



ISSN: 1994-4217 (Print) 2518-5586(online)

Journal of College of Education

Available online at: <https://eduj.uowasit.edu.iq>

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**Keywords:**

Coherence , coherent  
devices , "Death of a  
Salesman



#### Article info

##### Article history:

Received 20.Dec.2024

Accepted 27.Jan.2025

Published 25.Feb.2025



## Coherence in Arthur Miller's Play "Death of a Salesman" : A Discoursal Study

### A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the various types of coherence seen in Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman." It aims to find out the effect of using coherence devices in the selected text. This study uses a descriptive qualitative methodology to investigate the many types of coherence devices found in this play. It adheres to Oshima and Hogue's (2006) model of coherence. The findings of this study revealed that all coherent devices are used in Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman". The most common coherent device utilized in this play is the consistent use of pronouns. It occurs 1808 times (39.90%). The play employed the repetition of key nouns as an important coherent device. Repeating key nouns occur 1532 times (33.81%). It is the second frequent coherent device in this play. Repeating key nouns plays an important role in developing ideas and character motivations. Furthermore, transition signals are utilized extensively in this play. It serves as the third coherent device in this play. The play analyzed in this study contains 1190 (26.26%) transition signals. Additionally, the logical division of ideas pattern is the order that is used in this play. Although there are comparisons and contrasts particularly between Willy Loman's goals and the brutal facts he meets, the play is ordered by the logical division of ideas pattern.

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.31185/eduj.Vol58.Iss2.4202>

## تحليل التماسك في مسرحية "موت بائع متجول" لأرثر ميلر

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### الخلاصة

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو التحقيق في الأنواع المختلفة من التماسك التي نراها في مسرحية آرثر ميلر "موت بائع متجول". تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أثر استخدام أدوات التماسك في النص المختار. تستخدم هذه الدراسة منهجية وصفية نوعية للتحقيق في العديد من أنواع أدوات التماسك الموجودة في هذه المسرحية. وهي تلتزم بنموذج أوشيما وهوج (٢٠٠٦) للتماسك. كشفت نتائج هذه الدراسة عن استخدام جميع أدوات التماسك في مسرحية آرثر ميلر "موت بائع متجول". إن أداة التماسك الأكثر شيوعاً المستخدمة في هذه المسرحية هي الاستخدام المتسق للضمائر. يحدث ١٨٠٨ (٣٩.٩٠٪). استخدمت المسرحية تكرار الأسماء الرئيسية كأداة تماسك مهمة. تحدث الأسماء الرئيسية المتكررة ١٥٣٢ مرة بنسبة (٣٣.٨١٪). إنها أداة التماسك المتكررة الثانية الشائعة في هذه المسرحية. يلعب تكرار الأسماء الرئيسية دوراً مهماً في تطوير الأفكار ودوافع الشخصية. علاوة على ذلك، تم استخدام إشارات الانتقال على نطاق واسع في هذه المسرحية. إنها بمثابة أداة التماسك الثالث في هذه المسرحية. تحتوي المسرحية التي تم تحليلها في هذه الدراسة على ١١٩٠ (٢٦.٢٦٪) من إشارات الانتقال. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن نمط التقسيم المنطقي للأفكار هو الترتيب المستخدم في هذه المسرحية. على الرغم من وجود مقارنات وتناقضات خاصة بين أهداف ويلي لومان والحقائق الوحشية التي يواجهها، فإن المسرحية منظمة حسب نمط التقسيم المنطقي للأفكار.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التماسك ، أدوات التماسك ، "موت بائع متجول"

### 1. Introduction

Writing is one of the most important skill of language skills. It is difficult to decide and write down ideas in a reasonable and logical manner. As a result, it needs consistent and long-lasting activities. Monitoring one's writing activity is necessary to achieve the best results.

Cohesion and coherence are essential elements in writing. When producing written content, students or writers must demonstrate some degree of cohesion and coherence in expressing their ideas. Fitriati and Yonata (2017, p. 44) stated that when writing a text, it is important to consider not only how to make the text fit together, but also how to make meaning of the content. As a result, the writer must be aware of the reader's expectations of the text as well as other factors for the text to make sense.

Scholars have also paid attention to the issue of coherence in academic writing. A text's quality is determined by whether or not all of its components fit together. According to Kaplan (1966, p. 14), coherence is the characteristic of presenting material in a sequence that is understandable to its readers. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981, p. 13) defined coherence as the connectedness of a text's underlying material. Brown and Yule (1983, p. 224) defined coherence as the principle that connects linguistic strings in a text and on which readers rely to interpret the text.

