



TEXTUAL COHESION BETWEEN GRAMMATICAL ORGANIZATION AND SEMANTIC STRUCTURE AND ITS ROLE IN ENHANCING TEXT COMPREHENSION SKILLS AMONG LEARNERS OF A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE: AN INTERTEXTUAL STUDY

Sidibe Ousmane

A doctoral researcher at the College of Arabic Language and Human Studies, the Islamic University of Madinah. (sidibe122@yahoo.fr)

Abstract

This study examines textual cohesion (Textual Cohesion) as a central phenomenon in text linguistics and a foundational pillar of textual studies. It addresses two essential dimensions of language analysis and learning: the formal (structural) dimension and the semantic dimension. The formal dimension is realized through syntactic and structural organization, whereas the semantic dimension is concerned with the flow of meaning and the construction of pragmatic significance in accordance with grammatical structuring.

Textual cohesion serves as the integrative mechanism that harmonizes these two dimensions. It organizes syntactic structures and generates from them a coherent, fully developed semantic and pragmatic meaning. On this basis, the study provides a theoretical grounding of textual cohesion, identifies its tools and mechanisms, and explores ways of employing it in structuring the teaching process, along with proposing instructional strategies for effective language teaching.

Presenting this phenomenon as a pedagogical mechanism enhances the effectiveness of educational programs, with the aim of moving learners from a limited, sentence-bound framework to a broader level characterized by communicative competence and improved reading comprehension. To demonstrate the effectiveness of this text-based approach, the researcher conducted an empirical application involving students at both the intermediate level (third intermediate) and the secondary level (first and second secondary).

The findings reveal that a significant proportion of learners lack foundational knowledge of text linguistics, which necessitates revising current educational programs and advancing them from sentence-based instruction to text-based instruction. The study concludes that the ultimate goal of language teaching is communication, and that teaching isolated sentences outside their social and textual contexts neither benefits learners nor fulfills instructional objectives. At best, sentence-level instruction serves as an introductory stage suitable for early learning, but it is insufficient for intermediate and advanced levels, where text-based instruction becomes essential.

Keywords: Textual cohesion, syntactic organization, semantic construction, language teaching, Arabic as a foreign language.



Introduction

Recent text-linguistic studies have sought to broaden the scope of analysis by moving beyond a narrow linguistic framework characterized by fragmentation and limitation. Language is neither apprehended nor learned except through texts and through engaging with their underlying realities and deeper structures. Teaching grammatical structures within the confines of isolated sentences, detached from their textual and semantic dimensions, reduces language to static fragments devoid of dynamic meaning. This, in turn, weakens the learner's ability to grasp the true nature of language learning and its communicative essence, which is grounded in cohesion, the interplay of textual components, and the comprehension of holistic meaning.

In recent years, language teaching has undergone significant changes across various domains, particularly in the teaching of grammar, which was once considered a fundamental pillar in establishing a solid scientific basis for understanding and acquiring linguistic principles. However, this strictly rule-based perspective has proven insufficient in the field of teaching languages to non-native speakers. Instead, greater emphasis is now placed on the text as a communicative tool and as an integrated linguistic unit that draws upon all levels of language to construct meaning and generate interpretation.

Accordingly, grammatical structure is no longer regarded as an end in itself in language instruction; rather, it has become a means through which learners progressively develop the ability to construct meaning, produce discourse, and achieve effective communication. From this perspective, the concept of textual cohesion emerges as a linguistic-textual tool that examines the relationships and connections binding the components of a text, revealing the mechanisms through which meaning evolves, persists, and is sustained.

The marginalization of grammatical rules or systems in contemporary linguistic thought does not entail their complete abandonment or disregard. Rather, it indicates that they should not be relied upon exclusively as the sole basis for teaching and learning language. Grammar remains a foundational component upon which other analytical systems are constructed, as it performs a semantic function that contributes to establishing relationships among the parts of a text. It guides comprehension and regulates its course through the formation of a semantic network, manifested in cohesive ties and the sequencing of structures, which assist the learner in recognizing the unity, coherence, and cohesion of the text.

Within this framework, semantic structuring constitutes the mechanism that sustains grammatical organization and endows it with communicative value and vitality. It seeks to connect the partial meanings embedded in grammatical structures and to construct a network of semantic relations among sentences, constructions, and even individual words, thereby achieving an overall semantic unity of the text. Undoubtedly, such integration enhances and develops reading comprehension among learners of a second or foreign language.



