

COHESIVE TIES IN CARL SAGAN'S 'PALE BLUE DOT'

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The article focuses on a study of cohesive ties in Modern English. The investigation is based on Carl Sagan's 'Pale Blue Dot' (1994). The priority is given to highlighting the types of reiteration as main means of constructing the said text. We maintain that the specific feature of Carl Sagan's 'Pale Blue Dot' is in intensive usage of lexical cohesive ties. The lexical cohesive ties in the text are of oppositeness, antonymy, synonymy. Collocations function as 'topic holders' and distant repetition conveys leitmotif ideas. Grammatical cohesive ties are used sparingly in places of semantic tension of the text.

Key words: distant reiteration, cohesion, consecutive reiteration, parallel construction, principles of textuality.

Калитюк Л.П.

Когезивні зв'язки у тексті Карла Сагана 'Pale Blue Dot'

На матеріалі тексту Карла Сагана 'Pale Blue Dot' досліджується специфіка використання когезивних засобів сучасної англійської мови. У статті розкрито механізм створення зв'язності та описано типи когезивних зв'язків, причетних до аранжування цього тексту. Встановлено, що основне смислове та архітектонічне навантаження відведено контактним лексичним когезивним зв'язкам: опозитивній, антонімічній, синонімічній реітерації. Дистантна реітерація є лейтмотивною і представляє собою або матеріально тотожний повтор, або колокації. Граматичні когезивні зв'язки (координативні сполучники і паралельні конструкції) виконують другорядну роль.

Ключові слова: дистантні повтори, зв'язність, когезія, принципи текстуальності, реітерація.

Калитюк Л.П.

Когезивные связи в тексте Карла Сагана 'Pale Blue Dot'

На материале текста Карла Сагана 'Pale Blue Dot' раскрыта специфика функционирования когезивных единиц современного английского языка. В статье предпринята попытка выяснить механизм создания связности, описаны типы когезивных связей, привлеченных для аранжировки исследуемого текста. Основная смысловая и архитектурная нагрузка отводится контактными лексическими когезивными связями: опозитивной, антонимической, синонимической реитерации. Дистантная реитерация нами обозначена как лейтмотивная и представляет собой или материально тождественный повтор, или коллокации. Грамматические когезивные связи (сочинительные союзы и параллельные конструкции) выполняют второстепенную роль.

Ключевые слова: дистантные повторы, связность, когезия, принципы текстуальности, реитерация.

Introduction

A text contains specific language units for creating a coherent meaningful communicative product. Cohesion can be regarded to be the principal component of the said resources. In this article cohesion is understood as *the action or fact of forming a united whole* [7, 338], and when viewed purely linguistically, it is one of the seven principles or standards of textuality outlined by R. Beaugrande and W. Dressler (1981), with *coherence, informativity, intentionality, intertextuality, situationality, acceptability* to mention them all [1]. Influenced by the studies conducted by M. Halliday and

R. Hasan, through last four decades, linguists have sought to explain and examine cohesive features of texts [3; 4; 5].

The aim

The aim of this investigation is to identify the scope and character of cohesive means used by guru Carl Sagan in his powerful text 'Pale Blue Dot' (1994).

The theoretical background

According to M. Halliday and R. Hasan (1976), the concept of cohesion is of semantic character [2]. It has to do with the relations of meaning within a text. When the interpretation of some element in the text is dependent on that of another,

