

Coherence refers to links beyond the text. If a text is not coherent, it does not yield any sense. Hence, it is a “non-sense” text. Continuity, which gives sense to text, is the foundation for text coherence. Unlike cohesion, coherence is concerned with what is beyond the surface text. In other words, it looks at the internal textual world.

In so far as coherence has to do with what is beyond the text, the cognitive processes will have a vital role in taking in the information given. Beaugrande and Dressler handle the discussion of this concept from an appropriate psychological and philosophical viewpoint.

The role of the language receiver in building up the internal textual world plays a vital role. There are various factors participating in this process, among which are:

1. Text interaction, i.e. interaction of more than one piece of information in one text.
2. Text and text interaction, i.e. one text may depend totally or partially on the previous text.
3. Text and receiver interaction; that is how he/she interprets text according to his/her background, previous knowledge of the theme of discussion, psychological status at the time of dealing with the text, target in tackling the text, hypothesis about what the text topic is, etc.

As with many other discourse terms, although cohesion and coherence have received considerable attention from discourse practitioners, they are

not yet clearly defined. The two notions cohesion and coherence, in modern grammar, are associated with features of linkage between co-occurring sentences. However, the use of these two terms has become rather loose in works on text-linguistics. Textual coherence has been the focus of interest of many modern stylisticians and sociolinguists. Whatever the definitions given to these notions, their main concern is the characterisation of the unity of the text. Although the terms seem self-explanatory, they manifest themselves differently depending on the systems (or languages) they are operating in. That is, the cohesive devices of Arabic are not exactly the same, though there might be some similarities, as cohesive devices in other languages. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that cohesion/coherence are realised through lexis and grammar.

Despite the fact that the two terms cohesion and coherence both refer to connectivity between text parts; they are always treated as two distinct realisations. That is, they are distinguished from each other in terms of levels and means used to show the relationship. To put it more simply, cohesion is said to belong to surface structure and refers to the use in a text of devices showing the relations between clauses/sentences, whereas coherence pertains to the underlying semantic and pragmatic relations existing in a text.