

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR FUNCTIONAL TEXT ANALYSIS

Analyzing English texts for field, mode, tenor and communicative effectiveness

This document provides a scheme for analyzing English texts from a functional perspective. The document contains information adapted from Chapters 8, 10 and 12 – 16 of Books 2 and 3 of the Open University course E303 English Grammar in Context as it was presented in 2005, as well as from the set book *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* and from the course's associated readings. Skills in functional analysis are developed in the course books; this document re-iterates in concise form the main points to consider when performing the analysis.

Map of the document

As is common in functional linguistics, the document analyzes texts from three viewpoints:

- From the experiential viewpoint, we analyze the **field** of a text (page 1). The treatment of field is brief here because analyzing field amounts to nothing else than simply answering the question "What is the text about?".
- From the textual viewpoint, we analyze the **mode** of a text (page 2). Mode answers questions about the way a text was, or appears to have been, produced and delivered. The section about mode deals with two main subtopics, interactivity and spontaneity.
- From the interpersonal viewpoint, we analyze the **tenor** of a text (page 4). The section about tenor is the longest because analyzing tenor is the most complicated. Analyzing tenor often involves a lot of "reading between the lines" and reveals information about what kind of person the author is (or is pretending to be), how strongly the author believes in the truth of their message, whether the author and the reader/listener are on equal terms or not, and so on.

Additionally to the three main topics, there is a section at the end about **communicative effectiveness** (page 9) which brings the three topics together and also introduces the new topics of thematic organization and cohesion.

Field

The field of a text tells you which domain of experience the text is about: family life, religious observance, law enforcement, medicine, etc.

Field is an element of the experiential metafunction of a text.

When analyzing a text for its field, you will want to examine:

- The lexical items.

The field of a text can easily be determined by examining the lexical words in the text, or even just the nouns. You will want to find and answer to these two questions:

- Semantic domains: Which discipline do the lexical words refer to?

Certain words are more common in one discipline than in another. You could prove this by corpus research, otherwise use your own intuition, specialized dictionaries, etc.

Because semantic domains are inherently hierarchical and overlapping, we may make a very general pronouncement ("this text is about science") or a very specific one ("this text is about particle physics"). A text may also refer to more than one semantic domain.

- Specialization: How well known are the lexical words to a general audience and to a specialized audience?

Again, your own intuition or dictionaries or corpus research could help you judge this.

- The process and circumstance types. For example, in a news text 'about' a terrorist attack, a large proportion of the participants will refer to terrorists and a large proportion of the processes will refer to acts of terrorism.

Mode

The mode of a text tells about the method the text appears to have been produced in.

Mode is an element of the textual metafunction of a text.

Axes of the Mode continuum

The Mode of a text can be modelled as a point in a continuum defined by axes such as these:

- The spoken/written axis: some texts are prototypical spoken texts (such as a face-to-face conversation) and display signs of high interactivity, others are prototypical written texts (such as a scientific journal article) and display no signs of interactivity at all. Between them there is a continuum of texts which carry characteristics of both, such as radio programmes and personal letters.
- The action/reflection axis: depending on how close in time a text is to the events it describes, it may display signs of spontaneity. For example a dialog during a sports match is bound to be more spontaneous than a newspaper report on the same match the next day.

Interactivity

You will want to find out if the text was constructed in an interactive process. Typical indicators of an interactively produced text are:

- The presence of terms of address.
- The presence of attention attracting words, such as "look".
- The presence of questions and answers.

Further indicators may help you determine the precise nature of the interaction:

- Face-to-face conversations. These are usually indicated by:
 - Turn-taking.
 - Interruptions.
 - Overlaps.
 - Hesitators.
 - Supportive feedback ("right", "OK", "yep", "really?").
 - Deictic references to the shared physical environment ("Could we move that into this corner here?").
 - Intentionally vague language if the vagueness concerns information which can be found in the shared environment. Example: "this thing" instead of "this chair" because the speakers are in the same environment, which gives them shared knowledge, which gives them enough context to figure out what "thing" refers to.
 - Discourse markers, for example:
 - "Anyway" to indicate that the speaker wishes to return to another topic.
 - "Right" to indicate that the speaker is ready to move to another topic.
 - The thematic organization of the text is such that:

- The experiential themes are often pronouns ("I", "you").
- The interpersonal themes are often interrogative words ("how", "when").
- Oral/aural conversations when the participants can't see each other, such as a telephone call.

