EWE MAJOR STUDENTS' COMMAND OVER COHESIVE DEVICES: COHESION AND COHERENCE IN THE NATIVE SPEAKERS' CREATIVE WRITING ESSAYS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

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Introduction

Essay writing in one's native language or dialect, constitutes a problem for many people including native speakers who are formally studying their language. However, studies conducted in the fields of essay writing at the university levels and below to the best of my knowledge are, quantitative and not in L1. It is a fact that speakers of a language can generally demonstrate the language competence and language performance – thus to ascertain their level of command over the language. Creative writing forms are media for such justifications. Creative writing is 'a habitual act' and one of the full semester courses for Level 300 Ghanaian Language students in the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). In Ghana, language problems could be attributed to the nature of the prevailing language policy in the country- not considering effective study and development of local languages alongside the English language -L2[1] as well as the linguistic background of learners in the formal educational system. We can state that language problems are the causes of major challenges or are among the major challenges in the Ghanaian educational system. Despite numerous approaches to writing, tackling writing in L1 or L2 is still a major problem. In the modern Ghanaian classroom, writing is reduced to taking of tests or copying of notes. Complains alone on any of these challenges will not solve the problem, researching into them counts.

This study is therefore, concerned with exploring the organizational problems encountered by native/local language students while composing essays in their own language. It is purposed to examine types of coherent and cohesive devices Ewe major students use in their essay writings. Coherence and cohesion are evaluations essentials in continuous writings. I use the term coherence and cohesion generally to mean two complementary aspects of writing and text organization. Roughly, coherence includes those aspects of a narrative that are directly linked to the overall structure of its content, while cohesion involves those aspects that pertain directly to the linguistic expression of discourse – the internal relation across clauses. Expressing ideas verbally seems easier than putting them into writing. Ideally, people do have depths of ideas running through their minds; the ability to organize and express or present them in written forms is always the major task (Dogbey, 2012:1). Acquiring the writing skill seems to be more laborious and demanding than the other language skills (Ahmed, 2010:211). This proves that writing is as an independent structure on its own and organizing thoughts into codified forms need much attention. In fact, producing a coherent piece of writing in one's language (which is superficially studied at the foundation

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[1] L2 = For some schools in the Volta Region, Ghana Togo Mountain Languages area Ewe and Akan for instance, are second languages students offer at BECE and WASCE

levels as is the case of Ghanaian languages offered at the tertiary level) is an enormous challenge. Honestly, the rhetorical conventions of English texts (or L2 texts:---the structure, style, and organization-) differ from students' L1. A great effort is required by the L2 learner in organizing and managing the differences.

In this regard, this study could help in identifying student's level of awareness and competence in the use of cohesive devices in essays, ascertaining the most frequently used devices, those which are most problematic and or unfamiliar to students, discovering through students the awareness of the concept of cohesion and how lecturers handle it during lessons (the best teacher is seen through students' performances – Rice, 2003), ascertaining how much cohesion could be permitted per a construction in order to avoid 'heavy' paragraphs and sentences, justifying a connection between students' way of speaking and writing as well as thinking with regards to responding to essays and identifying the kind of essay writing approaches common to students.

Furthermore, the study significantly focuses on addressing writing and speaking problems (most often there is a correlation between what is said and written by students during oral treatment of essays (Nartey-Larwe, 1981), inform and improve on student's competence in the use of cohesive devices, serve as a point of contact as well as help to improve standards of performance in schools and institutions.

Research questions
1. Do EMS exhibit competence in the use of cohesive devices in their essays?
2. What is/are the most frequently used device?

