Teaching Cohesion in English and Arabic: The Role of Endophoric and Exophoric References in ESL/EFL Contexts

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Abstract— In both English and Arabic, creating clear and readable texts hinges on the concept of cohesion. This cohesion works by using internal references (endophora) and external references (exophora). English tends to favor pronouns, substitution, and ellipsis to keep things concise, whereas Arabic often opts for repeating words and using conjunctions, placing more importance on clarity than on brevity. This difference in structure poses difficulties for Arabic speakers as they learn English, particularly in ESL/EFL contexts. They frequently grapple with using pronouns accurately, picking up on implied links within the text, and understanding ellipsis, all of which can impede their ability to craft coherent English writing. This paper delves into how these two languages utilize internal and external referencing and the roles these play in communication. Applying Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and comparative discourse analysis, it determines typical cohesion-related challenges Arabic speakers encounter. The study suggests practical classroom approaches to improve students' cohesive ability, including direct teaching on reference, contrastive practice, and real-text training. Through the integration of linguistic comparison with classroom practice, this paper provides useful recommendations for ESL/EFL teachers. It equips them with hands-on tools and techniques to enhance students' reading and writing abilities by enhancing their command of cohesive devices.

Keywords— Arabic-English Contrastive Analysis, Cohesion, Referents, and ESL/EFL Teaching.

I. INTRODUCTION

English Foreign Language (EFL) learners encounter various challenges in reading and writing English texts. As far as it is not possible to quantify the difficulty of reading a foreign language text, linguists have related it to numerous factors. Halliday and Hasan (1976) relate the difficulty of a text to numerous factors, such as graphic organization, rhetorical devices, vocabulary, syntax, grammar, rhetorical complexity, and reader attitude and self-confidence.

From this view, referents are significant because their presence in a text contributes to coherence. They accomplish this by linking various parts of the text to their intended reference. Referents are important in the achievement of textual cohesion, hence substantiating theories of reading comprehension. They make indefinite antecedents used by pronouns or other forms of reference clear, hence the interpretation of the text becomes easier. Klare (1963) categorizes readability features into four broad categories: word length, word familiarity, grammatical structure, and sentence length. Referential information can essentially be viewed as information that has been retrieved, whereby a reference shows the presence of a specific entity in a text that allows the interpretation of another section. Thompson (2004) substantiates Halliday and Hasan's view by saying that reference is made up of grammatical devices that allow a speaker or writer to indicate whether information has been previously mentioned in the text or is

being introduced for the first time. This allows the linking of various parts of a text, making comprehension possible and the establishment of a coherent message. Anderson & Anderson (1997) note that a text is produced by combining words in a manner that conveys meaning. The selection and organization of words are not arbitrary; instead, they are guided by the intended purpose (the reason for writing the text) and the contextual variables (the situation, audience, and environment in which it is written).

Cohesion is a natural quality of discourse that increases the logical consistency, clarity, and interdependence of textual elements, hence making them more understandable and meaningful to readers and listeners. Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain cohesion as a group of linguistic devices that connect different parts of a text, thus creating semantic continuity. It involves a variety of linguistic devices that connect sentences, phrases, and clauses in a text, thus making its progression without disjointedness and enhancing its coherence. Cohesion is thus achieved through a variety of cohesive devices, such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion, all of which help to provide integrity to discourse. Among these devices, reference is a significant one by leading readers through a text and establishing relations among varied textual elements, thus aiding interpretation of meaning from prior discourse. The importance of cohesion in written and oral discourse cannot be overemphasized, as it enables smooth flow of ideas, avoids redundancy, and aids clarity. Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) believe that cohesion supplies the formal linguistic organization through which coherence is achieved in discourse, stressing its structural role in text organization. In the absence of cohesion, a text would be prone to disjointedness and navigational difficulty, thus making it more probable to result in misunderstandings. Al-Jurjani (11th century), a renowned Arabic linguist, contends in his Theory of Nadhem (Text Organization) that the success of discourse depends on the appropriate organization of words and their syntactic and semantic relationships, closely approximating modern notions of cohesion. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun (1377) said in his Muqaddimah (The Introduction) that the effectiveness and intelligibility of spoken language depend upon the harmonious relationship of ideas, and every sentence naturally follows another. Halliday and Hasan (1976) began the scientific study of cohesion and drew a distinction between it and coherence—while cohesion is the linguistic relations between sentences, coherence is the overall sense and logical structure of discourse. Al-Khatib (2001) thinks that Arabic discourse is, unlike its English counterpart, more prone to draw upon lexical repetition and overt conjunctions to produce cohesion, and this is a feature of the language's rhetorical tradition. Cohesion, in this

