RESEARCH ARTICLE

TEACHING COHESION TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

There are certain principles which can be used to teach students good translation through producing intelligible texts. The same principle can be applied to further evaluating a range of processes right from the writing course, students writing and the tutors' performance. In communicating thoughts and ideas, discourse is by no means much vital. Customarily, different people across the world express their opinions through diverse stretches of language ranging from long to relatively short ones. Understanding of any discourse irrespective of its nature or genre, it calls for some degree of cohesion. In the present paper, the researcher sets out to delineate the devices required by students of translation in order to come up with clear intelligible texts, based on the work of Halliday and Hassan (1976). It also aims to emphasize the necessity of using these devices through the examination of a number of texts. The student's writing is expected to demonstrate clear evidence of cohesion and appropriate use of grammatical and lexical devices.

Key words: intelligible, cohesive devices, lexical, grammatical, communicating thoughts and ideas

Introduction

English is largely considered to be the first language for the majority of the population in several countries and the second language for others. It is a lingua franks that people resort to wherever they travel abroad and cease using their national languages. Hence, English is becoming the language of communication globally. Communication allows language users to interact with each other and in turn understand what others are trying to convey. In other words, language could be understood differently depending on the situation and context in which the discourse occurs. Discourse, then, is any spoken or written language which includes verbal and nonverbal elements that are meaningful.

Concept of Coherence and Cohesion

Cohesion is the grammatical and lexical linking within a text or sentence that holds a text together and gives it meaning. It is related to the broader concept of coherence.

There are two main types of cohesion: *grammatical cohesion*, which is based on structural content—and *lexical cohesion*, which is based on lexical content and background knowledge. A cohesive text is created in many different ways. In *Cohesion in English*, M.A.K. *Halliday* and *Ruqaiya Hassan* identify five general categories of cohesive devices that create coherence in texts: reference, ellipsis, substitution, lexical cohesion and conjunction.

In linguistics, any spoken or written discourse that forms a unified whole is referred to as a text. A text is not a grammatical unit, but rather a semantic unit of language, i.e. a unit of meaning, not of form. Texture is what provides the text with unity and distinguishes it from a non-text. Therefore, it is the cohesive relation that exists between units of a text.

Conjunctions and transitions

A conjunction sets up a relationship between two clauses. The most basic but least cohesive is the conjunction *and*. Transitions are conjunctions that add cohesion to text and include *then*, *however*, *in fact*, and *consequently*. Conjunctions can also be implicit and deduced from correctly interpreting the text.

Referencing

There are two referential devices that can create cohesion:

- Anaphoric reference occurs when the writer refers back to someone or something that has been previously identified, to avoid repetition. Some examples: replacing "the taxi driver" with the pronoun "he" or "two girls" with "they". Another example can be found in formulaic sequences such as "as stated previously" or "the aforementioned".

- Cataphoric reference is the opposite of anaphora: a reference forward as opposed to backward in the discourse. Something is introduced in the abstract before it is identified. For example: "Here he comes, our award-winning host... it's John Doe!" Cataphoric references can also be found in written text.

There is one more referential device, which cannot create cohesion:

- Exophoric reference is used to describe generics or abstracts without ever identifying them (in contrast to anaphora and cataphora, which do identify the entity and thus are forms of endophora): e.g. rather than introduce a concept, the writer refers to it by a generic word such as "everything". The prefix "exo" means "outside", and the persons or events referred to in this manner are never identified by the writer. Halliday and Hassan considered exophoric reference as not cohesive, since it does not tie two elements together into in text.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is another cohesive device. It happens when, after a more specific mention, words are omitted when the phrase must be repeated. A simple conversational example:

- (A) Where are you going?
- (B) To dance.

The full form of B's reply would be: "I am going to dance". A simple written example: *The younger child was very outgoing, the older much more reserved.* The omitted words from the second clause are "child" and "was".

