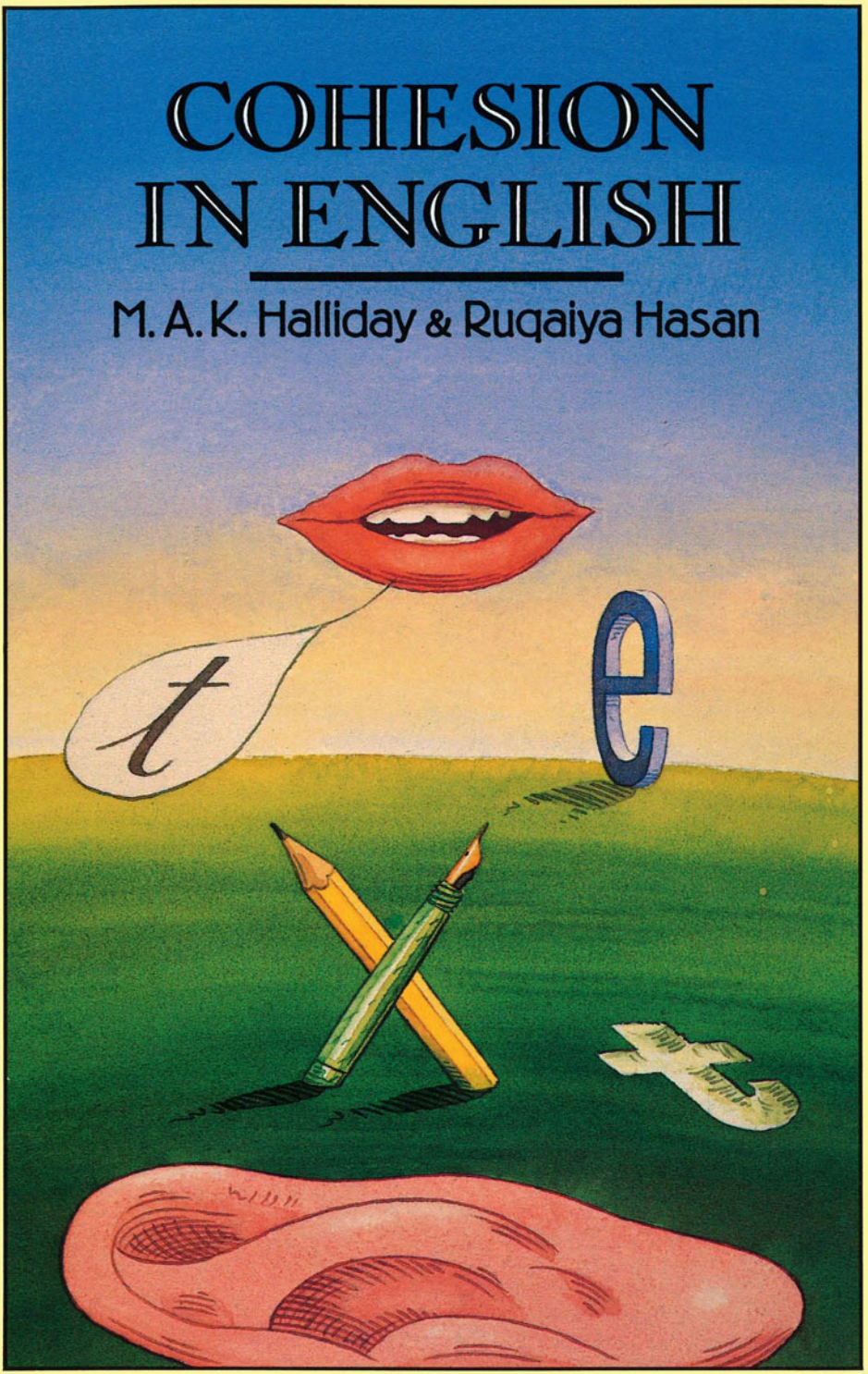
COHESION IN ENGLISH

M. A. K. Halliday & Ruqaiya Hasan



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Cohesion in English

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Foreword

Throughout more than a century of outstanding progress in linguistics – and especially from the time of the *Junggrammatiker* – the most impressive and apparently most abiding successes have been in work at the elemental end of language structure: the description and relation of phonological units. Nor, when they were pressed into reluctant service, did the categories and insights evolved for phonology get us far in explicating linguistic organization at other 'levels', the morphological and syntactic. Moreover, even in the fruitful renaissance of syntactic studies during the third quarter of this century, work has been virtually confined to relations within the sentence. This limitation, though to some extent vigorously defended on theoretical grounds, has not in general been because no relevance to linguistic structure was seen in the relations between sentences, in the connections which resulted in the impression of well-formed paragraphs or longer stretches of discourse. But as with semantics – another and indeed closely related area which linguists have hesitated to enter, often justifying their dissociation on closely-argued theoretical grounds – it was not unreasonably held that relations 'beyond the sentence' involved a complex interplay of linguistics with other concerns such as rhetoric, aesthetics, and pragmatics, for which the theoretical foundations and framework were too shaky to support ambitious model building. And that in any case linguists had enough on hand to get their sentential house furnished.

Meanwhile, literary critics (for whom of course text structure has been a traditional concern) and social anthropologists (for whom text and tale constitute fundamental evidence) began themselves to look at the constructs evolved by de Saussure, the Prague School, and other linguists. One thinks for example of Lévi-Strauss, Dell Hymes, Roland Barthes, as outstanding exponents of structuralism in broad-scale textual analysis. And among linguists, there have always been those who have persisted in the

venture to subserve literary and other humanistic disciplines by extending their work to embrace stylistics and other aspects of textual studies. In this movement, Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan have long been especially active. The prose of Golding and the verse of Yeats are among the material subjected to valued linguistic scrutiny by the former, while the latter has made 'cohesion' her special field, beginning with a doctoral dissertation at the University of Edinburgh and continuing with influential papers while she worked for several fruitful years in the Communication Research Centre at University College London. During the whole of this period, the two authors have worked in close cooperation and mutual influence, acutely aware of areas in English studies of profound interest for both linguists and critics but rigorously explored to a large extent by neither.

We are singularly fortunate that we are able to correct some of these grave deficiencies in the description of English with the work of so uniquely equipped a team. As English has increasingly come into world-wide use, there has arisen a correspondingly increasing need for more information on the language and the ways in which it is used. The English Language Series seeks to meet this need and to play a part in further stimulating the study and teaching of English by providing up-to-date and scholarly treatments of topics most relevant to present-day English – including its history and traditions, its sound patterns, its grammar, its lexicology, its rich variety and complexity in speech and writing, and its standards in Britain, the USA, and the other principal areas where the language is used.

