Lexical Cohesion in Jennie's Interview on The Jennifer Hudson Show

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Abstract

This study employs a qualitative research approach, specifically discourse analysis, to examine the role of lexical cohesion in spoken discourse, drawing on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory . Using a descriptive research design, the study systematically explores how cohesive devices maintain coherence in an interview with Jennie from Blackpink on The Jennifer Hudson Show. Data were collected through an observational method, where the researcher transcribed the interview and selected key excerpts featuring lexical cohesive devices such as repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy. The analysis followed the referential identity method, categorizing the cohesive devices based on context and participants' identities, with coding applied to identify patterns in their usage. The study finds that repetition is the most frequently used cohesive device, appearing 21 times, followed by synonymy and antonymy (12 instances each). Hyponymy and meronymy are less frequent but still contribute to the richness of the discourse. The findings highlight the importance of repetition in maintaining discourse coherence, while synonymy and antonymy provide variety and contrast. This research offers a deeper understanding of how lexical cohesion functions in informal, spoken settings, contributing to the overall flow and clarity of conversation.

Keywords: Lexical Cohesion; Repetition; Spoken Discourse

INTRODUCTION

Language is the foundation of human communication, allowing individuals to share ideas, emotions, and information across various contexts and cultures. As a complex system of communication, language is more than just the words we use. It includes the structure, meaning, and relationships between these words. Linguistics, the study of language, looks at these details to understand the patterns and structures that make language work. In this field, different branches such as phonetics, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics help uncover how language operates. One of the critical concepts in linguistics is cohesion, which ensures that a discourse, whether written or spoken, remains unified and comprehensible. Halliday and Hasan (1976), pioneers in the field of cohesion, argue that effective communication relies on cohesive devices that create meaningful connections within the text. Lexical cohesion, a subcategory of this concept, plays a particularly vital role by establishing links between words based on meaning rather than grammatical structure. According to Paltridge (2012), lexical cohesion involves the use of content words and their relationships to build meaning and maintain the flow of discourse. By employing lexical cohesion, speakers and writers ensure that their ideas are connected, and the message remains coherent and understandable.

In today's digital age, lexical cohesion is frequently observed in social media interactions, where maintaining clarity and coherence in short, fast-paced exchanges is essential. For instance, during the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, social media platforms like Twitter saw widespread use of hashtags like "#BlackLivesMatter" alongside synonymous terms such as "#JusticeForAll" and "#EndRacism." These hashtags not only acted as lexical ties that

unified various posts but also helped to reinforce the movement's central themes by linking content across a vast network of users. This use of lexical cohesion through repetition and synonymy allowed the message to be consistent, easily identifiable, and impactful, especially in a global context where individuals from different linguistic backgrounds were participating. Cohesive devices in social media discourse help to create a collective voice, making individual contributions part of a larger, coherent narrative. In this case, lexical cohesion played a crucial role in maintaining the integrity and unity of the movement's message, demonstrating how even in informal, brief exchanges, language can be structured to convey powerful, unified ideas.

In informal spoken discourse, lexical cohesion is crucial in maintaining coherence. A vivid example of this is seen in an interview with Jennie, where the concept of a "pop star" is repeated multiple times. For instance:

Jennifer : "Is it true you always wanted to be a pop star?"
Jennie : "I knew I wanted to be in the music industry, but I didn't understand what a pop star was at that time. I would see them on stage, everything looked so glamorous. I didn't know if I wanted to be a pop star or just do shows on stage, but I knew I wanted to get in there."

This repetition of "pop star" is a key cohesive device, reinforcing Jennie's aspirations and linking her early experiences to her current identity as an artist. It demonstrates how repetition can unify a conversation, creating clarity and focus around a central theme.

Several studies have explored lexical cohesion in different types of discourse, shedding light on its role in maintaining coherence across various contexts. Mubarak et al. (2023) aimed to investigate lexical cohesion in community legends as part of a discourse analysis, with a specific focus on the legends of Batu Ampar and Sungai Jodoh in Batam, Indonesia. Their research utilized the Halliday and Hasan (1976) model of cohesion, particularly focusing on the role of reiteration. The data for their analysis were drawn from transcriptions of local legends, where the researchers identified repetition of words, phrases, and verbs as the primary cohesive devices. The study revealed that repetition was the most commonly used lexical cohesion tool, and it played a significant role in conveying moral messages, thus preserving local wisdom. The study also touched upon collocations but found them to be less frequent than repetition.

Sheni and Satria (2024), in their analysis of Barack Obama's inaugural speech, aimed to explore how lexical cohesion contributed to the clarity and coherence of political discourse. They employed Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) theory of lexical cohesion, focusing on repetition, synonyms, antonyms, meronyms, and hyponyms. The data were sourced from the written text of Obama's inaugural address. Their findings showed that repetition was the most frequently used cohesive device, followed by synonyms and antonyms, which helped to establish contrast and emphasize key messages. Meronyms and hyponyms were used to provide part-whole relationships and more specific references, further strengthening the coherence of the speech. The results highlighted the importance of lexical cohesion in political speeches, where repetition and synonymy are used to reinforce the speaker's message and maintain listener engagement.