sense, allows for the readability of narrative, expository, and argumentative discourse, in the sense that different parts of a discourse stay connected. Thus, in the case of cross-cultural and multilingual communication, cohesion becomes even more crucial, as different languages employ different cohesive strategies. Al-Samerrai (2003) thinks that the Arabic language employs a system of repetition and redundancy to aid meaning and keep discourse clear, particularly in classical and formal styles. For instance, while English often employs pronouns and ellipsis to produce cohesion, Arabic tends to employ lexical repetition and categorical conjunctions. Understanding cohesion and applying it to discourse is of crucial significance in translation, second-language acquisition, and discourse analysis, as it significantly affects the transmission and reception of meaning across linguistic and cultural frontiers. Similarly, Carter and McCarthy (2006) mention that learners of a second language often encounter cohesion-related problems owing to structural differences between their mother and target languages, and therefore cohesive devices must be taught explicitly. Therefore, a clear understanding of cohesion practically and theoretically is essential to translators, linguists, and teachers to maintain coherence and text construction in multilingual settings.

II. LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON REFERENCES AND COHESION

Research in linguistics on reference and cohesion has been significantly influenced by various intellectual paradigms, each with its own unique conceptual frameworks and methodologies. Different linguistic schools have contributed to our understanding of cohesive structures by examining them from multiple perspectives. They have explored how these structures function structurally, functionally, and contextually to create meaning and maintain coherence in discourse.

Cohesion refers to the way words and phrases link various sections of a text, ensuring it flows seamlessly and is perceived as a unified whole. It relies on mechanisms such as referencing, substitution, ellipsis (omission of words), conjunctions, and lexical choices to maintain textual unity. Over the years, different linguistic schools of thought have contributed to the study of cohesion and referencing, each offering distinct perspectives and analytical frameworks. These theoretical insights have shaped the field by enhancing our understanding of how cohesive devices function to create meaning and coherence in written discourse.

From the perspective of functional linguistics, cohesion is a crucial aspect of a text's meaning. It is created using a variety of methods, such as reference, substitution, ellipsis,

conjunctions, and lexical cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Halliday & Hasan consider reference to be a grammatical tool that points to or indicates something within or outside the discourse, establishing connections between clauses, sentences, and larger discourse units. This reference can be anaphoric (looking back), cataphoric (looking ahead), or exophoric (outside the discourse).
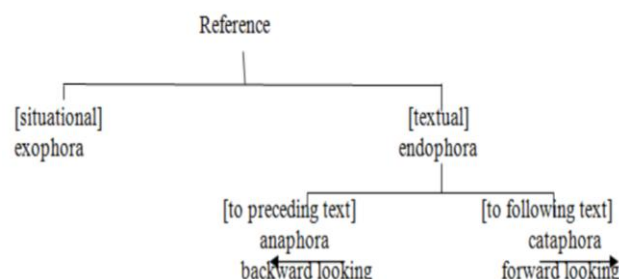

Fig. 1: Classification of Reference Types by Halliday & Hasan (1976, p. 33)

As illustrated in the diagram, references within texts can be broadly classified into two types: exophora, or outer reference, and endophora, or inner reference. Exophoric reference pertains to linguistic expressions that direct attention to elements of the situation outside the text but within the wider context. David Crystal (2008:169) describes exophoric reference as "a term used by some linguists to refer to the relationships of cohesion which help to define the structure of a text." Because these elements are not explicitly stated in the text, their omission might impede a reader's comprehensive grasp. Conversely, endophoric reference deals with linguistic expressions that are explicitly stated within the text, thereby fostering internal cohesion and improving clarity. David Crystal (2008:169) defines endophoric reference as "a term used by some linguists to refer to the relationships of cohesion which help to define the structure of a text."

In English, grammatical cohesion is mainly achieved through pronominal reference, conjunctions, and substitution. For instance, English often uses pronouns to avoid redundant repetition:

"The Prime Minister delivered a speech. He emphasized the need for reform."

The pronoun *"he"* functions as an anaphoric reference, pointing back to *"The Prime Minister."*

In contrast, Arabic typically relies on lexical cohesion, favoring the repetition of key nouns rather than substituting them with pronouns. A more natural Arabic rendering of the same sentence would be:

"ألقى رئيس الوزراء خطابًا. رئيس الوزراء شدد على الحاجة إلى الإصلاح"

(The Prime Minister delivered a speech. The Prime Minister emphasized the need for reform.)

This repetition reinforces clarity and maintains textual cohesion, a common stylistic feature in Arabic discourse.