## 2. Literature Review

When producing a text, it is critical to think about both how to let the language flow naturally and how to make sense of it. One step in producing a coherent text is to utilize devices such as references, substitution, ellipses, conjunctions, or lexical coherence to keep the text together. To make meaning of the texts, the writer must consider the audience's expectations for the material, as well as other elements. According to Thornbury (2005, p. 36), coherence is a feature that the reader derives from the text rather than being just a result of its cohesion.

There are numerous perspectives on the relationship between cohesion and coherence. Halliday and Hassan (1976) assert that cohesion generates coherence. They state that cohesion is a semantic concept that denotes meaningful relationships within a text. It is classified into two types: grammatical and lexical coherence. Halliday and Hassan (1976) were particularly concerned with providing a comprehensive explanation of the aforementioned types of cohesive relationships (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, as cited in Al-Hindawi & Abu-Krooz, 2017). Another point of view holds that a cohesive writing is not always coherent, and vice versa. Linguists who hold this opinion can be classified into two categories. Linguists in the first group believe that coherence is a social phenomena. It relies on pragmatic functions rather than cohesive devices. Widdowson (1978), for instance, contends that cohesion is a locutionary act, but coherence is an illocutionary one. According to the opposing perspective, coherence is a mental phenomenon. They look into coherence from a cognitive science perspective. For instance, Brown and Yule (1983) emphasize how readers or listeners affect coherence. Linguists also hold the alternative view that cohesion is the result of coherence. Beaugrande and Dressler represent this point of view (1981). They contend that a reader automatically assumes a text is coherent when he reads it (Sun, 2020).

Halliday and Hasan (1989, p. 48) define coherence as a text that hangs together. They went on to say that cohesive markers, when utilized correctly, can produce coherence by connecting one section of a text to the next. Renkema (1993, p. 35) also defined coherence as a relationship formed partly through cohesion and partly through something outside the text, which is typically the knowledge that a listener or reader is supposed to have.

### 2.1 Coherence

The term "coherence" describes the relationship between the concepts in a text that is presented in sentences. According to Oshima and Hogue (2006), coherence in writing entails that sentences be connected to one another, move smoothly, and make sense. The transition from one sentence to the next should be easy and make the ideas seem logical. This indicates that no single statement with a concept that is not supported by other sentences can be found in a text that is coherent.

The result of a dialogue between the text and its listener or reader is what coherence is (Widdowson, 1978, as cited in Tanskanen, 2006, p.28). It is a crucial factor that impacts the caliber of pupils' written compositions, coupled with coherence. A text can't be considered a text without it (Hatch, 1992). This describes how coherence creates unity and order in a conversation by using rhetorical tactics (Elkhayma, 2020).

Coherence refers to the way the ideas in a text that are presented in sentences relate to one another. Oshima and Hogue (2006) state that for writing to be coherent, sentences must flow naturally, make sense, and be related to one another. The concepts should seem reasonable and the transitions between sentences should be smooth. This suggests that a coherent text cannot have a single remark with an idea that is not backed up by other sentences.

Coherence is also defined as the logical link between ideas. It also alludes to a textual semantic quality. It is a component of comprehension that is formed in the reader's mind as a result of the reader perceiving a relationship among the premises of a text and between the text and their current understanding of the world (McCagg, 1990, as cited in Alarcon & Morales, 2011, p. 115).

When a reader comprehends how each subsequent textual unit contributes to the development of the text's overall or global meaning, the text is considered coherent (Widdowson, 1978). Coherence, according to Halliday and Hasan (1989, p. 48), is attained when a text flows together. They added that when cohesive indicators are employed correctly to connect one section of a text to another, coherence can be produced. Sherman et al (2010) assert that coherence is a writing talent that is virtually a guarantee of writing quality and an integral part of writing proficiency. It is achieved by fusing ideas and words together in a fluid manner. A reader may find it more difficult to understand a text's concepts and main points if it lacks consistency.

There are various steps that must be taken to help learners compose a cohesive text in order to produce a coherent discourse. They are taken from Hogue and Oshima (2006). According to Oshima and Hogue (2006, p. 22), there are four techniques to make writing coherent. These techniques include: the repetition of key noun, the consistent use of pronoun, the use of transition signals and the use of logical order.

#### **a. Repetition of Key Nouns**

To keep readers engaged and moving in the right direction, key nouns (key words) are repeated, synonyms are used, and thoughts are emphasized throughout the text. It can maintain the paragraph's flowing from one sentence to the next, allowing the sentences to be connected (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 22). It can be inferred that the paragraphs or sentences will be connected by the repetition of key words.

