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TEXTUAL ANALYSIS ON COHERENCE AND COHESION TO ENHANCE LEARNERS' WRITING IN PROSE

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Abstract

Writing is a critical macro skill in the 21st-century English curriculum, yet many secondary learners struggle to produce prose that demonstrates clear coherence and effective cohesion. Classroom observations at City of Bacoor National High School – San Nicolas revealed that Grade 8 learners frequently presented disorganized ideas and limited use of cohesive devices, resulting in writing that lacked clarity and logical progression. This action research examined the effectiveness of Textual Analysis as an instructional strategy for enhancing learners' coherence and cohesion in prose writing. Anchored in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Eggins, 2021), the study employed a mixed-method quasi-experimental design with an experimental group (n = 30) that received textual analysis instruction integrated with guided writing, and a comparison group (n = 30) that received conventional instruction. Data were gathered through pretest–posttest writing assessments, a student feedback survey, document analysis of written outputs, textual analysis worksheets, and teacher observation notes, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics, a paired-sample t-test, and thematic coding. Results showed that the experimental group achieved a significantly greater mean gain (+4.80) than the comparison group (+3.30), with a paired-sample t-test confirming a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group's writing performance ($t = -16.83$, $p < 0.001$). The experimental group also outperformed the comparison group on writing worksheets and on the Performance Task 2 expository essay ($M = 15.47$ vs. $M = 15.33$), and 85% of surveyed learners agreed or strongly agreed that textual analysis helped them understand how ideas and sentences connect. Findings support the integration of textual analysis into writing instruction, alongside continued support for grammar accuracy and independent revision, and inform the development of contextualized supplementary learning resources for teaching coherent and cohesive prose writing.

Keywords: *Cohesion, Coherence, Guided Writing, Mixed-Method Research, Prose Writing, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Textual Analysis, Writing Performance*

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Introduction

Background and Rationale

Writing is a vital macro skill in the K–12 English curriculum, enabling learners to communicate ideas clearly, think critically, and perform successfully in academic and real-life tasks. However, classroom observations at City of Bacoor National High School – San Nicolas revealed that many Grade 8 learners produced compositions marked by disorganized ideas, weak logical flow, and limited use of cohesive devices, resulting in texts that lacked clarity and unity. These difficulties pointed to a gap in learners' understanding of how sentences and paragraphs connect to achieve coherence and cohesion — indicators of writing quality emphasized in the Department of Education's English curriculum standards.

In response, this action research investigated the use of Textual Analysis as an explicit instructional strategy to help learners examine model prose texts and recognize how linguistic features contribute to the organization and connection of ideas. Through this intervention, the study aimed to improve learners' writing performance, increase their engagement in the writing process, and generate contextualized instructional materials to support the

Theoretical Framework

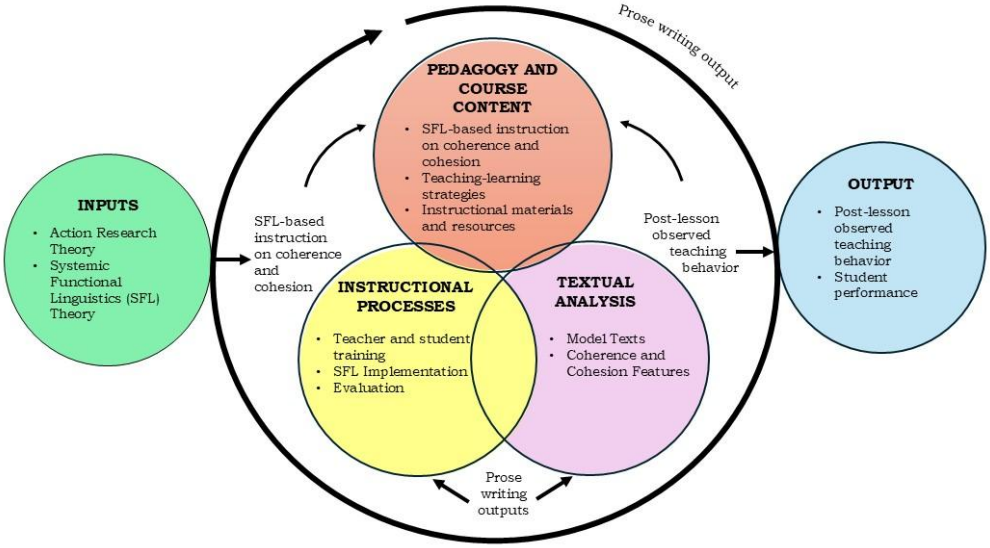
The study is anchored in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which explains how meaning is constructed through cohesive ties and logical organization within a text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Eggins, 2021). SFL positions textual analysis as a means for learners to examine well-structured texts and identify the linguistic features that contribute to textual unity, developing greater awareness of how ideas are connected within and across sentences and paragraphs.