The present study shares both similarities and differences with the previous research on lexical cohesion. A key similarity lies in the consistent finding that repetition is the most frequently employed device for maintaining cohesion. Whether in the community legends of Batam (Mubarak et al., 2023) or in Barack Obama's inaugural speech (Sheni & Satria, 2024), repetition emerged as a central strategy to reinforce ideas and maintain coherence throughout the discourse. This highlights the importance of repetition as a cohesive tool in both formal speeches and informal narratives, demonstrating its universal role in human communication.

However, the present study differs in its focus on lexical cohesion in spoken discourse as opposed to the written discourse analyzed in the previous studies. While Mubarak et al. (2023)

and Sheni and Satria (2024) concentrated on textual analysis (community legends and a formal political speech), the current study draws on a more dynamic, informal source, an interview with Jennie of Blackpink. This shift introduces a new context where lexical cohesion is analyzed in spontaneous, conversational speech, contrasting with the more structured discourse types in previous studies. Moreover, while synonymy and collocation were discussed in earlier works, the focus of the present study on lexical cohesion in a pop culture setting offers a fresh perspective on how cohesion operates in casual, media-driven discourse.

Despite these differences, both sets of studies underline the crucial role of lexical cohesion in structuring discourse and ensuring the coherence of communication. The present study thus extends the scope of lexical cohesion research, bridging the gap between formal and informal contexts, and demonstrating its relevance in everyday conversations in addition to more formal texts.

Discourse analysis is a field within linguistics that studies how language functions in communication beyond the level of individual sentences. According to Gee (2005), discourse analysis examines how larger units of language, such as conversations, speeches, and written texts, are structured and understood in social contexts. The study of discourse allows researchers to explore how speakers and writers create meaning through their use of language. One of the key aspects of discourse is cohesion, a term popularized by Halliday and Hasan (1976), who define it as the linguistic devices that link different parts of a text, ensuring that it is understood as a unified whole. Cohesion can be divided into two major categories: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion involves devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions. In contrast, lexical cohesion focuses on the connections made through meaning, using lexical items like repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy to establish continuity between ideas. This distinction highlights how lexical cohesion relies on the relationships between words to bind the discourse together, creating coherence from a semantic perspective.

In their seminal work Cohesion in English (1976), Halliday and Hasan laid the groundwork for understanding how cohesion operates within a text. They define lexical cohesion as the use of words and their meanings to establish relationships and continuity throughout a text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that lexical cohesion is essential for maintaining the integrity of a discourse, as it helps link ideas and ensure the text's unity. Their theory identifies several types of lexical cohesion: repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy. These devices, according to Halliday and Hasan, play an important role in keeping a discourse coherent by linking different parts of the text through meaning. Each type of lexical cohesion contributes uniquely to the cohesion and clarity of communication, whether in written texts, spoken discourse, or various other genres. Understanding these types allows researchers and linguists to analyze how texts maintain their unity and how meaning is conveyed effectively to the audience.

In written texts, lexical cohesion plays a crucial role in maintaining the continuity of ideas and ensuring that the text is coherent and easy to follow. Repetition is one of the most important lexical devices in written discourse. By repeating key words or phrases, the writer reinforces central themes, ensuring that the reader can easily track the development of the text. Synonymy also contributes significantly to lexical cohesion, allowing authors to avoid redundancy while keeping the text connected. Paltridge (2012) further elaborates on this by highlighting that the use of synonyms helps to create variety in language while maintaining the thematic unity of the text. Similarly, antonymy plays a role in written discourse by introducing contrast, thus highlighting key differences between ideas or concepts, which can deepen the reader's understanding of the issues being discussed. Hyponymy and meronymy are additional devices that support cohesion by specifying more detailed aspects of a broader category (hyponymy) or illustrating part-whole relationships (meronymy). For example, the term "rose" is a hyponym

of "flower," while "wheel" is a meronym of "car." These types of lexical cohesion provide more specific references, strengthening the reader's ability to follow and connect ideas.

In spoken discourse, lexical cohesion is also essential for maintaining coherence, though it often manifests differently than in written texts. Paltridge (2012) notes that in spoken communication, such as interviews or conversations, lexical cohesion frequently depends on repetition and synonymy to create clarity and ensure the flow of ideas. Because spoken language is more spontaneous and less structured than written texts, speakers tend to use repetition to reinforce key points, making sure the listener can grasp the main ideas. Furthermore, synonymy allows speakers to avoid repetitive language while maintaining cohesion in the conversation. For instance, in an interview, a speaker might switch between words like "success," "achievement," and "accomplishment" to keep the discussion varied while retaining its focus on the topic. According to Cameron (2001), in informal spoken discourse, collocations (common word pairings that naturally occur together) also play a crucial role in cohesion. Phrases like "take action" or "make a decision" are often used together in conversation, providing structural support and ensuring that the message is communicated efficiently.

