
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Cohesive Devices in Literary texts: Analysis of Stephen King's *The Mist* for Students of Foreign Languages, Linguistics and Translation

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ABSTRACT

Text analysis constitutes one of the most challenging and complex practices for every student. Owing to this fact, linguists need a theoretical framework that would explain every linguistic device in text cohesion. Those cohesive devices may identify those units that are part of the analysed text. Among the huge amount of literary works that might be analysed, we chose one by Stephen King, one of the most prolific thriller writers of the 20th century. The aim of this study is to analyse one of his bestsellers in American Literature, *The Mist*, a psychological horror novella published in 1980. The main work used in this research is Hasan and Halliday's *Cohesion in English*, which will be the centre of the linguistic study. Thanks to this investigation, we shall establish certain linguistic parameters to help students build a linguistic analysis to ease their academic and professional areas, such as linguistics and translation. The excerpt analysed will include certain linguistic cohesive devices, such as anaphora-cataphora, the use of direct speech, relative clauses, or Hasan and Halliday's terms of field, tenor, and mode, among others. As a result of this, EFL students from different disciplines, such as foreign languages, translation, or linguistic studies, will therefore increase their knowledge of this literary model in order to be applied to other literary and non-literary works.

KEYWORDS

Text cohesion, cohesive devices, linguistics, translation, text analysis

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1. Introduction

One of students' most demanding and essential disciplines in Linguistics is Text Analysis. Owing to this fact, linguistic researchers have studied this specific area to establish certain useful parameters. Text Analysis has been the main research area for several experts. Coulthard (1994) compiled several linguistic studies based on written text analysis. We could mention Sinclair (1994), Winter (1994), or Jones (1994), among many others.

This article has considered Hasan and Halliday's *Cohesion in English* as the centre of this study. On the one hand, we consider that this work has been one of the cornerstones in Linguistics since its publication. Many researchers have taken it as one essential work for their studies. In addition, this book summarises clearly the research point in this article: the cohesion of the text, and how it unifies a selection of features that will be analysed here.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Text analysis, with several points to be considered, and studied in Hasan and Halliday's book, may help students identify important linguistic units in a specific text. Essential linguistic notions, such as anaphora and cataphora, use of conjunctions, relative clauses, finite and non-finite clauses, or collocations, are fundamental features in every text for EFL students in secondary and university studies.

Owing to this reason, this research will therefore reveal several textual features that may give cohesion to text unity. Students in several fields (EFL students, linguists, translators...) may find it useful, as they will meet their academic criteria here.

1.2. Research questions

This study states some questions for EFL students in different educational levels (secondary and university levels):

1. What are the cohesive devices observed in a text analysis of Stephen King's *The Mist*?
2. How could these linguistic tools be used in text analysis?

2. Literature Review

This cohesion, and the cohesive tools experts may use, is the centre of academic study. Hameed (2008) focused his research on the study of the cohesive devices in a text. His observations included the principles of referencing, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion, and how these tools may contribute to the overall meaning of the text. Hoover (2013) and Jockers (2014), also focused their attention on computational analysis of texts applied to every text and to every literary enquiry.

More recently, we could mention cohesion in texts is further studied by Yang and Sun (2012), who explored those cohesive devices in texts written in English for Chinese students and carried out comparative studies of how these linguistic tools may affect the syntactical structure of every text. As it happened to previous authors, Yang and Sun considered Halliday and Hasan's theoretical framework in their studies of L2 students, and how they make incorrect use of cohesive agents in their texts.

Ghasemi (2014) established a contrastive study between English and Persian articles in a corpus of 40 psychological articles, 20 in each language.

This corpus analysis was done in other studies, such as Klimova and Hubackova (2014), who focused their research on the analysis of adverbial devices, and defined and established discourse connections in English-written abstracts coming from the United Kingdom. Moreover, we find the analysis done by Agdam and Hadidi (2015), who studied the use of cohesive devices from a lexical perspective in a selected corpus of articles from *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*. This lexical cohesion, which included synonyms and collocations, has been studied in academic articles in linguistic and political newspapers.

The study of a corpus has been further done by Alotaibi (2015), who did research about formal documents, as it happened with Agdam and Hadidi. Alotaibi pointed out the importance of lexical cohesion in formal writing. It is, therefore, noticeable how this academic use of cohesive devices in formal documents appear in several authors.

