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# 词汇重复与英语篇章

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**摘要:**借助 Hoey (1991) 的词汇模式分析方法,我们从教材中任选了一篇非叙事体英语篇章,进行分析.本文的目的试图说明词汇重复在教学篇章组织中的作用,即词汇的重复,特别是跨句重复,大大有助于教学篇章的连贯.我们通过统计分析发现,与上下文形成词汇重复关系多的句子在教学语篇中处于核心地位,反之处于次要地位.中心句和边缘句的判别可根据词汇重复相关的句子数目来判定,同时也可辨明主题控制句和主题结论句.从各句之间形成的词汇重复网络中,我们能大体摸清主题的发展轨迹,把此研究成果应用于英语教学实践中会起到至关重要的作用,给英语教师以更多的启示.

**关键词:**词汇重复;中心句;教学篇章

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## 0 Introduction

Halliday and Hasan insist that cohesion is necessary though not a sufficient condition for the generation of a text in their book *Cohesion in English* (1976). Other linguists such as Widdowson (1978), de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), and Brown and Yule (1983) posit that cohesion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the creation of a text from a variety of research perspectives. They provide some examples to illustrate their ideas. In fact, they misunderstand Halliday and Hasan. The study of Halliday and Hasan emphasizes the text itself, especially, of the written text.

The text itself is realized by lexicogrammar, particularly its lexis, which provides concrete linguistic clues to the explication of the coherence of a text with its macro-structure and semiotic structure, because lexis carries textual meaning. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) sample analysis shows that lexical cohesion accounts for nearly 50 percent of ties. Hoey (1991) claims that lexical cohesion

is the only type of cohesion that regularly forms multiple relationships. Therefore, lexical cohesion plays an important role in the process of the creation of coherent text.

In our English teaching, lexical cohesion is a common phenomenon. Lexical cohesion mainly includes two types: reiteration (repetition) and collocation. We also notice that frequent occurrences of some lexical items in the same teaching text give prominence to the theme of a text.

This study is intended to probe into the functions of lexical repetition of teaching text in text organization and its contribution to textual coherence.

## 1 Types of Lexical Repetition

Firstly, we must identify precisely what is going to count as repetition in my description. We know words relate to other words in many different ways. We call these relations *links*, that is, repetition as links. We think lexical repetition mainly includes:

(1) *Simple lexical repetition* occurs when a lexical

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item that has already occurred in a text is repeated with no greater alteration than is entirely explicable in terms of a closed grammatical paradigm. For example: London — London, poem — poems, and woman — women.

(2) *Complex lexical repetition* occurs either when two lexical items share a lexical morpheme (root), but are not formally identical, or when they are formally identical, but have different grammatical functions. For example, argue — argument, meet — meeting, human (adj.) — human (n.).

(3) *Simple paraphrase* occurs when two items may substitute for each other in context without loss or gain in specificity and with no discernible change in meaning. For example, photo — picture, the two words are synonymous. The link is a simple mutual paraphrase. If the substitution works in one direction only, it is partial paraphrase, for instance, teacher — lady (Their teacher is very kind. The whole class likes the lady).

(4) *Complex paraphrase* occurs when two lexical items are definable such that one of the items includes the other, although they share no lexical morpheme. Complex paraphrase includes two types. The first relates to our converge of antonym, for instance, hot — cold, dry — wet. The second situation in which complex paraphrase may be recognized occurs when the items under attention is a complex repetition of another item (for example, writer and writings) and also a simple paraphrase of a third (for example, writer and author). As a result, the second item “writings” is related to the third item “author” by complex paraphrase.

(5) *Superordinate, Hyponymic repetition* If the more general word follows, it cannot be said to supply any information that was not already contained in the earlier item. If it also meets the contextual criterion that we applied to lexical repetition and paraphrase, we call such a link *superordinate repetition*. If one is superordinate, the other is hyponym. The superordinate is followed by the hyponym. The two items have common referent; we call such a link *hyponymic repetition*.

6) *Co-reference* is a kind of link between items with an identical target, for instance, Mrs. Thatcher — the Prime Minister.

## 2 Identification of Repetition Links

Now we are ready to begin the process of analysis. The first step in the analysis is to identify the *repetition links*. We have noticed that sentences are, in various ways, related to each other across the text. They are, however, not of equal importance. Some sentences are *central*, with relations with many other sentences. Others do not have relations with many other sentences and are therefore *marginal*. These complex relations between sentences are, to begin with, manifested in lexical links. In the process of analysis, there is a general principle that an item may only make one link per sentence. If an item repeats two items from another sentence, then only one link is registered. Conversely if a sentence contains two items, both of which repeat an earlier item, again only one link is recorded.

We will take Unit 9, Text “Gender Roles from a Cultural Perspective” in New College English Book II as a sample to identify its repetition links. In this text, there are twenty-six long sentences. We can take these sentences two at a time and examine the links between each two. The specific process of analysis will be omitted because of the limit of space.

