Exophoric and Endophoric Awareness

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Abstract
This research aims to shed light on the impact of exophoric and endophoric instruction on the comprehension (decoding) skills, writing (encoding skills), and linguistic awareness of English as Foreign Language learners. In this line, a mixed qualitative quantitative approach was conducted over a period of fifteen weeks on sixty English major students enrolled in their first year at the Lebanese University, fifth branch. The sixty participants were divided into two groups (30 experimental) that benefited from instruction on exophoric and endophoric relations and (30 control) that did not have the opportunity to study referents in the designated period of the research. The participants sat for a reading and writing pretest at the beginning of the study; and they sat again for the same reading and writing assessment at the end of the study. The results of the pre and post tests for both groups were analyzed via SPSS program and findings were as follows: hypothesis one *stating that students who are aware of endophoric and exophoric relations are likely to achieve better results in decoding a text than are their peers who receive no referential instruction, was accepted with significant findings.* Hypothesis two *stating that students who are aware of endophoric and exophoric relations are likely to perform better in writing than their peers who receive no referential instruction ,* was accepted with significant findings. Hypothesis three stating that, *students who learn endophoric exophoric relations become aware of referents and their linguistic function, wa*s also asserted with significant findings. The study answered the research questions can endophoric and exophoric awareness influence the reading comprehension and writing structure of English as foreign language learners? Does instruction on referents boost learners' awareness on the linguistic function of endophoric and exphoric relations? Recommendations for teachers, learners, curriculum designers, and future research have been incorporated.

Keywords: decoding, encoding, exophora, endophora, referents, linguistic awareness

Introduction
English foreign language (EFL) learners encounter many obstacles when they are required to process English texts and to produce ones. Though difficulty in comprehending a text in a foreign language cannot be measured and quantified, linguists and psycholinguists have attempted to correlate this difficulty to various factors. To begin with, Klare (1963) categorizes readability characteristics into four broad subdivisions: word length, word familiarity, grammatical classifications, and sentence length. According to Mcgeown (2013) readability of a text refers to the ability to comprehend a text and produce the same ideas in one's own words. Halliday and Hasan (1976) refer a text's difficulty to one or more of the following: graphic organization, rhetorical devices, vocabulary, syntax, grammar, rhetorical involvement in the text, and reader's attitude and self- confidence.

According to Klare (1963) the linguistic meaning of an utterance can be subdivided into two levels: the lexical, or word level, and the structural, or the sentence level. Lack of clarity in one of the levels causes difficulty in perceiving an utterance. The same idea has been adopted by Barkute (2005) who considered that a text is constituted of semantically and syntactically connected elements and it is this connection that either facilitates comprehending a text or obstructs it. Fraser (1990) believes that the reason why learners do not succeed in comprehending a reading passage, is their lack of proficiency in linking the sentences of a text to one another, on one hand, and to the whole text on the other. From this perspective the importance of referents emerges since presence of referents in a text connects its part together by linking them to their references. Therefore, referents, which play a role in connecting the elements of a text, are crucial when decoding a piece of reading comprehension to clarify the vague antecedents that the pronouns or the other types of references indicate. Reference as defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976) is when

> the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other in the sense that it can't be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens… and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text (p.4).

Referential information is therefore, fetched information and reference signals the existence of a specific thing in a text which is turned to in order to perceive another part of the text.

Thompson (2004) reaffirmed Halliday and Hasan by remarking that,

> reference is the set of grammatical resources that allow the speaker to indicate whether something is being repeated from somewhere earlier in the text (that is to say we have already been told about it) or whether it has not yet appeared in the text (that is to say it is new to us) (p.180).

Reference in texts comes under two divisions: exophora or outer reference and endophora or inner reference. Exophora refers to linguistic expressions that are used to refer to situational elements that are non- verbal and excluded from the text but not from the context ; their absence may affect the deeper comprehension of the reader because there are some elements that are not found in the written text. Endophora, on the other hand, or inner reference, is linguistic expressions that are verbal and included in the text. The presence of these elements is essential as they give clarity to

the text and join its parts together; this assists in comprehending the text or even in writing a meaningful message. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of teaching the exophoric and endophoric relations not only on the comprehension skills but also on the writing skills of English major students enrolled in their first year at the Lebanese University.