This academic use of cohesive tools is observed in other works. Mohammed (2015) examined and continued with a further observation of conjunctions as part of cohesive devices in texts for ESL students. Bahaziq (2016) studies, as Mohammed's, were focused on students' essay writings, and on the importance of references and conjunctions for these academic writings. These references were also studied by Neisi and Gorjian (2017), who did comparative research of both English and Iranian non-native political news.

Latifah and Triyono (2020) continued with the cohesion of discourse, this time on social media Facebook. Due to the importance of cohesion in a text, they established important links of lexical and grammatical cohesion, leading to text coherence.

3. Methodology

3.1. Hasan and Halliday's Cohesion in English

This cornerstone in linguistics was published in 1980. The work is divided into 8 sections, which are named as follows:

- Introduction.
- Reference.
- Substitution.
- Ellipsis.
- Conjunction.
- Lexical Cohesion.
- The Meaning of Cohesion.
- The Analysis of Cohesion.

3.2. Methodology design

a) Conjunction

Conjunction is another linguistic device studied by Halliday and Hasan (1980), and further examined in this article. As they stated, "with conjunction (...) we moved into a different type of semantic relation, one which is no longer any kind of research instruction, but a specification of the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before" (Halliday and Hasan, 1980: 227). Namely, these cohesive devices connect and relate elements that appear correlatively in a text.

Apart from the conjunction “and”, we may include other examples, such as “but”, “yet”, “so”, and “then”. In addition, they mentioned “however”, which, unlike “yet” and “but”, can appear in other positions. Thanks to this, the authors established four big adverbial categories, namely,

- Additive.
 - Adversative.
 - Causal. “So”, “thus”, “therefore”, “hence”, “consequently”, “accordingly”, and many other examples.
 - Temporal. The simplest form is “then”.
- b) Lexical cohesion

Lexical cohesion is another aspect included in Halliday and Hasan. They point out the fact that lexical cohesion may be observed once there exists a recurrence of one lexical unit that precedes another one (Halliday and Hasan, 1980: 283). They established some patterns:

Table (1). Halliday and Hasan, 1980: 288

Types of Lexical Cohesion	Referential Relation
Reiteration	
Same word (repetition)	i. Same referent
Synonym (or near synonym)	ii. Inclusive
Superordinate	iii. Exclusive
General word	iv. Unrelated

Additionally, we mention the importance of collocation, a linguistic phenomenon that happens when two or more linguistic elements appear together on a regular basis. This is another obvious event in linguistics that may be highly important in the analysis and further study of the text.

c) Text Unity and the Concept of Text. Texture

This article finally establishes the most general and most important level of analysis, text unity or the concept of texture. Halliday and Hasan (1980) stated the unified form of a text as its most prominent feature. Moreover, there exist certain factors that are involved in the unified structure of the text. Its hierarchy, higher than the sentences, is semantically considered as a whole. However, this sense of oneness cannot be accomplished without the combination of several grammatical elements that can be fixed as a semantical jigsaw.

This text can have any length (Halliday and Hasan, 1980: 294), that is, from a single sentence to a whole book, named as “novel” or, in King’s work, a “novella”. All these concepts are shaped in a text with its specific features. This is called “Texture” (Hasan and Halliday, 1980: 2), which can be linguistically analysed by observing the text elements and how they interact within the text. All these grammatical units ensure an internal and cohesive structure that provides semantic coherence to the text. Halliday and Hasan summarise this idea: “All grammatical units - sentences, clauses, groups, words – are internally ‘cohesive’ simply because they are structured” (Halliday and Hasan, 1980: 7).

This idea of “text” is therefore a semantical unity that listeners or readers may infer when faced with an oral or written text. This textual meaning, fully understood in the “texture” of the text, is a semantical whole that gives coherence to the text.

4. Results and Discussion

With all this additional theoretical information, the following part reflects the practical analysis of a fragment from Stephen King’s *The Mist*. The analysis of this fragment is based on the different linguistic units that give a cohesive meaning to the text. This section introduces the analysed part of King’s work, followed by the questions based on it.