From this perspective, the present study aims to propose an instructional model based on the integration of grammar and semantics within a textual framework that reveals the mechanisms of textual cohesion and demonstrates how these mechanisms can be employed to guide instructional practices and refine the classroom learning environment. It also seeks to elucidate the integrative role of this text-based approach in improving learners' comprehension skills, strengthening their ability to perceive textual and semantic relationships, and developing their capacity to manage these relationships in order to construct meaning and form a coherent overall representation of the text.

This research orientation aligns with contemporary approaches to teaching languages to non-native speakers, which emphasize that language learning is a dual process grounded in both reading competence and communicative competence. These competencies are achieved through understanding and interaction rather than through rote memorization and mechanical instruction, as was prevalent in traditional pedagogical methods.

Study Objectives:

This study represents a qualitative advancement in the field of teaching languages to non-native speakers, as it seeks to redirect language instruction toward an integrated text-based perspective. Within this perspective, grammar and semantics are viewed as optimal tools for uncovering the underlying structures and meanings of texts and discourse, transforming them into dynamic and interactive entities. Such an approach contributes to the development of learners who are capable of critically examining texts and engaging in conscious, analytical reading that reveals their structural organization and mobilizes their meanings across diverse communicative contexts. Accordingly, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To highlight the value of textual features, particularly mechanisms of textual cohesion, and to demonstrate how they can be effectively employed in applied instructional contexts in a manner that تحقق an effective forward-looking educational vision.
- To identify areas of weakness in text comprehension among learners of a second/foreign language, particularly those arising from insufficient awareness of cohesive relations, which point to the necessity of integrating grammar and semantics within a systematic and coherent framework.
- To propose an integrated instructional approach aligned with advanced educational programs by shifting grammar instruction from the sentence level to its functional deployment within the text.
- To equip and train learners to produce coherent texts characterized by semantic consistency, thereby enabling them to analyze texts and extract implicit and nuanced meanings embedded within grammatical connections and semantic relations.



Research Problem:

The problem addressed in this study arises from its attempt to link a key aspect of text linguistics with a pedagogical dimension, namely the teaching of language to non-native speakers. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of textual features in isolation from their practical application is a challenging task for learners, particularly when it comes to implementing these textual principles within real educational contexts. Accordingly, this study seeks to address a number of research questions, including:

- What are the mechanisms of textual cohesion that contribute to organizing grammatical meaning and constructing the overall semantic unity of a text?
- How does grammatical organization contribute to achieving textuality, in a way that enables learners to trace cohesive ties and mechanisms within linguistic texts?
- How do language learners perceive semantic gaps within a text, and how do they work to bridge these gaps?
- What instructional strategies can teachers adopt to address this learning gap within current educational programs?

Research Instruments:

A teaching program based on cohesively structured instructional texts was designed to measure learners' awareness of grammatical and semantic relationships, thereby assessing their reading and comprehension skills. In addition, a set of assessment tools was employed, including oral, written, and reading tests administered to groups of students at the third intermediate level and the first and second secondary levels.

Scope of the Study (Applied Delimitations):

This study was conducted through the application of a text-linguistic approach—specifically textual cohesion—to a group of learners of Arabic as a foreign language across three educational levels (third intermediate, second secondary, and third secondary) at the Model School Dar al-Hadith in Duékoué, Côte d'Ivoire.

Research Methodology:

This study adopted both the descriptive-analytical method and the experimental (or quasi-experimental) method. This was implemented through the design of an instructional program based on the application of textual cohesion to a group of non-native learners of Arabic, particularly among intermediate and secondary school students at Dar al-Hadith School in Duékoué (Duekoué).



Theoretical Framework

First: Textual Cohesion in Text Linguistics

Textual cohesion is regarded as one of the most fundamental mechanisms of textuality, as it reflects the degree of semantic interconnectedness among the components of a text. It indicates that a text is coherent and not semantically disjointed. It is often contrasted with the term cohesion (in its formal sense, sometimes rendered in Arabic as *sabk*), which refers to the explicit, surface-level linkage between textual elements (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

The distinction between surface-level linkage and semantic interconnectedness has been a subject of debate within the Arabic rhetorical and critical tradition. Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī tends to privilege *sabk* (formal cohesion) over *habk* (semantic cohesion) (Ibn Rashīq, 1981). In contrast, ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī argues for the primacy of semantic cohesion, asserting that no merit lies in the ترتیب حسن (well-ordered sequencing) of surface structures if the meaning itself lacks coherence. As he states: “The purpose of the arrangement of words is not merely their succession in utterance, but rather the consistency of their meanings and the convergence of their significations” (al-Jurjānī, 1992).