Previous research

Coherence in text: a multidimensional feature base

Coherence, or texture, is the combination of semantic configurations of two different kinds: register and cohesion. Coherence in written text is "a complex concept, involving a multitude of reader- and text-based features" (Johns, 1986 in Ahmed, 2010). Text-based features mean cohesion (i.e., the linking of sentences) and unity (i.e., sticking to the point). Reader-based features mean that the reader interacts with the text depending on his/her prior knowledge. Coherence is defined as "the organization of discourse with all elements present and fitting together logically" (Hinkel, 2004). This denotes that a coherent essay consists of an introduction, a thesis statement, rhetorical support, and a conclusion. However, all other features that make written or verbal discourse complete are never left out (punctuations, registers, syntactic and sentence functions, participant and topic as well as setting concepts, etc).

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion separates a text from expressions that are not considered texts, holds together the sections of the text and arranges the meaning relationship within a text. They asserted, a cohesive relationship in the text sometimes appears in a sentence, sometimes between the sentences and sometimes between the paragraphs (p.278). Achieving cohesive effect on selected vocabulary items is by reiteration or collocation (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:274). Halliday and Hasan (1976) evaluated cohesion

under the following titles: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical cohesion. These features are crucial in achieving coherence. Ideally, coherence is a semantic property of discourse formed through the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences. Here, interpretation in implies interaction between the text, the reader and the writer (Dag, 2013).

Some research findings revealed that students' texts have repetition, parallelism and sentence length, lack of variation and misuse of certain cohesive devices as major sources of incoherence and textual deviations. In addition, students have some weaknesses, in terms of coherence and cohesion, manifesting both in their L2 written texts and spoken forms. The WAEC reports noted that students perform poorly in English Paper 1 where writing skills are tested…disconnected sentences or misuse of cohesive devises…(WAEC, Chief Examiner's report, 2007-2010 : English Paper 1). Text cohesion in writing is a mechanism that facilitates discourse flow. Constructing cohesive texts by second language learners requires focused instruction and additional attention. Writing cohesively in L2 constitutes a serious problem to learners (Ahmed, 2010).

The findings in this study portrayed the phenomenon that challenges faced in L1 also occur in L2. This finding emphasizes the assumption that 'the L2 only drive' cunningly propagated by the 'mirage language policy in Ghana' is never contributing any meaningful realization to learner efficiency. We can observer a blunt of unsharpened brains, destruction of potentials and the huge number of failures recorded across exams in the country set the record straight that deficiency in L1 (the medium of instruction, conceptualization, comprehension, expression and transfer) is the cause of all these ('academic genocide' experienced by students as shown by their examination records and academic reports.)

Cohesion

Cohesion is a general principle or a formal or grammatical linguistic feature that respects the order of thought presentation. Cohesive writing creates clear and logical relationships among ideas. Cohesion refers to the relationships established between sentences and paragraphs via the units in the surface structure of the text. In relation to essay writing cohesion, many researchers agree that cohesion, on the macro level is related to linking ideas whereas on the micro level, it is concerned with connecting sentences and phrases. "The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and defines it as a text". This made this study prove the proficiency and thinking levels of students in their languages as may be expressed even in their second languages. It is this part that emphasizes a link between thought and action (what is understood and is what is written down).

Studies on text cohesion claim that a text stands as a text by means of cohesion. But for cohesion, sentences/clauses would be fragmented and would result in a number of unrelated sentences. Studies on L2 have drawn attention to different aspects of cohesion problems (Ahmed, 2010; Kurt & Atay, 2007) but do not investigate such phenomena in students' native languages. This study is exploring the coherence and cohesion problems that EMS face in their essay writings and possibly relate it to other fields of study.

Data presentation and analysis
Sampling and sample size

The study used a purposive sample of 28 students of Ewe. Their responses and scripts/documents were subjected to critical analysis on cohesive devices and coherence. This study considers a combination of discourse analysis with corpus linguistic approach of Ewe major students (EMS). Discourses analyses here refer to a descriptive linguistic approach that focuses on 'language in actual use' (Kaplan & Grabe, 2002). In this study, a learner's corpus comprises the language in use, which is the authentic data that were analyzed. The exploratory nature of this study, and its context-specificity, made the naturalistic orientation of interpretive, qualitative research as an appropriate choice. The interpretive approach helps to explore and understand the context within which essay writing in Ewe is taught and learnt at University of Education, Winneba. It also helps in revealing problems that EMS and even teachers encounter in the cohesion and coherence of essays.

