

## UNDERSTANDING THE USE OF COHESION DEVICES AND COHERENCE IN WRITING

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**Abstract:** To make sense of the writing, the writer needs to understand the use of cohesion devices and coherence. It is important that writing be coherent as well as cohesive. A text is cohesive if its elements are linked together, and a text is coherent if it makes sense. This paper titled “Understanding the use of Cohesion Devices and Coherence in Writing”. This study is aimed to know and understand the using of cohesion devices and coherence in students’ writing. To make sense of the writing, the writer needs to understand the use of cohesion devices and coherence. It is important that writing be coherent as well as cohesive. This article discuss the concept of writing, cohesion devices, and coherence. The last, this article describe the importance of understanding the use of cohesion device and coherence in writing.

**Keywords:** *Writing, Cohesion Device, Coherence*

### INTRODUCTION

Writing plays a vital role in learning activity. It can be very useful for one who intends to generate a meaningful product in their learning process. Writing is a process to express ideas or thoughts in textual medium that usually called as written language. It is really needed for knowledge development.

Writing is one of skills in English mastery. It is very important for student because writing is the basic skill, just as important as listening, speaking, and reading. Moreover, writing is not only for communicating to each other but also for expressing an idea. In addition, it can be used for remembering something and for thinking critically as well.

Writing is really a way of thinking, not just feeling but thinking about thing that are disparate, unresolved, mysterious, problematic or just sweet. Everyone has the same right to share or blow up everything in his or her mind. Writing will be very enjoyable as long as we have the ideas in our mind. However, writing is not an easy activity. Many people get difficulties in clustering their idea into sentences and making a good paragraph.

A good writing has cohesion and coherence. The term cohesion refers to formal (stylistic) aspect of writing, specifically on the paragraph and sentence level. The term coherence refers to content aspect. Writing has coherence if it presents its argument in a clear, plausible, and comprehensible order. There are no

„logical gaps“ in its line of reasoning. It avoids unnecessary digressions.

The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text (Halliday, 1976). Cohesion can be defined as an element of text which contains grammatical and lexical aspect to bond the meaning or point of the text by using one topic and one idea as a topic of discussion. Cohesion can also be called as the outside structure of writing. It focuses on the grammatical aspects, not meaning which is achieved by coherence. However, coherence is mostly achieved by having cohesion first.

Many students still can't write a good paragraph yet. They have studied how to write a good writing. Their writings do not complete the characteristic of writing paragraph. In other words, it does not fulfill the requirements in writing a good paragraph yet; especially in the cohesion aspect.

The students have many problems in writing. They have lack of understanding of cohesion. Furthermore, they have difficulties in arranging the sentences. They are still confused how to use cohesion device in writing. Thus this problem needs to be resolved due the fact that having very good ability in using cohesion can improve their writing ability.

Considering the background that has been presented above, The main purpose of this research that the writer is focusing on discussing the use of cohesion devices and coherence in writing.

## **Concept Of Writing**

### ***Definition of Writing***

Writing plays a vital role in learning activity. It can be very useful for one who intends to generate a meaningful product in their learning process. In addition, according to (Harmer: 2004), writing is often helpful like a preparation in other activity, especially when the student write as an opening to discussion activities. Thus, writing is the product of learning process that help the student in their instruction activity.

On major theme in pedagogical research on writing is the basic organization process of writing. (Brown: 1998) stated that the result of the written product are thinking, drafting and revising. The compositional nature of writing has to produce writing pedagogy that focuses student to bring in ideas, how to control them coherently, how to function discourse markers and rhetorical convention to locate them cohesively to be written text, how to repair text for really meaning, how to correct text for suitable grammar, and how to result a final product. So, writing is the basic organization that focuses on student to bring in ideas, how to make cohesive and suitable grammar to be a good writing.

Moreover, (Omaggio: 2011) state that writing is needed composing, which signify the ability another to describe of part of information in the narrative type or descriptive, or to change information into new texts, like expository or argumentative writing.

Based on the above statements, the writer can put forward that writing is one of the process that person does, not only involve,

the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences, but also the ability to think creatively including all information which is not necessary, writing also consist of various genre such as description, argumentation, exposition and narration.