University College London
May 1975

RANDOLPH QUIRK

Preface

This book originated as one of a series of studies of the English language and modern English texts which were undertaken by the *Nuffield Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching* at University College London. The aim of these studies was to provide an account of aspects of contemporary English which would be both founded on theory and also applicable in practice: a description of the system, but one which, since it was based on evidence from texts of different varieties, including both spoken and written, would be useful in application to further text studies.

A relatively neglected aspect of the linguistic system is its resources for text construction, the range of meanings that are specifically associated with relating what is being said or written to its semantic environment. The principal component of these resources is that of cohesion. Cohesive relations are relations between two or more elements in a text that are independent of the structure; for example between a personal pronoun and an antecedent proper name, such as *John . . . he*. A semantic relation of this kind may be set up either within a sentence or between sentences; with the consequence that, when it crosses a sentence boundary, it has the effect of making the two sentences cohere with one another. The various kinds of cohesion had been outlined by M. A. K. Halliday in his writings on stylistics, and the concept was developed by Ruqaiya Hasan in her University of Edinburgh doctoral thesis.

The earlier chapters of this book were first published as *Grammatical Cohesion in Spoken and Written English, Part I*, by Ruqaiya Hasan, Communication Research Centre (University College London) and Longmans, Green & Co, *Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching: Papers*, No. 7, 1968. This contained Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in their original form. The later chapters were written in collaboration by Ruqaiya Hasan and M. A. K. Halliday, and were prepared for publication in the follow-up series (*Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching: Papers*

Series II). However, instead of issuing this part separately, it was decided to revise the earlier chapters and to publish the two halves together as a book. The revision was undertaken by M. A. K. Halliday, who also added the last two chapters.

We should like to express our gratitude to several individuals and institutions for their cooperation and help. The Nuffield Foundation financed the original project within which the earlier part of the work was written. The Schools Council financed the successor project (*Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching*, 1967–71); although the later part was not written directly under their auspices, since Ruqaiya Hasan had by then left the team, it had been planned to publish it in the series of papers emanating from this project, and we are grateful to them for allowing it to be withdrawn and published in its present revised form. The final version was written by M. A. K. Halliday during his tenure of a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California, and we are most grateful to the Center for providing this opportunity.

We wish to thank Stephen Lushington, General Editor of the *Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching: Papers Series II*, and a former colleague in the project, for his valuable help and comments throughout the preparation of the original manuscript. Other members of the Nuffield team – Kenneth Albrow, Eirian Davies, Peter Doughty, David Mackay and Brian Thompson – provided stimulating discussion, as did our colleagues on another related research project, Rodney Huddleston, Richard Hudson and Eugene Winter. To Marcia Insel we express our appreciation for her research and bibliographical assistance during the final revision. Students at the Linguistic Society of America's Linguistic Institute, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in summer 1973, made numerous helpful observations in the context of a course based on this material.

We much appreciate the interest shown by Randolph Quirk, friend, former colleague, and General Editor of the present series; and would like to take this opportunity of referring to the debt owed by everyone in the field of contemporary English to the work done by him and by his colleagues at the Survey of English Usage. Finally we thank the many people who have kindly enquired after the progress of the book. Their continuing concern has been a most valuable source of encouragement.

University of Essex MAKH
May 1975 RH

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The concept of cohesion

1.1.1 Text

If a speaker of English hears or reads a passage of the language which is more than one sentence in length, he can normally decide without difficulty whether it forms a unified whole or is just a collection of unrelated sentences. This book is about what makes the difference between the two.

The word TEXT is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole. We know, as a general rule, whether any specimen of our own language constitutes a TEXT or not. This does not mean there can never be any uncertainty. The distinction between a text and a collection of unrelated sentences is in the last resort a matter of degree, and there may always be instances about which we are uncertain – a point that is probably familiar to most teachers from reading their students' compositions. But this does not invalidate the general observation that we are sensitive to the distinction between what is text and what is not.

This suggests that there are objective factors involved – there must be certain features which are characteristic of texts and not found otherwise; and so there are. We shall attempt to identify these, in order to establish what are the properties of texts in English, and what it is that distinguishes a text from a disconnected sequence of sentences. As always in linguistic description, we shall be discussing things that the native speaker of the language 'knows' already – but without knowing that he knows them.

A text may be spoken or written, prose or verse, dialogue or monologue. It may be anything from a single proverb to a whole play, from a momentary cry for help to an all-day discussion on a committee.

A text is a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence; and it is not defined by its size. A text is sometimes

envisaged to be some kind of super-sentence, a grammatical unit that is larger than a sentence but is related to a sentence in the same way that a sentence is related to a clause, a clause to a group and so on: by CONSTITUENCY, the composition of larger units out of smaller ones. But this is misleading. A text is not something that is like a sentence, only bigger; it is something that differs from a sentence in kind.

A text is best regarded as a SEMANTIC unit: a unit not of form but of meaning. Thus it is related to a clause or sentence not by size but by REALIZATION, the coding of one symbolic system in another. A text does not CONSIST OF sentences; it is REALIZED BY, or encoded in, sentences. If we understand it in this way, we shall not expect to find the same kind of STRUCTURAL integration among the parts of a text as we find among the parts of a sentence or clause. The unity of a text is a unity of a different kind.

1.1.2 Texture

The concept of TEXTURE is entirely appropriate to express the property of 'being a text'. A text has texture, and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text. It derives this texture from the fact that it functions as a unity with respect to its environment.

What we are investigating in this book are the resources that English has for creating texture. If a passage of English containing more than one sentence is perceived as a text, there will be certain linguistic features present in that passage which can be identified as contributing to its total unity and giving it texture.

Let us start with a simple and trivial example. Suppose we find the following instructions in the cookery book:

[1:1] Wash and core six cooking apples. Put them into a fireproof dish.

It is clear that *them* in the second sentence refers back to (is ANAPHORIC to) the *six cooking apples* in the first sentence. This ANAPHORIC function of *them* gives cohesion to the two sentences, so that we interpret them as a whole; the two sentences together constitute a text. Or rather, they form part of the same text; there may be more of it to follow.

The texture is provided by the cohesive RELATION that exists between *them* and *six cooking apples*. It is important to make this point, because we shall be constantly focusing attention on the items, such as *them*, which typically refer back to something that has gone before; but the cohesion is effected not by the presence of the referring item alone but by the presence

of both the referring item and the item that it refers to. In other words, it is not enough that there should be a presupposition; the presupposition must also be satisfied. This accounts for the humorous effect produced by the radio comedian who began his act with the sentence

[1:2] So we pushed him under the other one.