These are indicated by the same features as face-to-face conversations but usually lack the deictic references and the intentionally vague language (although there are exceptions, such as when both participants are looking at a copy of the same document).

- Written exchanges.
 - Synchronous, e.g. Internet chat.
Even though these are written rather than spoken, they usually bear the same characteristics as oral/aural conversations.
 - Asynchronous, e.g. e-mail discussions.
These usually involve repetition or quoting of what others have said in preparation for a response.

These indicators may be a reflection of the way the text was actually produced, or they may be a deliberate attempt to make the text appear interactive, typically with the intention to make the audience feel involved. Typical techniques are:

- Apparently direct address to the audience: "You can bet that...".
- Use of (rhetorical) questions: "Just how much damage can they do?".
- Responses to an imagined contribution from the audience or from another speaker/writer: "Sure, we all know...".

Spontaneity

As part of analyzing a text for its mode, you will want to answer:

- Whether the text seems to have been produced on the spot/on the fly/in real time/on-line, that is without an opportunity to edit or correct it.
- Or whether it seems to have been produced off-line, in a situation when it is possible to edit and correct it before it is finally presented to the audience.

Note that this distinction refers to spoken as well as to written texts. Spoken texts can also be prepared and rehearsed before delivery.

These are the indicators of spontaneous text:

- There are pauses and hesitations.
- There are mid-utterance corrections and reformulations.
- There is qualification of what has been said before.
- There are mid-utterance changes of syntax.
- There is repetition.
- There are abrupt changes of topic.
- Clauses have heads, e.g. "The white house on the corner, is that where she lives?".
- Clauses have tails, e.g. "It can leave you feeling very weak, shingles, can't it?".
- Adverbials are placed arbitrarily, in places where they would not occur in a pre-planned text. Example: "I was worried I was going to lose it and I did, almost".
- There are chains of clauses connected with coordinating conjunctions, typically "and": "... and ... and ... and ...".
- Subordinate clauses are used as if they were coordinate clauses. Examples:
 - A: "Well actually one person has applied."
 - B: "Mm."
 - C: "Which is great." [Would be "(And) that is great" if not spontaneous.]
 - D: "Though it's all relative, of course." ["Though" would be omitted if not spontaneous.]

- "Melanie is still a student and she works in McDonald's cos she needs the money and..."

"Cos" here has the function of a coordinating conjunctions, simply connecting two phrases together (= "and that's because") rather than a subordinating one.

- There is low lexical density.
- There isn't much nominalization (or other examples of grammatical metaphor). The more nominalization occurs, the less spontaneous a text is because nominalized expressions are less congruous ("in sync with reality") than un-nominalized ones.
- Noun phrases are simple and short. Long and complicated noun phrases are the sign of an un-spontaneous text because they require planning.

As for lexical density, there is an opinion that less lexically dense texts are easier to follow – perhaps because they appear to be more interactive, and therefore more "gripping" – and this has been exploited in a number of genres, such as tabloid journalism and popular science.

Tenor

The tenor of a text tells you:

- What kind of person the author is, or is presenting himself/herself to be.
- What kind of people the expected audience are.
- What the relationship between them is, or what relationship the author is presenting it as.

Tenor is easiest to analyze in spoken conversations when all speakers are present and participating. Tenor is more difficult to analyze in written texts when the author is anonymous and when the recipients are not present.

Tenor is a component of the interpersonal metafunction of a text.

Map of tenor

In interactive texts (typically spoken), we typically analyze tenor into:

- **Relative status** (equality, inequality), for example we look the terms of address used, who gets to choose the topic of conversation, who gets to choose who speaks, and so on.
- **Social distance** (familiarity, friendliness), expressed for example by the presence of formal or informal vocabulary, slang, etc.