This preference for repetition aligns with Halliday and Hasan's (1976) assertion that English primarily relies on grammatical cohesion, whereas Arabic tends to favor semantic and lexical cohesion. Furthermore, Ryding (2005) highlights that Arabic frequently employs connective particles such as "و" (*wa* – "and") and "ف" (*fa* – "so/then") to sustain coherence. In contrast, English uses a wider variety of conjunctions to express logical relationships, offering more explicit signalling of connections between ideas.

For instance, the English sentence:

"He studied hard; therefore, he passed the exam."

The same example is more explicitly linked in Arabic with the use of conjunctions:

"درس بجد، ولذلك نجح في الامتحان" (*Darasa bijidd, wa lidhalika najaha fil imtihan.*)

This example illustrates how Arabic tends to rely on explicit discourse markers to enhance clarity, while English often employs ellipsis or implicit logical connections.

Traditional grammar mostly looks at how sentences stick together and how they're connected within a text. English usually does this by using things like subordinate clauses, punctuation, and pronouns. On the flip side, Arabic tends to use coordination, parallel structures, and repeating words as its main ways to create cohesion (Quirk et al., 1985).

One notable difference between the two languages is their treatment of relative clauses and pronoun reference. English frequently uses relative pronouns to create cohesion:

"She met her professor, who gave her valuable advice."

In Arabic, a more explicit structure is preferred:

"قابلت أستاذها، وأستاذها قدم لها نصائح قيمة"

(She met her professor, and her professor gave her valuable advice.)

Instead of using relative pronouns like *"who"*, Arabic tends to rely on noun repetition, a strategy that prioritizes clarity but reflects a different structural approach to cohesion. As Al-Khafaji (2005) explains, this preference for lexical repetition is deeply rooted in Arabic rhetorical conventions, where repetition is not viewed as redundancy but rather as a means of reinforcing emphasis and ensuring textual coherence.

Another significant difference between the two languages is their treatment of ellipsis and substitution. In English, certain elements can be omitted when the meaning is clear

from the context, as in:
"He bought a car, and she did too."

The phrase *"did too"* substitutes for *"bought a car."*

In contrast, Arabic generally avoids such substitutions, favoring explicit repetition to maintain clarity and cohesion.

"إشترى سيارة، وهي أيضًا اشترت سيارة"

(He bought a car, and she also bought a car.)

This illustration underscores the strong use of Arabic for clear lexical recurrence instead of structural parsimony. While English prefers brevity, Arabic keeps meaning clarity by guaranteeing meaning through repetition.

From a Generative Linguistics point of view, cohesion is connected to deep syntactic structures and deep grammar principles. Noam Chomsky's Transformational-Generative Grammar (TGG) postulates that cohesive items, like pronouns and conjunctions, are derived from universal linguistic principles that govern sentence structure. Arabic and English, however, are very different in the way these structures are realized in surface discourse.

One key difference between Arabic and English is the *pro-drop* phenomenon, where Arabic allows the omission of subject pronouns when verb inflection provides sufficient information. For example, the Arabic sentence:

"ذهب إلى السوق" *(Dhahaba ila al-suq.)*

translates to: *(He) went to the market.*

Although the subject pronoun is not explicitly stated in Arabic, the verb conjugation clearly indicates that the subject is masculine singular. In contrast, English requires an overt subject:

"He has gone to the market."

Chomsky (1982) explains that the *null-subject* property is associated with rich agreement morphology, where the verb's inflectional features provide enough information to identify the missing subject. This distinction highlights how Arabic's inflectional system supports implicit cohesion, whereas English relies on explicit syntactic markers to maintain coherence.

Hatim and Mason (1997) further note that Arabic cohesion strategies are influenced by diglossia. They observe that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) exhibits more consistent and structured cohesive patterns, while spoken dialects tend to rely on contextual and discourse-based cohesion.

Chomsky's theory of *movement* and *deletion* also explains why English frequently uses ellipsis, while Arabic tends to avoid it. For example, in the English sentence:

"John went to the store, and Mary did too."

The phrase *"did too"* replaces *"went to the store,"* demonstrating English's preference for structural economy by omitting redundant information.

In contrast, Arabic typically resists such substitutions, favoring explicit repetition to maintain clarity:

"ذهب محمد إلى المتجر، ليلى أيضًا ذهبت إلى المتجر"

(Mohammed went to the store, and Laila went to the store too.)

Chomsky (1993) notes that movement and deletion operations in syntax follow the principle of economy, aiming to eliminate unnecessary repetition while preserving interpretability. This supports the view that Arabic prioritizes explicitness and semantic clarity, while English leans toward structural efficiency.

