

LEXICAL COHESION

One Way of Making the Text One Interwoven Whole

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1. Introduction

All languages exhibit certain features which can be regarded as cohesive. Such features are of different types and belong to different levels; yet, all contribute in making the text one interwoven whole. In addition to the structural features which are admittedly considered the fundamental types of cohesion, non- structural features such as grammatical anaphora (or reference), grammatical substitution, and lexical anaphora (e.g. repetition of a lexical item) display a similar force in connecting sentences (Halliday, 1966: 248).

Among these non-structural features, lexical cohesion will be the concern of this paper which attempts to shed some light on the concept of lexical cohesion as well as its two major strategies: reiteration and collocation.

2. Lexical cohesion

Lexical cohesion can be defined as the cohesive effect obtained by the deliberate choice of certain vocabulary items in a text (Halliday and Hasan, 1989:274). It refers to the lexical connection which can be developed in written discourse through the anaphoric reference between a lexical item and another one occurring previously in a text (Halliday, 1985: 310). As mentioned before, lexical cohesion has two main strategies (i.e.) reiteration and collocation. In the following pages an attempt will be made to present these strategies along with their devices.

2.1 Reiteration

The term 'reiteration' is used to refer to that cohesive strategy which implies the meaning of repetition. By the repetition of the same item or through lexical equivalence (synonymy and near-synonymy), reiteration helps support or emphasize the content or idea of a written discourse (Leech and Short, 1981:247). Halliday and Hasan (1989: 278) state that the reiterated item (i.e. the second occurrence of the base word) can be categorized in terms of : (1) repetition of the same word; (2) synonymy; (3) near-synonymy; (4) superordinate; and, (5) the use of a general word. The following example (cited from Halliday and Hasan, *ibid*) will illustrate these categories respectively

- (1) There is a boy climbing that tree;
 - (a) the boy's going to fall if he doesn't take care.
 - (b) the lad's going to fall if he doesn't take care.
 - (c) the child's going to fall if he doesn't take care.
 - (d) the idiot's going to fall if he doesn't take care.

As it can be noticed from the afore-mentioned example, the reiterated item has the same reference as the base item. However, it is believed that it is not a condition for two lexical occurrences to have the same reference (*ibid*, 282) as the following example shows:

- (2) There is a boy climbing that tree;
 - (a) the boy's going to fall if he doesn't take care.
 - (b) those boys are always getting into mischief.
 - (c) and there is another boy standing underneath.
 - (d) most boys love climbing trees.

It can be noticed that 'the boy' in (a) has the same reference as that of a boy'. In (b), 'those boys' includes the boy' previously referred to. 'Another boy' in (c) excludes 'the boy' previously mentioned, and in (d) 'most boys' exhibits no referential link to the boy mentioned earlier. Accordingly the second occurrences in (a), (b), (c), and (d) are said to indicate 'identical', 'inclusive', 'exclusive' and 'unrelated' references respectively.

2.1.1. Repetition

The repeated item need not have the same form of its origin. This means that reiteration via repetition admits inflectional as well as derivational morphological variants (Halliday, 1985: 310). In this connection, Hoey (1983:

103) distinguishes between two types of repetition: simple and complex. Simple repetition relates to grammatical paradigms and can be illustrated by the following example:

- (3) In circumstances such as these, fluctuations and trends are apt to become confused. How can one tell if an apparent pre-seasonal fluctuation is in fact the beginning of an expected fluctuation occurring earlier than used or whether it is evidence of a new trend?

The above example represents a kind of simple repetition in which the distinction between the repeated items and the original ones is based on the missing of the plural suffix '-s'. Example (4) below, on the other hand, shows a kind of complex repetition in which the change between the relevant items is considered a matter of grammatical class; 'attend' is a verb whereas 'attending' is a noun (ibid, 119):

- (4) "Helen apologized for not attending the meeting held last week because she was very busy. But she promised that she will attend the next one."

2.1.2 Synonymy and Near-synonymy

In its general sense, synonymy means the identity of meaning shared by two or more different forms in certain contexts (Palmer, 1981: 88). Cruse (1986: 265) presents a detailed discussion about the concept of synonymy in which he develops what he calls 'a scale of synonymy'. In this scale, the idea of synonymy is classified into three classes according to the degree of synonymy depending on two criteria. The first criterion relates to the idea of semantic identity: the lexical items are said to be synonymous when possessing, as much as possible, the same semantic traits. The second criterion covers the degree of synonymy which describes synonymous words in such a way that some pairs of synonyms are 'more synonymous' than other pairs: (e. g.) 'settee' and 'sofa' are more synonymous than 'die' and 'kick the bucket' which in turn are more synonymous than 'brainy' and 'shrewd'. As a result, Cruse (ibid) classifies synonymy into three categories: (a) Absolute synonymy which indicates a pair of lexical items with identical contextual relations; (b) Cognitive synonymy (also called partial synonymy) referring to lexical items that have some contextual relations in common; and (c) Plesionym which refers to lexical items which are similar in meaning but are syntactically different.

