

Q : Cohesion in Text.

Ans : **Introduction**

The term 'cohesion' comes from the Latin for 'sticking together'. This term relates to the grammar of text¹. Cohesion² is what makes the words and sentences of a text stick together as a whole. There are some devices of achieving cohesion.

SENTENCE AND CLAUSE CONNECTORS

Sentence and clause connectors are used to join (or link) two clauses or sentences. They are of two types – coordinating connectors and subordinating connectors.

1) Coordinating connectors –

Coordinating connectors are used to join two independent clauses or sentences. In other words, they join a principal clause and a coordinate clause, both independent. Some of the coordinators are 'and', 'but', 'or', 'either-or', 'neither-nor', 'as well as'. Following are some of the examples :

(i) Peter eats a mango *and* Mary (eats) an apple.

PRINCIPAL CLAUSE COORDINATE CLAUSE

(ii) Mary is a doctor *but* she doesn't practice.

PRINCIPAL CLAUSE COORDINATE CLAUSE

2) Subordinating connectors –

Whereas subordinating connectors join one or more dependent clauses to the main clause (principal clause). Some of the subordinators are all 'wh-words', 'if', 'unless', 'that', 'so that', 'till', 'before', 'as', 'because', 'since', 'for', 'lest', 'though', 'although', 'therefore', etc. Following are some of the examples :

(i) I know *that* he is not happy.

PRINCIPAL CLAUSE SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

(ii) The mice will play *when* the cat is away.

PRINCIPAL CLAUSE SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

ELLIPSIS

Ellipsis³ is the process of leaving out of words or phrases from sentences where they are unnecessary because they have already been mentioned. For example, when the subject or the verb in two coordinating clauses is the same, it may be omitted to avoid repetition :

(i) The man went to the door and (he) opened it. (Subject ellipsis)

(ii) Mary ate an apple and Jane (ate) a pear. (Verb ellipsis)

¹ **text** - a higher unit than a sentence but may be one or more than one sentence; discourse.

² **cohesion** - linkage.

³ **ellipsis** - deletion; the process of omitting out sth to avoid repetition in the text.

Further, ellipsis in dialogue⁴ may take place under three conditions, which can occur in various combinations :

1) Repetition – The second speaker repeats what is said by the first :

- (i) A: I'm studying grammar.
B: Are you (studying grammar)?

In the above example, 'Are you' is the repetition of 'I'm'. The speaker B repeats (i.e. 'Are you?') what is said by the speaker A; and B omits⁵ the remaining information.

- (ii) A: I play cricket.
B: Do you (play cricket)?

In the above example, 'Do you' is the repetition of 'I'. The speaker B repeats (i.e. 'Do you?') what is said by the speaker A; and B avoids the remaining information.

2) Expansion – The second speaker adds to what is said by the first :

- (i) A: Will they lose the game?
B: Probably (they will lose the game).

In the above example, 'Probably' is the expansion of what is said by the speaker A; and B avoids the entire text spoken by the speaker A.

- (ii) A: Peter will be there.
B: Are you sure (that Peter will be there)?

In the above example, 'Are you sure?' is the expansion of what is said by the speaker A; and B avoids the entire text spoken by the speaker A.

3) Replacement – The second speaker replaces what is said by the first, with new material :

- (i) A: Who told your father?
B: Mary (told my father).

In the above example, the 'wh-element' is replaced by 'Mary'; and B omits the remaining information.

- (ii) A: I'm going to Delhi.
B: Where (are you going)?

In the above example, 'to Delhi' is replaced by 'where'; and B omits the remaining information.

- (iii) A: It cost me twenty-five dollars.

⁴ **dialogue** - discourse; text.

⁵ **omits** - avoids.

B: How much (did it cost you)?

In the above example, 'twenty-five dollars' is replaced by 'how much'; and B omits the remaining information.

4) Combination –

(a) which includes repetition and expansion.

A: Have you spoken to the doctor?

B: Yes, I have (spoken to the doctor).

In the above example, 'Yes' is the expansion and 'I have' is the repetition of 'Have you'.

(b) which includes expansion and replacement.

A: When did he lose the key?

B: Probably, (he lost the key) last night.

