



2.3: Cohesive Devices

EN2106 – Communication Skills

Level I - Semester 2

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.**
- ❑ They are words like *moreover, therefore, for instance*, etc.

Cohesion and cohesive ties

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

(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

Reference

Substitution

Ellipsis

Conjunctions

Lexical items

Reference

Refers to specific items within a text which cannot be “interpreted semantically in their own right” but “make reference to something else” (HALLIDAY & HASAN 1994:31).

Example:

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**.

Substitution

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

Example:

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”)

Ellipsis

Somewhat similar to substitution where one item could be replaced by another.

Ellipsis maybe explained as the omission of an item.

Example:

*Ruvini **ate** cake and Ruwan [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.

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.

Examples

CONJUNCTIONS

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

(1st "and" joining nouns; 2nd "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

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

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

Mum 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.)

Examples

coordinating conjunctions (simple adverbs) –

Example:

for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (FANBOYS)

more compound adverbs –

Example:

furthermore, nevertheless,
anyway, instead, besides.

compound adverbs in – ly

Example:

eventually, accordingly, subsequently,

prepositional phrases,

Example:

on the contrary, as a result, in
addition, instead of, in spite of,
because of

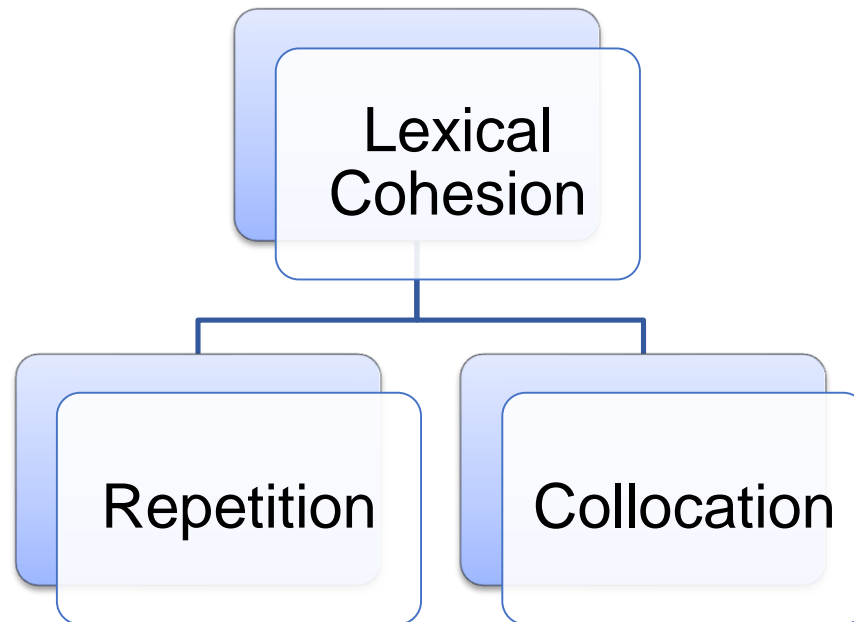
compound adverbs in there- and where-

Example:

therefore, thereby, whereas

Lexical Cohesion

- ❑ Lexical Cohesion is generally understood as “the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary” (HALLIDAY & HASAN 1994:274).



Repetition

Uses the same word or synonyms, antonyms, etc.

Example:

Question: Who is the kindest among your friends?

Answer : Hiruni is the most generous.

Here, two synonyms “kind(est)” and “(most) generous” are having lexical cohesion.

Collocation

Collocation uses related words that often go together or tend to repeat the same meaning.

Example: "once upon a time".

This is lexical cohesion.

Use of Cohesive Devices

Cohesive devices indicate what we are doing in a sentence and assist to guide the reader through our writing. They signal to the reader what the Relationships are between the different clauses, sentences and paragraphs.

Thank you.