The conceptual framework, presented in Figure 1, models an instructional system grounded in SFL and Action Research Theory that improves learners' coherence and cohesion through iterative cycles. In the planning phase, Action Research Theory and SFL principles guide the design of pedagogy and course content, emphasizing coherence and cohesion. In the action phase, textual analysis is implemented through teacher and student training, guided writing activities, and the examination of model texts. In the observation phase, student prose writing outputs and post-lesson teaching behaviors are systematically evaluated. In the reflection phase, findings from student outputs and classroom observations are analyzed to refine teaching strategies and instructional materials, with this feedback reintegrated into subsequent instructional cycles to sustain improvement in learners' prose writing performance.

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Figure 1. ***Conceptual framework of the study***



The Intervention: Textual Analysis as an Instructional Strategy

The innovation of this study is the integration of textual analysis as a structured, explicit instructional strategy for improving learners' coherence and cohesion in prose writing. The intervention used carefully selected model texts as learning anchors, guiding students to examine how ideas are logically organized, how cohesive devices function, and how paragraphs achieve unity through scaffolded activities such as annotation, outlining, guided writing, collaborative revision, and reflective assessment. Unlike conventional writing instruction, which focuses primarily on output, this strategy emphasizes the process of analyzing language and text structure to build learners' metacognitive awareness of how effective writing is constructed. Implemented through differentiated and interactive tasks, the approach gave learners repeated opportunities to apply identified cohesion strategies in their own compositions with continuous feedback and monitoring, and was designed to be contextualized, replicable, and aligned with the Learning Competencies (LCs).

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to answer the main question: How does using textual analysis as an instructional strategy influence students' coherence and cohesion in prose writing? Specifically, it addressed the following questions:

1. How does the use of textual analysis influence the improvement of students' coherence and cohesion in prose writing compared to those who do not receive this instruction?
2. How do students perceive the effectiveness of textual analysis in improving their writing skills, particularly in coherence and cohesion?
3. What recurring issues in coherence and cohesion can be systematically identified in students' written outputs through textual analysis?

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4. In what ways does employing textual analysis as a teaching method influence students' skills in producing coherent and cohesive writing?
5. In what ways can additional learning resources, developed from textual analysis findings, enhance teaching practices and promote greater student engagement in cohesive writing?

Hypotheses

H1 (Primary Hypothesis): Students instructed with textual analysis techniques will demonstrate a notable enhancement in the coherence and cohesion of their writing compared with those who do not receive this instruction.

H2 (Supporting Hypothesis): Common problems related to coherence and cohesion in students' writing can be systematically recognized by analyzing their written work.

H3 (Applied Hypothesis): Creating and utilizing additional learning resources informed by textual analysis results will facilitate more effective writing instruction and increase students' involvement in cohesive writing practices.

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Methods

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method quasi-experimental action research design using a pretest–posttest approach. Two intact groups of Grade 8 learners were involved: an experimental group, which received textual analysis–based writing instruction, and a comparison group, which underwent conventional writing instruction. The quantitative phase determined the effect of textual analysis on learners' coherence and cohesion in prose writing by comparing the pretest and posttest performance of the two groups. The qualitative phase examined students' perceptions, analyzed their written outputs to identify recurring issues in coherence and cohesion, and informed the development of contextualized learning resources based on the findings. This design allowed the researcher to measure improvement, explain how the intervention influenced learners' writing skills, and develop instructional materials to enhance classroom practice.