## 3 Bond and Net

After identifying all the links, we may take the step; count the number of links between each two sentences. We draw a matrix on which the number of links between each two sentences is plotted. For instance, as shown in the matrix, Sentences (1) and (2) share three links, and sentences (2) and (3) share no link. If two sentences share three or more links, we consider the relationship between the two strong. They form, as we call it, a *bond*, since three is an above-average degree of connection in this text.

Now we can take the next step, and that is to summarize the “bonding” among sentences. In the following list, each sentence has two numbers except for the first and the last, i.e., Sentences (1) and (26):

[illegible]

Table 1

Sentence (1) —, 5	Sentence (14) 5, 4
Sentence (2) 1, 1	Sentence (15) 5, 3
Sentence (3) 0, 0	Sentence (16) 1, 0
Sentence (4) 1, 0	Sentence (17) 8, 5
Sentence (5) 2, 1	Sentence (18) 3, 4
Sentence (6) 1, 12	Sentence (19) 0, 0
Sentence (7) 1, 0	Sentence (20) 2, 3
Sentence (8) 1, 2	Sentence (21) 4, 1
Sentence (9) 2, 1	Sentence (22) 2, 3
Sentence (10) 2, 7	Sentence (23) 7, 1
Sentence (11) 0, 2	Sentence (24) 6, 1
Sentence (12) 2, 5	Sentence (25) 3, 0
Sentence (13) 3, 3	Sentence (26) 2, —

The first numeral indicates the number of bonds a sentence has with sentences preceding it, and the second that with those following it.

## 4 Central and Marginal Sentences

Hoey (1991) treats the sentences as interrelated packages of information, connected by multiple repetition. Some sentences are *central* that make a number of connections with other sentences, and are germane to the

development of the theme(s) of a text while other sentences are *marginal* that show fewer signs of connection with the rest of the text, and contribute less to the development of its theme(s). Both these phenomena can be utilized to produce coherent sub-texts from the main text.

The first thing one might notice about Table 1 is that there is great variation in the number of bonds a sentence may have formed with other sentences. This variation can be expressed in tabular form as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Quantity of sentences	Quantity of bonds
2 (Sentences : 3, 19)	none
3 (Sentences : 4, 7, 16)	1
3 (Sentences : 2, 11, 26)	2
4 (Sen 4 (Sentences : 5, 8, 9, 25)	3
0	4
4 (Sentences : 1, 20, 21, 22)	5
1 (Sentences : 13)	6
3 (Sentences : 12, 18, 24)	7
2 (Sentences : 15, 23)	8
2 (Sentences : 10, 14)	9
none	10
none	11
none	12
2 2 (sentences : 6, 17)	13

From table 2, we can see that sentences (3), (19), (4), (7) and (16) have either no bond or only

one bond with another sentence. They are, therefore, *marginal*.

In this text, twelve sentences have no or less than three bonds and fourteen sentences have five or more. Four bonds would appear to be a clear threshold, since we have no sentences with just four bonds. It would, seem reasonable to regard any sentence with more than five bonds in this text as *central*.

Now we take five or more than bonds to be criterion of centrality, there are fourteen sentences meet the criterion. They are sentences 1, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24. Placed together, they form the summary or outline. In fact, if we make some changes, the outline of this text is as the following:

#### 1) Introduction (Para. 1)

It has been proved repeatedly that the various types of behavior, emotions, and interests that constitute being masculine and feminine are patterned by both heredity and culture. (Sentence 1)

2) There is a cultural bias in education that favors boys over girls. (Sentence 6) (Para. 2-4)

#### Supporting evidence:

A. Teachers called on males in class far more than on female students. (Sentence 10) (Para. 2)

#### Two examples:

i. In many of former all-women's colleges, the boys were "taking over" the classroom discussions and active participation by women students had diminished noticeably. (Sentence 12)

ii. A similar subordination of female to male students has also been observed in law and medical school classrooms in recent years. (Sentence 13)

B. Teachers assigned boys and girls different tasks in accordance with stereotyped gender role. (Sentence 14) (Para. 3)

#### An example:

A teacher had the little boys perform the scientific "experiment" while the girls were given the task of putting the materials away. (Sentence 15)

C. Gender-biased education is also reflected in the typical American teacher's assumption that boys will do better in the "hard", "masculine" subjects of math and science while girls are expected to have better verbal and reading. (Sentence 17) (Para. 4)

#### Three examples:

i. American boys do develop reading problems, while girls, who are superior to boys in math up to the age of nine, fall behind from then on. (Sentence 18)

ii. In Germany, all studies are considered "masculine", and it is girls who develop reading problems. (Sentence 20)

iii. In Japan, where early education appears to be nonsexist, both girls and boys do equally well in reading. (Sentence 21)

3) The educational bias begins at home. (Sentence 22) (Para. 5)