In classical Arabic lexicons, the term *habk* conveys the sense of firmness, tight interweaving, and precise construction. Abū ‘Ubayda notes: “*Habk* ... In the ḥadīth of ‘Ā’isha, it is reported that she would ‘*taḥṭabik*’ beneath her garment during prayer ... al-Aṣma‘ī stated that *iḥtibāk* refers to wrapping oneself tightly; Abū ‘Ubayda comments that what is meant here is the tightening and securing of the waistcloth, indicating that she would not pray except properly girded. Thus, anything that is firmly and skillfully constructed may be described as *muḥṭabak*” (Abū ‘Ubayda, 1964).

Similarly, Ibn Durayd defines the term as follows: “*Habk* is the verbal noun of *ḥabaka* ... and it denotes the mark of fine craftsmanship and the evenness and precision of construction in an object” (Ibn Durayd, 1987).

Accordingly, the lexical meaning of the term *habk* denotes a state of interweaving and tight interconnectedness among the parts of a given entity, such that they cannot be separated without causing a disruption to its overall unity.

In text-linguistic studies, however, the term refers to the flow and continuity of semantic relations and meaningful connections in a manner that renders the text a unified intellectual whole (Kamal Bishr, vol. 1, p. 263). Sa‘d Maṣlūḥ defines it as “semantic continuity manifested in a system of concepts and the relations that link these concepts” (Maṣlūḥ, 1991). Similarly, Ṣubḥī Ibrāhīm al-Faqī describes it as “the relations that connect the meanings of utterances in discourse, or the meanings of sentences within a text; these relations depend on the speakers’ knowledge of the surrounding context” (al-Faqī, 2000).



Mechanisms of Textual Cohesion:

An examination of works in text linguistics reveals that the mechanisms of textual cohesion can be broadly categorized into two principal approaches: a cognitive (psychological) approach and a linguistic approach. De Beaugrande has referred to these two orientations in his discussion of the features of meaning (de Beaugrande). Accordingly, the mechanisms of textual cohesion are grounded in these two approaches and may be outlined as follows:

The Cognitive–Reflective Approach:

- ❖ **mplicit links, or logical relations, that connect topics or propositions within the textual field may be represented in the following forms (de Beaugrande 1998):**
- **Causal relation:** This relation links one sentence to another on the basis of causality, such that the content of one functions as the cause of, or results from, the other.
- **Interpretive (explanatory) relation:** In this case, the subsequent sentence serves as an explanation of the preceding one, clarifying and resolving its ambiguity.
- **Contrastive relation:** This relation—often realized as opposition—is particularly employed in complex issues, where the understanding of a given proposition depends on presenting its opposite; meanings are often clarified through contrast.

These relations or links are typically apprehended through reflection and careful engagement with the texture of the text. However, the fact that such connections are identified through cognitive reflection does not imply that they cannot be recognized through linguistic devices. Texts may include explicit markers that guide the reader toward uncovering these relations, such as the causal particle *fa-* (فـ), which links clauses or words, and the explanatory particle *'an* (أن), which signals that what follows provides an explanation or justification for what precedes.

- ❖ **Text Focus or Semantic Nucleus of the Text:** It refers to the thematic unity of a text, whereby the text—or its paragraphs—is organized around a central idea for which the text is produced. This requires the absence of any conceptual or thematic gaps in the progression of ideas from the beginning to the end of the text. Such semantic recurrence renders the text accessible to the learner, enabling the construction of a mental model based on the sequential organization of ideas. It also allows the learner to anticipate forthcoming meanings, develop a unified lexical repertoire, and acquire the ability to summarize texts.

