

## MECHANISM OF COHESION IN EARNEST HEMINGWAY'S "THE KILLERS"

Rabia Faiz<sup>1</sup>, Asad Mehmood<sup>2</sup>, Iqra Jabeen<sup>3</sup>, Naveed Yousaf<sup>4</sup>

University of Sargodha, PAKISTAN.

<sup>1</sup>rabiafaiz@hotmail.com, <sup>2</sup>asadqazi.uos@gmail.com,  
<sup>3</sup>iqramajoka@yahoo.com <sup>4</sup>naveed.gujjar0000@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*The present study is aimed at exploring certain cohesive relations which bind the sentences together into a unified whole in the short story, The Killers by Earnest Hemingway with due focus on projecting substitution, ellipsis and reference. The use of these mechanisms of cohesion enables the author not only to get rid of encumbering repetitions but also help to perform identifiable functions that aid in comprehending the embedded meaning within the story. The study of these linguistic devices in the selected short story shows that they make the text coherent and carry forward author's meaning towards the readers.*

**Keywords:** Cohesion, ellipsis, substitution, reference

### INTRODUCTION

Cohesion is an important aspect of text. It gives the quality of wholeness and unity to a text. Furthermore, the analysis of cohesive devices reveals that an author creates themes by using the cohesive devices which owe functional significance in the text.

Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of certain elements in the discourse is dependent on that of the other. The one presupposes the other in the sense that it can only be effectively decoded by recourse to it thus establishing the relationship of cohesion between the two elements, that is, presupposing and the presupposed. (Halliday & Hassan 1976 –p.4)

In his book, "An Introduction to Functional Grammar" (1994), Halliday deviates from the original classification of conjunction thus regarding substitution and ellipsis as 'Variants of the same type of cohesive relation' (p.317)

Hassan while enlarging the concept of cohesion divides it into structural and non structural cohesion. The main cohesive devices holding a text are of two major categories, Grammatical (Reference, substitution and Ellipsis) and Lexical.

Coherence, according to McCagg (1990) refers to the logical relationship of ideas. It is a semantic property of textuality and an aspect of comprehension established in the mind of the reader as a result of perception of relatedness among a text's propositions and between the text and the knowledge of the world possessed by the reader.

However, another important fact is that a text can only include some factors from the context which can be relevant to its interpretation. A text is not just a sequence of sentences strung together but a sequence of units, be they sentences or parts of sentences connected in some contextually appropriate ways. 'A text as a whole must exhibit the related, but distinguishable properties of cohesion and coherence' (Lyons, 1983: 198)

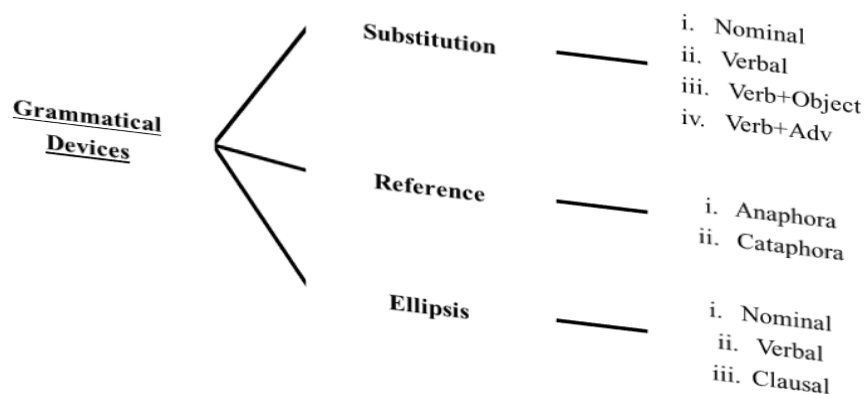
A text is not a string of explicit meanings but a sequence of related sentences which give meaning as a result of interaction existing between the text and the world of the readers. (McCarthy 2001:97)

## METHODOLOGY

The selected short story for cohesive analysis is ‘The Killers’ by Earnest Hemingway which first appeared to the public in the year 1927 in Scribner’s Magazine. The story is analyzed at three levels of cohesive analysis which are Reference, Ellipsis and Substitution given by Halliday and Hassan (1976). This study is intended to focus on striking and marked use of words in this story in order to enhance effective transfer of message, their effects and functions.