a relation of cohesion is set up. The one presupposes the other, and cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. The said elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are integrated into a text. M. Halliday and R. Hasan's interpretation of cohesion is further elaborated by putting forward the notion of a *cohesive tie* viewed as an occurrence of cohesively linked units. Cohesive ties are created in two ways: lexically and grammatically. *Lexical* cohesion is "the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary" [2, 274]. Lexical cohesion includes reiteration (any type of repetition of words). Thus the relation between the two items is a relation by means of repetition, synonymy, or occurrence in the same lexical environment (ibid.). This relation may be: 1) one of oppositeness (*patient / practitioner*), 2) antonymy (*love / hate*), 3) converses (*punishment / sin*), 4) a relation between sets of words, 5) a relation between part-to-whole (*individual, society*), 6) part-to-part (*sin, guilt, crime*), 7) co-hyponyms of the same general class [6]. *Grammatical* cohesion, in its turn, is structurally bound, and five main cohesive ties can be identified: *reference* (cataphoric / anaphoric), *substitution* (nominal, verbal and clausal), *ellipsis* (nominal, verbal, clausal), *conjunction* (coordinating (e.g. 'and', 'or', 'but'), subordinating (e.g. 'because', 'although', 'if'), and *conjunctive adverbs* (e.g.: 'on the other hand', 'nevertheless'), and we add the sixth — parallel constructions to the list. The latter is effectively used by Carl Sagan as will be subsequently shown.

Methods

This investigation is explanatory in nature and follows the research method for the cohesive analysis of a text (M. Halliday and R. Hasan (1976)).

In the text under analysis lexical and grammatical cohesive ties are used unevenly. The sentences *b, c, d*, of the example (1) contain parallel constructions, and fit to the SVA/C pattern, which is closely followed by OVS pattern with *who / that* in deep structure. In doing so Carl Sagan achieves the informative saturation of the message, compressing it into short, abrupt fragments. Then the pace slows down, the series of short sentences is broken and the tension is released by introducing a long sentence, but semantic pressure is still maintained with the help of lexical cohesive ties, e.g. initial *that's* (*b, c, d*), abundant *everyone, ever, every* (*e*). The said repetition of the cohesively linked units is followed by a semantically related pair *lived lives* (*e*). Sentence (*f*) contains a mixture of lexical and grammatical cohesive ties. The coordinating conjunction **and** connects consecutive lexical cohesive ties of various shades of relations ranging in this article in decreasing order: converse (*hunter and forager; mother, father, child*), oppositeness (*hero and coward, inventor and explorer, creator and destroyer; morals — corrupt*), antonymy (*joy and suffering; king and peasant*), relation between words (*religions, ideologies, doctrines*). Semantically related words are repeatedly introduced by *every*

which strengthens the link of the part of the text under investigation. And again there is a distant repetition of the word *lived*. Let's turn our attention to cataphoric — anaphoric relations in the example (1). In *a*) cataphoric *that dot* is explicated by *here, home* (*b, c*) and anaphoric-cataphoric *there* in *f*). Cataphoric *us* is fully detailed in *e, f*):

(1)

a) Look again at that dot.

*b) **That's** here [SVA].*

*c) **That's** home [SVC].*

*d) **That's** us [SVC].*

*e) On **it** everyone you love [OSV], everyone you know [OSV], everyone you ever heard of [OSAV], every human being who ever was, **LIVED** out their **LIVES**.*

*f) The aggregate of our **joy and suffering**, thousands of confident **religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines**, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful **child, inventor and explorer**, every teacher of **morals**, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species **LIVED there** — on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.*

In the example (2) the nature of repetition is slightly different from what we observe in (1). The lexical ties are predominantly based on relations of synonymy (*stage — arena* in *g*); *glory and triumph* (*h*); *generals, emperors, masters* in *h*). There are still sporadic occurrences of lexical repetitions of the same element, e.g. *j*) *inhabitants* or based on antonymy or oppositeness *g*): *small — vast; one — other* the latter are followed either by synonyms (*stage — arena*) or repetition of the same word (*corner*), which to a certain extent smoothes the polarity of the thought expressed. Parallel constructions in the form of initial *Think of* (*h, i*) and *how they / how their* (in *i*) add to the impression of hopeless tiredness (*frequent, endless* in 2 *i*) from absurdity of events happening on Earth. And again there is a drop of the word **KILL**, almost unnoticed (in *i*), but this is a leitmotif marker together with **LIVE** in (1, *i*) and *f*):