Participants

Participants were Grade 8 learners from City of Bacoor National High School – San Nicolas. Two intact classes were selected through purposive sampling: one class served as the experimental group (n = 30), exposed to textual analysis instruction integrated with guided writing activities, collaborative revision, and reflective assessment; the other served as the comparison group (n = 30), which received the regular writing instruction prescribed in the curriculum. These learners were selected because classroom observations revealed difficulties in organizing ideas and using cohesive devices in their prose writing, making them appropriate participants for the intervention.

Data Collection Instruments

The following instruments were used to answer the research questions:

Writing a pretest and a posttest (quantitative). Measured learners' level of coherence and cohesion in prose writing before and after the intervention, used to determine whether textual analysis significantly improved writing performance relative to the comparison group (Research Question 1).

Student feedback survey (qualitative). Gathered learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of textual analysis in improving their writing skills, engagement, and awareness of text structure (Research Question 2).

Document analysis of students' written outputs (qualitative). Learners' compositions were examined using a coherence and cohesion rubric to identify recurring writing issues, improvements in the use of cohesive devices, and the logical organization of ideas (Research Question 3).

Textual analysis worksheets and writing tasks (qualitative). Served as supporting evidence of how learners applied identified textual features in their own writing during the intervention (Research Question 4).

Teacher observation notes (qualitative). Documented learners' participation, engagement, and difficulties during the implementation of textual analysis–based instruction (Research Questions 2 and 4).

The combined results from the pretest and posttest, survey responses, document analysis, worksheet performance, and teacher observation notes served as the basis for identifying instructional needs and developing supplementary learning resources (Research Question 5).

Data Analysis Plan

Pretest and posttest writing scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and a paired-sample t-test / independent-sample t-test to determine significant differences between the experimental and comparison groups. Student feedback and writing samples were thematically coded to identify improvements in

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coherence and cohesion, common writing difficulties, and learners' engagement and metacognitive awareness. The intervention's effectiveness was evaluated by comparing pretest and posttest writing performance, analyzing students' increased use of cohesive devices and improved organization of ideas, examining survey results on learners' perceptions, and using the findings as the basis for developing supplementary learning resources and instructional materials.

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Results

Pretest and Posttest Performance

Table 1 presents the mean pretest, posttest, and gain scores by section and group.

Table 1. ***Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores by Section and Group***

Section	Group	Mean Pretest	Mean Posttest	Mean Gain
Rosario	Group 1 (Experimental)	13.30	18.30	+5.00
Rosario	Group 2 (Comparison)	13.10	16.70	+3.60
Tagaytay	Group 1 (Experimental)	13.30	17.40	+4.10
Tagaytay	Group 2 (Comparison)	13.30	16.70	+3.40
Trece Martires	Group 1 (Experimental)	13.30	18.60	+5.30
Trece Martires	Group 2 (Comparison)	13.80	16.70	+2.90

Across the three sections, the experimental group consistently obtained higher mean gains than the comparison group. The largest improvement was observed in Trece Martires (Group 1), with a mean gain of 5.30 points.

Table 2. ***Overall Comparison of Pretest, Posttest, and Gain Scores***

Group	Mean Pretest	Mean Posttest	Mean Gain
Group 1 (Experimental / With Intervention)	13.30	18.10	+4.80
Group 2 (Comparison / Without Intervention)	13.40	16.70	+3.30

The pretest results show that both groups had almost identical baseline performance, indicating comparable initial writing ability. After the intervention, the experimental group obtained a higher mean posttest score (18.10) than the comparison group (16.70), and its mean gain score (4.80) exceeded that of the comparison group (3.30). This pattern was consistent across the Rosario, Tagaytay, and Trece Martires sections, suggesting that the textual analysis intervention contributed to greater improvement in student writing performance.

