

Fadhel Mohsen Mohammed Mohammed

**Investigating the Discourse Competence
in Essay Writing with Reference to the
Third Level EFL Students**

Master's Thesis

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University of Aden

Faculty of Education/Aden

Department of English

**Investigating the Discourse Competence in Essay Writing
with Reference to the Third Level EFL Students in the
Department of English, Faculty of Education/ Radfan,
University of Aden.**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
of the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics.

Submitted by:

Fadhel Mohsen Mohamed

1439 H

October, 2017 A D

DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to:

**My Late
Father
and
Mother**

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ABSTRACT

Writing is considered as a difficult process even in the first language (L1). It is even more complicated to write in a foreign language (FL).

Writing in a (FL) often presents the greatest challenge to the students at all stages of their learning, particularly essay writing, students write essays without serious grammatical errors or misspellings; however, their essays are still disconnected and incoherent.

This illogicality is mainly caused by the errors at the discourse level.

EFL third-level English students at Faculty of Education/Radfan, University of Aden often face many problems when they write essays in English. Thus, this study aims at investigating the students' discourse competence in essay writing.

This study also aims at exploring the causes that make the students commit discourse errors and to what extent the students' incompetency affects their writing negatively.

To find out the reasons that might lead to the problems under investigation, two instruments were employed to collect data; the first instrument was the teachers' questionnaire, which was responded to by five teachers who teach writing and composition in the Department of English at Faculty of Education/Radfan, University of Aden. The second one was the students' writing task; through which twenty-five students were required to write an argumentative essay.

The analyses and interpretations of the result obtained by the two instruments can be summed up as follows:

The teachers supplied the researcher with valuable information that made the students commit discourse errors when writing essays. Besides, they emphasized on the importance of drawing the students' attention to the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices to help them write proficiently. Moreover, they suggested some methods and strategies to be taken during teaching writing to overcome the students' problems.

The results obtained through the analyses of the students' writing task showed that the students' errors might be attributed to the inappropriate use of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices, such as the overuse of some devices and the absence of the others; however, the overuse was not appropriate. It was also noticed that the students managed to use some cohesive devices of each type, but they showed their ignorance of the others as in the case of substitution and ellipsis which were barely used, however that use was wrong.

It could be concluded that through the results, the researcher had a clear picture of the students' difficulties in English essay writing and how the errors affected their writing negatively and made them incompetent.

On the basis of the findings, the researcher proposed some solutions and suggestions that might help to overcome the problem under investigation.

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