### Grammatical Devices

Halliday and Hassan (1976) give taxonomy of the types of cohesive relationship which can be formally established within a text. Therefore, the main cohesive devices which bind a text together are of two main categories: Grammatical and lexical devices. The kinds of grammatical cohesive ties discussed by Halliday (1978) and Osisanwo (2005) are reference, substitution, Ellipsis and conjunction. This is represented below for explicitness.



(Osisanwo, 2005:38)

### Reference

This implies the use of language to point to something. Reference therefore has the ability to point to something within or outside a text. Halliday and Hassan (1976) states that co-referential forms are forms which instead of being interpreted semantically in their own right make reference to something else for their interpretation. When the interpretation is within the text, this is an “endophoric” relation but in a situation where the interpretation of the text lies outside the text, in the context of situation, the relationship is “exophoric”. However, exophoric relations play no part in textual cohesion. Endophoric relations on the other hand, form cohesive ties within the text. Endophoric relations are also of two types, those which look back in the text for their interpretation (anaphoric relations) and those which look forward to the text for their interpretation (cataphoric relations). For instance, the following sentences show the use of reference.

- a. ‘Go on back to the kitchen, nigger. You go with him, bright boy’.
- b. ‘The clock says twenty minutes past five, the second man said ‘It’s twenty minutes fast’.
- c. ‘What do you mean the nigger? The nigger that cooks.’

In the first sentence above, “him” refers back to “nigger” while “It’s” in the last sentence refers back to “the clock”. This kind of references is referring to an anaphora (i.e. looking

backward). The other kind of reference, where the pronoun is given first and then kept in suspense as to its identity, which is revealed later, is known as cataphora (i.e. looking forward). Examples:

- a. 'You go with him, bright boy'.
- b. 'I'll tell you, 'Max said. 'We're going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Anderson?'
- c. 'Who's out in the kitchen? The nigger'.

Referring expressions help to unify the text, develop relation between meaning and create economy because they save writers from unnecessary repetition.

### Substitution

This is the replacement of one item by another. It is a relation in the wording rather than in the meaning. This implies that as a general rule, the substitute item has some structural function as that for which it substitutes. There are three types of substitution.

These are nominal, verbal and clausal substitution.

Examples:

- I. I have eaten your meal. I must get you another one (Nominal substitution)
- II. 'They'll kill him. I guess they will.' (Verbal Substitution)
- III. 'He must have got mixed up in something in Chicago'. 'I guess so'. (Clausal Substitution)
- IV. 'They're all right'. 'You think so'. (Clausal Substitution)

Substitution, therefore, is presupposition of linguistic structure at the word and structural level.

### Ellipsis

The idea of omitting part of sentences on the assumption that an earlier sentence will make the meaning clear is known as ellipsis. There is nominal, verbal and clausal ellipsis.

For example:

- II. 'Do you know the big Swede named Ole Anderson? Yes I know'. (*Verbal ellipsis*)
- III. 'Which is yours? Ham and eggs. (*Verbal ellipsis*).
- IV. 'I can give you ham and eggs, bacon and eggs, liver, I'll take ham and eggs'. (*Nominal ellipsis*)
- V. 'I mean you got anything to drink? Just those I said'. (*Clausal ellipsis*)
- VI. 'They are come here and eat the big dinner'. That's right. (*Clausal ellipsis*)

In sentence 1, the verb "bought" has been elided, In 2, the noun "members" have been elided while in 3, "who" replaces „someone" and the clause „came in ..." has been elided. Moreover, the following lines from (Halliday, 1978: 4) may be considered for illustration.