Substitution

A word is not omitted, as in ellipsis, but is substituted for another, more general word. For example, "Which ice-cream would you like?" – "I would like the pink one," where "one" is used instead of repeating "ice-cream." This works in a similar way with pronouns, which replace the noun. For example, "ice-cream" is a noun, and its pronoun could be "it", as in, "I dropped the ice-cream because it was dirty."

Grammatical cohesion

In linguistics, grammar refers to the logical and structural rules that govern the composition of clauses, phrases, and words in any given natural language. The term refers also to the study of such rules, and this field includes morphology and syntax, often complemented by phonetics, phonology, semantics, and pragmatics.

Lexical cohesion

Lexical cohesion refers to the way related words are chosen to link elements of a text. There are two forms: repetition and collocation. Repetition uses the same word, or synonyms, antonyms, etc. For example, "Which dress are you going to wear?" – "I will wear my green frock," uses the synonyms "dress" and "frock" for lexical cohesion. Collocation uses related words that typically go together or tend to repeat the same meaning. An example is the phrase "once upon a time".

After this brief exploration of the notions of cohesion and translation, it would be useful to demonstrate clearly the similarity and differences between English and Arabic as regards the issue of translation. As they have developed markedly quite independently and in total separation, Arabic and English are noticeably different. However, the employment of cohesive devices is one of the most common features between the two languages. Arabic and English are to a greater extent hypotactic though in many instances the adjective precedes the noun in Arabic whereas the opposite is true for English.

In order to achieve coherent translated texts, the question of using cohesive devices has to be considered critically in relation to both languages. Peter New Mark (1987) argues that that the topic of cohesion has always been —the most useful constituent of discourse analysis or text linguistics applicable to translation. (p.295). During the translation process, equipped with the knowledge of similarities and more importantly differences in cohesive devices, translators will be able to understand the original text better and accurate and they are able to shift cohesive devices in the target language so as to achieve the corresponding semantic effects Thus, it is of great value to make a comparative study of the cohesive devices.

What is a word?

Mona Baker (1987) states that   translators   are primarily concerned with communicating the overall meaning of a stretch of language. To achieve this, we need to start by decoding the units and structures which carry that meaning. The smallest unit which we would expect to possess individual meaning is the **word**. Defined loosely, the **word** is 'the smallest unit of language that can be used by itself' (Bolinger and Sears 1968:43).1 For our present purposes, we can define the **written word** with more precision as any sequence of letters with an orthographic space on either side.

It is generally believed that the word is the basic meaningful element in a language. This is not strictly accurate. Meaning can be carried by units smaller than the word. More often; however, it is carried by units much more complex than the single word and by various structures and linguistic devices. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. For the moment, we will content ourselves with single words as a starting point before we move on to more complex linguistic units.

Is coherence a feature of text or situation?

No text is inherently coherent or incoherent. In the end, it all depends on the receiver, and on his ability to interpret the indications present in the discourse so that, finally, he manages to understand it in a way which seems coherent to him – in a way which corresponds with his idea of what it is that makes a series of actions into an integrated whole.*(Charolles 1983:95)*

The ability to make sense of a stretch of language depends on the hearer's or reader's expectations and experience of the world. Different societies, and indeed different individuals and groups of individuals within the same society, have different experiences of the world and different views on the way events and situations are organized or related to each other. A network of relations which is valid and makes sense in one society may not be valid in another. This is not just a question of agreeing or disagreeing with a certain view of the world but of being able to make sense of it in the first place. Whether a text is judged as acceptable or not does not depend on how closely it corresponds to some state of affairs in the world, but rather on whether the reader finds the presented version of reality believable, homogeneous or relevant.

Conclusion

Cohesion occurs in a text if it has texture. In other words, a text is cohesive when the stretches of language are hung together with ties (Hasan, 1968). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), these ties could be grammatical or lexical. Therefore, if the text makes sense to the reader, then it is clear that the writer accomplished the use of cohesive devices.

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