

**Cohesion in 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Short Stories Compiled By Jean  
A. McConochie, and Its Contribution to Teach Reading in Senior High School**

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**Abstract:** Five types of cohesive devices are identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), namely, reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Each of the five types is about the formal links within sentences. This qualitative research method describes the kind of cohesive devices employed in 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Short Stories and discusses its implication for developing teaching material for reading skill in Senior High School. The result of the study shows that cohesive devices mostly appeared in the short stories are lexical cohesion followed by references, conjunction, ellipsis and then substitution. The contribution of this research to English education is the cohesive devices can be used as a lesson material for teaching reading both as the example of language use in order to familiarize about the use of pronouns, conjunctions and dictions, also it can be used to show the way to substitute or omit a word meaningfully and as the task students need to accomplish.

**Keywords:** *cohesive devices, reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, lexical cohesion, reading, short stories.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Broadly known, language has to do with propositions that hang together. This means that people perceive language as a whole, that is, it does not occur in isolation. According to Widdowson (1978), sentences are contextually appropriate when they are expressed as a whole. The representation of big whole ideas within sentences requires certain standard of accuracy. In this matter, Beidler (1992: 123) states that lack of unity, cohesion, and organization will be viewed as wandering, disconnected, and chaotic. In this case, the unity is maintained through the use of cohesive devices. Halliday & Hasan (1976) state that cohesion is defined as the set of possibilities that exists in the language for making text hangs together. There are

five types of cohesive devices proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), namely: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion.

Basically, any form of language use, whether spoken or written language, has to do with cohesion. It is used to acknowledge whether the stretch of sentences is related or it is just only jumbled sentences. Therefore, cohesion becomes crucial to be learned in Language Teaching context. In this case, the aims of teaching and learning process are often defined with reference to the four 'language skills', namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing (Widdowson, 1978). From the four language skills, reading plays a dominant role among the

four language skills in the foreign language acquisition.

By means of reading ability, students may understand the learning instruction, texts, and any area of printed materials to support learning. Wallace (1992) says that readers are helped in their interpretation of text by their knowledge of the principles of word formation and cohesion. Therefore, the consideration of teaching materials becomes crucial as learning activities are reflected by learning materials. The learning materials, then, requires the standard accuracy such as grammatical and lexical appropriateness, unity and stylistic effect. One of the written medium can be used is short story. According to Abrams (2009), a short story is interpreted as a brief work of prose fiction, and most of the terms for analyzing the component elements. In this case, possess adequate coherence to make the reader not lose interest from beginning to the end.

Based on the background of study above, the researcher was interested in conducting the research. The objectives of this study are to find out 1). What cohesive devices employed in the compilation of short stories in 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Short Stories; 2). How this compilation can be used as teaching material for teaching reading in Senior High School. It is hoped that the result of this research will give significant contribution to the readers, students, teachers, and other researchers.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The type of the study is qualitative research because this research is relying primarily on the collection of non numerical data such as words and pictures Johnson and Christensen (2000). Meanwhile, the method used in this research is descriptive method. Johnson& Christensen (2012: 584) argues that descriptive research means a study

which is focused on providing an accurate description or picture of the status or characteristics of a situation or phenomenon. By using descriptive qualitative method, then, this researcher explains and describes about cohesion which occurs in the short story.

Due to the use of qualitative research, the data are texts in which sample is chosen based on certain criteria related to research problems. Therefore, the technique of sampling in this research is purposive sampling. According Sutopo (2006), qualitative research does not choose sample randomly, indeed it tends to choose the sample which have related data with the problem being investigated. Particularly, the technique of sampling uses total population sampling. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique that involves examining the entire population (Laerd.2012). Sugiyono (2001:61) states that total population sampling is conducted when the population is typically very small; indeed it is fewer than 30. Because of the compilation only consists of 12 short stories, therefore the data are all the short stories in 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Short Story. The use of all the population is because every short story in the compilation has different characteristics of cohesive devices need to be concerned. The different characteristics are important in order to lead in deeper understanding of cohesive devices and its use.

The process of collecting data are 1). Reading the theory of cohesive devices, 2). Reading the short story to understand the story, 3). Reading the whole story and finding the cohesive devices, 4). Coding the cohesive devices found in the short story. After the data have been collected, the researcher turns to the task of analysing. The analysis of data requires a number of closely

related operations such as establishment of categories, the application of these categories to raw data through coding (Kothari. 2004: 18). The researcher used a technique of data coding in order to make the analysis simpler and easier. The classifications of cohesive devices are: Reference (R), Substitution (S), Ellipsis (E), Conjunction (C), and Lexical Cohesion (L).