Lyons (1985: 148 -50) proposes a, more or less, similar classification for synonymy in which he distinguishes three categories: (a) absolute synonymy where the lexical items are absolutely synonymous if and only if they have the same distribution and are completely synonymous in all their meanings and in all their context of occurrence; (b) complete synonymy where in a certain range of contexts,

lexical items are said to be completely synonymous if and only if they have the same descriptive, expressive and social meaning ; and (c) descriptive synonymy where lexical items are descriptively synonymous without having the same expressive or social meaning.

A comparison between these two classifications shows that Cruse agrees with Lyons in the identification of absolute synonyms. Cruse's cognitive synonyms; however, seem to cover Lyons' complete and descriptive synonyms. Plesionym, on the other hand, is apparently not accounted for in Lyons' classification.

2.1.3 Superordinates

Semantically, the term 'superordinate' is analogous with that of hyponymy. The relationship of superordinate as a cohesive device represents a kind of a part- whole relationship in which the lexical relationship exists between an item conveying a general meaning called a superordinate word and another lexical item called a subordinate, or a hyponym word (Palmer, 1981: 85).

Lyons (1977: 29 1-2) argues that the relation of superordinate is unilateral. For instance, if X is the class of 'furniture' and Y is the class of 'chair', then X includes Y but not vice versa. Furthermore, he (ibid) points out that this relation involves the criterion of transitivity in the sense that if X is a hyponym of Y and Y is a hyponym of Z then X is a hyponym of Z. For example, 'boy' is a hyponym of 'man' which is in turn a hyponym of 'human being.'

2.1.4 General words

As a cohesive device, the term 'general word' refers to the established relationship between an item which is more general in meaning, having an anaphoric reference, with another one occurring previously, with a specific reference (Halliday and Hasan, 1989: 274). As such, the category of general words is similar to that of superordinates but differ from it in that the reference signalled by them is more general than that of superordinates. In this regard Halliday and Hasan (ibid) state that general words are the 'superordinate members of major lexical sets' thus their cohesive use is an instance of the general principle whereby a superordinate item operates anaphorically as a kind of synonymy . Examine the following example:

- (5) - didn't everyone make it clear they expected the
minister to resign?
- They did. But it seems to have made no impression
on the man.

In example (5), the general noun 'man' with the definite article 'the' function as an anaphoric reference to the specific word 'minister'. Therefore for a general noun to function cohesively, it must be preceded by one of the anaphoric items, the, that, this, these, or those (ibid: 275).

2.2. Collocation

Generally speaking, the term 'collocation' is used to refer to the idea that part of a word meaning could be interpreted by its regular co-occurrence with certain lexical items in a given text. In other words, collocation refers to words in habitual company with other words and this accompaniment contributes to their meaning. Put rather differently, it is an order of mutual expectancy between actual lexical items (Palmer, 1981:76).

It is also worth mentioning that any word is free to occur or collocate with other items; yet, sometimes a word might have a higher probability of occurrence with certain words than with others. Thus the items in example (6) below collocates with each other more than those in (7):

(6) I posted the letter in a pillar-box.

(7) I dropped the letter in a puddle.

2.2.1. Selection (Collocational) Restrictions

As a cohesive strategy, collocation deals with certain lexical relations set up between lexical items that are paradigmatically related with each other. The following sections, consequently, deal with patterns of collocation such as that of oppositeness, inclusion, and associated sets.

2.2.2.1. Patterns of oppositeness

These patterns include two lexical relations; these are complementaries and antonym S.

(A) Complementaries

Cruse (1986: 198-9) defines the notion of complementary as the relation between a pair of lexical items that exhaustively divide some conceptual domain into two mutually exclusive parts so that what falls into one of the parts is impossible to fall into the other. This means that complementary relations involve the idea of entailment in the sense that the denial of a lexical item entails the assertion of the other with in the domain of opposite context, and vice versa (Carter, 1987: 19). Consider the following examples:

(8) "She is alive." entails "She is not dead".

(9) "He is out." entails "He is not here".

In these examples, 'alive' and 'dead' on one hand and 'out' and 'here' on the other stand in complementary relations to each other.

(B) Antonyms

The concept of 'antonym' involves a comparison between the lexical members of an opposite pair such as (big x small), (short x tall), .. etc. It is clear that these pairs are not exclusive (i.e. the negative of one member of the pair does not necessarily mean the other member; thus, (10) does not exactly mean the same as (11):

(10) This box is not heavy.

(11) This box is light.

Contrasting 'complementaries' with 'antonyms' reveals that the distinction between them is gradability: whereas antonyms are gradable complementaries are not.