In non-interactive texts (typically written), we analyze tenor into:

- **Personalization** (how much attention is drawn to the writer or to the reader) and also the related technique of deliberate impersonalization.
- **Standing**, or how much the author comes across as possessing expertise and authority on the subject.
- **Stance**, or how much the author allows the reader to disagree with the content. Stance breaks down further into:
 - **Attitude**, revealing whether the meanings communicated come across as negative or positive. Also the topic of agency and affectedness is mentioned here as a technique used to trigger attitudes.
 - **Modality**, which breaks down into:
 - **Epistemic modality** (how much the content comes across as being true).
 - **Deontic modality** (how much obligation to do something the text seems to put on the reader).

Tenor in interactive texts

Interactive texts are usually spoken and include a face-to-face conversation, a telephone conversation, but not a prepared lecture. Some written texts are also interactive, for example a real-time Internet chat. To a lesser extent, written texts directed at a single participant known to the writer (as opposed to those directed at the public) are also interactive.

Relative status (equality, inequality)

When analyzing an interactive text for its tenor, you will be interested in the status of the participants to each other. Are they equal, or is there some amount of equality between them? This will typically be reflected in the choices the speakers make while speaking.

Speech acts

We recognize the following speech acts:

	<u>Information</u>	<u>Goods and Services</u>
<u>Offer</u>	Statement (offer of information), prototypically realized by a declarative clause. <i>Sally made this coffee.</i>	Offer (of goods and services), usually realized by an interrogative clause. <i>Would you like me to make coffee?</i>
<u>Request/Demand</u>	Question (request for information), prototypically realized by an interrogative clause. <i>Who made this coffee?</i>	Command (request for goods and services), prototypically realized by an imperative clause. <i>Make coffee.</i>

You will want to find out who has access to what type of speech acts.

- Those who mostly ask questions come across as needing or lacking information. They are also causing those the questions are directed at to come across as having the information.
- Those who mostly provide statements come across as possessing information worth communicating. They are also making others come across as needing or lacking the information.
- Those who mostly give orders (sentences in the imperative) are making themselves come across as seeking to or being able to control the behaviour of others. They are also making others appear as providers of the actions or services required.

In each of the above cases, the way a participant comes across may be:

- Determined by the context. For example, an exchange between a customer and a shop assistant pre-positions the customer as giving orders and the assistant as provider of service.
- Deliberate. For example a shop assistant may want to resist the pre-positioning by deliberately speaking to the customer in the imperative, attempting to reverse the equality/inequality aspect of the relationship.

Turn management

Those who control who speaks and when come across as more powerful than others.

Terms of address

What terms of address are present and who uses them?

For example, if person A addresses person as "Mister so-and-so" and person B addresses person A with their first name, then the tenor of the conversation is such that person B is superior to person A.

This may be a reflection of the actual relative status of the participants (for example a teacher and a student), or it may be a deliberate attempt to overcome the actual status. For example a teacher and a student each titling themselves "Mister" may be a deliberate attempt to pretend equality and mutual respect.

Evaluation, assessment

Those who pass judgements or make assessments come across as superior in their ability or competence to judge or assess.

Topic choice

Those who choose or change the topic of the conversation come across as superior to the other participants.

Social distance (familiarity, friendliness)

The degree of distance between participants can usually be detected from the presence or absence of informal language. For example:

- Use of colloquial vocabulary: "I've got a lump" (colloquial) instead of "I've developed a lump" (formal).
- Use of a dialect: "We've had us jabs for flu" (dialect) instead of "We've had jabs for flu" (standard).
- Use of terms of address: given names, nicknames, pet names indicate closeness, formal names indicate distance.
- Presence of contractions: "I'll" (informal) instead of "I will" (formal).
- Presence of ellipsis: deliberately failing to mention something out of shared knowledge means presuming that both parties know it. People who are close have shared knowledge (shared experiences in the past, etc.).

These features may be an indication of actual social distance or closeness between the participants, or they may be deliberate attempts to make the writer appear closer to his/her intended readers, perhaps to persuade them for something. This is a common technique in tabloid journalism where it is known as synthetic personalization.

Tenor in non-interactive texts

Non-interactive texts are (usually) written texts directed at the public, as opposed to texts directed at a single person known to the author. Some spoken texts are also non-interactive, such as lectures and rehearsed speeches. When analyzing a non-interactive text for its tenor, you want to find out how the personality of the author (or of the institution the author belongs to) is projected in the text. This projection is called a persona.