A representative example of this is the following statement: “*The practice of football is an important symbol in Ivorian culture. It is not merely a game; rather, it represents mutual affection, serves as an instrument for unifying the people, and constitutes an essential pillar of national identity. It is viewed by most young people as a primary means of transforming their lives.*”



A close reading of this text reveals a high degree of textual cohesion and semantic harmony, as it is structured through thematic progression. It begins with a general statement, namely the importance of football in Ivorian culture, and then gradually develops this idea by elaborating on its main aspects. It is also noticeable that each sentence employs referential ties, particularly pronouns, which link the subsequent subsidiary ideas to the main idea, namely the text's focus and central topic (football).

It is further observed that each sentence is semantically compatible with the others, such that no semantic gap exists between them. No sentence deviates from the contextual frame of discourse; the text does not introduce any extraneous proposition unrelated to the topic of football. For instance, inserting a statement such as “**Cocoa prices are currently high in Côte d’Ivoire**” within the text would create a semantic rupture and thematic discontinuity between the sentences. Undoubtedly, such semantic coherence fosters learners’ sense of textual stability, as they perceive the text as logical, engaging, and free from boredom or confusion.

❖ **Among the mechanisms of textual cohesion related to the cognitive–interpretive dimension is the consideration of context and communicative situation** As the Arabic rhetorical maxim states, “For every situation there is an appropriate discourse, and for every discourse there is an appropriate state.” Accordingly, when a text takes into account the communicative situation and context, as well as the intended audience, it becomes more readily acceptable and more deeply engaging for the learner, as it is characterized by greater logic and realism.

Context is considered one of the most important mechanisms of textual cohesion, as it establishes a communicative bridge between grammatical meanings, thereby contributing to the construction of a dynamic textual semantic structure capable of forging links between the reader or learner and the environment in which they live, whether linguistic or social. Thus, taking context into account in the process of textual analysis enables the learner to (Jamal Mustafa al-‘Isawi, 2005):

a) It enables learners to recognize the semantic differences among polysemous lexical items when used in different contexts, such as the words ‘ayn (eye/spring) and qara’a (to read/recite).

b) It develops learners’ ability to move beyond literal interpretation toward inferential understanding, as context helps them bridge textual gaps left by the speaker or writer, relying on the reader’s interpretive competence. This, in turn, fosters an active and engaged learner, enhances comprehension and cognitive processing, and strengthens their ability to grasp various forms of discourse.

c) It encourages learners not to remain at the surface level of texts, but to go beyond them and reflect on their implications and outcomes. Context thus becomes a means through which learners anticipate subsequent events in the text, enabling them to grasp its unfolding structure from its initial stages.



An example of employing context in learners' text comprehension can be seen in the word *ḍaraba* (to strike), when it is used in different contexts. For instance, in a sports context: **“Zayd struck the ball with great force toward the goalkeeper, and it entered the goal.”** From the context, it is understood that the intended meaning of *ḍaraba* is not its basic lexical sense, but rather “to kick,” i.e., Zayd kicked the ball.

In a religious context, for example: “The Qur'an gives parables of previous nations for their disobedience to the commands conveyed through their prophets.” **Here, the verb *ḍaraba* does not carry its primary lexical meaning, but rather denotes “to present” or “to cite,”** not its original literal sense.

In an educational context, a teacher may say to a student after explaining a grammatical or morphological rule: **“Provide examples of the rule to demonstrate your understanding.”** Here, ***ḍaraba* means “to cite” or “to present examples,”** rather than its literal lexical meaning. This illustrates how meaning shifts according to context, and so on.

From these examples, it becomes evident that context plays an essential role in the process of teaching language to non-native speakers. It contributes to enhancing and developing learners' comprehension by enabling them to identify the specific meaning of a word, as well as assisting them in examining the logical relations between sentences within a text. It also helps learners infer sentence meaning through the speaker's intonation or through punctuation marks that demarcate sentence boundaries, commonly referred to as punctuation marks.

As for the linguistic approach, it is manifested in the following elements:

a) Referential cohesion through pronouns, relative pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and the definite article (al-), These devices play an important role in organizing grammatical meaning and constructing the overall semantic structure of a text. Undoubtedly, recognizing referential relations between two or multiple elements within a text contributes to improving and developing learners' comprehension. Examples of this include: “Zayd wrote the lesson, and I asked him to read it,” “‘Umar came who wrote the lesson,” “This is Khālīd, the diligent one,” and “‘Abdullāh went to the market to buy the book.”

