

THE FACT OF COHESION AND COHERENCE IN TEXTUAL HARMONY

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ABSTRACT: *Texts, in their various forms are not created in a vacuum, but they are contents of certain messages which the reader decodes for use. Being language use in naturally occurring situations, a text involves meaningful linguistic manipulations as well as ideational and interpersonal interaction in its realization in what is expressed as cohesion and coherence in textual building. Every meaningful text is an embodiment of cohesive network within the discourse (internal) and the other experimental (external) factors in the making and understanding of such a text. In this paper, we closely examine what a text is and made a case for its interchangeable use with discourse without contradictions. Much attention is also given to the cohesive devices which form the main network of links, ties and chains within a linguistic text but with the evidences that a text may be cohesively well-structured without the status of a coherent text which is the ultimate. Finally, a pedagogical intervention is recommended to cushion the problem associated with the acquisition of the required knowledge of cohesion and coherence in textual creation.*

KEYWORDS: Text, Discourse, Cohesion, Coherence, Textual Harmony.

Introduction

In human existence, a phenomenon that runs through cultures, races and colours is the need for interaction among members through the medium of language in a given community. Many theories are in existence with regard to how languages are acquired or learned but the possession of it is a fundamental need of the society. Being endowed with it, a person is able to express himself in the society where his feelings, desires, fears, emotions, etc are manifested through the medium of language. Done in this way, the process of communication among persons involves at least three parameters—the P1, that is the person who has a message to share with another, the message, and the P2, the receiver of the message (Bald 2010). However, not all messages sent get to the receiver with the intended meaning as encoded by the sender and the factors of those circumstances are numerous. But despite the circumstances of such aborted cases of message delivery, human societies are run entirely by the singular means of communication and at the center of it is language. Although language is society's property (Saussure 1916), there are certain knowledge required of a participant in any communicative event, and for effective communication to take place, cognizance must be taken of such principles of text and discourse building in language studies.

Text and Discourse

The terms text and discourse are quite familiar in the parlance but the distinctive substance remains unclear between the two as linguists are not unanimous in that regard. Text in the main is viewed as an actual use of language unambiguously different from a sentence, considered as an abstract unit when one involves in a linguistic analysis. Glaser(1986), Parel(1980),

Carter&McCarthy(2006), Barthes(1977) and Richards&Schmidt(2012) are among scholars who have commented on the nature of text either linguistically or literarily. In his view, Barthes (1977) notes that a text involves a linguistic structure or the signs that convey meaning and allow interpretation. Glaser (1986) on his part views text as a relatively independent and hierachially structured linguistic unit, reflecting a particular state of affairs and has a specific communicative intention. But Richards &Schmidt (2012) are more explicit when they remark that a text is an embodiment of the following features (a). a text is usually made of several sentences put together to create a structure or unit, such as a report, a sermon, a letter, a novel etc. A word text also occurs as in the case of warning such as DANGER, (b).it has a distinctive structural and discourse characteristic, (c). a distinctive communicative function and (d). better understood in relation to the context of use.

A deduction from the foregoing means that, a text is the manifestation of language occurring naturally in a use situation and a significant recognition factor borders on the product's communicative purpose. To achieve this intention, a text that is, a passage or an utterance must clearly possess unity topically, syntactically and lucid semantic units of language in use. To infer meaning to a text involves the functionality of grammar and the location of contextual framework and therefore all the following are regarded as such.

- 1) KEEP AWAY FROM NURSING MOTHERS
- 2) HANDLE WITH CARE
- 3) John and his wife were at the airport yesterday. They left for Dubai today.
- 4) A five-hundred-page novel on "Urban Migration in Africa".

A text may be a notice, label, monologue, dialogue, radio commentary, television news report, obituary announcement, sermon, campaign talks, etc. It is a case of functional language use not in an idealize case but in a case of actual linguistic output.