Personalization

Personalization of a text refers to whether the speaker is revealed in the text and drawn attention to, such as by the use of the personal pronoun "I", or whether he/she is obscured and underplayed. Personalization also refers to whether the audience is referred to and drawn attention to, such as by the use of the personal pronoun "you". Finally, the personal pronoun "we" is also an example of personalization, referring to both the author and the audience.

Personalization is usually achieved with these techniques:

- Personal pronouns.
- Directives ("Click here to...", "Don't panic")
- Rhetorical questions ("What's a girl to do?")
- Questions seemingly coming from the reader or from another, imagined participant.

Personalization can be used for many purposes:

- To position the audience as agreeing, thereby making it difficult for them to disagree. Example: "Surely you of all people see that Darwin's theory of evolution cannot explain human nature."
- To create a feeling of solidarity between the author and the audience ("we").
- To create a feeling of intimacy.
- To create an impression of the interactivity of a one-to-one conversation ("pseudo-interactivity")

- To make the reader feel like they are physically present in a situation. This is often achieved in literature by referring to an assumed shared context, such as “here” or “this year” to draw the reader in.

Impersonalization

The opposite of personalization is impersonalization. Strongly impersonalized texts are meant to create a feeling of objectivity, of being free of personal biases. This is a common technique in scientific texts and can often be detected by the presence of the “anticipatory *it*”:

“It is disappointing that...” (instead of “I’m disappointed that...”)

“It is necessary that you ...” (instead of “You should...”)

Standing

Standing tells you how much of a claim the author lays to expertise and authority. To evaluate the standing of a text, you will be interested to answer these questions:

- Does the author refer to external, (seemingly) respectable, sources?
“According to the majority of Nobel prize winners” is an example of the author constructing a strong standing, “only a few experts agree” is an example of the author constructing a weak standing.
- Does the writer come across as possessing expertise?
Writers achieve this by demonstrating their expertise, in other words by providing information of a factual nature in the text. This is common in journalistic reporting where it is to be expected because of the situation. In other situations it may be also be an attempt by the writer to present themselves as possessing expertise when they don’t actually possess any.
- Does the writer come across as being in a position to criticise or give praise?
Writers achieve this by actually doing it (criticising or giving praise), and this can be detected by the presence of evaluative expressions. Evaluative expressions are such expressions which go beyond describing undisputable facts and express an opinion on facts. For example:
 - Sometimes, when describing an existing state of affairs, there is a choice between a neutral expression (e.g. “feature”) and an evaluative one (e.g. “weakness”).
 - An adjective may be inserted into an otherwise neutral expression to make it evaluative, for example “the fragile bond of trust with the mainland” instead of just “the bond of trust with the mainland”.

Criticism and praise may be given in less obvious ways as well and when that happens, it is an example of the tenor being manipulated deliberately.

- Does the writer come across as being in a position to tell other people what to do?
Writers achieve this position by doing it (telling or recommending people what to do). This can be detected by the presence of imperative sentences (very obvious) and the presence of meanings involving obligation and necessity (less obvious), for example “will have to”, “can no longer afford”, “should”, “must”.

Note that instructions can be given in less obvious ways as well. When people do that, they deliberately manipulate the tenor of their writing to appear less “bossy”.

Stance

Stance refers to the space the author seemingly allows you to argue with the experiential content, to agree or disagree. The stance encoded in a text also expresses the author’s commitment to the experiential content: how certain (they want us to believe) they are that what they are saying is true.

Stance is further subdivided into Attitude and Modality.

Attitude

The attitude of a text tells you whether positive, negative or neutral meanings are expressed. Attitude is typically realized in text by:

- Lexical choices. For example "peril", "lost" and "feared" carry negative meanings for most people, the author knows this, and is using them to construct a negative attitude in the text.
- Evaluative expressions, that is expressions which go beyond describing undisputable facts and express an opinion on facts. For example:
 - Sometimes, when describing an existing state of affairs, there is a choice between a neutral expression (e.g. "feature") and an evaluative one (e.g. "weakness").
 - An adjective may be inserted into an otherwise neutral expression to make it evaluative, for example "the fragile bond of trust with the mainland" instead of just "the bond of trust with the mainland".