Statement of the Problem

Processing a text in a foreign language seems harder for students than processing the same text in their native language; nevertheless, this hardship seems sharper when EFL learners are asked to produce their own text, or to write in a foreign language (Campbell, 1999). It came to the researcher's attention that students enrolled for a BA degree in English language struggle in decoding and encoding an English text, and after investigation the researcher came to a realization that those learners are unaware of referents and cohesive devices in texts. In this realm, the study aims to investigate the effect of teaching endophoric and exophoric relations on the comprehension and writing skills of EFL learners. Linguists and psycholinguists have proposed many different explanations for learners' difficulty to encode and decode an English text starting with understanding the syntactic structure of the words, moving to perceiving the semantic features of the sentences, and ending in decoding the pragmatic function of the text as a whole (Nazari, 2003). A great obstacle in such decoding is the readers' inability to identify referents, perceive their meaning and function. This gives rise to a major problem for EFL learners where they become unaware of the semantic relations between words, clauses, sentences, ideas, and even paragraphs within one text. The lack of awareness of referents poses hindrances on reading comprehension where "the reader is not enhanced with all components of a picture to ensure its understanding" (Hill, 1988, p.65). In contrast, when learners become aware of referential relations, particularly endophora and exophora, their reading comprehension ability is boosted. Furthermore, many EFL learners struggle at expressing their ideas fluently and smoothly in a language which is not their native tongue. A possible reason might be the lack of writers' ability to connect ideas and relate different parts of the writing together. In a word, lack of awareness of endophoric and exophoric relations might be the problem hindering adequate comprehension and writing skills of the subjects of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether studying the lexical referents namely exophoric and endophoric relations can have an impact on the reading and writing skills of the subjects. Therefore, the study seeks to investigate whether mastering the two types of referents, endophoric and exophoric expressions can help in improving comprehension and writing skills for students. It is a study that will illustrate hindrances learners of English as a foreign Language encounter in reading comprehension and in writing an English text due to their inability to establish a link "between linguistic forms and what they stand for in the universe of discourse" (Martin 2000, p. 43). This will be done by raising learners' awareness to meaning of linking words within the context of discourse and to the syntactical structure of sentences that make a unified text, namely endophoric or textual reference which can be subdivided into anaphora (reference to a preceding entity) and cataphora (reference to a following entity) (Yule, 1979), and exophoric referents: situational reference that does not name anything but points that reference must be constructed in the context of the situation (Yule, 1979). Besides, the research attempts to find a link between the writing skills of learners when they learn referential devices and their ability to

connect their ideas and to express them efficiently and at ease. This can result in having better understanding of the texts that they encounter during their daily studies or during their tests.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. Can endophoric and exophoric awareness influence the reading comprehension of EFL learners?
2. Can endophoric and exophoric awareness influence the writing structure (production level of learning a foreign language) of EFL learners?
3. Does instruction on referents boost learners' awareness on the linguistic function of endophoric and exphoric relations?

Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses are formulated.

1. Students who are aware of endophoric and exophoric relations are likely to achieve better results in decoding a text than are their peers who receive no referential instruction.
2. Students who receive referential instruction will perform better in writing than their peers who receive no similar instruction.
3. Students who learn endophoric exophoric relations become aware of referents and their function.
4.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terminology is used in the study:

1. Anaphora: the use of a word referring back to a word used earlier in a text or conversation, to avoid repetition, for example the pronouns *he*, *she*, *it*, and *they* and the verb *do* in *I like it and so do they* (Yule, 1979).
2. Antecedent: an expression (word, phrase, clause, etc.) that gives its meaning to a pro-form (pronoun, pro-verb, pro-adverb, etc.). A proform takes its meaning from its antecedent, *e.g. Susan arrived late because traffic held her* up $(Merriam\text{-}Webster, 2011)$.
3. Cataphora: a word or phrase (as a pronoun) that takes its reference from a following word or phrase (Yule, 1979).
4. Decoding: Decoding is the ability to apply knowledge of words to correctly understand ideas $(Merriam\text{-}Webster, 2011)$.
5. EFL: English as a foreign language where English is studied by nonnative speakers living in a non-English- speaking environment (Curran, 1976). The EFL classroom is specifically catered to learners of a common native language and culture (Bell,2011).
6. Endophoria: textual reference which can be subdivided into anaphora (reference to a preceding entity) and cataphora (reference to a following entity) (Yule, 1979).
7. Exophora: situational reference that does not name anything but points that reference must be constructed in the context of the situation (Yule, 1979).
8. Syntactic relations: grammatical relations that refer to functional relationships between constituents in a sentence (Lyons,1977).

Literature Review
Text and Cohesion

Though linguists have different opinions about what makes a good text, they do agree that any written or spoken message is considered a text. Therefore, in linguistics, text refers to any spoken or written passage that form a unified whole (Ionell,2011). In other words, sentences that are related to each other and that carry within them a semantic relation are considered a text. As Halliday and Hasan (1976) clarify before that a "text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning" (p. 2). A text is not defined by its size; for it can be short or long as long as it provides a purposeful message. Cook (2001) puts it as such "discourse is language used for communication" (p. 6). According to Anderson & Anderson (1997), "a text is created by putting words together to communicate meaning. The choice of words will depend on the purpose and context in creating a text" (p.7).

This idea was expressed fully by Halliday and Hasan (1976) who considered that a "text is a term used in linguistics to refer to any passage- spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole." (p. 1). Sine a text forms a unified whole, it is a representation of semantic and syntactic connected elements. Accordingly, comprehending a text or decoding one and producing a text or encoding one demands skills in perceiving the semantic and syntactic relations which hold this text together. According to Nash-Webber (1977), to understand a text one must delve into the connective devices that hold a text together since comprehending single sentences are absurd in creating a well comprehended message in language.

