



FACOLTÀ DI STUDI UMANISTICI  
Lingue e Comunicazione

# Lingua Inglese 2

LESSON 4

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What is the difference between  
coherence and  
cohesion?

What is the difference between  
coherence and  
cohesion?

Mary lives in Ireland. She loves potatoes. Potatoes are full of calories. Calories are what athletes need to perform.

- Cohesion can be defined as the property that distinguishes a sequence of sentences that form a discourse from a random sequence of sentences. It is a series of lexical, grammatical and other relations which provide links between the various parts of a text.

Cohesion is a term in linguistics that refers to how the structure and content of a sentence or text is linked together to create meaning.

Cohesion needs to be achieved in a sentence, within a paragraph and across paragraphs for a text to make sense.

Ex. “Please don’t **do that** while I’m trying to work”, she begged.

WHAT DO THE ELEMENTS **DO & THAT** REFER TO?

“True to his nature, James **started whistling to himself** as soon as she settled down to her work. “Please don’t do that while I’m trying to work”, she begged.”

➤ **THIS TEXT FORMS A MEANINGFUL AND INTEGRATED SYSTEM.**

**WHY?**

- Pragmatically **coherent** (it reflects real-world experience)
- And it is **cohesive** (elements are interrelated grammatically and lexically)

“True to his nature, James started whistling to himself as soon as she settled down to her work. “Please don’t do that while I’m trying to work”, she begged.”

- Exophoric reference (outside)
- Endophoric reference (inside) – anaphoric (backward) v cataphoric (forward)

**REFERENCE REFERS TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS**

- In the textual sense, though, reference occurs when the reader/listener has to retrieve the identity of what is being talked about by referring to another expression in the same context.
- References to the “shared world” outside a text are called exophoric references.
- References to elements in the text are called endophoric references.



# What is exophoric reference?

Exophoric reference occurs when a word or phrase refers to something **outside** the discourse.

Here are some examples of exophoric reference:

*"They're late again, can you believe it?"  
"I know! Well, they'd better get here soon or it'll get cold."*

*They* refers to some people outside the discourse known to both speakers.

*It* also refers to something that both speakers know about (perhaps the dinner).

The use of exophoric reference requires some shared knowledge between two speakers, or between writer and reader(s).

Coherence & cohesion build textuality: the text does not contain random unconnected sentences but linked ones, connected discourse, an integrated whole, organization & linking of ideas.

Coherence and cohesion signal the relationships between ideas, and make obvious the meaning that the speaker or writer is trying to communicate.

# Coherence & cohesion

- Coherence: Making sense, the feeling that a text makes sense and that it is not a jumble of sentences. It refers to the organization of meanings in relation to one another. The elements of a text correspond to the real-world order of events or sequences.
- Logical transition from one sentence to another, only in this way does the text achieve its general purpose

# Coherence

- Organization of meanings in relation to one another
- The elements of the text correspond to the natural, real-world order of events or sequences (Ulrich 209)
- Logical transition: time ordered sequences (narrative texts), order according to cause-effect sequence or argumentative discussion, phenomenon-reason, phenomenon-example; problem-solution; instrument-achievement.

# Discourse Analysis and Written Discourse



## Cohesion and Coherence

**«Clare loves potatoes. She was born in Ireland».**

- The two sentences are cohesive (Clare/she)....
- The pronoun provides a link with the proper noun Clare in the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence

# DA and Written Discourse



## Cohesion and Coherence

«Clare loves potatoes. She was born in Ireland».

HOWEVER, it is coherent only if the reader has a specific knowledge of Irish culture and history.

# Coherence & Cohesion

- <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-a-cohesive-sentence.html>.

# Coherence & cohesion

- Cohesion: Showing togetherness; Connections in the text: Texture (Bateman 2008)
- Such connections within a text – grammatical or lexical – hold the text together and give it meaning.
- Such connections are called **cohesive devices** and may span long passages of texts. By forming a network of references, cohesive devices make a text a unified whole.
- Cohesion is a guide to coherence, which is something created by readers in the act of reading a text.



# Cohesion and Coherence



The important difference between coherence and cohesion is that **coherence** relies on **semantics** of a given text as well as **cultural knowledge** and the **overall context** in which discourse is unfolding.