Attitude can be more or less explicit, and therefore more or less easy to detect:

- **Asserted attitudes** are attitudes which are mentioned quite openly, a typical reader is aware of them and is free to disagree with them: "The government's behaviour was disgraceful."
- **Assumed attitudes** are attitudes which are mentioned as if they were truths accepted by everyone on which another argument can be built: "After nine years of the government's betrayal, ..." (Main argument follows.) A typical reader will feel less free to disagree with assumed attitudes.
- **Triggered attitudes** aren't mentioned at all, but a typical reader will imply them. Example: "Even though Fred's father is very old, Fred only visits him once a year". This triggers a negative attitude to Fred. Even though the facts that Fred's father is old and that Fred visits him once a year are objective facts, the syntax employed ("even though ... only") encourages a typical reader to imply from the facts a negative attitude to Fred.

One way of triggering attitudes is the manipulation of **agency** and **affectedness** in a text: wording material processes in such a way that certain entities appear as actors (and therefore come across as responsible for what happened) while others appear as goals (and therefore come across as more or less victims of what happened).

► Agency and affectedness

When analyzing a text for agency and affectedness, we typically only look at the material processes in the text, disregarding other process types, because material processes have the most impact on the world.

The main idea of agency and affectedness analysis is that if a certain event is constructed with a certain attitude by a text, then the participants who have the most agency in the event also tend to be viewed with the same attitude by a typical reader. In other words, the attitude of a process "rubs off" onto the agent.

- Those entities which often appear as **transactional actors** (= actors who have a goal at the other end of the process) have the most agency. For example in "demonstrators were shot at by the police", "the police" have agency.
- Those entities which appear as **non-transactional actors** (= actors who do not have a goal at the other end of the process) have less agency because they are constructed as not influencing anybody. For example in "shots were fired by the police", "the police" have some agency but not as much as in the previous example.
- Entities who do not appear as actors are not constructed by the text as having agency at all.

The agency of a participant can be further manipulated in a text by:

- Shot passives, e.g. "shots were fired" (as opposed to "shots were fired by the police").
- Nominalizations, e.g. "the 1970s saw several factory closures" (as opposed to "in the 1970s, the company management closed several factories").
- Ergatives, e.g. "several mines closed" (as opposed to "several mines were closed").

Of secondary importance to the issue of agency is the issue of affectedness. Entities who are often presented as affected in material processes can potentially be constructed as victims and attract sympathy. However, it has been observed that attitudes "rub off" onto the affected less easily than they do onto the agent.

Modality

The modality of a text is an aggregate of various meanings relating to permission, ability, obligation, necessity, volition, and prediction. Modality is usually expressed by:

- Modal verbs. There are nine of these in English: "can", "could", "may", "might", "shall", "should", "will", "would", "must".
- Semi-modals, for example "had better", "have (got) to", "ought to", "be supposed to", "be going to".
- Various lexical word classes expressing modality, for example the verbs "need to", "be obliged to", the adjectives "definite", "possible" and the nouns "certainty", "likelihood".

There are two kinds of modality: epistemic and deontic.

▶ Epistemic modality

Epistemic modality of a text tells you the likelihood that the experiential content is (believed by the author to be) true. Typical indicators of epistemic modality are:

- Modal verbs:
 1. "will" = certainty (strong epistemic modality)
 2. "would" = probability based on a hypothetical condition
 3. "must" = deduced to be fairly certain
 4. "may", "might", "could" = possibility (weak epistemic modality)
- Modal adverbs ("definitely" = strong epistemic modality, "possibly" = weak epistemic modality)
- Modal adjectives, often used in the pattern "It is definite/possible that...".

Writers who say their message with a high epistemic modality may appear as dogmatic, while authors who give their experiential content low epistemic modality may appear as open to negotiation or even uncertain.

▶ Deontic modality

The deontic modality of a text tells you the amount of obligation, permission or necessity conveyed by the text. Typical indicators of deontic modality are modal verbs, and other expressions conveying meanings of obligation, permission or necessity:

1. "have to", "must", "had better" = strong obligation
2. "ought to", "should" = obligation
3. "need to" = necessity
4. "be supposed to" = weaker obligation

Communicative effectiveness

A text is effective if it succeeds in achieving its purpose. The purpose of a text can be anything from the communication of factual information to convincing the audience of the validity of certain opinions. In all cases, the communicative effectiveness can be judged in two broad areas:

- Whether the text lays out its experiential content in the best possible way for the receiver to follow easily. This is dealt with under "Thematic organization" and "Cohesion" further below.
- Whether the text satisfies the expectations of its register in terms of its Field, Mode and Tenor.