As we have seen clearly, some texts are as simple as the sentence or even below that rank, but others obviously extend beyond that and are very complex in nature. But whether a text carries a utility or a social function, for instance, to express an opinion or shape same, all text are uses of language produced with a view to refer to for some specific purpose. When we produce a text to get a particular message across to others, to express an idea or belief, the explanation of certain facts, or mould the opinion of people in a certain way, we are involved in that complex communicative activity called discourse Widdowson (2007). In other words, discourse underlines the creation and motivates the production of text in all its ramifications. Cook (1990), Gee(2001), McCarthy(1999), Renkema(2004), Salkie(1995) all commented on discourse but Flowerdew (2013) succinctly puts that discourse is language in its contexts of use, the concern is also with language above the level of the sentence. The emphasis of contexts of use and supersentential level is borne out of the fact that there is a growing interest in the belief that knowing a language goes beyond its grammar and vocabulary but to its context of use, how to participate in a conversation, to the structuring of linguistic unit as well as the overall structuring of discourse strategies.

The terms text and discourse are used interchangeably because of the tiny dividing line between the two and therefore some linguists see discourse as text. It is also a truism that text serve to mediate, according to Widdowson (2007), some convergence between discourses, or otherwise no communication would take place at all. In a broader sense, text is regarded as a

body of data for analysis, while discourse refers to what a text producer meant by a text and its overall meaning to its receiver. In discourse, such social and ideological issues and how texts can be used to express, mould and impose the thinking of the perspective of the receiver's world view are articulated. In all of these, texts serve as the linguistic trace in the process and in circumstance of use, we pay attention to text in order to realize its discourse (Widdowson).

Cohesion

The notion of cohesion in language studies relates to the formal, especially, the semantics links between one clause and another in terms of its reference in rolling forward or backward. With cohesive ties, we know how an item such as a pronoun, a noun, or a conjunction relates in either dimension (forward or backward) to another clause within a text. Consider the text below.

My mother bought an edifice in Lagos in 1990. She got the money to do that through her meager salary. That house cost her millions of dollars, but after five years, she sold it to meet up her other family obligations. Often at times, it agitates me to think that the house would have been preferable to the money.

The above text as can be clearly seen, has a structure depending on factors which we all know are fundamental to a piece of this nature. More importantly, a number of connections are present to maintain references in terms of people and places within the text, such cohesive devices here includes the pronoun, for instance--*my mother--she, her, her, she; that house--it*; and the lexical connection--*the house for edifice*. In the examples given so far, all the connectors are used anaphorically to refer to some things that have been mentioned before to aid the interpretation of elements in the discourse depending on the knowledge of the other. In other words, one presupposes the other, meaning that the effective decoding of one finds recourse to the other looking at a further example, Halliday and Hassan (1976:2) text suffice *Wash and core six cooking apples. Put them into a fireproof dish.*

In the text above, there are two sentences. *Them* in the second sentence refers back to *six cooking apples* in the first sentence. In a cohesive relation of this manner, one of the two elements is interpreted by reference to another, that is, the meaning of *them* refers back to the *six cooking apples*. Cohesive relation involves meaning dimension to it hence it is called a semantic phenomenon and may be interclausal, intersentential or even intraclausal. Modern linguists have identified five basic classes of cohesive devices and each of these will be examined closely below.

Reference

Flowerdew (2013:32) in his discussion of reference, refers to it as "a word or phrase, the identity of which can be determined by referring to other parts of the text or the situation". He classified reference in English as follows: personal pronouns- I, you, he, she, it; possessive adjectives- my, your, his, her; possessive pronouns- mine, yours, his, hers; demonstratives- this, that, these, those and the definite article- the.

References are mainly in two categories, namely, endophoric and exophoric references. The later refers to when someone makes reference to something which is not part of the context of situation but does not in any way appear in the text. Exophoric reference doesn't bind two elements together in a text and so always not considered as a cohesive device. Examples of exophoric references include, *that* situation is awkward and look at *them*. In the examples

above, the references to *that* and *them* are not known and therefore knowledge of referencing is outside the text.