Cohesion with no coherence
Text A:

[Amadede si dzea `unye vevie lae nye 6it4. #u 6iwo 2e woz4na `ut4. #uawo kuku alea tea `u hea af4ku ge2e vanae. Medze 3uf4ku kp4 he`e nye af4. Esi men4 abiawo 5e d4x4 la, dzi medz4am o elabena nyemetea `u sea vivi na nu2u2u o.] (NB:)[2]

1. Ama - de-de sì   dze - a `ù - nyè vevee la- e   nye   6i - t4
    Color - RED REL   like-HAB part-1SG best   TP - FOC be/COP-is   white - one

'*The color I like best is white*'

2. [β ū]   6i - wo   2è   wo   z4 - na̰   `ut4.
    Vehicle   white - PL   pFOC 3SG   walk - HAB   very much

'White cars move very fast.'

3. Wo –ku – ku   ale-a   ta - a `u hè - à   àf4ku   gè2è va - na - e
    3SG-RED-drive this way POT-HAB body bring-HAB accident many come-HAB-FOC

> *'Driving them like this can cause many car crashes'.*

4. Mè - dzè   βū - 'f4ku   kp4   he - `e   nyĕ af4.
    1SG-contacted   vehicle - accident   see   ITIVE - break   1SG   leg/foot

> *'I once had a car accident and **broke my leg'***

5. Esì   mè -n4   àbì   -a -wo ɸe   d4-x4   la, dzì me- dz4 - â - m   ò
    When 1SG -be-LOC   wound-TP -PL   POSS sick-room TP, heart NEG-happy-HAB-1SG NEG

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2 High and low tones are prominent in Ewe, in the glossing; unmarked tones will be regarded high. Also, DEF - definate, DEM – demonstrative, FOC - focus, aFOCUS - term focus marker, FUT - future, PROG – progressive, HAB - habitual,LINK - linker (conjunctions, co-ordinate, etc), REL-Relativizer, NEG - negative, POT - potential, PL–plural, QT - quotative, RED–reduplicated, SG–singular, SPCF – Specifier, TRANS–Transitive, VENT–Ventive, 1SG - First person singular, 2SG - second on person singular, 3SG - Third person singular, ARG –Argentive marker, DAT –Dative, be-LOC –Abilitative marker, CFp-Clause focus marker, TP-Topic marker, COMP-Complementizer, CFP-Clause final particle IDEO-Ideophone , PART: Particle

elàbena nye -me- te - a   `u sè   -à   vìvi   na   nu- 2u- 2u   ò.
because 1SG-NEG-POT-HAB body hear-HAB sweetness DAT thing-RED-eat(food)
NEG.

*'Because of the wounds, I was very sad in those days for I loss **appetite for food'**.*
*"My favorite colour is **white**. **White cars** move very **fast**. **Driving** them like this can cause many **car crashes**. I once had a car accident and **broke my leg**. Because of the wounds, I was very sad in those days for I loss **appetite for food**."*

Text B:

[Nu si wòl-a 2u2u vevie lae nye gali. Ga ge2e le galidzadzra me. Gali t4t4 al4 de kotokuwo me nye d4 ses8. Gali kotoku 2eka kpena wua dze kotoku 2eka g- h7. M]eléa afiwo kple alegeli siwo n4a agbax4wo me n4a gali kotokuawo `4m la].

6. Nu   sì   wò - l- - a   2ù - 2ù   vevie la-e   nye   gàli.
Thing REL 2SG - like-HAB RED-eat most TP-aFOC COP-is gali
*'What s/he likes eating most is **gali**.[3]*

7. Ga   ge2e le   gali - dza-dzra   me.
          Money a lot be-LOC gali- RED-sell   in
                Much money is in selling gali

8. Gali t4-t4   a - l4   de   kōtōkú - wo me   nye d4   se-s8.
Gali RED -roast POT - collect put sack - PL inside COP work RED-hard
          'Roasting and bagging gali is a tedious work.'

