discourse elements to students, and observes how it results in improvements in both cohesion and coherence in their L2 writing.

Online Technology for L2 Writers

Free online technology has had a major impact in the past few years on how I teach writing to first-year university students. However clunky it may have been in the past, it is now quick and easy, and offers compelling data that has palpable effects on students; they are motivated, challenged and inspired by the data that they can calculate whenever they like. Table 9 shows results from just one of many sites I am currently using while teaching academic writing to first-year university students. While still anecdotal in nature, after five years of preparing students to write the 30-minute, Question Two writing task (an opinion essay) of the TOEFL iBT, there are surely clear correlations between the data below and scores they can attain in the writing section. For example, I set targets of 300 words, an average sentence length of 20 words, more

than 20 hard words (three syllables or more) and a Fog Index (readability factor) of 11.0 or higher. Students who attain these targets regularly score at least 18 out of 30 and often much higher. Students respond excitedly and enthusiastically to data about their own writing when the writing can be operationalized into measurable parts. Table 9 shows significant gains in Sachika's essay after the author revised it.

Table 9

Student Text Data from UsingEnglish.com

Sachika's Texts	Original Text	Revised Text	Percent Gain
Total Word Count:	234	396	69.2%
Total Unique Words:	133	203	5%
Number of Sentences:	23	22	(4.4)%
Average Sentence Length:	10.17	18.00	77%
Hard Words:	15	28	86.7%
Fog Index:	6.63	10.03	51.3%

Discussion

Unfortunately, there are not enough teachers who have studied about the underlying theory of written discourse and how to approach teaching L2 writing to EFL students. Therefore, students routinely seem unaware of the importance of this kind of grammatical cohesion. It is not so much that students don't care, as it is that there has not been any importance placed on this kind of textuality.

Students need to be made aware that grammatical cohesion is very important because it is the foundation of expressing meaning. There is great potential for students to improve these elements of discourse writing if the teacher explains what they are and how they work in text. From consciousness-raising activities to explicit focus on form activities, much improvement is possible. Eggins so rightly expresses that, "language users do not interact in order to exchange sounds with each other, or even to exchange words or sentences. People interact in order to make meanings: to make sense of the world and each other" (1994, p. 11).

Conclusion

The author chose a text that was somewhat lexico-semantically competent but presented the challenge of showing one student how much further their writing could be elevated. If the student works towards a better understanding of the underlying theory of written discourse, and from that, extracts some practical pedagogical applications with regards to written discourse structural systems, great improvements can be made. Examples include cohesion, clausal relations, discourse-signaling vocabulary, appropriate use of conjunctions, and lexico-grammatical items of reference and ellipsis/substitution. The theoretically supported evidence is quite overwhelming. With few exceptions, putting in the time and effort to study the tenets of written discourse analysis are well worth it. Teachers can better help their students improve their writing, and become more effective teachers and writers themselves in the process.

Appendix A. Text Separated by Clause

(1) Every time I consider what my life would be,

(1a) I get confused with this problem.

(2) Nobody can predict

(2a) what will happen in the future.

(3) Therefore I can't explain my life.

(4) However, I have some hopes for my future.

(5) So I just write about my desire.

(6) I like English.

(7) I was shocked

(7a) when I studied English for the first time

(7b) because I could realize that

(7c) there were different languages from Japanese completely.

(8) From that time, my insight got wider.

(9) And I also like different cultures.

(10) When I visited New Zealand,

(10a) which was the first foreign country for me,

(10b) I was extremely moved by various habits.

(11) I wonder why

(11a) different cultures were emerged in the same planet.

(12) And I suppose why

(12a) various habits were born from the same human beings.

(13) Maybe answers for these questions never exist.

(14) This mystery tempts me into English world and

(14a) never release me from it.

(15) As a result, I want to learn English

(15a) and feel cultural things in the future.

(16) So I want to enter an university involved with English.

(17) My life will be so precious

(17a) if I can pass examinations.

(18) If I can't succeed this way,

(18a) I want to go to a university concerned with law.

(19) I'm interested in social problems especially judgment.

(20) Now there is no time to waste.

(21) All I can do is just studying.

(22) Other ways were never left.

(23) So I try much harder and harder.

Appendix B. The Dialogue Test

(1) What happens when you think about your future?

(2) Do you know what you will do in your life?

(3) So, what does that mean?

(4) Do you have any idea at all about your future?

(5) So what can you tell me about your future?

(6) What does "I like English" have to do with your future?

(7) What was your first impression of English?

(8) What does "time" mean and how did your insight get wider?

(9) Did your interest in English lead to anything else?

(10) When did you first experience an English environment?

(11) Did that experience raise any questions?

(12) Any other questions?

(13) Are there any answers to your questions?

(14) So what position does this leave you in?

(15) How can you exploit this position you find yourself in?

(16) What's the first step to this process?

(17) How will you feel if you can pass the

university entrance test?.

(18) Do you have a back-up plan?

(19) Why?

(20) Why do you think so?

(21) What should you do now?

(22) What other options do you have?

(23) Why?

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