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Discourse Analysis

Higher Studies- P.hd

What is Cohesion? 2

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What is Cohesion? complement

3) SUBSTITUTION AND ELLIPSIS

Substitution and ellipsis are closely related to each other, as they both involve the replacement (substitution) or removal (ellipsis) of material which would otherwise be anticipated in the text. Compared to reference, reference links can stretch across long stretches of text in cohesive chains (see below).

3.1   Substitution

With substitution, a substitute word of phrase is replaced by another, for example:

*Which **book** do you want? I'll take the red **one***.

In this example the word *book* is substituted by *one*. Substitution may be nominal, as in the example just given; it may be verbal, for example:

*I **have coffee every morning** and he **does** too*.

In this example, *have coffee every morning* is substituted by *does;* or it can be at the level of the whole clause, for example,

A: *I am so ugly*

 B: *Okay*

*Here if you say **so***, where the whole clause, *I am so ugly*, is replaced by *so.*

3.2 Ellipsis

Halliday and Hasan refer to ellipsis as <u>a variation on substitution</u>. It is described by them as 'substitution by zero' that is to say, something is omitted. Where ellipsis occurs, something is left unsaid, it is true, but, at the same time, it is nevertheless understood, ellipsis may be at the level of the noun group, verbal group or complete clause. The following are examples of each:

a) He potted the pink ball and then the black. (nominal)

b) John played tennis and Peter football. (verbal)

c) A: Do you play tennis? B: No. (clausal)

In (a), *ball* is ellipsed at the end of the second of the two clauses; in (b), the verb *played* is ellipsed in the second clause; and in (c), the whole clause, *I don't play tennis* is ellipsed.

Question and answer routines involving substitution and ellipsis are typically practiced in drills such as the following:

A. Do, you like tennis?

B. Yes, I do./No, I don't.

A. Does she like tennis?

B. Yes, she does./No, she doesn't.

4) CONJUNCTION

Christiansen (2011: 161) describes conjunction as 'perhaps the most explicit and obvious cohesive devices in a text', because, with this type of cohesion, the meaning relation is contained in the cohesive item itself. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) describe conjunction as a system for marking what they refer to as *logicosemantic relations*. Halliday and Hasan (1976) distinguish four major types of conjunction in English for marking these relations:

1- ADDITIVE (for example, *and, in addition, besides, furthermore*)
2- ADVERSATIVE (for example, *but, yet, though, however*)
3- CAUSAL (for example, *so, then, therefore*)
4- TEMPORAL (for example, *then, next, after that, finally*)

Some conjunctions may occur at various places in the clause:

a) Mark is an excellent teacher. **However**, David is even better.
b) Mark is an excellent teacher. David, **however**, is even better.
c) Mark is an excellent teacher. David is, **however**, even better.
d) Mark is an excellent teacher. David is even better, **however**.

In contrast, others can only occur at the beginning of the second clause or sentence:

a) Mark is an excellent teacher **and** Alice is too.
b) Mark is an excellent teacher **but** Alice is better.
c) Mark is an excellent teacher, **so** we are lucky to have him.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) list over 40 different conjunctions. However, spoken discourse, although making very frequent use of conjunctions, typically uses a much narrower range of items (most typically *oh, well, and, so, then, but*, *because, now* and *then*), as compared to written text. Schiffrin (1987) refers to such conjuncts as *discourse markers*. The following is an extract from Schiffrin's data showing the pervasiveness of the discourse marker *and* in informal spoken discourse:

I believe in that. Whatever's gonna happen is gonna happen. I believe … that … **y'know** it's fate.

It really is.

Because eh my husband has a brother, that was killed in an automobile accident.

and at the same time there was another fellow, in there, that walked away with not even a scratch on him.

And I really fee–

I don't feel y'can push fate.

and I think a lot of people do.

But I feel that you were put here for so many, years or whatever the case is,

and that's how it was meant to be.

Because like when we got married.

we were supposed t'get married uh: like about five months later.

My husband got a notice t'go into the service

and we moved it up.

And my father died the week … after we got married. While we were on our honeymoon.

And I just felt, that move was meant to be,

because if not, he wouldn't have been there.

So eh **y'know** it just s–seems that that's how things work.