Table 3. ***Paired-Sample t-Test Result (Experimental Group)***

Variable	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Pretest vs. Posttest	−16.83	$p < 0.001$	Significant

A paired-sample t-test determined whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected: the analysis revealed a statistically significant improvement in learners' writing performance after the textual analysis intervention ($t = -16.83$, $p < 0.001$).

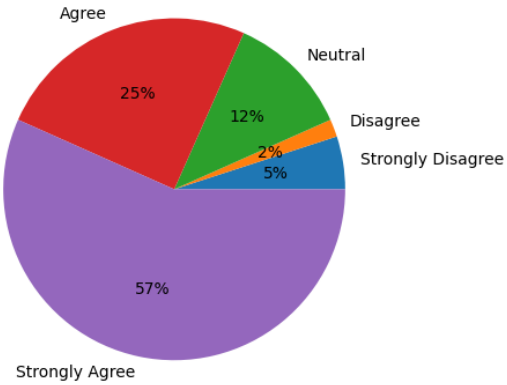
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Student Feedback Survey

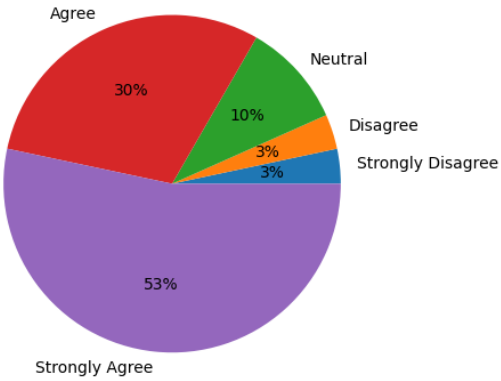
Part I. Effectiveness of Textual Analysis

Figure 2. ***Textual analysis helped me see how sentences and ideas connect***



34 (56.67%) of respondents strongly agreed, 15 (25.0%) agreed, 7 (11.67%) were neutral, 1 (1.67%) disagreed, and 3 (5.0%) strongly disagreed, indicating that textual analysis positively influenced learners' writing skills.

Figure 3. ***Awareness of the importance of transitions***

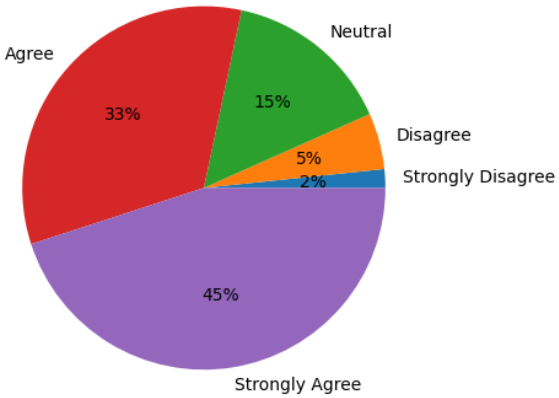


32 (53.33%) strongly agreed, 18 (30.0%) agreed, 6 (10.0%) were neutral, 2 (3.33%) disagreed, and 2 (3.33%) strongly disagreed.

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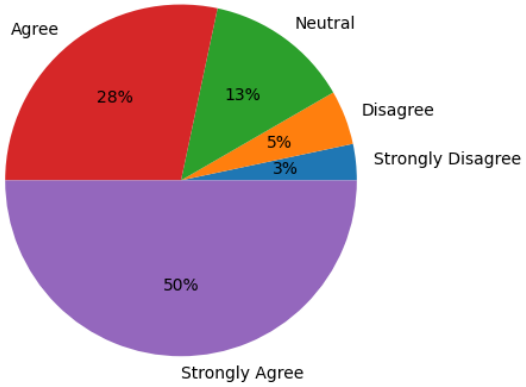
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Figure 4. ***Improvement in coherence***



27 (45.0%) strongly agreed, 20 (33.33%) agreed, 9 (15.0%) were neutral, 3 (5.0%) disagreed, and 1 (1.67%) strongly disagreed.

