14 Text and discourse

A Warm-up

1 Your trainer will give you the first line of a text. Listen to the instructions and do the activity.

2 Read the text that you started and answer the questions.

1 Do you like the text?
2 Does it make sense?
3 Does it hold together, i.e. is it cohesive?

3 Compare ideas with a partner.

B Connected text

1 Work in groups of three. Look at the first line of a story, then read the sentences a–e, and put them in the right order to complete the text.

Once upon a time there was a farmer who dug up a big earthenware jar in his field.

a So the man sold the brushes, and the family managed to live quite comfortably.
b No matter how many were taken out, others kept on taking their place.
c But while the boy was brushing the inside of the jar, he dropped the brush inside and the jar suddenly began to fill with brushes.
d So he carried it home and asked his son to clean it out.
e 'This will make a fine jar for storing rice,' he said to himself.

2 Your trainer will show you a copy of the text. Check that your version matches the original. If not, account for any differences.

3 Work in pairs. Discuss what kinds of knowledge you drew on to be able to order the sentences.

C Cohesion

1 Work in pairs. Look at the sentences in B2 again and identify the ways that each sentence connected to the one before it.

2 Read this summary of the main lexical and grammatical ways a text can be made cohesive. Then read the rest of the folk tale and find at least one example of these cohesive devices. Compare with a partner.

Lexical:

- repetition of words, or words from the same word family (e.g. *brushing – brush – brushes)*
- use of general words to refer to something more specific that is mentioned elsewhere (e.g. *a farmer – the man; his son – the boy*)
- use of words from the same lexical set (*farmer – field – rice*)
- leaving a word out because it can be recovered from the previous text, as in *No matter how many [brushes] were taken out …* (this is called 'ellipsis')
- substitution of previously mentioned words with pronouns: … *<u>others</u> kept on taking their place.*

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Grammatical:

- reference using pronouns: *So he carried it home and asked his son to clean it out.*
- back reference using different determiners, such as the definite article (*the jar)* or possessives (*his son*)
- linkers, such as *So … But …*

Some time later, while they were shovelling out brushes, a coin fell into the jar by mistake. At once the brushes disappeared and the jar began to fill with money. So now the family became rich, for they could take as much money out of the jar as ever they wished.

Now, the man had an old grandfather at home, who was weak and shaky. Since they needed as many hands as possible, his grandson set the poor man to work shovelling money out of the jar. One day, however, the old man's strength gave out, and he toppled into the jar and died. At once the money disappeared, and the whole jar began to fill itself with dead grandfathers. The farmer had to pull them out one by one and have them buried. For this purpose he had to spend all the money he had gained. So, in a rage, he took a brick and smashed the jar, and he was now just as poor as he once had been.

3 Work in pairs. Look at these exercises from two coursebooks. What aspects of cohesion does each one focus on?

a

In this lesson, you . . .

- plan an argument.
- contrast ideas.
- avoid errors with *whereas.*

Task **Write a script for an online debate.**

Should employers judge applicants by their online profiles?

A **Brainstorm** **Read the question above. Write three reasons to answer "yes" and three reasons to answer "no."**

B **Look at a model** **Read the debate script. Circle three more expressions that contrast ideas.**

Many employers check the Internet for information about job applicants. However, this is not a fair way to judge a person. On the one hand, employers need people who will fit into the company. An online profile gives information that employers will not see on a résumé – for example, if the person is aggressive or has extreme views. On the other hand, an online profile is for friends, whereas a résumé is for employers. A résumé provides the most relevant details about qualifications and work experience. An online profile may contain information that employers should not use to judge an applicant, such as age or religion. In conclusion, while there are good reasons to check an applicant's online profile, it is not a professional document. For this reason, it is not fair, in my opinion, to judge candidates by their personal online profiles.

Viewpoint 1

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b

With a partner, use reference words from the box to replace the underlined words.

This They He She Them It These

1 We need to make an effort to understand how things work in other cultures. The effort is the first step to effective communication across cultures.
2 Many presenters like to use gestures. Gestures help the audience to follow the flow of a presentation.
3 Using idioms in a presentation can cause trouble. Idioms can sometimes have two meanings.
4 I had a conversation with a Malaysian woman. The Malaysian woman told me a story about a presentation that went wrong.

Business Explorer 2

D Coherence

1 Read the text below and decide what is wrong with it.

Once upon a time there were two brothers, who lived in the same house. The house known as 'Inde Steenrotse', situated on the Dwars Quay at Middelburg, dated 1590, is noteworthy for its large panels in high relief. For this relief, much thanks. Our thanks are also due to Jill Florent and Penny Hands for their editorial expertise. I recognized the faces of the two last-named, but I had not, until Morton informed me, known who they were. And since that time no one ever heard from Old Dschang again.

2 How does this text support the argument that a text may be cohesive but not coherent?

E Putting it into practice

1 Read this example of learner writing and answer the questions.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I would like to express you what is my opinion about the programmes you are showing through our local TV Channel. I supose you are not psicologist, you are 'only' a manager, but I think any person should know that TV is a mass-media you should use to release information, entertainment, culture, or anything like this. But you did not get it, and you use TV as a gun, as a weapon, trying to scare everyone who lays in his comfortable sofa, waiting for an only acceptable TV programme just to spend the last few day hours relaxed.

In the other hand we can choose between another kind of clever and interesting programmes such as a Miss World Award or the terrific Scotch Whisky manufacturing story.

Please sir, I would be very grateful if you take out this horrible productions from our little image cages we have in front of the sofa.

Your's faithfully

a How cohesive is it? (= Does it hang together?)
b How coherent is it? (= Does it make sense?)

2 Work in pairs. Decide how you could help the learner improve the cohesion and coherence of the text in activity E1.

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KEY WORDS FOR TEACHERS

Check you know the meanings of these terms.

- *cohesion, coherence*
- *reference*
- *ellipsis, substitution*
- *linkers*
- *genre*

REFLECTION

Read the text that you started (and which your classmates continued) in task A and answer these questions.

a According to the principles you have been looking at in this session, in what ways is the text *cohesive*?
b In what ways is it *coherent*?
c What kind of text (or *genre)* does it belong to (if any)?

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