The differences in cohesive patterns between English and Arabic reflect their distinct linguistic structures, rhetorical traditions, and grammatical systems. From a *functional perspective*, English achieves cohesion through pronominal reference and conjunctions, whereas Arabic relies more heavily on lexical cohesion and repetition. The *traditional approach* highlights Arabic's preference for coordination over subordination, while English frequently uses relative pronouns and ellipsis. From a *generative perspective*, Arabic's rich inflectional system allows for implicit cohesion, whereas English relies on explicit syntactic markers to ensure coherence.

III.   THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING COHESION IN ESL/EFL CONTEXTS

Teaching cohesion is vital in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, as it enhances learners' ability to produce clear, connected, and logically structured discourse. Halliday and Hasan (1976) define cohesion as the set of linguistic resources that create relationships in discourse, extending beyond grammatical structures. It plays a key role in effective communication, as a lack of cohesion can make learners' writing and speech appear disjointed, making it harder for readers or listeners to follow their ideas.

Applied linguists such as Canale and Swain (1980) emphasize that discourse competence—one of the core components of communicative competence—heavily relies on cohesion. They argue that the ability to link sentences into a coherent whole is a fundamental skill in language proficiency. Similarly, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) highlight the importance of training learners in using cohesive devices to achieve coherence in their language production. According to them, cohesive markers such as pronouns, conjunctions, and lexical repetition are essential

for constructing meaningful discourse and avoiding ambiguity.

From an Arabic linguistic perspective, Al-Jurjani (1954), in *Dala'il al-I'jaz*, argues that textual unity in Arabic rhetoric (*balāgha*) is achieved through cohesive devices such as repetition (*takrār*), reference (*dalāla*), and parallelism (*muṭābaqa*). His theory suggests that Arabic speakers learning English may face challenges due to differences in cohesion strategies between the two languages. This aligns with Ryding's (2005) observation that Arabic discourse tends to favor explicit lexical cohesion, whereas English often relies on pronouns and ellipsis to create cohesion.

Several studies have stressed the role of cohesion in improving reading and writing skills. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) argue that cohesion is crucial for reading comprehension, as it helps readers reconstruct meaning by providing interpretive cues. This is particularly relevant for ESL/EFL learners, who may struggle with implicit cohesion markers, such as ellipsis or substitution. Similarly, Knoch (2007) highlights that lack of cohesion in second-language (L2) writing is a common reason why students receive lower scores in academic assessments.

In Arabic, Al-Samerrai (2003) observes that Arabic writers traditionally rely on overt cohesion by frequently using conjunctions such as *"wa"* (و – "and"), *"fa"* (ف – "so/then"), and *"thumma"* (ثم – "then"). These conjunctions link words, phrases, or clauses, with *"wa"* indicating addition, *"fa"* expressing sequence and immediacy, and *"thumma"* signaling delayed sequence. Consequently, Arabic-speaking learners of English may produce texts that seem repetitive or redundant in English due to their reliance on this cohesion strategy. Explicit instruction in cohesion can help students recognize these cross-linguistic differences and refine their writing accordingly.

Cohesion also plays a significant role in spoken discourse. Carter and McCarthy (2006) note that fluent English speakers use cohesive devices naturally and spontaneously, making their speech more fluid and comprehensible. However, they observe that ESL learners often struggle with cohesion in conversation, resulting in disjointed or abrupt turns.

Interestingly, the importance of cohesion in oral discourse has long been recognized in Arabic rhetorical traditions. Ibn Khaldun (1377), in *Al-Muqaddimah*, viewed speech cohesion as a marker of rhetorical eloquence (*fasāḥa*), highlighting the significance of coherence in classical Arabic oratory. However, Arabic-speaking ESL learners may face difficulties with cohesion in English speech due to different discourse norms. For example, while Arabic tends to use elaborate descriptive structures, English often relies

on direct referential cohesion (Badawi, Carter, & Gully, 2004).

Given these differences, ESL/EFL educators should incorporate explicit cohesion-focused instruction into their curricula. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) argue that cohesion should not be treated as a separate grammatical component but as an integral part of meaning-making in language. Therefore, teachers should provide explicit instruction on cohesive devices, using authentic texts to demonstrate their functions. Additionally, Swales and Feak (2012) highlight the importance of teaching cohesion in academic writing, as it enhances clarity and persuasiveness. For Arabic-speaking learners, contrastive analysis can be particularly beneficial, helping them understand how cohesion functions differently in English and Arabic.

IV. ENDOPHORIC REFERENCES: ANAPHORIC AND CATAPHORIC RELATIONS

Cohesion is a fundamental aspect of how we put together texts. It's what gives a text its clarity and logical flow, making it easy for readers or listeners to follow along. A key way that cohesion is achieved is through endophora, which basically links different parts of the same text together. Chomsky (1981) believed that how we refer to things is determined by how pronouns relate to their antecedents, all governed by something called binding theory. This theory outlines the rules for how elements within a sentence are connected. Similarly, Halliday and Hasan (1976) pointed out that reference is a tool used to link words or phrases to what's already been said or what's coming up in the text. This makes the text easier to understand and avoids repeating things unnecessarily.

