

The importance of Accurate Cohesion and Coherence in the Text

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Abstract

This paper outlines a general and practical overview of the importance of *cohesion* and *coherence* in the Text. Text linguistic studies and defines cohesion and coherence as crucial elements for the Text. Without these a *Text* would suffer for continuity and clarity and can not be called a text. In our everyday life people communicate with each other through different ways. In every speech, every communication we take a message which is given through text. *What would happen if there is a lack of cohesion and coherence?* In this paper we will present some different point of views, definitions and research studies of these terms.

Cohesion and coherence will be treated from their role in written text. From the practical point of view different Texts are taken as examples to show their importance of understanding on the part of the reader. Frequently foreign language students may face problems of understanding and decoding a text if it is not clear and lacks the accuracy of cohesion and coherence. A foreign language text may have one element but may miss the other one, for this reason it may lose the concept of communication. Apart from a clear understanding of the differences between these two elements Italian students should be provided with text templates to help them write essays, or different types of written text (argumentative, persuasive, informative est.). The article ends with a conclusion and discussion of the role that cohesion and coherence play in texts and research studies on how to deal with cohesion and coherence in writing.

Keywords: text linguistic, cohesion, coherence, writing texts.

Different Linguistic views of cohesion and coherence

Linguists and researchers like Dressler and De Beaugrande have claimed that the text should have 7 criteria to be considered as complete and inherent. The criteria are: cohesion and coherence, the receiver (volume and eligibility in which is developed communication, informative character, circumstances and intertextuality); If any of this criteria is not fulfilled, then there will be no text. Cohesion and coherence are

phenomena that complement each other and with cohesion we will understand the relationship between different parts of the sentence respecting relations of syntax and grammar.

Text linguistics deals with the relationship between the parts of sentences that forms a text. A text is called as such if there is a continuity of meaning. If there is continuity, then we have communication. Once these definitions are made then it is continued this activity. The terms cohesion and coherence are used in every field of human sciences. In linguistics it is studied by the works of Harweg (1968), Dijk (1972, 1977) and De Beaugrande (1980).

Consistency of a text is the level in which are displayed concepts and relationships in a text ensuring, in the case of coherent texts, knowledge and relevance. The knowledge that it is taken from a text may be not the same as the meaning or content of linguistic expressions that represent them. We can grasp the concept of knowledge that can be activated in a text through uniformity and consistency.

Relationships created in a text are links between concepts happening together in the text. Consistency and cohesion are not the same things. Consistency is attributed to the text reader how it is understood and produced on its pragmatic interpretation of the reader. The writer writes for the reader but is the reader's skill of how to read and give the right intonation and place to the reading part. Readers give voice to the writers, interpret and relate meaning to context. In other words by reading there is mutual interaction by both interlocutors.

Dressler and De Beaugrande (1981) state that textual coherence processes involve in themselves these elements:

- activation,
- strength ,
- decomposition,
- the extended activation,
- episodic and semantic memory,
- the economy,
- global patterns,
- Inheritance.

Activation of linguistic expressions within communicative contexts activates a series of concepts in the minds of interlocutors of the language. Apart from the linguists above mentioned others like Halliday treated the concept of cohesion to study how sentences are linked in a text. Every

sentence is connected into paragraphs and paragraphs are connected to form a text through cohesive ties: A text has a meaning that is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text (sentences linked together but not having the same meaning and not presenting the same situation.

This may happen in many languages in the same way; it does not matter if it is in Albanian, English, German, French or Italian language. Writers relate sentences together in different ways as result cohesion is created to establish the meaning. Cohesion helps to understand if we have a text or if we have just unrelated sentences. Cohesion does not deal with the meaning of a text. Halliday & Hasan (1976) state that: "*cohesion does not concern what a text means; it concerns how the text is constructed as a semantic edifice*".

Coherence is another element of a text dealt by other linguists. It has to do with the illocutionary speech acts which lead to discourse. Discourse involves the context in which it happens and needs to be interpreted through the understanding of structures. Widdowson (1978) defines cohesion as the relationship between illocutionary acts. Morgan and Sellner (1980) define that cohesion is concerned with content but has some linguistic consequence. If a text has got both cohesion and coherence, it facilitates us to understand the information easily.

Writing: Cohesion and coherence in the Text

The Text is presented to the interlocutors or to the readers in two forms: written or spoken. Above mentioned we spoke about the importance of cohesion and coherence in the Text. What about written texts? There are some differences between spoken or written language, for these reason it is important even defining the importance of cohesion and coherence in written text despite which foreign language is used.

When we speak, we use ellipses, pauses, short sentences while in writing there are not provided such things as the writer should be specific for the reader to understand. Interlocutors face eye to eye contact and interaction, while the writer and the reader no. Although there are different types of writing there are some rules to be followed in order to reach that *mutual communication*. Chafe (1982) defines speaking as "involvement" while writing as "detachment".

