I.   Cohesion and Coherence

a. Text and Texture

Consider the following example

This box contains one hundred large paper clips. Applied linguistics is therefore, not the same as linguistics. The tea is as hot as it could be. Young people nowadays are exposed to a lot of bad news on TV, Internet, social media, etc.

We must never stop dreaming. Dreams provide nourishment for the soul, just as a meal does for the body. Many times in our life we see our dreams shattered and our desires frustrated, but we have to continue dreaming.

Grammatically speaking the above both passages are correct and complete; semantically speaking, every sentence is meaningful. However, looking at the first passage as a paragraph it looks only like a random collection of unrelated sentences. One cannot put only one sentence after the other and hope that it will mean something, the same can be said about putting a number of words one after the other in a correct grammatical structure and consider it as a meaningful sentence. Thus, the first passage cannot be considered as a *text*; whereas, the second passage words and sentences are connected to eachother in a way that makes the whole paragraph has a unified meaning.

According to Haliday and Hasan (1976), **Text** refers to any spoken or written passage that is : unified as a whole (it is a unit of language)

It can be of any length (a text can be of 2 or 3 words, or 500 pages book)

It is not only a grammatical unit but also a semantic unit (it is grammatically correct and semantically meaningful)

Eg: No smoking (posted on the bank outside door)

Interestingly, a text without **Texture** would just be a group of isolated words or sentences with no clear relationship to one another. Take the following example

Wash and core six cooking apples. Put them into the fire-proof dish

The relationship between *six cooking apples* and *them* is called "a tie" which makes the two sentences tied or related to each other. The *cohesive relation* that exists between the pronoun *them* and its referent *six cooking apples* provides a texture for this text. Thus, texture occurs when language items link meanings together in a text as well as linking the meaning of the text to its social or situational context.

Considering the same previous example providing a small modification on it,

Wash and core six cooking apples. Put the apples into a fire-proof dish.

In this case the tie that makes this text texture is the relationship "repetition" which is *apples*. Repetition is another cohesive device that provides texture in a particular text, detailed discussion of cohesive devices will be provided in the coming titles when dealing with cohesion.

b. *Cohesion and Coherence*

Cohesion has to do with the relationships between text and syntax, and *coherence* has to do with the knowledge or cognitive structures that are implied by the language used and that contribute to the overall meaning of a given discourse. Cohesion and coherence are semantic

concepts and they are both part of the system of a language (Alba Juez, 2009). Phrased differently, cohesion means the connection of ideas at the grammatical and semantic level, while coherence means the connection of ideas at the idea level or at the contextual level.

Cohesion is a *textual property* and has to do with the *textualization* of contextual connections. Coherence, on the other hand, is the *discourse function* of realizing those connections, and is a *discoursive property*. Cohesion is the glue that holds a piece of writing together by the use of cohesive devices that are ties which clarify for readers relationships among ideas, words and sentences. In other words, cohesion is the network of lexical, grammatical and semantic relations which provide links between various parts of a text. Cohesion can be seen in a discourse when the interpretation of a linguistic element in a text is dependent on the interpretation of another element within the same text/discourse.

A text can therefore have no cohesion but derive a coherent discourse. Conversely, a given text may be cohesive but discourse-incoherent. Examples **a** and **b** illustrate this point in a very simple manner:

a-I went to Paris last week and my grandma is a radio hostess

b-Great! Oh no!

Example **a** is an instance of a cohesive text. We find cohesive devices such as reference (I) and conjunction (And), but it is difficult to make a connection between the first clause and the second, and consequently most hearers would catalogue the whole utterance as incoherent (it is hard to find a connection between the fact that the speaker went to Paris and the fact that his grandmother is a radio hostess). Thus, the speaker would most probably be judged as lacking some mental capacities (Alba Juez, 2009). Contrary to example **a**, example **b** shows no signs of

cohesion (there is no apparent use of reference, substitution or any other cohesive devices), but derives a coherent discourse if we think of the situation in which the two exclamations occurred: *A 10-year-old child sees her mother approaching with a bag in her hands and feels happy because she thinks the bag contains the present she has been waiting for, (and so she says "Great!"), but immediately after she realizes that the bag holds the books for her to do the homework (and therefore she expresses her disappointment by exclaiming "Oh, no!!").*

Let us now examine the concepts of cohesion in more detail