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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THROUGH THE USE OF COHESIVE TIES
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Abstract:

This Research paper focuses on the experiential learning of the text through the use of cohesive items by the undergraduate students based on the cohesion analysis of Halliday and Hasan and their coding scheme. A story "The Hawk and the Tree" has been given to 60 students and they are asked to read the text and analyze it as per the coding scheme is given to them. The story is part of their academics and what the students need to do is to find out the cohesive elements from the text and code them and then analyze it.

The results of this analysis are, the students could identify the cohesive elements. They are able to identify the cohesive item, the number. of ties and the presupposed items. What they did not mark in their coding was the distance and exact type i.e., they categorized the type as the reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical. But when it has come to the minutest categorization they failed to give coding to those types. They even felt that even without coding they are able to focus better on the text and interpret well. This method has helped them in relating the ideas even if the sentences are complex.

Key Words: Text, Tie, Cohesive elements Reference, Substitution, Ellipsis, Conjunction, Lexical Cohesion, presupposed items.

Introduction:

Researchers looking at students' awareness of their comprehension processes found that the interpretation skills of the students are very low when the text is complex. Discussions reveal their misunderstandings about a text as their lack of background knowledge in the subject matter. The two important factors that influence students' readiness to interpret text material are text difficulty and interest. Students come across various types of texts. As they start growing they have to read texts which provide fewer visual diagrams and more descriptions and such type of texts students need to comprehend and interpret. If they are technical students they come across texts that are written to convey, describe, or explain non-fictional information. For this, they need to understand the text structure.

The main components in the linguistic system are semantic components that are functional. They are Ideational, the Interpersonal and the Textual. The Ideational component is that part of the linguistic system which is concerned with the expression of 'content', with the function that language has of being about something. These functions are experiential and logical. Experiential is directly related to the experience, of the context of culture. The social functions such as the speaker's angle, his role, relationships, his motive in saying something are all interpersonal components. The third component is the 'textual' which comprises the inputs that are required for creating a text that is operationally relevant. This textual component operates at two levels: one at the grammatical level and the other at the patterns of meaning.

The text is the end product of intrapersonal as well as interpersonal conflicts, a process of selection and elimination of narratives, genres, events, ideas, images, interpretations in terms of the actual and implied participants and local and global goals of discourse. It is a communicative event in which the communicator transfers propositional content to the readers or audience by means of language and with social consequences. The text is normally one person's written or spoken utterance, intended as one message to one audience about one coherent topic in one concrete situation (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981). In terms of functions, the text is seen as an expression of the communicator's intentions and attitudes (the expressive or emotive function). A text generally has continuity of register wherein the field, mode, tenor play a significant part.

Every text has unity. This unity forms texture to the text. It is the cardinal element of text. The elements which contribute to the aspect of unity constitute the texture. The linguistic features present in a given text contribute to the unity of the text. Cohesion is the set of meaning relations that is general to All CLASSES of text that distinguish text from non-text and interrelates the substantive meanings of the text with each other. "Cohesion does not concern what a text means; it concerns how the text is concerned as a semantic edifice" (Halliday and Hasan 1976). Texture remains incomplete without the tie. A semantic relation of this kind may be set up not only within a sentence but also between two sentences. And when it crosses a sentence boundary, it has the effect of making the two sentences cohere

with one another" (Halliday and Hasan: vii). In this context, it is significant to talk about a tie. A tie is a relation which is possible only when there are two members. Halliday and Hasan (1989: 73) show this relationship through the following picture:

A   B
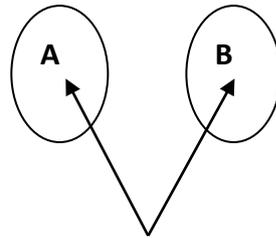
   If we think of a text as a continuous and spacious message, in which individual messages follow each other, then the items that function as the two ends of the tie- the A and the B – are spatially separated from each other; A may be part of one message and B part of another. But there is a link between the two, depicted above by the two-headed arrow. The nature of this link is semantic; the two terms of any tie are tied together through some meaningful relation. Such semantic relations are the basis for cohesion between the messages of the text.