Endophoric references however, may either be anaphoric or cataphoric and which reference items are retrievable from within the text of analysis. In anaphoric reference, it is easy to link items between the reference items and its antecedent and also show how the reference items presupposes that its antecedent has been mentioned already in the text. For example;

Mary struggled to leave the diagnostic room. Her interest was no longer sustained and her attitude was an indicator.

In the above example, *her* in the second sentence and also *her* in the second clause of the second sentence refer back to *Mary* in the first. But the presupposed element in a text may follow instead of preceding the presupposing element as we have in the following example.

Put them here. Don't you see that the oranges are big and you need a large basin? Emezue (2002:66).

In the text above, the cataphoric elements for analysis are *them* and *here*. *Them* anticipates oranges while *here* anticipates a large basin in the forward referential domain but in all of these their referential status is endophoric since referential signals are within the text in question.

The definite article *the* is one of the referring items used in English. *The* as a reference item has no meaning of its own but aligns with another to realize specificity and identity of that item in textual and situational context as in, *the tree* and *the house*, meaning that there is some *tree* and some *house* which one can identify. Halliday and Hassan(1976) identify two basic ways in which exophoric definite reference can be used. One, by referring to something in a given situation, for instance, *The building is very tall* or *The house is painted white*. In the sentences above, the assumption is that the *building* and *the house* are quite familiar to both participants in the discussion. Two definite exophoric references can refer to something specific to a community as in, *the president, the leader, or the government*. Also called homophone, the reference here is related to the world view of a community or context to a culture. It is also used to represent a whole class of items as in, *The python* is one of the most dangerous snakes in this forest. The following are real cohesive devices which are in endophoric referencing form used anaphorically.

(i) *Last year, I bought a new house. The house is very well built.*

(ii) *I went into the house. The rooms are very well dark (Flowerdew2013).*

Referencing as a device doesn't correspond between items and categories one-by-one. Users of English, especially the English as second language learners must take pains to master the complexities of referencing as a phenomenon lest they continue to suffer from floundering in its use.

Substitution

In a text, the need for economy and the avoidance of repetition necessitate the use of substitution. The same form repeated several times in a paragraph can be replaced, most often by *one*, *do* or *so*. So and do in its variegated forms might also substitute whole phrases or clauses. For instance, *which pen do you want? I will take the black one. One* in this example substituted *pen* and it is normal.

It may be verbal as in, *I take drugs every night and she does not*. Here, *does* substituted *take drugs every night*. Substitution can effectively take place at the level clause, example; the following except is taken from Things Fall Apart, (pp58): “It is near that orange tree”, Ezinne said, “And why did you not say so, you wicked daughter of Akabgoji”, Okonkwo swore furiously. In the clause under study, *so* is used as a substitute for the entire clause, *it is near that orange tree* and as a cohesive device in the text, it is used anaphorically to achieve that purpose.

Ellipsis

The view of Halliday and Hassan(1976) on ellipsis is very instructive when they note that it is a variation on substitution. In substitution, a form including a clause can be substituted by *so*, *do* etc. But in ellipsis, there is zero or an outright omission, something is left out yet the clause is understood based on its linguistic context. Ellipsis may be at the level of the noun group, verbal group or clause level. Examples of each level include the following.

- a. *He bought a black shoe and then the white (nominal).*
- b. *We play football and Mary volley ball (verbal).*
- c. *Do you sing?*
Yes (clause).

