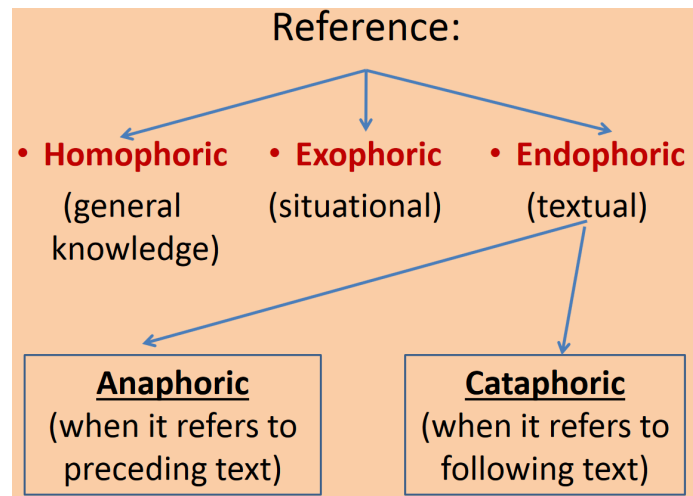


Grammatical Cohesion

Cohesion is the term for the quality of a text such that it appears as a single unit, not as a random sequence of thoughts or sentences. Students may have trouble understanding a text that seems to have easy words and concepts because they fail to identify the cohesive ties, or even because the student has not yet learned how to tie English sentences together clearly and naturally with the appropriate cohesive devices.



Earlier, we considered the ways in which lexis can help make a text more cohesive and therefore more coherent. Operating alongside these lexical cohesive devices, we often can find **a system of grammatical referencing**, which helps bind the words of a text together. Below, the two main grammatical cohesive features are outlined:

Backward reference

The most common cohesive device in texts is the backward reference to something that has been mentioned before. The technical term for this type of reference is *anaphora*. Three very common instances of anaphoric reference are:

1. Use of a pronoun to refer back to an already-mentioned noun.
2. Use of the definite article to qualify a noun that has been already been introduced with the indefinite article.
3. Substitution of an already mentioned noun by a synonym or hyponym.

Here are examples of each:

- My sister's on the phone. **She** says she needs the drill **that** she lent us.
- When I looked out of the window yesterday I saw a man and a woman standing by the gate. **The** man was wearing a hooded jacket and **the** woman was carrying a baseball bat.
- There was so much delicious **food** on display, but I'm on a diet so I had to stick to the **salad**.

Forward reference

Another frequently used cohesive device is forward reference or cataphora. Here are two examples of cataphoric reference:

- Perhaps I shouldn't tell you **this**, but when I was young I had hair down to my waist!
- Please send your reply to the **following** address.
- As soon as she had mentioned his name, **Lucy** knew she had made a mistake.

Task 1 Read the text below entitled 'Academic overdrive?' and decide what the underlined reference words refer to.

Student life is becoming increasingly difficult. Not only are students expected to perform and compete within the class, but also to devote time and energy to extra-curricular activities as well as struggle with an increasing load of homework. The push to get into the top universities has caused many overachieving students to take on heavier workloads and more challenging classes.

This push, however, doesn't end once students reach university. In fact, when they reach the top places they have worked so hard to get into, many students are forced to work even harder than they did in high school. Once in the top universities, the pressure is on to secure a place in the top graduate school. But it doesn't end there. Once students have graduated with the best results, they find that they must continue to overextend themselves in order to secure the top jobs in their particular field. Such is the emphasis on academic success.

There are many who claim that this entire system is wrong because it puts too much emphasis on measuring achievement and not enough on true learning. This in turn has inevitable effects on the students themselves. In such a high-pressure learning environment, those that find the pressure overwhelming have nowhere to turn. In an academic world measured only by academic success, many students begin to feel a low sense of worth, yet they fear to turn to anyone for help as this would be perceived as a signal of failure, an inability to cope with that which other students appear to have no problem. This can be particularly hard for foreign students as they find themselves isolated without familiar cultural or family ties in their new environment and thus they concentrate solely on their work.

Task 2 Underline all the reference words in these texts.

1. Every organization, as soon as it gets to any size (perhaps 1,000 people), begins to feel a need to systematize its management of human assets. Perhaps the pay scales have got way out of line, with apparently similar-level jobs paying very different amounts; perhaps there is a feeling that there are a lot of neglected skills in the organization that other departments could utilize if they were aware that they existed. Perhaps individuals have complained that they don't know where they stand or what their future is; perhaps the unions have requested standardized benefits and procedures. Whatever the historical origins, some kind of central organization, normally named a personnel department, is formed to put some system into the haphazardry. The systems that they adopt are often modelled on the world of production, because that is the world with the best potential for order and system.

2. We all tend to complain about our memories. Despite the elegance of the human memory system, it is not infallible, and we have to learn to live with its fallibility. It seems to be socially much more acceptable to complain of a poor memory, and it is somehow much more acceptable to blame a social lapse on 'a terrible memory', than to attribute it to stupidity or insensitivity. But how much do we know about our own memories? Obviously we need to remember our memory lapses in order to know just how bad our memories are. Indeed one of the most amnesic patients I have ever tested was a lady suffering from Korsakoff's syndrome, memory loss following chronic alcoholism. The test involved presenting her with lists of words; after each list she would comment with surprise on her inability to recall the words, saying: 'I pride myself on my memory!' She appeared to have forgotten just how bad her memory was'.

<http://esl.fis.edu>

<http://www.uniba.it>

<http://www.englishpracticeonline.com>

<http://www.uefap.com>