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English Department

Discourse Analysis

Higher Studies- P.hd

What is Cohesion? 3

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6. GENERAL NOUNS AND SIGNALLING NOUNS

Halliday and Hasan (1976) refer to this type of cohesion as *general nouns*, which they describe as 'a small set of nouns having generalized reference within the major noun classes, those such as "human noun", "place noun", "fact noun" and the like. Halliday and Hasan (1976) provide the following examples and classes:

- a) people, person, man, woman, child, boy, girl – human;

- b) creature – non-human animate;

- c) thing, object – inanimate concrete count;

- d) stuff – inanimate concrete mass;

- e) business, affair, matter – inanimate abstract;

- f) move – action;

- g) place – place;

- h) question, idea – fact.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) point out, there is very little difference in meaning between an utterance such as *it seems to have made very little impression on **the man*** and *it seems to have made very little impression on **him***; in both cases, in order to understand the utterance, it must be referred back to something that has preceded it.

While the human and concrete members of the general noun category are in other ways fairly unremarkable, since Halliday and Hasan (1976), quite a lot of attention has been given to the abstract ones (including animate and concrete nouns such as *thing* and *stuff* used metaphorically in abstract senses) and it is possible to view these items as a separate class. Various linguists have used different terms to describe this type, including *type 3 vocabulary*, *anaphoric nouns*, *advance labels*, *carrier nouns*, *metalanguage nouns*, *shell nouns* and *signalling nouns*.

7. <u>COHESIVE CHAINS</u>

Cohesive ties do not operate in isolation, but combine together in *cohesive chains*. Here is an extract from *Women in Love* by D.H. Lawrence:

One day at this time Birkin was called to London. He was not very fixed in his abode. He had rooms in Nottingham, because his work lay chiefly in that town. But often he was in London, or in Oxford. He moved about a great deal, his life seemed uncertain, without any definite rhythm, any organic meaning.

In this extract we can see two major chains in operation, as follows:

a) Birkin – he – his – he – his – he – he – his

b) London – Nottingham – that town – London – Oxford

We can make a number of points about cohesive chains. First of all, the links in a chain can be either grammatical or lexical. In our example above, all of the links in chain (a) are grammatical, while those in chain (b) are all lexical. Chains may also be made up of combinations of lexical and grammatical links. Hasan (in Halliday & Hasan, 1985/1989: 83) states that 'in a typical text, grammatical and lexical cohesion move hand in hand, the one supporting the other.'

Second, in any text, it is likely that different chains are operating simultaneously, in our example above, with the two chains overlapping with each other. Third, we can distinguish two types of chain: *identity chains* and *similarity chains*. Chain (a) in our example is an identity chain. In identity chains, all of the links in the chain refer to the same entity, they are *co-referential*. Chain (a) is in many ways a paradigm example for identity chains, in so far as it clearly identifies the participant at the outset (Birkin) and then continuously refers back to this person (as *he/his*) throughout the text. This is a typical feature of third-person narratives.

With similarity chains, the links in the chain are not related by identity of reference, but by similarity; they all belong to the same class of entities. Similarity relations may be cases of *co-classification* (belonging to the same class) or *co-extension* (belonging to the same general field of meaning). In our example text extract, chain (b) is a good example of a similarity chain. Each of the items refers to a city/town (co-classification).

8. COHESIVE HARMONY

Starting with the notion of cohesive tie and then moving on to cohesive chains, Hasan (1985) goes a stage further in the analysis of cohesion in texts, arguing that for there to be what she refers to as *cohesive harmony* – what it is that makes a text coherent, The term "cohesive harmony" is one of the ways to analyze cohesion and a coherence of a text, according to Hasan – there must be interaction between chains; the presence of multiple chains does not mean on its own that a text will be coherent. Hasan refers to this as *chain interaction*. She argues that, for chains to interact, there must be at least two members of a given chain which are in the same relation to two members of another chain.

Hasan divides the tokens in a text into two types: *relevant tokens* and *peripheral tokens*. Relevant tokens are those that are part of chains. Peripheral tokens are those which do not belong to chains. Relevant tokens are sub-divided into *central tokens*, which are those that interact with tokens in other chains, and *non-central tokens*, which are those which do not interact. A hierarchy of tokens is thereby established, in terms of their contribution to cohesive harmony. Using these categories,

Hasan is able to define cohesive harmony as: (1) a low relation of peripheral tokens to relevant ones;
(2) a high relation of central tokens to non-central ones; and (3) few ruptures in the chains.

