

## INAPPROPRIATE USE OF COHESIVE DEVICES IN WRITING AND EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO THIS PROBLEM

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### ABSTRACT

This article deals with inadequate, inaccurate or inappropriate use of cohesive devices in IELTS writing, problems arising from this for the test takers and its effect on the writing score. Additionally, a detailed information and explanation about coherence and cohesion of writing will be highlighted. They will be supported with solid reasons as well as examples.

**Keywords:** writing, coherence and cohesion, linking words, wrong form, informal linking words, types, marking, problems, solutions.

These days, test takers in IELTS exams are struggling to score highly in Writing section, which is considered as by far the most difficult skill to acquire. The core reasons to this predicament are varying, as writing mainly focuses on 4 skills, namely task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and so candidates may have problems associated with one of these skills. One of the most challenging skill to acquire among them is associated with employing cohesive devices or linking words effectively with precision in writing essays. In this article, the importance of coherence and cohesion for writing will be explained fully with its definition, primary problems related to this for language learners will be highlighted as well as reasonable ways to address these issues will be suggested.

To start, the main difference between two concepts, **cohesion** and **coherence**, should be clarified. Firstly, **cohesion** is related to grammar and style of connecting sentences with each other. It is mainly about using different types of linking devices in order to connect sentences. On the other hand, **coherence** is associated with the logical connection or organization of the ideas in an essay, as it mainly focuses on meaning and idea progression.

As for problems associated with the use of cohesive devices, main ones ought to be highlighted:

1. The first primary one is **overusing cohesive devices**. To be more specific, in order to score highly in this assessment criteria, test takers try to employ as many linking words as

possible. It, as a consequence, leads illogical linking between sentence parts and redundancy, which lowers score.

2. Secondly, **picking the wrong cohesive device** as a result of confusing types is quite common problem among language learners. There are several types of transitional words according to their meaning and English learners often make mistakes by mixing up various types of these devices. For example, in the sentence given below, cohesive device is not used appropriately:

a) Unless amateurs of doing hazardous sports have enough training or experience in these fields, it may bring negative consequences. **Because** restricting these activities prevent people from putting their life in unnecessary danger.

The problem here is associated with the use of “*because*” which is not really appropriate. The second sentence is not a reason of the first. There is a connection between two sentences but the second part gives a result to support the idea in the first part. To fix this problem, it should be corrected as:

b) Unless amateurs of doing hazardous sports have enough training or experience in these fields, it may bring negative consequences. **Therefore**, restricting these activities prevent people from putting their life in unnecessary danger.

3. The next problem is **changing the form** of these linking devices. The reason why is that, candidates often want to employ them creatively and alters the form which causes them using these parts of speech in an incorrect way. A prime example will be given below:

a) **In conclusion** – to be conclusion;

b) **For example** – for examples.

The second pairs of these words are totally incorrect.

4. Another major problem is employing **informal or outdated linking words**. Test takers often want to impress examiners with use of uncommon or special words to connect sentences, which lowers their score instead. For instance:

a) **Finally** – last but not least;

b) **Nevertheless** – anyway;

c) **Firstly** – for a start.

The second pairs of these devices are the examples for informal use of linking words.

There are many **viable solutions** to address these issues.

1. Linkers are used in order to develop ideas, in this case, they should not be used if ideas flow well. Instead of relying on using a lot of transitional phrases, test takers ought to employ linking words to convey different relationship between ideas when they are necessary. Also, the reliance on linking phrases can be eliminated and clarity in essay will be prioritized by mixing up different sentence structures.

2. Linking words have various functions according to their meanings and language learners often cannot differentiate them when they are using in essays. Only reasonable way to tackle this problem would be a deeper look into types of linking phrases and learning them:

a) **General explaining:** *in order to, in other words, to put it another way, to be more specific, simply put;*

b) **Adding information:** *moreover, furthermore, additionally, also, not only ..., but also, apart from this, in addition to this;*

c) **Showing order:** *firstly, secondly, thirdly, finally, subsequently, at this time, following;*

d) **Demonstrating contrast:** *however, on the other hand, having said that, by contrast, in comparison, yet, nonetheless, nevertheless, despite this, while;*

e) **Giving examples:** *for example, for instance, a prime example is that, take something as an example, such as, namely;*

f) **Signifying importance:** *importantly, significantly, notably,*

g) **Showing result:** *consequently, as a result, as a consequence, therefore, hence, thus;*

h) **Showing reason:** *because, the reason why is that, since, as, due to, because of;*

i) **Summarizing:** *in conclusion, to sum up, in opinion, to summarize, to conclude.*

Being able to distinguish the difference between each of these linking devices allows test takers to use them consciously.

3. Different types of cohesive devices should be employed without changing their forms. Standard forms of them ought to be used while writing essays, which provides clarity and appropriacy.

4. In essays, informal words should not be employed, as it affects the score negatively. Therefore, candidate must avoid using informal linking devices, such as: “*honestly, I mean, in any case, after all*”, these kinds of informal ones are used only in speaking, not in writing.

All of these mentioned solutions ought to be employed in order to score highly in this marking criteria, as band descriptors demand those requirements, for example:

**Band 7:** *information and ideas should be logically organized; a wide-range of cohesive devices should be employed appropriately, but there may be some under-/over-use.*

To summarize, one of the most significant skills for getting a high score in IELTS writing is associated with the employment of different cohesive devices or linking phrases with appropriacy and precision. However, candidates often struggle with using them in

a correct way, as language learners are likely to make mistakes and face with numerous problems, namely overusing, choosing the wrong type, altering the form and using informal ones. All of the root causes of these issues are analyzed above with explanations and solid examples. Moreover, practical solutions and recommendations are provided for addressing these problems, such as using linking words neutrally, being informed about all types of cohesive devices with their own meanings, employing standard forms without alterations and avoiding the usage of outdated or informal ones. If language learners go through all mentioned steps one by one in learning process, there is a high likely for them to score highly in this specific marking without any problem.

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