- Time flies
- You can't they fly so quickly

The above lines from Halliday show that „cohesion" is expressed no less than three ties:

- I. The Elliptical form "you can't"
- II. The Reference item "they"

### III. The Lexical item “fly”

These cohesive devices combine to give the two sentences the quality of being a complete text.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Ernest Hemingway** (1899-1961), born in Oak Park, Illinois, started his career as a writer in a newspaper office in Kansas City at the age of seventeen. During the First World War, he joined a volunteer ambulance unit in the Italian army. Serving at the front, he was wounded, was decorated by the Italian Government, and spent considerable time in hospitals. After his return to the United States, he became a reporter for Canadian and American newspapers and was soon sent back to Europe to cover such events as the Greek Revolution.

During the twenties, Hemingway became a member of the group of expatriate Americans in Paris, which he described in his first important work, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). Equally successful was *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), the study of an American officer's disillusionment in the war and his role as a deserter. Hemingway used his experiences as a reporter during the civil war in Spain as the background for his most ambitious novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Among his later works, the most outstanding is the short novel, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), the story of an old fisherman's journey, his long and lonely struggle with a fish and the sea, and his victory in defeat.

Hemingway - himself a great sportsman - liked to portray soldiers, hunters, bullfighters - tough, at times primitive people whose courage and honesty are set against the brutal ways of modern society, and who in this confrontation lose hope and faith. His straightforward prose, his spare dialogue, and his predilection for understatement are particularly effective in his short stories, some of which are collected in *Men without Women* (1927) and *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories* (1938). Hemingway died in Idaho in 1961.

### The Killers: A Brief Overview

One winter evening, around dusk, while he is sitting at the end of a counter and talking to George, the manager of a diner in Summit, Illinois, a small town south of Chicago, Nick Adams watches two over-dressed strangers in black (Al and Max) entering the diner. After complaining about the serving schedule, the two men order dinner, joking sarcastically about George and Nick being a couple of dumb country boys.

Finishing his meal, Al orders Nick and Sam, the Black cook, to the kitchen, where he ties them up. Meanwhile, Max boasts to George that he and Al have been hired to kill Ole Andreson, an aging boxer, who, they've heard, eats dinner there every night.

When the boxer fails to show up in the diner, Al and Max leave, and George hurries to untie Nick and Sam. He then suggests that Nick warn Andreson, who lives in a nearby boarding house.

When the boxer hears about Al and Max's plan to kill him, he's unconcerned; he's tired, he says, of running. Nick leaves and returns to the diner, where he tells George and Sam that he's leaving Summit because he can't bear to think about a man waiting, passively, to be killed by a couple of hired killers.

### Text Analysis

In given analysis we tried to highlight the prominent features present in the short story to make the understanding easier for the readers as well as the hearers. Through the cohesive analysis the style of the writer will be elaborated as the different one from the traditional

short stories because it is a thrilling story though it has some of its own specific features to call it thrilling.

In the story the most prominent feature is ellipsis which is used to create suspense and thrill throughout. Ellipsis also creates a conversational realism in the story. Their discussion seems to be factual by using the technique of ellipsis. Writer Earnest Hemingway used this skill deliberately for the sake of genuineness in his story. He has used affirmative and negative words for the reply in the most situations which shows fear and horror which makes the story more interesting for the readers and this leads till the end. Bulk use words like 'no', 'yes', 'sure', 'nothing' are used specifically to make the story more thrilling.

### *Text*

"Got anything to drink?" Al asked.

"Silver beer, bevo, ginger-ale," George said.

"I mean you got anything to drink?"

"Just those I said."

"This is a hot town," said the other. "What do they call it?"

"Summit."

"Ever hear of it?" Al asked his friend.

"No," said the friend.

"What do they do here nights?" Al asked.

"They eat the dinner," his friend said. "They all come here and eat the big dinner."

"That's right," George said.

"So you think that's right?" Al asked George.

"Sure."

"You're a pretty bright boy, aren't you?"

"Sure," said George.

"Well, you're not," said the other little man. "Is he, Al?"

