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Cohesion Coherence Interdependence - Analysing Cohesive Devices to Study Coherence in the Text

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Abstract

This paper places its focus on an in-depth analysis of text-forming (cohesive) devices in a literature-based discourse. The purpose behind the research is to highlight a significant role of cohesion in generating coherence of a text. Moreover, a detailed study of the language use in a post-war literary piece aims to facilitate the comprehension of linguistic varieties in the chaotic periods of turmoil.

Introduction

“Literature is the art form realized entirely through language, evaluation and interpretation...a detailed analysis of authorial technique and stylistic

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features successfully achieved within a rigorous linguistic frame.”
(Coulthard 1985:179)

The linguistics science has long been centered upon the traditional study of ‘sentence’ for the purpose of analysis. However, the recent trends have transferred the focus to inter and outer sentential relations in language. People engaged in tracing the linguistic unity and drawing its connections to the world around are usually called *discourse analysts*.

A purposeful ‘stretch of language’ that retains sequence of thought and meaning is named *discourse* and the examination of linguistic functions can be referred to as *discourse analysis* that regards language as something more than a sentence-level phenomenon. Zellig Harris, a sentence linguist, wrote an article entitled “Discourse Analysis” in 1952 coining this term for the first time. He, through this article, attempted to identify the connectedness, semantic unity and underlying structural patterns within the stretches of language and thus paved the path for the future *discourse analysts* to explore the functional depths of language.

Basic Unit in Discourse Analysis

To discourse analysts, the basic unit of analysis in language is the “utterance” and one of the fundamental aims of discourse analysis is to discover the rules that make these utterances a meaningful coherent whole. These rules are called the rules of *coherence*. The quality of coherence can either be formal or contextual. Formal coherence refers to the co-textual or linguistic unity and contextual coherence points towards non-linguistic ties. The linguistic bond is established through certain text-forming devices that are termed as “*cohesive devices*”, whereas contextual coherence is achieved through a relationship between the discourse and the situation in which it occurs.

Focus of This Article

This research paper aims to analyze the co-textual/ linguistic unity in the chosen discourse through a detailed identification and explanation of “cohesive devices” used in it. Moreover, it sets out to highlight a significant role of cohesion in generating coherence of a text. The conclusion is going to throw light on choice of the text in terms of its appropriateness for being an apt *discourse* to be analyzed.

Chosen Text

The chosen text for discourse analysis is the first chapter of Earnest Hemingway’s novel, “A Farewell to Arms”. Having been selected from a novel, the *text type* turns out to be ‘a literary discourse’. “A Farewell to Arms”, published in 1929, is a vivid portrayal of the World-War I. It’s a semi-autobiographical account of Hemingway’s personal war-time experiences. A tragedy of broken-hopes and shattered-ideals, the novel, presents a farewell both to the ‘arms’ of war and the ‘arms’ of love. The story has been set against the backdrop of World War I, particularly, at the Italian-Austrian front. Moreover, Hemingway’s characters are the people involved in the war scenario and his audience is the post-war society of 1920s America, whom Gertrude Stein called “The Lost Generation”.

Literature Review

Though critical thinking and analysis of situations/texts is as ancient as mankind or philosophy itself, yet Discourse Analysis is generally perceived as a product of the postmodern period. The postmodern period is distinguished from other periods for most of its literary and non-literary productions focusing on “deconstruction”. Stephen (1994) states that the postmodern writers and theorists viewed the world as an inherently fragmented and heterogeneous place that made them come up with “deconstructive” ideas and methods of analysis which suit this world the best. Discourse Analysis is one of such studies of ‘deconstruction’ in the field of linguistics.

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“The way you construct meanings for texts depends on the way you construct theories about the world—about realities.” (Birch 1989:25)

“Discourse can be defined as a stretch of language consisting of several sentences that are related not only in terms of ideas they share but also in terms of functions they perform within the discourse.” (Nunan 1993:5) This is the functional relation within sentences or utterances that is termed as ‘*coherence in discourse*’ which emphasizes organization and mapping of language on one hand and social relationships and interaction on the other.