This sentence is loaded with presuppositions, located in the words *so*, *him*, *other* and *one*, and, since it was the opening sentence, none of them could be resolved.

What is the MEANING of the cohesive relation between *them* and *six cooking apples?* The meaning is that they refer to the same thing. The two items are identical in reference, or COREFERENTIAL. The cohesive agency in this instance, that which provides the texture, is the coreferentiality of *them* and *six cooking apples*. The signal, or the expression, of this coreferentiality is the presence of the potentially anaphoric item *them* in the second sentence together with a potential target item *six cooking apples* in the first.

Identity of reference is not the only meaning relation that contributes to texture; there are others besides. Nor is the use of a pronoun the only way of expressing identity of reference. We could have had:

[1:3] Wash and core six cooking apples. Put the apples into a fireproof dish.

Here the item functioning cohesively is *the apples*, which works by repetition of the word *apples* accompanied by *the* as an anaphoric signal. One of the functions of the definite article is to signal identity of reference with something that has gone before. (Since this has sometimes been said to be its only function, we should perhaps point out that it has others as well, which are not cohesive at all; for example none of the instances in (a) or (b) has an anaphoric sense:

[1:4] a. None but the brave deserve the fair.
b. The pain in my head cannot stifle the pain in my heart.

For the meaning of *the*, see 2.4.2 below.)

1.1.3 Ties

We need a term to refer to a single instance of cohesion, a term for one occurrence of a pair of cohesively related items. This we shall call a TIE. The relation between *them* and *six cooking apples* in example [1:1] constitutes a tie.

We can characterize any segment of a text in terms of the number and

kinds of ties which it displays. In [1:1] there is just one tie, of the particular kind which we shall be calling REFERENCE (Chapter 2). In [1:3], there are actually two ties, of which one is of the 'reference' kind, and consists in the anaphoric relation of *the* to *six cooking apples*, while the other is of a different kind and consists in the REPETITION of the word *apples*, a repetition which would still have a cohesive effect even if the two were not referring to the same apples. This latter type of cohesion is discussed in Chapter 6.

The concept of a tie makes it possible to analyse a text in terms of its cohesive properties, and give a systematic account of its patterns of texture. Some specimen analyses are given in Chapter 8. Various types of question can be investigated in this way, for example concerning the difference between speech and writing, the relationship between cohesion and the organization of written texts into sentences and paragraphs, and the possible differences among different genres and different authors in the numbers and kinds of tie they typically employ.

The different kinds of cohesive tie provide the main chapter divisions of the book. They are: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. A preliminary definition of these categories is given later in the Introduction (1.2.4); each of these concepts is then discussed more fully in the chapter in question.

1.1.4 Cohesion

The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text.

Cohesion occurs where the INTERPRETATION of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one PRESUPPOSES the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text.

This is another way of approaching the notion of a tie. To return to example [1:1], the word *them* presupposes for its interpretation something other than itself. This requirement is met by the *six cooking apples* in the preceding sentence. The presupposition, and the fact that it is resolved, provide cohesion between the two sentences, and in so doing create text.

As another example, consider the old piece of schoolboy humour:

[1:5] Time flies.
– You can't; they fly too quickly.

The first sentence gives no indication of not being a complete text; in fact it usually is, and the humour lies in the misinterpretation that is required if the presupposition from the second sentence is to be satisfied. Here, incidentally, the cohesion is expressed in no less than three ties: the elliptical form *you can't* (Chapter 4), the reference item *they* (Chapter 2) and the lexical repetition *fly* (Chapter 6).

Cohesion is part of the system of a language. The potential for cohesion lies in the systematic resources of reference, ellipsis and so on that are built into the language itself. The actualization of cohesion in any given instance, however, depends not merely on the selection of some option from within these resources, but also on the presence of some other element which resolves the presupposition that this sets up. It is obvious that the selection of the word *apples* has no cohesive force by itself; a cohesive relation is set up only if the same word, or a word related to it such as *fruit* (see Chapter 6), has occurred previously. It is less obvious, but equally true, that the word *them* has no cohesive force either unless there is some explicit referent for it within reach. In both instances, the cohesion lies in the relation that is set up between the two.

Like other semantic relations, cohesion is expressed through the stratal organization of language. Language can be explained as a multiple coding system comprising three levels of coding, or 'strata': the semantic (meanings), the lexicogrammatical (forms) and the phonological and orthographic (expressions). Meanings are realized (coded) as forms, and forms are realized in turn (recoded) as expressions. To put this in everyday terminology, meaning is put into wording, and wording into sound or writing:

meaning	(the semantic system)
↘	
wording	(the lexicogrammatical system, grammar and vocabulary)
↘	
'sounding'/writing	(the phonological and orthographic systems)

The popular term 'wording' refers to lexicogrammatical form, the choice of words and grammatical structures. Within this stratum, there is no hard-and-fast division between vocabulary and grammar; the guiding principle in language is that the more general meanings are expressed through the grammar, and the more specific meanings through the vocabulary. Cohesive relations fit into the same overall pattern. Cohesion is expressed partly through the grammar and partly through the vocabulary.

We can refer therefore to GRAMMATICAL COHESION and LEXICAL COHESION. In example [1:3], one of the ties was grammatical (reference, expressed by *the*), the other lexical (reiteration, expressed by *apples*). The types of cohesion dealt with in Chapters 2–4 (reference, substitution and ellipsis) are grammatical; that in Chapter 6 is lexical. That dealt with in Chapter 5 (conjunction) is on the borderline of the two; mainly grammatical, but with a lexical component in it. The distinction between grammatical and lexical is really only one of degree, and we need not make too much of it here. It is important to stress, however, that when we talk of cohesion as being 'grammatical or lexical', we do not imply that it is a purely formal relation, in which meaning is not involved. Cohesion is a semantic relation. But, like all components of the semantic system, it is realized through the lexicogrammatical system; and it is at this point that the distinction can be drawn. Some forms of cohesion are realized through the grammar and others through the vocabulary.

We might add as a footnote here that certain types of grammatical cohesion are in their turn expressed through the intonation system, in spoken English. For example, in

[1:6] Did I hurt your feelings? I didn't mean to.

the second sentence coheres not only by ellipsis, with *I didn't mean to* presupposing *hurt your feelings*, but also by conjunction, the adversative meaning 'but' being expressed by the tone. Phonologically this would be:

//.2. did I / hurt your / FEELINGS // *4* ∧ I / didn't / MEAN / to //

the second sentence having the rising-falling tone 4. For an explanation of the intonation system, see section 5.4 and the references cited there.

