

Written Discourse

Cohesion and Coherence

- Meaning is dependent on the **context**: the events and situational factors in which acts of communication are embedded, i.e. the **purpose, circumstances, physical context, relationship** between addresser and addressee, their **previous contact** with each other, and the **topic** ...

When is a text not a text?

- We can tell whether something is a text:
- Example:
Text 1. *Pick up a handful of soil in your garden. Ordinary, unexciting earth. Yet it is one of nature's miracles and one of her most complex products. Your success as a gardener will largely depend on its condition, so take the first step in gardening. Get to know your soil.*

How do we know that this is a text?

Starting point

- **Text**: the record of some speaker's or writer's discourse, uttered or written in some context and for some purpose.
- **Context**: No texts are constructed in isolation. Language is a social practice.

Spoken vs. written discourse

- Some features of spoken language
'a friend of mine like he er suddenly turned up um er in the airport my best friend'
- **Fillers**: *um, er*
- **Hesitations**
- **Repetition**: double subject (a friend of mine, he)
- **Lexical repetition**: a friend of mine, my best friend

1. It makes sense:

- We can understand what the text is about.
- We can translate it.
- We can paraphrase it .
- We can explain the meaning to someone else.

2. It is somehow complete

- It is made up of sentences, not bits of sentences.
Can I have a... (this is not a complete utterance - we know there is **something missing at the end**)
...were not very clear (this is not a complete text we know there is **something missing at the beginning**)
- The sentences are somehow **connected** (*yet, and, so; soil, earth; garden, gardening*) – there is **cohesion**.

Cohesion

- Cohesion is the set of **grammatical and lexical connections between sentences** which are linked together into a text.
- There are several of these elements in our text.

Coherence?

Is **Text 2** below coherent?

Text 2: Fertilisers put back what the rain and plants take away. Plastic pots are not just substitutes for clay ones. Pears are a little more temperamental than apples. Supporting and training are not quite the same thing.

3. You can make a summary of it

- Our text was taken from the first page of a book about gardening. The first paragraph introduces the idea of the important role played by the soil, underlining how unremarkable it is in physical terms but how miraculous it is in terms of its properties, and encourages the reader to become familiar with this element.

The text is, therefore, **coherent**.

Cohesive features

Text 1. *Pick up a handful of soil in your garden.*

Ordinary, unexciting earth. Yet it is one of nature's miracles and one of her most complex products. Your success as a gardener will largely depend on its condition, so take the first step in gardening. Get to know your soil.

Lexical cohesion: garden, gardener, gardening; soil, earth, soil

Pronouns: your (3x)

Imperatives: pick up, take, get

Earth – it, one of nature's miracles, one of her most complex products, its condition

Conjunctions – yet, so, and

Incoherent

- Although there are some cohesive features in the text, it is **not coherent**. It does not really say anything coherent that one could paraphrase. It seems to be talking about a lot of **unconnected things** even though it is on the topic of gardening.
- In fact it is taken from the first line of each chapter of the gardening manual.

Cohesive features

- **Texts have texture** as we have seen. The sentences in a text are **linked together into a cohesive whole**, the elements are in some way tied together, they are linked by a series of devices known as **cohesive ties**.
- Without cohesive ties, texts become a collection of isolated sentences; they are **the devices a language uses to achieve unity and cohesiveness in texts**, written or spoken.

Cohesion and coherence

- **Cohesion** and **coherence** are terms used in discourse analysis to describe the properties of written texts.
- Cohesion is a precondition for coherence.

Definitions

⇒ **Cohesion:**

The **grammatical and lexical relationships between different elements of a text** which hold it together.

⇒ **Coherence:**

The **ways a text makes sense** to readers and writer through the relevance and accessibility of its configuration of concepts, ideas and theories.