9. <u>Cohesion, Coherence & Texture</u>

Hasan refers to cohesive harmony in the context as texture, which she aquates with textual unity. Therefore, for Hasan the greater the cohesive harmony of a text, the greater will be its coherence. Texture involves much more than merely cohesion. In the construction of text, the establishment of cohesive relations is a necessary component; but it is not the whole   story.
There are two other components of texture. One is the textual structure that is internal to the sentence: the organization of the sentence and its parts in a way which relates it to its environment. The other is the 'macrostructure' of the text, that establishes it as a text of a particular kind – conversation, narrative, lyric, commercial correspondence and so on (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

10. Patterns of Lexis in text: Hoey's Model of (Lexical) Cohesion

* Hoey's study is concerned with non-narrative text.
* He claims, in non-narrative text, it is the lexical cohesive links which dominate the cohesion.

* Non-narrative text which is built up from a series of links from one clause to the next, is built on repeated links. As in figure 3.3 illustrates:

1   A **drug** known to **produce** violent reactions in **humans** has been **used** for **sedating** grizzly **bears** *Ursus arctos* in Montana, USA, according to a report in the *New York Times.*
2   After one **bear**, known to be a peaceable animal, killed and ate a camper in an unprovoked attack, scientists discovered it had been **tranquillized** 11 times which phencyclidine, or 'angel dust', which **causes** hallucinations and sometimes gives the **user** an irrational feeling of destructive power.
3   Many wild **bears** have become 'garbage junkies', feeding from dumps around **human** developments.
4   To avoid potentially dangerous clashes between **them** and **humans**, scientists are trying to rehabilitate the **animals** by **drugging** them and releasing them in uninhabited areas.
5   Although some biologists deny that the mind–altering **drug was responsible for** uncharacteristic behaviour of this particular bear, no research has been done into the effects of giving **grizzly bears** or other mammals repeated doses of phencyclidine.

Figure 3.3   Lexical links in a non-narrative text (Hoey, 1991b: 37).

- Hoey argues that the basic cohesive relationship is one of repetition.
- Hoey's model of cohesion has the following categories:

a) simple lexical repetition (a bear – bears);

b) complex lexical repetition (a drug – druggin

c) simple paraphrase (to sedate – to drug);

d) complex paraphrase (heat – cold);
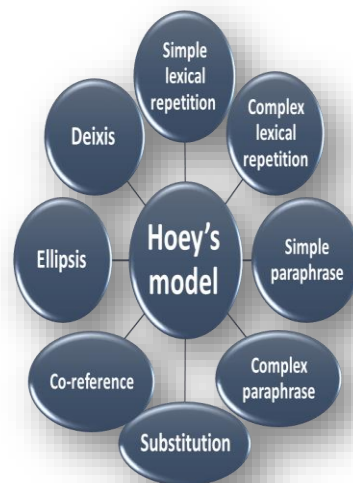
e) substitution (a drug – it);

f) co-reference (Mrs Thatcher–the Prime Minster);

g) ellipsis (a work of art – the work);

h) deixis (Plato and Artistotle – these writers).

Hoey is interested in those items in a text, these items establishing what he refers to as **bonds**. The order of strength follows the ordering of the list of categories given above. Lexical cohesive bonds combine together and relate to other items in networks referred to as **nets**.

