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A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SEMANTIC UNITY IN SHORT STORY 'IT'S IN THE CARDS'

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ABSTRACT

Every text as a cohesive semantic unit represents a flow of thought and meanings which is the outcome of cohesion and coherence. Semantic connections take two forms; a connection at surface level called cohesion and a connection at more profound level takes the form of coherence (Enkvist, 1978). Being the essential features of textual unity and continuity, patterns of coherence and cohesive devices not only contribute in weaving the texture of a text but the understanding of these patterns is also significant for readability and comprehensibility of the text. Drawing on Halliday and Hassan's model (1976) of cohesive devices, the present study aims to analyze the features of connectedness and semantic unity in a 200 words' award-winning short story 'It's in the Cards'. This study highlights that how use of cohesive devices contributes towards the structural unity of a narrative text by connecting the sentences at micro level and how at macro-level, these features of connectedness add to establish the structure of meanings and thereby making the text meaningful and a coherent semantic whole.

INTRODUCTION

Stylistic analysis of a text investigates the interpretative effects of a text through close study of choice of linguistic elements like semantic deviation, syntactic structuring, modality, etc., based on the inferred interpretative cohesion of foregrounded features of the text. A text is a semantic unit of meaning, not of form, realized by textual components (Halliday, 2002).

Textual unity and semantic unity are two important features of a text. Different linguistic items present in a text weave together to give textual unity

to the text and at deep level these linguistic features contribute to produce unified meanings which create semantic unity in the text. Enkvist (1978) also believe that semantic connections take two forms i.e. a connection at surface level called cohesion and a connection at more profound level takes the form of coherence. A text as a cohesive semantic unit must have surface cohesion and overall coherence in order to present a flow of thought and meanings in the text.

Jackobson (1967) was the first to expand the concept of cohesion and epitomized literary texts as containing "cohesion or internal patterning and repetition far exceeding than that of most non-literary texts" (cited in Traugott & Pratt 1980, p. 21). In Halliday & Hassan's view "cohesion expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the text and the other" (1976, p. 299) and consists of text-making devices which "help to tie the sentences in a text together" (Nunan, 1993: 21). Studies based on stylistic analysis of different literary texts focused on various operational aspects of cohesion and found that use of cohesive devices in a text can play a key role in creating a powerful aesthetic effect within a text (Traugott & Pratt 1980; Leech & Short, 1981).

Halliday (2002) defines cohesion as the connectedness of grammatical and lexical items in a text. Whereas coherence is underlying structural unity in a text resulting from logical connections among ideas to convey a coherent message to the reader (Meyer & Rice, 1984). Different linguistic elements in a text are connected to each other to weave the text into a whole and impart cohesion onto the text and the overall meanings of a text and its relatedness with the real world make a text coherent. Coherence is the result of the mental processes involved in text production and comprehension.

Writer's choice of cohesive devices creates cohesion and harmony in the text. Cohesiveness and harmony develop familiarity and stereotypicality which in turn leads to expectation. The use of specific patterns of cohesive devices, along with other syntactic structures contributes to create and highlight a particular discourse pattern running through the text. The connection of the sentences with the structure, actions and meanings of a text makes it coherent (Schiffrin, 1987) and use of cohesive devices provides the clues to identify meanings and assist in understanding and interpreting the text. In a narrative text coherence relies on "writer's successful integration of different devices to situate a message in an interpretive frame and readers' corresponding synthetic ability to interpret such cues as a totality in order to interpret that message" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 39).

Every text type has certain expectations and patterns associated with it. Linguistic cohesion and structural coherence are the characteristics of a narrative text. Linguistic cohesion (microstructure) refers to semantic relations between different sentences and clauses and structural coherence (macrostructure) refers to the way events are related to one another (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991). Furthermore, narrative text type provides information about what happened and in which order, contains mainly the actions and verbal and relational processes, is in simple past tense and there are certain grammatical features associated with it like use of specific nouns, adjectives. Therefore,

knowledge of text type and text structure (text grammar), its pattern helps to construe the meanings and makes interpretation of a text easier.

