

Cohesion in conversation: A Discourse Stylistics Approach on Amitav Gosh's Sea of Poppies

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Abstract: *The assumption that stylistic analysis of literary and non literary texts is hardly enough to bring a comprehensive linguistic appreciation has led the stylisticians to explore new approaches in stylistics. Discourse stylistics widely opens the door of stylistics to a dynamic world. Cohesion in discourse stylistics is important as far as a text is concerned. Amitav Ghosh, a well known writer from Bengal though started his career writing nonfictional texts later he inaugurated a new epoch in fictional world. "Sea of Poppies" the first novel in the Ibis trilogy has been the finest of all his works. This article illustrates how the author makes use cohesive markers to create cohesion in the novel and establish a unique style in story telling.*

Keywords: Discourse stylistics, cohesive markers; grammatical and lexical cohesion

1. Introduction

Discourse stylistics is an innovative approach in stylistic analysis. It is a combination of discourse and stylistic analysis and a branch of stylistics which draws specifically on the techniques and methods of discourse analysis (Simpson Paul, 2002:136). One of the fundamental tasks of the discourse analysis is to figure out what makes a text a text and a conversation a conversation. A text becomes a texture by cohesion and coherence. Cohesion primarily deals with linguistic features in texts whereas coherence goes in search of frameworks of the texts. Cohesion is not just linguistic features within in the text but the features which lead the readers to perform certain mental operations to locate and associate earlier or later parts of the texts in which they are going through (Halliday, 1976:4). Cohesion is the quality in a text that forces you to look either backward or forward in the text in order to make a comprehension of the text. In discourse stylistics the unique style of the author while creating cohesion in the story telling is found out. There are three types of cohesion such as; grammatical, lexical and literary and among these grammatical and lexical cohesion are analyzed based on selected discourses from the novel.

1.1 Grammatical Cohesion

The devices connected with grammatical cohesion are; conjunction, references, substitution and ellipsis.

1.1.1 Conjunction

Conjunction refers to the use of various connecting words to join together clauses and sentences. Conjunction causes the reader to look back to the first clause in a pair of joined clauses to make sense of the second clause. The significant thing is that they do not just establish the relationship but tell the nature of relationship. Hence there are different groups of conjunctions depended on the kind of relationship between clauses and sentences. The words such as; and, moreover, furthermore, in addition, as well etc. are called additives which add information to the previous clause or sentence. Those conjunctions which create contrast with the previous sentence or clause are called contrastive. The words like; but, however are some of them. Causative keep

cause effect relationship between sentences or clause. The words such as; because, consequently, therefore etc. are some of them. Sequential conjunctions indicate the order facts or events come in such as; firstly, subsequently, then, finally etc.

1.1.2 Reference

References are pronouns used to tie together the whole text. The word or group of words that a pronoun refers to is called its antecedent. There are three kinds of references; anaphoric, cataphoric and exophoric. When anaphoric point back to a word used before, the cataphoric point forward to a word which has not been used yet. The exophoric is quite different which point something outside the text (Halliday, 1976:31).

1.1.3 Substitution

It is similar to reference where pronouns are used to refer whereas in substitution other words are used to refer to an antecedent which is either appeared earlier or appearing later. Substitution can also be used to refer to the verb or the entire predicate of a clause.

1.1.4 Ellipsis

It is the omission of a noun, verb, and phrase on the assumption that it is understood from the linguistics context. In order to understand this context and read the gaps the reader has to go back to the previous clauses or sentences.

1.2 Lexical Cohesion

This type of cohesion occurs as a result of the semantic relationship between words. There are different ways of creating lexical cohesion at semantic level such as; repetition, synonyms, superordinates and general words.

1.2.1 Repetition

The most common form of lexical cohesion is repetition. The repeated words, phrases or word phrases threads together to create a text.

1.2.2 Synonyms

The synonyms can also be used for creating lexical cohesion at semantic level. Instead of repeating the same word, different synonymic words are used to create the semantic

chain of meaning. Here the repetition of same word is deliberately avoided and substituted by synonyms.