Table 2. Analysed excerpt from Stephen King’s *The Mist* (King, 1985: 53-56)

The generator’s roar muted a little as the line shuffled forward. Norton and I made desultory conversation, skirting around the ugly property dispute that had landed us in district court and sticking with things like the Red Sox’s chances and the weather. At last we exhausted our little store of small talk and fell silent. Billy fidgeted beside me. The line crawled along. Now we had frozen dinners on our right and the more expensive wines and champagnes on our left. As the line progressed down to the cheaper wines, I toyed briefly with the idea of picking up a bottle of Ripple, the wine of my flaming youth. I didn’t do it. My youth never flamed that much anyway.

"Jeez, why can't they hurry up, Dad?" Billy asked. That pinched look was still on his face, and suddenly, briefly, the mist of disquiet that had settled over me rifted, and something terrible peered through from the other side-the bright and metallic face of terror. Then it passed.

"Keep cool, champ," I said.

We had made it up to the bread racks-to the point where the double line bent to the left. We could see the checkout lanes now, the two that were open and the other four, deserted, each with a little sign on the stationary conveyor belt, signs that read PLEASE CHOOSE ANOTHER LANE and WINSTON. Beyond the lanes was the big sectioned plateglass window which gave a view of the parking lot and the intersection of Routes 117 and 302 beyond. The view was partially obscured by the white-paper backs of signs advertising current specials and the latest giveaway, which happened to be a set of books called The Mother Nature Encyclopedia. We were in the line that would eventually lead us to the checkout where Bud Brown was standing. There were still maybe thirty people in front of us. The easiest one to pick out was Mrs. Carmody, in her blazing-yellow pantsuit. She looked like an advertisement for yellow fever.

Suddenly a shrieking noise began in the distance. It quickly built up in volume and resolved itself into the crazy warble of a police siren. A horn blared at the intersection and there was a shriek of brakes and burning rubber. I couldn't see-the angle was all wrong-but the siren reached its loudest as it approached the market and then began to fade as the police car went past. A few people broke out of line to look, but not many. They had waited too long to chance losing their places.

Norton went; his stuff was tucked into my cart. After a few moments he came back and got into line again. "Local fuzz," he said.

Then the town fire whistle began to wail, slowly cranking up to a shriek of its own, falling off, then rising again. Billy grabbed my hand-clutched it. "What is it, Daddy?" he asked, and then, immediately: "Is Mommy all right?"

"Must be a fire on the Kansas Road," Norton said.

"Those damned live lines from the storm. The fire trucks will go through in a minute."

That gave my disquiet something to crystallize on. There were live lines down in our yard.

Bud Brown said something to the checker he was supervising; she had been craning around to see what was happening. She flushed and began to run her calculator again.

I didn't want to be in this line. All of a sudden I very badly didn't want to be in it. But it was moving again, and it seemed foolish to leave now. We had gotten down by the cartons of cigarettes.

Someone pushed through the IN door, some teenager. I think it was the kid we almost hit coming in, the one on the Yamaha with no helmet. "The fog!" he yelled. "Y'oughta see the fog! It's rolling right up Kansas Road!" People looked around at him. He was panting, as if he had run a long distance. Nobody said anything. "Well, y'oughta see it," he repeated, sounding defensive this time. People eyed him and some of them shuffled, but no one wanted to lose his or her place in line. A few people who hadn't reached the lines yet left their carts and strolled through the empty checkout lanes to see if they could see what he was talking about. A big guy in a summer hat with a paisley band (the kind of hat you almost never see except in beer commercials with backyard barbecues as their settings) yanked open the outdoor and several people-ten, maybe a dozen-went out with him. The kid went along.

"Don't let out all the air conditioning," one of the army kids cracked, and there were a few chuckles. I wasn't chuckling. I had seen the mist coming across the lake.

"Billy, why don't you go have a look?" Norton said.

"No," I said at once, for no concrete reason.

The line moved forward again. People craned their necks, looking for the fog the kid had mentioned, but there was nothing on view except bright-blue sky. I heard someone say that the kid must have been joking. Someone else responded that he had seen a funny line of mist on Long Lake not an hour ago. The first whistle whooped and screamed. I didn't like it. It sounded like big-league doom blowing that way.

More people went out. A few even left their places in line, which speeded up the proceedings a bit. Then grizzled old John Lee Frovin, who works as a mechanic at the Texaco station, came ducking in and yelled: "Hey! Anybody got a camera?" He looked around, then ducked back out again.