9. Gali kotoku 2èká kpè - nà wú - á   dzè   kotoku 2èká g- h7.
Gali sack   one   heavy- HAB than -HAB salt sack   one even also.
          'A bag of gali is heavier than a bag of rice'

10. M]e -lé - a   àf ì- kple alegeli si - wo   n4   - a   agbax4 -wo me
1PL- catch-HAB mouse and rat   SPECF -PL be.at:PRES-HAB storeroom-PL inside
n4 - a   gali kotoku -a -wo `4 - m   la.

 be.at:PRES-HAB gali   sack - TP-PL perforate-PROG CFP
*'We **catch the mice and rats** that hide in **store rooms** destroying (making holes into) the sacks of gali.'*

*'His best food is **gali**. There is much **money is** in gali business. **Roasting** and **bagging gali into sacks** is a **tedious work**. One sack of gali is **heavier** than a sack of salt. We **catch the mice and rats** that hide in **store rooms** destroying (making holes into) the sacks of gali.'*

i.   ***White*** *>* ***white cars*** *>* ***move fast*** *>* ***driving*** *>****car crashes*** *>****broken leg*** *>* ***appetite for food***.

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[3] Gali: a cassava meal prepared by roasting grated cassava. Some call it gari.

ii. ***Gali >a lot of money > preparation/roasting > putting into sacks/bagging > a tedious work > heavier > catching mice and rats > store rooms***

In ''i'' above, there is cohesion. The sentences connect clearly together but if you read the paragraph, it really makes no sense. The sentences started with talking about favorite color and food and ended on loss of appetite for food as well as catching mice and rats. There is no coherence in these sentences.

Coherence with no cohesion

Now, look at a sentence that is coherent but with no cohesion.

Text C:

[Amadede si nyoa `unye vevie lae nye 6it4. Mele dzi2e2i kple gb42eme blibo me. Le nye vovo6iwo la, meml4a gbe mumu ml4ml4 dzi le xexe, n4a yame kp4m].

11. Ama-de-de   sì   nyo - a   `ù - nyè vevie la - e   nye   6i - t4
    Color RED REL good-HAB body-1SG   best   PT-LOG be/COP-is   white-one:
    (ARG).

'My favorite colour is white'

12. Mè -lè   dzì-2è-2i   kple gb4-2e-me   blíbo
    mè.   1SG-be.at PRESS hear-remove-down and   breath-remove-
    into/inside total inside
      'I am in total peace and comfort/relaxation' OR   '*I'm totally calm and relaxed'*

13. Le nyĕ vō-vo - 6i- wo la,   mè- ml4- a   gbē   mumu   f1   ml4ml4ml4
    dzi   At 1SG RED-free time-PL TP, 1SG-lie-HAB grass green   young IDEO-
    fluffy on lè   xexe, n4   -à   ya-mè   kp4 -m
    LOC-at   outside be.at-PRES -HAB air–inside (sky)   look - PROG
    'At/During my leisure hours, I lie on fresh fluffy green grass outside, looking up'
      "My favorite colour is white. I'm calm and relaxed. During my leisure hours, I lie on the young fluffy green grass outside, looking up."

The sample Text C is more difficult to understand due to cohesion challenges but basically this lack of cohesion means a lack of sufficient connectors to join the ideas together. If you try hard to understand what the person is saying (a short answer, an explanation, an example) the sentences do not fit together or are not coherent.

Cohesion and coherence in dialogue

The best examples are derived from the drama texts. Two people could talking about some picture/thing but if they neither respond to what each other is saying nor refers to each other then the conversation can be coherent but completely lack cohesion. For example, some of the derived texts from respondents' creative writing include:

Text D:

14. E-w4   na-m   be   àgbè kò 2ù-m   àmè   sia-wo lè   alea
    3SG-made to-1SG   QT life only eat-PROG person DEM-PL be-LOC this way

'I think these people are having a good time.'

