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Understanding Coherence and Cohesion in Academic Writing	عنوان المحاضرة باللغة الإنكليزية
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• • Swales, John M. & Feak, Christine B. – <i>Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills</i>	المصادر او المراجع

Lecture: Understanding Coherence and Cohesion in Academic Writing

Course: Academic Writing / Academic Research

Level: Third-year undergraduate students

Language: English

Duration: ~45 minutes

Lecture Objectives

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

- Define **cohesion** and **coherence** in academic writing.
 - Understand the difference between the two concepts.
 - Identify cohesive devices and strategies to improve coherence.
 - Apply these concepts to improve their writing structure and clarity.
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1. Introduction

Clear and effective writing is not only about grammar and vocabulary. Two critical elements that make writing understandable and easy to follow are:

- **Cohesion** – how sentences and ideas stick together
 - **Coherence** – how clearly and logically ideas are organized
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2. What is Cohesion?

Definition: Cohesion refers to the **grammatical and lexical connections** between sentences and parts of a text.

It's about **surface structure**: how parts of the sentence are **linked using words and phrases**.

☞ □ Examples of Cohesive Devices:

- **Pronouns:** he, she, it, they
- **Conjunctions:** and, but, because, although
- **Transitional words:** however, therefore, in addition, on the other hand
- **Repetition / Synonyms:** using the same words or related terms

Example:

The weather was bad. **Therefore**, the flight was delayed.

□ 3. What is Coherence?

Definition: Coherence refers to the **logical flow and clarity of ideas** in a text.

It's about how well the **ideas are organized**, whether the reader can easily **understand the writer's point**, and whether the **text "makes sense"** as a whole.

Coherence comes from:

- **Clear topic sentences**
- **Logical structure**
- **Smooth transitions**
- **Consistency in argument or theme**

Example (Poor Coherence):

I love coffee. My sister went to France. It rained yesterday.

Better Coherence:

I love coffee. I usually drink it in the morning before work. It helps me stay focused throughout the day.

🌀 4. Key Differences: Cohesion vs. Coherence

Feature	Cohesion	Coherence
Focus	Surface connection of sentences	Deep logical connection of ideas
Tools	Grammatical and lexical devices	Structure, logic, clarity
Visible?	Yes – can be identified easily	Not always visible – based on reader understanding
Example Tool	Pronouns, conjunctions, transition words	Paragraph unity, logical order
Without it?	Text feels “disconnected” on the sentence level	Text feels “confusing” or illogical

□ 5. Practice Examples

Example 1: Cohesion but No Coherence

I woke up late. **Therefore**, I didn't have time for breakfast. **As a result**, I missed the bus. **On the other hand**, I love watching movies.

✓ **Cohesive** – uses correct connectors

✗ **Not coherent** – the last sentence is off-topic

Example 2: Coherence but Weak Cohesion

My father was a strict man. He expected everyone to follow his rules. The house had a lot of structure. I learned discipline at an early age.

✓ **Logically connected ideas**

✗ Needs more **linking words** to improve flow

Improved:

My father was a strict man. **As a result**, he expected everyone to follow his rules. **Because of this**, the house had a lot of structure. **Consequently**, I learned discipline at an early age.

💡 6. How to Improve Cohesion and Coherence

For Cohesion:

- Use appropriate transition words and linking devices.
- Avoid overusing the same word – use synonyms or pronouns.
- Make sure subjects and verbs agree across sentences.

For Coherence:

- Outline before writing – have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Make sure each paragraph has **one clear main idea**.

- Use topic sentences and supporting details.
 - Maintain a logical order (chronological, cause-effect, etc.)
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Useful Resources

1. Bailey, S. (2018). *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*. Routledge.
2. Purdue OWL – <https://owl.purdue.edu>
3. Cambridge Academic English Series
4. Swales, J., & Feak, C. (2012).