This document deals with the communicative effectiveness of more or less prototypical written texts, such as newspaper articles and scientific texts.

Suitability to register

A text is effective if it is suitable to the register of which it claims to be an instance. This includes:

- **Field:** A text is effective if the Field as constructed by the text is identical to the Field intended for the text. In other words, a text is effective if it appears to be "about" what it is meant to be "about".
- **Mode:** A text is effective if it displays the characteristics of its intended mode. For example, a scientific journal is deemed effective if it constructs its mode in accordance with the customs of scientific articles, namely with low interactivity and low spontaneity.
- **Tenor:** A text is effective if it constructs the expected tenor for the participants. For example a political speech is deemed effective if its tenor is such that the speaker appears confident about the information presented. A speech where the speaker comes across as uncertain would be judged as ineffective.

Thematic organization

When analyzing the thematic organization of a text, we recognize three kinds of theme:

- The **macro-theme** is the theme of the whole text: what the whole text is about. Most registers require that the macro-theme be specified clearly at the beginning, in the first one or few paragraphs, and that the hyper-themes (see below) are previewed there as well.
- The **hyper-theme** is the theme of a paragraph or a sequence of paragraphs. For example, in an essay dealing with the arguments for and against children TV programmes, each paragraph or group paragraphs would typically deal with one argument, and this would be its hyper-theme. Again, most registers require the hyper-theme of a unit to be indicated clearly at the beginning of the unit, although this principle is not observed as strictly as the macro-theme principle.
- The **clause theme** is the theme of each individual clause. In a clause, its theme appears at the beginning, and the rest of the clause is the rheme. A theme is the "point of departure" for the clause, and it is what the writer considers important with respect to the hyper-theme and the macro-theme. A common pattern is for the rheme of a clause to be picked up as the theme of another clause. Here are some common **thematic progression** patterns:
 - **Zigzag:** the rheme of a preceding clause is picked up as the theme of the next one, its rheme is in turn picked up as the theme of another, and so on. Example:

"Friction of rotary saws can cause abrasion. Abrasion is simply a loss of skin surface. Broken skin gives easy entry to harmful substances."
 - **Fan:** individual elements of the rheme of a clause are picked as themes by the next two or three clauses. Example:

"The scheme has two objectives. The first objective is to... and the second is to..."
 - **Reiteration:** the same element appears as the theme of all clauses. Example:

"We collected dishes and seeds. We placed soil on the dish and <we> put seeds in. Then we labelled the dish."

The following are some points to look out for when judging the communicative effectiveness of a text:

- For the whole text, identify the macro-theme. Is it laid out clearly at the beginning?
- For each section, identify its hyper-theme, and see if it is laid out at the beginning of the section. If it isn't, would it make the text more efficient if it were?
- Identify the thematic progression from section to section throughout the whole text. What pattern has the author chosen? Would the text be more efficient if a different pattern had been chosen?

- Within each section, identify the thematic progression from clause to clause. What pattern has been chosen? Would the section be more efficient if a different pattern had been chosen?

Cohesion

A text is coherent if it “makes sense” in the wisest possible meaning of the phrase: if it fits the receiver’s expectations, previous knowledge and cultural knowledge.

Coherence can be achieved by:

- Usage of cohesive devices such as repetition, linking adverbials, etc. Cohesive devices are dealt with in the rest of this text.
- Even in the absence of cohesive devices, the receiver can use their cultural knowledge etc. to construct a coherent interpretation for themselves. For example:
Ann: “Brian! Phone!” [coherent interpretation: ‘Brian, answer the phone!']
Brian: “I’m in the bath!” [coherent interpretation: ‘I can’t answer it.’]
Ann: “Okay”.

Cohesive devices can be divided into two broad categories: clause cohesion and logical cohesion.

Clause cohesion

Some cohesive devices are used to keep track of participants, circumstances, etc. from one clause to another. Each time a participant etc. is referred to in a text, it is either a presenting reference or a presuming reference.