15. E - w4   na -m   be   dzìdz4 kò kp4 -m   àmè   sia-wo   lè   alea
    3SG-made Dat-1SG COMP happy only see/look-PROG person DEM-PL be-LOC this
    way

'It appears (as if) these people are only enjoying themselves'

16. Wo-dze   àbe   m4keke-2u-la-wo   ène
        3SG-look   like /as   holiday-eat-DEF-PL   as/if

'They seem to be on holidays or as holiday makers'

17. E-w4   àbe   m4keke   wo-lè   ène.
        3SG-made   like/as   holiday   3SG-be-LOC   as/if

'It looks like they are on vacation'

Obviously, there is no connection between A and B in this conversation. We understand them
and they are coherent. What is missing is cohesion. They are not connected. A is not listening
to B and B is not listening to A.

Text E:

18. E-w4   na - m   be   àmè   sia-wo   lè   àgbè 2ù -m
        3SG-made DAT-1SG   QT   person DEM-PL be-LOC lie   eat-PROG
                    'I think these people are enjoying themselves'

19. ^eyi6i `uti d4 me-   nya   w4-nà na - m   ò; e - ses8- na   na -
    m. Time body work 3SG:NEG-VOICE/MOD do-HAB DAT-1SG NEG,   3SG-hard-
    HAB DAT-1SG

'I can't keep to time; it is usually hard for me.'

20. Mè-tsi-a   mègbē 6esia6i le   w4-w4   2e   gàmè dzi
    `u   3SG-remain-HAB back   always be-LOC do/observe-RED LOC
    time on/top body

    àbe lè   gò do-do   ny4nu-vi   a-2e   sì   mè- di   be   mà - a- dzè
    like be-LOC out RED-exit woman-small INDEF REL 1SG-search QT 1SG-POT-
    contact

    àhì7 -e   la   `u   ène.
    love-3SG   CFP   body as/like

    'I am always not on time; like meeting a lady whom I wanted to date/marry'.

21. Ny4nu-vi   sì-wo   2à di-di yib4 lè   ta   na eye   wo - ɸe   `ku-wo
    lè   Female-small REL-PL hair long black be.at head for and (LINK) 3SG-POSS
    eye-PL be.at   ayi - bli-
    tsi   ɸe   ama – de-de   me la   ɸe   nu   nyo - a   `u -nye.   beans-
    maize-water POSS colour-RED-add in TP POSS thing please-HAB body -ISG
                'I like ladies with with long dark hair and brown eyes'

22. Nyĕ avu ɸe   `ku-wo lè   àbe   ayi -bli - tsi 'ma-de-de   ène eye e - ɸe
    1SG dog POSS eye-PL be.at as/like beans-maize-water color-RED-add as and 3SG-
    POSS   asike   h7   dìdì
    tail   also   long

'My dog has brown eyes and a long tail'

The data or examples show that there is cohesion but the conversation makes no sense and therefore, it is missing coherence. This observation agrees with Carrell (1982) and Chen (2008) as cited in Ahmed (2010) that a text can display cohesive devices yet be found incorrect.   With regards to linkers, the highest abused ones are:

kplé/kpákplé,   élàbéná,   gake,   hafi,   h7,   ale,   eye and,   because, but/yet, before, also, so/hence, and

This abuse could be explained under various concepts especially on the grounds that students are trying to transfer the L2 (English) code on to the Ewe. For example some of the texts read:

23. **i**: *Mè - ɸo - è **togb4   be**   e - dzu -m   h7, ……
1SG-beat -3SG **despite** COMP 3SG - insult-1SG   PART ….
'I beat him **though/although,** s/he insulted me …'

ii: *Nyě -me - ɸo - e   o   **elàbena**   e - dzu - m   h7,
1SG-NEG-beat-3SG NEG **because**   3SG-insult -1SG too/also
'I did not beat her/him **because** s/he insulted me too/also'

iii: *Kofi **kple** Ama**, kple** Adzo, **kple** Aku **kplakple Yao**….
NAME (LINK) NAME, (LINK) NAME, (LINK) NAME, (LINK) NAME,
*the commas and LINKERS usage concurrently is a gross abuse of co-coordination.

iv: *Nyě **kpakple   -e**   va
1SG   and (LINK) - 3SG   come
The linker 'kpakple', goes with more than two nouns.