Coherence and Cohesion

Coherence and *cohesion* are two different forms of connectedness in discourse. Halliday and Hasan (1976) believe that a text can be cohesive without necessarily being coherent because cohesion does not spawn coherence. In other words, cohesion refers to grammatical and lexical ties in discourse that join the utterances/sentences together, whereas coherence is the semantic unity that flows throughout the text and makes it an overall ‘meaningful whole’. That’s why; the critics believe that a text can be cohesive without being a semantically unified.

Cohesion can be defined as a relation between the utterances that is established by the grammatical and lexical links in discourse. Nunan (1993) defines cohesion as ‘sequence of sentences or utterances which seem to hang together containing text-forming devices and a relationship across sentence or utterance boundaries which helps to tie the sentences in a text together’ (p. 21).

Widdowson (2004) states that for Halliday and Hasan cohesion is a feature of discourse structure that gives a text its texture. “We can interpret cohesion, in practice, as the set of recourses for linking a sentence with what has gone before” say Halliday and Hasan (1976:10). They, in their book entitled “Cohesion in English” (1976), categorize cohesion into grammatical and lexical *cohesive devices* and define them as “categories which have

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a theoretical basis as distinct types of cohesive relation, but which also provide a practical means for describing and analyzing texts” (p.13). The different **types of cohesive** devices according to Halliday and Hasan (1976) are listed below:

1- Grammatical Cohesive Devices:

- a- Reference
- b- Ellipsis
- c- Substitution
- d- Conjunction

2- Lexical Cohesive Devices:

- a- Reiteration
- b- Collocation

1- Grammatical Cohesive Devices

a- Referential Cohesion

Referential cohesion is achieved through different types of references in a text. There are two basic types of references:

i- Exophoric references

There are times when the meaning is not explicit from the text itself, but is obvious to those in a particular situation. This type of situational reference is called an exophoric reference that refers to the ‘shared world’ which both sender and receiver share “outside the text”.

ii- Endophoric references

These references are of textual nature that refer to elements “within the text”. Endophoric references are further divided into *anaphoric* and *cataphoric* references.

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- **Anaphoric references**

The reference item functioning in anaphoric way refers “backwards” to the preceding text pointing the reader or listener to a “previously mentioned entity, process or state of affairs” (Nunan 1993:22).

- **Cataphoric references**

This type of reference item points the reader or listener forward referring to elements in the following text. Nunan (1993) says that authors sometimes use cataphoric references to produce a dramatic effect.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) identify three sub-types of referential cohesion: personal, demonstrative and comparative references.

Personal reference items are expressed through personal pronouns and possessive determiners, such as he, she, it, they etc. These references are used to identify individuals and objects that are referred to at some other point in the text.

Demonstrative reference item is expressed through determiners and adverbs that refer to a single word or phrase or much longer chunks of text and sometimes several paragraphs or pages also. Demonstrative determiners are words like this, that, these and those and adverbial reference items are mostly here, there, now and then etc.

Comparative reference is articulated through adjectives and adverbs to compare or contrast items in a text for their being similar, identical or different. For example words like: equally, likewise, contrastingly, else, other or same etc are comparative adjectives or adverbs.

b- Ellipsis and Substitution

Ellipsis is the “omission of elements” in a sentence/ text that are “obvious from the context itself” (McCarthy 1991:43). Whereas, substitution is the replacement of these elements with some other words or phrases. Halliday and Hasan (1976) combine these two devices by saying that “ellipsis is a form of substitution in which the original item is replaced by zero.” Ellipsis and substitution occur in three types that are: nominal, verbal and clausal (relating to noun, verb and clause respectively).

Halliday and Hasan (1976) believe that references and substitution are such cohesive forms that lie on the borderline for reference being a form of substitution itself. However, they draw the distinction between the two by stating that “in terms of the linguistic system, reference is a relation on the semantic level, whereas substitution is a relation on the lexicogrammatical level, the level of grammar and vocabulary, or linguistic ‘form’.” (p.89)

c- Conjunction

The last of the three relationships, conjunction, functions somewhat differently than the other three because it is related to the entire environment of a text. The conjunctive elements or connectors that are also known as “discourse markers” make a text cohesive by joining the utterance or sentences together resulting in the construction of sequence of thought. Halliday and Hasan (1976) have categorized conjunction into four sub-types:

- **Additive conjunctions** (relating to an addition of information such as and, moreover, furthermore etc)
- **Adversative conjunctions** (relating to a contrastive information such as however, yet, but etc)
- **Causal conjunctions** (connection in terms of cause, for example, because, as a result of, consequently etc)

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- **Temporal conjunctions** (relation in terms of time such as then, afterwards, subsequently etc)

2- Lexical Cohesion/Cohesive Devices

Lexical cohesive devices are meant to produce a semantic relationship between two words in a text in order to generate cohesion amongst its lexical units. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), there are two major categories of lexical cohesion: reiteration and collocation.

a- Reiteration

The Penguin Dictionary of Literary and Linguistic Terms (Cuddon 1980) defines reiteration as a form of lexical cohesion in which the two lexical items refer to the same entity or event. Reiteration includes repetition, synonym and near synonym, super-ordinate and general word.

- **Repetition**—recurrence of the same lexical unit
- **Synonym**—words similar in meaning
- **Super-ordinate**—words referring to the general class
- **General word**—collective nouns corresponding to something in general such as people, things, universe etc.

b- Collocation

Collocation is a form of lexical cohesion that includes semantically related words in a text which tend to appear in a similar context. Collocational words are text as well as context-bound and Nunan (1993) says that our ability to identify them depends on our background knowledge and on our familiarity with the context and content of the text.

After having defined grammatical and lexical cohesive devices introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the proceeding literature review is going to focus on ***some other text-forming devices*** that also prove to be instrumental for the establishment of *cohesion* in discourse.

1- Verb Form (Tense and Aspect)

Tense refers to the time when the action of the verb occurs. The action can occur in one of three time periods: past, present, or future. They form a time line.

Ex: I ate, I eat, I will eat.

Aspect refers to the time when the action of the verb occurs either across or between those periods. That is, the times on the time line can be extended (progressive aspect) or combined (perfect aspect):

Progressive

The action is continuous.

Ex: When Saima called, I was eating.

Perfect

The action happened at some unknown time between the past and the present time of speaking.

Ex: I have eaten today.

2- Parallelism

Parallelism is another device that makes a text cohesive by establishing a connection between the forms of sentences or clauses. It refers to the use of grammatically or phonetically equal elements in sentences and paragraphs. It might be viewed as a matter of balance. When elements are balanced (parallel), the result is clear and smooth; when they are not balanced the discourse is disharmonious and confusing.

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Balanced or symmetrical elements also tend to be more concise. Writers who face the challenge of stating several ideas in one sentence can often achieve this goal with remarkable clarity if they arrange these ideas in a balanced/ parallel series. This series might comprise parallel nouns or phrases, or it might comprise a more sophisticated sequence of parallel clauses. Parallelism produces a powerful emotional and aesthetic effect in the discourse.

3- Theme and Rheme

Theme and rheme help to understand how information is conveyed in clauses. *Theme* is the initial element around which the rest of the sentence/clause is organized. This ‘rest of the sentence’ which follows the theme is called *rheme*.

Analysis of a text in terms of theme and rheme emerges different ***patterns***. Sometimes theme remains the same throughout and rheme keeps on changing. While some other times, rheme of the previous sentence, frequently, becomes theme of the next. This type of pattern is called ***communicative dynamism***.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), there are three major **types of themes**:

- **Textual Theme** sequences the text by drawing grammatical links between clauses/sentences e.g. however, moreover, etc.
- **Interpersonal Theme** indicates the attitude of the speaker or writer e.g. honestly, generally, etc.
- **Ideational Theme** is the topic or content of the text/sentence e.g. a name (Nancy Smith), you, I, the cat, etc.

Application of Discourse Analysis to Other Fields of Education

Discourse Analysis, being a study of relationship between a text and its context, opens up a number of avenues for research in academia. Contemporary *psycholinguists*

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believe that a child's language acquisition depends more on his understanding of the discourse than grammatical competence. Latest researches on educational psychology (Bates 2007) hold that a child should be taught *grammar* through discourse analysis and not vice-e-versa. Moreover, numerous *sociolinguists* agree on the point that the study of discourse analysis suggests the most effective ways of analyzing social interactions that can be further developed into various methodologies. Coulthard (1985) states that discourse analysis is "the key to a better understanding of what language is and how it works" (p.1) and that it paves a path of research for not merely linguists but also for sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, philosophers, ethnographers and conversational analysts.