- Presenting references introduce new participants into the text.
- Presuming references refer to existing participants. A presuming reference presumes that the reader will be able to retrieve the referent from previous text or from context. Presuming references are used to achieve cohesion.

The following devices are used for participant cohesion:

- Lexical cohesive devices:
 - Repetition of wording: Sometimes the repeated word may be morphologically different, such as “age” – “aged” – “ageing”. Plain repetition is frowned upon in some registers such as fiction where lexical variation is valued.
 - Repetition of meaning, worded differently:
 - Synonymy (different words with the same meaning)
 - Literary metaphor
 - Co-reference, e.g. “Donaghy” – “the Chelsea veteran” – “the 35-year old Belfast man”. Often used in news not only as a cohesive device but also as a vehicle to communicate additional information about the referent.
 - Relexicalization, when a meaning is repeated with different words and at the same time the meaning is altered, for example:
A: “Do you work on Saturdays?”
B: “Well I sometimes float in on Saturdays...”
Here, B has relexicalized the original meaning “work on Saturdays” into “float in Saturdays”, putting a more casual “spin” on it.
 - Introduction of a related meaning:
 - Antonymy (words with opposite meanings)
 - Hyponymy: referring to a class and its subclass.
 - Co-hyponymy: referring to two members of the same class.
 - Meronymy: referring to a whole and its part.
 - Co-meronymy: referring to two parts of the same whole.
- Grammatical cohesive devices:

- Personal pronouns ("he"): particularly common in certain types of fiction.
- Possessive pronouns ("Is the book hers?")
- Demonstrative pronouns ("Those are difficult")
- Definite articles ("the book")
- Demonstrative determiners ("this argument"): especially common in scientific writing where precision of reference is valued.
- Possessive determiners ("his book")
- Comparatives ("the other book"): The identity of the presumed referent can be retrieved not because it has already been mentioned but because a different, comparable item has already been mentioned.
- Place adverbials ("Here we see the main argument")
- Time adverbials ("Back then, times were hard")

Each reference can be more or less direct, depending on how much work is required on the reader's part to work out who the referent is. An indirect reference may lead to **reference-retrieval problems**.

Each presumed reference may refer to something that has been mentioned already (**anaphora**, backward reference), to something that is yet to be specified fully (**cataphora**, forward reference) or to a point on time or space (locational reference).

Cohesive references effectively set up **reference chains** throughout the text.

Logical cohesion

While clause cohesion is used to keep track of participants from one clause to another, logical cohesion is used to link larger units of meaning into a single coherent text. For example, in an argumentative essay, logical cohesion devices would be used to combine arguments for and against a proposal into a single, easy-to-follow text.

Logical cohesion is usually achieved by linking adverbials. These are similar in function to conjunctions, but the main difference is that:

- Conjunctions link the meanings of clauses together.
- Linking adverbials link meanings together across larger units of text, such as from one sentence to another or from one paragraph to another.

The following semantic categories of linking adverbials can be recognized:

- Enumeration: first, second, finally, in the first place, in the second place, for one thing, for another, first of all, to begin with, next.
 - Addition: in addition, similarly, also, by the same token, further, furthermore, likewise, moreover.
- Summation: in sum, to conclude, all in all, in conclusion, overall, to summarize.
- Apposition (shows that the following text is equivalent to, or included in, the preceding text): in other words, i.e. (= that is), e.g. (= for example), viz. (= namely), which is to say, that is to say, for instance, specifically.
- Result/inference: consequently, thus, therefore, so, then, hence, as a result.
- Contrast: in contrast, alternatively, on the other hand, conversely, instead, on the contrary, by comparison.
 - Concession (shows that the following text expresses something contrary to the expectations raised by the preceding text): though, nevertheless, anyway, besides, still, in any case, at any rate, in spite of that, after all, yet.
- Transition (shows that the following text is only loosely connected, or completely unconnected, to the previous text): by the way, incidentally, by the by, meanwhile, now.

Effective cohesion

A text is cohesive effectively if:

- There are no reference-retrieval problems: we can decode easily who the referents are.

- The choice of reference items (the actual wording of the reference) is appropriate to the register.
- The number of reference chains is just right. Generally, many short reference chains reveal lack of focus and purpose.
- Logical links between meanings can be decoded easily.

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