Through the article, using keywords or phrases again helps to focus and link ideas. It's called "repeating an idea." By informing the reader of the core point, repeating an idea can help the writer become more coherent in their writing as well as assist the reader stay concentrated.

To provide some variation to the text, the author may also employ synonyms, phrases, or additional words in this point, but they must maintain the same or roughly the same meaning (Oshima and Hogue, 2006 p, 23). In summary, it is acceptable as long as it doesn't alter the topic or the paragraph's meaning. Additionally, repetition keeps the reader on task and moving in the correct path.

### **b. The Consistent Use of Pronouns**

Sherman et al (2010) shows that pronouns can be helpful in a number of ways, but in order to maintain coherence and prevent misunderstanding, writers need to understand when and how to use them. Pronouns can be used to substitute nouns which have been stated once or more times before, helping the writer prevent regularly repeating the same noun. Additionally, pronouns can assist readers in identifying key phrase components. Readers can create connection between the paragraph's content while following a coherent flow of thoughts if they have spoken signals to follow, such as pronouns and transitions. Consider precisely who or what you are referring to when you use pronouns in writing.

### **c. The Use of Transition Signals**

In paragraphs, transitions are the words or phrases that link one concept to the next. It is employed to assist readers in comprehending the importance of the primary idea in relation to the subsequent theme. Transitional words provide consistency to a paragraph, showcasing the writer's abilities. The relationship between the main concept and the supporting ideas inside a paragraph (or sentence) is demonstrated by transitions.

Oshima and Hogue (2007) defined transition signals as "Words and phrases that connect the idea in one sentence with the idea in another sentence". Similar to traffic signs, transition signals let your reader know when to move forward, turn on, slow down, and stop. In simpler terms, they let your reader know when you are presenting an instance (for example), a result (hence, as a result), a conclusion (in conclusion), an opposite thought (on the other hand, but, in comparison), or a similar notion (similarly, and, in addition). Since they direct your reader from one topic to the next, transition signals provide paragraphs coherence. Transition signals come in a variety of forms.

The author must employ transition signals in order to achieve coherence. Similar to traffic signals, transition signals inform readers when to proceed, turn around, slow down, and stop (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 25). This can be interpreted as the use of transition signals to

help readers go from one concept to the other. Linking words or phrases that improve the writing's internal cohesion and coherence are known as transition signals. It is comparable to switching from one concept to another. Transitional signals serve as links between different sections of the text. However, it is challenging for the authors to create a cohesive paragraph in the absence of transition cues. By employing suitable transitional cues, the authors will avoid making abrupt changes or sounds.

Though they can also occur in the middle or conclusion of phrases, transition signals are typically found at the start of sentences. Commas are always used to distinguish it from the remainder of the phrase. Additionally, transition words are not required in every phrase of a paragraph; rather, their effective use will help to clarify and rationalize the relationship between the concepts in writing. Expressions like first, last, and however, or phrases like in conclusion, on the other hand, and as a result, are examples of transition signals. Transition signals can also be provided by other types of words, including prepositions (because of, in spite of), coordinators (and, but), adjectives (another, additional), and subordinators (when, although).

#### **d. The Use of Logical Order**

Naturally, the subject and goal of the writing will determine which type of logical order is best. In a single paragraph, it is advised to combine two or more distinct logical orders. The most crucial thing to keep in mind is to put the concepts in a logical order that makes sense to readers who are used to reading in English. The common types of logical order in English are chronological order, logic division of ideas, and comparison/contrast," according to Oshima and Hogue (2006, p. 34).

##### **Chronological Order**

According to Oshima and Hogue (2006, p. 34), "it is ordered by time, a sequence of events or steps in a process" It indicates that the text that describes the steps of a process or a series of events is in chronological order.

##### **Logical division of ideas**

When a topic is broken down into its component parts and each part is examined independently, this is known as logical division (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 34). Logical division is defined as an organizational style whereby authors break a topic down into points and address each point independently.

##### **Comparison/contrast paragraph**

The similarities and/or differences between two or more things are presented in a comparison or contrast paragraph (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 34). In order to understand the comparison and contrast paragraph, the authors should discuss the similarities and differences between two or more people, locations, objects, or concepts.

### 3. Data and Methodology

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research. When using a descriptive technique, the writer's objectives are to ascertain the study's purpose, the data source, and the data analysis process. The study's source material was the play "Death of a Salesman" by Aruther Miller. The conversations between the characters in this play provide the study's data. These statements in the play will be analyzed using Oshima and Hogue (2006). The author conducted an investigation by determining the coherent devices that the characters in this play employed in their interactions.