Analysis of the Text

(Identification of *cohesive devices* in the given text)

1- Grammatical Cohesion

a- Referential Cohesion

i- Exophoric References

Paragraph 1, Line 1—that year we lived in a house

Paragraph 1, Line 4—the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops

Paragraph 2, Line 2—we could see the flashes

Paragraph 3, Line 1—we heard the troops marching

Paragraph 3, Line 4—we could look across the valley

Paragraph 4, Line 3—came out in this way

ii- Endophoric References

• Personal References

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	Reference Item	Linguistic Referent	Type
Para 1, Line 3	they	Troops	anaphoric
Para 2, Line 3	it	flashes from the artillery	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 4	it	forest	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 5	it	fighting	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 7	their	the troops	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 7	they	the men	anaphoric
Para 4, Line 2	they	officers	anaphoric
Para 4, Line 2	he, his	one of the officers	anaphoric
Para 4, Line 2	it	the king	cataphoric
Para 4, Line 3	he	the king	anaphoric
Para 5, Line 2	it	the cholera	anaphoric

- **Demonstrative References**

	Reference Item	Linguistic Referent	Type
Para 1, Line 1	that	house	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 2	that	many mules	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 2	that	other trucks	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 3	that	big guns	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 4	this	the north	anaphoric
Para 3, Line 5	that	another mountain	anaphoric
Para 4, Line 1	that	motor-cars	anaphoric

b- Ellipsis and Substitution

Omitted/ellipted words or clauses are written in brackets in the sentences below.

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- **Clausal Ellipsis**

Para 1, Line 1

...a house in a village that looked across the river and (looked across) the plain to the mountains.

Para 1, Line 2

...there were pebbles and boulders, (that were) dry and white in the sun...

Para 1, Line 4

...we saw the troops marching along the road and (we saw) the dust rising and leaves...

Para 3, Line 1

...we heard the troops marching under the window and (we heard) guns going past pulled...

Para 3, Line 2

There was much traffic at night and (there were) many mules on the roads...and (there were) gray motor-trucks...and (there were) other trucks with loads.

Para 3, Line 4

...we could look across the valley and (we could) see a forest of chestnut trees...

- **Verbal Ellipsis**

Para 1, Line 2

...the water was clear and (was) swiftly moving and (was) blue in the channels.

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- **Nominal Ellipsis**

Para 5, Line 2

But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand (people/ soldiers) died of it in the army.

The **substitution** occurs at only one point in the text when the clause “green branches” is substituted by the clause “green leafy braches and vines”. It is a *clausal substitution*. (Para 3, Line 3)

c- Conjunctions/ Connectors

	Conjunctions	Type
Para 1 and 2	And	Additive
Para 3, Line 2-4, 6		
Para 4, Line 3		
Para 5, Line 1		
Para 3, line 5	But	Adversative
Para 4, Line 2		
Para 5, Line 2		
Para 3, Line 1	Sometimes	Temporal
Para 3, Line 7	So that	Causal
Para 3, Line 7	As though	Additive
Para 4, Line 1	Usually	Additive

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2- Lexical Cohesion

a- Reiteration

- **Repetition**

The lexical units recurring in each paragraph of the text are listed below:

Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3	Paragraph 4	Paragraph 5
The river	mountains	motor-tractors	officers	rain
Trees	nights	trucks	things	
Dust		guns		
Leaves		traffic		
		Branches		

- **Synonyms**

Flashes/ lighting, brown/ bare (Paragraph 2, Line 1-2)

- **Near-Synonyms**

Ammunition/ guns (Paragraph 3, Line 2), wet/ brown/ dead (Paragraph 3, Line 6)

- **Super-ordinate and Hyponym**

Super-ordinate: forest

Hyponym: chestnut tree

(Paragraph 3, Line 4)

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Super-ordinate: ammunition

Hyponym: guns

(Paragraph 3, line 2-3)

- **General word**

“Things” (Paragraph 4, Line 3)

b- Collocation

Paragraph 1:

The river...pebbles...boulders...water...blue

The plain...trees...leaves...dust...road

Paragraph 2

Mountains...brown and bare...nights...cool...storm

Paragraph 3

Troops...guns...ammunition...traffic...rifle...cartridge-boxes

Paragraph 4

Officers...generals...the King

Paragraph 5

Winter...rain...cholera

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Some Other Cohesive Devices

1- Parallelism

- Most of the sentences and clauses throughout the text are beginning with “there was/ there were” which is a grammatical parallel.
- Secondly, the use of sound parallels or alliteration is also quite prominent:

Paragraph 1: Plain/ Pebble, Blue/ Boulder

Paragraph 2: Brown and Bare

Paragraph 3: Trucks...slower in the traffic, Guns covered with green branches

Paragraph 4: Gray motor-cars...going very fast

Paragraph 5: Came the cholera

2- Verb Form (Tense and Aspect)

- The **tense** used in the text is past.
- The grammatical **aspect** throughout is simple/indefinite.

3- Theme and Rheme

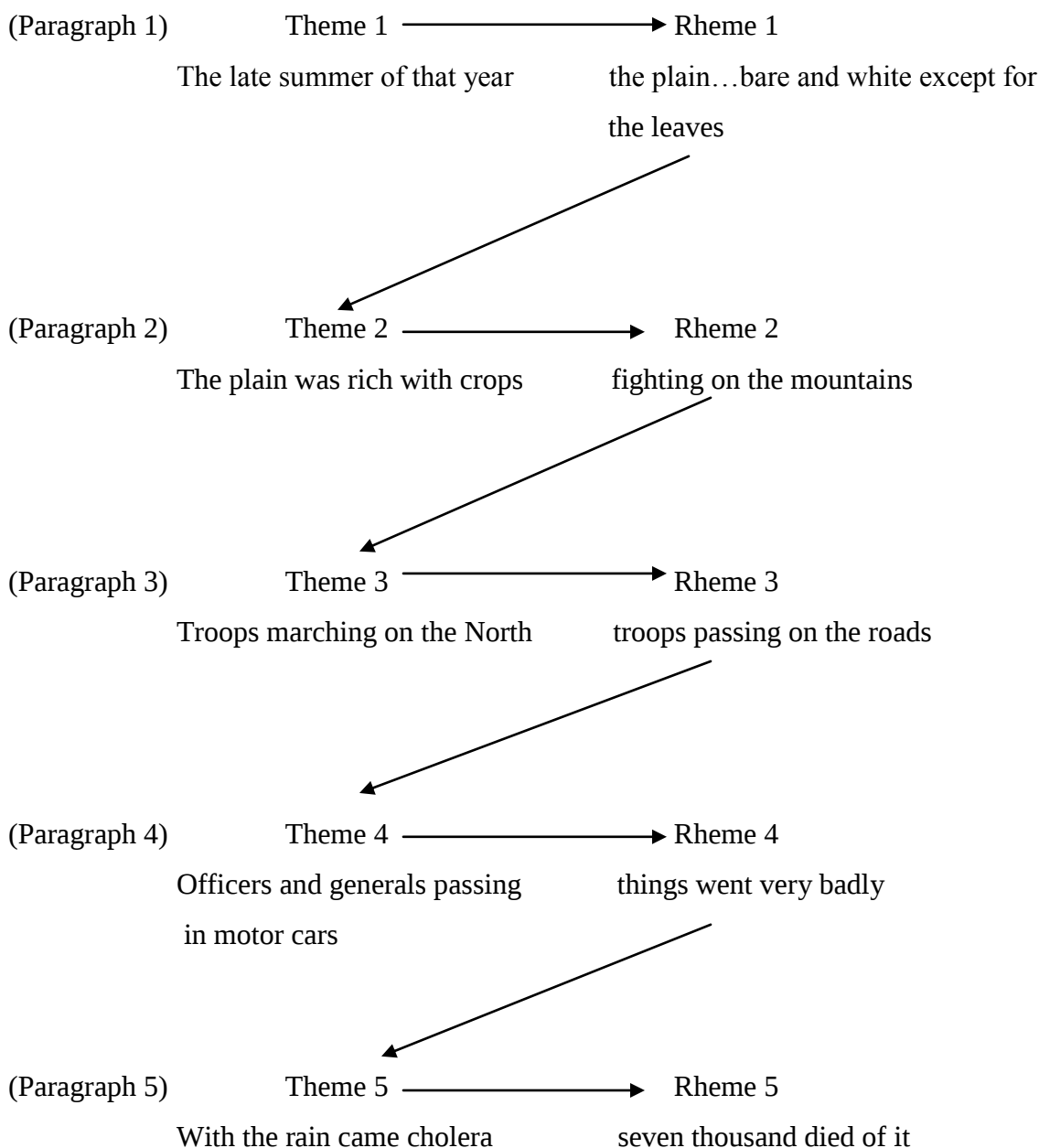
The pattern emerging from ‘theme and rheme’ of the text is that of “communicative dynamism”.