1.2 Cohesion and linguistic structure

1.2.1 Texture and structure

A text, as we have said, is not a structural unit; and cohesion, in the sense in which we are using the term, is not a structural relation. Whatever relation there is among the parts of a text – the sentences, or paragraphs, or turns in a dialogue – it is not the same as structure in the usual sense, the relation which links the parts of a sentence or a clause.

Structure is, of course, a unifying relation. The parts of a sentence or a clause obviously 'cohere' with each other, by virtue of the structure. Hence they also display texture; the elements of any structure have, by definition, an internal unity which ensures that they all express part of a text. One

cannot change text in mid-sentence, so to speak; or rather, if one does, there will always be a break in the structure, with something being interpolated which is not structurally a part of the same sentence, as in Hamlet's

[1:7] Then I will come to my mother by and by –
they fool me to the top of my bent – I will come by and by.

or, more conversationally,

[1:8] . . . But what I want to know is – yes, some ice, please – what this government think they're doing when they spend all that money on building new schools. What's wrong with the old ones?

In general, any unit which is structured hangs together so as to form text. All grammatical units – sentences, clauses, groups, words – are internally 'cohesive' simply because they are structured. The same applies to the phonological units, the tone group, foot and syllable. Structure is one means of expressing texture.

If every text consisted of only one sentence, we should not need to go beyond the category of structure to explain the internal cohesiveness of a text: this could be explained simply as a function of its structure. But texts are usually not limited to one sentence; on the contrary, texts consisting of one sentence only are fairly rare. They do exist; there are public notices, proverbs, advertising slogans and the like, where one sentence by itself comprises a complete text, for example

[1:9] a. No smoking.
b. Wonders never cease!
c. Read The Herald every day.

But most texts extend well beyond the confines of a single sentence.

In other words, a text typically extends beyond the range of structural relations, as these are normally conceived of. But texts cohere; so cohesion within a text – texture – depends on something other than structure. There are certain specifically text-forming relations which cannot be accounted for in terms of constituent structure; they are properties of the text as such, and not of any structural unit such as a clause or sentence. Our use of the term COHESION refers specifically to these non-structural text-forming relations. They are, as we have suggested, semantic relations, and the text is a semantic unit.

1.2.2 Cohesion within the sentence?

Since cohesive relations are not concerned with structure, they may be

found just as well within a sentence as between sentences. They attract less notice within a sentence, because of the cohesive strength of grammatical structure; since the sentence hangs together already, the cohesion is not needed in order to make it hang together. But the cohesive relations are there all the same. For example

[1:10] If you happen to meet the admiral, don't tell him his ship's gone down.

Here the *him* and *his* in the second half have to be decoded by reference to *the admiral*, just as they would have had to be if there had been a sentence boundary in between. Similarly:

[1:11] Mary promised to send a picture of the children, but she hasn't done.

Here *done* equals *sent a picture of the children*, and it is quite irrelevant to this whether the two are in the same sentence or not.

Cohesive relations have in principle nothing to do with sentence boundaries. Cohesion is a semantic relation between an element in the text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it. This other element is also to be found in the text (*cf* 1.2.4 below); but its location in the text is in no way determined by the grammatical structure. The two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, may be structurally related to each other, or they may not; it makes no difference to the meaning of the cohesive relation.

However, there is a sense in which the sentence is a significant unit for cohesion precisely because it is the highest unit of grammatical structure: it tends to determine the way in which cohesion is EXPRESSED. For example, if the same entity is referred to twice within the same sentence, there are rules governing the form of its realization. These are the rules of pronominalization. It is the sentence structure which determines, within limits, whether at the second mention the entity will be named again or will be referred to by a pronoun. For example, we cannot say

[1:12] John took John's hat off and hung John's hat on a peg.

Assuming that there is only one 'John' here, and only one 'hat', then this identity of reference must be expressed by the use of pronominal forms: *John took his hat off and hung it on a peg.*

This sort of thing can be accounted for by reference to sentence structure; the relation between an item and another one that presupposes it could be explained as a structural relation. In the preceding sentence, for

example, the words *one* and *it* both, in different ways, presuppose the word *item*; and this presupposition could be incorporated into the structure of the sentence.

But this would be misleading. Only certain instances of cohesion could be treated structurally, and only when the two items, the presupposing and the presupposed, happened to occur within the same sentence. But, as we have seen, the question whether the two fall within the same sentence or not is irrelevant to the nature of the cohesive relation; cohesion is a more general notion, and one that is above considerations of structure. Moreover only certain kinds of cohesive relation are governed by such rules; mainly those involving identity of reference, which under certain conditions must be signalled by a reference item (Chapter 2). Cohesion that is expressed through substitution and ellipsis (Chapters 3 and 4) is unaffected by the sentence structure; and so is lexical cohesion (Chapter 6). In the case of conjunction (Chapter 5), there are special forms to express the various conjunctive relations where these are associated with grammatical structure; compare [1:13a], which is non-structural, with its structural counterpart [1:13b]:

[1:13] a. It's raining. – Then let's stay at home.
b. Since it's raining, let's stay at home.

Regardless of the presence or absence of a structural link, the semantic relation that provides cohesion, namely that of cause, is the same in both.

For these reasons cohesion within the sentence need not be regarded as essentially a distinct phenomenon. Cohesion is a general text-forming relation, or set of such relations, certain of which, when incorporated within a sentence structure, are subject to certain restrictions – no doubt because the grammatical condition of 'being a sentence' ensures that the parts go together to form a text anyway. But the cohesive relations themselves are the same whether their elements are within the same sentence or not.

As a general rule, the examples cited in this book will be of cohesion across sentence boundaries, since here the effect is more striking and the meaning is more obvious: cohesive ties between sentences stand out more clearly because they are the ONLY source of texture, whereas within the sentence there are the structural relations as well. In the description of a text, it is the intersentence cohesion that is significant, because that represents the variable aspect of cohesion, distinguishing one text from another. But this should not obscure the fact that cohesion is not, strictly speaking, a relation 'above the sentence'. It is a relation to which the sentence, or any other form of grammatical structure, is simply irrelevant.

1.2.3 Cohesion and discourse structure

It will be clear from what has been said above that cohesion is not just another name for discourse structure. Discourse structure is, as the name implies, a type of structure; the term is used to refer to the structure of some postulated unit higher than the sentence, for example the paragraph, or some larger entity such as episode or topic unit.