In the first text, the pronoun *-hā* in *'amartuhu* (“I ordered him”) refers back to Zayd, while the pronoun *-hā* in *qirā'atihi* (“his reading of it”) refers to the lesson. This contributes to syntactic coherence, as the pronouns agree with their antecedents in gender and number, which in turn supports the construction of the overall textual meaning.

In the second text, textual cohesion is achieved through the use of the relative pronoun *alladhī* (“who/that”), which links clauses together. In the third, cohesion is realized through the demonstrative pronoun *hādhā* (“this”). In the fourth, it is achieved through the use of the definite article *al-* in *al-sūq* (“the market”) and *al-kitāb* (“the book”), indicating that both refer to previously known or contextually identifiable entities.



The correspondence between these referential elements and their antecedents in both quality and quantity reflects a high degree of syntactic organization in these texts. This, in turn, leads to intersentential cohesion and the generation of coherent overall meanings and the general semantic structure of the text.

b) Another manifestation of textual cohesion is substitution, whether lexical substitution or semantic substitution. Substitution is defined as “the replacement of a linguistic element with another linguistic element, or the substitution of one linguistic item in place of another” (Muhammad al-Khaṭṭābī). Its function is to avoid redundancy, thereby sparing the learner from undesirable and monotonous repetition. It also contributes to enriching the learner’s linguistic repertoire, as replacing one element with another indicates a strong semantic connection between the two. This, in turn, activates the recipient’s cognitive background knowledge and supports language learners in constructing meaning.

Substitution plays an important role in enhancing and developing learners’ comprehension, as it largely relies on the learner’s background knowledge. It is generally classified into several types, including the following:

1.1 Nominal substitution: This involves replacing a nominal element with another nominal element. For example: “‘Abdullāh bought an important book in mathematics, and his colleague bought one of it so that they could study together.” Here, the phrase “one of it” substitutes for “an important book in mathematics,” as it refers back to the previously mentioned noun phrase.

2.1 Verbal substitution: This refers to the replacement of one verb with another. For example: “Human beings live as long as they have a trace in life, and they do not remain if no trace of them exists.” In this case, the verb *ya‘īshu* (“live”) in the first sentence is substituted by *yabqā* (“remain”) in the second. The verb *yabqā* is semantically broader than *ya‘īshu*, which justifies its use as a substitute.

3.1 Linguistic (particle) substitution: This type of substitution often occurs with prepositions, where one particle replaces another while conveying a related meaning. For instance: “Zayd struck ‘Alī on his leg.” The original meaning of the preposition *fī* indicates containment (“inside”), but in this context it is intended to express elevation or contact above something, i.e., the meaning of ‘*alā* (“on”). Thus, *fī* is used here in the sense of ‘*alā*, meaning that he struck him on or above his leg.

c) Another manifestation of textual cohesion within the linguistic approach is the linkage between sentences through conjunctions. such as *wa* (و), *fa* (ف), and *thumma* (ثم), with attention to their specific conjunctive meanings. These particles play a significant role in achieving textual cohesion and syntactic organization, in addition to constructing a coherent semantic system. They indicate the progression of meaning from a preceding element to a subsequent one, or the participation of two linguistic elements in realizing a linguistic or non-linguistic event, while differing in the sequencing of these events in the learner’s cognitive perception.



From the perspective of syntactic organization, these conjunctions establish grammatical dependency within the linguistic text, which entails semantic coordination between the coordinated elements. In such cases, the latter element follows the former in terms of syntactic case marking. For example, in the sentence “Muḥammad came and Zayd (also came),” the noun Zayd is coordinated with Muḥammad through the conjunction *wa* (و), which indicates that Zayd shares with Muḥammad the action of coming.

This type of coordination protects the text from fragmentation; without such coordinating particles, the text would appear to the reader as disconnected and scattered linguistic units.

Instructional Strategies for Teaching Textual Cohesion to Non-Native Language Learners:

Textual cohesion constitutes a fundamental process in teaching language to non-native speakers, and it may be regarded as a central goal of instruction. Language learning typically begins with vocabulary acquisition, i.e., teaching lexical items and examining their meanings. The learner then gradually moves toward constructing semantic bridges that link the acquired vocabulary items.

Within this framework, cohesion—functioning as the connecting medium between meanings and as the organizing principle of grammatical structures—is considered one of the most essential mechanisms of effective language instruction. It is primarily based on comprehension, as it trains learners in proper cognitive planning and enables them to progress from rote memorization to independent reading and inferential understanding. It also habituates learners to organizing ideas in a coherent and interconnected structure, allowing them to emerge as an integrated whole.