Transliteration from English to Ewe is also a major negative effect exhibited by students with regards to linkers, cohesive and coherent text constructions. For instance, there is a wrong use of linkers: eye, kple, etc as in data 24 below to literally mean ''and''.

24.   a: Kofi **kple** Ama yi dua me **kple** va do go 2e dukpl4la ɸe vava `u.
b: Kofi **kple** Ama yi dua me **eye** wodo go 2e dukpl4la ɸe vava `u.
"Kofi **and** Ama went to the town **and** met the arrival of the president.''

In "24a" the student literally translate 'and' as 'kple' for cohesion but not coherence. In, ''24b'' 'and' as 'kple', 'eye' is well presented cohesively to address the right coherence. In ''24a', the sentence could be restructured to achieve the correct order through a reduplication of the verb 'do' (exit) and elimination of the ventive 'va' to make the sentence read as: "Kofi **kple** Ama yi dua me **kple** go dodo 2e dukpl4la ɸe vava `u". However, this will give the sense of suddenly.

Total absence of cohesive devices

Interestingly, some respondents wrote without observing any punctuation or coordinative device. An example is:

25. *~utsu-vi la 2ù nu - a kat7 v4 dzè al- d4-d4 g4mè f- he-dzè
Man - small DEF eat thing-DEF all   finish contact sleep RED-send under rose IT-
contact   nu - a -wo gbegbl8   wo - x4 - e   sè be
thing- DEF-PL RED-spoil/bad 3SG-receive-3SG   hear   QT/COMP
àti-ke   -v- -wo   no   -m   wò -le   ale   wò - le
tree-root (medicine/drug)-bad -PL drink-PROG 2SG-be.at-PRES thus   2SG-
be.at:PRES   àgbè   vlo   -a   n4-m.
life   bad -DEF be.at-PRES-PROG.

LITERAL: [The boy ate all the food started sleeping when he woke up engaged in promiscuous conducts believed to be on drugs leading to that bully conduct.]

CORRECTED VERSION: "The boy ate all the food [then he] started sleeping. [Later] when [he] woke up [he] engaged in promiscuous conducts. [He is] believed to be on drugs, leading to that conduct.

Findings from students' writings

Table 1: Summary of findings from students' writings

Item	Frequency
1. Lengthy, compound-complex sentences	(68)
2. Total absence of cohesive devices	**54**
3. The use of wrong connectives in joining clauses	**38**
4. Using noun, sentence/clause connectives in place of paragraph connectives in vice versa	
5. Presence of cohesive devices without punctuation marks	**50**
6. Presence of cohesive devices without the right punctuation mark	**32**
7. Cohesive device wrongly beginning with capital or small letter	**42**
8. Sentences beginning with small letters or capital letters beginning connecting features and subordinating sentences or clauses	**44**
9. Paragraph connectives found at the beginning of sentences of students	**126**
10. Placing connectives at the end of their sentences	**8**
11. Lack of knowledge on the use of certain punctuation marks such as the comma, the colon and semi-colon as cohesive.	**18**
12. Total abuse of cohesive devices (either under-abuse or over-abuse)	**81**
13. Cohesive without coherence constructions	**26**
14. Coherence without any cohesive realization	**12**
15. Poor development of paragraphs, full of series of unrelated points	**48**
16. Poor usage of reference elements such as, pronouns, demonstratives, relative clauses and relative pronouns, ellipsis	**35**
17. Concord challenges	**23**