Richards & Schmidt (2002) explain that this relationship of text components may be found in separate sentences or within the elements of the same sentence. Moreover, Malmkjar (2004) states that "linguistic items connected to each other must follow certain grammatical rules and specific sequence in order to be meaningful and to create cohesion" (p. 543).

Brown and Yule (1989) summed up the function of cohesion in a text as the inter relation between sentences that make those sentences meaningful and purposeful (p.191). The interrelation between sentences may be attained through the usage of certain linguistic elements which indicate the relation between different propositions in the text to generate cohesion. For Brown and Yule (1983, p. 191) text cohesive relationships are made "where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another." However, discourse coherence relates more to the 'sense' a reader makes of a text in semantic terms and whether it displays overall unity. Shiro (1994) clarifies that determining if a text is coherent or not results "to a large extent from the reader's ability to infer the relations beyond sentence level that keep the text together" (p.34).

Therefore, text and cohesion are interrelated terms in which one indicates the presence of the other and in order to have cohesion in the text many elements should be available on sentence and text level and on the receiver level. The reader, who is the receiver, will receive the message and will determine the degree of connectivity from the clarity of the message behind the language in use. This draws to linguists' attention the role of reference in determining a meaningful text.

Reference

Brown and Yule (1989) refer to the linguistic elements that make interrelation between sentences as cohesive markers and they specify reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical

relationships, and explicit markers of conjunctive relations as different types of cohesive markers. The importance of reference for linguists lies in the fact that referential devices can have an impact on understanding a text and on a learner's ability to write a meaningful one. Moreover, Halliday and Hasan (1976) present reference as one of the four grammatical devices that can give cohesion in a text besides lexical cohesion. Goldman and Wiley (2004) define reference, as "the existence of specific thing which is turned to'' (p.17), and the term reference as explained by Lyons (1977)

'is the relationship between an expression and what the expression refers to in a specific occurrence of its verbal or written communication; it is the concept which reconciles between the word or expression and the referent, and the term referent stands for any object or situation in the outer world that is recognized through an expression or a word" (p.76).
 The linguistic items that are found in any language and have the tendency of relating sentences or texts are not semantically interpreted for their own meaning, but they are used to make a reference for an item, and they are studied for their function in the sentence. These items are instructions that indicate the presence of information that should be gotten back from the text or even the context (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

In grammatical analysis, Crystal (2003) mentions that reference is "a term often used to state a relationship of identity which exists between grammatical units, e.g. a pronoun refers to a noun or noun phrase" (p.407). Thompson (2004) states that "reference is the set of grammatical resources that allow the speaker to indicate whether something is being repeated from somewhere earlier in the text (i.e. we have already been told about it), or whether it has not yet appeared in the text (i.e. it is known to us)" (p.180). Reference is the relationship between persons, things, and positions and they are indicated mostly by the nominal group or the adverbial group and their other appearances as personals, demonstratives or comparatives at different positions in the text.

The Linguistic Function of References
Brown and Yule (1983) elucidate the real function of reference as "an action on the part of the speaker or the writer in any discourse or any text" (p.27). The reference describes what the discourse marker is doing "not the relationship which exists between one sentence or proposition and another" (p. 27-8). McCarthy (1991) affirms that the concept of discourse segments as "functional units, rather than concentrating on sentences…and to see the writer/speaker as faced with a number of strategic choices as to how to relate segments to one another and how to present them to the receiver" (p, 37). Reference items can refer to segments of discourse or entire circumstances rather than to any particular entity in that situation. Fox (1987) declares that successful reference can be established through the use of pronouns for example if the referent is "in focus, in consciousness, textually evoked or high in topicality" and where it "can be operationally defined in terms of the discourse structure" (p.139-40).
 According to Thompson (2004) and to Halliday and Hasan (1976), the two general categories of reference are exophora and endophora. To point outwards the text is known as exophoric reference which presents the language pinpointing to the external context. Whereas to point inward the text is known as endophoric reference which links the message to its textual context; it contains the meaning that is repetitive in the text. These cohesive endophoric references are divided into two parts: anaphora and cataphora. Anaphoric reference is pointing backwards in the text, and this type is used more frequently. The cataphoric reference is less commonly used

when compared with the anaphoric reference because it points forward to the text which means that the referent is not mentioned yet and the speaker or the writer will specify it later.
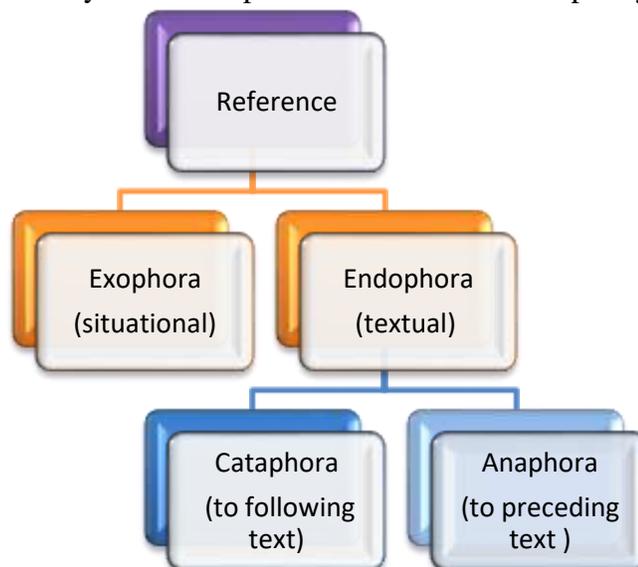