Conjunction

In the practice of applied linguistics, conjunctions in English are regarded as the most explicit and obvious cohesive device in a text because the meaning relation is also always obvious in the cohesive item itself. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004b) discussing conjunction aptly describe them as a system or device whereby we mark what is referred to as logical semantic relations. Four main types of conjunctions can be identified for marking such relations in English. They include:

- i. *Addictive eg; and, in addition, also, besides, furthermore.*
- ii. *Adversative eg; yet, but, though, nevertheless.*
- iii. *Causal eg; so, then, for this reason, therefore.*
- iv. *Temporal eg; first, next, henceforth, finally, after that.*

Mention must be made that the classification of conjunctions into a single acceptable type is not easily realizable but it is common knowledge that conjunctions are highly mobile in grammatical structures. They can be placed at various points of a clause or sentence. For example;

- a. *Jones is a wonderful musical performer. However, Mary is even better.*
- b. *Jones is a wonderful musical performer. Mary is even better, however.*
- c. *Jones is a wonderful musical performer but Mary is even better.*

In sentence (c) above, the conjunction is at the beginning of the second clause. The logical semantic relations of conjunctions are much clearer and more specific in written than spoken texts. At the beginning of a clause, they occur as a topic organizing device, and breaking down a discourse into its chunks with a clear direction of a spear. Conjunctions have a tendency of being owned by immature users of English especially as a second language, therefore teachers have to pay attention in this regard to emphasize or minimize use.

Lexical Cohesion

In a text, by lexical cohesion we are concerned with links between words that have meanings, such as verbs, nouns and adjectives. Halliday and Hassan(1976) identify two basic sub-categories of a lexical cohesion, namely; reiteration and collocation. Reiteration as a lexical item may take the form of a repetition of the word, use of a synonym, a near synonym, a subordinate, etc. Examples include:

- a. *Mr Matthias came to my house yesterday. Mr Matthias is a teacher (repletion).*
- b. *Mrs Ime is a senior civil servant in the ministry. She is at the height of her career. (synonym).*
- c. *There is a problem with my computer system since last year. The network has been fluctuating for a very long time now (near synonym).*

Collocation refers to a way in which certain words occur together, shows the relation between adjacent items and also apply it to interclausal relationships in a text. Basically, the two systems that operate within collocation are hyponymy and antonymy. Hyponymy borders on the relationship between groups of words within the same superordinate. For instance; apple, lemon, orange and banana are all hyponyms of the superordinate fruit, just like chair, desk and table are hyponyms of superordinate furniture. Antonyms, on the other hand, exhibit opposite in meaning as can be seen in the following pairs; large/small, black/white, happy/sad, long/short, etc.

It is highly instructive to note that lexical semantic relations of cohesive ties do not operate in isolation, rather forms a relationship that can be regarded as cohesive chains. In the first degree, a chain can be grammatical or lexical. Second, chains can operate simultaneously, and third, there are two types of chains, namely, identity chains and similarity chains. To illustrate the two types of chains, the following hypothetical example will suffice.

On my wedding day, John was the master of the ceremony.

He started that day with prayers for abundant blessings. Events on the

5th of January 2013 were recounted in his book for lasting memories.

In the above example,

- a) *John – he – his.*
- b) *Wedding day – that day – 5th January 2013.*

Those in (a) represent an identity chain because all the links in the chain refer to the same entity, meaning they are co-referential. Right from the beginning, it clearly identifies the participants and always refers back to the person (as he/she) in the text.

The similarity chains are different because the chains are not related by the same identity reference but by the same class of entities. In other words, being the case of co-classification or co-extension (belonging to the same class/belonging to the same field of meaning), they are typical of similarity chains of reference in a text. Cohesive ties and cohesive chains systematically result in making a text to achieve what is called cohesive harmony.

Cohesive harmony simply means that there must be an interaction between chains, that is, at least two members of a given chain which are in the same relation with two members of another chain (Hassan1984a), known as tokens. In a text, tokens are divided into two types, namely, relevant token and peripheral tokens. The latter are not part of the chains therefore; less will be said about them here. But as the phrase implies, relevant tokens are part of the chains and are divided into two. They are: central tokens and non-central tokens, depending on their contribution to cohesive harmony in a text. In summation, the salient points according to Hassan in the making of cohesive harmony include; a low relation of peripheral tokens to relevant ones; high relation of central tokens to non-central ones, and few ruptures in the chain (Flowerdew pp44).