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Explanation

(A detailed account of the *use of cohesive devices in the text*)

1- Grammatical Cohesion

a- Referential Cohesion

An abundant use of references has been made in the text. **Exophoric** references include the general pronoun “we” and the demonstrative determiner “that” referring to ‘that year’ in the text, for both the reference items refer to the elements ‘outside the text’. The given text does not explain whom the “we” refers to and which year the determiner “that” points to.

Moreover, **endophoric** references are all expressed through **anaphoric** reference items with the exception of one **cataphoric** reference used in paragraph 4, line 2, where the reference item ‘it’ comes before the referent ‘King’. All the references are either **personal** or **demonstrative**. Any **comparative** reference item does not appear which also highlights the narrative nature of the text.

An excessive use of references establishes a grammatical inter-sentential relationship that supports cohesion in the text and aids the reader to make sense of it as a whole.

b- Ellipsis and Substitution

The use of ellipsis and substitution is also contributing to the grammatical cohesion of the text. For instance, in paragraph 3, line 2 (There was much traffic at night and many mules on the roads...and gray motor-trucks...and other trucks with loads) the words “there was/were” are omitted in the beginning of internal clauses which makes it more effective and meaningful, otherwise, the repetition of these words would have made it disjointed and jumbled up.

Substitution has been used only at one point in the text (Paragraph 3, Line 3) for an emphatic and dramatic effect in order to *unify* language with thematic concern of the subject.

c- Conjunctions/ Connectors

All the four types of conjunctions/connectors have been used, not merely to join the sentences but also to connect the writer's thought in order to shape the text as an overall meaningful unit in itself.

2- Lexical Cohesion/ Cohesive Devices

The text, fulfilling nearly all the requirements of lexical cohesion, turns out to be highly cohesive in lexical terms.

a- Reiteration

Reiteration, the quality of two lexical items referring to the same object or event, repeatedly occurs in the chosen text. There is an abundant **repetition** of words in each paragraph which emphasizes the symbolic significance hidden behind them. For instance, recurrence of natural images such as “trees, leaves, branches etc.” being covered with the “dust” highlights the destruction of nature due to the dirt and filth of this world. Secondly, the repetition of words **synonymous** to ‘darkness, storm, flashes and war’ also reflects the writer's intention to portray a grim and black war-like society.

The use of concrete words and images is the most prominent characteristic of Hemingway's writing style. The disillusionment as an after-effect of his war-experience made him distrust the abstractness and adopt a concrete approach towards life. This personal attitude of the writer is visible through his language. That's why; the lexical choice in this particular text is also very simple and concrete.

b- Collocation

Collocation also contributes in making the text cohesive. All the lexical items used in each paragraph relate to a single image that writer intends to draw. For example, words appearing in the first paragraph refer to ‘a river besides the plain’. Similarly, in the second paragraph the image being produce through words is that of a ‘mountainous area’, in the third and fourth paragraph is that of ‘war and destruction’ and in the fifth paragraph is of ‘death and cold’.

Thus, *lexical cohesion* in the chosen text adds to the sequence of thought and helps the reader in making more sense of the implicit meaning through an explicit inter-clausal relationship of the discourse.