Cohesion vs. coherence

Cohesion:

- **formal** linguistic features e.g. repetition, reference
- semantic relationships between **sentences** and **within sentences**
- determined by **lexically** and **grammatically** overt intersentential relationships

Coherence:

- very **general** principle of interpretation of language in context
- **fewer formal** linguistic features
- relationships deal with **text as a whole**
- based on primarily **semantic relationships**

Cohesion

General categories of cohesive devices that signal coherence in texts:

- Reference
 - Substitution
 - Ellipsis
 - Conjunction
 - Lexical Cohesion
- } Grammatical Cohesion

1. Reference

- There are certain **items** in every language which have the property of reference, in the specific sense that **they make reference to something else** for their interpretation.

Reference

- For example:
 - *Three blind mice, three blind mice. See how **they** run! See how **they** run!*
 - *There were two birds upon a tree. **Another** came, and there were three.*
 - *Doctor Foster went to Gloucester in a shower of rain. **He** stepped in a puddle right up to **his** middle and never went there again.*

Reference

- In other words, in the example “See how they run!”, the pronominal reference **they** means not merely “three blind mice”, but more precisely “the same three blind mice that we have just been talking about”.

Reference

- The identity of a presuming reference item may be retrievable from:
 - the surrounding text (**endophoric** reference),
 - or outside the text (**exophoric** reference).

Reference

- All these items show that **information is to be retrieved from elsewhere** (in the same text in this case).
- What characterises this particular kind of cohesion, i.e. reference – is the continuity of what is being referred to, whereby **the same thing enters the discourse a second time**.

Reference

Expressed by:

- **pronouns and possessive adjectives** (I, me, she, you, we, my, mine)
- **demonstrative pronouns** (this, these, that, those)
- **comparative adjectives/pronouns** (another, other, such)
- **definite article** (the)
- **demonstrative adverbs** (here, there, now, then).....

1.1. Exophoric reference

- The identity of a presuming item can be retrieved **from the general context of culture**.

- *How hot the sun is today!*

(we all know which sun we are talking about, the specific sun of our solar system)

- or

1.1. Exophoric reference

2. The identity of a presuming item can be retrieved from the immediate context of situation.

- Put *it* down next to *her*, please.

(if you are in the same place and in the same time, you are able to decode the *it* and *her*)

1.2. Endophoric reference

• Reference to elements which can be reconstructed from inside the text.

• It can be:

a) **cataphoric**, pointing forwards, as in:

This is how he said it. He shouted and...

- *The news came as a terrible shock to Mrs. Mallard. It seemed her husband Brently had been killed in a railroad disaster.*

b) **anaphoric**, pointing backwards, as in:

- *I met John in the station. He was completely drunk.*

- *A man rang on the door. He was wearing a black coat.*

1.2. Endophoric reference

• the identity of a presuming item can be retrieved from elsewhere within the text itself. The identity of the participant is usually given at an earlier point in the text:

- *A man rang on the door. He was wearing a black coat.*

(the identity of the man participant identified as HE has been revealed somewhere before in the text)

(Lucy), an only child, is used to a life of shopping with (her) (mother), who uses (her) credit card to pay for purchases—(she) calls this using 'funny money' to shop because (they) have great fun with (their) new purchases. Lucy's father owns his own construction business and the family is comfortable with their standard of living. Recently, (she) notices a change in (her) parents. They argue more and Lucy feels (herself) being 'shut out' from their discussions which they now have in hushed voices. Instead of going abroad, Lucy is told that (she) will be staying with (her) Grandma in Muar because they don't have the money to go away. During the time Lucy spends with (her) Grandma, (she) discovers that one doesn't have to spend money to have fun.

(Adapted from *Funny Money* by Alison Prince)

Exercise 1

- Lucy : her she she her herself she her her she
 - Lucy's mother : her
 - credit card : this
 - Lucy and mother : they their
 - Lucy's father : his
 - the family : their
 - Lucy's parents : they their they they
- } ana-phoric devices

• What type of reference (exophoric or endophoric) do we have in the following examples?