Figure 1 **Referents Classification Halliday & Hasan (1976, P. 33)**

Exophoric and endophoric reference include a system of instruction to retrieve important information that helps in explaining the set of words in a discourse and gives cohesion to a text (Halliday and Hasan 1976). Martin (1992) believes that the identity of the exophoric reference unit is realized from the environment outside the text. However, the endophora reference identity will be discovered from the text itself; this referential meaning retrieved from references is what makes them cohesive elements. When the same linguistic element is used references will give coherence; however, the reference element, if not pinpointing any item in the text, will be meaningless. Therefore, it is quite essential for every referential item to have a presupposition to covey a meaningful sense (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), situational reference is preceding any type of reference to the text. This is because situational reference can have historical priority or can include logical sense, so it is plausible to have situational reference preceding text reference. "In this perspective, situational reference would appear as a prior form" (p.32). Halliday & Hasan (1991) associate exophora with context of situation because it is non-verbal and is not presented in the text and associate endophora with text because it is verbal and situated within the text.

Exophora

As it was clarified above, reference has two major categories, exophora and endophora. Starting with exophora, "it is a term used by some linguists to refer to the process or result of a linguistic unit referring directly (i.e. deictically) to the extralinguistic situation accompanying an utterance, e.g. *there, that, her*," (Crystal, 2003 p. 178). It is a situational group of reference mainly associated with the context of the speech, conversation, letter…etc. Its referent may be anything

related to the outside world of the text that can be directly seen, or that is clearly known by the speaker/ writer and the receiver.

Endophora

The second major category of references is endophora. It is considered a textual reference which connects main parts of the text together. Endophora as explained by Halliday and Hasan (1976) is the umbrella term that encompasses anaphora and cataphora. Endophora is characterized as having antecedent "within the text" (p.33). However, this term is not widely used and it is more common to use anaphora to include both terms of endophora: anaphora and cataphora (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). They explain that "anaphora is the relation between an anaphor and antecedent, where the interpretation of the anaphor is determined via that of the antecedent and the antecedent should be a segment of the text from which the anaphor derives its interpretation" (p.1453).

Crystal (2003) also divides endophoric relations into anaphoric and cataphoric types. Their major role of endophoric relations is to "relate referents to their references within a text and to make different parts of the text connected by their ability to retrieve the referential meaning or the identity of the references mentioned within the text" (p.169).

In linguistic studies, more attention is given to endophoric relations in its sub-divisions than to exophoric ones due to its essential influence on creating text cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 1976).

Anaphora

Anaphora is one type of endophoric reference which is pointing backward towards a concept or word presented in a previous sentence (Crystal, 2003). Anaphora is co reference of one expression with its antecedent. The antecedent provides the information necessary for the expression's interpretation. This is often understood as an expression "referring" back to the antecedent. The etymology of anaphora, as presented in dictionary.com, comes from Greek *ana*- to bring back, repeat and –*phora* akin to *phérein* to carry, bring. Thus, anaphoric references remind the reader of information previously read, and according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), " anaphora is the simplest way of referring back in the text and keeping the identity of the particular thing or class of things being referred to"(p.54).

Cataphora

Most linguists use the term anaphor to indicate both anaphora and cataphora because both are considered references to certain linguistic items in the text. Moreover, both have the phoric tendency of relating references and satisfying presuppositions. Thus, both groups have cohesive property. However, cataphora and anaphora are not the same in the direction of reference; for wheras anaphora refers backward, cataphora refers forward. As Crystal (2003) puts it "cataphora is a term used by some grammarians for the process or result of a linguistic unit referring forward to another unit" (p.68). If an anaphora refers back to something previously mentioned, a cataphora refers to something not yet mentioned as in this example:

Because *she* studied really hard, *Sara* aced her test.

Therefore, the first thing to detect here is that the pronoun comes first. That is what distinguishes an anaphor from a cataphor. Actually, cataphors are sometimes called "backward anaphors" because of the direction of reference within the sentence or utterance. So, an anaphor looks back (up) for the noun that it refers to, while a cataphor looks down (ahead).