### ***How To Write***

According to (Harmer : 2004) the process of writing has four elements:

1. Planning  
Planning is any orderly procedure which is used to bring about a desired result. The first stage in the writing process is planning. There are three main issues when starting a planning. Firstly, is they have considered the purpose of their writing, because it will affect what kind of text that will be produced, the language that will be used and the information that will be included. Secondly, the writers have to think of the audience who read their writing. Thirdly, writer has to consider the content structure of their writing. What the best way is to arrange the fact, idea, or argument which has been decided to include.
2. Drafting  
Drafting is a row of strategies designed to compose and develop a sustained piece of witting procedure to conclude whether the information you discover while planning can be established into a successful piece of or not.
3. Editing (Reflecting and Revising)

The writers need to read the draft which they produced. Perhaps the order of the information is not clear probably the ambiguous and confused text has been written. Eventually, the writers have asked the reader to comment and suggest and reflecting and revising. So, the writer revises his writing to make appropriate revisions.

#### **4. Final version**

The writers produce the final version when he has edited his draft, making the changes they think to be necessary. It is considerably different from both the original plan and the first draft because it has been changed in the editing process. It becomes the final version that will be read by the audience.

### **The Concept of Cohesion**

Cohesion deals with how the ideas of sentence and paragraph is connected into a unified whole, so that the flow information in textbook on writing and composition is easily to be read. Similarly. Taboada (2004) proposed that "Cohesion is part of the system of a language, and like other semantic relations, it is expressed through the stratal organization of language. Furthermore, Halliday and Hasan (1976: 4) state that cohesion is the method to show the coherence of the text by relating the meaning within a text. In addition, Halliday and Hasan argue that cohesive text includes grammatical and lexical elements in the text.

Based on some statements above, cohesion can be defined as an element of text which contains grammatical and lexical aspect to bond the meaning or point of the text

by using one topic and one idea as a topic of discussion.

Grammatical cohesion embraces some devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction, while lexical cohesion is divided into reiteration (repetition, synonymy etc.) and collocation (co-occurrence of lexical items). Additionally, Halliday and Hasan (1976) identified five different types of cohesion, namely, reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion.

#### 1. Reference

Reference is the act of preferring to a preceding or following element, deals with a semantic relationship. For example:

*Mikhail Gorbachev didn't have to change the world. **He** could have chosen to rule much as his predecessors did.*

#### 2. Substitution and ellipsis

Substitution and ellipsis are essentially similar. Ellipsis is described as a form of substitution in which the original item is replaced by zero. In a later publication, Halliday (1985) combines substitution and ellipsis into a single category.

- a. Substitution is the replacement of the word (group) or sentence segment by a „dummy“ word.

Example:

*A: I really like eating sandwich.*

*B: I do too.*

- b. Ellipsis occurs when some essential structural elements are omitted from a sentence or clause and can be recovered by referring to an element in the

preceding text. For example:

*A: Have you been working?*

*B: Yes, I have (0)*

The symbol of (0) has a meaning as material which has been omitted from the first sentence of each text.

3. Conjunction is a relation which indicates how the subsequent sentence or clause should be linked to the preceding or the following (part of sentence).

For example:

*From a market viewpoint, the popular tabloid encourages the reader to read the whole page instead of choosing stories. And isn't that what any publisher wants?*

(“And” signals the presentation of additional information.)

#### 4. Lexical cohesion

Hoey (1991) argues that lexical cohesion is the single most important form of cohesion, accounting for something like forty per cent of cohesive ties in texts. In addition, Lexical cohesion occurs when two words in a text are semantically related in some ways – in other words, they are related in terms of their meaning. As Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that, the two major categories of lexical cohesion are reiteration and collocation.

- a. Reiteration can also occur through the use of a word that is systematically linked to a previous one. For example:

*What we lack in a newspaper is what we should get. In*

*other words, a „popular“  
newspaper may be the  
winning ticket.*

The second underlined word or phrase in each of texts refers back to previously mentioned entity.

b. Collocation deals with the relationship between words on the basis of the fact that these often occur in the same surroundings.

Some examples are “*sheep*” and “*wool*”, “*college*” and “*study*”.