Some Other Cohesive Devices

1- Parallelism

Almost all the sentences and clauses are opening with ‘there was/ there were’ which gives the text a balance and symmetry and also produces a sense of mystery by pointing the reader to an unknown time period. Secondly, the repeated use of ‘*sound parallels*’ generates a poetic effect in the discourse.

2- Verb Form (Tense and Aspect)

As far as *verb form* is concerned, the cohesion of *tense* and *aspect* polishes the coherence of the text. The reader is forced to go back to the period where the whole scenario is being sketched out. Moreover, the constant use of past indefinite gives a narrative taste to the text.

3- Theme and Rheme

'Communicative dynamism' emerging from the text makes it a well-knit cohesive piece of discourse. The rheme of previous paragraph frequently becomes the theme of the next which doesn't let the semantic flow break at any point. For example, the rheme of the first paragraph is about autumn ending at 'the plain' and the next paragraph begins with the start of spring at the plain again. Similarly, the second paragraph ends with the information of 'fight at the mountains' and the next paragraph open with the same idea of 'troops marching on the North'. Third paragraph closes at the point of 'troops passing' and next starts with the same note of 'army officers moving in cars'. Finally, the fourth paragraph ends up saying that 'things went very badly' and the fifth begins explaining how these 'things went badly': "At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army".

Conclusion

Frohmman (1994) states, "Discourse Analysis does not provide definite answers and is not a "hard" science, but an insight-based study stemming continuous debate and argumentation" (p. 131). It has an ability to allow personal growth and a high level of creative fulfillment which makes it applicable to every situation and subject. Discourse Analysis has great implications not only for linguists but for language teachers also. It presents numerous methods which the language instructors can apply as important pedagogic strategies such as top-down, bottom up or interactive processing models, ethnomethodological as well as structural techniques of analyzing discourse typologies and most importantly the formal and contextual links that help the students in making sense of discourse.

"Cohesion does not spawn coherence" in Halliday and Hasan's (1976) view, however the chapter chosen from Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms" negates this idea. An ample use of cohesive devices has generated a definite sense of semantic unity in this

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particular text substantiating the interdependence of *cohesion* and *coherence* in discourse. It is a simple, clear and reader-friendly text that doesn't involve much complexity and states its subject-matter clearly. Moreover, it being rich in both grammatical and lexical cohesion retains a logical balance and doesn't let the reader lose his focus which makes it an effective 'stretch of language' suitable for a healthy discourse analysis.

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APPENDIX

(The Chosen Text)

A Farewell to Arms

BY

Ernest Hemingway

Book One

1

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves. The plain was rich with crops; there were many orchards of fruit trees and beyond the plain the mountains were brown and bare. There was fighting in the mountains and at night we could see the flashes from the artillery. In the dark it was like summer lightning, but the nights were cool and there was not the feeling of a storm coming. Sometimes in the dark we heard the troops marching under the window and guns going past pulled by motor-tractors. There was much traffic at night and many mules on the roads with boxes of ammunition on each side of their pack-saddles and gray motor trucks that carried men, and other trucks with loads covered with canvas that moved slower in the traffic. There were big guns too that passed in the day drawn by tractors, the long barrels of the guns covered with green branches and green leafy branches and vines laid over the tractors. To the north we could look across a valley and see a forest of chestnut trees and behind it another mountain on this side of the river.

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There was fighting for that mountain too, but it was not successful, and in the fall when the rains came the leaves all fell from the chestnut trees and the branches were bare and the trunks black with rain. The vineyards were thin and bare-branched too and all the country wet and brown and dead with the autumn. There were mists over the river and clouds on the mountain and the trucks splashed mud on the road and the troops were muddy and wet in their capes; their rifles were wet and under their capes the two leather cartridge-boxes on the front of the belts, gray leather boxes heavy with the packs of clips of thin, long 6.5 mm. cartridges, bulged forward under the capes so that the men, passing on the road, marched as though they were six months gone with child. There were small gray motor cars that passed going very fast; usually there was an officer on the seat with the driver and more officers in the back seat. They splashed more mud than the camions even and if one of the officers in the back was very small and sitting between two generals, he himself so small that you could not see his face but only the top of his cap and his narrow back, and if the car went especially fast it was probably the King. He lived in Udine and came out in this way nearly every day to see how things were going, and things went very badly. At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army.

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