

TU-CHEMNITZ

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES



COHERENCE & COHESION

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Introduction:

- *What makes a text cohere?*
- *What differentiates a cohesive grammatical unit from a random collection of sentences?*



Introduction:

- **Cohension** and **coherence** are terms used in discourse analysis and text linguistics to describe the properties of written texts.
- Advertising language tends not to use clear markers of **cohesion**, but is interpreted as being **coherent**.



Definitions:

⇒ Coherence:

The ways a text makes sense to readers & writer through the relevance and accessibility of its configuration of concepts, ideas and theories.

⇒ Cohesion:

The grammatical and lexical relationship between different elements of a text which hold it together.



⇒ Coherence :

- a semantic property of discourse formed through the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences, with "interpretation" implying interaction between the text, the reader and the writer.
- a property that a reader will discern in the text
- allows the reader to make sense of the text
- refers to the semantic unity created between the ideas, sentences, paragraphs and sections of a piece of writing.



Coherence vs. Cohesion

Coherence:

- very **general** principle of interpretation of language in context
- **fewer formal** linguistic features
e.g vocabulary choice
- relationships deal with **text as a whole**
- based on primarily **semantic relationships**
↳ errors much more obvious

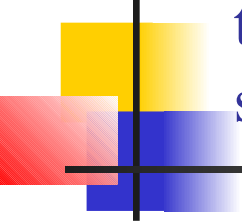
Cohesion:

- **formal** linguistic features
e.g repetition, reference
- semantic relationships between **sentences** and **within sentences**
- determined by **lexically** and **grammatically** overt intersentential relationships
↳ more recognizable



Is it coherent or not?

- The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by making mummies of them. Mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. The skin, hair, teeth, fingernails and toenails, and facial features of the mummies were evident. It is possible to diagnose the disease they suffered in life, such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies. The process was remarkably effective. Sometimes apparent were the fatal afflictions of the dead people: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head, and polio killed a child king. Mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages.



Below is the same paragraph revised for coherence. *Italics* indicates pronouns and repeated key words, **bold** indicates transitional tag-words, and underlining indicates parallel structures.

- The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by *making mummies* of them. **In short**, *mummification* consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages. **And** *the process* was remarkably effective. **Indeed**, *mummies* several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. *Their* skin, hair, teeth, fingernails and toenails, and facial features are **still** evident. *Their* diseases in life, such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies, are **still** diagnosable. **Even** *their* fatal afflictions are **still** apparent: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head; a child king died from polio.



According to Halliday & Hasan,

- ↳ A text is a semantic unit whose parts are linked together by explicit **cohesive ties**.
- ⇒ **Cohesive tie**: a semantic and /or lexico-grammatical relation between an element in text and some other element that is crucial to interpretation of it.
- Eventhough within-sentence ties occur the **cohesive ties** across ‘sentence boundaries’ are those which allow sequences of sentences to be understood as text.
- ↳ Cohesion therefore defines a text as text.



Halliday & Hasan identify general categories of cohesive devices that signal coherence in texts:

- Reference
 - Ellipsis
 - Substitution
 - Conjunction
 - Lexical Cohesion
- } Grammatical Cohesion



Halliday & Hasan's Taxonomy of Cohesive Devices :

- Reference :

Replacement of words and expressions with pro-forms.

e.g pronouns, pro-modifiers.

⇒ Three types of reference:

- Personal
- Demonstrative
- Comparative



Cohesion consists in continuity of referential meaning (relatedness of reference) ;

REFERENCE

Personal (communication goal of referent)

Demonstrative (proximity of referent)

Comparative (similarity to preceding referent)



Types of reference:

↳ Personal Reference

- ❖ a reference by means of **person**,
- ❖ includes;

Personal pronouns (e.g., I, he, she)

Possessive pronouns (e.g., mine, hers, his)

Possessive determiners (e.g., my, your, her)

e.g. English is considered an international language.