Endophoric references are generally divided into two different categories, namely, anaphoric reference, referring back to something previously discussed, and cataphoric reference, referring forward to something to be discussed later. The use of these referential devices is of maximum importance in ensuring textual cohesion in all languages, though their use can be different based on the specific language and writing style used.

Anaphoric reference is one of the most common approaches towards achieving cohesion since it ensures continuation and connectedness of discourse. This type of reference is where a pronoun, a demonstrative, definite noun phrase, or elliptical clause points back to an initial item in the discourse. Quirk and colleagues (1985) explain that anaphoric reference acts as a retrieval system, cutting down on redundancy and making text more concise while keeping the meaning clear. Take the English sentence: "David bought a new house. He is very happy with it." This shows

anaphoric reference because "he" stands in for "David" and "it" points back to "a new house."

Arabic uses anaphoric reference too, but its ways of creating cohesion are often different from English. English uses pronouns to keep things short, but Arabic often repeats words for emphasis and to make things clear. As Ryding (2005) points out, Arabic rhetorical traditions place a high value on being explicit, often repeating nouns along with pronouns to make sure the meaning is perfectly clear. Consider the Arabic sentence:

(*Mohammed completed* أكمل محمد دراسته. محمد الآن يستعد للعمل *his studies. Mohammed is now preparing for work.*).

Unlike English, which prefers to substitute the second occurrence of Mohammed with the pronoun 'he,' Arabic prefers to repeat in order to be clear. This is a general linguistic preference such that clarity is given priority over concision.

Demonstratives like this, that, these, and those in English also show anaphoric use, pointing back to some noun or idea previously mentioned. For example, in:

 The government introduced new reforms. These reforms were widely debated.

The demonstrative these is used to point back to new reforms. Likewise, Arabic demonstratives this, that these, and those (هذا، هذه، هؤلاء) are used for the same purpose but usually accompany the repeated noun to emphasize, as in: أعلنت الحكومة عن إصلاحات جديدة. هذه الإصلاحات أثارت جدلا واسعًا. (The government announced new reforms. These reforms sparked widespread debate.).

Badawi, Carter, and Gully (2004) contend that although English and Arabic employ demonstratives to the purpose of cohesion, the repetition tendency of the Arabic language focuses its rhetorical concern on clarity and elaboration.

Ellipsis is a form of anaphoric cohesion in which missing items can be brought in from preceding discourse. English uses this method to encourage text economy, such as:

Sarah prefers classical music, and so does her brother.

The verb phrase 'enjoys classical music' is not expressed but understood from the surrounding context. Ellipsis is not as frequently employed in Arabic since clear references tend to be used to ensure coherence. In Arabic but not English, the subject pronoun may be dropped due to its pro-drop nature. Ryding (2005) assumed that such an occurrence is enabled by the complex verbal morphology of Arabic that expresses sufficient information about the subject, a phenomenon which is frequently referred to as zero anaphora. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:635) note that:

> "Another form of anaphoric cohesion in the text is achieved by ELLIPSIS, where we

presuppose something by means of what is left out. Like all cohesive agencies, ellipsis contributes to the semantic structure of the discourse. But unlike reference, which is itself a semantic relation, ellipsis sets up a relationship that is not semantic but lexicogrammatical – a relationship in the wording rather than directly in the meaning... Ellipsis marks the textual status of continuous information within a certain grammatical structure. At the same time, the non-ellipsed elements of that structure are given the status of being contrastive in the environment of continuous information."

Different from how anaphora works, cataphora points ahead to something coming up later in the conversation or text. This trick is often used to build suspense, create a particular effect, or just to structure things logically. You see this a lot in formal writing and literature in English. Take this sentence for instance:

"Before she spoke, Lisa took a deep breath."

Here, the word "she" is hinting at Lisa, who comes later in the sentence, and this creates a bit of anticipation. Carter and McCarthy (2006) think this is a great way to organize information, because it keeps the reader engaged by pointing them toward what's coming next.

In Arabic, though, they don't use cataphora nearly as much. They tend to prefer just stating the full noun outright rather than using a pronoun that refers to something coming up. Even so, you can still spot it now and then in Arabic literature or formal writing. Let's look at an example sentence:

عندما وصل، استقبله أصدقاؤه بحرارة، خالد كان سعيدًا للغاية

(*When he arrived, his friends welcomed him warmly; Khalid was very happy.*).