1. *The government are to blame for unemployment.*

exophoric

2. *This is how to get the best results. You let the berries dry in the sun, till all the moisture has gone out of them. Then you gather them up and chop them very fine.*

Endophoric - cataphoric

3. You entered into a tiny little hallway and the kitchen was off **that**.

Endophoric - anaphoric

4. We could move **that** table.

Exophoric

5. I saw Sally yesterday. **She** was lying on the beach.

Endophoric - anaphoric

6. **It** was charming, that little bistro in Regent Square.

Endophoric - cataphoric

7. **The queen** to visit India (newspaper headline)

Exophoric

8. Take a look at **this**.

Exophoric

9. On 7 May 1945, Germany surrendered to **the Allied Forces** and **the war** was over.

Exophoric

10. If you need **it**, there's a towel in the top drawer.

Endophoric - cataphoric

Exercise 2

- Decide whether the following cases of endophoric reference are anaphoric or cataphoric:

1. If a man has talent and can't use it, **he's** failed.

Anaphoric

1. No woman can call **herself** free until **she** can choose consciously whether **she** will or will not be a mother.

Anaphoric

7. The object felt heavy in his hands. Inside **it** was a key.

Anaphoric

8. Too scared to buy before **they** sell, some homeowners aim for a trade.

Cataphoric

9. **The** book was there on the table. I'd never read Moby Dick and I didn't intend to do so now.

Cataphoric

10. Michael went to the bank. **He** was annoyed because **it** was closed.

Anaphoric

3. Why do we envy **him**, the bankrupt man?

Cataphoric

4. A few weeks before **he** left, John gave us an old cigar box.

Cataphoric

5. Some careless driver backed into our car. **Such** people make me mad.

Anaphoric

6. **This**, I now realize, was a very bad idea – suggesting we do whatever Terry Crews wants for the day.

Cataphoric

Exercise 3

- Find instances of reference and decide on the type:

- Mr. Kaplan rose, inspiration in his eyes. His smile was so wide that his face seemed to be one ecstatic cavern. He cast majestic glances to both sides, as if reading the tribute in the faces of his fellow students.

- his (eyes), his (smile), his (face), he, his (fellow students) – endophoric (anaphora)

- *I have a kind neighbor. He is Agus Mulyono. He works in a hospital. It is located not so far from his house. Mr. Agus has lived there for more than ten years with his family. They are Mrs. Siti and two sons named Bobby and Agung.*
- I have a kind neighbor. **He** is Agus Mulyono. **He** works in a hospital. **It** is located not so far from **his** house. **Mr. Agus** has lived **there** for more than ten years with **his** family. **They** are Mrs. Siti and two sons named Bobby and Agung. (endophoric – anaphora)

- *For many years, East German people devised creative ways to sneak out of East Germany. Some people dug tunnels; others tried crashing through checkpoints with cars, trucks, or busses; still others flew out in small airplanes or balloons.*
- For many years, East German people devised creative ways to sneak out of East Germany. **Some** people dug tunnels; others tried crashing through checkpoints with cars, trucks, or busses; still **others** flew out in small airplanes or balloons. (endophoric – anaphora)

- *When the CSI team arrived at the crime scene, these words were scribbled on the bathroom mirror: I'll be back.*
- When the CSI team arrived at the crime scene, **these words** were scribbled on the bathroom mirror: I'll be back. (endophoric – cataphora)

Exercise 4

List the words which belong to the reference chain which starts with the word 'LA Galaxy football team'.

- 1 LA Galaxy football team from New York has just checked into the Royale Bintang Hotel. This group is here on a world tour. Malaysia is their third stop-over after Singapore and Indonesia. Hong Kong plays host after this and they are expected to play against the national team.

List the words which belong to the reference chain which starts with the word 'the Beatles'.