Effect of Exophoric and Endophoric Referents on Reading Skills
         According to Miller (1982), a reader has to construct semantic representation of a given text by applying parsing to the sentences to be able to understand the text. In other words, the reader has to put the meaning of individual sentences together to understand the general meaning of the whole discourse. This process of capturing the whole meaning of a discourse by putting together all the individual semantic representations is called integration. Clark and Haviland (1977) reveal that there is a distinction between given and new information between the speaker and the hearer; the given information is the knowledge which the speaker believes that the listener knows and accepts as true, while the new information is the knowledge which the speaker believes that the receiver does not know. According to them, integration of the information in a discourse occurs in three stages: computing the new and given information, memory searching for antecedent for the given information, and then adding new information to memory. In the example, *the beer was warm*, the reader will isolate the given information from the new and then start searching in the memory for antecedent of the beer. "If the reader does not find the information in the memory, bridging between what is found in the memory and the given information will take place as in *Horace got some picnic supplies out of the car*. *The beer was warm.* It is easier after reading the paired sentences to comprehend *The beer was warm* if it is preceded by *Horace got some beer out of the car* than *Horace got some picnic supplies out of the car* because bridging takes time" (Clark and Haviland 1977, p.21). Besides, separating the old and the new information is not an easy task even though there are many linguistic devises which can help to determine such types of information as the definite determiner "the" which precedes a noun phrase and makes it definite; however, this does not happen all the times. Another way to discover old from new information in simple declarative sentences is to simply answer wh- questions as "who", "what", and "what happened", so the most obvious answers for *Olivia kissed Oscar* are either *Olivia kissed someone*, *Olivia did something* or *Something happened.* "In brief, to determine the given information for *it was Olivia who kissed Oscar,* replace the Wh- word in the question *who kissed Oscar* with *X;* to determine the new information, find the answer assigns to that X" (p.8). The main difficulty for a reader is more than specifying new from given information; it is integrating these two types. Recent researches on language comprehension indicate text is first stored in the short-term memory and then integrated clause by clause to the long term memory. When the discourse takes short time in the short memory, the reader grasps it easier.

         Therefore, Miller (1982) states that information can be moved to the long term memory when an antecedent is found to connect given and new information. Thus, it is for welfare of the reader to make this classification quickly and it is better for the writer to make it easy for the reader to do so. From this point, considering pronouns as linguistic devices which achieve cohesion would help the readers to facilitate connecting information. This can happen by simple matching to find the antecedent of a reoccurring noun phrase while in a more complex syntax; however, any kind of mechanism could be used to determine nominees of the pronouns. The writer may use anaphoric pronouns instead of repeated noun phrases not only for stylistic variation, but mainly for

establishing integration. This is because nominalized noun phrases may introduce participants, things, phenomena…etc but cannot serve anaphorically as pronouns. It would be reasonable for a listener to try linguistically to attach information in a pronominalized clause with previous text content instantly while applying less integration with a repeated noun phrase. Thus, readers and writers may prefer pronouns over repeated noun phrases because they facilitate integration. Pronouns tell the readers when to integrate meanwhile noun phrases do not function like that. Therefore, the integration should occur directly after a pronoun is encountered. This happens with anaphora while with cataphora this integration between the pronoun and the antecedent should be delayed until more information is gathered to decide if the pronoun refers to this antecedent or to another.

In the light of the above, words or phrases are linked to other words or phrases in connected sentences by the use of cohesive ties. A pronoun which is an anaphoric element is used as a word that refers back to another word or words. These words which are considered as cohesive links in texts facilitate comprehension and reading. These elements help in comprehending the messages of the producer to enhance the communicative function of the used language. In the mind of the receiver of the discourse, a text is coherent and all the pronouns used in it should refer back to certain noun phrases, so the main role of the reader is to determine what the pronoun stands for because this facilitates in comprehending the piece of discourse (Brown & Yule, 1983).

When pronouns are considered from linguistic point of view, they will be examples of expressions used to refer to stated entities. Therefore, the antecedent-anaphor relation is structured between a full nominal expression and its pronominal expression. (Brown &Yule, 1983).

Effect of Exophoric And Endophoric Referents On Writing Skills

According to Bartlett (1984) any interpretation of a written text requires the reader to keep track of the new information; moreover the reader has to construct characters, objects, and events in organized mental representations that aid in identifying new and old information. Using clear linguistic devices to connect the text together makes the decoding and encoding process less demanding on the reader's side since it eliminates ambiguity hovering around the text. It is the actual wording of the text which makes the language easy or difficult for the readers to depict the right connections. The writer makes choices according to how to stage the information where to start in presenting the message according to McCarthy (1991). The real problem that young writers encounter is their lack of knowledge of how anaphoric and non- anaphoric devices function in specific contexts and the role of the referential language in text structure (Bartlett, 1984). Many writers are unaware that the English language is the richest in anaphoric devices as pronouns, definite articles, demonstratives and lexical repetitions (Halliday and Hasan 1976). Thus, understanding a certain text is highly influenced by understanding the referents in a certain context. When referents of the same gender are found in the same context, the choice of same gender pronouns (referents) can be confusing. In the example, *one day two girls set out for the park. She had a bike, she can refer to any of the girls.*
Another factor that should be considered is the complexity of the text separating between the anaphora or cataphora and its last proposed referent (Clancy, 1980).