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the researcher presents the interpretation of the data. The discussion presented by giving examples taken from the short stories in five parts based on its types.

### 1. References

#### a. Short Story 3

- Example “Here, Unicorn”, said **the man**, and **he** pulled up a lily and gave it to **him** (8)
- Function The word ‘he’ and ‘him’ refer to singular masculine. In the example, he refers to the man as only someone who is capable to pull up and give a flower; on the other hand ‘him’ refers to the unicorn as the object.

#### b. Short Story 4

- Example My mother explained (149). He has a gentle heart, **she** said... (150).
- Function The word ‘she’ refers to singular feminine. In the example, she refers to mother stated previously.

#### c. Short Story 7

- Example Joe, munching one thick biscuit as he led her to the car, found **its** flavor and texture very strange; ... (36).
- Function The word it means singular noun thing, in the

example ‘its’ plus noun is defined as a possession. Therefore, its flavor means the biscuit flavor, that is, ‘its’ refers back to ‘thick biscuit’.

#### d. Short Story 8

- Example I picked an egg up and held **it** in my hand (67).
- Function The word ‘it’ means singular, neutral, mostly used for thing. The example shows that ‘it’ (thing were holding) refers to an egg.

#### e. Short Story 10

- Example Although **the villagers** had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, **they** still remembered to use stones (194).
- Function The word ‘they’ refers to plural noun functioned as a head. In the example, they refer back to the villagers who forgot about the ritual but remembered about the use of stones.

#### f. Short Story 11

- Example Some of you may know **Jackson** (28). **He**’s the oversized sheepdog... (29).
- Function The word ‘he’ means singular masculine functioned as head. Mostly, ‘he’ is used to point people, but in such matter animals can do so. In the example, ‘he’ refers to the dog. The owner called the dog as he indicates she has a good relation with the dog.

#### g. Short Story 12

- Example I’ve always wanted to go up into those hills,

anyway, and **this** gives me an excellent excuse (58)".

Function The word 'this' means something near with the speaker or means idea of the speaker. In the example, 'this' refers to wanted to go up into those hills.

Reference means referring the identity to the immediate context. The examples show that the use of reference deals with the use of same categories and functions. Nevertheless, the use of reference is also influenced by the context in which people's feelings toward something include. As a matter of fact, the correct reference affects into correct interpretation of such texts or it can be said that reference effects readability of such texts. Thus, reference has crucial roles for gaining reading comprehension and reading competency.

## 2. Substitution

### a. Short Story 1

Example She is afraid to speak English, and maybe this is **so** since she only knows eight words (16)

Function The word 'So' substitutes the clausal stated previously 'she is afraid to speak English'.

### b. Short Story 4

Example It wouldn't become stealing until we offered to sell the horse, which of course I knew we would never **do** (37).

Function The verb 'do' substitutes verb, in this example, do substitute sell.

### c. Short Story 7

Example Mrs. Wu, for **so** she introduce herself, left them after wagging her head in amazement that

Mrs.Hattori, so young, (39).

Function The word 'so' is used to substitute attribute, in the example 'so' substitutes the name of the woman, that is, Mrs. Wu.

### d. Short Story 9

Example I had to have a throat culture for her own protection (59). But as soon as he **did** the child let out a scream (69).

Function The word 'did' substitute verb, that is, have a throat culture.

### e. Short Story 11

Example He gets out and about more than I **do** (30).

Function The word 'do' substitutes verb. In the example, do substitute gets out.

### f. Short Story 12

Example Our expedition was a large **one** (5).

Function One substitute expedition.

Substitution is about replacing one item by another that has the same structural functions. Substitution makes possible to decrease such repetition of words, phrases, clauses or sentences. As a means of replacing one item by another, the interpretation needs to relate to the previous sections. Substitution cannot stand by itself but always relates to the immediate ones, therefore cohesive.

## 3. Ellipsis

### a. Short Story 2

Example Are you crazy? (20). **No** (21)

Function The question is answered by direct polarity 'No' without giving further explanation. The omitted item is 'I am not'.

