TYPES OF REFERENCE – ACHIEVING COHESION BY CREATING LINKS BETWEEN ELEMENTS

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General considerations on cohesion

In this paper we follow the model of cohesion set up by Halliday and Hasan in 1976 in *Cohesion in English*. According to them, cohesion and coherence can be studied only within a text pointing out that in fact we study the *product* of the process of talking or writing, listening or reading. Generally, we refer to text as a written product because it is easier to notice its structural organization.

The organization of text is both formal and semantic, but it is important to think of it as "an outgoing process of meaning" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 524).

Cohesion studies the textual metafunction of the text which refers to the system of Theme, achieved by marked or unmarked Theme selections, giving prominence to a certain pattern (also known as "method of development", Halliday 1995), e.g chronology and focus on Subject in narrative and biographical discourse, and angle of assessment, e.g. hypothesis in scientific discourse. The textual metafunction develops a set of lexicogrammatical systems which, alongside the semantic and contextual resources, create and interpret a text.

There are four ways by which cohesion is created in English: conjunction, reference, ellipsis and lexical organization. In this paper we are concerned with reference as a relationship between things or facts which may be established at various distances in texts and which can also turn any passage of text into a clause participant.

1. General considerations on textual metafunction

Textual metafunction refers to the resources which mark the textual *status* of a text. "By textual statuses, we mean values assigned to elements of discourse that guide speakers and listeners in processing these elements" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 549). At a level of textual metafunction there is a close semantic relationship between the system of information and the system of Theme, namely between information structure and thematic structure. These two structures have totally different functions within the flow of the text. The Theme represents the point of departure for the information presented further in the text while the New retains this information. The Theme and the New belong to textual structure of the clause; at the same time the textual status (reference and ellipsis) does not. "[…] while an element is marked cohesively as identifiable by means of a grammatical item such as the nominal substitute *they*, or as a continuous by means of a grammatical item such as the nominal substitute *one*, the textual statuses of identifiability and continuity are not structural functions of the clause or of any grammatical unit" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 550).

2. The system of reference

The textual status which concerns the system of reference is that of identifiability. As reference is a semantic relationship, the reference item is not constrained to match the grammatical class of the item it refers to, but it has to match the semantic properties. Reference has semantic properties due to the fact that a conversational element can be identified and recovered or identified by the listener at the relevant point in the discourse with the help of its semantic properties. According to Martin (1992), the core reference paradigm is this:

	[presenting]	[presuming]
[comparison]	a white house	the white house
[-]	a house	the house

"Presenting reference signals that the identity of the participant in question cannot be recovered from the context; presuming reference signals that it can. Presenting reference is strongly associated with first mention and presuming reference categorically associated with second mention" (Martin 1992: 102).

If the element can not be identified, then the listener has to establish it as a new element of meaning in the interpretation of the text.

> e.g. *There was **an old man** standing there. **He** seemed poor, **his** clothes were shabby and **his** shoes torn.*

The new element, the nominal group *an old man*, cannot be identified. After introducing the new element in this way, the nominal group is then identified by means of the personal pronoun *he* and the possessive determiner *his*. These two items, *he* and *his*, are called 'reference items'. In this example, the reference items are pointing backwards to the preceding text.

What we have to notice is that there are two types of references: one which is present in the text and another one which is situational, related to the context ("accompanying text", Halliday and Hasan 1976: 32). Situational reference comes before textual reference, and this is quite clear if we take into account the fact that there is a logical continuity from referring to a thing without mentioning the context of the situation, passing through the reference of a thing as identified in the context of the situation to referring to a thing which is identified in the context of the situation. The situational reference is called *exophoric reference* (pointing outwards to the environment), and the textual reference is called *endophoric reference* (pointing inwards to the text).

Reference to:		**before**	**current**	**after**
environment	exophoric	exophoric		
text	endophoric	anaphoric	reference item	cataphoric

(i) *Exophoric reference* means that the identification of the reference item can be recovered from the environment of the text. This type of reference does not contribute to the cohesion of the text directly, but only indirectly when references to one and the same referent are repeated, forming a chain. Such chains are common in every day conversations with repetitions of references to the participants, like in the dialogue below.