In the above example, 'Probably' is the expansion and 'when' is replaced by 'last night'.

(c) which includes repetition and replacement.

A: John told me what you did.

B: Who told you (what I did)?

In the above set of dialogue, 'told you' is the repetition of 'told me' and 'John' is replaced by 'who'.

(d) which includes repetition, expansion, and replacement.

A: They paid fifty dollars for it.

B: Oh no, they paid more (than fifty dollars for it).

In the above set of dialogues, 'Oh no' is the expansion, 'they paid' is the repetition, and 'more' is the replacement of 'fifty dollars'.

DISCOURSE REFERENCE

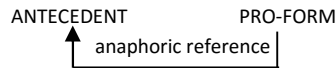
Reference is one of the methods of cohesion. It means relationship between one expression and another. One word (often a pronoun) refers to a different word (often a noun) in the same text. There are three kinds of reference :

1) Anaphoric⁶ reference – It is a reference in which the referring word (pro-form⁷) refers to an earlier word (antecedent⁸). In other words, if the antecedent comes before the pro-form in the text, then antecedent and pro-form bear anaphoric relation. For example,

⁶ **anaphora** – pointing or referring backwards.

⁷ **pro-form** – 'pro-' means 'in place of' and 'pro-form' is a word used in place of any other word, often a noun; the referring word as it seeks information from the antecedent.

(i) When the dog woke up, it barked.



In the above sentence, 'it' (pro-form) refers back to 'the dog' (antecedent).

(ii) Jack and Jill went up the hill and they found some water there.

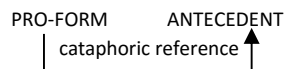
In the above sentence, 'they' (pro-form) refers back to 'Jack and Jill' (antecedent).

(iii) My cousin said he was coming.

In the above sentence, 'he' (pro-form) refers back to 'my cousin' (antecedent).

2) Cataphoric⁹ reference – It is a reference in which the referring word (pro-form) refers to a later word (antecedent). In other words, if the antecedent comes after the pro-form in the text, antecedent and pro-form bear Cataphoric relation. For example,

(i) When it woke up, the dog barked.



In the above sentence, 'it' (pro-form) refers forward to 'the dog' (antecedent).

(ii) When they went up the hill, Jack and Jill found some water there.

In the above sentence, 'they' (pro-form) refers forward to 'Jack and Jill' (antecedent).

(iii) If you see him, will you ask Bob to telephone me.

In the above sentence, 'him' (pro-form) refers forward to 'Bob' (antecedent).

(iv) What I want to say is this. Please drive carefully.

In the above sentence, 'this' (pro-form) refers forward to 'Please drive carefully' (antecedent).

3) Exophoric¹⁰ reference – It is a reference in which the referring word (pro-form) refers to someone or something outside the text. For example,

(i) I want to give you this.

PRO-FORM PRO-FORM PRO-FORM

In the above sentence, the pronouns 'I', 'you', and 'this' surely refer to someone or something, but that someone or something is not present in the above text.

⁸ **antecedent** – known information; the word or words referred to for information as it contains the information for the pro-form.

⁹ **cataphora** – pointing or referring forward.

¹⁰ **exophoric reference** – also called 'deictic reference'.

SUBSTITUTION

When the pro-form does not exactly refer back/forward to the antecedent present in the text but the one like it, is called substitution¹¹. In substitution, the pro-form does not exactly match with the antecedent but demands the substitute of it. For example,

Have you got your newspaper? I haven't got mine. (Substitution)

In the above example, the pro-form 'mine' does not refer to the antecedent 'your newspaper', but the substitute of this antecedent. Substitution differs from reference. In substitution, pro-forms replace other words. For example,

I like your golf umbrella. Where can I get one like it? (Substitution and Reference)

ANTECEDENT

SUBSTITUTION

REFERENCE

In the above example, unlike the pro-form 'it' (which refers back to the antecedent 'golf umbrella'), the pro-form 'one' does not refer back to the same 'golf umbrella' but demands a substitute of it.

However, in co-reference, the pro-form refers to the very same referent (i.e. antecedent), e.g. 'I like your golf umbrella. May I borrow it? (Reference)

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¹¹ **substitution** - replacement.