There is no explicit manifestation of textual coherence in a text itself. Coherence **is rather deduced** from a text. **Cohesion**, in turn, starts with **concrete textual elements** which are then built upon to produce the effect of cohesion. Cohesion is often manifested through the use of such “devices” as pronouns (e.g. I, he, she, it) and deictic words (e.g. here, there, then).

# Cohesion and Coherence



Coherence and cohesion are essential to aid readability and idea communication.

**Coherence** is about the unity of the ideas and **cohesion** the unity of structural elements.

One way to do this is through the use of **cohesive devices**:

- ✓ logical bridges (repetition, parallel constructions),
- ✓ verbal bridges (synonyms),
- ✓ linking words,
- ✓ and clear back referencing.

# Cohesive Devices



If these types of devices are missing in the text, it not only becomes more difficult to read the text, but also to understand its contents since the reader must guess how the various parts of the paragraph or text are connected, which will involve re-reading sentences or larger sections more than once.

## Example

*There are three components to a typical modern catalytic converter: **one** to effect the reduction of nitrogen oxides, **another** to facilitate the oxidation of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons, **and the third** to maintain the correct abundance of oxygen. **In the first stage** the nitrogen oxides are reduced using a platinum catalyst, which facilitates their decomposition into nitrogen and oxygen. **In the next stage** the carbon fragments are oxidized over a platinum/rhodium catalyst. **Finally**, the correct amount of oxygen is ensured by monitoring the amount of oxygen passing into the engine, **and** by incorporating into the catalyst a metal oxide that absorbs oxygen (by reacting with it to form a higher oxide) when the fuel mixture has too much oxygen and reverts to the lower oxide, releasing oxygen, when the mixture has too little (Atkins. P.W, 1991)*

## Remarks

The topic sentence introduces the three stages which are then explained in more detail. **Verbal bridge:** The second sentence includes a key word “reduced”, linking the idea to the previous sentence though in a different form from earlier (“reduction”). A similar repetition occurs in the third sentence. **Logical bridge:** The processes of the first two stages are described in parallel form. The final sentence sums up this process, clearly signalled by “finally”.



You **can have cohesion without coherence** but you **cannot have coherence without cohesion**.

The picture does not make sense unless the correct pieces are placed in the correct order, even if certain pieces may be the same size and shape.

“I bought some hummus to eat with celery. Green vegetables can boost your metabolism. The Australian Greens is a political party. I couldn’t decide what to wear to the new year’s party.”



In the example, there are lexical links from one sentence to the next; cohesive ties are used to join the sentences. There is evidence of lexical repetition, 'green' 'party' and collocations, 'new year's'.

However, this string of sentences **do not make any sense**; there is no binding **semantic link**. This is an example of **cohesion without coherence**.

"I bought some hummus to eat with celery. Green vegetables can boost your metabolism. The Australian Greens is a political party. I couldn't decide what to wear to the new year's party."

# DA and Written Discourse



## Processing a text ...

The surface of a text is characterized by ‘**markers**’ of various kinds.

For example –ed suffix is a marker of pastness.

Cohesive **markers/devices** (pronouns, determiners, demonstratives, other items....) create links across sentence boundaries and chain together items that are related.

However, reading a text is more complex than that.

We have to interpret it and this depends as much on what both author and reader put/bring into it.

The reader makes **cognitive links** in the text and recognizes **textual patterns**.

# Cohesion

- One element in the text is dependent on another for its interpretation -> a cohesive link- **a device** - is present between the presupposing & the presupposed items
- 3 types of grammatical links or cohesive devices/markers:

Reference, substitution, ellipsis & conjunction





## 1. REFERENCE

**Personal pronouns** (*he, she, it, they, etc.*), **definite article** (*the*), **deictics** (*this/that, these/those, here/there, etc.*), *same, different, other, else, such, etc.* -> **endophoric** (anaphoric, cataphoric), **exophoric**

**Anaphoric reference:** looks back in the text

**Cataphoric reference:** we have to read on to understand the relation between the items and the referents (engaging the reader's attention)

**Exophoric reference:** refers to the world outside the text (not truly cohesive, because it is not text-internal, but part of the reader's active role in creating coherence)