Thus, the pronoun "he" works by looking ahead to the mention of "Khalid." Although this kind of structure can be found in Arabic, it's far less frequent than it is in English. Hatim and Mason (1997) point out that Arabic tends to favor explicit connection words over subtle ways of referring to something coming up later in the text, showing a liking for being clear instead of ambiguous.

V.   EXOPHORIC REFERENCES: DEIXIS AND CONTEXTUAL MEANING

Exophoric reference, especially using deixis, is a basic tool for connecting text to the world outside it, which is crucial for clear communication in both English and Arabic. Halliday and Hasan (1976) describe exophoric reference as

a way of referring that guides the reader or listener to things outside the text itself, counting on the surrounding situation for understanding. Unlike anaphoric and cataphoric references, which work within the text, exophoric references, like deictic expressions, only make sense when considered in relation to the speaker's place in time, space, or social setting. Levinson (1983) sorts deixis into three main kinds: person deixis (for example, I, you, we), spatial deixis (for example, here, there, this, that), and temporal deixis (for example, now, then, today, tomorrow).

In English, deixis is fairly straightforward, often depending on context to be understood, while Arabic has a more intricate system that takes into account gender, number, and verb forms (Al-Khafaji, 2005). When it comes to person deixis, English uses simple pronouns like "I" (for the speaker) and "you" (for the listener), but Arabic pronouns give extra details about gender and whether someone is talking about more than one person, like this:

أرسلت لكَ المستند(I sent you [masculine] the document) ,and

أرسلت لكِ المستند(I sent you [feminine] the document).

Also, Arabic has a dual form (أنتما, هما), which English doesn't have. This makes Arabic deixis more specific, but it can be tricky for Arabic speakers learning English. Spatial deixis, which helps place things in relation to the speaker, is another important part of exophoric reference. English uses demonstratives (this, that, these, those) and locative adverbs (here, there), telling the difference between things close by (this, here) and things farther away (that, there). Arabic, though, shows gender and number in demonstratives, as we can see in:

هذا الكتاب ممتع(This book is interesting – masculine)

versus: هذه القصة ممتعة(This story is interesting – feminine) and also features a separate plural demonstrative (أُولئك). Also, Arabic demonstratives can work both inside and outside of the text, based on the situation. Temporal deixis, which places events in time, further highlights the differences between English and Arabic deixis. In English, words like now, then, today, tomorrow, and yesterday get their meaning from the time when they're said, like in "I will meet you tomorrow," where "tomorrow" is outside the text because its meaning depends on when the sentence is spoken. Arabic is similar, but it also has extra differences, including specific words for the day before yesterday (قبل أمس) and the day after tomorrow (بعد غد), which English doesn't have (Badawi, 2012). Arabic verb tenses also have a clearer role in temporal deixis, as they show if an action has already happened, is happening now, or will happen in the future. Exophoric reference really stands out in spoken conversations, where speakers take for granted that they're both in the same situation. Like, if someone's pointing at a chair and says, "Can you move that?", the word "that" only

makes sense because of what's around them physically. But in writing, you don't see exophoric references as much, because readers aren't necessarily in the same immediate context. This difference is super important in academic and news writing, where they use endophoric cohesion more often (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). For Arabic speakers learning English, exophoric deixis can be tricky. They might misunderstand words like "this" and "that" because English doesn't have the same gender and number differences as Arabic. They might also rely too much on repeating the exact same words instead of using pronouns or demonstratives, and they might struggle to get the hang of how flexible English is with talking about time. To tackle these challenges, teachers of language can use methods like contextual role-plays, which let students practice deixis in realistic conversations. They can also compare how English and Arabic use deixis and analyze real texts to understand how it works in different contexts. In the end, knowing how exophoric deixis works in both English and Arabic is really important for learning a second language, translating accurately, and analyzing discourse. It changes how we understand meaning across different languages and cultures. Although both languages use personal, spatial, and time-based deixis, Arabic has a more detailed grammar system with clear gender and number differences. This leads to different ways of making references, which can either help or make it harder for learners to understand, depending on how well they know the discourse norms of both languages.

VI.   CHALLENGES IN TEACHING COHESION IN ESL/EFL CLASSROOMS

Teaching the concept of cohesion in English language classrooms, whether for English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL), comes with its own set of hurdles, especially when working with students whose first language is Arabic. Cohesion, in the words of Halliday and Hasan (1976), is the way sentences are linked together smoothly, using grammatical and lexical tools like referencing, substitution, leaving out words (ellipsis), conjunctions, and lexical links. The problem is that Arabic and English often have very different ways of structuring sentences and making arguments, which makes it tough for Arabic speakers to get the hang of these cohesive tools in English. A big part of the trouble is how differently the two languages use cohesion because of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Arabic tends to repeat things more directly, while English likes to be more concise, using pronouns and leaving out words to avoid redundancy. For example, an English speaker might say something like:

Ali bought a new car. He loves it.