> e.g. *Mother:*   *Jane, **I** must say that **this dress** is out of fashion.*
> *Jane:*   ***It** is too long.*

Mother: **Mine** *is not so beautiful.*
Jane: *Well,* **you** *can have mine.*
Helen: *Take* **the red blouse***, it looks better on you than the dress.*
Jane: **I** *will take* **the dress** *I think.*
Helen: *As you wish…*
Jane: **I** *am sorry.*

I, this dress, mine, you, I, I are exophoric references.

(ii) *Endophoric reference* means that the identity presumed by the reference item can be recovered from within the text itself. As the text unfolds, the participants in a dialogue build up a system of meanings. When a New element is introduced, it becomes part of that system, and if it is correct, it can presume endophoric reference. Endophoric reference can be divided into two categories according to the direction they point to: anaphoric reference and cataphoric reference.

(ii.a) Anaphoric reference is the endophoric reference which points backwards to the unfolding text, to a referent that has already been introduced and, as a result, becomes part of the text's system of meanings. In the example above *it* is anaphoric reference.

Anaphoric reference is very spread in narrative texts where we can find long chains of anaphoric references.

(ii.b) Cataphoric reference is the endophoric reference which points forwards to the unfolding text, e.g. the reference has not been introduced yet. Cataphoric reference appears less often than the anaphoric one. Cataphoric reference is used for introducing a person into the text (example 1) or to anticipate a passage of text (example 2):

e.g. *While I was waiting for my friend in front of the house I lived in,* **a strange man** *passed by me and said "Hello" to me.*

Honestly speaking, the issue was **this***: no one wanted to assume his responsibility regarding pre-school education.*

Eggins (1996: 97) identifies one more type of endophoric reference: esphoric, when the referent occurs in the phrase immediately following the presuming referent item (within the same nominal group, not in a separate clause)

e.g. *I had to pick her up from* **the** *school she was teaching.*

The definite article *the* tells us what we know about the school (it is a presuming referent item). Instead of needing to look back in the text to find references about the school we are immediately told something about it, that it is the school where *she was teaching*.

As we have mentioned above, exophora and endophora have different directions of pointing, either to referents outside the text, or to referents introduced in the text before or after the reference expression. All such expressions have in common the fact that they presuppose referents, but they differ in the type the reference which can be the same (co-reference) or another reference of the same class (comparative reference).

Co-reference can be divided into two types: *personal reference* and *demonstrative reference*.

(i) *Personal reference* is expressed by a nominal group which can function as Head or pre-modifier. The types of pronouns are: personal pronouns which can function as Thing/Head and possessive pronouns which can function as Head or Deictic/ pre-modifier.

e.g. *There was* **an old man** *standing there.* **He** *seemed poor.* (Thing/Head)
There was **an old man** *standing there.* **H**is *clothes were shabby and* **his** *shoes torn.*
(Deictic, conflated with either Head or Pre-modifier)

The Deictic element indicates whether or not some specific subset of the Thing is intended. The nature of the Deictic is determined by the system of Determination. The primary distinction is between specific and non-specific.

Specific Deictics are demonstrative or possessive determiners or embedded possessive nominal groups. This type has one or two deictic features: either by reference to some kind of proximity to the speaker (*this, these* = 'near me'; *that/those* = 'not near me') or by reference to person as defined from the speaker's position (*my, you, his, her, our, their* or *mother's*, etc) together with the possibility of an interrogative in both these categories (demonstrative *which?*, possessive *whose?*). All these have the function of identifying a type of 'thing' that is referred to.