That caused something of a rush. If it was worth taking a picture of, it was worth seeing.

Suddenly Mrs. Carmody cried in her rusty but powerful old voice, "Don't go out there!"

1- Analyse conjunction in the fragment according to Halliday and Hasan

Conjunction is a cohesive device in between the grammatical and the lexical categories by means of which there are, from a linguistic point of view, forms of systematic relationships between sentences. The connection of structures is semantically realised by conjunctions. Following Halliday and Hasan, we find different semantic connections expressed in this fragment, namely additive, adversative and temporal:

- Temporal relation: "The generator's roar muted a little as the line shuffled forward" ; "something terrible peered through from the other side-the bright and metallic face of terror. Then it passed."
- Adversative relation: "People eyed him and some of them shuffled, but no one wanted to lose his or her place in line."
- Additive relation: "At last we exhausted our little store of small talk and fell silent."

Simple adversative, additive and temporal relation is used in this fragment to indicate simplicity (everyday language), immediateness (things happen very fast) and suspense (constant use of "and", as anticipating that something unknown is about to happen).

2- Analyse endophoric reference in the fragment

Reference can be further subdivided into endophoric (anaphora –backward reference- and cataphora – forward reference) and exophoric or deictic – relation between an element in the text and the outside world.

Endophoric references in the fragment can be found in the following examples:

- Anaphora: "I toyed briefly with the idea of picking up a bottle of Ripple, the wine of my flaming youth. I didn't do it", where "it" refers to the previous sentence's idea of picking up a bottle of wine; "A big guy in a summer hat [...] and several people-ten, maybe a dozen-went out with him.", "him" referring to "a big guy", just to name a few.
- Cataphora: "a bottle of Ripple, the wine of my flaming youth", the wine brand Ripple referring forwards, anticipating the information to be received, an explanation: "the wine of my flaming youth".

3- Provide at least one synonym and a definition for each of the following words in the text. How would you translate the word in its context?

- Roar →synonym: blare, noise; definition: to make a loud noise, such as thunder; translation: "rugido, estruendo"
- Desultory →synonym: random, casual; definition: occurring in a random or incidental way; haphazard; translation:"casual, informal"
- Flaming →synonym: blazing, burning; definition: intensely ardent or passionate; translation:"ardiente, llameante"
- Pinched →synonym: ill-looking, unhealthy; definition: thin, pale or not very healthy-looking; translation:"flacucho, paliducho"

4- What is a semantic field? Mention two semantic fields in the text and say, at least, four words in each semantic field

Related to the concept of hyponymy is the notion of a lexical or semantic field. A lexical field denotes a segment of reality symbolised by a set of related words. The words in a semantic field share common semantic properties and help lexical cohesion in a text. Below we can see some of the semantic fields present in this fragment, with examples:

- Motion verbs: shuffled forward, skirting around, fidgeted; craning around;moved forward.
- Shopping: line, conveyor belt, cart, checker.
- Sounds and noises: roar, volume, warble, siren, horn, whistle, blared,wail, yelled.

5- Define homophone and find all the possible homophones in the fourth paragraph in the text. Provide a definition.

A homophone is a word which is pronounced the same as another word but has different meaning or spelling, or both:

- Bread: food made from flour mixed wth other ingredients, and baked. // Bred: Past tense and past participle of breed.
- Sign: Something that suggests the presence or existence of a fact, condition, or quality // sine: trigonometric function// syne: a Scottish word for "since".
- Lane: a narrow way or passage// lain: past participle of lie.
- Wine: A beverage made of the fermented juice of grapes, usually containing alcohol.// whine: To utter a plaintive, high-pitched sound, as in pain, fear, or complaint.

6- Find an example of the following in the text. Then define the terms

- Complex sentence: "The generator's roar muted a little as the line shuffled forward". A complex sentence is a sentence that contains an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence, but a dependent clause - even though it has a subject and a verb - cannot stand alone.
- Defining relative clause: "Beyond the lanes was the big sectioned plateglass window which gave a view of the parking lot and the intersection of Routes 117 and 302 beyond". Defining relative clauses are complex clauses composed of a relative pronoun (sometimes omitted), a verb, and other optional elements such as the subject or object of the verb or the passive agent. Commas are not used to separate defining relative clauses from the rest of the sentence, whereas they are used to separate non-defining ones.
- Ellipsis: "Must be a fire on the Kansas Road," Norton said. There/It is omitted before the verb. Ellipsis is the omission from speech or writing of a word or words that are superfluous or able to be understood from contextual clues.
- Non-finite clause: "skirting around the ugly property dispute"; "the two that were open and the other four, deserted". There are examples of non-finite clause with ed-participles and ing-participles in the text. The absence of a finite verb means that