The logicosemantic relations in spoken text such as the above example seem to be a lot less specific than those found in formal written text. Coming as they do at the beginning of clauses, they also seem to have a more topic-organising function, breaking the discourse into chunks and indicating when the speaker is continuing with a topic or shifting to a new one. Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (2004) argue that the strongest meaning of discourse markers is not ideational, but interpersonal. It is true that in our example, *y'know* at the beginning of the extract does seem to indicate the speaker's attitude to what she is saying.

One consideration in the teaching of conjunction concerns the danger of overuse. Consider the following learner text concerning the possible development of a village in Hong Kong (Shalo):

As golf playing is a popular sport in the world, **however**, we have only a few courses in the area, **therefore** in order to promote tourism and recreation, it is the time for us to construct a private golf course.

5) LEXICAL COHESION

Halliday and Hasan (1976) divide cohesion into two distinct categories: grammatical and lexical. Tanskanen (2006) points out that lexical cohesion makes up almost half of the cohesive ties they analyse. In spite of this, lexical cohesion is in many ways the most interesting (and problematic) part.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) have two subcategories of lexical cohesion: reiteration and collocation.

Reiteration of a lexical item in a text may be by repetition of a word, use of a synonym, a near synonym, a superordinate or a general class word. The following are examples of each:

> i. I would like to introduce **Dr Johnson. Dr Johnson** is our head of department. (repetition)
> ii. He has worked in a **coal mine** all his life. He first went down **the pit** when he was a boy. (synonym)
>
> iii. Our **computer system** is one of the most sophisticated in the country. The **network** has been running for several years now. (near synonym)

iv. As part of our **America** week, RTHK revels in some of the most expressive music of **that continent**. (superordinate)

Broadly defined, collocation is the way in which words are used regularly together. The term 'collocation' is also used in lexicography and Corpus Linguistics, where it tends to mean relations between adjacent items. However, Halliday and Hasan apply it to interclausal relationships. Words may be related with each other semantically without being coreferential (referring to the same thing). Thus 'there is cohesion between any pair of lexical items that stand to each other in *some* recognizable lexicosemantic (word meaning) relation.

Two systems operate within collocation: *hyponomy* and *antonymy*. *Hyponomy* concerns the relations between groups of words all falling under one *superordinate*. Thus *apple*, *orange*, *banana* and *lemon* are all hyponyms of the superordinate *fruit*. *Chair*, *desk*, *sofa* and *table* are hyponyms of the superordinate *furniture*. Antonymy is concerned with opposites; thus *large* and *small* and *happy* and *sad* are pairs of antonyms.

In addition, there may be other semantic relations, such as ordered sets, as in the days of the week, part–whole relationships (for example, *mouth*, *eyes*, *nose – face*), and even relations which are difficult to describe systematically (for example, *laugh–joke, blade–sharp, garden–dig, ill–doc- tor*). Halliday and Hasan (1976) write that these relationships depend more on their tendency to occur in adjacent contexts than on any systematic semantic relationship. Halliday and Hasan also point out that these relationships build up into chains across whole stretches of text, not just in adjacent clauses. We can see this already in the following short extract:

The muzzle of the US Army Colt .45 pistol wavered slightly, then steadied. It was fully loaded and its safety catch was in the 'off' position. From a distance of only a few inches, it was pointing directly at the head of King Rama VIII of Siam.

Lexical chains

a) *muzzle of the US Army Colt .45 pistol, loaded, safety catch, 'off' position*

b) *wavered, steadied, pointing*

In a revised version of this model of lexical cohesion, Hasan re-organized the system into two major categories: *general* and *instantial*. The general category includes all of those

systems which can be described semantically, including repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy (part–whole relations) and antonymy. The instantial category deals with those relations which cannot be described semantically. Thus, it includes the sort of relations that in the earlier model were dealt with under the heading of collocation and which Hasan argues are specific to individual texts. Thus, in one of the children's narratives studied by Hasan, the words *sailor* and *daddy* are related to each other by a relation of equivalence, even though these two words are not systematically related to each other outside this text.

Separately, Halliday, too, has reorganized the earlier system. In the latest version (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), Halliday now has three major categories: *elaborating relations* (which include repetition, synonymy and hyponymy), *extending relations* (meronymy) and *collocation*. Of this last category, he emphasizes its probabilistic nature, how a collocation sets up expectations of what is likely to come next in a text, and how this probability can vary according to how frequently any two words typically occur together in a given corpus. It is notable that Halliday's revised model is closer to the original one than is Hasan's.