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COHERENCE AND COHESION AS ESSENTIAL PARTS IN EFFECTIVE WRITING

***Summary:** The article defines the term academic writing and discusses the problems of coherence and cohesion in writing process.*

***Key words:** language, skill, process, coherence, cohesion, concept, paragraph, substitution, logical.*

Writing is a medium of communication that represents language through the inscription of signs and symbols. Writing has always been considered an important skill in teaching and learning. It motivates students' thinking, organizing ideas, developing their ability to summarize, analyze and criticize; it strengthens students' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language. Academic writing, as the name implies, is the kind of writing that you are required to do in college or university. It differs from other kinds of writing such as personal, literary, journalistic or business writing. Its differences can be explained in part by its special audience, tone, and purpose.

Every writer wishes to make their points clearly to their readers, with pieces of writing that are easy to read and have logical links between the various points made. This coherence, this clarity of expression, is created by grammar and vocabulary (lexis) through cohesion. This is the "glue" that joins our ideas together to form a cohesive whole. Generally, the concepts of cohesion and coherence are more technical and relatively uncommon to many people compared to the concepts of other more universally understood language-related

components, such as grammar, content, and text length. One of the most significant works that have contributed to our explicit understanding of cohesion is Halliday and Hasan. According to Halliday and Hasan, the concept of cohesion is a semantic one, referring to "relations of meaning" that exist within the text, and it "occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another." Cohesion is expressed "partly through the grammar and partly through the vocabulary" [2, p. 4-5]. In comparison, coherence, generally defined, refers to the quality of a text when it makes sense or is pleasing because all the parts or steps fit together well and logically. It is the connection that is established partly through cohesion (Halliday and Hasan) and partly through something outside the text that is usually the knowledge which a listener or reader is assumed to possess [3, p. 35], such as background knowledge, genre expectations, and reader expectations. Cohesion is the glue that holds a piece of writing together. In other words, if a paper is cohesive, it sticks together from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph.

Halliday and Hasan's concept of textual cohesion involves how a text hangs together. A text is not merely a collection of sentences, and "cohesion" is a means of forming "text." In their work, "text" is defined as "any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole" [2, p. 1]. In the linguists' view, cohesion involves relationships between two or more meanings in a text, and such relationships are referred to as "cohesive ties". A cohesive tie occurs "between a particular meaning, realized as a surface marker such as a noun or noun phrase, and another instance of that meaning, realized usually by linguistic units such as pronouns and definite noun phrases" [6, p. 5]. Cohesion, therefore, is achieved through the use of cohesive ties, which can be found within or across sentences. Halliday and Hasan have classified cohesive ties into five major categories: *reference*, *substitution*, *ellipsis*, *lexical cohesion*, and *conjunction*, although in Halliday, these cohesive ties have been reclassified

into four types, with ellipsis being a subcategory of substitution. In the following section, the five types of cohesive ties will be described.

Reference. Reference is a common cohesive device that consists of "words which don't have a full meaning in their own right [8, p. 64].

Example: Neil is a devoted teacher. He always prepares his lessons carefully.

Substitution. Substitution occurs when one linguistic item is replaced by another that contributes new information in a text. This new information differs from the information previously provided by the antecedent linguistic item. Substitution involves the use of the terms "one(s)" or "(the) same" for nouns, "do so" for verbs, "so" or "not" for clauses.

Example: Pete owns the black sedan. The blue one belongs to Mike.

(The word *one* is the substitute for sedan.)

Ellipsis. Considered as the equivalent of substitution by zero, ellipsis refers to "the omission of an item" [2, p. 88] that is already understood from the antecedent context.

Example: There are only a few vehicles on the road. More are expected to travel along the road after the New Year Holiday.

(The word *vehicles* is omitted in the second sentence.)

Lexical Cohesion. Lexical cohesion involves the repetition of a noun phrase, or the use of another noun phrase which bears a relation to the antecedent noun phrase.