- b. Short Story 4  
 Example ...The horse must go back to its true owner (164).  
**When?** I said (165).  
 Function Only WH- element present in interrogative sentence which should be ‘When will the horse give back to the owner?’.
- c. Short Story 5  
 Example But three of the boys were Negroes and **the fourth** was something else she couldn’t tell for sure (28).  
 Function The sentence 28 tells about the boys, so the omitted word is boys as the three boys have been stated. Therefore, the remains is the forth boys.
- d. Short Story 6  
 Example “She is already (59). Only she doesn’t care about it” (60). “**She will**, when she has taken this (61).  
 Function Sentence 61 only remains S + modal verb, completely, the sentence should be ‘she will care about it’.
- e. Short Story 7  
 Example On one such night Mrs.Hattori confided to Joe, because he was the eldest, “Sometimes I lie awake at night and wish for death... (98)  
 Function The item remains the epithet ‘the eldest’ only. Therefore, the omitted item is the son. Thus, Joe is the eldest son of Mrs. Hattori
- f. Short Story 8  
 Example “Steady”, I say to my father (119).  
 Function Since the sentence is used to warn, mostly it omitted the subject
- g. Short Story 9  
 Example One says to oneself at such times (98). **Others** must be protected against her (99).  
 Function The omitted item for ‘others’ is the noun. In the example, others mean ‘other people’.
- h. Short Story 10  
 Example Open the papers (180). Harry, you open **little Dave’s** (181).  
 Function The omitted item is the possessive thing. It should be little Dave’s paper.
- i. Short Story 12  
 Example And then I noticed something that set the scalp crawling at the back of my neck, something so trivial and so innocent that **many** would never have noticed it at all (108).  
 Function The use of qualifier without noun indicates an ellipsis. The word omitted is geologist group.

Ellipsis means substitution by zero. Rather than replacing a word with another word in the same structural function, ellipsis omits the word. It is mostly used in conversation to make it more effective. Therefore, to interpret such text where there is an ellipsis in it, reader must consider the previous sentences because the item being omitted has always been stated earlier.

#### 4. Conjunction

##### a. Short Story 1

Example she is fat, *or* can’t climb the stairs, *or* is afraid of English (24)

Function Combine sentences by

- giving other alternatives.
- b. Short Story 2  
 Example The street outside, where it was getting dark (3). **But** it was getting dark on the inside too (4).  
 Function Combine sentence by showing the contradiction. **Inside** was dark *but* **outside** was dark too.
- c. Short Story 5  
 Example Samuel had let go of his hold on the chain **so** he could pound Tom as well as Alfred (61).  
 Function The word 'so' indicates the result of something. In the example, as Samuel let go of his hand, he can pound Tom and Alfred then.
- d. Short Story 6  
 Example "**Well-** the fact is" began Alan (10).  
 Function The word 'well' in conversation may used to give time to the speaker to think what he/she wants to say, or it can be used to show uncertainty.
- e. Short Story 7  
 Example **Although** the woman was about Mrs.Hattori's age, she immediately called the latter "mama",...(37)  
 Function The word 'although' means in spite of the fact. In the example, in spite of having the same age, Mrs. Wu still called Mrs. Hattori 'mama'.
- f. Short Story 8  
 Example Neither my father **nor** I spoke (89).  
 Function The conjunction 'nor' is used to introduce another negative statement. In the example, my father and I

- did not speak.
- g. Short Story 10  
 Example "There is Bill, Jr., **and** Nancy, and little Dave. And Tessie **and** me (147).  
 Function The conjunction 'and' means together to or give additional things in the same part of speech, phrases, and clauses.
- h. Short Story 12  
 Example I looked at the shining pyramid **again**, and the more I looked the more remote it seemed from anything that had to do with the Moon (130).  
 Function The word 'again' means repetition. 'Again' in this example means looked at the shining pyramid.

Conjunction is formal links which makes the stretched of sentences may relate one another meaningfully. The presence or absence of conjunction may effect on people interpretation about the text. Readers may get puzzled when sentences are joined but lack of conjunctive expression in it. Therefore, it helps the reader to understand such complex sentences in texts.

#### 5. Lexical cohesion

- a. Short Story 1  
 Example Breakfast, lunch, dinner (s21)  
 Function It is collocation, that is, the word which has correlation in meaning. Breakfast, lunch and dinner have the same relation to the time for having meal.
- b. Short Story 3  
 Example "There's **unicorn** in the garden", he said (3). The **unicorn** was still there; he was now browsing

- among the tulips (7).
- Function The unicorn in sentence 3 and the unicorn in sentence 7 are the same item and the same things so identical reference.
- c. Short Story 5
- Example **The ladies** in the car became very angry when they looked at the four boys (24). **Another lady** thought (31).
- Function The lady being talked about in the sentence 31 is another lady with the ladies in the sentence 24. Therefore, they have exclusive reference though semantically related.
- d. Short Story 6
- Example He had been told to do, and found himself in a tiny room, which contain no **furniture** but **a plain kitchen table, a rocking-chair, and an ordinary chair** (2).
- Function **A plain kitchen table, a rocking-chair, and an ordinary chair** include in superordinate and having the same reference as the old man's room.
- e. Short Story 8
- Example We counted **thirty-seven eggs** (66). I picked **an egg** up and held it in my hand (67).
- Function The egg is the same item. In the example, the egg picked up is one of the thirty-seven eggs thus having inclusive reference.
- f. Short Story 9
- Example But as soon as he did the child let out a **scream** (69). Aren't you ashamed, the mother **yell** at her (85).
- Function Scream and yell are synonym, but both have different reference thus unrelated.
- g. Short Story 12
- Example The only **living things** that had ever existed there were **a few primitive plants** and their slightly less **degenerate ancestors** (54).
- Function **A few primitive plants and degenerate ancestors** include in living things as a general item. Also, they have the same reference, therefore identical.

