

## Narrative Cohesion: Concept and Content

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**Abstract:** This article addresses the term "cohesion" from a narrative perspective and its connection to discourse. It explores the nature of cohesion as a term, its concept, key mechanisms, types, and the contributions of scholars in their research, emphasizing its importance. It also highlights the primary uses of cohesion in text coherence and cohesion, concluding with key concepts emphasized by linguists in their studies. Keywords: Cohesion, Term, Concept, Linguistics, Modern, Discourse.

### 1. Introduction:

The term "cohesion" has garnered significant attention from scholars, researchers, and scientists as an important and fundamental criterion in structural and syntactic construction in both text and narrative discourse. Some find it challenging to define the concept of this important textual term. To clarify, the following questions will be addressed:

What is meant by the concept of cohesion, and what are its mechanisms and types?

### 2. Concept of Cohesion:

Language: The term "cohesion" appeared in various dictionaries, including Al-Waseet, where it is described as follows: "to congeal, to gather, water and tears, Sagm: a description of congealment, it is said: an eye Sagooma, and from camels and similar animals: numerous offspring, and by it, it means pouring generally."

Similarly, in *Lisan al-Arab* and precisely in "*Al-Qamoos Al-Muhit*": "The tear congealed in Sajooma and Sagam, like a book, and the eye congealed it, and the cloud water gathered and gathered it Sagam and Sagumma and Sijmana, its tear dripped and flowed little or much."

In "*Mukhtar al-Sahah*" by "Al-Razi" in the text (n.s.s), in a narration by Ali, may God be pleased with him, "Indeed, the most eloquent of women reached the half-stage, meaning the peak of intellectual maturity, and the camel reached the state of Sagmas, like the state of Hasmas. It is said: I smoothed out the thing, I moved it."

In terms of terminology, cohesion is considered one of the most important studies falling within the field of discourse analysis "(linguistics of discourse), as it is one of the terms that has received significant attention from scholars and researchers in shedding light on it from one side, and on the concept of the term "consistency," which is less important than cohesion, from the other side, showing the compatibility and similarity between them, which poses a problem for the reader.

**2.1 The Concept of Cohesion among Arabs:** The concept of cohesion varies among researchers and scholars due to the diversity and plurality of their theories, orientations, and linguistic schools. Mohamed Al-Khattabi defines it as follows: "Cohesion is more important than consistency, as it becomes deeper than it, so that building cohesion requires diverting attention to the hidden relationships that organize the text and generate it, meaning surpassing the observation of the realized or unrealized action (i.e., consistency) in the hidden (cohesion)."

On the other hand, the concept of cohesion according to "Halidi and Ruqayya Hassan" is "the semantic relationship between an element in the text and another element that is necessary to interpret this text. This element exists in the text and others, and its location can only be determined through this coherent relationship."

Mohammed Miftah believes that cohesion means integration and includes two elements: coordination and installation. He says, "What integration requires of coordination and its installation is often called cohesion by conservative and analytical discourse scholars, and can be represented by the French critical area and school."

## **2.2 Cohesion in the West:**

"Van Dijk" considers cohesion as "the major semantic structures, which are deep abstract structures based on the principle of interpretation and the relationships between sentences. It is also known as major semantic structures, which are deep abstract structures." John Paul Schaeffer defines it as: "Cohesion involves the gradual integration of meanings around the topic of discourse, which is a reciprocal acceptance of developments that determine the structure of the text designed as a mental construct." Tammam Hassan has agreed to use the term "cohesion" with "weaving and knitting," resorting to a cultural necessity that requires the use of the traditional term to translate modern French terms, and these two terms (weaving and knitting) are present in Al-Jurjani's "Dala'il al-I'jaz."

## **2.3 Cohesion Tools:**

Among the priorities recognized by scholars and specialists in text linguistics for the term cohesion is its unique and distinctive importance. They agree that it is "a semantic property of discourse that depends on understanding each sentence composing the text in relation to what is understood from other sentences." The processes and mechanisms of cohesion have varied and differed due to the diversity of opinions among thinkers and scholars in the field of text. Therefore, we will try to focus on the most important mechanisms agreed upon by text scholars.

### **2.3.1 Interpretation:**

It refers to observing the hidden relationships between parts of the text.

### **2.3.2 Context:**

It means shifting from the analytical level to another level related to the circumstances of discourse production. The sender or receiver, the text symbol, its place of production, and the psychological state of the sender or receiver are all specific factors of the context.