### 4. Findings and Discussions

The characters in Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman" employed all coherent devices with different percentages as determined in this study. The types of coherent devices used in this play are shown in table (1) bellow:

**Table (1): Coherence Devices used in Arthur Miller's Play Death of a Salesman''**

Coherence Devices	Frequency	Percentage
Repeating Key Nouns	1532	33.81%
Consistent Use of Pronouns	1808	39.90%
Use of Transitional Signals	1190	26.26%
Use of Logical Order	1	0.02%
Total	4531	100%

Table (1) shows that "Death of a Salesman" has 4531 coherent devices. Consistent use of pronouns is used most frequently in this play, accounting for 1808 (39.90%). The second coherent device is repeating key nouns which occurs 1532 times (33.81%). The use of transitional signals occurs 1190 times (26.26%), whereas the use of logical order appears one time (0.02%).

#### a. Repeating of Key Nouns

In Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman," repeating key nouns occur 1532 times. The following table shows the repeated key nouns in the play with their frequency of occurrence:

**Table (2) Repetition of Key Nouns in "Death of a Sales Man"**

<b>Key Nouns</b>	<b>Frequency of occurrence</b>
family	6
dream	15
home	36
hope	9
sales	19
Biff	302
Happy	205
Ben	150
man	84
house	59
Woman	55
Room	50
Boy	48
Kitchen	48
Door	31
Mom	31
Girl	30
Hell	30
Table	30
Dollars	29
Business	31
Attention	4
Dad	47
money	21
idea	15
Time	79
people	29
life	39
<b>Total: 1532</b>	

Repeating key nouns has vital function in establishing ideas and character motives. There are many nouns that have been repeated in Miller's "Death of a Salesman". Among these key nouns are "dream", and "family", draw attention to Willy Loman's fixation on the American Dream and his appreciation for approval and success. They are used often to highlight Loman's internal struggle, the demands he endures, and the disappointment he feels from his



unfulfilled goals. While the characters struggle with their dreams and facts, this strategy aids in establishing a feeling of tension and emotional connection throughout the play. Below are some extracts from the play about the way the writer employs the coherent device of repeating key nouns:

1. *"HAPPY: All right, boy. I'm gonna show you and everybody else that Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had a good dream. It's the only dream you can have — to come out number-one man. He fought it out here, and this is where I'm gonna win it for him. BIFF"*

The repetition of the noun "dream" shows how important it is to the lives of the characters especially Happy and Biff. Happy sees the dream as a source of inspiration and optimism to succeed and demonstrate that their father didn't die in vain. The play's main theme (that is the American dream can be both inspiration and burden) is reaffirmed by its repetition.

2. " LINDA: I can't understand it. At this time especially. First time in thirty-five years we were just about free and clear. He only needed a little salary. He was even finished with the dentist."

Linda's use of time repetition in the above extract highlights the importance of the occasion she is referring to. The phrases "At this time especially" and "First time in thirty-five years," which she used, refer to a turning point in their life when they were about to become financially independent. In addition to expressing Linda's incredulity and annoyance, this repetition of time also speaks to the play's overarching topic of time's unrelenting passage, which frequently affects the characters' hopes and desires. It makes the approaching crisis all the more devastating by reminding the viewer of the years of sacrifice and hard work that have brought them to this point.

3. "So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person. You called him crazy..."

In the above extract the repeated use of the noun "attention" highlights how crucial it is to acknowledge and value Willy Loman's life and hardships. It captures the fervor and immediacy of the speaker's appeal for society to accept Willy's humanity in spite of his shortcomings. The idea that everyone deserves to be seen and heard, regardless of their situations, is emphasized by this repetition, which also highlights the need of empathy and social responsibility. It also connects to Willy's internal struggle as he struggles with his identity and the social forces that fuel his sense of inadequacy.

## **b. The Consistent Use of Pronouns**

One of the coherence types is the use of consistent pronouns. A term that replaces a noun is called a pronoun. In Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman," the pronoun is used consistently 1808 times. It is the most common coherent device used in Arthur Miller's play

"Death of a Salesman". The pronouns that are employed in this play include possessive, demonstrative, relative, and personal pronouns. Table 3 below shows the pronouns that are used consistently in the play with their frequency of occurrence:

**Table (3): Consist Use of Pronouns in "Death of a Sales Man"**

Type of pronouns	Pronouns	Frequency of Occurrence
Personal pronoun	I	578
	he	342
	it	301
	we	58
	they	36
	she	31
Relative pronoun	who	40
	which	9
Demonstrative pronouns	This	118
	That	232
	These	10
	Those	27
possessive pronoun	our	6
	their	16
	its	4
<b>Total: 1808</b>		

4. "Willy: "I am not a dime a dozen, and you're not a dime a dozen. You're better than that."