It is spoken by more than 260 million people all over the world.

They told me you had gone by her car



↳ Demonstrative Reference

- ❖ essentially a form of verbal pointing
- ❖ the speaker identifies the referent by locating it on a scale of proximity.
- ❖ In general,
 - ⇒ **this, these** and **here** imply **proximity** to the speaker;
 - ⇒ **that, those** and **there** imply **distance** from the speaker.



↪ Demonstrative Reference

- ❖ Like personals, the demonstratives regularly refer exophorically to something within the context of situation.

*e.g. How do you like a cruise in **that** yacht?*

*Pick **these** up!*



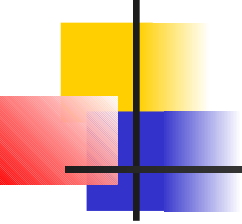
↪ Comparative Reference

- ❖ contributes to textual cohesion by setting up a relation of contrast
- ❖ expressed by such adjectives as **same, identical, equal**, adjectives in a comparative degree such as **bigger, faster** and adverbs such as **identically, likewise, so, such** etc.

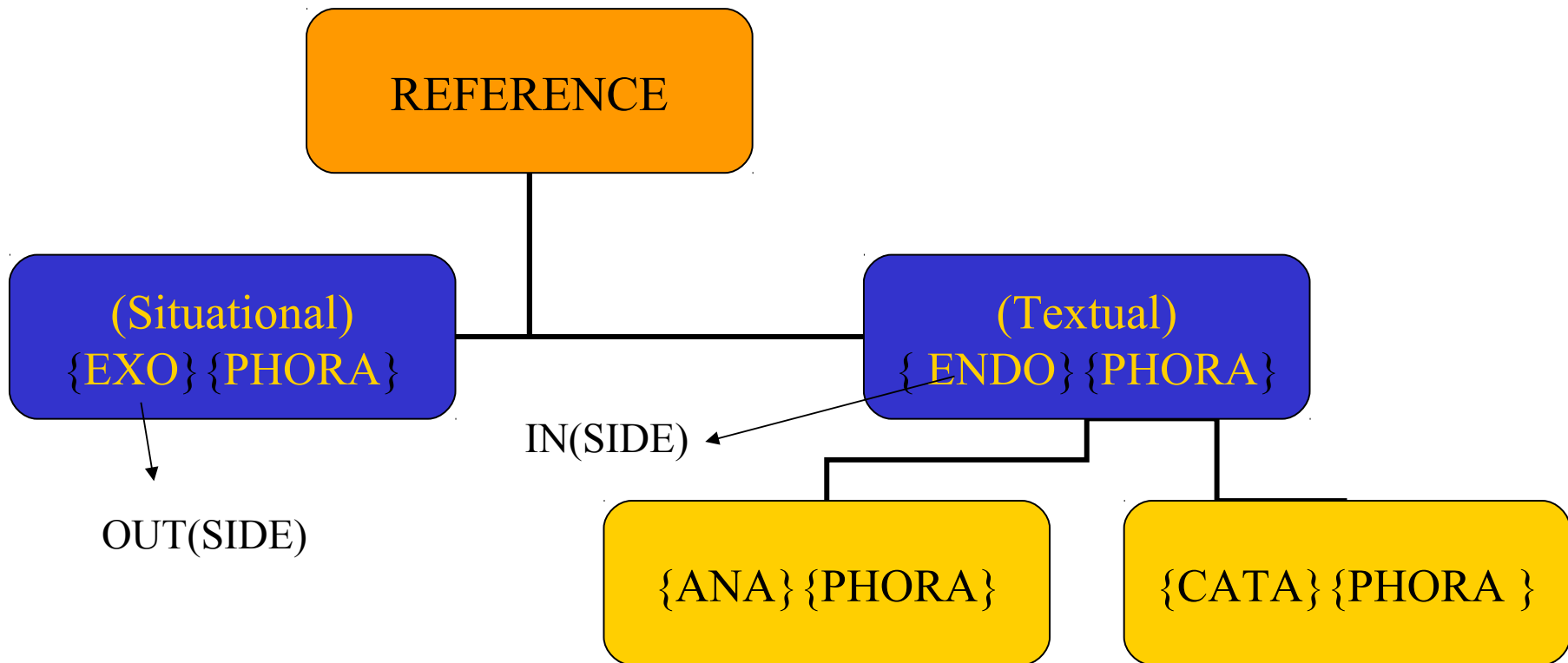
*e.g. She has a **similarly** furnished room to mine.*

