

Relations Between Cohesion in Constructed Responses and Individual Differences in Reading Literacy Skills

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Background

- Models of literacy assume relations exist between foundational reading skills (vocabulary, reading comprehension) and coherence-building¹⁻⁴
- Assume reading varies across contexts (e.g., genre)⁵⁻⁶
- Cohesion of constructed responses (CRs) found to be a reliable proxy for the coherence-building processes associated with deep comprehension⁷⁻⁸

Gaps in literature:

Relations Between Processes & Individual Differences

Multi-Dimensional Linguistic Analyses of Students' CRs

Research Questions

- How do readers' foundational reading skills (vocabulary, reading comprehension) relate to the cohesion of constructed responses?
- To what extent do these relations vary across contexts (i.e., text and sample)?

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Data & Variables

Participants from a 4-year institution (N=263) or 2-year community college (N=297) read 2 texts (history and science) in a think-aloud task and completed assessments of reading comprehension and vocabulary skills

Foundational Reading Skills:



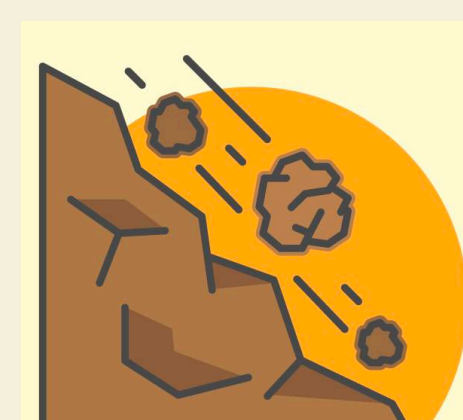
vocab. skills

vs.



reading comp.

Text Genres:



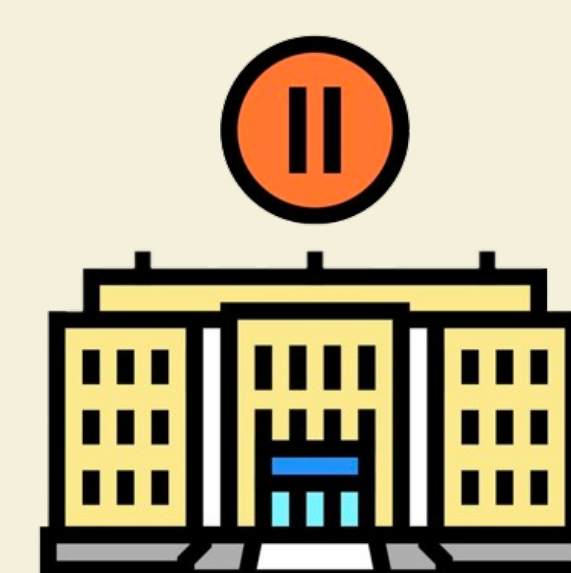
science text

vs.



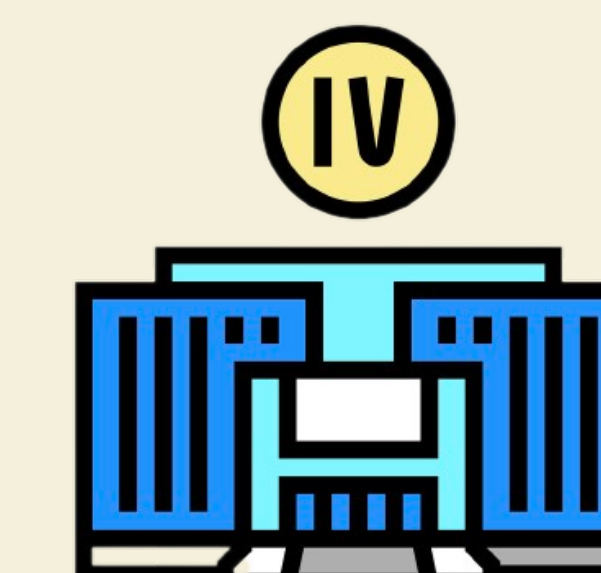
history text

Institution Sample:



2-year

vs.

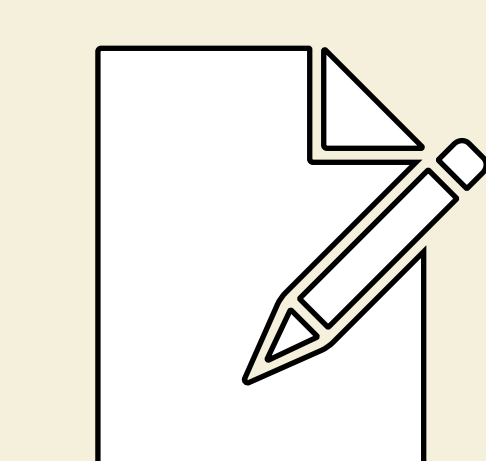


4-year

semantic cohesion reflects extent readers represent ideas through semantically similar words (local, distal, or source-overlap)