- 2 The Beatles were probably the most famous British pop group in the 20th century. They first caught the public's attention in the 60s. It was unusual then for groups based outside London to achieve recognition. Their songs are still popular today. Songs such as 'A hard day's night' and 'Let it be' are theirs. These songs have sold millions and until today no group has come close to their level of success.

CONSOLIDATION EXERCISE

What do each of the words in bold refer to? Identify whether each word is an anaphoric or a cataphoric reference. Complete the table.

On the Money is a set of four short stories supported by teachers' notes, a DVD and a website. (0) **It** is the result of a working partnership among Standard Life, through (1) **its** corporate responsibility policy, Scottish Book Trust and the Scottish Centre for Financial Education. It is important to emphasise also that teachers and pupils piloting (2) **the** project and the authors themselves are equal partners and the success of the project is due to an extremely vibrant and cohesive team approach.

The aim of the project is to develop the financial capabilities of primary school pupils as part of (3) **their** general education. (4) **This** will give pupils an opportunity to discuss values and to do (5) **this** in a very creative and enjoyable way.

Primary teachers in pilot schools used drama or other forms of art to explore issues raised by (6) **the** stories. (7) **Some** encouraged pupils to keep a 'financial dictionary' to remind (8) **them** of any financial terms with which (9) **they** were unfamiliar.

(Adapted from *Learning and Teaching Scotland*, 2007)

2. Substitution

- It is a grammatical relation where **one grammatical item substitutes another (lexical) one**. The substituted item can only be interpreted by reference to the original longer item.
- There are three kinds of substitution **nominal, verbal and clausal**.

Nominal substitution

Nominal substitution is when *one* or *ones* in pronominal use substitute a singular or a plural countable noun, and the substitution of the whole noun phrase by *the same*.

- *This Coke is flat. Get me a fresh **one**.*
- *This bulb is broken . Give me a new **one**.*
- *These magazines are old. Let's look at some newer **ones**.*
- *Give me a pint of Guinness and a packet of crisps. – I'll have **the same**.*

Clausal substitution

- **Replaces a whole clause:** It is carried out by means of **so** (to replace an affirmative clause) and **not** (to replace a negative one):
- *Is there a strike on Saturday? - They say **so**.*
- *Are you going to Grosseto? If **so**, we could travel together. If **not**, I'll take the bus.*

3. *Many people have refused to vote in elections for years. They may have because they believe that their vote can change nothing.*

Done so

4. *Good writers frequently rephrase and summarise the main ideas in their texts. They in order to remind the reader about what is important.*

Do so

5. *The company changed their product packaging last year and by they have attracted many new customers.*

Doing so

6. *There has been a lot of speculation about why the team played so badly – the manager claims that they..... because they were tired.*

Did so

Verbal substitution

- Carried out by means of the various forms of **do** functioning as pro-verbs substituting for some lexical verb mentioned previously.

- *I didn't manage to do my homework but Martin **did**.*

- *Does anyone live in Grosseto? - I **do**.*

Exercise 1

Use clausal substitution to complete the sentences:

1. *Many British graduates are taking jobs overseas and the reason they are is because graduate unemployment is currently high in the UK.*

Doing so

2. *The prince is then told to kill and bring home a dragon, but in order to, he has to cross the Forbidden Mountain.*

Do so

Exercise 2

Identify substitution:

1. *I'll have a latte, and please be sure to use skim milk.
- I'll have the same.*

The same

1. *Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up, and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better.*

One

3. *It's tonight, right? – I don't think so.*

So

4. *All generalisations are false, including this one. (Mark Twaine)*

One

5. *I might come round. If not, I'll call you.*

not

6. *There's a towel in the top drawer, if you need one.*

One

3. Ellipsis

- **Ellipsis** is similar to substitution but **the item concerned is replaced by nothing**. There is an obvious structural gap which can only be revealed by a previous sentence.
- It can be **nominal, verbal and clausal**.