*The **little** dog barked as **noisily** as the big one.*

*They asked me three **equally** difficult questions.*



Halliday and Hasan call within text cohesive ties *endophoric*, and references, items outside the text *exophoric* :





Halliday and Hasan call within text cohesive ties *endophoric*,

e.g. *Wash and core six cooking apples. Put **them** into a fireproof dish.*

⇒ an example of an **endophoric reference** when *them* referred back to *apples*.

- Reference signals to the reader what kind of information is to be retrieved.

Them, therefore, signals to the reader that he or she needs to look back in the text to find its meaning.



Endophora

Anaphora (to preceding text)

Cataphora (to following text)

e.g. *We went to Devon for a holiday. **The** people we stayed with had four children. **The** eldest girl was about nine.*

- ↪ The first **the** is **cataphoric** since there is no lexical relation between people and anything **in the preceding sentence**.
- ↪ The second **the** is both **cataphoric** and **anaphoric**
 - ↪ **Cataphoric**: eldest defines **girl**,
 - ↪ **Anaphoric**: girl is related to **children**



Halliday and Hasan call references, items outside the text *exophoric* :

e.g. *For he's a jolly good fellow
And so say all of us.*

- As readers outside of this environment, we are unfamiliar with who the *he* is that is being referred to,
- But, most likely, the people involved are aware of the *he*.
- ⇒ When the meaning is not explicit from the text itself, but is obvious to those in a particular situation. This is called *exophoric reference*.



Halliday & Hasan's Taxonomy of Cohesive Devices :

- Substitution :

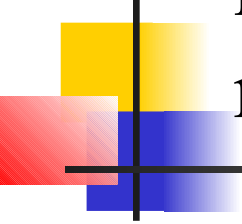
Replacement of one item by another.

A relation in the wording rather than in the meaning.

⇒ somewhat different from reference in that another word takes the place of the thing that is being discussed.

⇒ Types of Substitution:

- Nominal
- Verbal
- Clausal



□ Whereas reference is a relation between meanings, substitution is a grammatical relationship :

Types of Cohesive Relation

Linguistic Level

Reference

Semantic

Substitution (including Ellipsis)

Grammatical

Types of Substitution

↳ Nominal Substitution:

❖ Nominal substitutes ;

⇒ for noun head : **one/ ones**

⇒ for nominal complement : **the same**

⇒ for attribute : **so**

e.g. John seems to be intelligent.

*–Is he really **so**?*



➡ Nominal Substitution:

- ❖ The pronoun *one* is often used in nominal references.

e.g. Let's go and see the bears. The polar ones are over on that rock.

- In this sentence, *ones* is taking the place of bears in the previous sentence.

e.g. Winter is often so damp. The same is true for the summer.



↪ Verbal Substitution:

❖ The verbal substitute in English is **do**.

❖ Verbal substitutes ;

⇒ for verb : do, be , have

⇒ for process : do the same /likewise

⇒ for proposition : do so, be so

*e.g. The words did not come to the same as they used to **do**.*

*e.g. I finally called on him. I have wanted to **do (so)** for a long time.*



Clausal Substitution:

- ❖ The clausal substitutes ;
 - ⇒ for positive : **so**
 - ⇒ for negative : **not**

- ❖ In clausal substitution the entire clause is presupposed, and the contrasting element is outside the clause.