Figure 5. ***Improvement in cohesion***

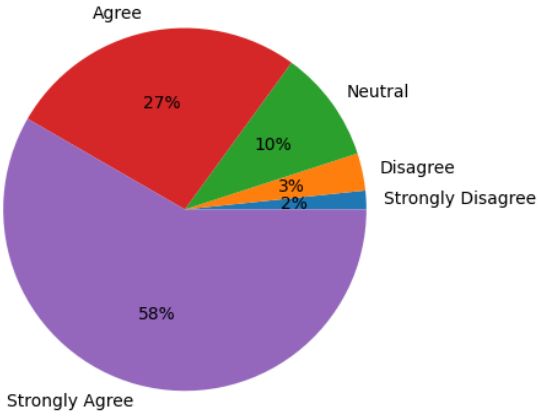


30 (50.0%) strongly agreed, 17 (28.33%) agreed, 8 (13.33%) were neutral, 3 (5.0%) disagreed, and 2 (3.33%) strongly disagreed.

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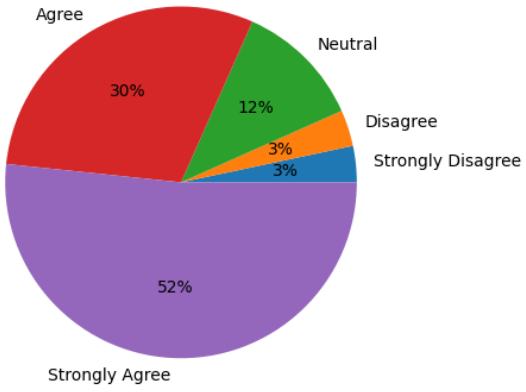
Figure 6. ***Confidence in organizing ideas***



35 (58.33%) strongly agreed, 16 (26.67%) agreed, 6 (10.0%) were neutral, 2 (3.33%) disagreed, and 1 (1.67%) strongly disagreed.

Part II. Learning Needs

Figure 7. ***Need for more practice in transitions***

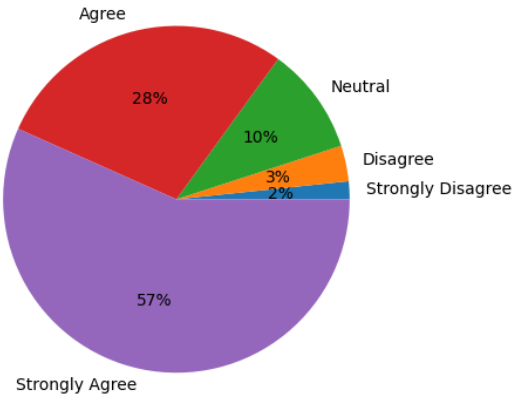


31 (51.67%) strongly agreed, 18 (30.0%) agreed, 7 (11.67%) were neutral, 2 (3.33%) disagreed, and 2 (3.33%) strongly disagreed.

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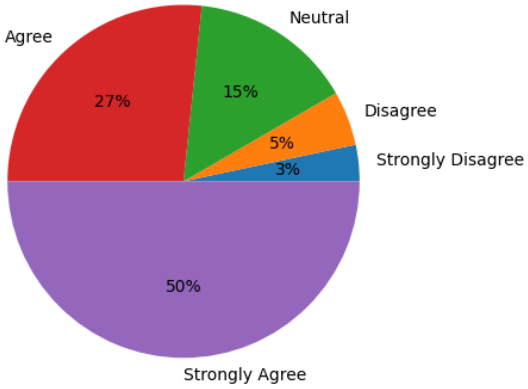
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Figure 8. ***Need for model student compositions***



34 (56.67%) strongly agreed, 17 (28.33%) agreed, 6 (10.0%) were neutral, 2 (3.33%) disagreed, and 1 (1.67%) strongly disagreed.