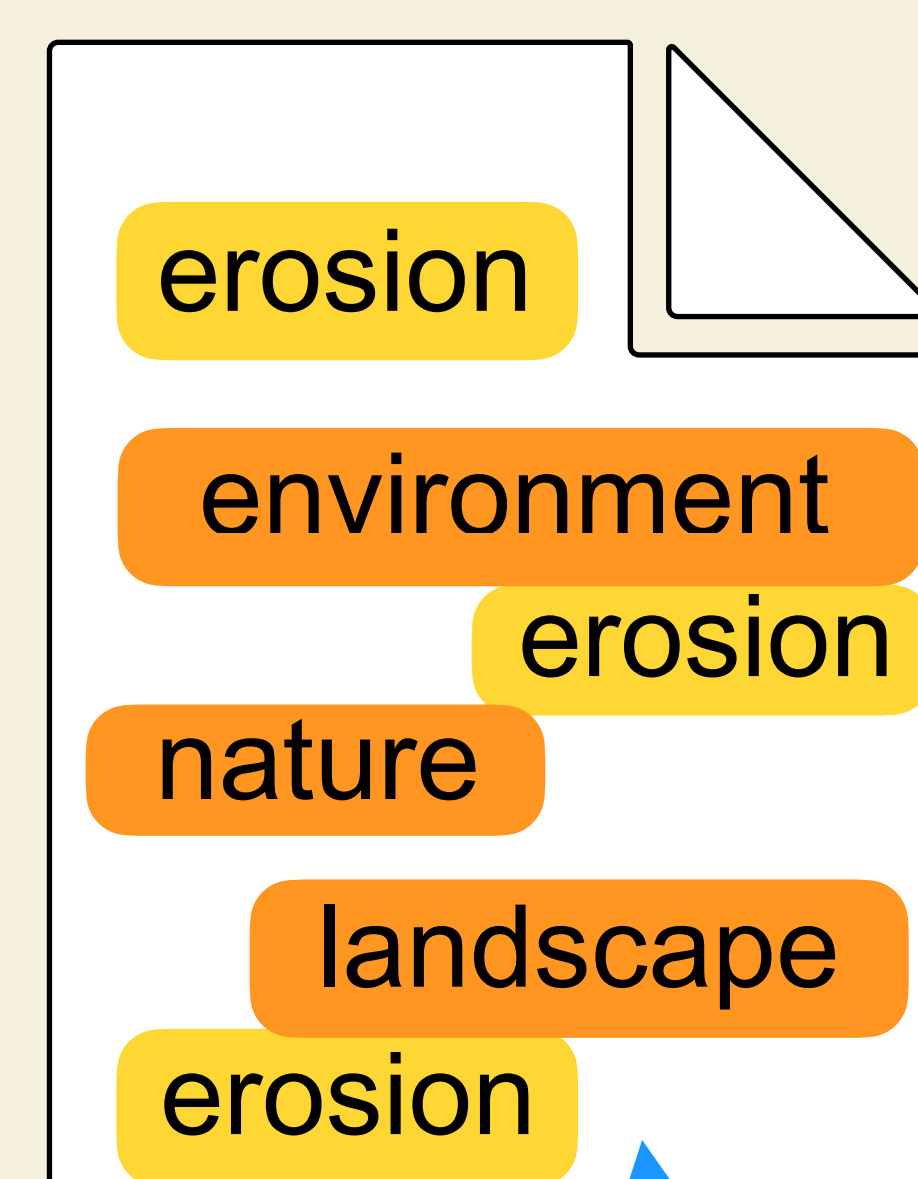
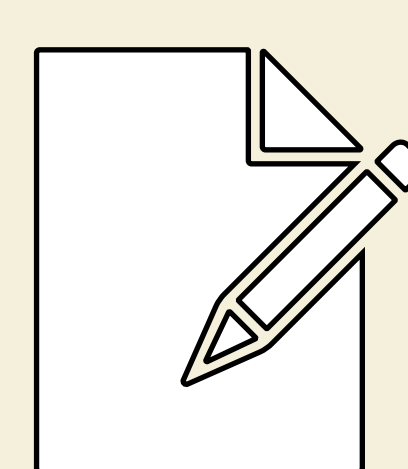
lexical cohesion reflects "what" is being connected; repetition of content words (local, distal, or source-overlap)

source cohesion reflects extent readers represent the content words (lexical) or ideas (semantic) that are in the text