1.2.3 Superordinates

These are those words which form a head of multiple family members. This is also called hyponym which comprises all the elements in the same family. It is an umbrella term that includes many.

1.2.4 General words

It includes all other varieties of words which have some kind of significance in the linguistic analysis.

2. Analysis of Texts

2.1 Conversation Discourse

Conversation discourses may be varied in cohesion level based on the different contexts and relationship between different characters. The discursive structures however generally shares cohesive markers, certain discourses varies radically and form a unique cohesion. The cohesive markers vary largely in those discourses of critical and crisis situations. Five conversations analyzed here in both grammatical and lexical level of cohesion.

2.1.1 Deeti and Chandan Sing

The conversation between Deeti and Chandan Singh (Ghosh, 2009:6) seem to be a complex communication. There are two anaphoric references in possessive pronouns 'he' and 'his' which indicates the Chandan Singh and four anaphoric reference to Deeti in second person singular pronoun 'you'. The demonstrative pronoun 'this' substitutes the phrase 'working alone'. Only once the sequential conjunction 'again' and causative 'after all' is used.

In lexical cohesion no repetition has been found out. There are very few near synonyms such as; 'son' and 'helping hand', 'working' and 'carry on' in the text. Though the presence of Deeti is there in context, there are no replies for any of the questions asked by Chandan Singh. Hence it is a monologue in that sense. There are four questions protruding to Deeti by Chandan Singh and he himself gives the answer to the questions.

2.1.2 Deeti and Paulett

This conversation between Deeti and Paulet appears (Ghosh, 2009:494) at the end part of the novel. The execution of Kalua has been planned by Captain Mr. Crowle and Subedar. Meanwhile an escape plan is worked out among the convicts and inmates. This is one of the most critical as well as emotional situation in the novel. This is very well reflected in formation of conversation.

In grammatical cohesion different types of conjunction markers have been used such as additives like; and, rather, or etc., contrastive like; but, whatever etc., sequential like; before, again etc. These tie together intact the conversation discourse through out the discourse. In reference level

Deeti, Kalua and Paulett are the major antecedents of the conversation wherein at reference level 27 pronouns have been referred to Deeti, 15 to Paulett and 4 to Kalua. Among

these out of 27, 19 times it is referred in third person by the author and only eight times in first person. Out of 15 reference of Paulet seven times being referred in third person, four times each in first person and second person. Kalua is referred only in third person but in anaphoric reference. Ellipsis has been used two times in the texts for example the very second line of this discourse demonstrative pronoun 'the knowledge of this' and middle of the conversation Paulett replies that 'there is a chance'. Both are omissions of clauses which are supposed to be there. The substitutes like; the girls, it, *jora*, one person, her husband have been used now and then.

In lexical cohesion repetitions come as many as 26 times altogether. Among these 6 to Deeti, 5 to Paulett, 4 to Pugli a synonym of Paulett, 3 to Bahuji a synonym to Deeti and other nouns come two times altogether. There are three nouns synonymously used quite a number of times such as Bahuji for Deeti, Pugli for Paulett and *jora* for Kalua. When we look at the chain of lexical words which link the discourse together are words indicating parts of human body. The words like; ear, cheeks, head, limb, arm, shoulder, finger etc. have been distributed from beginning till end. There are also nouns and adjectives telling the mental and emotional status of the characters such as; furious, nervousness, worried, cried, appraising etc.

2.1.3 Deeti and Kabutri,

The conversation between Deeti and her daughter kabutri (Ghosh, 2009:6) is having nine references among these five to Kabutri and four to Deeti. The anaphoric references to Kabutri three fall in third person pronoun and two in second person. All the four references are third person pronouns whereas one cataphoric and three anaphoric references. The question by Deeti remains as an ellipsis, so late to wake up? The conjunctions additives and causatives come twice and once respectively.

In lexical cohesion synonyms such as her mother to Deeti, her daughter to kabutri are referred. The same question asked both in English and Bojpuri creates a repetition or a synonym in broad sense. General words of things are given such as; doorway, poppy petals, fire, iron tawa etc. the superordinate word 'work' having different expressions such as; sweeping, stoking, heating and so on. The four questions by Deeti remained unanswered by Kabutri show the attitudinal relationship between mother and daughter.