Figure 9. ***Need for worksheets on coherence and cohesion***

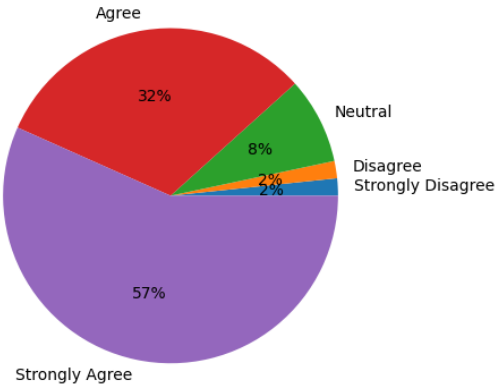


30 (50.0%) strongly agreed, 16 (26.67%) agreed, 9 (15.0%) were neutral, 3 (5.0%) disagreed, and 2 (3.33%) strongly disagreed.

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Figure 10. ***Preference for group editing and revision***



34 (56.67%) strongly agreed, 19 (31.67%) agreed, 5 (8.33%) were neutral, 1 (1.67%) disagreed, and 1 (1.67%) strongly disagreed.

Overall, most learners perceived textual analysis as an effective strategy for improving their writing skills, particularly in coherence, cohesion, and the organization of ideas: of 60 respondents, 51 (85%) selected "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" on items assessing the intervention's helpfulness, while only 9 (15%) selected "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." The experimental group showed a higher proportion of positive responses than the comparison group, suggesting that guided exposure to textual analysis activities improved learners' confidence and competence in writing. The survey also revealed that several learners still needed additional support in using transitions, analyzing model compositions, and practicing coherence and cohesion through structured worksheets and collaborative activities such as group editing and revision.

Open-Ended Responses

Student feedback and sample texts were thematically coded, revealing two major categories: (1) improvements in cohesion and writing strategies, and (2) persistent writing difficulties after the intervention.

Under the first theme, learners frequently cited pre-writing, outlining, identifying thesis statements, analyzing claims and evidence, and the use of transitions as the most helpful components of the textual analysis lessons — indicating a developing awareness of cohesion devices and coherence in written texts. The second theme centered on errors that still needed improvement, particularly in grammar, translation from Filipino to English, construction of strong thesis statements, sentence flow, and organization of ideas; some learners also expressed difficulty editing and revising their work, suggesting a continuing need for guided and sustained practice.

In terms of additional learning needs, coded responses consistently pointed to the need for more model essays and sample texts, focused grammar and vocabulary activities, additional practice in pre-writing and outlining, collaborative writing and revision tasks, and technology-supported or interactive learning materials.

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Document Analysis of Students' Written Outputs

Table 4. ***Mean Scores of Students' Written Outputs (Performance Task 2) by Section and Group***

Section	Group	Description	N	Mean Score
Rosario	Group 1	Experimental Group	10	15.80
Rosario	Group 2	Comparison Group	10	15.00
Tagaytay	Group 1	Experimental Group	10	14.50
Tagaytay	Group 2	Comparison Group	10	15.00
Trece Martires	Group 1	Experimental Group	10	16.10
Trece Martires	Group 2	Comparison Group	10	16.00

Table 5. ***General Mean Scores of Students' Written Outputs (Performance Task 2)***

Group	Description	N	General Mean Score
Group 1	Experimental Group (with Textual Analysis Intervention)	30	15.47
Group 2	Comparison Group (without Intervention)	30	15.33

Table 4 presents the mean scores of students' expository essays in Performance Task 2 across the three sections. The experimental groups obtained comparable or slightly higher mean scores than the comparison groups in most sections. As shown in Table 5, the experimental group's general mean score (15.47) was slightly higher than that of the comparison group (15.33), suggesting that learners exposed to the textual analysis intervention performed somewhat better in organizing and developing their expository essays, particularly in applying coherence and cohesion strategies.