Whereas an Arabic equivalent would likely use lexical repetition:

In Arabic, you'd typically see more repetition, like this: "اشترى علي سيارة جديدة. علي يحب هذه السيارة" (Ali bought a new car. Ali loves this car.). This difference can make it tricky for Arabic speakers learning English to use pronouns correctly. They often end up either repeating words too much or using pronouns wrong.

A major challenge in teaching cohesion is grasping the concept of implicit and contextual references. English often uses implicit cohesion, meaning much is understood from the context rather than being directly spelled out. This shows up a lot with ellipsis and substitution. Take the sentence, "I wanted the red dress, but they only had the blue one." Here, "one" stands in for "dress." That kind of structure doesn't come naturally in Arabic, which tends to prefer explicitly repeating the noun. English also uses exophoric references, where the meaning depends on what's going on around you—like words like "this," "that," "here," and "there." Arabic speakers, who are used to clearer linguistic clues, might find these phrases confusing (Baker, 2018). This difference can make it tough to understand things, especially when reading academic texts or trying to comprehend what you've read.

Also, the tendency to either overuse pronouns or repeat nouns in Arabic versus English creates a pretty big teaching challenge. Arabic students often either use way too many pronouns or skip them completely because of how different their first language is. In Arabic, you can leave out subject pronouns a lot of the time because the verb ending tells you all you need to know about the subject. Take this sentence, for example: "ذهب إلى السوق" (Went to the market). It's totally fine grammatically in Arabic without saying if it's "he" or "she" who went. But in English, you've gotta explicitly say the subject pronoun: "He went to the market." This difference in how the languages are built can make Arabic learners accidentally leave out needed pronouns when they write in English, causing grammar mistakes and making their writing less connected. On the flip side, when Arabic speakers *do* use pronouns in English, they might have trouble making it clear who or what the pronoun refers to, especially when there are multiple options. For instance, take the English sentence, "John told Mark that he was wrong." The pronoun "he" here creates ambiguity, leaving us to wonder whether it refers to John or Mark. In Arabic, such ambiguity is often resolved by simply repeating the name, like this:

قال جون لمارك إن مارك كان مخطئًا. (John told Mark that Mark was wrong.)

In conclusion, teaching cohesion in ESL/EFL classes, especially to Arabic-speaking students, poses a variety of linguistic and teaching challenges. The differences in structure and style between English and Arabic often make it difficult to master cohesive devices. This is because Arabic tends to rely on clear repetition of words, while English prefers using pronouns, leaving out words (ellipsis), and substitution. These differences can cause Arabic-speaking learners to either overuse or avoid pronouns, repeat words too much, or use referential elements incorrectly. These issues can ultimately affect their fluency and coherence when writing or speaking English. Moreover, the subtle nature of cohesion in English, particularly with external references and contextual meaning, can be hard for Arabic learners to grasp, as they are more used to clear linguistic indicators.

VII. TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING COHESION AWARENESS

Helping ESL/EFL students, especially those who speak Arabic, understand how to use cohesive devices in English means adopting specific teaching methods. These methods need to tackle the variations in structure and style between English and Arabic. Given that cohesion is crucial for creating text that's easy to follow and logically connected, educators need to create exercises that highlight both internal and external references, along with reading and writing practice, and activities focused on deixis to help students master the use of cohesive tools.

An effective technique involves including classroom tasks that highlight both internal (like anaphoric and cataphoric) and external references. This helps students tell the difference between cohesion within a text and cohesion that relies on outside context. For instance, when teaching anaphoric reference, teachers can give students brief passages with several pronouns and demonstrative adjectives and then ask them to find the words these pronouns and demonstratives refer back to. Take this for instance: in the sentence "Sarah bought a laptop. She uses it for work," students would underline "she" because it points back to "Sarah," and "it" because it refers to "laptop." Along the same lines, for cataphoric reference, you could give students a sentence like "Before he could speak, John took a deep breath" and have them figure out how "he" is actually looking ahead to "John." This kind of practice helps learners spot how English ties things together, which is different from Arabic, where they tend to just repeat things more. For exophoric reference, teachers could use dialogues that have words like "this," "that," "here," and "there," and then get students talking about how the meaning shifts based on who's speaking and who's listening. By getting the hang of these referencing tricks, students get better at following the meaning throughout a whole piece of text.

