

## Cohesion Analysis of “Looking at Others People’s Garden” By: Paulo Coelho

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### ABSTRACT

*This research study explores the relation between grammatical and lexical cohesion that determines meaningful chronological order in a text. The principles of referencing, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion stated by Halliday and Hasan (1976) were applied on the text “Looking at others people’s garden” by Paulo Coelho to reveal the significance of the cohesive elements that are responsible for transforming it into a cohesive whole. How these cohesive devices constitute semantic links among the structurally unrelated elements in the linguistic system of a text are looked into. Pedagogically it is facilitative for learners to attain better semantic understanding of a text in second and foreign language.*

**Keywords:** Cohesion, semantic understanding, cohesiveness

### INTRODUCTION

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), “a text is best regarded as a semantic unit – a unit not of form but of meaning”. Texture is that very quality which converts a text into a cohesive whole. Cohesion is a source of semantic sequence in a text and it is important to see cohesion as a grammatical relationship since it refers to structural substance and lexical relationship and operates on the content within a text or sentence.

Cohesion is a series of clues which signal semantic relationships and unify a text. Halliday and Hasan argue that cohesion occurs in a text when the explanation and interpretation of an element in the text becomes dependent on another element in the same text. The first element, thus, presupposes the other while the other needs to make an effective recourse to the first one to complete the decoding process. In this way both the presupposing and the presupposed elements achieve potential integration into the text and furnish semantic networking.

Reference is considered as the most striking feature to impart cohesion in any discourse and not just a method is undeliberately used for providing continuity in writing. However, some students rely upon repetition of words instead of using reference words. According to Halliday and Hasan, “only repetition is not sufficient for supplying cohesion in discourse passages rather it often makes them less cohesive and coherent”(Holloway, 1981).

Substitution and ellipsis function like referential cohesion. Halliday and Hasan observe “Substitution is a relation between linguistic items, such as words or phrases; whereas reference is a relation between meanings... ellipsis is simply a kind of substitution; it can be defined as substitution by zero” (p. 89). For reading comprehension, these cohesive devices, including substitution, infer richness and clarity in the given context of any proposition in a text. When the level of cohesion is high then we can easily retrieve the required information with the help of references, substitution, or ellipsis (Anderson, 1983).

About conjunctions Halliday and Hasan (1976) says that words like therefore, so, accordingly, and, but give semantic organization to our concepts and ideas in a text or discourse and thus communicate the cohesive relationship between items through logical structure (Holloway, 1981).

Crowhurst (1987) has “examined the use of cohesive devices in narrative and argumentative writing at three grade levels (6, 10, and 12). She found that narrative writing was superior to argumentative writing in terms of the numbers and percentages of cohesive ties at all three grade levels. This was attributed in part to different levels of lexical familiarity or depth associated with the topics of the compositions” (Beverly E. Cox, May, 1991).

The ability to produce a lexically cohesive text has also been analyzed with regards to the grade level of students. It has been observed that “increases in lexical cohesion generally rely on knowledge of vocabulary, concepts, and semantic hierarchies. Older children would normally be expected to have larger vocabularies and more conceptual knowledge, as well as more experiences with exposition. In all likelihood, it would be expected that greater use of lexical cohesion would be positively correlated with grade level” (ibid).

## METHODOLOGY

The present research study is explorative in nature and uses a text by Paulo Coelho, “How one thing can contain everything,” for analyzing the textual meanings extracted through the semantic concept of cohesion.

There are five different kinds of cohesive ties identified by Halliday and Hasan. *Reference* is an affiliation between a linguistic item with another situational and textual item. *Substitution and Ellipsis* occurs, according to Bloor and Bloor (1995), when a lexical item is replaced in writing or communication, without any repetition, with any other available grammatical resource. Substitution and ellipsis are not different in their function as a linguistic link, however, ellipsis differs from substitution in that it substitutes an item with zero (R. Hasan, 1976). *Conjunction* functions as a semantic cohesive device and function between clauses or different parts of a text to make obvious the semantic patterning (Bloor, 1995).

These identified devices along with connected lines are analyzed at word, sentence and clausal level chronologically in tabulated form to investigate both grammatical and lexical linking within the selected texts to seek an overall cohesiveness and semantic unity.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

### Analysis at reference level of text “Looking at others people’s garden”

Reference is one of the basic ties for inculcating cohesion in a text. It consists of a word whose understanding and interpretation is insufficient in its isolation and it should be explained in relation to the overall context of a conversation or communication for generating its semantic scope. There are three types of references: personal, demonstrative, and comparative (Anderson, 1983).