Other findings are:

18. Impoverished knowledge on inherent category or properties of verbs and their usage
19. Difficulty in writing the introduction, the thesis statement, the topic sentence, concluding sentences and writing the conclusion as well as show poor topic-specific background knowledge.
20. It has been observed that as Africans has advanced oral development backgrounds than written and in speeches of conversation, structural outlines (punctuations, paragraphs etc) are conceptual maters hence are not consciously marked. This makes learners to transfer such phenomena into the writing environments.
21. Traces of L1 proficiency challenges were also identified. Students were paying attention to language matters rather than making meaning. Resulting in transliteration of the syntax and semantics of English language into their native language compositions.
22. Native language study and its skills are grossly plagued with attitudinal, policy and other incomprehensible roadblocks. These made learners incompetent neither in L1 nor L2. It is hard to find a fluent speaker without code switching or mixing. The poor proficiency in language; the medium for every thought and actions and functions entails poor thinking, understanding and expression.

These findings agree with some researchers' assertions on students' essays (and discourse) in English: Lack of knowledge on features of a good paragraph (Agor, 2010), Have problems with concord (Agor, 2003), Exhibit gross shallow knowledge of parts of speech (Gyasi et al. 2011), Lack of cohesion and coherence (Dako, 2009; Appiah, 2002, Dag, 2013), Exhibit weak thematic progression (Adika, 2003, Krista, 2012), Gross ignorance of essay and essay types (Tsareva, 2010), Tune to wrong and non-standard use of language (Forson, 2007, Krista, 2012).

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed a number of factors behind the coherence and cohesion problems. These challenges include lack of motivation, lack of self confidence, writing anxiety as well as judgment of competence through examination results among others. Students and lecturers are not motivated enough to produce essays in Ewe or study the language. Large classes also characterize physical and intellectual distance between teachers and students. Instructional methods of teaching Ewe essay writing is always the traditional (lecturing, reading aloud, and book reading) method. According to Ahmed, 2010), the traditional approaches on essays hinder students' communication; they respond to essay writing as difficult. This could be described as "signs of boredom", "passive watching" and "teaching spectacle" (It presents an impact of passive listening on students' learning in general, creative writing and examinations).

Other revelations by the study include: low motivation -usually contributing to students' vocabulary problems in writing (Lee, 2006), lack of confidence, poor supervision, over loaded curriculum, scarcity of teachers' feedback on students' writing performance, quality of assessment measures not exploring students full potency, high demands on learners by parents and teachers, students learning for results or certificates instead of for knowledge.

Ahmed (2010) says, families place unrealistic academic expectations on their children, they expect them to achieve high beyond their intellectual abilities. Parents, teachers and institutions also value and judge students by certificates rather than their actual levels of knowledge acquisition and full learning faculty.

Students also have poor reading culture. Meanwhile, it is students' reading and writing competence that enables them to adapt to new teaching/learning methods better. We can say, reading and writing have a close relation and are inseparable but need to be properly addressed simultaneously. The writing anxiety or apprehension could also be due to teaching load, short lecture duration, and defficient of teachers' professional development, teacher attitudes toward teaching essay, resources and difficult topics among others. Pedagogically, it was suggested that L1 proficiency helps to improve L2 reading and writing (Bell, 1998) hence, reading for pleasure and mandatory reading affect developing composition skills positively (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998). In this view teaching reading and writing should be simultaneous to better prepare learners to read like writers and write like readers. Additionally, knowledge of topic backgrounds is also crucial. Prior knowledge plays an important role in one's comprehension and composition skills (Heller, 1999). Prior knowledge and experience that students bring to the composition classroom are major distinctive characteristics between effective and non-effective students (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2004).

The study revealed that students lack topic prior knowledge, meanwhile, different kinds of knowledge backgrounds were believed to be a predictive of success in compositions. There is a strong and consistent relationship between topic specific background knowledge and the quality of students' writing (Tsadidey, 2009) hence, prior knowledge and writing experiences affect students' works (Scordaras, 2003). It is what students bring into the text; it is 'the what' and 'the how' of their reaction to the given information.