Textual Analysis Worksheets and Writing Tasks

Table 6. ***Mean Scores of Worksheets by Section and Group***

Section	Group	WS 1 (9)	WS 2 (5)	WS 3 (15)	WS 4 (15)	Overall Mean
Rosario	Group 1 (Experimental)	7.6	4.2	12.6	12.9	9.83
Rosario	Group 2 (Comparison)	7.1	3.9	11.8	12.0	8.70

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Section	Group	WS 1 (9)	WS 2 (5)	WS 3 (15)	WS 4 (15)	Overall Mean
Tagaytay	Group 1 (Experimental)	7.3	4.0	12.1	12.4	8.95
Tagaytay	Group 2 (Comparison)	6.9	3.8	11.4	11.6	8.43
Trece Martires	Group 1 (Experimental)	7.9	4.4	13.2	13.4	9.73
Trece Martires	Group 2 (Comparison)	7.5	4.1	12.6	12.8	9.25

Table 7. ***General Mean Scores of Worksheets (All Sections)***

Group	Description	WS1 Mean	WS2 Mean	WS3 Mean	WS4 Mean	Overall Mean
Group 1	Experimental Group	7.60	4.20	12.63	12.90	9.83
Group 2	Comparison Group	7.17	3.93	11.93	12.13	8.79

The experimental groups consistently obtained higher mean scores than the comparison groups across the four worksheets, with the difference most noticeable in Worksheet 3 and Worksheet 4, which require learners to analyze and revise texts for coherence and cohesion. This suggests that the textual analysis intervention helped learners better understand how ideas are organized and connected within a paragraph, aligning with the results of Performance Task 2, where the experimental group also demonstrated slightly higher overall writing performance.

Teacher Observation Notes

Rosario Section. Textual analysis activities positively influenced learners' engagement and writing development. Most engagement indicators were consistently observed, with learners actively participating in tasks, asking and answering questions, and collaborating during group activities. Improvement in coherence was evident as learners identified the main idea, arranged ideas logically, and produced organized paragraphs, while cohesion skills were observed through the use of transition words, pronouns, and synonyms. Learners analyzed model texts before writing, used outlining strategies, and revised outputs based on teacher feedback, though some difficulties remained in writing topic sentences, using transitions, maintaining grammar, and translating ideas from Filipino to English. All learners completed the required output.

Tagaytay Section. Learners actively participated in discussions, analyzed model texts, and collaborated during group work, identifying the main idea and organizing supporting details logically when revising their expository essays. Cohesion indicators — transition words, pronouns, and synonyms — were observed, along with model-text analysis, outlining, and revision after feedback. Some learners experienced difficulties organizing ideas, writing topic sentences, and translating ideas into English, slowing pacing during the activity, though all learners completed their writing tasks.

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Trece Martires Section. Learners actively participated in analyzing model texts, answering guide questions, and collaborating during group activities, with most engagement indicators consistently observed. Improvement in coherence was evident as learners identified the main idea, arranged ideas logically, and produced more organized paragraphs, and cohesion was evident through transition words, pronouns, and synonyms. Although pacing was relatively faster, some learners still required assistance translating ideas into English and applying correct grammar; all learners completed their outputs.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 8. ***Summary of Findings for Each Hypothesis***

Hypothesis	Result	Basis
H1 (Primary)	Supported	Paired-sample t-test: $t = -16.83$, $p < 0.05$; experimental mean gain (4.80) exceeded comparison mean gain (3.30).
H2 (Supporting)	Supported	Document analysis identified recurring issues — weak topic sentences, improper transitions, grammatical inaccuracies, and difficulty organizing ideas.
H3 (Applied)	Supported	Synthesis of survey, worksheet, and observation data indicated learners benefited from model texts, guided worksheets, and structured writing tasks, informing new instructional resources.

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Discussion

Discussion of Findings

Consistent with the pretest–posttest results, learners in both groups improved, but the experimental group demonstrated significantly greater improvement, indicating a positive effect of textual analysis on students' writing skills, consistent with prior research on explicit writing instruction (Hyland, 2003; Graham & Perin, 2007). The worksheet results similarly showed that the experimental group obtained higher mean scores, particularly on tasks requiring analysis and revision for coherence and cohesion, suggesting that textual analysis activities helped learners understand these constructs more concretely (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Derewianka, 2011).