## 1. ANAPHORIC REFERENCE

“Grandmother and I moved from **via de’ Magazzini** to **via del Corso**, in the autumn of ‘26. The two of **us** had been left “alone on the face of the earth”, as **she** used to say; and **via de’ Magazzini**, in the centre of the city, had, with the passing of the years, bestowed a new value on **its** buildings, and one by one the apartments had been sold. A businessman and his wife had bought the **one** in which we were living: **they** came from Turin and needed the house, for meanwhile **they** were living in a hotel. **They** were planning to renew the flooring, to put up a partition of the bathroom, between the entrance and the kitchen. **They** offered **us** a compensation money which grandmother refused. **The eviction order** was suspended for a month”.

2. EXOPHORIC REFERENCE (referred to knowledge of city, buildings, streets, eviction, ecc)



# DA & GRAMMAR

## 1.a ANAPHORIC REFERENCE

Problems with 'it' and 'this' 'that'

Also in other languages we may have problems with some cohesive items ('sua' in Italian, her? Your?; 'lei' , you?, she?)

These items can be used when an entity has already been marked as the focus of attention, by using a deictic word: *a, the, my, this, that...*



## 1. ANAPHORIC REFERENCE

«Analyzing where **a** business stands in relation to **its** market and competition, enables **it** to identify potential opportunities for growth and potential threats. **It** is then possible to set strategic objectives and to predict the human financial resources needed to achieve **them**» (Intelligent Business, Intermediate, Longman: 23)

«Globalisation is forcing businesses to make cost savings by reducing operating costs. One way to do **this** is by outsourcing...» » (Intelligent Business, Intermediate, Longman: 58)

“Germany's Angela Merkel has restated her support for Jean-Claude Juncker to take over as president of the European Commission, at a mini-summit in Sweden. The chancellor said that while she was "happy" to say she wanted Mr Juncker for the top job, **it** was not "the main topic" of the two-day talks.” (BBC news, 10 June 2014)



## 1.b EXOPHORIC REFERENCE

Related to the immediate context. Reference to a world shared by both sender and receiver.

«Leave it on the table»

The Pope, the PM, the Queen.

Problems with L2 students:

«Do you like the classical music?» (music being heard)

«Do you like classical music?» (are you fond of that type of music?)

“**The** secure video conference room in **the** basement of **the West Wing** fell silent. Next to **me**, **Secretary Bob Gates** sat in **his** shirtsleeves with **his** arms folded and **his** eyes fixed intently on the screen. The image was fuzzy, but unmistakable. One of **the two Black Hawk helicopters** had clipped the top of **the stone wall surrounding the compound and crashed to the ground**. Our worst fears were coming true..”(The Times, 10 June 2014)

# DA & GRAMMAR



## 1.c CATAPHORIC REFERENCE

Related to referents to come, to be mentioned later. Reader's attention hooked.

The untold message is: «Read on and find out more».

*Although I phone her every week, my mother still complains that I don't keep in touch often enough.*

«**It** has often been compared to New Orleans's Mardi Gras as an outdoor celebration. Certainly New York's Mulberry Street and surrounding block have been as crowded over the last few days as Royal and Bourbon Streets in the French Quarter are for the Mardi Gras. More than three million people are estimated to have celebrated **the 61st annual Feast of the San Gennaro down in Greenwich Village** since **it** began on Thursday».

(The Guardian, 15 September 1987, quoted by McCarthy M. 1991: 42)

- Deictic reference: this/these (here & now, cataphoric ref.) v that/those (there & then, anaphoric ref.) (≠ w Italian)

“This is an announcement: will Mr Smith please go to the information desk”

“And that was the 9.00 o’clock news”

- Informal texts: this/these tend to be associated w speaker’s approval & that/those w disapproval:

“Why on earth is this sensible girl going out with that horrible man?”

- **THE USE OF THE IN ENGLISH:**

*the* w anaphoric function v *the* w cataphoric function

Type of reference

Type of noun	Specific	Generic
Count singular	the	a/an
Count plural	the	zero
Uncount	the	zero

**Generic reference** coincides with unshared new information presented for the first time. It is mainly associated with cataphora, forward-looking reference.

