DBB 408 TRANSLATION STUDIES IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Textual equivalence: Cohesion

- Every language has its own battery of devices for creating links between textual elements.

- The grammatical system of each language will itself encourage the use of certain devices in preference to others.

- «The topic of cohesion . . . has always appeared to me the most useful constituent of discourse analysis or text linguistics applicable to translation.»

(Newmark, 1987: 295)

What is cohesion?

- **Cohesion** is the network of lexical, grammatical and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text.

- These relations or ties organize and, to some extent create a text, for instance by requiring the reader to interpret words and expressions by reference to other words and expressions in the surrounding sentences and paragraphs.

- **Cohesion** is a surface relation; it connects together the actual words and expressions that we can see or hear.

- The model outlined by **Halliday and Hasan in *Cohesion in English* (1976).**

- Halliday and Hasan identify five main cohesive devices in English: **reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction,** and **lexical cohesion.**

- -Reference

- -Substitution and ellipsis

- -Conjunction

- -Lexical cohesion

1. Reference

- The term **reference** is traditionally used in semantics for the relationship which holds between a word and what it points to in the real world.

- The reference of *chair* would therefore be a particular chair that is being identified on a particular occasion.

- In Halliday and Hasan's model of cohesion, reference is used in a similar but more restricted way. Reference is limited here to the relationship of identity which holds between two linguistic expressions.

- **Mrs Thatcher** has resigned. **She** announced her decision this morning.

- the pronoun *she* points to **Mrs Thatcher** within the textual world itself.

- Every language has certain items which have the property of reference in the textual sense. These reference items have the potential for directing the reader to look elsewhere for their interpretation.

- The most common reference items in English and a large number of other languages are **pronouns.** Third person pronouns are frequently used to refer back (and occasionally forward) to an entity which has already been introduced (or is about to be introduced) into the discourse. Apart from personal reference, English also uses items such as *the, this,* and *those* to establish similar links between expressions in a text.

- Mrs Thatcher has resigned. **This** delighted her opponents.

- The reader has to go back to the previous stretch of discourse to establish what ***This*** refers to.

- So, reference is a device which allows the reader/hearer to trace participants, entities, events, etc. in a text.

- One of the most common patterns of establishing chains of reference in English and a number of other languages is to mention a participant explicitly in the first instance, for example by name or title, and then use a pronoun to refer back to the same participant in the immediate context.

- The following example, from Agatha Christie's ***Triangle at Rhodes***, illustrates networks of personal reference in a short paragraph:

Hercule Poirot sat on the white sand and looked out across the sparkling blue water. **He** was carefully dressed in a dandified fashion in white flannels and a large panama hat protected **his** head. **He** belonged to the old-fashioned *generation* which believed in covering *itself* carefully from the sun. **Miss Pamela Lyall,** who sat beside **him** and talked carelessly, represented the modern school of thought in that **she** was wearing the barest minimum of clothing on **her** sun-browned person.

(Christie, 1936: 196)

➥ There is a continuum of cohesive elements that may be used for referring back to an entity already mentioned in the discourse.

➥ **There's a boy climbing that tree.**
a. *The **boy**'s going to fall if he doesn't take care. (**repetition**)
b. *The **lad**'s going to fall if he doesn't take care. (**synonym**)
c. *The **child**'s going to fall if he doesn't take care. (**superordinate**)
d. ***He**'s going to fall if he doesn't take care. (**pronominal reference**)

➥ **Example:** Callow (1974) explains that **Hebrew,** unlike English, prefers to use **proper names** to trace participants through a discourse. So, where English would normally use a pronoun to refer to a participant who has already been introduced, provided there is no possibility of confusing reference, **Hebrew** is more likely to repeat the participant's name.

- Unlike English, which tends to rely heavily on pronominal reference in tracing participants, **Brazilian Portuguese** generally seems to favour more lexical repetition.

- The following example is from an article on **Akio Morita, Chairman of the Sony Corporation.** The article was published in the English and Portuguese editions of *Playboy* magazine.

English text:

Surrounded by the toys and the gadgets of <u>his</u> calling – tape recorders, mini television sets, world-band radios – <u>he</u> is the quintessential Japanese combination that has conquered the world: a tinkerer turned businessman.

As the <u>eldest son</u> of a wealthy sake and soy-sauce producer in conservative Nagoya, <u>he</u> was expected to take over the family business – and perhaps become the 15th generation of Morita Mayors in the local community. Instead, <u>he</u> spent <u>his</u> time taking apart clocks and listening to Western classical music and preferred the study of physics to business. During World War Two, <u>he</u> went into naval research as a lieutenant, working on a thermal-guided missile and other projects, and it was there that <u>he</u> met <u>his</u> future partner, Ibuka. After the war, the two set up a business after a false start in the home-appliance market – manufacturing rice cookers. Total production: 100. Total sales: 0.

Portuguese Text:

Produto de uma cultura que valoriza a sutileza e as maneiras indiretas, **Morita**, com **seu** jeito franco, é a ponte ideal entre o Japão e o Ocidente.

Filho mais velho de um próspero produtor de óleo de soja e de saquê, em Nagoya, os pais de **Morita** esperavam que **ele** assumisse o controle dos negócios da famlia. Ao invés disso, **Morita** passava o tempo desmontando relógios, ouvindo música clássica ocidental e preferindo estudar Fisica a **se** meter em negócios. Durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial dedicou-**se** à pesquisa naval, como civil, e foi nessa época que fez a sociedade numa fábrica de panelas de cozinhar arroz. Produção total: 100 panelas. Total de vendas: 0.

- In some languages, such as Japanese and Chinese, a totally different pattern seems to be in operation. Pronouns are hardly ever used and, once a participant is introduced, continuity of reference is signalled by omitting the subjects of following clauses. The reader has to supply all the missing subjects and create his/her own chains of reference.

2. Substitution and Ellipsis

- Unlike reference, substitution and ellipsis are grammatical rather than semantic relationships.

- In **substitution,** an item (or items) is replaced by another item (or items):

- -I **like movies.**
  -I **do** too.

- In the above example, **do** is a substitute for **like movies**. Items commonly used in substitution in English include **do, one,** and **the same.**

- You think Joan already **knows**? – I think everybody **does**. (**Does replaces knows**).

- My **axe** is too blunt. I must get a sharper **one**. (**One replaces axe**).

- A: I'll have **two poached eggs on toast**, please.
  B: I'll have *the same*. (**The same** replaces **two poached eggs on toast**).

- **Ellipsis** involves the omission of an item. In other words, in ellipsis, an item is replaced by nothing. This is a case of leaving something unsaid which is nevertheless understood.

- Joan **brought** some carnations, and Catherine some sweet peas. (ellipted item: *brought* in second clause).

- Here are **thirteen cards.** Take any. Now give me any three, (ellipted items: *card* after *any* in second clause and *cards* after *any three* in third clause).

- **Have you been swimming?** – Yes, I have, (ellipted items: *been swimming* in second clause).

(Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 143; 158; 167)

- The boundary lines between the three types of cohesive device **(reference, substitution, and ellipsis)** are not clear cut.

- A question such as ***Does Agatha sing in the bath?*** May elicit two answers, of which answer (a) is an example of substitution and answer (b) of reference:

- **(a.) No, but I do.**
  (b.) Yes, she does it to annoy us, I think.