Cohesive Devices: Halliday & Hasan's (1976) Model

Halliday & Hassan's Model (1976) of cohesive devices provided the theoretical framework for this study. Halliday & Hassan (1976) suggested the following categories of cohesive relations:

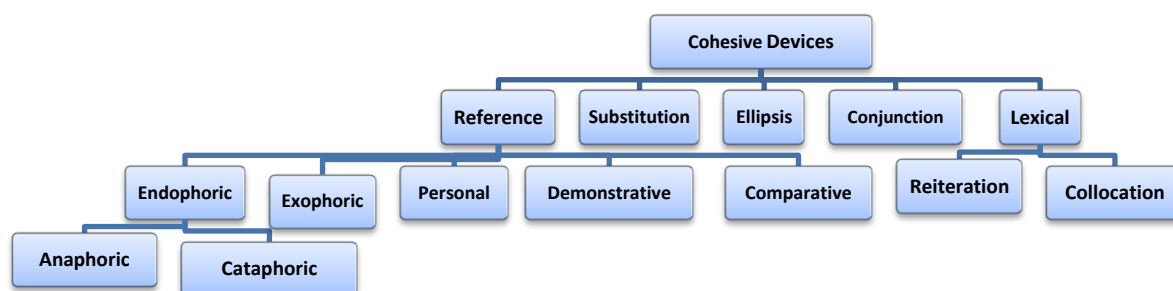


Figure 1 Types of Cohesive Devices Halliday & Hassan's Model (1976)

References, substitution and ellipsis belong to grammatical cohesive devices and lexical cohesion is lexical as it involves a system of open-ended choice. Conjunction 'is on the borderline of these two' (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 303).

Reference is "the relation between an element of the text and something else by reference to which it is interpreted in the given instance" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 308). Two main types of references are endophoric (textual) and exophoric (situational) Reference. Endophoric can be further classified as anaphoric (referring back) and cataphoric (referring forward) references. Reference are also categorized as personal (I, my, mine etc.), demonstrative (this, the, these, here etc.) and comparative (same, such, equal etc.).

In substitution one item is replaced by another item e.g. Will the teacher come today? I think so. Substitutions are of three types i.e. nominal, verbal and clausal. Ellipsis is the omission of an item. It is very similar to substitution; it is simply "substitution by zero". Ellipsis is also of three types: nominal, verbal and clausal.

Conjunctions are the cohesive devices which "are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings; (...) they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 226). Conjunctions can be categorized as additive (and, moreover etc.), adversative (but, yet etc.), causal (as a result,

so etc.), and temporal (then, later etc.). Reiteration (repetition of synonyms) and collocation (co-occurrence) are the major forms of lexical cohesion in a text.

Cohesive Ties and Semantic Relations

A pair of semantically interrelated textual elements constitutes a tie, e.g. 'it' and 'garden'. Two members of a tie might co-occur adjacent to each other and is called "immediate tie". Alternatively, members of a tie might occur quite distant from one another across a text and are called "mediated tie". Another type of tie is "remote tie" in which presupposition is met with reference to a remote element in the text but without other mediating elements.

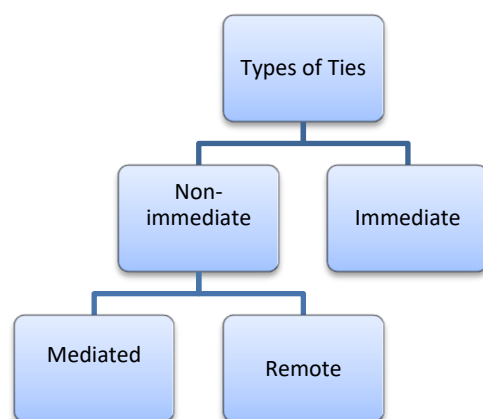


Figure 2 Types of Ties, based on Halliday and Hassan's Model (1976)