Writers' choice of words is mainly influenced by the writer's knowledge of discourse rules as anaphoric and non-anaphoric pronouns and definite articles and readers' biases in their interpretations. As Clancy (1980) mentions pronouns replace nouns for subject referents and when the subject is changed maintaining the pronoun is no longer possible. Therefore, adult anaphoric language choice is multifunctional, so writers should provide readers with signals to indicate point of view, thematic organization, and text structure. Moreover, skilled writers should include varied referencing devices based on referential context and thematic orientation to produce more coherent writing. In a word, using inappropriate linguistic referents, anaphora and cataphora, without taking into consideration contextual features as number, age and gender of interacting characters may hinder clarity and trigger ambiguity in the text; such ambiguity is rendered as weakness in writing (Bartlett & Scribner, 1982).

Methodology of the Research
Research Design
The research is an experimental study where "a relationship is studied in the first way, starting from the cause to establish the effects" (Kumar, 2005, p. 100). The impact of instructing exophoric and endophoric referents, and the effects on reading and writing on English major students at the Lebanese University, fifth branch, is investigated.

Subjects
The subjects of the study are sixty undergraduates enrolled in first year of BA program in English Language and Literature at the Lebanese University. The researcher divided the subjects to two groups: experimental benefiting from referents instruction, and control group not exposed to the treatment period. The study took place in the fall semester of academic year 2016-2017. It started on November 14, 2016 and ended on March 28, 2017.

Instruments
The study is conducted by using pretest, posttest, and a questionnaire. Comprehension pretest (Appendix A) and writing pretest (Appendix B) are specially prepared to test the subjects' ability to understand and use endophora and exophora referents. The sentences and paragraphs are selected to reflect the different types and functions of references. The questions are designed to test participants' ability to comprehend or to utilize pronouns. This is because there are no special tests formulated to test participants' ability to connect endophoric and exophoric referents in recognition level (comprehension) and production (writing). Also in the writing pretest, all the material is used from SAT questions and from Halliday and Hasan (1976) examples about different types of references. A likert scale questionnaire is prepared to measure the subjects' awarness of endophoric and exophoric relation in general, and their presence in the text.

Procedure

The procedure of the study is summarized in figure 2

Figure 2 **Study Design**

The data designed by this research were submitted to a t-test and the most recent version of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version.

Results and Discussions

A T test was conducted between the experimental and control groups' comprehension pre-tests and posttests:
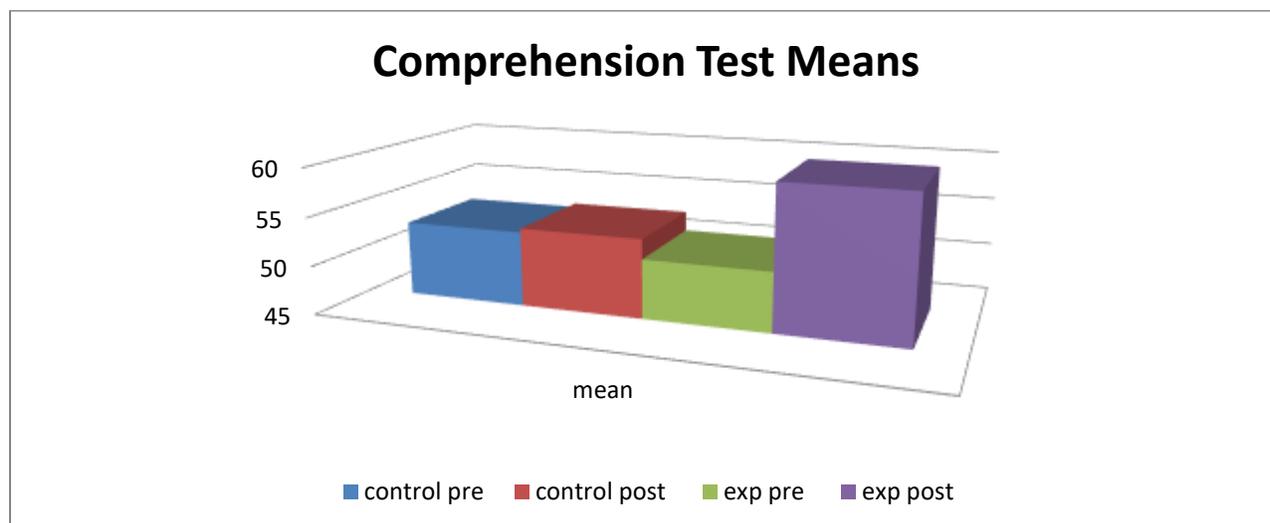

Figure 3 **Comprehension Test Means**

Figure 3 shows that the mean of the comprehension pre test is similar between the control and the experimental group; the experimental group received instruction on exophric and endophoric

relations in the treatment period while the control group did not. In order to investigate the effect of referents' instruction on student's comprehension achievement the same test was conducted to both groups after the treatment period. The means of both groups were compared and a paired t-test, using SPSS, was applied. The mean scores are statistically compared to see if the difference between means is statistically significant. The p-value was calculated then compared to the alpha level "α-level", which is 0.05 in educational research studies. When $p< \alpha$, the difference is statistically significant. Hence, there is difference between the results of the pre test and the post test (0.00<0.05) for the experimental group, while there is no significant difference in the results of the pre and the post tests for the control group that did not receive instruction on referents. Thus, it can be inferred that instruction on referents has a positive effect on students' comprehension level, which affirms hypothesis one stating that students who are aware of endophoric and exophoric relations are likely to achieve better results in decoding a text than are their peers who receive no referential instruction.