"He's dumb," said Al. He turned to Nick. "What's your name?"

"Adams."

"Another bright boy," Al said. "Ain't he a bright boy, Max?"

"The town's full of bright boys," Max said.

George put the two platters, one of ham and eggs, the other of bacon and eggs, on the counter. He set down two side dishes of fried potatoes and closed the wicket into the kitchen.

"Which is yours?" he asked Al.

"Don't you remember?"

"Ham and eggs."

"Just a bright boy," Max said. He leaned forward and took the ham and eggs. Both men ate with their gloves on. George watched them eat.

"What are you looking at?" Max looked at George.

"Nothing."

"The hell you were. You were looking at me."

There is some unknown narrator in the story either the writer is himself a narrator or somebody else. In the above given extract is selected from the mentioned story. Though ellipsis he is making a sense of fear in the servants of the hotel that is why they are answering in the shorter way. On the other hand the both killers named Al and Max also used shorter way in order to make them afraid of to acquire their motifs. Generally it is considered that the persons who are scared and who are scaring, both converse in short way because one is overpowered and other is overpowering.

### Text

Go on back to the kitchen, nigger. You go with him, bright boy’.

‘The clock says twenty minutes past five, the second man said ‘It’s twenty minutes fast’.

‘What do you mean the nigger? The nigger that cooks.’

‘You go with him, bright boy’.

‘I’ll tell you, ‘Max said. ‘We’re going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Anderson?’

‘Who’s out in the kitchen? The nigger’.

References (anaphoric & cataphoric) basically occur in “The Killers” to avoid repetition. In the short story he uses them either to depict anaphorically, cataphorically or abstract things to create suspense and horror. Another type of reference which is not explained by Halliday and Hassan (1976) is exophoric reference. It used to describe generics or abstracts without ever identifying them (in contrast to anaphora and cataphora, which do identify the entity and thus our forms of endophora) e.g rather than introduce a concept the writer refers to it by a generic word such as “everything”.

In this short story this device is castoff to portray the electrifying state. Earnest Hemingway used this device to designate the persons or objects. Cataphoric reference is used to craft insecurity, doubtfulness and anxiety in the minds of readers. Anaphoric reference is used to explain the previous situation as there are so many characters in the story to create ambiguous situation.

### Text:

I have eaten your meal. I must get you another one (*Nominal substitution*)

‘They’ll kill him. I guess they will.’ (*Verbal Substitution*)

‘He must have got mixed up in something in Chicago’. ‘I guess so’. (*Clausal Substitution*)

‘They’re all right’. ‘You think so’. (*Clausal Substitution*)

It is very surprising thing that in substitution, word is not omitted as in ellipsis. In the prearranged sentences taken out from “The Killers” writer has projected substitutive words in order to sidestep lexical repetition. This device is fashioning conversational coherence. It seems at the whole situation is presented before the eyes of the readers. They find themselves in “Henry’s Lunch room”. Although he has used many devices but still it’s cohesive and coherent sense is maintained handsomely.

### CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to explore the various cohesive devices in short story of Earnest Hemingway “The Killer”. The analysis of the cohesive devices used in this text understudy revealed that a discourse or text can only be meaningful if various

segments are brought together to form a unified whole. Therefore, for a text to be cohesive, it must be held together by some linguistic devices.

The writer has used all the cohesive devices in order to create suspense and thrill. If we analyse theme of the story we will find another aspect of the story which is scaring. The discussion shows the factor of realism in their conversation that in the both conditions people used to speak in a short way. Hemingway is famous due to his thrilling techniques in his novels and short stories. So that is why it is true to say that he has used all the devices accurately and created cohesion in conversation. The characters of killers, their appearance and their dialogues create ambiguous situation and till the end readers remain in the state of horror.

Through the continuous use of ellipsis and reference, the writer lessens the anxiousness of the readers. As the characters come in the situation rapidly after one another, this rapid changing, alteration and shifting of the situation is the core of the thrill in the story.

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