Three types of semantic relations i.e. "co-referentiality", "co-classification", and "co-extension" are represented by cohesive ties giving a texture to the text (Halliday & Hassan, 1989). When the semantic relation between the two members of a tie is the identity of reference or the "situational identity of reference", it is called co-referentiality (Halliday & Hassan, p. 73). It is realized by using referential devices like pronouns, definite articles, demonstratives etc. In co-classification, however, the meaning relation between members of a tie is a relation in which the things, processes, or circumstances are from the same class and each member refers to a distinct member of this class. It is realized by use of substitution and ellipsis. The third type of meaning relation between the items of a tie is that of 'co-extension', where both the members of a tie refer to same field or domain of meanings. This relation is typically realized by lexical cohesive relations, i.e. synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy and repetition.

METHODOLOGY

The short story 'It's in the Cards' written by Pat Harrington is randomly selected for analysis of features of semantic unity. This short story is the winner of 200 words' short story contest. This paper intends to elaborate the linguistic and structural choices which have contributed in making this story a cohesive semantic unit. Drawing on Halliday & Hassan's (1976) model of cohesion, different cohesive devices in the story are identified by reading and

re-reading the text. The analysis elaborates how the use of cohesive devices contributes towards the structural unity of text by connecting the sentences at micro level and how at macro-level, these features of connectedness adds to establish the structure of meanings; thereby making the text meaningful and a coherent semantic whole.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the story reveals that in this 200 words' short story 66 words are used by the writer to bring structural and semantic unity and continuity in the story and the patterns of use of these cohesive elements have also contributed in aesthetic effect of the story. The high frequency of different cohesive relations in the story not only contributes to bring connectedness in structure and meanings of the text but also helps in the interpretation of the story as Smith (1983) also found that a higher cohesion of any type helps to make a text more comprehensible. Similarly, Panasenko (2013) concludes that the semantic analysis of a literary text facilitates understanding of the writer's purpose, however, important information sometimes is not given directly, but is hidden in the thematic group of words.

References And Semantic Relation of Co-Referentiality

Table1 highlights the maximum use of references (46 times) as a cohesive device in the story. By using these references author was successful to strategically introduce the characters (Magda, Tamas, and the bad men) and then refer them throughout the text (Eggins, 1994). Name of female character Magda is introduced in first clause and is repeated in clause 9a and 12 a. But in between these clauses she is being referred with the pronouns (she and her, 13 times) which are scattered in the story. This pattern of cohesive device creates textual unity and harmony in the story.

Table 1. Cohesive Devices used in the Story 'It's in the Cards'

Cohesive Device Category	Sub Types	Examples	Frequency/ Occurrence
1. Reference	1. Endophoric (textual) 1.1 Anaphoric	1.1. 'she' 7times for 'Magda', 'her' '6times, 'he, him 3+2 for Tamas They, them and their 2+1+1 for bad men I, we, you (3) your, yours, it, its 'The'(5times)as <u>anaphoric</u> in 'the cards', 'the	36times
	1.2 Cataphoric		

	2.Exophoric(situational)	one', the door', 'the curtain' 'the cards', 2.'The' _____ as <u>exophoric</u> in 'the others', 'the tarot cards', 'the country', 'the table', 'the image', 'the floorboards', 'the curtained doorway'	7 times
	1. Personal	1.'she' (7times) 'her' (6), 'he' (3), 'him' (2) 'They' (2), 'them' (1), 'their' (1), 'I' (1), 'we' (1), 'you' (3), 'your' (1), 'yours (1)', 'it' (1), 'its' (1) 'when', 'now', 'here' In Clause 1a, 8, 15	31 times (also endophoric)
	2. Demonstrative		3 times
	3. Comparative		
Total			46 times

There are more endophoric references (36) used in the story by the author which are the textual references because they refer to something within the text. Exophoric (situational) references are used just 7 times in the story. Moreover, all these endophoric references are anaphoric in nature as the use of pronoun (she, her, he, them etc) and determiners (the) refer back to the characters (Magda, Tamas, and bad men) and things (cards, curtains etc.) respectively which were already introduced in the story. The use of more endophoric references helps to tie the parts of the story together and make it a cohesive narrative text. These references also provide textual cues which help to interpret the story without any external reference or any need of further elaboration.