The concept of cohesion is set up to account for relations in discourse, but in rather a different way, without the implication that there is some structural unit that is above the sentence. Cohesion refers to the range of possibilities that exist for linking something with what has gone before. Since this linking is achieved through relations in MEANING (we are excluding from consideration the effects of formal devices such as syntactic parallelism, metre and rhyme), what is in question is the set of meaning relations which function in this way: the semantic resources which are drawn on for the purpose of creating text. And since, as we have stressed, it is the sentence that is the pivotal entity here – whatever is put together within one sentence is *ipso facto* part of a text – we can interpret cohesion, in practice, as the set of semantic resources for linking a SENTENCE with what has gone before.

This is not to rule out the possibility of setting up discourse structures, and specifying the structure of some entity such as a paragraph or topic unit. It is clear that there is structure here, at least in certain genres or registers of discourse. But it is doubtful whether it is possible to demonstrate generalized structural relationships into which sentences enter as the realization of functions in some higher unit, as can be done for all units below the sentence. The type of relation into which sentences enter with each other differs from that which holds among the part or sub-parts of a sentence. We cannot show, for example, that there is any functional relation between the two sentences of [1:1] above, such that the two form a configuration of mutually defining structural roles. (It may on the other hand be possible to show something of the kind precisely by invoking the concept of cohesion; *cf* Chapter 5.) Whereas within the sentence, or any similar unit, we can specify a limited number of possible structures, such as types of modification or subordination, transitivity or modal structures and the like, which define the relations among the parts, we cannot in the same way list a set of possible structures for a text, with sentence classes to fill the structural roles. Instead we have to show how sentences, which are structurally independent of one another, may be linked together through particular features of their interpretation; and it is for this that the concept of cohesion is required.

1.2.4 Cohesion as a semantic relation

To say that two sentences cohere by virtue of relations in their meaning is not by itself very precise. Practically any two sentences might be shown to have something to do with each other as far as their meaning is concerned; and although in judging whether there is texture or not we certainly have recourse to some feeling about how much the sentences do actually interrelate in meaning, we could not give any very explicit account of the degree of relatedness that is needed or how it is to be measured.

But there is one specific kind of meaning relation that is critical for the creation of texture: that in which ONE ELEMENT IS INTERPRETED BY REFERENCE TO ANOTHER. What cohesion has to do with is the way in which the meaning of the elements is interpreted. Where the interpretation of any item in the discourse requires making reference to some other item in the discourse, there is cohesion.

Consider the example

[1:14] He said so.

This sentence is perfectly intelligible as it stands; we know what it means, in the sense that we can 'decode' it semantically. But it is UNINTERPRETABLE, because we do not know who 'he' is or what he said. For this we have to refer elsewhere, to its 'context' in the sense of what has gone before.

Now it is also true that, given just the sentence

[1:15] John said everything.

we do not know who 'John' is, or what he said, either. But there is an important difference between examples [1:14] and [1:15]. In [1:14], the items *he* and *so* contain in their meaning an explicit signal that the means of their interpretation is available somewhere in the environment. Hearing or reading this sentence, we know that it links up with some other passage in which there is an indication of who 'he' is and what he said. This is not the case with *John* or *everything*, neither of which necessarily presupposes any such source of further interpretation.

We now come to the more complex part of the picture. It is easy enough to show that *he* and *so* are cohesive; there is no means of interpreting them in their own right, and we are immediately aware of the need to recover an interpretation from elsewhere. There are systematically related questions which express this: *Who said so? What did he say?* By the same token we can readily recognize the cohesive effect of a sentence such as:

[1:16] Lying on the floor.

Here there is no explicit signal of presupposition, in the form of a word like *he* or *so*; the cohesion is provided by what is left out, and again we can ask the relevant question *Who is?* Notice however that there is now some ambiguity as regards the information to be supplied; the actual text might have been

[1:17] What was John doing when you came in?
Lying on the floor.

in which case *lying* would have to be interpreted as *was lying* not *is lying*. And there are still further possibilities as illustrated by:

[1:18] What is your favourite pastime?
Lying on the floor.

These show that cohesion is a relational concept; it is not the presence of a particular class of item that is cohesive, but the relation between one item and another.

This point emerges very clearly with another type of cohesion, which would otherwise be difficult to explain. We said with reference to example [1:15] that there is nothing presupposing about the item *John;* the sentence *John said everything* does not in itself confer the automatic right to ask for an interpretation of *John*, as *he said everything* does with regard to *he*. But we may have a sequence such as:

[1:19] I was introduced to them; it was John Leathwall and his wife. I had never met John before, but I had heard a lot about him and had some idea what to expect.

Here *John* does have a cohesive function – because it is reiterated. This form of cohesion is lexical (Chapter 6); it consists in selecting the same lexical item twice, or selecting two that are closely related. The two instances may or may not have the same referent; but the interpretation of the second will be referable in some way to that of the first. Compare what was said about example [1:3] above. Another example would be:

[1:20] Jan sat down to rest at the foot of a huge beech-tree. Now he was so tired that he soon fell asleep; and a leaf fell on him, and then another, and then another, and before long he was covered all over with leaves, yellow, golden and brown.

Here *leaf* ties with *beech-tree*. The two are clearly not identical in reference, since *tree* and *leaf* are not synonymous; but the interpretation of *leaf* de-

pends on *beech-tree* – we 'know' that the leaf was a beech-leaf, and if the sentence had continued *before long he was covered all over with oak-leaves* we should have rejected it as a mistake. This illustrates the force of cohesion; and it also illustrates the fact that cohesion depends not on the presence of explicitly anaphoric items like *so* and *he*, but on the establishment of a semantic relation which may take any one of various forms.

One other form it may take is that of conjunction, expressed by means of items such as *but, later on, in that case* (Chapter 5). Here the cohesion resides in an abstract relation between one proposition and another. This may be a matter of the CONTENT of the propositions, how they are related to each other as phenomena; for example

[1:21] First, he took a piece of string and tied it carefully round the neck of the bottle. Next, he passed the other end over a branch and weighted it down with a stone.

Or it may be a matter of their role in the discourse, how they are related in the perspective of the speaker or writer, for example

[1:22] First, he has no experience of this kind of work. Next, he showed no sign of being willing to learn.

Here *next* refers to succession in the argument, not to any sequence of events in time. A very large number of different words and phrases occur as expressions of conjunction; but they all fall into a few sets representing very general types of logical relation.