In order to support Biff and establish his identity, Willy employs the pronouns "I" and "you" in the above extract. Consistently using the pronoun "you" throughout the passage highlights Willy and Biff's direct relationship in a logical way. By referring to Biff as "you," Willy is attempting to establish an emotional connection with him in addition to communicating with him.

5. "Biff: "He's not the man you think he is."

Biff emphasizes Willy's disenchantment with his father's principles by referring to him as "he" throughout. These extracts from the play show how pronouns are employed consistently to express characters' intimate feelings.

### **c. The Use of Transition Signals**

The link between concepts in a piece of writing is indicated by transition signals. It is comparable to switching from one concept to another. The play examined in this study contains 1190 examples of transition signals. After the use of key nouns, it ranks as the second most common type of coherence. Words like when, while, first, second, again,

before, after, as, next, here, there, and so on were employed in "Death of a Salesman". The table below shows the transition signals used in this play with their frequency of occurrence:

**Table (4) Transition Signals in "Death of a Salesman"**

Transition Signal Uses	Transition Signals	Frequency
For addition	Furthermore	1
	Next	14
	Too	14
	First	17
	Second	4
	Third	1
To provide examples	For instance	1
For comparison	Like	89
For contrast	But	158
	Still	24
	Although	1
	Yet	7
To show time	After	40
	As	64
	Before	14
	Next	14
	During	1
	Later	3
	Finally	6
	Then	60
	When	95
	While	6
To show place or directions	Opposite	2
	Above	1
	Below	2
	Beyond	1
	Near	6
	Between	7
	To the left	4
	To the right	6
	Here	76
	There	46
To indicate logical relationship	If	61
	So	82
	Thus	3
	Since	8
To show cause and effect	Because	38
	For	113
For indicating result	Then	60
To show repetition	Again	41
<b>Total: 1190</b>		

In "Death of a Salesman," transition words such as "again," "for," "so," "finally, but" and so on are employed to link concepts and improve dialogue flow while expressing the feelings and thoughts of the characters. Here are some instances from the play:

6. "LINDA: Willy, dear. Talk to them again. There's no reason why you can't work in New York."

The transition signal "again" in the above extract suggests that Willy and Linda are still having difficulties in their relationship, with Linda attempting to help him but he is still mired in his own shortcomings and fears. "Again" here highlights the play's recurring themes of optimism and repetition.

7. "WILLY: Bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not — liked. He's liked, but he's not — well liked."

In the above extract, the transitional signal "but" conveys Willy's conflicting feelings about his family and himself. He is attempting to persuade himself that one's reputation among others is just as important to success as skill or diligence. His desire for his son Biff to be popular and the pressure he puts on him to live up to those expectations are also reflected in this conflict.

#### **d. The Use of Logical Order**

In "Death of a Salesman" the logical division of ideas pattern is the order that is used in this play. Logical order is the least common type of coherent devices, accounting for only one instance because it is found out from the whole text, whether the play follows a logical order or not.

However, it is used via flashbacks and memories to show Loman's past and present. This order helps the readers to see how Loman's past experiences influence his present life and his connection with his family. Although there are comparisons and contrasts particularly between Loman's goals and the brutal facts he meets, the play is ordered by the logical division of ideas pattern. This order contributes to the exploration of topics such as the American Dream and the family dynamics enabling the readers to grasp the nuance of Willy Loman's character and his challenges.

#### **Conclusions**

The findings of this study revealed that all coherent devices are used in Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman". The most common coherent device used in this play is the consistent use of pronouns. It occurs 1808 (39.90%). The play employed the repetition of key nouns as an important coherent device. Repeating key nouns occur 1532 times (33.81%). It is the second common frequent coherent device in this play. Repeating key nouns has a vital function in establishing ideas and character motives. The use of transitional signals is also

used frequently in this play. It comes as the third coherent device used in this play. The play examined in this study contain 1190 examples of transition signals accounting for (26.26%). The logical division of ideas pattern is the order that is used in this play. It is used via flashbacks and memories to show Loman's past and present. This order helps the readers to see how Loman's past experiences influence his present life and his connection with his family. Although there are comparisons and contrasts particularly between Loman's goals and the brutal facts he meets, the play is ordered by the logical division of ideas pattern. Logical order is the least common type of coherent devices, accounting for only one instance because it is discovered from the whole text, whether the play follows a logical order or not.

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