In this short story of 200 words, there are 31 personal references which are very significant. These personal references and their referents form 'mediated ties' as they are found scattered in the text making the story a cohesive and coherent unit. Maximum use of references as cohesive device helps to avoid repetition in the story and also assists to connect the characters and events in

the different parts of the story thereby assigning textual and semantic unity onto the text.

Use of more pronouns is one of important features of a narrative text and occurrence of more pronouns as references in this story fulfills our expectations of the narrative text and creates familiarity with the structure of the story and this familiarity guides readers to interpret the story.

The use of cohesive ties in this short story represents a semantic relation of co-reference as there are more personal (31) and demonstrative (3) references which are elements of co-referential semantic relation within a text. The semantic ties of co-referentiality shows the logical progression of characters, their actions and the events in the story thereby creating a semantic coherence in the story and making its comprehension easier for the reader as Gernsbacher (1997) is of the view that comprehension of a text requires the construction of an integrated and coherent representation of a text's meaning.

Table 2. Cohesive Devices used in the Story 'It's in the Cards'

Cohesive Device Category	Sub Types	Examples	Frequency/ Occurrence
2.Substitution		'the one' clause 6 (nominal type of substitution)	1 time
1. Ellipsis			
2. Conjunction	1. Additive 2. Adversative 3. causal 4. Temporal.	1. 'and' Clause(2a,9a,11a,12a) 2. 'but' clause (10a) 3. 'after' , 'when' clause 7a 4. 'last night'	1. 4times 2. 1time 3. 2time 4. 1 times
3. Lexical	1. Reiteration	(the tarot cards, the cards, the cards, the one (card)), (curtained doorway, heavy curtain), (hand, head, foot), (trembling voice, voice muffled), (front, behind, aside)	4+2+3+2+3 times

Table 2 highlights the use of substitution, conjunction and lexical cohesive relations in the short story 'it's in the cards'. There are seven conjunctions used in the story as shown in the table 2. Use of additive conjunction 'and' (in

clause 2a, 9a, 11a, 12a) in the story helps to structure the narrative by unifying the information into a semantic whole. Use of adversative and causal conjunctions like 'but' (in clause 10a), 'after' (in clause 7a) and 'when' (clause 1a) maintains the sequence of the action of characters, integrate the textual information, and enrich the semantic texture of the narrative.

Lexical cohesive items are also shown in table 2. There is reiteration of different lexical items in the story. Repetition of 'the card' (e.g. 'the tarot cards', 'cards', 'the cards' etc.) which is also the part of title of the story highlights its semantic significance in portraying the thematic outlook of the story as this lexical cohesion helps in texturing the unified semantic structure and thereby providing the semantic unity and harmony in the story.

This 200 words' short story 'it's in the cards' written in simple past tense and having more action as highlighted by the use of more material processes (60%) meets our expectations of a narrative text. In this story use of transition expressions (e.g. and, but, after etc.), repetition of key words (e.g. the card), use of personal references (she, her, he, his, they, their etc.) and use of parallel form are the mechanical considerations which not only unite the sentences in the story but also provide transition and progression of ideas and make this short story a cohesive and meaningful semantic unit.

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows how the skilful and patterned use of cohesive devices weaves the parts of a story together and brings textual and semantic unity in a text. The study reveals that close study of narrative text by focusing on its cohesive relations can facilitate the identification of logical connection between sentences and ideas in a text and can make the comprehension and interpretation of a text easier. Moreover, it also points out that how the skillful use of cohesive devices can help an author to create a coherent piece of narrative in just 200 words.

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