Thus the concept of cohesion accounts for the essential semantic relations whereby any passage of speech or writing is enabled to function as text. We can systematize this concept by classifying it into a small number of distinct categories – reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion; categories which have a theoretical basis as distinct TYPES of cohesive relation, but which also provide a practical means for describing and analysing texts. Each of these categories is represented in the text by particular features – repetitions, omissions, occurrences of certain words and constructions – which have in common the property of signalling that the interpretation of the passage in question depends on something else. If that 'something else' is verbally explicit, then there is cohesion. There are, of course, other types of semantic relation associated with a text which are not embodied in this concept; but the one that it does embody is in some ways the most important, since it is common to text of every kind and is, in fact, what makes a text a text.

1.3 Cohesion and linguistic context

1.3.1 The domain of cohesive relations

The simplest form of cohesion is that in which the presupposed element is verbally explicit and is found in the immediately preceding sentence; for example

[1:23] Did the gardener water my hydrangeas?
– He said so.

We shall treat this as the norm for purposes of illustration and discussion; not only because it is simpler in practice but also because it is, as we have suggested, the paradigm case of cohesion from a theoretical point of view, since the boundary between two sentences represents a minimal break in structural continuity.

There are two kinds of departure from this norm. First, the presupposed element may be located elsewhere, in an earlier sentence, perhaps, or in the following one; secondly, it may not be found in the text at all. Let us consider these in turn.

Cohesion as we have said is not a structural relation; hence it is unrestricted by sentence boundaries, and in its most normal form it is simply the presupposition of something that has gone before, whether in the preceding sentence or not. This form of presupposition, pointing BACK to some previous item, is known as ANAPHORA. What is presupposed anaphorically may be in the sentence immediately preceding, but it may also be in some earlier sentence; in the following example, *he* refers back to *Henry:*

[1:24] The first years of Henry's reign, as recorded by the admiring Hall, were given over to sport and gaiety, though there was little of the licentiousness which characterized the French Court. The athletic contests were serious but very popular. Masques, jousts and spectacles followed one another in endless pageantry. He brought to Greenwich a tremendously vital court life, a central importance in the country's affairs and, above all, a great naval connection.*

Or it may be the whole of some longer passage; here the *such* presupposes everything that precedes:

[1:25] Travelling with huge retinues of staff and servants, medieval monarchs demanded a series of houses to take care of their needs.

* Olive and Nigel Hamilton, *Royal Greenwich*, The Greenwich Bookshop.

Their requirements were large. Government went where they went – (it was still the King's government) – with all its attendant staff and visitors. They were responsible for a large number of followers, and visitors had to be entertained in style. They were expected to dispense patronage and to entertain on a lavish scale. During the winter festival of Christmas, lasting twenty days, they nominally kept open house. Richard II, notoriously prodigal, entertained over ten thousand every day at his palaces, and even more over Christmas.

No single home could possibly cope with the organization and material products needed on such a scale.*

As might be expected, the tendency is different with different types of cohesion. Where the cohesive element is something like *he* or *one*, which coheres by direct reference to, or substitution for, another item, the presupposed element is typically a specific item in the immediately preceding sentence. This is the most usual pattern in the case of reference and substitution. Characteristically these intances also tend to form COHESIVE CHAINS, sequences in which *it*, for example, refers back to the immediately preceding sentence – but to another *it* in that sentence, and it is necessary to go back three, four or more sentences, stepping across a whole sequence of *it*s, before finding the substantial element. An example of this is [1:25] above, which has a cohesive chain *medieval monarchs . . . their . . . they . . . they . . . they . . . they*, leading finally to *Richard II* as a specific instance of a medieval monarch. Here is another example in which three such cohesive chains intertwine, initiated by *Short, Johnson over Jordan* and *Johnson:*

[1:26] Short places *Johnson over Jordan* squarely in the tradition of expressionist drama. He says that Johnson is a 'typical Briton', an 'English Everyman'. He regards the play as an imaginative presentation of the mind of a man who has just died. But, he adds, Priestley is more interested in Johnson living than in Johnson dead. In this the play is expressionist in its approach to theme. But it is also so in its use of unfamiliar devices – the use of masks, the rejection of the three or four act lay-out of the plot. And, finally, he points to the way in which Johnson moves quite freely in and out of chronological time.†

It may be helpful to tabulate the ties forming these three chains:

* Olive and Nigel Hamilton, *Royal Greenwich*, The Greenwich Bookshop.

† Gareth Lloyd Evans, *J. B. Priestley – The Dramatist*, Heinemann.

	(i) Short	(ii) *Johnson over Jordan*	(iii) Johnson
Sentence 1:	Short	*Johnson over Jordan*	Johnson (in *J over J*)
Sentence 2:	he	↓	Johnson
Sentence 3:	he	the play	a man who has just died
Sentence 4:	he	↓	Johnson (2×)
Sentence 5:	↓	the play . . . its	↓
Sentence 6:	↓	it . . . its	↓
Sentence 7:	he		Johnson

Where the cohesion takes the form of conjunction, with expressions like *but, so, in that case, later on,* the presupposition typically involves a passage longer than a single sentence. This hardly needs illustrating, but here is one example, a passage of Carlyle in which the conjunction *on the other hand* clearly relates to the whole of the preceding paragraph:

[1:27] How much is still alive in England; how much has not yet come into life! A Feudal Aristocracy is still alive, in the prime of life; superintending the cultivation of the land, and less consciously the distribution of the produce of the land, the adjustment of the quarrels of the land; judging, soldiering, adjusting; everywhere governing the people, – so that even a Gurth, born thrall of Cedric, lacks not his due parings of the pigs he tends. Governing; – and, alas, also game-preserving, so that a Robin Hood, a William Scarlet and others have, in these days, put on Lincoln coats, and taken to living, in some universal-suffrage manner, under the greenwood tree!

How silent, on the other hand, lie all Cotton-trades and such like; not a steeple-chimney yet got on end from sea to sea!

Lexical cohesion differs again, in that it regularly leaps over a number of sentences to pick up an element that has not figured in the intervening text:

[1:28] I screamed, and my scream went wafting out on the night air! And some neighbours who – they were my nearest neighbours, but they were still some distance away – came rushing along. They were awfully good, and they said afterwards they thought I'd been being murdered. Well, I couldn't've made more noise if I had been! But I'd surprised myself – really, the sound that

went floating out on the air I didn't know I had it in me, and they said it would make my fortune if I sent it to Hollywood. And I may say it surprised the thief sufficiently that he dropped my handbag and fled. Fortunately I wasn't between him and the door, so there was no harm done and I didn't lose anything.
– Fortunately for him, or fortunately for you?
– Oh, for me; they generally carry knives.
– I know; someone was murdered in the main hotel quite recently.
– Oh yes, yes, although people did say that there were wheels within wheels in that. But you get between a fleeing thief and his exit, and he's bound to be carrying a knife. But anyhow, the only thing I lost was my voice. I couldn't speak for a week afterwards.