Examples: There's a flower in the vase. The flower was bought from a market.

(The word *flower* is repeated in the second sentence.)

Conjunction. Conjunction is the type of cohesion that involves the use of ties that perform the main function of connecting sentences. Conjunction, or connective, links two ideas in a text or discourse together semantically. With the use of conjunction, the understanding of the first idea accommodates the

interpretation of the second idea. In English, conjunctive relations are usually established through the use of conjunctive ties, which may be a coordinating conjunction (like and, but, or), an adverb (like in addition, however, thus), or a prepositional phrase (like besides that, despite the fact that).

Examples: This is the first time I have tried Japanese food, and I like it very much.

(And is an additive conjunction.)

Another element of a good essay is coherence. The Latin verb *cohere* means "hold together". In order to have coherence in writing, the sentences must hold together; that is, the movement from one sentence to the next (and in longer essays, from one paragraph to the next) must be logical and smooth. There must be no sudden jumps. Each sentence should flow smoothly into the next one. Coherence is product of many different factors, which combine to make every paragraph, every sentence, and every phrase contribute to the meaning of the whole piece [3, p. 40]. There four ways to achieve coherence. The first two ways involve *repeating key nouns* and *using pronouns* that refer back to key nouns. The third way is *to use transition signals* to show how one idea is related to the next. The fourth way to achieve coherence is *to arrange your sentences in logical order*. Repetition of key words - the easiest way to achieve coherence is to repeat key nouns frequently in your paragraph. *Use of consistent pronouns* - when we use pronouns instead of key nouns, we should make sure that we use the same person and number throughout our paragraph. In the following paragraph, the pronouns are not consistent. *Transition signals* are words such as *first, second, next, finally, therefore, and however*, or phrases such as *in conclusion, on the other hand, as a result*.

The role of cohesion and coherence is very important in writing. Cohesion links together the elements that are structurally unrelated through the dependence of one on the other for its interpretation. Moreover, cohesion distinguishes texts from non-texts and enables readers or listeners to establish

relevance between what was said, is being said, and will be said, through the appropriate use of the necessary lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. Cohesion occurs when the semantic interpretation of some linguistic element in the discourse depends on another. Accordingly, the basic difference drawn between cohesion and coherence is that coherence "is the totality and unity of "sense in a text" which means this concept is "global in nature" and as Thompson suggests it is "a mental phenomenon" [7, p. 179] while cohesive ties may be "local or global", and these are intratextual relations [5, p. 19]. This means that the concept of cohesion relates to surface links; thus, is comprised of grammatical and lexical relations "within-sentence, inter-sentence and cross-section interdependency" and the interpretation of one element is crucial to the other one. Coherence, on the other hand, regards the relations concerning "thematic development, organization of information, or communicative purpose of a text" [4, p. 48].

As a conclusion we must state that writing is an important part of the English teaching process. In order to teach writing skills we should know the effective methods of teaching writing. The writing skill was not taught as a separate class in long-established system of education and for this reason students faced certain challenges in writing, especially in academic writing. Therefore, we should help students to accomplish better writing results. Because cohesion and coherence are essential part in an effective writing. Cohesion and coherence are the objects of interest in this thesis as it shows how meaning relations in the text contribute to its unity. Basically, cohesion is concerned with lexico-grammatical ties that show relations between messages in the text, and texture within the text is created through the use of such cohesive ties. The study of cohesion and coherence provides an insight into how texts are organized and meanings are expressed through investigating the patterns of cohesion and coherence that help to understand the text in terms of its representation of ideas; for example, patterns of lexical cohesion make the reader focused on the field of

the passage, patterns of reference devices relieve the reader's track of entities mentioned in the passage, and patterns of conjunctive relations show the purpose of the passage. To sum it up, cohesion and coherence are important features in academic writing. If students have difficulties with writing coherent essays, it can be made interactive and interesting with the help of appropriate teaching strategies.

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