Lexical cohesion is about the use of words in a text that are semantically related. It can in the form of occurrence of certain words that regularly occur in the same context or it can be in the form of restating explicit item in a text. Both become dominant mode of creating unity. The use of identical/ related dictions in a text helps the reader to identify the topic of the story. For example: the use of thing 'in focus' like by restating the names/ attribute may indicate the focus of the story that lead to find the title of the story.

Taken from the data analysis above, then, the researcher discusses the finding of the interpretation. The finding in this discussion is used to answer the questions in the problem statement, that is, the types of cohesive devices used in the short story. This research focuses on cohesive devices employed in the short story. The researcher analyzed 12 short stories in about 58 pages. Some of them are displayed in the data

analysis above. The cohesive devices are divided into five types according to Halliday and Hasan (1976) taxonomy, these are Reference (R), Substitution (S), Ellipsis (E), Conjunction (C), Lexical Cohesion (L). Those can be presented on the table 1.

pronouns, Yes/No Questions, Conjunction, Synonym/ Antonym, etc. Particularly, the use of short story as an authentic material is useful to exemplify the use of reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion in a real context. For instance:

*Table 1. Data of Cohesive Devices*

No	Kind of Cohesive Devices	∑ Data	Percentage
1.	Reference	1485	37.85%
2.	Substitution	17	0.44%
3.	Ellipsis	33	0.84%
4.	Conjunction	829	21.13%
5.	Lexical cohesion	1559	39.74%
	Total	3923	100%

Based on the data that the researcher analyzed, the representation of such topic in a text should depict the criterion for being unity, that is, by means of structure and meaning. People may understand the meaning of such propositions, nevertheless when the prepositions linked together just so, they need to be acknowledged whether it is meaningfully related or it is only jumbled ones. In this matter, cohesion becomes crucial. Cohesion shows connectedness of the elements in the text. By means of cohesion, stretch of sentences can relate one another meaningfully. It makes continuity to the text so that enables the reader to relate the elements to its better interpretation. Therefore, awareness on cohesion becomes crucial in teaching reading.

As a means of language teaching that has always been devoted to sentences, specifically it can be used as teaching materials when it is purposefully analyzed to develop such tasks in order to improve such language skills. Related to cohesion, that is, the formal links within sentences, texts can be implemented to teach reading skill by focusing on tasks which are related to the use of types of cohesive devices, such as:

At a solemn signal from the psychiatrist, the police leaped from their chairs and seized the wife. ... had a hard time to subduing her, for she put a terrific struggle, but ... finally subdued her.

As the example of students' task taken from the third short story, students are asked to fill-in-the-blank with appropriate pronouns. By means of cohesive devices, then, readers naturally relate sentences grammatically and semantically to understand the content and the meaning of whole texts, thus their reading comprehension can increase.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

There are five types of cohesive devices employed in the short story entitled 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Short Stories. These are reference (37.85%), substitution (0.44%), ellipsis (0.84%), conjunction (21.13%), and lexical cohesion (39.74%). Lexical cohesion is mostly occurred in the short stories, followed by reference, conjunction, ellipsis, and substitution. The analysis has shown that cohesive devices not only help in understanding the structure of the text but also the deep meaning of its



relation. For example, such an analysis reveals that people may use specific reference because of their feelings toward something; people may also use different interrogative expression by using ellipsis or substitution. For the teaching of reading, this is important to be familiarized to the students because the awareness of cohesion will develop ability to relate sentences one another, to understand the content meaningfully, and to get the meaning appropriately, therefore improve reading ability. Further, teachers can use the analysis as teaching materials both as the example of language use and as the task students need to accomplish. It can be used to familiarize about the use of pronouns, conjunctions and the choice of dictions, also it can be used to shows the way people substitute or omit a word meaningfully. Specifically, learners can get the benefits to explore what cohesion is, and how it is used in the real contexts, for example: the use of appropriate pronouns to point such things differently among people. However, when introducing cohesion to the students it is better to

emphasize on one category at a time until the students are familiar with the process and language used.

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