To achieve this cognitive organization and the linking of textual components, the instructor may adopt the following strategies (D. Baligh, 2011; Arab Educational Center for the Gulf States, 2019):

1- Tool Mapping Strategy: his strategy is based on constructing mind maps that include various types of linguistic devices which function as cohesive ties between words or between sentences. It typically focuses on highlighting elements that are often confusing for learners, such as demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, and personal pronouns.

Demonstratives rely on the shared referential background between the speaker and the addressee, as they point to entities that are already known or contextually identifiable to both parties. It is not possible to refer to something absent or unknown; rather, both speaker and listener must share awareness of the referent.

Relative pronouns are more structurally constrained than demonstratives, as they are based on three essential components: first, the relative clause, which must be known or accessible to the addressee or learner; second, the clause introduced by the relative pronoun; and third, the resumptive element (the referential link back to the antecedent).



As for pronouns, they must refer to an antecedent that is either explicitly mentioned within the text or inferred from the extratextual context, depending on the learner's cognitive or socio-cultural background knowledge.

To implement this strategy, the learner is given a short text containing demonstratives, relative pronouns, or personal pronouns, and is then asked to establish links between these forms and their referents by drawing directional arrows connecting each linguistic item to its corresponding antecedent. For example: "Zayd bought a pen and brought it with him to the classroom in order to write his lessons." The pronoun -hu in *istaṣḥabahu* ("he brought it with him") refers back to the pen. This anaphoric linkage enhances and develops learners' comprehension skills and enables them to analytically deconstruct the components of the text.

2- Strategy of Text Deconstruction from Cohesive Devices (Blank Text Strategy): This strategy is based on deleting cohesive devices within a linguistic text while leaving gaps that signal the omission of such elements. It aims to train learners to think critically about the logical and causal relationships that connect sentences, thereby enhancing their attentiveness and analytical awareness of different textual contexts. Consequently, learners become actively involved in the construction and reconstruction of the text itself, which contributes to their development as active participants in meaning-making (Rushdy Ahmad Ta'ima, 1986).

This can be illustrated through a text that contains causal and logical relations (**such as therefore, while, based on that, as a result of that, etc.**). For example:

"Higher education has witnessed various transformations in the modern era, most notably the significant digital developments in the field of scientific research, particularly artificial intelligence, which has greatly facilitated complex tasks for researchers and saved them considerable time. However, a group of researchers still adheres to traditional methods of research, despite their difficulty and the considerable time and effort they require. Therefore, in light of the effectiveness of modern methods and the current cognitive transformation, it is necessary for any educational institution that seeks to adapt to the digital age and achieve its educational objectives to design training programs that enhance learners' skills in using technology across various scientific and research fields."

This text includes cohesive devices such as (**among the most important, however, based on that**). These markers establish causal and justificatory relations between sentences, thereby transforming the text into a coherent and interconnected sequence of ideas. In implementing this strategy, the teacher removes these cohesive devices from the text and leaves blank spaces indicating their omission. The learner is then asked to fill in these gaps with appropriate connectors that establish logical relations between the preceding and following sentences.

3- Strategy of Lexical Substitutes (Lexical Repetition Reduction): This strategy involves lexical repetition, particularly nominal repetition, and is closely related to substitution and reference mechanisms previously discussed in textual cohesion (nominal substitution and both



anaphoric and cataphoric reference). In this approach, the teacher deliberately repeats a noun within a text and then asks learners to replace the repeated occurrences with referential devices (such as pronouns, relative pronouns, or demonstratives), while retaining the initial occurrence of the noun.

To implement this strategy effectively, several stages must be followed, including instructional stages and activation stages. These stages are as follows:

First Stage: Teaching Lexical Substitutes:

In this stage, the teacher introduces referential devices and explains their role in linking sentences and texts, as well as the function of synonymy in enriching the learner's lexical repertoire. This stage is considered a purely instructional phase.

Second Stage: Comparison and Analysis

This stage aims to assess the learner's awareness of the nature and function of lexical substitutes. In this phase, the teacher presents two texts: the first contains repeated lexical items, while the second avoids repetition and instead employs lexical substitutes that replace the repeated elements in the first text.