In the second text “Looking at others people’s garden”, backward as well as forward references can be found. In line 3 the word “garden” is a cataphoric reference not to a typical garden but to the “garden of our life”. This cataphoric reference is used throughout the text,

thus, providing the semantic link for a better understanding of thoughts and ideas related to this phenomenon. In line 4 the phrase “one side” is an anaphoric reference to the same “garden.” In line 10, the word “forgetting” is used as an anaphoric reference to “cultivated...much sweat....so many blessings.” In line 6, the word “advice” points forward to “sow actions...fertilize thoughts...water achievements” which in themselves, for their accomplishment of meaning, also serve as exophoric references in the text as their true understanding and application comes from real life experiences. These exophoric references strengthen the semantic understanding of the text and helps bind it together as a cohesive whole

There are twenty three instances of personal pronouns in the text out of which “we” is used nine times in lines 3, 4, 8, 8, 10, 11,12,14, and 15 and “our” five times in lines 3, 4, 9, 10, and 18. In all of these instances the pronouns refer back to the presupposed addressee “people/human beings” in an exophoric sense.The pronoun “he” is used thrice in lines 2,5, and 6. Twice in lines 5 and 6 it refers back to “our neighbour” while in line 4 and 2 it refers back to the “fool” in line 1. The pronoun“you” and “us” in lines 1 and 18 respectively refer back as exophoric references to the presupposed addressee “people.”, Mostly the pronouns refer to the common addressee “people /human being” thereby giving the text the unification of meaning.

There are also instances of possessive pronouns in this text.In line 2 the possessive pronoun “your” is used to refer back to the presupposed addressee “people” in line 1 while “him and himself” in lines 5 and 9 refer back to “(our) neighbor” in line 4.Another possessive pronoun “his” in line 19 refers back to “the fool” in line 18. These forward and backward cohesive references minimize the need of repetition and provide the uniformity of meaningfulness in the text.

Demonstrative pronouns have been used sixteen times in this text. In line 8the demonstrative pronoun “this” is used to specify the “neighbor” who is spying. In line 4 “there” is used to refer back to the “garden of our life.” “That” is used thrice in the text in lines 12, 13, and 16 to highlight and link the information.In line 12 it relates information to “each centimeter of earth”, in line 13 to “the patient hand” and in line 16 “that head peering at us” links information back to “neighbour” in line 4. The determiner “the” is used eleven times in the text.Twice in lines 3 and 9 it refers to the “garden” as it is not a usual garden but the garden of life and in line 14 to the “gardener” as man himself is looking after it with the help of God. In line 1 “the” refers to “intellect”, in line 12 to the “earth,” the garden of life, in lines 13 and 14 to the “patient” which marks out the hand of a human being working as a gardener, in lines 15, 15, and 16 to rain, the sun, and the seasons (of life), in line 17 to the “hedge” around the garden of life for the protection and in line 18 to the “fool”. These demonstrative pronouns only link information to its right track but also lock the texture of the text in a cohesive whole.

Comparative references are used five times in this story. In lines 1 and 2 the phrase “but the only one” shows one intellect which is desired by the fool as compared to the thousand other intellects that he is offered. In line 6 the phrase “likes to gives advice” denotes the neighbor’s activity that he is capable of working but prefers to advise only. Similarly, in line 19the phrase “never tends his own” refers back to the situation in line 6 and denotes the same activity of the neighbor.

**Table 1. Personal references in “Looking at others people’s garden”**

<i>Line No</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Line reference No</i>	<i>Referenced Item</i>
1	you	1	Presuppose (people)
2	He	1	Fool
2	yours	1	Presuppose (people)
3	we	1	You, Presuppose (people +human being)
3	our	3	We (human being, people)
4	we	3	We (human being, people)
4	our	3	We (human being, people)
5	He	4	(our) neighbour
5	Himself	4	(our) neighbour
6	He	4	(our) neighbour
8	we	3	We (human being, people)
8	We (will)	3	We (human being, people)
9	Him	4	(our) neighbour
9	Our	3	We (human being, people)
10	Our	8,3	We (human being, people) + (our) neighbour
10	We	3	We (human being, people)
11	We	3	We (human being, people)
12	We (will)	3	We (human being, people)
14	We (will)	3	We (human being, people)
16	We	3	We (human being, people)
17	us	3	We (human being, people)
18	Our	3	We (human being, people)
19	His	18	The fool