2.2.2.2. Patterns of Inclusion

These patterns include the following relations between lexical items:

(A) Ordered Series

As cohesive devices, ordered series refer to part-to-part relations that are established between two or more items belonging to the same hierarchical entity, as in the relation between 'autumn', 'spring', 'winter', and 'summer' (Halliday and Hasan, 1989:285). These relations are described as incompatible in that they cannot be used interchangeably (i.e.) the use of one member excludes the other in the same context (Crystal, 1985: 155).

(B) Unordered Series

Cohesively, unordered series are of two types of relations: meronymy (part- to-whole relation) and co-hyponyms. Meronymy refers to the relationship that holds between small members and a large entity; whereby the former is included within the latter, as part to a whole (Lyons, 1977:311). Cruse (1986: 160) defines meronymy in this way:

'X' is a meronym of 'Y' if and only if sentences of the form "a Y has Xs \ an X" and "An X is a part of a Y" are normal when the noun phrase 'an X' and 'a Y' are interpreted genetically.

Instances of meronymy are found in the following examples between 'face - eyes' and 'classroom — desks':

(12) A face has two eyes.

(13) Classrooms have many desks.

It should be noted, however, that the relation of meronymy is distinguished from that of hyponymy in that in the case of meronymy the same members are described as "parts of" a large entity, while in the case of hyponymy the members are described as "a type of" the large entity.

In addition, unordered series can be found in the relations of co-hyponymy which refers to the established relations between two or more lexical items that are members of a large entity. For instance, such lexical items as 'father, mother, brother, sister... etc.' are hyponyms of the superordinate term 'family'.

2.2.2.3. Associated Sets

The existence of the members of this category of collocation sets up lexical relations that function as a cohesive force. In other words, there is a kind of cohesion between the pair of lexical items if they stand to each other in some recognizable lexico-semantic (i.e. word-meaning) relationship (Halliday and Hasan, 1989: 286). The following sets are examples of this category:

(14) winter, cold, rain, snow, wind etc.

(15) literature, poetry, poet, poem, verse line etc.

3. Sample of Analysis

The excerpt in the Appendix, which is taken from Hemingway's short story Hills Like White Elephants, will be analyzed to show how lexical cohesion is employed to connect the sentences in the text. For easiness of analysis, the cohesive devices will be given symbols (letters and numbers) as follows:

REITERATION

Simple Repetition	R11
Complex Repetition	R12
Synonymy or near-synonymy	R2
Superordinate	R3
General words	R4

COLLOCATION

Complementaries	C1
Antonyms	C2
Ordered series	C3
Unordered series	C4
Associated sets	C5

In addition, a table including the following columns will be used:

1. Sentence No. which refers to the number of the sentence including the cohesive item.
2. Cohesive item which refers to the second occurrence of a lexical item.
3. Device including to the symbol of the device used.
4. Distance which refers to the number of intervening sentences between the cohesive item and the presupposed item.
5. Presupposed item which refers to the first occurrence of a lexical item.

Sentence No.	Cohesive item	Device	Distance	Presupposed item
2	hot	C5	0	shade
2	minutes	R11	0	minutes
3	junction....went	C5	0	express....come
4	the girl	R11	2	the girl
4	drink	C5	1	hot
5	had taken off her hat	C5	2	hot
5	the table	R11	3	a table
6	hot	C5	3	hot
6	said	R2	1	asked
6	The man	R4	4	The American
7	Doz cervezas	C5	2	drink
7	The man	R11	0	The man
7	said	R11	0	said
8	asked	R11	3	asked
9	Big ones	R11	0	Big ones
10	The woman	R11	1	A woman
10	Glasses of beer	C5	2	Doz cervezas
10	Felt pads	C5	0	Glasses of beer
11	put	R11	5	put
11	Felt pads	R11	0	Felt pads
11	Beer glasses	R11	0	Glasses of beer
11	The table	R11	5	The table
11	The man	R11	3	The man
11	The girl	R11	7	The girl
12	The girl	R11	0	The girl
12	looking	R12	0	looked
13	Sun.....dry	C5	6	hot
13	brown	C3	0	white
14	look	R12	1	looking
14	white	R11	0	white
14	said	R11	6	said
15	The man	R11	3	The man
15	drank	R12	10	drink
15	beer	R11	3	beer

Appendix

The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade outside the building (1) . It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes (2) . It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went to Madrid (3) "What should we drink?" the girl asked (4) . She had taken off her hat and put it on the table (5)

"It's pretty hot" said the man (6)

"Doz cervezas", the man said into the curtain (7)

"Big ones?" a woman asked from the doorway (8)

"Yes, two big ones" (9)

The woman brought two glasses of beer and two felt pads(10) . She put the felt pads and beer glasses on the table and looked at the man and the girl (11) The girl was looking off at the line of hills (12) They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry (13).

"They look like white elephants" she said (14) "I've never seen one," the man drank his beer" (15)

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