↪ Clausal Substitution:

e.g. *Is there going to be an earthquake?*

It says so.

- *so* presupposes the whole of the clause there's going to be an earthquake and contrastive environment is provided by the *says* which is outside it.

e.g. *Has everyone gone home?*

I hope not.



Halliday & Hasan's Taxonomy of Cohesive Devices :

- Ellipsis :

Deletion of words, expressions or phrases,
Simply 'substitution by zero'.

⇒ Types of Ellipsis:

- Nominal
- Verbal
- Clausal



Types of Ellipsis

↳ Nominal Ellipsis :

❖ ellipsis within the nominal group.

e.g. *Here are **thirteen** cards.*

Take any (-). Now give me any three (-).

e.g. *Some say one **thing**, others say another (-).*

e.g. *Which **hat** will you wear ?*

This is the best (-).

e.g. *Have another **chocolate**.*

No thanks; that was my third (-).

e.g. *Smith was the first **person** to leave. I was the second (-).*



Verbal Ellipsis :

❖ ellipsis within the verbal group.

e.g. *Have you been swimming? Yes, I have.*

e.g. *What have you been doing? Swimming.*

e.g. *Is he complaining? He may be; I don't care.*

e.g. *I haven't finished it yet. I hope you're going to have by tomorrow.*

e.g. *Some were laughing and others crying.*

e.g. *Were you laughing? No I wasn't.*

e.g. *John came, did not he? NO, but he will.*



↪ Clausal Ellipsis :

❖ ellipsis in which an entire clause is elided from a sentence.

e.g. *Smith was going to take part but somebody telephoned and asked to see him urgently so he had to withdraw.- Who ?*

e.g. I kept quiet because **Mary gets embarrassed if anyone mentions about John's name.** I don't know why.

e.g. *Who could have broken those tiles?- I can't think who.*



Halliday & Hasan's Taxonomy of Cohesive Devices :

- Conjunctions :

a word or group of words used to connect words, phrases, or clauses.

- mark certain relationships between clauses and sentences

⇒ Four categories:

- Additive
- Adversative
- Causal
- Temporal

Categories of Conjunction

↳ Examples :

- For the whole day he climbed up the steep mountain side, almost without stopping.
- ⇒ **And** in all this time he met no one. ▶ Additive
- ⇒ **Yet** he was hardly aware of being tired. ▶ Adversative
- ⇒ **So** by the night time the valley was far below him. ▶ Causal
- ⇒ **Then**, as dusk fell, he sat down to rest. ▶ Temporal

Types of Conjunction

↳ Additive type

- ❖ The additive is a kind of conjunctive relation which is closer to coordination.
 - ❖ Additive words are such as *and, also, nor, or else, moreover, in addition, besides, by the way, that is, likewise, similarly, conversely, thus, for instance.*
- e.g. My client says he does not know his witness. Further, he denies ever having seen her.*
- e.g. Perhaps she missed her train. Or else she's changed her mind and isn't coming.*



Types of Conjunction

↳ Adversative type

- ❖ The basic meaning of the adversative relation is ‘contrary to expectation’.
 - ❖ Adversative words are such as *yet, but, however, despite this, on the other hand, in fact, instead, either way, anyhow, nevertheless, rather* etc.
- e.g. All the figures were correct; they'd been checked. Yet the total came out wrong.*
- e.g. We maybe back tonight; I'm not sure. Either way, just make yourself at home.*



Types of Conjunction

↳ Causal type

- ❖ Causal relation involves primarily reason, result and purpose relations between the sentences.
- ❖ Causal words are such as *so, thus, hence, therefore, arising out of this, in that case, otherwise, because, as a result (of this), on this basis, accordingly.*

*e.g. You are not leaving, are you? **Because** I've got something to say to you.*