**Table 2. Demonstrative references in “Looking at others people’s garden”**

<i>Line No</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Line reference No</i>	<i>Referenced Item</i>
1,2	“The only one”	1	Intellect (s)
3	The garden	3	(Garden) of our life
4	There	4,5	“Garden of our life”/ (“neighbor on one side”) spying
8	This	4,5	Neighbour /who is spying
9	The garden	3,9	“Garden of our life”
11	The earth	3,9,11	Earth/garden/that we cultivated
12	That	13	“Each centimeter of earth”
13	That	13,14	“Only the patient hand”
13,14	The patient	14	“Patient hand of the gardener”
14	The gardener	14	Gardener/can decipher
15	The sun	15	sun
15	The rain	15	rain
15,16	The seasons	15,16	The seasons
16	That	16,17,4	“Head peering at us”/neighbour
17	The hedge	17	hedge
18	The fool	18,4	Fool/ our neighbour

**Table 3. Comparative references in “Looking at others people’s garden”**

<i>Line No</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Line reference No</i>	<i>Referenced Item</i>
1,2	“But the only one”	1,3	Intellect as compare to thousand intellects
6	“Likes to give advice”	5,6	(neighbor) “Capable of growing anything but likes to give advice only”
8	“What this neighbor is saying”	8-9	“If we listen to him ,....we will end up working”
14,15	“No longer pay attention”	14-17	Instead (doing work) concentrate only on that peering head
19	“Never tends his own”	18,19	(neighbor)Loves to give advices rather than tending his own plants

In line 8 the phrase “what this neighbor is saying” shows the comparative effect of listing to what he says as by doing this you will be unable to do your work. Likewise, in lines 14 and 15 the phrase “no longer pay attention” connects back the information with the previous comparison in line 8 that the comparative effect of paying attention on peering head (neighbour’s doing as well as saying) will divert your attention completely from your own working. These comparative references with little differences of lexical arrangements give the text the connectivity of meaning.

**Analysis at Substitution And Ellipsis Level**

**Table 4. Substitution in “Looking at others people’s garden”**

<i>Line No</i>	<i>Word/clause + substitution category</i>	<i>Line substitution No</i>	<i>Substituted Item</i>
1	Thousand intellects ( Nominal)	2	one

**Nominal substitution:** “ ‘You can give a fool a thousand intellects, but the only one he will want is yours.’”

In this text there are two instances of nominal substitution, in lines 1 and 2. The noun “thousand intellects” in the phrase “You can give a fool a thousand intellects” is replaced with “one” in “but the only one he will want is yours.”

An explicit example of ellipsis is found in line 4 of this text. The noun phrase “one side” is used to elliptically presuppose one side (□-of the garden) for the noun “garden” in line 3. An implicit example of ellipsis is found in the first line of the text. The possessive pronoun “you” is used as a presupposed elliptical reference to “human being/people” in general.

The use of such elliptical expressions and substitution provides cohesive unity in the text. These devices determine that only adding up lexical resources are not the only way to enrich a text but to provide preciseness of semantic structure is more helpful to infer delicacy in semantic patterns of the text. Ellipsis substitutes an item with ‘zero’ to bring maximum uniformity of expression and provides the cohesiveness of the text.

**Table 5. Ellipsis in “Looking at others people’s garden”**

<i>Line No</i>	<i>Ellipsis category</i>	<i>Line ellipsis No</i>	<i>Elliptical Item</i>
3	Garden (nominal)	4	One side(□)

In ellipsis an item is usually substituted by a zero-item such as in above example

**Nominal ellipsis:**“When we start planting the garden of our life,

We glance to one side (□-of the garden) and notices the neighbour is there,spying.”

Note: elliptical item is ‘garden’

**Analysis at Conjunction Level:**

There are five instances of the additive conjunction “and” in this text which enrich the texture of the narrative and provide the necessary semantic unity. In line 4 “and notice our neighbor...” refers back to “we(people/human being) glance...” and also, generally, to “you(people/human being)” in line 1. In line 7 “and when to water...” structurally connects this activity to the previous set of same activities in lines 6 and 7 “to give advice ... to sow... to fertilize...” In line 9 “and the garden of our life...” points forward to “neighbour’s ideas” and also points back to “... end up working”. In line 11 “and fertilized with so many blessings” unites the information with “...we cultivated with so much sweat”. Lastly, in line 16 “and the seasons” refers back to the same connected items as “...the sun, the rain”.

Adversative conjunctions have been used twice in this text. In line 1 “but the only one...” refers back to “thousand intellects” in line 1 which shows the opposition of expectation on part of the fool that even if you offer him thousand intellects he will ask you for the one you have. In line 6 “But he likes to give advice...” refers to the opposition of information in line 5 “... himself capable of growing...” which shows that the fool/neighbor never tends to do his work and rather prefers to give advices only.

These conjunctive cohesive devices enrich the texture of, and provide the necessary semantic unity to, the narrative.