Another key approach is to use reading and writing activities to strengthen how well ideas stick together in writing. Students can learn to understand and create texts that are well-organized by doing this. When doing reading exercises, students should pay special attention to words and phrases that connect ideas in academic and news articles. For example, students could look at a news article and circle pronouns, conjunctions, and repeated words, then talk about how these help the text flow smoothly. Also, exercises where students rephrase sentences can help them get better at replacing pronouns with noun phrases and the other way around. For instance, the sentence: "The government introduced new policies. These were widely debated," can be rewritten as: "The government introduced new policies, and the policies were widely debated." Writing tasks should push students to improve their writing so that ideas stick together well. They should check that pronouns clearly refer to a specific noun, and they should avoid repeating words when it's not needed. Peer review exercises, in which students assess each other's use of cohesion, can also be helpful. They offer instant feedback on unclear references or unnecessary repetition.

Also, using deixis exercises to build contextual understanding is super important for teaching cohesion, particularly for students who aren't used to how English uses words like "this," "that," "here," "there," "now," and "then." Deixis, meaning words whose meaning changes with the context, can be really tough for Arabic speakers because Arabic often gives clearer clues about the context. Teachers can have students do role-playing where they have to use these pointing words in real-life situations, like giving directions ("The bookstore is over there") or talking about time ("We'll meet here at noon"). Another helpful exercise is to give students dialogues where they have to figure out the meaning of these pointing words based on what's happening in the situation. For example, if someone says: "I'll do that later," you can get a better understanding by asking what "that" means and when "later" is. Doing things like this helps students learn to grasp meaning on the fly, instead of just memorizing words. By using these methods, teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) can really boost students' understanding of how sentences connect, which in turn helps them write better and communicate more effectively. When learners see the different ways English and Arabic connect sentences, they can adjust how they talk and write in English, leading to a better understanding and creation of well-structured English texts.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This article has delved into the concept of cohesion in both English and Arabic, with a special emphasis on endophoric and exophoric references. It underscores the significant linguistic differences between the two languages. English frequently uses pronouns, substitution, and ellipsis to keep the text cohesive, while Arabic prefers methods like repeating words, using clear referential markers, and employing discourse connectors. These variations can make translation, learning a second language, and analyzing discourse quite challenging, since they affect how meaning is built and understood across different languages and cultures. Recognizing these differences is especially important in ESL/EFL settings, where Arabic speakers often find it difficult to adapt to English's concise style and its way of subtly connecting references, which contrasts sharply with Arabic's more direct approach and its use of repetition.

With all these tricky aspects to consider, teachers of English as a Second or Foreign Language need to use specific teaching methods to boost students' understanding and command of cohesive devices, especially referential ties. These ties are super important for both understanding what we read and making our writing flow smoothly. One of the best ways to teach is by directly showing students how referential cohesion works, pointing out different types of references like anaphoric, cataphoric, and exophoric, and giving them guided exercises to use these tools correctly and effectively. Comparing how cohesion works in English versus Arabic can also be really helpful. This helps students see and remember the differences between the two languages, which in turn reduces mistakes when using referential cohesion. Carter and McCarthy (2006) emphasize that cohesion is a vital tool for understanding language in context, and therefore, it should be a regular part of English language learning programs, taught both directly and through interactive activities. Activities in the classroom like structured reading exercises that focus on cohesive ties, writing tasks that involve students using different referential strategies, and interactive discussions that encourage the use of exophoric deixis can be very helpful in strengthening these ideas. Additionally, looking at errors along with corrective feedback can give learners useful insights into their cohesion-related mistakes, allowing them to improve their writing and speaking skills over time.

Further research really needs to dig deeper into how cohesion works in bilingual discourse processing, especially looking at how Arabic-speaking English learners pick up and use referential cohesion across different ways

of communicating. Studies that compare cohesion patterns in English and Arabic using corpora could give us really valuable insights into how often and how cohesive devices are used in everyday language. Also, translation studies could help us understand the difficulties in translating referential links between these two languages. Approaches that look at cohesion from a cognitive perspective in second-language learning could also help us better understand how learners handle cohesive devices and how teaching methods can be adapted to support their cognitive growth in this aspect. Furthermore, adopting new teaching methods for cohesion, like using digital tools, AI feedback on writing, and strategies focused on discourse, could make ESL/EFL teaching more effective and lead to better results for students. Studies that track the effects of teaching cohesion directly on students' writing, reading, and speaking over time would be very helpful in understanding the lasting benefits of these teaching approaches. Because referential cohesion is so closely tied to how well someone communicates, how smoothly they speak, and their overall ability to use language, it's vital to keep studying and improving teaching methods in this area. This will help students become more proficient in both English and Arabic, ultimately improving their ability to communicate in both languages.

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