The writer is concerned to write something that will be understood by different readers. For these reason is very important for the text to be written correctly having both cohesion and coherence. According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, (2000) a well-written text has got unity and is

connected through sentences which relate to one another. It depends whether the text is long or short whether the coherence depends. In a long text the coherence of the whole text depends on the coherence of the paragraphs presented in the text while in a short text depends within sentences themselves.

Different types of text have got different types of cohesion and coherence as the types of writing and the audience differs. As examples a literary book, a scientific book, a journal, a magazine, a brochure or even an advertisement are different from each other. What do they have in common is that the element of coherence is presented logically for the intended reader presenting the information to the intended reader correctly. It is very important the role of opening sentences, organizing sentences and closing sentences in a text. From the studies we know that language is formal and informal and it has got different functions. In these context even the opening or closing sentences are chosen according to what type of writing and which the intended audience is. Opening sentences help the reader to understand what he or she is going to read. If there is not cohesion or coherence in writing, the reader will not understand.

Discussion: Practical examples in Italian classes

Beaugrand and Dressler (1981) developed their theory on Text. They presented seven criteria of textuality. According to them the most obvious example of relation cohesion-coherence is presenting different models of the Text based on sentence structure. this function is the appearance of models with different dimensions and complex on the surface of the text, as defined by building words.

According to them large syntactic units are well defined models ready to be used according to given time and collaboration. But what is text surface? It has to do with the words we listen (audio texts, spoken), texts we look at (written text) or we process (visual texts in general). In this context, the text area is not "primarily material" that is presented from the sounds or signs printed, but the structure of the text, which means that verbal expressions are already known. Cohesion comes from the Latin and means "bound together". This term is used for the first time in linguistics in 1964 from M.A.K. Halliday, then in the textbook which was a cooperation with his wife R. Hasan in the years 1968, 1976). The term was used in linguistics during the '70s as the base for the seven criteria of textuality. These criteria became widely known further more by W. U. Dressler (1972, 1981) and R. A. Beaugrand (1976, 1981). Cohesion and coherence are two important

criteria in terms of textuality. They complement each other and are in the function of each other.

The bound created according to linguistic rules makes the text appear as a unified unit of words and sentences. Linguistic ties that serve to realize the cohesion in the text can be:

- **grammatical:** morphological adaptation,
- **syntax:** the use of connectors,
- **semantic:** replacement, repetition, ellipsis.

Grammatical links have to do with morphological suitability, where the noun / adjective, masculine / feminine noun / verb fit in number, case and gender.

Let us have a look at the example given in order to understand the importance of cohesion and coherence in the written text.

*Nevina è una gattina bianca e morbida come la neve. È una gatta pigra e dorme per ore su una sedia in cucina. Io la cerco e la chiamo, ma lei rimane immobile. Quando sente l'odore del cibo, però si sveglia e improvvisamente diventa affettuosa.*¹

*Nevina është një mackë e bardhë dhe e butë si bora. Është një mace përtace dhe fle me orë të tëra mbi një karrike në kuzhinë. Unë e kërkoj dhe e thërras, por ajo nuk lëviz. Por, kur ndjen aromën e ushqimit, zgjohet dhe menjëherë bëhet e përzemërt.*²

In both texts given Italian and Albanian, the name is adopted to the adjective, verb, pronoun.

• **Repetition** of a word that is in the text can be used to achieve cohesion. Usually repetition occurs frequently in spoken texts, as time given to elaborate or index sentences, thoughts or ideas is insufficient. As an example we can have a look at the text below. What we can see is that the word or better to say the group of words “*armë kimike*” is repeated several times. This is due to create cohesion in the text given.

¹ Andreozzi, M. S. , (2008), Versante Linguistico. Abilità linguistiche e tipologie testuali, Loreto. p. 167

² The translation is made from the author .

Eksperti amerikan: Ja avantazhet e Shqipërise për të pritur armët kimike
Charles Duelfer, ekspert i armëve të shkatërrimit në masë, u shpreh se në Shqipëri nuk do të eksportohen armë kimike, por vetëm pjesë të veçanta të tyre. “Në Shqipëri nuk do të eksportohen armë kimike. Fjala është për njërin nga komponentët që përbëjnë një armë kimike. Pra, nuk do të sjellin armët kimike në Shqipëri...³
(Gazeta SOT, 14.11.2013, fq. 4)

Conclusions

Although there are different points of view from different linguists all the studies lead to one important point that cohesion and coherence are very important elements in spoken or written language. They cannot stand by themselves, otherwise there is not a Text. In order to develop Text in writing, students should be given to write different types of texts, reasons, and elements, content. Avoiding problems that usually are accounted in spoken texts, writing involves more concentration in the way students realize a written Text.

From the moment that the components of the structure of the text depend on one another respecting grammatical rules, then cohesion will be based on these grammatical rules. So by cohesion we will understand the right relationship between different parts of the sentence, respecting the grammatical connections, syntactic and semantic. These notions although are present will need much more researches. This study may show that the development of theories focuses on why are cohesion and coherence important issues to create and define what is known as “Text”.

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³ Paragraph taken from newspaper” SOT”, date 14.11.2013, p. 4.

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