*“Money is the root of all evil”.*

**Specific reference** refers to information shared by both addresser and addressee and generally coincides with anaphoric or exophoric reference.

*“My first thought was that I was finally witnessing the building of a Scottish castle, complete with ghosts. The ghosts existed, but they had not yet been roused from sleep”.*



# DA & GRAMMAR – Cohesive devices (reference)

1

## LOOMINGS

CALL me Ishmael. Some years ago – never mind how long precisely – having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off – then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.

# DA & GRAMMAR – Cohesive devices

## 2. ELLIPSIS/SUBSTITUTION

Substitution & ellipsis are highly dependent on context as the substituted and omitted elements are recoverable from other elements in the discourse (Ulrich 233)

Ellipsis: Omission of elements. Speaker/writer choice made on a pragmatic assessment of the situation.

«The children will carry the small boxes, the adult the large **ones**»  
(anaphoric);

«If you **could**, I'd like you to be back here at 5.30»

(cataphoric, but usually in front-placed subordinate clauses);

Verbal ellipsis, more complex:

A: Will anyone be waiting?      B: Bill **will**, I think (auxiliary echoing ellipsis)

A: **Has** she remarried? B: No, but she **will** one day, I'm sure (auxiliary contrasting)

# Substitution & Ellipsis

Ellipsis can be nominal, verbal, clausal

**Nominal:** the headword is omitted:

John liked the white plates, I preferred the pink

**Verbal:** repetition of a verbal element (elision of entire verbal group in Italian)

Will Rose be going? I believe she will

+ contrastive function w change of auxiliary

Has he moved? No, but he will soon

# Substitution & Ellipsis

*My aunt waited until Eliza sighed and then said:*

*“Ah, well, he’s gone to a better world.”*

*Eliza sighed again and bowed her head in assent. My aunt fingered the stem of her wine-glass before sipping a little.*

*“Did he...peacefully?” she asked.*

*“Oh, quite peacefully, ma’am,” said Eliza. “You couldn’t tell when the breath went out of him. He had a beautiful death, God be praised.”*

*“And everything...?”*

*“Father O’Rourke was in with him a Tuesday and anointed him and prepared him and all.”*

(“The Sisters” from *Dubliners* by James Joyce)

# DA & GRAMMAR – Cohesive devices

## 2. ELLIPSIS/SUBSTITUTION

Similarly to ellipsis, Substitution is used at nominal, verbal & clausal level: **One** refers to an indefinite antecedent, **it** to a definite antecedent

Whole stretches of clauses may be omitted:

«Matteo Renzi said he would add 80 euros to some salaries as soon as he could, and he has»

- **One(s)**. I offered him an ice cream. He said he didn't want **one**.
- **Do**: Why don't you find another boyfriend? I might **do** that.
- **So/not**: Do you need a lift? If **so**, wait for me, if **not**, I'll see you there.
- **Same**: He chose the beef, I chose the **same** (I **did** the **same**)

# DA & GRAMMAR – Cohesive devices

## 3. CONJUNCTIONS, LINKING WORDS AS COHESIVE DEVICES

A linking work presupposes a textual sequence, and signals a relationship between segments of the discourse.

The role of conjunctions is to create a logically articulated discourse that can be easily followed by the reader.

- Logical relationship between sentences + textual sequencing
- Explicit c.: consequently, rather, for instance, in short, in fact, however, moreover, ...)
- Implicit c.: to be inferred.

Discourse genres with informative function (scientific, legal) explicit linking devices are used.

In expressive texts conjunctions are generally a stylistic feature...

## ADDING

and  
as well as  
moreover  
furthermore  
in addition  
too  
on top of that  
another point is

## SEQUENCING

first, firstly, first of all  
second, secondly..  
third  
next  
meanwhile  
now  
subsequently

## ILLUSTRATING

for example  
such as  
for instance  
in the case of  
as shown by  
illustrated by  
take...  
one example is..

## COMPARING

similarly  
likewise  
as with  
like  
equally  
in the same way

## QUALIFYING

but  
however  
although  
unless  
except  
apart from  
as long as  
if

## CONTRASTING

whereas  
alternatively  
unlike  
on the other hand  
conversely  
having said that  
nevertheless  
however