The source of this semantic coherence, and the convergence of meanings, goes back to the existence of relational relationships between those meanings, which made "Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani" direct the poet to the science of grammar to benefit from

its broad possibilities, saying: "And we knew that poetry is nothing but suggesting the meanings of grammar and its rules between words."

Narration: delving into the study of Arabic narrative, whether ancient or modern, should only be done through an approach founded theoretically on its analysis and the cultural contexts that embraced it because they represent the context that embraced this phenomenon and shaped its general features.

As for the theory, because it determines the nature of the critical vision followed in dealing with this literary phenomenon during its distinctive journey. Therefore, the following subsidiary problem can be posed: What is cohesion linguistically and terminologically? What is meant by cohesion in Arabic studies?

#### **2.4 Cohesion linguistically:**

If we go back to the origin, the word "cohesion" in language referred to a set of various linguistic concepts. Cohesion in language presents something to something in a coherent sequence, and cohesion in speech and the like is presented sequentially. Someone provides cohesion to speech if its context is good, and in the attribute of his speech <<peace be upon him>> he provides cohesion to speech, meaning he follows it, hastens in it, and the cohesion of the Qur'an follows its reading cautiously and sequentially.

#### **2.5 Cohesion terminology:**

The term "cohesion" was derived from the linguistic meaning, and hence cohesion in the saying of "Abdullah Ibrahim": "Cohesion is presenting something to something in speech in such a way that it is presented sequentially without any flaw, meaning arranging speech in a skillful manner so that its elements are harmonious, and the provider of cohesion is the one who excels in the brevity of speech and is proficient in its weaving."

According to this theory, cohesion relies on an important pillar and a distinct compositional component containing a coherent narrative, whether it is a speech, story, history, or any other literary genre, and this pillar is the manner in which the speech is delivered. In this sense, "John Sutherland" intervenes saying: "Story and cohesion are not simply synonymous words; the story directs our attention to what

is said, while cohesion directs our attention to the manner in which it is said, to the artistic skill, not the subject."

## **2.6 The concept of cohesion in ancient Arab studies:**

Many modern scholars mention that the formation of ancient Arabic cohesion began through what was translated into Arabic from Persian and Indian texts, and then these translations became a model on which Arabs also wove their cohesion.

According to some of the ancients, cohesion in ancient Arab culture was almost confined to a single pattern of literary creativity, namely poetry, so that this verbal art became the major literary phenomenon in Arab life, their compositions, and imaginations, despite all the profound transformations and violent upheavals witnessed by Islamic Arab history in all the places where the major Islamic states succeeded each other.

Despite the rich cohesion aspects contained in the Qur'an, it did not view Qur'anic cohesion as miraculous except in terms related to wisdom, admonition, and setting examples, for the righteous guidance of human behavior. If the ancients neglected cohesion, their neglect of cohesive criticism was even more emphatic, as it was observed by literary poetry and artistic prose, which critics worked to consolidate and theorize in specialized known works.

Perhaps this signifies that cohesion and story are different, each distinguished from the other, and cohesion is a type of artistic skill that beautifies literature, and the cohesive, i.e., the story, its content is a type of literature and cohesion, and whenever they merge and adhere, they form a distinct literary and artistic type.

This is supported by the concept of cohesion in "Hameed al-Hameidani," who says: "Cohesion is the manner in which we tell the story through the narrator's channel and the one narrated to, subjected to influences, some related to the narrator and the one narrated to, and others related to the story itself."

In this concept, the components and forms of cohesion are included, from the narrator and the one narrated to, to the types of discourse, the characters of the story, its time, and place.

As for the critic "Gerard Genette," who defines cohesion as: "It is a real or imaginary act resulting from discourse and making it cohesively realistic in particular, and this opinion does not negate the possibility of the existence of cohesion in other literary genres."

As for "Roland Barthes," he defines cohesion in modern critical terms as a message sent from a sender to a recipient, and this message may be oral or written, and cohesion is present in mythology, knowledge, folklore, tale, story, and epic. It starts from the history of humanity itself, so there is never a people without cohesion in its various forms of literature, including ancient Arabic texts. We suffice here by mentioning these different concepts of cohesion and what each definition includes.