For example:

"The teacher went to the school, then the teacher entered the classroom, and the teacher found the students sitting and waiting for him, then the teacher began explaining the lesson to the students."

And: "The teacher went to the school, then he entered the classroom, and found them sitting and waiting for him, then he began explaining the lesson to them."

The learner is then asked to compare the two texts, carefully identifying the positions of substitution and the repeated words or expressions in the first text. In the second text, the learner observes the substituted items and analyzes how they functionally replace the repeated lexical elements.

Third Stage: Activation Stage

This stage involves the application of what has been covered in the previous stages in a way that ensures full learner comprehension and reading understanding. It is implemented through presenting texts containing gaps that require learners to supply appropriate lexical substitutes referring back to previously mentioned nouns or elements in the initial part of the text. Alternatively, learners may be given a short text containing repeated lexical items and asked to establish links between these repeated elements and their corresponding referents.



Fourth Stage: Personal Production

In this stage, learners are required to produce or write a short text incorporating lexical substitutes within a familiar and commonly known topic. Repetition is deliberately avoided, in the sense that a single noun should not be repeated more than twice. Instead, learners are encouraged to replace repeated lexical items with referential devices that guide the reader back to previously mentioned elements or establish cohesive links between preceding and subsequent parts of the text.

Practical Applications:

The practical applications were divided into two main sections:

First Section:

Identifying and documenting common and recurrent errors made by non-native learners of the language in the use of textual cohesion devices.

In this applied dimension, the researcher observed a group of secondary school learners at Dar al-Hadith School (Duékoué) in order to assess the extent of their understanding of this device, their ability to use it in reading, and its role in enhancing their reading comprehension in both academic and everyday contexts.

The results of this observational procedure indicated that a significant proportion of students tend to transfer cohesive devices from their native languages when writing in Arabic or when communicating with their peers.

Among these examples is their use of cohesive devices from their foreign languages when writing in Arabic, or their tendency to structure Arabic sentences according to the syntactic patterns of their native languages, or to translate their mother tongue literally when expressing themselves in Arabic. This may include, for instance, placing the subject before the verb to express agency, as in: “Mūsā went to the house” (Mūsā dhahaba ilā al-bayt). While this structure is not considered standard in Arabic—particularly according to the Basran grammatical tradition—it is nevertheless acceptable, common, and grammatically correct in some foreign languages.

Undoubtedly, this is attributable to a lack of awareness of Arabic syntactic structure and grammatical organization, as well as limited understanding of the role of syntax in meaning construction. Proper syntactic organization is essential for generating accurate and coherent meaning, whereas any disruption in the structure of grammatical construction inevitably leads to a distortion or breakdown in meaning.

This aspect of the textual study was applied to a group of students consisting of fifty (50) third-year intermediate pupils, forty-five (45) first-year secondary students, and thirty (30) second-year secondary students. The implementation was conducted as follows:



- 1- Presenting selected texts from the Arabic heritage, after emphasizing that these texts contain a range of textual cohesion mechanisms.
- 2- Asking students to identify and extract textual cohesion devices from these texts, while explaining their role in syntactic organization and the construction of textual meaning.
- 3- Requiring students to produce short texts that include certain cohesion mechanisms, as a means of assessing their level of understanding of this textual-linguistic phenomenon.

Distribution of Respondents According to Their Textual Backgrounds:**Table No. (1)**

Grade Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Second Secondary	12	40%
First Secondary	9	20%
Third Intermediate	5	10%

It is evident from Table (1) that the proportion of students who possess textual competence is relatively low, which indicates a weakness in their textual skills compared to their sentential competence. Their linguistic performance tends to remain confined to the level of the sentence or to isolated sentences detached from their broader linguistic context. This, without doubt, negatively affects their comprehension of textual meaning and, consequently, impacts their language learning process.

The number of respondents from the second secondary level is 12 out of 30 students, representing 40%. The number of respondents from the first secondary level is 9 out of 45 students, representing 20%. As for the third intermediate level, the number of respondents is 9 out of 50 students, representing 10%.

These percentages indicate that most of the respondents who demonstrated textual cohesion competence possess a strong native linguistic disposition. Some of them were raised in educated families with academically qualified parents, which provided them with basic foundations in linguistic knowledge and enabled them to acquire an initial understanding of certain Arabic usage patterns.