they have no distinction of person, number or modal auxiliary. In the text they are mainly used for descriptive purposes and as post modifiers. The effect of non-finite clauses is to alter the position of theme and rheme (given and new information), and fulfill the purpose of bringing the readers' attention to the message that the writer is trying to convey, that is, he is interested in what is the effect of what we are talking about.

e. Direct speech: "Keep cool, champ," I said.; "Jeez, why can't they hurry up, Dad?" Billy asked. The reporting of speech by repeating the actual words of a speaker.

7- Give examples of antonyms for the following words

- a. Chances: improbabilities, impossibilities.
- b. Frozen: hot
- c. To fade: to appear
- d. Foolish: intelligent
- e. Yelled: whispered
- f. Powerful: weak

8- Define "collocation". What are examples of collocations in the first three paragraphs of the text?

A collocation is a group of two or more words that are almost always put together to create a specific meaning. Using a different combination of words in that context may sound unnatural or awkward.

Examples: small talk; frozen dinners; yellow fever; desultory conversation; district court; flaming youth; keep cool; conveyor belt; parking lot; a set of books.

9- Discuss field, tenor and mode in the text

According to Halliday, any text features register as 'a variety of language, corresponding to a variety of situation', with situation interpreted 'by means of a conceptual framework using the terms "field", "tenor" and "mode":

1. Field (what) is the subject matter of the text. This fragment tells us about the everyday act of doing the shopping, which is interrupted by an awkward atmosphere of suspense featuring police sirens, scared people and an unexplainable and dense mist forming outside the supermarket.
2. Tenor (who) is the relationship between those involved in the communicative act. Here, the relationship of characters is a daily one, namely neighbours doing the shopping and talking about everyday things and objects; the relationship between the reader and the narrator goes a little bit beyond, as we as observers are aware of the danger the characters may be in before they even notice it by means of the introduction of suspense elements which forward a possible fatal ending.
3. Mode (how) refers to text construction, looking at whether it is based on written or spoken communication. The fragment combines narration (third person omniscient) and dialogue (direct speech).

10- Translate the following fragment from the text

Suddenly a shrieking noise began in the distance. It quickly built up in volume and resolved itself into the crazy warble of a police siren. A horn blared at the intersection and there was a shriek of brakes and burning rubber. I couldn't see- the angle was all wrong- but the siren reached its loudest as it approached the market and then began to fade as the police car went past. A few people broke out of line to look, but not many. They had waited too long to chance losing their places.

De repente, se escuchó un sonido agudo en la distancia. Subió rápidamente en volumen y se resolvió en el loco gorgjeo de una sirena de policía. Un claxon sonó en la intersección y hubo un chirrido de frenos y goma quemándose. Yo no podía verlo, el ángulo era incorrecto, pero la sirena alcanzó su punto más alto cuando se acercó al mercado y luego comenzó a apagarse cuando pasó el coche de la policía. Algunas personas se salieron de la fila para mirar, pero no muchas. Habían esperado demasiado para arriesgarse a perder sus lugares.

5. Conclusion

We can establish certain conclusions once we consider all the aspects observed in the theoretical and practical sections of this article. Firstly, the importance of text analysis, studied by several authors, is noticeable in the practical investigation carried out in this research. Thanks to this, we can reach certain conclusions for students at all levels.

There is no doubt that linguistic studies carried out in this article have important implications for students that have an intermediate-advanced level of English and Spanish. As many authors suggested, the use of these cohesive devices, such as the use of adverbs studied by Klimova and Hubackova (2014), can articulate the text comprehension once their complete use has been fully understood.

It is undeniable the additional observations you may include in the text for further study in higher and more complex analysis. Additionally, further studies in lexical cohesion, as Alotaibi (2015) points out, may open a much wider comprehension of the text for students. This better understanding of the text will undoubtedly result in a much more complete work, related to linguistics or translation studies, among other disciplines.

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