#### Supporting evidence:

A. Boy preschoolers were permitted to go away from home in a much wider area than girl preschoolers. (Sentence 23)

B. Boys were encouraged to develop intellectual curiosity and physical skills, while girls are filled with fears of the world outside the home with the desire to be approved of for their "goodness" and obedience to rules. (Sentence 24)

If we take nine or more bonds to be criterion of centrality, there are four sentences that meet the criterion. They are sentences 6, 10, 14, 17. If we combine the four sentences together, we will get the short summary as the following:

6 A study of American public schools showed that there is a cultural bias in education that favors boys over girls. 10 From nursery school to postgraduate courses, teachers were shown to call on males in class far more than on female students. 14 Research done by the Sadlers showed that sometimes teachers unknowingly prevented girls from participating as actively as boys in class by assigning them different tasks in accordance with stereotyped gender roles. 17 The typical American teacher [assumes] that boys will do better in the "hard", "masculine" subjects of math and science while girls are expected to have better verbal and reading skills.

Sentence 6 is the theme of the text. Sentences 10, 14, 17 are supporting evidences by which the theme is developed. The sub-text is very coherent.

Therefore, from these outline and sub-text, we can easily trace the clue of the thematic development.

## 5 Topic Opening and Topic Closing

We have seen that both the elimination of marginal sentences and the combination of central ones may be used to create summary or outline.

We also know the bonding is unevenly distributed. Some sentences have the great majority of their bonds with earlier sentences, while others are dominantly bonded with later sentences.

Hoey (1991: 119) states: "A reasonable interpretation of the variation in the distribution of bonding is that those with a high second co-ordinate are *topic-opening* and those with a high first co-ordinate are *topic-closing*."

From Table 2, we know sentence 6, with its remarkably high second co-ordinate such as sentences 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, is fairly obviously setting a topic for the whole text.

6 Recently, for example, a study of American public schools showed that ~~there is a cultural bias in education that favors boys over girls.~~

We have underlined the clause that appears to support the topic-opening function of the sentence in the whole text. Sentence 6 is placed together with the sequent bonded sentences to create a summary nearly like the above outline. This summary illustrates the development of the text.

In this text, there is no remarkable topic closing. We have seen that it is possible to identify both marginal and central sentences with the help of the nets and to use them to create summaries and outline of the text. We have also shown that the nets have something to tell us about the way topics are introduced and dropped in the course of a text.

## 6 Conclusion

Through analyzing a teaching text, Hoey's pattern theory of lexis is proved and enriched. Applying the findings to English teaching, our English teachers can improve their teaching methods. In reading skill teaching: We can decode a text from a macro-perspective. We can help students to catch the main idea of a text and

trace the development of its theme by leading them to identify central sentences, marginal sentences, topic-opening sentences and topic-closing sentences. To put it in easy words, we should put emphasis on training students two basic fast reading techniques: skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific information or facts. Identifying topic sentences is helpful when skimming a text. Identifying relevant sentences that may make most direct use of bonding is also useful when scanning a text. Identifying bonded pairs unconsciously is very useful when reading a text carefully. In writing skill teaching: We can guide students to conceive the outline or summaries of a text. Students should be advised to avoid clumsy repetition by adopting different ways of lexical repetition. We should encourage those who are learning to write to think of their writing non-linearly. They should be advised to make connections between what they are currently saying and what they said before, and later intend to say. Otherwise, they are likely to drift from topic to topic. In the teaching of lexis: The words should be learnt in the morphological forms in which they are encountered. We should concentrate attention on some lexical items of high frequent occurrences that make bonded pairs. The bond-making items would give students quicker access to the content of a text. We take the text "Gender Roles from a Cultural Perspective" as example. From the title, we can predict these words are very important to the development of the theme such as *gender*, *boy/girl*, *man/woman*, *male/female*, *masculine/feminine*, *bias*, and *culture/education*. These lexical items are high frequent words in the text. We can infer that the sentence involving most of them is the theme of the text. Sentence 6 (Recently, for example, a study of American public schools showed that ~~there is a cultural bias in education that favors boys over girls.~~) is a self-evident example. In a word, the application of the findings of our study in practice will be of significance in our English teaching.

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Lexical Repetition and English Text

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**Abstract:** By means of Hoey's (1991) approach to the analysis of lexis pattern in text, we analyze a non-narrative English text with long sentences chosen from our textbook. The paper tries to prove the functions of lexical repetition in text organization and its contribution to textual coherence. It is possible for our English teachers to get some implications from the study. Applying the findings in practice will be of significance in our English teaching.

**Key words:** lexical repetition; central sentences; teaching text

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On the Writing of English Abstract of Science and Technology Theses

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**Abstract:** This paper points out the importance of English abstract to science and technology theses for international communication and some mistakes of English abstract written by a few authors. And then it, from the aspects of its length of an article, tense, voice and person, discusses the ways of how to write English abstract in detail.

**Key words:** science and technology thesis; English abstract; the quality of a thesis