A T test was conducted between the experimental and control groups' writing pre-tests and post tests
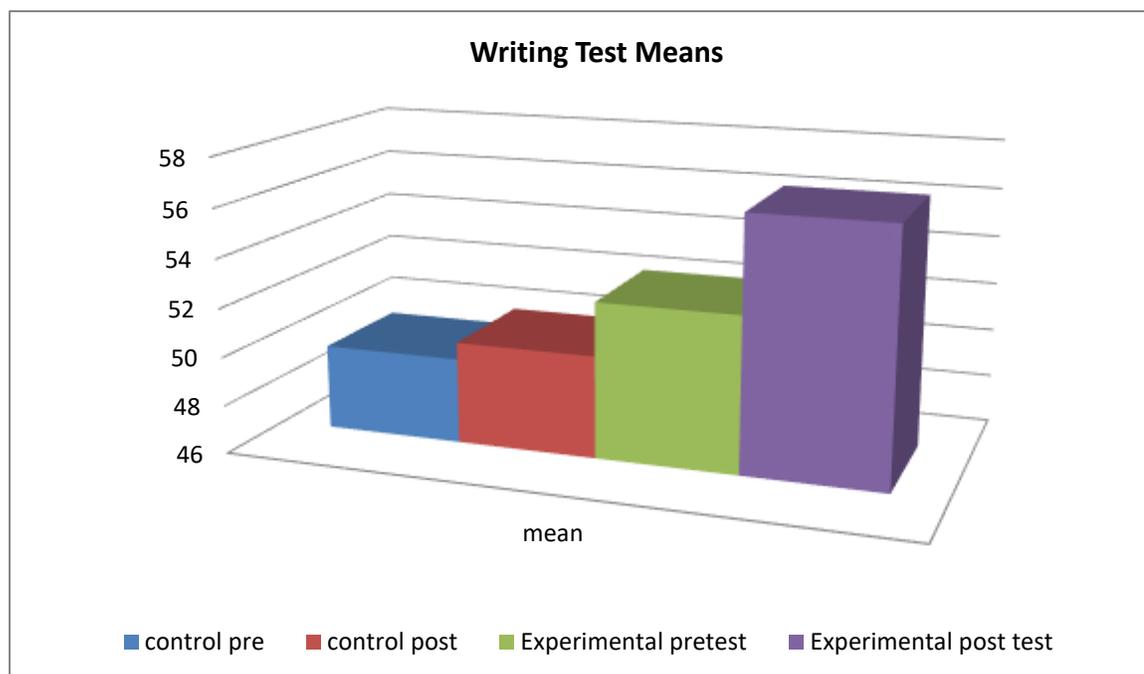

Figure 4 **Writing Means (pre & post)**

Figure 4 shows that the mean of the writing pretest is similar between the control and the experimental group; the experimental group received instruction on exophoric and endophoric relations in the treatment period while the control group did not. In order to investigate the effect of referents' instruction on student's writing achievement the same test was conducted to both groups after the treatment period. The mean scores are statistically compared to see if the difference between means is statistically significant. The p-value was calculated then compared to the alpha level "α-level", which is 0.05 in educational research studies. When $p< \alpha$, the difference is statistically significant. Hence, there is difference between the results of the pre test and the post

test (0.01<0.05) in the writing post test of the experimental group. Consequently, it can be inferred that students who receive referential instruction will perform better in writing than their peers who receive no similar instruction.

In order to test hypothesis 3 stating that Students who learn endophoric exophoric relations become aware of referents and their function, a Lickert scale questionnaire was passed to the experimental group to compute the extent of the participants' agreement.
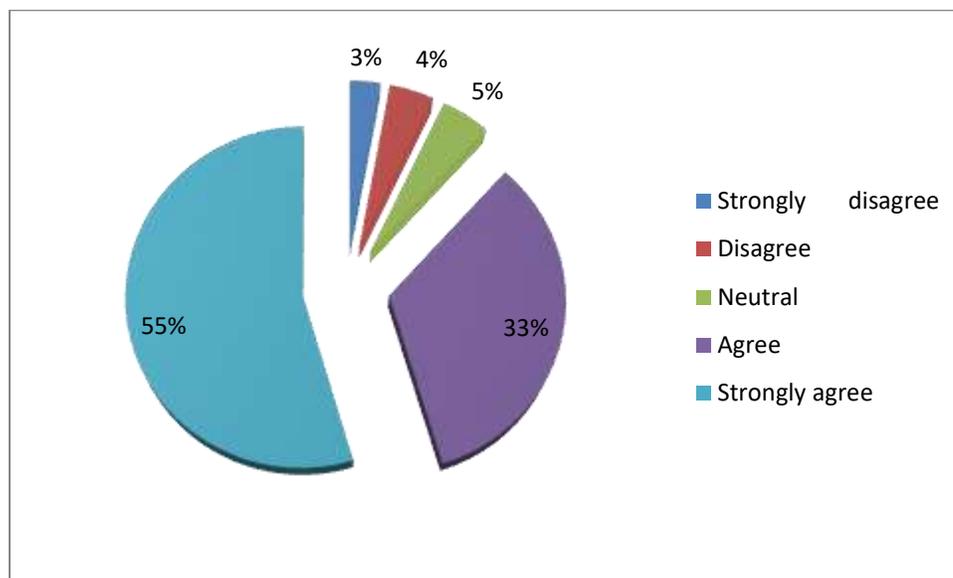
.