Accordingly, representing this textual phenomenon—textual cohesion—in intermediate educational programs is essential for improving reading comprehension levels and achieving effective communication. The need to teach the mechanisms of textual cohesion is a pedagogical necessity dictated by the current educational reality in Arab schools, as it emphasizes that language learning cannot be achieved through teaching isolated sentences detached from their linguistic and



social contexts. It also affirms that grammatical meanings cannot be properly organized without the support of cohesive mechanisms, through which meaning is constructed and the overall semantic structure of the linguistic text is formed.

These percentages indicate variation in learners' textual backgrounds and their awareness of textual cohesion across different educational levels. In general, as students progress to higher levels, their awareness and understanding of cohesion mechanisms increase. This suggests that lower-level classrooms require greater emphasis on textual rules that demonstrate the effectiveness of text-based approaches. It also highlights that language should be taught through complete texts rather than through isolated and fragmented sentences.

Second Section:

Attempting to correct these errors by applying the previously discussed instructional strategies.

In order to shift this trajectory toward a more effective direction and to advance an educational system that is based on sentence-level fragmentation toward a text-level approach, it is essential for learners to recognize that language essentially lies in the appropriate use of cohesive devices that weave sentences together.

To achieve this, a textual awareness strategy should be implemented with students by directing a set of exploratory questions aimed at assessing their understanding of textual links in the reading passage. Such questions may include: Why did the author choose this particular connector to link the sentences in the text? and What would happen if these connectors were removed from the text?

Similarly, learners may be asked to write a short text about their social reality, ensuring that it includes textual cohesive devices, whether semantic or linguistic. Through this task, the teacher can assess the extent of their ability to use such cohesive devices without disrupting the grammatical system of Arabic.

Outcomes of the Empirical Application:

1. The learner's ability to identify implicit or distant referents in texts, whether short or long.
2. The ability to appropriately and correctly use textual cohesive devices—both semantic and linguistic—in accordance with the principles of Arabic.
3. Enabling learners to engage in accurate reading based on reading comprehension, while reducing cognitive confusion and interpretive distraction.
4. Shifting reading practice from a sentence-by-sentence decoding approach to a reflective reading mode, characterized by contemplation and anticipation of subsequent meanings.



5. Transforming the learning process into a dynamic and flexible activity, no longer limited to superficial literal reading, but rather prioritizing meaning as a fundamental objective no less important than formal structural organization.

Discussion of the Empirical Outcomes:

These applied findings suggest that the teaching–learning process is no longer confined to rote instruction or sentence-level decomposition. Rather, it has extended to recognizing texts as one of the most effective pathways for teaching language to non-native speakers, representing one of the most efficient approaches to second language instruction. They also indicate that the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge within the educational field has become a pedagogical necessity imposed by contemporary educational realities.

The use of supplementary or cross-disciplinary knowledge in order to enhance the educational system reflects a strong indicator of the integrative perspective adopted by current educational programs. Undoubtedly, these results are consistent with findings reported in studies on teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, including those of the Arab Educational Center for the Gulf States (2019), D. Baligh Hamdi Ismail (2011), among other educational and pedagogical studies.

Conclusion of the Study:

The study concluded that sentence-based instruction alone does not enable learners to deconstruct texts or achieve effective communication. This is because meaningful communication can only be realized through interconnected sequences of sentences forming coherent texts.

It was also found that textual cohesion mechanisms—whether semantic, such as text focus, causality, and explanation, or linguistic, such as pronouns, demonstratives, and relative pronouns—play a fundamental role in enhancing and improving reading comprehension among non-native learners of Arabic.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that semantic construction or textual understanding is essentially grounded in syntactic organization, and that any disruption in grammatical structuring inevitably leads to a distortion of meaning. It also emphasized that proper syntactic organization can only be achieved through the effective employment of textual cohesion mechanisms.

Based on the findings of the applied field study, it has been shown that integrating or incorporating text-linguistic theories into the educational system and curricula constitutes an added pedagogical and scientific value that helps reduce cognitive gaps among learners of Arabic as a foreign language at Dar al-Hadith School in Duékoué.

In conclusion, this study recommends that textual features be taken into account when designing educational curricula, particularly for upper levels of basic education (middle and secondary school). It also emphasizes the need to move beyond fragmented and isolated sentence-based



exercises. Furthermore, it suggests conducting a field study to investigate the impact of textual cohesion on the evaluation and development of teachers' oral discourse.

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