

Textual Structure

To call a sequence of sentences a 'text' is to imply that the sentences display some kind of mutual dependence: they are not occurring at random.

Sometimes the internal structure of a "text" is immediately apparent, as in the headings of a "restaurant menu": sometimes it has to be carefully demonstrative, as in the network of relationships that enter into a literary work.

In all cases, the task of textual analysis is to identify the linguistic features that cause the sentence sequence to 'cohere'- something that happens whenever the interpretation of one future is dependent upon another elsewhere in the sequence. The ties that bind a text together are often referred to under the heading of "cohesion".(after M..A.K. Halliday & R Hasan, 1976).

Several types of cohesive factors have been recognized:

I. Grammatical Connectors:

1. Conjunctive Relations:

What is about to be said is explicitly related to what has been said before, though such notion as contrast, result, and time:

e.g. - I left early, however, Mark stayed till the end.

- Lastly, there's the question of cost.

2. Co-Reference:

Features that cannot be semantically interpreted without referring to some other features in the text. Two types of relationships are recognized:

***Anaphoric relations** look backward for their interpretation.

e.g. My sister's computer is more reliable than mine, but then hers is newer

***Cataphoric relations** look forward.

e.g. Listen to this: John's getting married.

She is Mr Brown secretary, Synthia was at school with me.

3. Substitution:

One feature replaces a previous expression:

e.g. I've got a pencil, Do you have one?

Will we get there on time? I think so.

*It can be: nominal, verbal or clausal.

e.g. these trousers are not as tight as the other ones.

-did he read the whole book? Yes he did.

-she bought a black car; I did the same.

4. Ellipsis

A piece of structure is omitted and can be understood only from the preceding discourse.

e.g. Where did you see the car? < In the street.

II. Logical Connectors/ Transitional Words-Phrase:

1. Addition and Comparison:

***Addition**: again, also, and, and then, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, too, indeed, in fact, moreover, besides.

***Comparison**: in alike manner, in the same way, likewise, similarly, etc.

2. **Results**: Accordingly, consequently, hence, then, therefore, thus, as a result, thereby.

3. **Contrast and Concessions**: After all, but, despite, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, perhaps, on the other hand, still, yet, whereas, while, and yet, at the same time, naturally, etc.

4. Passage of Time:

After a short time, after a while, afterwards, at last, presently, shortly, since then, temporary, lately.

5. Enumeration:

First(ly), second(ly), finally, next and last.

6. Example:

For example, for instance, incidentally, in particular, namely, specifically, that is, particularly, in other words, such as.

7. Summary:

In brief, in conclusion, in short, on the whole, to conclude, to summarize.

III. Lexical Connectors

1. Repetition of Keywords:

e.g. "... it is important to note that the original thirteen rules, conceived by Dr. Naismith are still the basis for the game today. In order to evaluate the game intelligently of basketball as well as any other sport, one must be familiar with the rules. Thus, an evolution of rules, is contained in this article..."

2. Use of Synonyms

A synonym is a word or an expression, which means the same as another word or expression.

e.g. the development of their firm increased rapidly, much of its growth was due to the use of computers.

3. Use of Antonyms:

The antonym of a word or expression means its opposite.

e.g. because of this bad behaviour, he has not a very good reputation.

4. Use of Expression with a Slight Change in the Wording to Avoid Repetition:

e.g. they lowered their voices when they entered the mosque, Mohamed's son, without understanding why they did so, dropped his own voice.

5. Repetition of the Same Words in a Different Form:

e.g. he is highly motivated to politics. In fact, this motivation in his actions owes much to his father who is a great politician.

Cohesive links go a long way toward explaining how the sentences of a text hang together, but they do not tell the whole story.

It is possible to invent a sentence sequence that is highly cohesive, but nonetheless incoherent.

e.g. a week has seven days. Every day I feed my cat. Cats have four legs. The cat is on the mat. Mat has three letters.

A text has to be coherent as well as cohesive, in that the concepts and relationships expressed should be relevant to each other. Thus, enabling us to make plausible inferences about the underlying meaning.

Exercise: put the following sentences in order to get a coherent paragraph.

- 1) However; nobody has seen one for months.
- 2) He thought he saw a shape in the bushes.
- 3) Mark has told him about the foxes.
- 4) John looked out of the window.
- 5) Could it be a fox?