Here *lost* (in *lost . . . my voice*) resumes the *lose* (in *didn't lose anything*), the resumption being signalled by the conjunctive item *anyhow*; and *voice* relates back to *scream*, *noise* and *sound*. Resumptions of this kind can span large passages of intervening text, especially in informal conversation.

So far we have considered cohesion purely as an anaphoric relation, with a presupposing item presupposing something that has gone before it. But the presupposition may go in the opposite direction, with the presupposed element following. This we shall refer to as CATAPHORA.

The distinction only arises if there is an explicitly presupposing item present, whose referent clearly either precedes or follows. If the cohesion is lexical, with the same lexical item occurring twice over, then obviously the second occurrence must take its interpretation from the first; the first can never be said to point forward to the second. If *John* follows *John*, there is no possible contrast between anaphora and cataphora. But an item such as *this* and *here* CAN point forward, deriving its interpretation from something that follows, for example:

[1:29] This is how to get the best results. You let the berries dry in the sun, till all the moisture has gone out of them. Then you gather them up and chop them very fine.

The presupposed element may, and often does, consist of more than one sentence. Where it does not, the cataphoric reference is often signalled in writing with a colon: but although this has the effect of uniting the two parts into a single orthographic sentence, it does not imply any kind of structural relation between them. The colon is used solely to signal the cataphora, this being one of its principal functions.

There remains one further possibility, namely that the information required for interpreting some element in the text is not to be found in the text at all, but in the situation. For example, given

[1:30] Did the gardener water those plants?

it is quite possible that *those* refers back to the preceding text, to some earlier mention of those particular plants in the discussion. But it is also possible that it refers to the environment in which the dialogue is taking place – to the 'context of situation', as it is called – where the plants in question are present and can be pointed to if necessary. The interpretation would be 'those plants there, in front of us'.

This type of reference we shall call EXOPHORA, since it takes us outside the text altogether. Exophoric reference is not cohesive, since it does not bind the two elements together into a text. One might reason that, metaphorically speaking, the plants form part of the text; but this seems rather pointless, because there could be no significant contrast here between the presence of cohesion and its absence – one would have to assume that, in the absence of cohesive reference to them, the plants would have comprised a text on their own. But exophora is of interest at several points in the discussion, particularly with reference to the definite article as a text-forming agent, and it will be brought up where relevant.

The line between exophoric and anaphoric reference is not always very sharp. In dramatic dialogue, for example, the mere presence or absence of a stage direction would change the picture, *eg*

[1:31] How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sound of music
Creep in our ears.

If the stage directions specify something like 'a grassy bank', then for the reader *this* and *here* become anaphoric; otherwise, they were exophoric. The significance of the exophoric potential is that, in instances where the key to the interpretation is not ready to hand, in text or situation, the hearer or reader CONSTRUCTS a context of situation in order to supply it for himself. So we supply the grassy bank in our imagination, and the producer need not put one on the stage. This is an essential element in all imaginative writing.

It may be helpful here to draw attention to the distinction between cohesion as a relation in the system, and cohesion as a process in the text. 'Cohesion' is defined as the set of possibilities that exist in the language for making text hang together: the potential that the speaker or writer has at

his disposal. This is a purely relational concept, and directionality comes into it only if one of the elements in the cohesive relation is BY ITS NATURE cohesive, in that it is inherently 'pointing to' something else; in this case there is a logical dependence, and hence a significant opposition IN THE SYSTEM between pointing back (anaphora) and pointing forwards (cataphora). But cohesion is also a process, in the sense that it is the instantiation of this relation in a text. A text unfolds in real time, and directionality is built into it; hence of the two elements embodying the cohesive relation, one always follows the other.

In the system:	a ⟷ b	
In the text:	a ⟶ b (time)	
implicitly anaphoric	$John_1$	$John_2$
explicitly anaphoric	John	:he
(explicitly) cataphoric	he:	John

In the text it is natural for the element occurring second to depend for its interpretation on the one occurring first; hence, anaphora is the unmarked and cataphora is the marked term in the opposition. Cataphora occurs only as an EXPLICIT relation, with the first element always being one that is inherently presupposing. Thus cohesion as a process always involves one item pointing to another; whereas the significant property of the cohesive relation, as we have stressed above, is the fact that one item provides the source for the interpretation of another.

1.3.2 Text and situation

We should now say a little more about the nature of a text, and its relation to a context of situation. Let us begin with an example:

[1:32] Although the light was on he went to sleep. Although the house was unfurnished the rent was very high. Although he was paid a high salary he refused to stay in the job.

These three sentences clearly have something in common; they are not just three sentences picked at random from a corpus of written English. What they have in common is a certain degree of grammatical similarity: parallel structures, with repetition of the item *although*. They could, however, be written in any other sequence without disturbing the organization of the passage as a whole, such as it is; whatever it is that gives unity to this 'text' it does not depend on the order in which the sentences are arranged.

This sort of grammatical parallelism is not irrelevant to internal cohesion; it is a common feature not only of poetry but of many other kinds of discourse as well. But by itself it does not make a string of sentences into a text. The sentences in [1:32] could be said to form a text, but if so it is a text of a very special kind: a text about language, in which the sentences are CITATION FORMS – that is, items introduced for the purpose of saying something about them. A set of citation forms that are related ONLY by their grammatical parallelism is a familiar feature of texts about language; and [1:32] is in fact taken from a textbook of Chinese for English-speaking students. The sentences in it, together with their Chinese equivalents, form part of a drill.

The passage illustrates, in an extreme form, a general principle concerning decisions about what is and what is not a text. We do not, in fact, evaluate any specimen of language – and deciding whether it does or does not constitute text is a prerequisite to any further evaluation of it – without knowing something about its context of situation. It is the context of situation of this passage, the fact that it is part of a language textbook, that enables us to accept it as text. A set of sentences that in any other environment would not constitute a text is admissible as such in the restricted context of a book about language. Since the present book will be full of citation forms we need not discuss them further here; the effect of their occurrence in a situation to which they are inappropriate can be seen in Ionesco's play *The Bald-headed Primadonna*. But they illustrate the general principle that the hearer or reader, when he is determining, consciously or unconsciously, the status of a specimen of language, invokes two kinds of evidence, the external as well as the internal: he uses not only linguistic clues but also situational ones. Lingustically, he responds to specific features which bind the passage together, the patterns of connection, independent of structure, that we are referring to as cohesion. Situationally, he takes into account all he knows of the environment: what is going on, what part the language is playing, and who are involved.