The document analysis of students' expository essays showed a modest advantage for the experimental group (M = 15.47) over the comparison group (M = 15.33), reflecting somewhat better organization of ideas and use of cohesive devices (Hyland, 2007; Flower & Hayes, 1981). Survey results indicated that most learners agreed that textual analysis improved their understanding of how ideas and sentences connect in writing (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), and open-ended responses revealed that outlining, identifying thesis statements, and analyzing model texts were the activities learners found most helpful for organizing their ideas (Graham & Harris, 2018). Teacher observation notes corroborated these findings: learners actively participated in textual analysis activities and showed improvement in identifying main ideas, organizing paragraphs, and revising their writing, consistent with sociocultural and formative-feedback perspectives on learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Hattie, 2009).

Despite these gains, learners continued to experience challenges in grammar usage, vocabulary development, and translating ideas from Filipino to English (Nation, 2001; Ferris, 2002). This pattern — improved awareness of coherence and cohesion alongside persistent language-mechanics difficulties — suggests that textual analysis is most effective when combined with continuous practice, scaffolded instruction, and explicit teaching of language mechanics, rather than treated as a stand-alone intervention.

As a teacher-researcher, this study underscores the value of reflective and responsive teaching practice. The consistently positive engagement observed during textual analysis activities across all three sections suggests that collaborative learning, guided questioning, and formative feedback can deepen learners' understanding of writing concepts. Refining the intervention with additional model texts, differentiated worksheets, and writing workshops may extend these gains and provide learners with more opportunities to practice and revise their work.

Implications

These findings suggest that integrating textual analysis as an instructional strategy can meaningfully support the development of students' writing skills, particularly coherence, cohesion, and the organization of ideas in prose writing. Guided analysis of model texts and structured writing activities helped learners better understand how ideas connect logically within a paragraph, implying that textual analysis activities may enhance students' ability to analyze text structures and transfer these concepts to their own writing.

The results also imply that scaffolded learning materials — worksheets, model texts, and guided questions — help learners develop critical reading and writing skills by giving them structured opportunities to examine text organization before applying the same strategies independently. The increased engagement observed during textual analysis activities further indicates that interactive and collaborative learning strategies can deepen learners' understanding of writing concepts.

At the same time, the persistence of difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, and translation implies that writing instruction should combine textual analysis with explicit language instruction, regular writing practice, and constructive feedback to more fully strengthen students' writing competence. Finally, the findings imply that teachers can benefit from reflective, evidence-based teaching practices: by analyzing students' written outputs and

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identifying their learning needs, teachers can design targeted interventions that address specific writing difficulties and improve learning outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study found that textual analysis, as an explicit instructional strategy grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics, significantly improved Grade 8 learners' coherence and cohesion in prose writing relative to conventional instruction. Learners exposed to the intervention achieved significantly greater gains from pretest to posttest, performed better on writing worksheets and an expository essay task, and reported high levels of engagement and perceived benefit. At the same time, learners continued to need support with grammar accuracy, vocabulary, and English-to-Filipino translation, indicating that textual analysis is best implemented alongside, rather than in place of, explicit language instruction.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

For teachers. Integrate textual analysis strategies into writing lessons on coherence and cohesion, using model texts, guided questions, and structured worksheets to help learners understand how ideas are logically connected within a paragraph.

For learners. Engage in more writing practice and revision activities — outlining ideas, identifying topic sentences, and applying transition words — to further develop the ability to organize and connect ideas in compositions.

For school administrators. Support the implementation of innovative instructional strategies such as textual analysis by providing teachers with professional development opportunities, instructional resources, and collaborative learning environments.

For curriculum developers. Incorporate more activities that develop coherence and cohesion in writing — textual analysis tasks, collaborative editing, and scaffolded writing exercises — within English learning modules.

For future researchers. Explore the use of textual analysis in other writing genres or grade levels, and investigate additional instructional strategies that can further enhance students' writing competence and language proficiency.

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