*e.g. I was not informed. **Otherwise** I should have taken some action.*



Types of Conjunction

↳ Temporal type

- ❖ The relation between two successive sentences.
 - ❖ Conjunctions of this type are such as *then, next, afterward, previously, finally, at last, meanwhile, next day, first, from now on, to sum up, in short, henceforward, hitherto, up to now, this time* etc.
- e.g. The weather cleared just as the party approached the summit. **Until then** they had been nothing of the panorama around them.*
- e.g. **At last**, he finished the rehearsal for his role.*



CONJUNCTIONS

Coordination

Subordination

- Coordinating conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses of equal grammatical rank.
 - For, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
 - e.g. *I used phonics in learning to read, **and** so did you.*
 - e.g. ***Though** he seemed to be tired, he did not refused to go out.* →
- Subordinating conjunctions connect clauses that are of subordinate importance to the independent clause or to some element in the main clause.
 - although, except, though, while, if, whether as, as if, where, wherever, in order that, so that, after, as long as, as soon as, before, since, when etc.



Halliday & Hasan's Taxonomy of Cohesive Devices :

- Lexical Cohesion :
achieved by the selection of vocabulary.

⇒ Types of Lexical Cohesion :

- Reiteration
- Collocation

Types of Lexical Cohesion

↳ Reiteration :

- ❖ a form of lexical cohesion which involves repetition, synonym or near synonym, superordinate and a general noun.

e.g. Pollution of our environment has occurred for centuries, but it has become a significant health problem only within the last century. Atmospheric pollution contributes to respiratory disease, and to lung cancer in particular. Other health problems directly related to air pollutants include heart disease, eye irritation and so on. ⇒ Repetition



↪ Reiteration :

e.g. *Henry's has bought a new jaguar. He practically lives in the car.* ⇒ **Superordinate**

e.g. *I turned to the ascent of the peak. The climb is perfectly is easy.* ⇒ **Synonym**

e.g. *I turned to the ascent of the peak. The thing is perfectly is easy.* ⇒ **General noun**

e.g. *There is a boy climbing that tree. The lad is going to fall if he doesn't take care.* ⇒ **Near-Synonym**



Collocation :

- ❖ Cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly **co-occur**.
- ❖ These lexical items or words tend to occur in similar environments.
- ❖ **For instance**; hair/comb, reader/writer, door/window, chair/table, north/south, peace/war, bee/honey etc.

*e.g. Why does this little **boy** wriggle all the time? **Girl** don't wriggle.*



Analysis of Coherence

- Hello, James Gleick," said Amazon.com the other day (click here if you're someone else). "Take a peek at your brand new music recommendations."

I peeked. Amazon's computers predicted that I would like the Beastie Boys, Adiemus, Frank Sinatra, Harvey Danger, and the Dave Matthews Band. What an impressive list! All right, I don't actually care for any of these, but still. It was quite a shot in the dark, considering I'd never been to Amazon's music department before. This is the way it's going on the Internet: if marketers want your money and your time and your "eyeballs," they feel they should figure out who you are and what you like.



Analysis of Coherence:

- Repetition of : peek
- Repetition of pronoun: I
- Pronoun reference: these
- Transitional tag: but still
- Pronoun reference: it , this
- Repetition and parallel form : your money and your time and your eyeballs
- Pronoun reference : they and you
- Parallel form: who you are and what you like



Analysis of Coherence

- Late in the early morning hours, in a Spanish cafe, an old man drinks brandy. A young waiter is angry; he wishes that the old man would leave so that he and an older waiter could close the cafe and go home. He insults the deaf old man and is painfully indifferent to the older waiter's feelings when he states that "an old man is a nasty thing." The older waiter, however, realizes that the old man drinking brandy after brandy is not nasty; he is only lonely. No doubt, that's the reason why the old man tried to hang himself last week. When the old man leaves, the waiters close the cafe.



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