2.1.4 Mr. Crowle and Serang Ali

The conversation between the captain and native lascar (Ghosh, 2009:227) shows another dimension of cohesion in the discourse. The unique pattern of cohesion is because of the unequal power relationship between the characters. How the possession of power is reflected and expressed with authority in the conversation has been very diligently presented by the author. In conversation level interactions between unequals invite special attention.

In grammatical cohesion conjunctions have been used very less in two categories like; additives (9) and contrastive (2). This means no complex and compound sentences rather simple direct sentences have been used. The number of references are comparatively very less among unequals

where three antecedents are dominant; Serang Ali, Mr. Crowle or Burra Malum and Pinto. The lascar Serang Ali has been referred with 16 times and all in third person. Burra Malum is referred with four times and Pinto two. The noun 'lascar' and definite article 'the' are cataphoric reference to Serang Ali whereas reference to Malum is an anaphoric reference. Substitutions are like; this time of the day refers to midday and Burra Malum for Mr. Crowle.

In lexical cohesion the repetition of nouns and verbs occurs many times such as; 'swear' three times, 'Serang' four times, 'Malum' four times, 'midday' two times, the verb 'kick' two times and so on. The words like oath and swearing seem to be synonymous. The simile 'drunk as a fidler's bitch' and metaphors like 'over-shrubbed sniplouse' and 'soor-ka-batcha' are used to refer lascar Serang. The general words form a lexical chain and gives lexical cohesion. The words like; head, mouth, tongue, knees, foot etc are distributed through out the discourse. The tone of verbs used in the conversation sounds like rapid, rude and radical actions. The verbs such as; kick, pull, stuff, drop, jump, snatch, spew, macerate etc are verbs of actions performed both by Malum and Serang Ali. This turns up the discourse into a dynamic discourse.

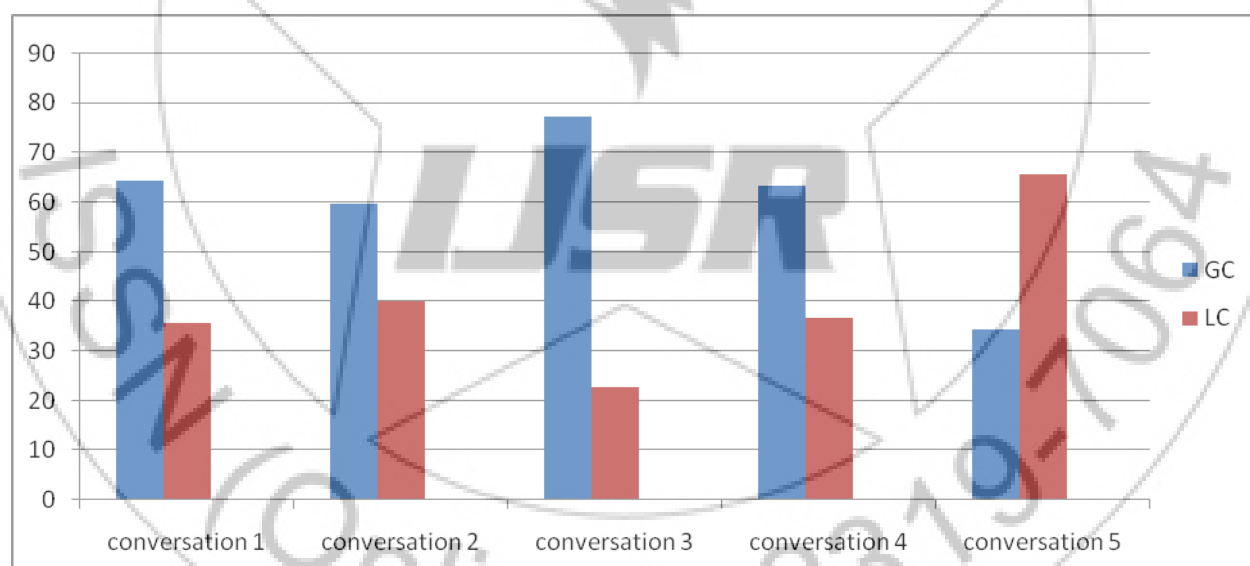
2.1.5 Kalua and Bhyro Singh

Kalua in a turn of events has been caught by the armed men accusing the murder of one of the silhadars (Ghosh, 2009:487). Though it was an accidental death, the crime accused on Kalua and now he is in the rope before the