Types of Ties:
There are five different types of ties. They are the reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. The cohesion is established by continuity of reference because the same thing appears again and again. In most cases, the reference is realized by the definite article. But this is not always the case.   The reference items in English are personals, demonstratives, and comparatives. Reference can be situational or contextual. The situational reference is referred to as Exophora or Exophoric reference. The textual reference is referred to as Endophora or Endophoric. Halliday and Hasan call within-text cohesive ties endophoric and references to items outside the text exophoric.
It is generally observed that only anaphoric reference is relevant to cohesion because it provides a link to the preceding part of the text. It points not outwards to the environment but backward to the preceding text. Exophoric reference items are not relevant because they do not contribute to creating cohesion in a text.

One can think of substitution and ellipsis as the processes within the text. If one item is replaced by another in the text, it is substitution and omission of an item is an ellipsis.
Substitution is of three types:
1. Nominal: one, ones; same
2. Verbal: do
3. Clausal: so, not
Ellipsis too is of three types: Nominal, verbal and clausal.

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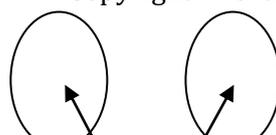
Conjunction:

Conjunction shows the grammatical relation between the words, sentences and the clauses. It relates the words grammatically rather than through their meanings. Conjunction shows the grammatical relation between the words, sentences and the clauses. It relates the words grammatically rather than through their meanings. To state clearly, conjunction does the work of connecting one word with another or one clause with the other or one text with another. It may be said that it functions as a logical connector between parts of the text at different places in the different environment.

Types of Conjunctions:

Conjunctions are broadly categorized into four types. They are

Additive

Adversative

Causal

Temporal

Lexical Cohesion:

This is a type of cohesion which takes place by the selection of words. Reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions are the grammatical type of cohesion but lexical cohesion is not related to grammar. Unlike other elements of cohesion, this is related to words. In this, an individual word refers back to another in the development of the text that has a related meaning. "These words of similar meaning form a stitch work through the text" (Haynes:1989:34). It is through the choice of the words that continuity is established in a text which brings about cohesion to it. This cohesion may be the outcome of various devices in the form of word repetition or the choice of a word which shows similarity or relation to a word which has previously occurred or the words which have more than ordinary proclivity to co-occur.

After explaining all these concepts to the students, they are given a model of the coding scheme of Halliday and Hasan. The coding scheme initially for them appeared to be quite confusing and they got rattled. After working on that for nearly 3 to 4 classes, they got familiarized with it. Then they were given a story to analyze. A sample passage is being given below for better understanding.

The Hawk and the Tree Mohammad Azam Rahnaward Zaryab

Passage – 1

I have been watching a dead tree in our neighborhood for many years now (1). The tree always fascinated me(2). A cobbler had his shop near the tree (3). Every day he would open his shop early morning and close it a late evening with a big lock (4). There were two jobless

Oray's Publications

Impact Factor: 3.589(SJIF) Research Journal Of English (RJOE) Vol-1, Issue-2, 2016

www.rjoe.org.in   An International Peer-Reviewed English Journal   ISSN: 2456-2696
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men living nearby on the same street(5); the men had no work but to hang around all day in the cobbler's shop as if that was their entire world and that they were part of the furnishings of the shop(6).

While passing by the shop one day, I noticed that the cobbler who was usually talkative sat quietly, looking dejected(7). He sat with his head bowed, deep in thought about something unpleasant that might have happened(8); the two loafers too looked very sad as though mimicking the cobbler(9). I approached him and asked,

'What's the matter?'(10)

He raised his head and spoke to me with some vague sadness spilling from his eyes (11). Usually, his eyes had a merry twinkle but now I could only see in them some mute dejection (12).

