# Cohesion And Coherence: Siamese Twins in Textuality

## Sopuruchi Grace Onugha

Department of English Language and Literature
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria
Phone: +2347061867081
Email:sopurugraceonugha93@gmail.com

**Abstract**

Cohesion and coherence are two properties used in text linguistics to determine the quality of an article or any written content. They are mainly regarded as the links that hold between clauses or sentences in a text and give both grammatical and semantic meaning to that text. These links are needed to establish the grammatical and lexical relationships between the elements that occur in adjacent clauses or sentences. While cohesion refers to surface structure relations, sticking together different sentences, phrases and paragraphs with each other. Coherence is often related to deep structure relationships and determines the quality of the content. This work examines the intertwined relationship between coherence and cohesion in literary discourse.

**Keywords:** Cohesion, Coherence, textuality

## Introduction

### Cohesion

Despite thinking about subject matter, its associated vocabulary and the syntactic structure of individual sentences , a writer will usually  help you to read his or writing by using direction signals to make corrections in and between sentences. These include the ways in which sentences are sequenced, how one thing leads to another, implication and so on. This signals act as markers  of cohesion  or cohesive ties in a text, that is, the writing is held together not only because of relationships between the ideas or events ( represented through lexis, semantics or syntactic structure) but by through connecting forms in the lexis and syntactic structure themselves .

Halliday and Hassan (1976) assert that '' cohesion is defined as a set of possibilities that exist in the language for making a text hang together''. By this definition it means that cohesion refers to the many ways (grammatical, lexical, sematic, metrical, alliterative) in which the elements are linked together.

According to Halliday & Hassan (1978), cohesion are divided in to:

1. Grammatical cohesion
2. Lexical cohesion

## GRAMMATICAL COHESION

According to Ezeifeka (2018), grammatical cohesion ''are inter-sentential links which relate one idea to the other in a text so that they follow logically and make sense to the reader''. They are;

> *Deictics or reference*: deictics is a term used in stylistics to describe words or phrases which refer to a specific time, person, place or thing in a text without actually naming them by using a noun. Words which indicate the use of deictics include personal pronouns (I, you, we, they etc.) the demonstrative pronouns (this, that, those, these). This deictics are further divide into anaphoric referencing, cataphoric referencing and exophoric referencing.

*Anaphoric referencing* is the use of words to refer back to somebody or something that has already been mentioned, usually by using personal pronouns such as he, she, they or it or possessive pronouns such a s mine or hers. Once a referent has been established (that is, the person or thing referred to) it is usually placed with a pronoun the next time it appears.

*Cataphoric referencing* refers forward. For example, saying that something appears 'below' in a text, directs the reader to something that is about to be seen. The reference is made before the referent itself appears, similarly the adjective 'next' can be used to refer forward to subsequent sections of the text itself. For example; ''in the next chapter, we will review the topic''. Cataphoric references delay more precise information thus creating an element of suspense. In the following example, cataphoric referencing gradually reveals information about a particular woman, before naming her. A pronoun is used first, followed by a noun phrase, then a proper noun of the person being referred to, and reflexive pronoun for more emphasis:

> And slowly down the steps in <u>her</u> magnificent ballgown comes <u>the young woman</u> of the moment we have all been waiting for, <u>princess Diana, herself</u>…

*Exophoric referencing* is where the listener is required to look around or think backwards or forwards in time for the most obvious referent.

Ezeifeka (2018), illustrates the anaphoric, cataphoric and exophoric referencing with the sample text below;

> <u>A businessman</u> would not consider <u>a firm</u> to have solved <u>its</u> problem of production and to have achieved

viability if <u>he</u> saw that <u>it</u> was rapidly consuming its capital. How then could <u>we</u> overlook <u>this</u> vital fact when <u>we</u> are faced with <u>the country's</u> dwindling economy? One reason (for overlooking this vital fact) is that <u>we</u> are estranged from reality and inclined to treat as valueless <u>everything</u> that <u>we</u> have made <u>ourselves</u>. Why is this <u>so</u>? Why must <u>everyone</u> in <u>this country</u> feel unconcerned when <u>our</u> collective efforts, our dreams, our future are going down the drain by our <u>own</u> lousy attitudes. <u>Nigeria</u> is <u>ours</u> and <u>we</u> must strive by all means to make <u>her</u> better.

Anaphoric reference:

    a businessman – he

    a firm – its, it

    Nigeria - her

Cataphoric reference:

    this country – Nigeria

Exophoric reference:

    we, ourselves, everything –
need to be retrieved from the context

> Ellipsis: this is the name given to the omission part of an utterance or a grammatical structure which the reader or listener is been assumed to understand easily from its context. It is often used where economy of words is needed, such as determiners and auxiliaries is also common in representing interior monologue in narratives; it suggests a rapid succession of thoughts or images as the following extract from James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* cryptically describes the thoughts of one person;

*raised his eyes and met the stare of a bilious Clock. Two. Pub clock*

*five minutes fast.   Time Going*
*on. Hands moving. Two. Not yet.*

The above extract uses no referencing except *his*. Instead, a degree of cohesion is achieved through repetition and lexical cohesion. Then, we as readers have to infer far than we are accustomed to in order to make sense of the text.