Non-specific Deictics can be total or partial determiners. "They convey the sense of all, or none, or some unspecified sub-set" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 314), e.g. *Both children are sick, is there any child in the house? Some children are sick, I haven't seen any children here.*

We should point out the fact that there are two different systems of number in the English nominal group, one associated for each type of Deictics:

(a) with specific Deictics, the system of number is non-plural/ plural. Mass nouns are grouped together with singular, in the non-plural category. As a result, *this, that* go with non-plural, and *these, those* with plural.

(b) with non-specific Deictics, the system is singular/non-singular; mass nouns are grouped together with plural, in a category of non-singular. As a result, *a, an* go with singular, *some* goes with non-singular (mass or plural).

If there is no Deictic element, the nominal group is non-specific and non-singular. In other words, a nominal group may have no Deictic element in its structure, but anyway it has Deictic value in its system.

(ii) *Demonstrative references*

Demonstrative reference items create co-reference in terms of the category of person. The demonstrative reference items *this/ that, these/ those* may be either exophoric or anaphoric; according to Halliday (2004) they retain a stronger deictic feature than the personal pronouns:

e.g.   *I will give you **this** one.*
    *We have to take **this** decision today.*   (exophoric)
        *Although he won the gold medal not everyone was convinced that **this** award was deserved.*   (endophoric: anaphoric)
        *I am not sure if **these** issues regarding education and health system should be taken into account at this meeting.*   (endophoric: cataphoric)

This and *that* express proximity, referring to something that is near to the speaker and not near to the listener.

Halliday (2003) considers that the definite article *the* can also be considered a particular kind of demonstrative reference item, taking the 'unmarked' feature of *that*.

e.g.   *The accident happened to the village road.*
    This is the girl I met at the party.

In the first example we know which accident *the* refers to, even if we weren't there. In the second example we know what girl is being referred to, because we are told that it is the one I met at the party. We can then conclude that *the* has a specifying function, signaling an identity we already know. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between *the* and the demonstratives. The demonstratives state how the identity is to be established:

e.g.   *my child* means *the child I have*
    this child means *the child who goes to school with my child*

We should notice that *the* signals only the specificity of an entity without telling us anything about this specificity.

(iii) *Comparative references*

Comparative reference items build a relation of contrast. Comparative reference signals 'you know which'. Comparative is realized through Post-Deictics (which precede Numerals if they exist), Numeratives and Epithets (which follow Numerals if they exist) in nominal groups (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 76).

> e.g.   Post-deictic: *another, different, similar*
>   Numerative: *more, fewer, less, equally + quantifier*
>   Epithet: *same, different,*
>   *similarly/ equal + adjective*

Comparison can also be realized through comparative Attributes in intensive attributive relational clauses (Halliday 1985: 115)

> e.g.   *This one*   *was*   *bigger.*
>   Carrier   Process   Attribute

Taking the above considerations into account, we can observe that the comparison system is simultaneous with the options [presenting/ presuming] and [generic/ specific]. Where both types of reference are selected, the superset reference will come in front position, isolating a participant from its whole class of similar participants; e.g. *the biggest whiter building*. There can be a number of *whiter buildings*, but there cannot be more than one *biggest* building. This is the reason why we can not say **the whiter biggest building*.

3. Conclusions

Because reference is regarded as a relationship between things or facts which may be established at various distances in texts and which can also turn any passage of text into a clause participant, the best way to capture reference patterns in a text is a chart which graphically represents *reference chains* (Martin 1992: 140). The reference patterns of a text, displayed in reference chains, can tell us: which participants are the major ones; if there is any consistency in the participants, if these participants change during the story; if the text is highly cohesive (with mostly endophoric reference) or to what context the reference items depend on the text itself (with mostly exophoric reference). What is common to all these aspects is the fact that all of them tell us about the *textual* meanings being realized in the text. Thus we can recognize a link between the discourse domain of reference and the semantics of the text. This link has two different aspects: one at the text level and the other at the semantic level.

The types of reference patterns are different according to the way the text was constructed. Spoken texts which involve a face-to-face communication will contain mostly exophoric reference. Written texts will contain mostly endophoric reference, with esphoric reference as a common type.

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