Cohesion in Writing

Creating cohesion means ‘tying’ our words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs together, to create a text where the relationships between these elements is clear and logical to the reader, giving the text ‘flow’. We create cohesion at all these levels (word, phrase, sentence and paragraph), in order to direct our readers’ attention to the development of our argument. Following are some of the cohesive tools you can make use of.

**Repetition:** use a particular word or phrase across different sentences or paragraphs, e.g. Of course, *materials development* or adaptation is not the only priority for the professions in South Africa. However, the focus on *materials development* is appealing because it provides a very tangible and practical focus for speech and language therapists (Pascoe et al., 2013).

**Synonyms:** use a word or phrase in a later sentence which has the same or similar meaning to a keyword in the first sentence, e.g. The purpose of *population genetics* is to quantify and explain the processes generating variation in natural populations (Vargo & Husseneder, 2011). *Sociogenetic studies* of eusocial insects are generally based on the approach that the colony functions as a discrete entity within the population (Thorne et al., 1999).

**Pronouns:** use a pronoun to refer back to a phrase already used, e.g. When *scientific experiments* do not work out as expected, *they* are often considered failures until some other scientist tries *them* again. *Those* that work out better the second time around are the ones that promise the most rewards.

**Cohesive Words and Phrases**

1. **Additive words**
   Also, and, as well as, at the same time as, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, too, not only... but also.

2. **Amplification words**
   As, for example, for instance, in fact, specifically, such as, that is, to illustrate

3. **Repetitive words**
   Again, in other words, that is, to repeat

4. **Contrast words**
   But, conversely, despite, even though, however, in contrast, notwithstanding, on the one hand / on the other hand, still, although, though, whereas, yet, nevertheless, on the contrary, in spite of this

5. **Cause and effect words**
   Accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this reason, since, as, so, then, therefore, thus

6. **Qualifying words**
   Although, if, even, therefore, unless

7. **Example**
   For example, for instance
8. **Emphasising words**
   Above all, more/most importantly

9. **Reason words**
   For this reason, owing to this, therefore

10. **Order words**
    Afterwards, at the same time, before, firstly/secondly, formerly, lastly, finally, later, meanwhile, next, now, presently, today/yesterday/last week/next year, subsequently, then, until, ultimately, while, historically, in the end, eventually

11. **Explanation**
    In other words, that is to say

12. **Attitude**
    Naturally, of course, certainly, strangely enough, surprisingly, fortunately, unfortunately, admittedly, undoubtedly

13. **Summary**
    Finally, in conclusion, in short, to summarise

**Remember:** Cohesive writing refers to the connection of your ideas both at the sentence level and at the paragraph level. **Cohesion** is a very important aspect of academic writing, because it affects the tone of your writing. Here are some **examples** that illustrate the importance of connecting your ideas more effectively in writing:

The hotel is famous. It is one of the most well-known hotels in the country. The latest international dancing competition was held at the hotel. The hotel spent a lot of money to advertise the event. Because the hotel wanted to gain international reputation. But not many people attended the event. *(The connection of ideas is not very good.)*

The hotel, which is one of the most well-known hotels in this region, wanted to promote its image around the world by hosting the latest international dancing competition. Although the event was widely advertised, not many people participated in the competition. *(The connection of ideas is better than in the first example.)*

The latest international dancing competition was held at the hotel, which is one of the most well-known hotels in this region. The hotel spent a lot of money on advertising the event since it wanted to enhance its international reputation; however, it failed to attract many people. *(The connection of ideas is better than in the first example.)*

**Adapted from:** Young-Kyung Min, 2015. Coherence and cohesion. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.bothell.washington.edu/wacc/for-students/eslhandbook/coherence

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