S. No	No. of supposed Ties	Cohesive item	Type	Distance	Pre item
1	0	-	-	-	-
2	2	The	R23.6	0	dead tree
		Me	R11.6	0	I⟶
narrator					
3	2	The	R23.6	M.1	Dead tree ⟶ tree
		Tree	L1.6	0	tree
4	2	He/his	R11.6/R11.7	0	popular
		Shop	L1.6	0	shop
5	1	The	L1.6	N.1	the
6	6	The	R23.6	0	jobless
men					
		Men	L1.6	0	men
		No work	L2.6	0	jobless
		Day	L1.6	N.1	day
		Shop(2x)	L1.6	N.1	shop

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7 shop	5	The	R23.6	0		cobbler's
		Shop	L1.6	0		shop
narrator		I	R11.6	N.5		me ➝ the
		Noticed	L2.6	N.6		watching
		Looking	L2.6	N.6		watching
8	2	He/his	R11.6/R11.7	0		cobbler
		Dejected	L2.6	0		unpleasant
9 men	5	The	R23.6	N.3		jobless
		Two	L1.6	N.3		two
		Loafers	L2.6	N.3		jobless
men		Looked	L2.6	N.1		noticed
		Sad	L2.6	N.1		dejected
10	3	I	R11.6	N.8		narrator
		Him	R11.6	N.1		cobbler
		The	L1.6	0		the
11	5	He/his	R11.6/R11.7	N.2	him	a cobbler
		Me	R11.6	0+ N.8		narrator
		Head	L1.6	N.2		head
		Spoke	L2.9	N.3		talkative
		Sad	L1.7	0		sadness
12 cobbler	8	Usually	L1.6	N.4		usually
		His	R11.7	M.1+ N.3		he ➝
		Eyes	L1.6	0		eyes
		I	R11.6	M.1+ N.9		narrator
		See	L2.6	N.2		looked
		Them	R14.6	0		eyes
		Mute	L2.6	N.4		quietly
		Dejection	L1.7	N.4		dejected

The analysis of the passage shows a combination of reference and lexical devices of cohesion. The lexical items of cohesion dominate the passage as they are more in number when compared to the referential items. 'The' repeats several times both as a reference item and lexical item of cohesion. As a referential item, it refers to the 'dead tree' in S.2 and S.3, to the 'jobless' men in S.6 & S.8, to the cobbler's shop in S.7 and is coded in all the mentioned sentences as R23.6. As a lexical cohesive device, it occurs in S.5 and S.10 and therefore coded as L1.6. The pronominal variants used for the narrator are 'I & me'. As the narrator is of masculine gender, these pronominals are coded as R11.6. For the 'cobbler' the pronominal variants used are 'He, Him & His'. There are certain repetitions like 'tree', 'men', 'and 'shop' 'and'dejected'. The lexical variants like synonyms and same item variants do occur in the passage.

Synonyms are coded as L2.6 while the synonymous item variants like 'spoke-talkative' are coded as L2.9 suggesting different parts of speech as well. Coming to the same item variant like 'dejection-dejected' is coded as L1.7 indicating the inclusive nature of a similar word.

Observations:

When the students are asked to work out as per the coding scheme of Halliday and Hasan, they found this sort of analysis difficult initially. But after getting acquainted with the types of cohesive elements, they found that they are able to focus more on the content. Their comprehending skills increased. They are able to relate ideas well. They felt that it actually helped them in knowing more related words. They found that never before had they realized that the repetition of the words or sentences in the story by the author is used to hold their focus or attention. It, in fact, developed their reading skills. They are able to read now with more concentration and are now able to grasp the content with ease than before. The students also felt that it has become easy for them to know the contextual meaning of the word and the usage of the word has become easy for them. Each time the same word or its synonym is used in the text by the author, they felt that it is like reviewing the word. Each review activity is like revealing a word and its meaning in a different way offering its own perspective. The students' grammatical competence increased.

But the disadvantage of this analysis is that the students are not able to give an accurate number to the items. They could identify and segregate reference items and lexical items but failed to give the coding numbers as per the coding scheme of Halliday and Hasan. Another difficulty they encountered was identifying substitution and ellipsis. Initially, it appeared tough for them but after a few exercises, this problem has been overcome. But the majority of the students did not make the identification of cohesive type and even felt that assigning the number to the type is not of any help to them. They also neglected the measuring of the distance between one tie and another tie.

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