Cohesion, Coherence and Textual Building

In our discussion on this paper, we started by looking at the issue of what in the linguist's view constitute a text, and proceeded to the issue of cohesion with its numerous facets in a text. But the lingering notion of cohesion in textual building is one with utmost importance also. Coherence in its most common sense represents the order of statements or events as they relate to one another by rationation. Hassan(1984a) views texture and textual unity as essential to coherence in the belief that the greater the cohesive harmony, the greater will be it's coherence in a text. Flowerdew (pp46) aptly puts "that there is a gradation in the degree to which cohesion and cohesive harmony contribute towards coherence". In furtherance to that he notes the relationship between cohesion and coherence in textual building. Widdowson (2007:49-50) asserts that cohesive devices are only aids to understanding to the extent that the cohesion in a text enables them to device a coherent discourse from it.

In all of these, what is meant is that both cohesion and coherence are very essential in text building or interpretation and that one can be without the other. Therefore, a text may be cohesive to the satisfaction of a practicing linguist but may be incoherent. Widdowson's (pp50) example will suffice.

*The process may seem complicated but actually it is not really,
so long as you prepare things in advance and know what has to be
done in what order. Some of the things you need you already have,
but others of course, you may need to get. They are not readily
available and when they are, they can be quite expensive. But the
first result will make all the effort and cost worthwhile.*

The text above can be adjudged co-textually well connected as it relate to one another with cohesive devices. For instance, *it* refers to the *process*, *others* and *they* also refer to *things*. Yet the reader cannot figure out what the text means by *the process* and the things refer to as *they* in the text. In other words, the text lacks schematic frame of reference upon which the reader can make contextual connection to relate the content of the text to his real world. This text is regarded as incoherent since it cannot make sense to us by the manner events relate to one another. How far a reader will make coherent sense of what he reads in a text clearly depends on his ability to relate to it in a vivid frame of reference.

A passage can be cohesive as a text but lacks the ingredients of coherence as a discourse. What makes a coherence text is its ability of the reader to key into both familiar schema of ideational and interpersonal frame of reference. Both frame of reference the reader keys into enables him to refer to people, things, objects, places, action, events, states, qualities, circumstances and his feelings and attitude towards the passage and relate it to the purpose with the communicative conventions of any genre we are familiar with. Therefore, no matter how far a text may be cohesive internally, the extent to which it is regarded as coherent depends on how it is related externally to contextual realities in these frames of reference the reader is familiar in a given socio-cultural milieu.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have taken a cursory look at cohesion, a vivid factor in text creation without which a passage will be in name but not in content. In other words, without appropriate cohesive links, ties and chains, a text cannot have that bond, the network of connections in bringing together central sentences, omitting marginal ones, and the capacity of producing a meaningful text explicit and with the desired economy. But a text may have a particular density of cluster of cohesive ties without achieving greater textual coherence which is the ultimate in textual building. In the light of the above, we believe that there is a place, therefore for pedagogical intervention in maintaining a synchrony between cohesion and coherence in the creation of texts especially among the English as second language learner/users.

Thornbury (2005 a) and Flowerdew's (2013) views on the pedagogical implications are very significant. They include:

- exposition of learners to texts rather than to isolated sentences only,
- teachers should draw learners' attention to, and categorize, the features that bind texts together,
- encourage learners to reproduce these features, where appropriate, in their own texts,
- guide learners to have control of textual themes because of their roles in connecting texts together,
- control of interpersonal themes is inevitable for the expression of subtle distinctions of meaning in attitudes and evaluation,

- in interpersonal themes, cultural factors are allowed to come on board,
- as a result of lack of space for teaching these specifics, the use of cloze exercise is recommended and,
- device feedback mechanism on textual building to access progress on both teacher and learner.

To sum it up, it is necessary to state that cohesion is an obligatory, but not a sufficient condition for the creation of text. Text is created by the textual or text-forming components of the linguistic system, of which cohesion is one, coherence is another.

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