



# **Cohesive Devices**

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# What are Cohesive Devices?

- Cohesive Devices are words or phrases that show the logical relationship between paragraphs or sections of a text or speech.
- They are sometimes called linking words, linkers, connectors, discourse markers or transitional words.

*e.g.*

Moreover, Therefore, for instance, Meanwhile, However, In conclusion, In addition, Furthermore etc.

# Cohesion and Cohesive ties

The difference of the presence or absence of cohesion in a text is illustrated in the following examples.

*e.g.*

1) To go to the post office, you will need to turn left from the next junction and then go straight for about 10 minutes and you will see it on your right-hand side.

2) The cow grazes in the field. The car broke down. I go swimming.

You can see that (1) makes sense while (2) consists of three independent sentences with no relationship to each other. This is because of the absence of cohesive devices.



## Types of Cohesion

- 1) Reference
- 2) Substitution
- 3) Ellipsis
- 4) Conjunctions
- 5) Lexical items

# 1) Reference

- Specific items within a text which cannot be “interpreted semantically in their own right” but “make reference to something else” (Halliday & Hasan 1994:31).

*e.g.*

Fanny goes jogging everyday. She is a fast runner.

In this example, the subject of the second sentence *she* refers to the subject of the first sentence, *Fanny*. Without *Fanny*, you wouldn't know who is referred to as *she* in the second sentence.

The personal pronoun *she* cannot be interpreted semantically in its own right without referring to *Fanny*.

## 2) Substitution

➤ This is a process in which one item within a text is replaced by another.

*e.g.*

Saman's shoes are old now. He should buy a new pair.

➤ The above example shows this cohesive relation where “pair” substitutes the word, “shoes”

➤ Unlike in reference, in substitution one item could easily be replaced by the other. (“pair” could be easily replaced by “shoes”)

### 3) Ellipsis

➤ Ellipsis maybe explained as the omission of an item.

*e.g.*

Ruvini **ate** cake and Ruvan [blank] some raisins.

➤ In the given example the predicator “**ate**” is left out in the second half of the sentence and is presupposed because it already occurred before.

It would, also be possible to repeat the predicator again at the position where it has been left out.

## 4) Conjunctions

The writer's purpose in using **conjunctions**:

- to join nouns, phrases and clauses
- to operate within a sentence
- to join words/ideas of equal status (coordinating conjunctions)
- to join words/ideas of unequal status (subordinating)

**Connectives** are words that link clauses or sentences. They can be conjunctions or connecting adverbs.



## CONJUNCTIONS

Tom **and** Jerry didn't get on well **and** they hated each other.

"**and**" joining nouns;

"**and**" joining two main clauses

Shrek **and** Fiona came home **when** I was asleep.

"**and**" joining nouns;

"**when**" joining a subordinate idea/clause to the main clause, indicating time

## CONNECTIVES

Mom and Dad went out. **Meanwhile**, Linda took the car and drove to the party.

➤ The idea in the first sentence of Mom and Dad going out is connected by "**meanwhile**" to the idea of Linda driving to the party during the same time period.

Mom and Dad came home. Linda, **however**, stayed out.

➤ The idea in the first sentence is linked to the contrasting idea in the second sentence by the use of the contrasting connective.

## 5) Lexical Cohesion

Lexical Cohesion is generally understood as “the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary” (Halliday & Hasan 1994:274).

- i. Repetition
- ii. Synonym
- iii. Collocation

# Repetition

- When the same lexical item is repeated in the same or different form, there is some contribution to the text's overall cohesion

*e.g.*

- George met a **bear**. The **bear** was bulgy.
- Ann is facing a **difficult** situation at Western Technologies Corporation. She has **difficulty** functioning in the executive team.

# Synonym

- Lexical cohesion also occurs when a different word is chosen but the meaning of the word is being repeated.

*e.g.*

Ann is facing a difficult situation at **Western Technologies Corporation**. She has difficulty functioning in **the company's** executive team.

- Another type of synonymy is created when the words relate to each other in terms of category and sub-category, or general to specific, or part to whole.

*e.g.*

**the knee joint, the elbow joint** are parts of **the skeleton**.

# Collocation

- Collocation describes when a given word is expected to occur along with another specific word.

*e.g.*

‘Prescribe’, is likely to be immediately followed by the name of a specific drug or dosage.

The word ‘diagnose’ is predictably followed by a specific medical condition.

- The more a reader knows a particular field or language, the more easily they can predict collocations, and recognize when words put together by inexperienced writers.



Small islands of coherence in a  
sea of chaos can shift the  
whole system to a higher order.

Barbara Marx Hubbard

“ quote fancy

# References

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