Figure 5 **Questionnaire Responses**

Figure 5 reveals that 55 % of the surveyed participants strongly agree, 33% agree, 5% are neutral, 4% disagree, and 3% strongly agree on the items presented in the questionnaire. It is noteworthy to mention that responses of strongly agree represent full awareness on the importance of referents' linguistic function; therefore, 55% which comprises more than half the sample became fully aware of the linguistic function of exophoric and endophoric referents after the instruction period, and since 33% agree which means that 88% of the sample had sharpened awareness on the linguistic function of exophoric and endophoric relations after they were exposed to the treatment period. In a word, hypothesis 3, stating that students who learn endophoric exophoric relations become aware of referents and their function, is also accepted.

Conclusion
In an aim to investigate the impact of exophoric and endophoric instruction on the comprehension (decoding) skills, writing (encoding skills), and linguistic awareness of sixty English major students enrolled in their first year at the Lebanese University, fifth branch,, the study was conducted over a period of fifteen weeks. The experimental group benefited from instruction on exophoric and endophoric relations while the control group did not have the opportunity to study referents in the designated period of the research.

In the light of the above, the study confirmed that there is a positive correlation between instruction of exophoric and endophoric relations and learners' performance on comprehension exams. The exophoric and endophoric relations aid in comprehending a given piece of information in discourse since the reader learns to apply parsing and mapping to sentences and paragraphs (Clark & Haviland 1977). Learning about endophoric and exophoric relations aid in drawing distinction between what the speaker believes that the listener knows and accepts as true and the new information which the speaker believes that the receiver does not know. Accordingly, referents are linguistic devices which achieve cohesion and help readers connect information. Furthermore, anaphoric words are considered as cohesive links in texts that facilitate comprehension and reading. These elements help in comprehending the messages of the producer to enhance the communicative function of the used language (Brown &Yule, 1983).

Moreover, the study reveals that learners who were exposed to instruction on endophoric and exophoric relations performed better in the writing part of the post test. This may be justified by the fact that any interpretation of a written text requires from the reader to keep track of the new information by constructing characters, objects; the writers may make this process less demanding on the reader's side if their language uses clear linguistic devices to connect the text together. The real problem that young writers encounter is their lack of knowledge of how anaphoric and non- anaphoric devices function in specific contexts and the role of the referential language in text structure (Bartlett, 1984). For Clancy (1980), anaphoric language choice is multifunctional, so writers should provide readers with signals to indicate point of view, thematic organization, and text structure. Moreover, if skilled writers include varied referencing devices, their writings become more coherent. If anaphoric devices are not employed in a proper manner, ambiguity prevails the text. Therefore, instruction on endophoric and exophoric referents does have a positive influence on the writing structure of EFL learners.

Eventually, the study reveals that the experimental group that benefited from instruction in exophoric and endophoric relations became aware of the linguistic functions of those referents. 88% of the surveyed sample tended to agree that endophoric and exophoric relations make reading and writing tasks easier; in addition, vague referents make a text incomprehensible which sheds light on the linguistic function of referents in decoding a text; besides, referents give cohesion to a text, and learning about referents contributes in organizing ideas in writing and help in improving sentence structure.

In the light of the above, instruction on exophoric and endophoric referents seems to improve the comprehension and writing skills of EFL learners and to raise their awareness on the linguistic function of those referents.

Recommendations

Teachers need to pursue certain steps to maximize learners' benefit from pragmatic referents which enhance learners' communicative skills when decoding or encoding a text. In this realm, educators can bring into light the linguistic function of referents and their relation with the pre- and post-linguistic structures. Moreover, they can convey how words tend to change meaning when they occur in different contexts, and the impact of pre-existing knowledge of referents on changing the meaning of a text through sharing students' writings and highlighting mistakes in referents. On the other hand, EFL and ESL learners should participate in tasks that portray how

vague referents can produce ambiguous writing and incomprehensible passages as ambiguous newspaper titles and word puns caused by vague referents. Moreover, to optimize learners' benefit from referents' instruction, curriculum designers must take into consideration designing materials that help students develop pragmatic skills, particularly in relation to referents that aid them in decoding a text and better understand it, and in producing or encoding a well-organized consistent and coherent passages with appropriate referents.

Eventually, evidence gained from this study on the positive impact of exophoric and endophoric referents on reading and writing skills of EFL learners is intended to contribute to the vast legacy of knowledge with implications for further researches. More studies are still required to approach a larger sample of Arab students concerning the way they use ambiguous referents and the way they misinterpret existing referents.

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