### **3. Types of Cohesion:**

#### **3.1 Syntactic Structural Cohesion:**

Syntactic cohesion is achieved through internal links (explicit or implicit) between words and structures in the text. It involves discussing a single topic based on sequence or progression in the text's format, relying on links that ensure cohesion and suitability, as well as semantic structures. Mohammed Salah al-Din al-Sharif argues that it's not necessary to speak of cohesion in relation to the text, but rather of coherence. He illustrates this by understanding the text through the concept of the sentence, stating that with the end of the sentence, the pressures and regularity cease. There are no rules in the language that force you to arrange sentences within the text in the same way that words are arranged within sentences. The syntactic structure of the text is based on organization, not necessarily on the grammatical syntactic structure, and it involves accumulative construction, whether in its production or reproduction. This structure is governed by reference rather than system, and the reaction of the recipient without the writer's desire. Concerning the text, we speak of cohesion in structure as well as outside and around it.

#### **3.2 Cohesion Associated with Lexical Relations:**

Lexical cohesion results from the relationship between the signifier and the signified, but not just by considering them in the lexicon and outside the context. Rather, they are part of a network of textual units that combine linguistic structural linguistics,

context, and a network of rules. All these components do not mean just focusing on the word and structure, but raising questions about the text and around it, leading to discursive dimensions. The origin is lexical cohesion, which does not mean that the language has been completed, but it is currently in progress. What supports considering the lexicon as part of the fabric and structure of the text is the flexibility of words in terms of synonymy at the root and gender levels. If variation occurs in wording, there will be harmony in reference, as in the case of pronouns, for example. There is interaction between the expression in its form and the literary genre in which it falls. Thus, cohesion, in any aspect, is not just a given that suffices to analyze its characteristics and features but is part of a large network.

### **3.3 Cohesion According to the Referential Indicators Establishing Micro-Structure:**

These include pronouns and temporal indicators that fluctuate between the time of writing or composing the text and the time of reading or receiving it. They guide understanding, structuring, and representing the text. Referential indicators establish micro-structure positions of the lowest textual units, referring to: beginnings, transitions between paragraphs or ideas, and endings. They provide clues to the end of one topic and the beginning of another.

### **3.4 Subjective Evolution and its Role in Achieving Textual Cohesion:**

Subjective evolution contributes to organizing the text overall, whether it concerns verbal patterns, coherence, or openness to the general meaning. It relates to cohesion even if there are multiple cognitive domains in creating the narrative event, which is necessarily related to progression, at least at the level of discourse, as long as the content relies on repetition. This means that there must be a logic governing the transition from one level to another, based on a functional aspect that is both syntactic-semantic and open to discursive and logical understanding.

### **3.5 Contextual Elements Contributing to Achieving Cohesion:**

Van Dijk analyzes this issue from various perspectives, considering the text as a linguistic verbal achievement. The text is a dialogue of the self with itself, as the speaker may have an intention or purpose in performing an action without

necessarily expecting a response. Readers recognize these events through the text as a linguistic expression. The context of text production may be narrow, and it varies to different degrees. The text's association with communication processes requires a relationship between the speaker and the addressee within the context of discourse. Understanding requires interaction between the two parties through dissecting discourse and recognizing its linguistic and structural sequences, as well as through cohesive vision between the speaker and the addressee in perceiving the content of the discourse, similar to how they perceive the material universe from which the discourse derives its linguistic components and meanings.

#### **4. Result:**

The assisting indicators for achieving cohesion are diverse and varied, representing only a part of the intertwined relationships between micro, macro, and higher structures in two directions: horizontal and vertical. These manifestations reflect the coherence and regularity of the text.

Syntactic structural cohesion, coupled with grammar and morphology, can be seen as a semantic unit within the entirety of the text. Cohesion associated with lexical relations can be either in terms of the relationship between signifier and signified or in their combined relationship for understanding in the lexicon. This allows for the elucidation of degrees of variation in the evocative power of a word repeated in various forms in the text, contributing to expanding the circle of meaning without departing from it within the unity of the macro-structure.

Cohesion according to the referential indicators of the micro-structure is an extension of the previous, representing the framework in which cohesion between word and meaning, or between axis and rays disseminated in positions drawn from the text, occurs simultaneously within its objective and generic articulation.

#### **5. Conclusion:**

After detailing the concept of cohesion, its mechanisms, and mentioning its main types, our study concludes as follows: The term cohesion remains associated with

the semantic relationships embodying its internal coherence and refers to the relationships that connect the meanings of sentences and their coherence in the text.

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