For example:

*My brother rides his car  
quickly, its speed more  
than 100 Km per hours.*

### ***The concept of Coherence***

A text is cohesive if its elements are linked together. A text is coherent if it makes sense. It should be clear that these are not the same thing. That is, a text may be cohesive (i.e. linked together), but incoherent (i.e. meaningless). Here is one such (invented) text:

I am a teacher. The teacher was late for class. Class rhymes with grass. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. But it wasn't. Each sentence is notionally linked to the one that precedes it, using both lexical and grammatical means, but the text is ultimately senseless. The following (much quoted) exchange, however, is coherent to most people, even though there are no obvious links between its parts:

A: *There's the phone.*

B: *I'm in the bath.*

A: *OK.*

It is coherent because we can easily imagine a context in which it would make sense. Just as (albeit with more ingenuity perhaps) we can imagine a context in which the following would make sense:

A: *Whose hands are these?*

B: *They're your hands.*

A: *Good.*

Put simply, then cohesion is a formal feature of texts (it gives them their *texture*), while coherence is "in the eye of the beholder" - that is to say, it is the extent to which the reader (or listener) is able to infer the writer's (or speaker's) communicative intentions. Thus, cohesion is objectively verifiable, while coherence is more subjective. A text may be coherent to you, but incoherent to me.

### **DISCUSSION**

The exact relationship between cohesion and coherence is a matter of contention, however. While it is true that a sequence of unlinked utterances *can* make sense, it is often the case that some form of linking, e.g. with cohesive devices such as *and*, *but*, *so*, can make it easier for the reader (or listener) to process and to make sense of what they read (or hear). Nevertheless, a text which is basically poorly organized is not going to be made more coherent simply by peppering it with *moreover*, *however* and *notwithstanding*.

The following text (devised by the writer on writing, Ann Raimes) is an example of a text that is "over-egged" with cohesive markers, and which is typical of the

kind of texts that many students produce as a result of an over-emphasis on linking devices at the expense of other ways of making texts cohesive (of which probably the most important is lexis), For example:

Louie rushed and got ready for work, but, when he went out the door, he saw the snowstorm was very heavy. Therefore, he decided not to go to work. Then, he sat down to enjoy his newspaper. However, he realized his boss might get angry because he did not go to the office. Finally, he made another decision, that he must go to work. So, he went out the door and walked to the bus stop.

So, to return to the second part of the question, what *are* some practical ways to teach cohesion and coherence? The way that textual cohesion is achieved is best learned through paying close attention to the way sentences are linked in texts. There are a variety of cohesive devices, both lexical and grammatical, of which linkers (*and*, *so*, *but*) are just one. (For a comprehensive list, see the entry under *cohesion* in *An A-Z of ELT*, Macmillan: 2006). Cutting (short) texts up and asking learners to order them is a good way of drawing attention to the way that they are linked. I am fond of using short articles from children's encyclopedias. Identifying lexical chains in texts - that is, repetitions, the use of synonyms and hyponyms, and words from the same lexical field - is also a useful way of alerting learners to the key role that lexis has in binding a text together.

Coherence is more elusive but it has a lot to do with the way that the propositional content of texts is organized. If the content of a (written) text is organized in such a way that it fulfills the reader's expectations, it is more likely to achieve its communicative effect. This means that learners can be helped to write coherent texts through the analysis of the generic features of particular text types. This has long been the approach to teaching business, technical, and academic writing. More important still, is second-guessing the intended reader's questions, and then answering them. This means that it is important that, when doing writing tasks, students have a clear idea both of the purpose of the text, and of the intended readership. Good writers are able to "keep their reader in mind". Keeping your reader in mind does not guarantee coherence, but it would seem to be a prerequisite.

## CONCLUSION

It is important that writing be coherence as well as cohesive. English language teachers have often have often emphasised teaching cohesion devices, but they can also usefully focus on coherence by teaching learners to sequence ideas logically. To works toward this goal, teachers should help lerners understand the cohesion device and coherence in English writing. The teaching activities outlined in this writing have been developed to help learners gain more insight into some of possibilities for combining ideas and information in written English. It is hoped that these activities will provide teachers with some ideas for developing their own activities to

promote cohesion and coherence in students writing.

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