Ellipsis can also be used in narratives and plays, not only in the form of grammatical omission but also as a means to speed up the action or pace of a narrative by leaving out events assumed to have happened but not described. For example, *two years later…* used in this way, ellipsis inks closely with inference

➢ Substitution: this works in a similar way to ellipsis except that, rather than working by omission, one word is substituted for another word, phrase or clause. The items commonly used for substitution are:

One(s) – I offered her a drink. She didn't want **one**.

Do – Have you eaten? Please **do**.

So/Not – do you need a lift? If **so**, wait for me, if **not**, I'll see you there.

Same- She chose the red dress; I'll have **same**

➢ Conjunctions (or connectives): conjunction join clauses within a sentence, which can lead to ellipsis possible in coordinating clauses. They also indicate that what follows in a sentence bears some relation to what has already been said, as well as grammatically joining the clauses together. As such, they commonly act as element of coherence as well as cohesion.

Within a text, there are different four types of relation between sentences that cohension signals, they are;

1. Additive: these add more information already given, e.g ''She is intelligent. And she is very reliable''. Other conjunctions showing such cohesion are ''in addition'', ''besides'',

2. Adversative: these qualify information already given, e.g ''I have lived here for ten years but haven't ever heard of that pub''. Others include; ''however'', ''nevertheless'', etc.

3. Casual: these conjunctions introduce the reason why something happened

52

e.g ''He caught a cold because he fell into the river''. Others include ''consequently'', ''therefore'', etc.

4. Temporal: these signal a temporal sequence, that is, that one thing happened before or after another e.g '' I got up and made my breakfast''. Other conjunctions   include; ''then'', ''subsequently'', etc.

## LEXICAL COHESION

As the name implies, it describes the way in which items of vocabulary relate to one another across clause and sentence boundaries to make a text work as a whole. The

relations between vocabulary items in a text are of two main kinds; reiteration and collocation.

*Reiteration*: this means either representing the same word in a later section of the word in a later section of the text or else reminding the reader of it by exploiting lexical relations. These relations are of two main kinds; synonymy and hyponymy. For example, *bachelor* and *unmarried* are related by

synonymy. They both refer to exactly the same thing or state. *Jumbo jet* and *aeroplane* are related by hyponymy.

*Collocation*: this describes the way in which certain words associate with others in a sematic way. For example, the adjective beautiful collocates with the noun woman rather than man. Some verbs regularly collocate with particular nouns, particularly those associated with animals and insects; bees-buzz, dogs-bark, ducks-quack.

## COHERENCE

A text make sense because there is continuity within the information it contains, where as a text is senseless or nonsensical when there is a serious mismatch between what it describes and our prior knowledge of the textual world.

Coherence is ''the quality of meaning, unity, and purpose perceived in discourse'' (Cook, 1989:156). Coherence is the underlying conceptual networks that are responsible for producing meaningful texts.

One important element of coherence is inference.

Inference: coherence unlike cohesion involves a degree of interaction between the text and the reader. When we read a text, we use our already existing knowledge to fill in the gaps which exist in a textual world.

In narratives, inference is nearly always necessary, since without taking for granted facts, details and cultural knowledge, a story would be very tedious to read. Much information is presupposed on the basis of our understanding of what happens in the real world. For example, we assume that characters go to bed at night, wash, use the toilet and get dressed in the morning as well as eating regularly every day, even though these events may not be described. The events that are described then have more significance for the plot and characters in the story. This selection is known as foregrounding. In turn, the events which are described or foregrounded require inference in terms of their potential significance for the theme or events of the story.

Comparison between cohesion and coherence

| Cohesion | Coherence |
|---|---|
| 1) Cohesion focuses more on lexical, syntax and grammar in sentence formation. | Coherence mainly deals with logic and appropriate organization of the sentences to form meaningful and understandable content. |
| 2) Cohesion is just the individual parts that are collected together and are stick together for representation. | Coherence is more sort of a pattern in the collected parts of writings. |
| 3) Cohesion is the writer's attribute and which is brought by using different techniques like repeated words/ideas, reference words, transition signals, substitution etc. | Coherence is the attribute that is decided by the end-user or reader, which determines whether the content seems meaningful, understanding and useful. |
| 4) Cohesion is a measurable property that can be measured by checking the lexical, syntaxes and grammar rules. | Coherence is not a measurable property and very hard to achieve. |
| 5) It is observable as it is dealt with the actual written content. | It is abstract as it deals with the ideas. |
| 6) Cohesion is a quantitative property. | Coherence is a qualitative property. |

Conclusion

A text, plainly, has to be coherent as well as cohesive. Cohesion and coherence are two important linguistic notions considered while writing any content and are properties of written materials. Cohesion is a textual

property which fosters coherence as cohesive devices guide the reader in text processing. Coherence is more elusive and has a lot to do with the manner that the content of a text is organised. When the content of a text fulfills the expectations of the reader. It is more likely to achieve its communicative effect.

References

Cook, G. (1989) *Discourse*. Hong Kong; Oxford University Press.

Ezeifeka, C. (2018). *Discourse analysis and approaches*. Awka; Patrobas Nigeria Limited.

Halliday, M.A.K and Hassan, R. (1978). Cohesion in English. London: Longman