Local Cohesion

Distal Cohesion



Lexical Cohesion

Semantic Cohesion

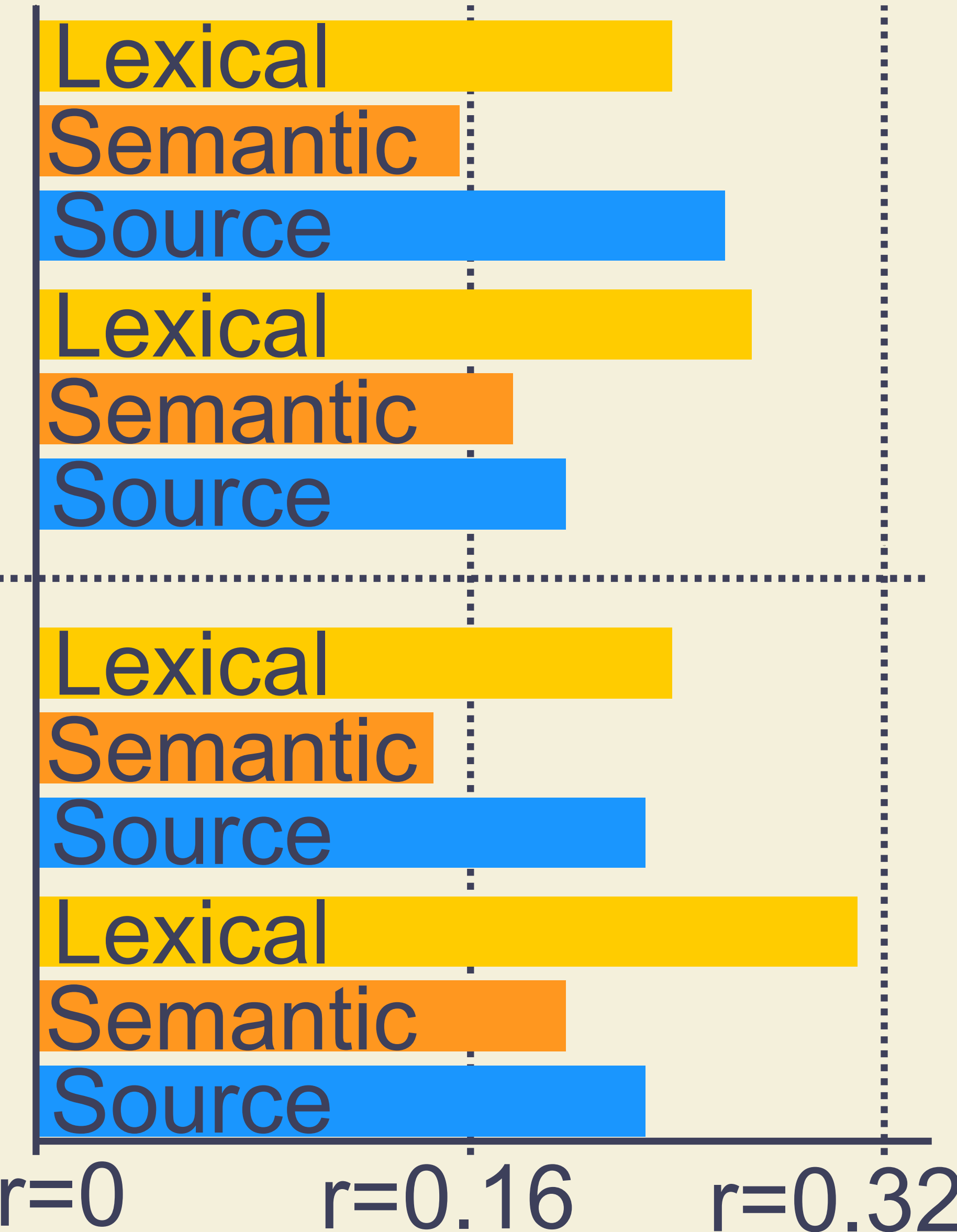
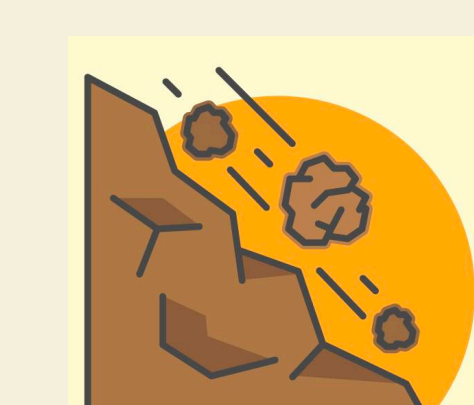
Source Cohesion



Results



vocab. skills



Conclusion

- Analyses suggest that readers with stronger reading skills (RC/Voc) make more connections
- Fine-grained analyses (including institution sample) showed cohesion more strongly related to reading comprehension than vocabulary skills, indicating the importance of comprehension skills that elicit coherence-building
- Relationship between reading skills and cohesion relatively stable across contexts (but differ in magnitude)

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