(2)

*g) The Earth is a very **small** stage in a **vast** cosmic arena.*

*h) **Think of** the rivers of blood spilled by all those **generals and emperors** so that, in **glory and triumph**, they could become the momentary **masters** of a fraction of a dot.*

*i) **Think of** the **endless** cruelties visited by the **inhabitants** of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable **inhabitants** of some other corner, **how frequent** their misunderstandings, **how** eager they are to **KILL** one another, **how** fervent **their** hatreds.*

Let's turn our attention to example (3), which also differs from (1) and (2). The first thing that meets

the eye is the shift from the 3d person plural pronoun **they / their** in (2) to the 1st person plural **our / us / ourselves** in (3). I think, it is the author's intentional movement from past, distant events to present situation that we bear full responsibility for. The lexical cohesive ties are of part-to-part relations (*posturings, self-importance, privileged position* in (3 j)). Besides there are lexical cohesive ties with implicit semantic relation of antonymy: *point of pale light — vastness* (3 j, l); *lonely speck — great cosmic dark* (3 k):

(3)
j) **Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light.**

k) *Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark.*

l) *In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to **SAVE us** from ourselves.*

The text fragment (4) is constructed on 1) endophoric reference *nowhere else* (4 m)), which extrapolates anaphorically to *vast cosmic arena* (2 g)), *the Universe* (3 j)) and 2) on grammatical cohesive ties (ellipsis in 4 o, p)). The final part of the text (5) is entirely anaphoric: (5 r)) *humbling and character-building*, (5 s)) *folly of human conceits*, (5 t)) *more kindly* refer to fragments (2) and (3). *We, our* (5 t)) anaphorically ties all personal deictics in (1) — (4). And distant repetition of **ever** echoes the fragment (1 e, f)). Cf.:

(4)
m) *The Earth is **the only world** known so far to harbor **LIFE**.*

n) *There is **nowhere else**, at least in the near future, to which **our** species could migrate.*

o) *Visit, yes.*

p) *Settle, not yet.*

q) *Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make **our** stand.*

(5)
r) *It has been said that astronomy is a **humbling and character-building** experience. s) *There is perhaps**

*no better demonstration of the **folly of human conceits** than this distant image of our tiny world.*

t) *To me, it underscores **our** responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only **home** we've ever known.*

The text under analysis contains collocations (the association of one word with another from the preceding text), which are grey colour highlighted:

(1) a) *Look again at that dot.*

f) *a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.*

(2) g) *The Earth a fraction of a dot.*

i) *..... this pixel.*

(3) j) *point of pale light.*

k) *Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark.*

(4) m) *The Earth is the only world*

q) *the Earth*

(5) r) *our tiny world.*

t) *..... the pale blue dot.*

In (1) these collocations are placed to form a frame, embracing the whole fragment like a container filled with the explication, who inhabits that dot. The second example (2) explicates the name of the planet *the Earth* at the very beginning, then at some distance goes *a fraction of a dot* followed distantly by *this pixel*. No frame arrangement observed. In (3 j, k) the collocations are intermediately close adding sense to one another. In (4 m, q)) the distant repetition of *the Earth* + collocations to denote *LIFE* form a kind of frame. And the fragment (5) has a collocation r) *tiny world* and t) *pale blue dot* crowns it all, being distant repetition of (1 a)) and thus presenting a sequence *EARTH* is *HOME* for *LIFE*. The just mentioned notions occur in the text with varying degree of intensity. *EARTH* is the dominant topic, *HOME* and *LIFE* are leitmotif repetition holding the whole text together. Sporadically used *KILL* and *SAVE* semantically relate to *LIFE*.

Conclusions

Carl Sagan's *Pale Blue Dot* is constructed primarily on lexical cohesive ties, grammatical ones are employed only in places of semantic tension, therefore are secondary.

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