**Table 6. Conjunctions in “Looking at others people’s garden”**

<i>Additive conjunctions</i>			
<i>Line No</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Line reference No</i>	<i>Referenced Item</i>
4	And	4	“We glance...”/ “..neighbour is there..”
7	And	7	“..fertilize thoughts”/ “...achievements.”
9	And	8-10	“...End up working”/ “..ourneighbour’s idea.”
11	And	10-12	“..we cultivate with so much sweat/....so many blessing.”
15	And	14-16	....the rain/the season
<i>Adversative conjunctions</i>			
<i>Line No</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Line reference No</i>	<i>Referenced Item</i>
1	But	1-2	“Thousand intellect/the only one”
6	But	5-6	“Capable of growing”/ “likes to give advice”

**Analysis at Lexical Level**

There are a number of instances of lexical cohesion in this text. For example, there is a series of related lexical items to the superordinate term “garden/gardening” which are: planting, garden, growing, sow, fertilize, water, garden, earth, cultivate, sweat, fertilize, fertilized, earth, gardener, sun, rain, season, garden and plants. Similarly, under the category of “human

traits” contains intellect(s), glance, spying, likes, actions, thoughts, achievements, patient, hand, peering ,attention, concentrate, loves, tends, listen and saying. Terms related to “numbers/quantity” like thousand, one, one (side), each (centimeter),so much and so many have also been used in the text. Apart from this, there is a repetition of certain lexical items such as “fool” in lines 1 and 18, “advice” in lines 6 and 18, “neighbor” in lines 4,8, and 10, “forget” in lines 10 and 12, “end up” in lines 9 and 10 and “give” in lines 1,6, and 18.

These related lexical repetitive terms provide a unanimous blend of meaningful unity to the text. The superordinates serve as semantic groups to convey random information in an organized way. Without these devices the semantic connectivity becomes difficult to achieve because these devices provide sequential links in the text.

**Table 7. Lexical Cohesion Summary in “Looking at others people’s garden”**

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*Garden*

Planting/garden/growing/sow/fertilize/water/garden/earth/cultivate/sweat/fertilize/fertilized/earth/gardener/sun/rain/season/garden/ plants

*Human traits*

Intellect(s)/Glance/Spying/likes/actions/thoughts/achievements/patient hand/peering/attention/concentrate/loves/tends/ listen/saying

*Give*

Give/give/giving

*Forget*

Forget/forgetting

*Numbers/quantity*

Thousand/one/one (side)/each (centimeter)/so much/so many

*Neighbour*

Neighbour/neighbour/neighbour’s

*Fool*

Fool/fool

*advice*

Advice/advice

*End up*

End up/ end up

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Collocation has not been used in the text. However, the use of the phrasal verb “end up” in lines 9 and 10 bind the text through grammatical collocation.



These grammatical collocations give the text its contemplative richness and the thoughtful communicative style. The use of collocation as a cohesive device demonstrates that these grammatical relations are not only responsible in providing the structural unity but are also helpful in maturing the semantic base of the text to engender the cohesive harmony.

## CONCLUSION

This Cohesion analysis authenticates the basic property of cohesion that meanings of a text cannot be understood in isolation and rather their complete understanding comes from generating patterns of relations among various covert and overt signals within the text for attaining semantic unification. Present analysis reveals that Paulo Coelho has engaged those cohesive ties in his work to attain harmony in thoughts that in turn enhances the semantic understanding of the particular text for its readers.

The understanding of the patterns of these cohesive devices for maintaining semantic unity at lexical and syntactic levels will facilitate in adding up to the knowledge of future learners and researchers to pursue further research in the related field. Understanding how cohesion functions within the text to create semantic links could be beneficial for students of English as a second or foreign language to help “decode” meaning.

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**Looking at Other People's Garden**

1. 'You can give fool thousand intellects, but the
2. only one he will want is yours,' says an Arabic
3. Proverb. When we start planting the garden of our life,
4. We glance to one side and notice our neighbor is there,
5. Spying. He himself is incapable of growing anything,
6. but he likes to give advice on when to sow actions, when to fertilize thoughts, and when to water
7. Achievements.
8. If we listen to what this neighbor is saying, we will
9. End up working for him, and the garden of our life will
10. Be our neighbor's ideas. We will end up forgetting
11. about the earth we cultivated with so much sweat and
12. Fertilized with so many blessings. We will forget that
13. Each centimeter of earth has its mysteries that only the
14. Patient hand of the gardener can decipher. We will no
15. longer pay attention to the sun, the rain, and the seasons,
16. We will concentrate instead only on that head
17. Peering at us over the hedge.
18. The fool who loves giving advice on our garden
19. Never tends his own plants at all.