The internal and the external aspects of 'texture' are not wholly separable, and the reader, or listener, does not separate them when responding unconsciously to a passage of speech or writing. But when the linguist seeks to make explicit the basis on which these judgments are formed, he is bound to make observations of two rather different kinds. The one concerns relations within the language, patterns of meaning realized by grammar and vocabulary; the other concerns the relations BETWEEN the language and the relevant features of the speaker's and hearer's (or writer's and reader's) material, social and ideological environment. Both these aspects

of a text fall within the domain of linguistics. The linguistic patterns, which embody, and at the same time also impose structure on, our experience of the environment, by the same token also make it possible to identify what features of the environment are relevant to linguistic behaviour and so form part of the context of situation. But there are two sets of phenomena here, and in this book we are concerned with the LINGUISTIC factors that are characteristic of texts in English. The situational properties of texts, which are now beginning to be studied in greater detail and with greater understanding, constitute a vast field of enquiry which lies outside our scope here. Some of the factors of most immediate relevance are summarized in the paragraphs that follow.

The term SITUATION, meaning the 'context of situation' in which a text is embedded, refers to all those extra-linguistic factors which have some bearing on the text itself. A word of caution is needed about this concept. At the moment, as the text of this Introduction is being composed, it is a typical English October day in Palo Alto, California; a green hillside is visible outside the window, the sky is grey, and it is pouring with rain. This might seem part of the 'situation' of this text; but it is not, because it has no relevance to the meanings expressed, or to the words or grammatical patterns that are used to express them. The question is, what are the external factors affecting the linguistic choices that the speaker or writer makes. These are likely to be the nature of the audience, the medium, the purpose of the communication and so on. There are types of discourse in which the state of the weather would form part of the context of situation, for example, language-in-action in mountaineering or sailing; but writing a book about language is not one of them.

As a rule, the features of the situation are relevant at a rather general level. That is to say, if we think of the example of a lecture on current affairs to an adult evening class, what matters is not that it is John Smith talking to Messrs Jones, Robinson, Brown and others on a particular Tuesday evening in Burnley, but that it is a lecturer addressing a gathering of adult students within the framework of a given social institution. This is not to deny either the individual characteristics of speakers or writers or the importance of studying the distinctive quality of a particular author's style. It is merely to emphasize that many of the features of a text can be explained by reference to generalized situation types.

1.3.3 Components of the context of situation, and register

The concept of CONTEXT OF SITUATION was formulated by Malinowski in 1923, in his supplement to Ogden and Richards' *The Meaning of*

Meaning, and subsequently elaborated by Firth, particularly in a paper written in 1950 called 'Personality and language in society'. It has been worked over and extended by a number of linguists, the best-known treatment being perhaps that of Hymes in 'Models of interaction of language and social setting'. Hymes categorizes the speech situation in terms of eight components which we may summarize as: form and content of text, setting, participants, ends (intent and effect), key, medium, genre and interactional norms. It will be noted that, in this view of the matter, the text itself forms part of the speech situation.

A more abstract interpretation, intended as a basis for DERIVING the features of the text from the features of the situation, had been offered by Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens in *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. They had proposed the three headings FIELD, MODE, and TENOR (to adopt the terminology preferred by Spencer and Gregory in *Linguistics and Style*). These are highly general concepts for describing how the context of situation determines the kinds of meaning that are expressed. The FIELD is the total event, in which the text is functioning, together with the purposive activity of the speaker or writer; it thus includes the subject-matter as one element in it. The MODE is the function of the text in the event, including therefore both the channel taken by the language – spoken or written, extempore or prepared – and its genre, or rhetorical mode, as narrative, didactic, persuasive, 'phatic communion' and so on. The TENOR refers to the type of role interaction, the set of relevant social relations, permanent and temporary, among the participants involved. Field, mode and tenor collectively define the context of situation of a text (see the further discussion in Halliday's *Language and Social Man*).

The linguistic features which are typically associated with a configuration of situational features – with particular values of the field, mode and tenor – constitute a REGISTER. The more specifically we can characterize the context of situation, the more specifically we can predict the properties of a text in that situation. If we merely name the subject-matter, or the medium, it will tell us very little; we could talk of a 'register of marine biology' or a 'newspaper register', but this hardly enables us to say anything of interest about the types of text in question. But if we give some information about all three categories of field, mode, and tenor, we begin to be able to make some useful observations. For instance, if we specify a field such as 'personal interaction, at the end of the day, with aim of inducing contentment through recounting of familiar events', with mode 'spoken monologue, imaginative narrative, extempore' and tenor 'intimate, mother and three-year-old child', we can reconstruct a great deal of the

language of this kind of bedtime story, especially if we go further and describe the CONTEXT OF CULTURE (another of Malinowski's concepts) which will tell us, among other things, what are the familiar events in the life of a child with the given socio-cultural background. The register is the set of meanings, the configuration of semantic patterns, that are typically drawn upon under the specified conditions, along with the words and structures that are used in the realization of these meanings. The fact that we can say of any given text, with some assurance, whether or not it satisfies a description of the context of situation such as the one just given, shows how real the notion of register is.

In general, if a passage hangs together as a text, it will display a consistency of register. In other words, the texture involves more than the presence of semantic relations of the kind we refer to as cohesive, the dependence of one element on another for its interpretation. It involves also some degree of coherence in the actual meanings expressed: not only, or even mainly, in the CONTENT, but in the TOTAL selection from the semantic resources of the language, including the various interpersonal (social-expressive-conative) components – the moods, modalities, intensities, and other forms of the speaker's intrusion into the speech situation.

The concept of COHESION can therefore be usefully supplemented by that of REGISTER, since the two together effectively define a TEXT. A text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive. Neither of these two conditions is sufficient without the other, nor does the one by necessity entail the other. Just as one can construct passages which seem to hang together in the situational-semantic sense, but fail as texts because they lack cohesion, so also one can construct passages which are beautifully cohesive but which fail as texts because they lack consistency of register – there is no continuity of meaning in relation to the situation. The hearer, or reader, reacts to both of these things in his judgment of texture.

Under normal circumstances, of course, we do not find ourselves faced with 'non-text', which is 'non-sense' of a rather esoteric kind. Texture is a matter of degree. It is almost impossible to construct a verbal sequence which has no texture at all – but this, in turn, is largely because we insist on interpreting any passage as text if there is the remotest possibility of doing so. We assume, in other words, that this is what language is for; whatever its specific function may be in the particular instance, it can serve this function only under the guise of text. If one can imagine a situation