10. **Tanskanen's approach to lexical cohesion:**

Tanskanen's model is the further development of the original Halliday & Hasen model. Her model is developed in order to analyse cohesion in different text types. The elements of the model are as follows:
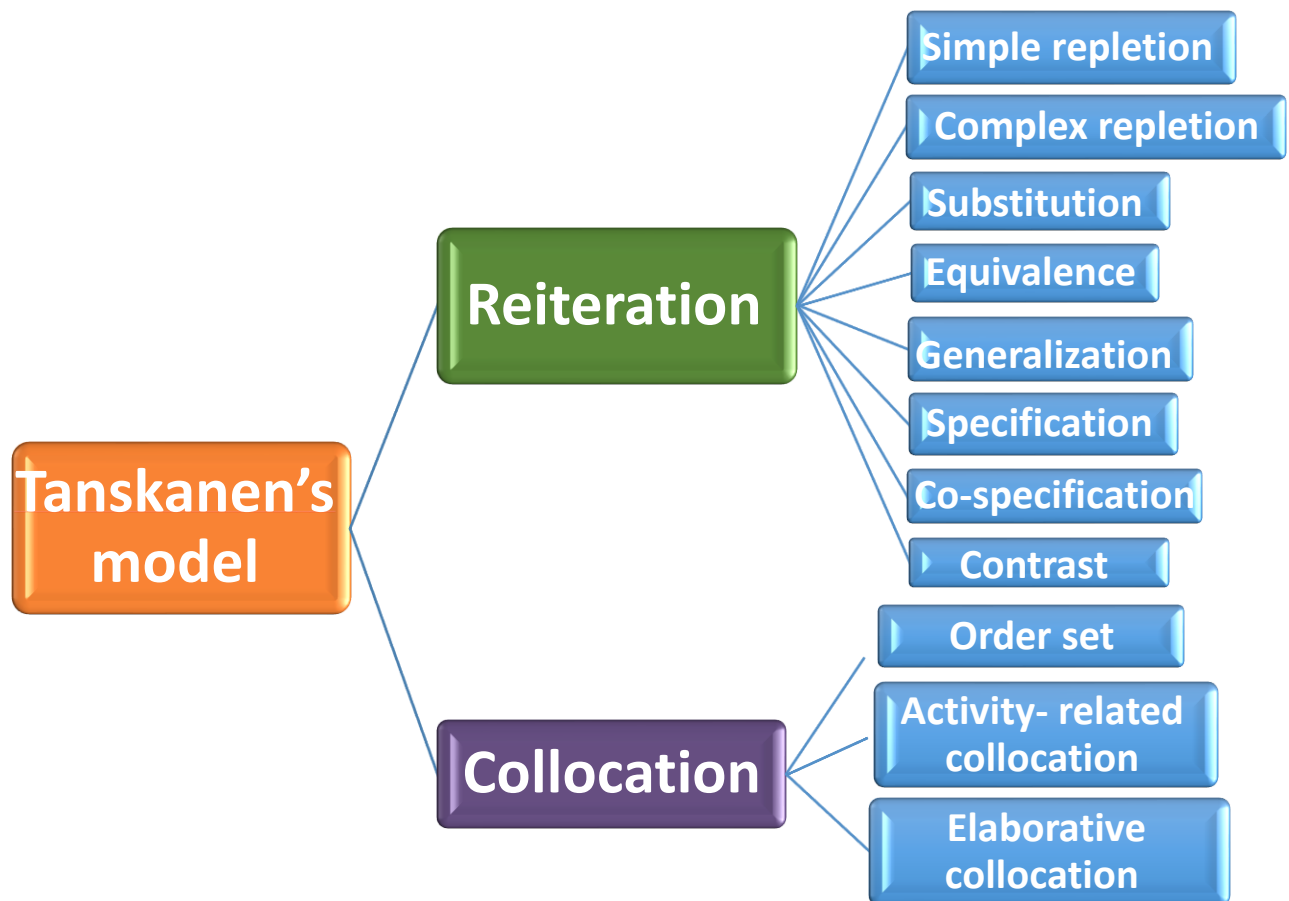
Reiteration

Simple repetition applies to items of an identical form or with a difference in grammatical form.

Complex repetition concerns items which are identical but serve different grammatical functions or are not identical but share a lexical morpheme.

Substitution, like repetition, also includes pronouns.

Equivalence, basically corresponds to synonymy.

Generalisation corresponds to as superordinates.

Specification is the counterpart of generalisation, usually referred to as meronymy, the parts of a whole.

Co-specification refers to what are elsewhere referred to as co-meronyms or co-hyponyms.

Contrast corresponds to as antonymy.

Collocation

Ordered sets refer to sets such as months of the year, days of the week and colours.

Activity-related collocations are items which relate to each other in terms of an activity: meals – eat, ciphers – decode and car – drive are examples of these.

Elaborative collocation is a catch-all category for those items which are part of neither ordered sets nor activity relations.