captain and Bhyro Singh. Subedar Bhyro Singh who is being a powerful Subedar orders to beat Kalua over many times. This scene is the murder scene of Bhyro Singh by Kalua. The conversation is built up almost in oneway by Bhyro Singh. The cohesive markers vary in this discourse.

In grammatical cohesion the two major antecedents are Bhyro Singh and Kalua. Bhyro Singh is referred more than seven times and Kalua is being referred more than 28 times. Five of the reference used in the second person and three in first person in direct conversation and other 20 in third person. Conjunction markers are very less used in this murder scene discourse such as; and (8), sequential conjunctions like again (8) and contrastive 'but' only once. Ellipsis has been coming frequently, at least four times, since conversations remain unfinished here and there.

In lexical level Bhyro Singh has been used synonymously with Malik, Subedar etc. There are many repetitions of names come in this discourse such as; Kalua (3), Bhyro Singh (2), Subedar (3), adverb again (6), nouns such as head (6), wrist (4). The words of superordinates come as many as 12 lexical items in this conversation. The words such as; arm, skin, ear, head, wrist, lips, teeth, jaw, back, hand, waist, neck etc. there are many verbs which modulates the situation with special voice effects such as; buzzing, echo, crack, drumbeat, flick, jerking etc. and human voices such as; mutter, utter, whisper etc. The synonymous words such as blow and lash, whisper and mutter etc. occurs often in the text.



Cohesion in Different Discourses (GC- Grammatical Cohesion, LC- Lexical Cohesion)

3. Findings and Suggestions

- 1) Cohesion varies invariably in different discourses, however grammatical cohesion dominates generally.
- 2) Only in one conversation a strong lexical dominance has been found and that was a conversation with many mental as well as physical actions and ended with a murder.
- 3) The more number of references to an antecedent whether a character or anything, means it is dominant and focus of attraction.
- 4) The more number of substitution and ellipsis makes discourse precise and concise.
- 5) Different types of conjunctions make the discourse reasonable, logical and descriptive. The less number of conjunctions invites imaginations and assumptions. Discourse would become ambiguous and vague.
- 6) The less number of super ordinates and lexical units make discourse less in literariness and less in action.
- 7) Repetition and synonyms emphasize the character or objects which are being repeated and used synonymously.

- 8) Action oriented conversations demand more lexical items than grammatical.

4. Future Scope of the Study

- 1) A comparative study between two Indian writings and between Indian and non- Indian writings in perspective of cohesion is strongly recommended.
- 2) Cohesion in conversation discourses can be extended to other discourses such as; narrative discourse, poetic discourse and other genres of writings. This would give a variety of discursive styles in creative writing.
- 3) Cohesive structures and power structures are closely related. Hence use of power in language can be studied on the basis of cohesive markers. The speeches of people in media can be analyzed and compared in terms of power structures.

5. Conclusion

Cohesion and coherence are two pillars of discourse analysis. Cohesion is the solid part of the discourse. The rationality of a discourse is verified on the basis of the cohesive markers used in the discourse. If cohesion tells about how the text is bound together, coherence explains how a text is narrated. The stylistics features in story telling demands an expert use of cohesive markers. The more use of cohesion, enhances the more solidarity and understanding in discourse. Amitav Gosh has well made use the cohesive markers in various discourses. The more dominance in grammatical cohesion than lexical reminds us the fiction is filled with narration rather than literariness. At cohesive level narrative as well as cognitive aspect is focused instead of play of words with literariness. The literary devices such as; metaphor, simile, hyperbole etc. has not been used in cohesion. Hence he follows a non literary story telling or realistic story telling method in conversations. This makes his narration significant and unique in style.

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