

COMMENTS ON THE SYSTEM OF LEXICAL COHESION IN A SAMPLE OF ENGLISH FICTION

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ABSTRACT

Cohesion is a semantic notion that refers to non-structural text-forming meaning inherent in relations of connectedness which may or may not be linguistically coded. It is the means by which one element is construed by reference to another. As a part of the system of a language, cohesion is evidenced by means of 'reference', 'ellipsis', 'conjunction' and 'lexical cohesion'. The purpose of this study is to explore and explain the occurrence of two types of lexical cohesive devices, i.e. collocation and synonymy evident generally in both fiction and non-fiction genres. The corpus for the analysis was composed of 20000 words from a sample of prose fiction in English from five novels thatspan and represent different eras of English fictional literature. The model for analysis was mostly taken from Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). The manner and frequency of occurrence of both collocation and synonymy were investigated and calculated. The results point to synonymy being the prominent cohesive device which manifests itself within a large number of cohesive chains. Another significant finding is the salient presence of chain leaps across unrelated synonymous words, while the presence of chain leaps across collocational and synonymous terms is less prominent, but present nevertheless. The analysis also shows that a noteworthy number of metaphorical expressions which are properties of the novel blur the cohesive lines of this genre by co-occurring and co-existing with cohesion and bringing to the fore the involved textual and discursive bonds that exist between metaphor and cohesion and the need to research this interesting textual phenomenon further. Some stylistic explanations of the textual patterns are offered. The findings of this study carry implications and can be beneficial for language teachers and learners too.

KEYWORDS: Lexical Cohesion, Collocation, Synonymy, Cohesive Chain, Chain Leap