In this regard, cohesion problems have links with prior knowledge (External Examiner's Report on Ewe Language Essay, 2012 & 2013). Producing coherent, cohesive and well-organized writing pieces by L2 students are always very challenging because the rhetorical conventions of L2 texts such as the structure, organization, lexis and grammar differ from those in other languages (Forson, 2007). These students need to understand the concepts first in the L1 before transferring them into any other language. Meanwhile; the EMS were superficially taught or not taught the L1at all in their previous schools.

From this study, Ewe cohesive devices could be characterized as context-based, generalized, repetition-oriented, and additive. In contrast, English cohesion could be described as text-based, specified, change-oriented, and non-additive. In my view, since students have total speaking command in Ewe than the writing, it would affect cohesion in their writings in both languages. This accounts for why they turn to use English ideas in the Ewe and vice versa (see data 23). It also accounts for the literal translation and use of formulaic expressions in their writings as indicated by data 24 and the findings in Table 1.

In addition, writing the run-on sentences and repetition were other features identified due imbalance in the use of L1 and L2 for academic purposes. This could be interpreted from two angles based on the findings: First, students join the university with poor L1 and L2 proficiency. Second, admission to all levels of education is determined by results or

certificate rather than knowledge or competence and performance (communication). These foreshadow the numerous problems students are expected to encounter in the various academic courses in general and essay writing in particular as well as work environments.

In view of these finding, further studies could be conducted on: (1) effects of different teaching techniques on the development of students' organizational skills in writing, (2) the concept of teaching and the mechanics of writing in an essay writing course, (3) analyzing students' vocabulary learning strategies and its effect on the development of coherent and cohesive written essays, (4) classroom interaction techniques on students' attitudes towards essay writing and (5) investigating feedback practices to understand the factors that hinder good quality teacher feedback on students' writings in the L1 and others.

Summary and conclusion

The full assessment on the study proves that, students exhibit a lesser degree of knowledge on cohesive devices. They depend on just a few of them and over use them exhaustively. Most of these are: 'kple' 'kpakple', 'eye'- (and), 'h7'-(also), 'elabena'-(because), 'gake' 'ke'-(but, yet), 'hafi'-(before). Another observation was poor usage of punctuation marks. It causes students' construction of very long sentences: compound-complex or complex-complex sentences. It is surprising to see a full paragraph (a heavy paragraph of 18 lines) without a comma. Only the full stop specifies the end at times.

These 'paragraph sentences' are full of 'kple', 'eye'-(and) 'eya ta'- (because of), 'elabena'-(because), 'ale'- (so, hence), 'yi edzi la'-(furthermore), etc as connectives. Cardinal and ordinal connectives such as 'gb7-(one), 'eve'-(two) or 'gbat4' (first /firstly), 'evelia'-(second or secondly) and others were totally absent in the texts.

The few sentence or clause and paragraph connectives found were also abused (They were either marked with a full stop or mostly not marked at all with any punctuation): 'Togb4 be' (although), 'ke h7 la'-(however), kpe 2e e`u la'-(in addition/additionally), 'yi edzi la'-furthermore, moreover), etc. These cohesive devices were either not punctuated at all or are wrongly punctuated or used to connect nouns rather than clauses and paragraphs. These conjunctions: the additive, adversative, causal, temporal or co-ordinate conjunctions suffer the same degree of punctuation menace. Extensive repetition of lexical features and semantic units was also observed. It means a scratch of the same thought, making the composition appearing in parallel or parallelism forms in given contexts.

In conclusion, the study provides implications for strategies on essay writing, methods of teaching and assessment in Ewe and for that matter, other African languages at the university level. It is hoped that curriculum planners and designers would take into consideration different approaches that could enhance the organization skills of students in composition / essay writings in Ewe (other languages of African inclusive)

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