Nominal ellipsis

- **Nominal ellipsis** involves the **omission of a head noun or noun phrase**.
- *Ten students passed and another ten \emptyset failed.*
- *Which jeans are you going to wear? These \emptyset are the nicest.*
- * *another* and *these* are endophoric references

Verbal ellipsis

- **Verbal ellipsis** involves the **omission of a lexical verb form a verb phrase** and possibly an auxiliary or two, only recoverable from reference to a previous sentence.
- *Is it going to rain today? It may \emptyset , it may not \emptyset .*
- *Have you been drinking? – Yes, I have \emptyset .*

Clausal ellipsis

- **Clausal ellipsis** is concerned with the **omission of large parts of clauses, whole phrases and more**.
- *Who has taken my car keys?*
- *Peter \emptyset .*
- *Where did you leave those library books?*
- *\emptyset On the floor in the bedroom.*

Exercise 1

Identify the ellipsis and say whether it is nominal, verbal or clausal.

Many OAPs still have a hard time making ends meet– but some are sitting on a small fortune. During the last property boom they saw the value of their homes soar. (208)

Particles containing the b quark (bottom particles) are the heaviest found so far, some weighing in at around ten times the mass of the proton. (219)

I say that the critic new to the trade 'lowers his standards' when faced with a weekly fare of rubbish, and so he does; that is, he excuses the badness of the plays and marks them higher than he knows he should. Which is only reasonable

This form tells me that you want to vote by post, or get someone else to vote on your behalf, at elections for an indefinite period. It is for people who have a right to vote but who cannot reasonably be expected to vote in person because of the nature of their job (or their spouse's). Fill the form in carefully using *block letters* except for your signature.

4. Conjunction

- Refers to specific **grammatical devices, conjunctions, which link sentences to each other:**
- **Additive conjunctions** add on information
- **Adversative conjunctions** draw a contrast
- **Causal conjunctions** make a causal link
- **Temporal conjunctions** make a time link between two sentences

Exercise 1

Sort these conjunctions: additive, contrastive, causal, or temporal?

Finally, anyway, in addition, or, furthermore, in other words, yet, however, on the contrary, so, then, for this reason, as a result, up to now, but, after all, and, though, consequently, now, it follows that, then

Exercise 2

Now have a look at the sentences below and see if you can change them using ellipsis.

1. *He said he would retire at the age of 55 and he has retired at the age of 55.*
3. *Do you know if it will snow tomorrow? I think it will snow.*
4. *Michiko bought 10 eggs and Hiro bought another 10 eggs.*

Conjunctions

- **Additive:** *and, in addition*
- **Adversative:** *but, yet, however*
- **Causal:** *so, therefore, consequently*
- **Temporal:** *then, after that, subsequently*

Key

- **additive, contrastive, causal, temporal**
- **Finally, anyway, in addition, or, furthermore, in other words, yet, however, on the contrary, so, then, for this reason, as a result, up to now, but, after all, and, though, consequently, now, it follows that, then**

5. Lexical cohesion

- Lecture no. 4

Exercise 1

Identify grammatical cohesion in the text:

Martin's grandmother had an English accent.

'I'm a Londoner, of course,' she said. 'Always a Londoner, that's me.'

She'd left London years and years ago, after the end of World War Two.

'I was about your age,' she said to Snow.

'Hopped on a boat. Never seen one before. All by myself. Couldn't get out of there quick enough.'

Key

Martin's grandmother had an English accent. 'I'm a Londoner, of course,' she said. ∅ Always a Londoner, that's me.' She'd left London years and years ago, after the end of World War Two. 'I was about your age,' she said to Snow. ∅ Hopped on a boat. ∅ Never seen one before ∅. ∅ All by myself. ∅ Couldn't get out of there quick enough.'

Reference: M's grandmother = I, she, me, she, I, she
(endophoric – anaphora);
Snow=your – endophoric –cataphora;
Londoner = that (end. – anaphora);
London=there (end.-an.);

Substitution: one

Ellipsis: ∅

Conjunctions: and, after