Lexical cohesion is not limited to formal or spoken discourse; it also plays an important role in various genres, including literary texts, news articles, and advertisements. In literary texts, particularly poetry, lexical cohesion helps to maintain the emotional and thematic unity of the poem. Tannen et al. (2015) suggests that repetition and synonymy in poetry contribute to the emotional weight of the text, while antonyms are used to introduce contrast and deepen the emotional resonance. In journalistic writing, lexical cohesion is essential for guiding readers through a news story. According to Biber et al. (1999), repetition of key terms and the use of synonyms help journalists maintain the reader's focus on the main issue, while antonyms and hyponyms provide clarity and specificity. In advertisements, lexical cohesion is often strategically employed to create memorable taglines and slogans. Cameron (2001) discusses how repeated phrases and collocations in advertisements ensure that the message is clear and sticks with the audience. The use of collocations like "make it happen" or "feel the difference" creates a strong connection between words, making the advertisement more persuasive and effective.

1. Repetition: Repetition involves the reuse of words or phrases within a text to maintain focus on a central theme. Repeated words or phrases often serve as reminders of the key concepts or arguments within the text, reinforcing their importance.
2. Synonymy: The use of synonyms allows for variety in language while still maintaining the connection between ideas. By substituting one word for another with a similar meaning, speakers and writers can enrich the text without breaking the flow.
3. Antonymy: Antonymy refers to the use of opposite words or contrasts within a text. This helps introduce differences in ideas or concepts, which can emphasize important distinctions and balance the discourse.
4. Hyponymy: Hyponymy refers to the relationship between a more general term (hypernym) and a more specific term (hyponym). For example, "dog" is a hyponym of "animal." Hyponymy provides specificity and clarity, making discourse more detailed and precise.
5. Meronymy: Meronymy describes the part-whole relationship between words. For example, "wheel" is a meronym of "car." This type of cohesion adds depth to a text by clarifying how components fit together within a broader context.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically discourse analysis, to examine how lexical and grammatical cohesion operate in spoken discourse. The data for this study were

gathered from the Jennie: 'I Love You, Doechii!' Extended Interview on The Jennifer Hudson Show YouTube channel. This qualitative methodology is well-suited to the research, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of spoken language. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research investigates social and personal issues through textual data, providing a deep understanding of meanings, perceptions, and experiences. The research follows a descriptive research design, which aims to systematically describe the phenomena under investigation without manipulating variables (Creswell, 2009). This type of research is particularly effective for analyzing natural language data, such as conversations, where the goal is to detail the ways in which language is used to maintain cohesion and coherence in the discourse.

The data for this study were collected using an observational method as defined by Sudaryanto (2015), which involves observing and documenting language in its natural setting. In this case, the researcher carefully watched the interview and transcribed the spoken discourse. The observation process was conducted by watching the interview in its entirety to understand the context and dynamics of the conversation. The researcher then took notes and highlighted key excerpts from the transcript that featured cohesive devices. Following Merriam and Tisdell (2016) approach, the researcher applied a note-taking technique, marking relevant portions of the transcript to focus on cohesive devices such as repetition, synonymy, antonymy, and collocations. The steps for data collection included selecting a specific segment of the interview, transcribing the conversation, and then identifying the cohesive devices used throughout the discourse.

For the analysis of the data, the study applied Sudaryanto's (2015) referential identity method, which focuses on identifying key components within the data based on the context in which they are used. This method helped the researcher examine the cohesive devices in the interview by considering the identities of the participants, the setting, and the broader context of the conversation. Additionally, coding was employed as a technique to classify and group the cohesive devices used in the interview. According to Miles et al. (2014), coding involves assigning symbols or labels to portions of the data, allowing for the identification and organization of specific cohesive devices. The researcher categorized excerpts from the transcript according to the types of lexical cohesion identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), such as repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy. The steps for analyzing data involved reading through the transcribed text, coding the instances of cohesive devices, and categorizing them to reveal patterns in their usage and their contribution to discourse coherence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis of lexical cohesion in the interview with Jennie revealed a significant use of cohesive devices throughout the conversation. Repetition was the most frequent device, with a total of 21 instances observed, reflecting its importance in maintaining the flow and coherence of the dialogue. Synonymy appeared 12 times, demonstrating the speaker's ability to vary language while preserving meaning. Similarly, antonymy, also present in 12 instances, helped create contrasts that emphasized key distinctions and added depth to the conversation. Hyponymy was observed 5 times, contributing specificity and clarity, while meronymy appeared 3 times, highlighting part-whole relationships. Overall, these cohesive devices played a crucial role in ensuring the unity and comprehensibility of the discourse.

The following table summarizes the results of the lexical cohesion analysis, providing an overview of the types of cohesion identified, their frequencies, and their corresponding

percentages. This table offers a clear representation of how different cohesive devices contributed to the overall coherence and flow of the interview discourse.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Lexical Cohesion Types in the Interview

Types of Lexical Cohesion	Frequency	Percent (%)
Repetition	21	42%
Synonymy	12	24%
Antonymy	12	24%
Hyponymy	5	10%
Meronymy	3	6%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Discussion

Out of the 53 instances of lexical cohesion identified in the interview, only 10 data points were selected for analysis to provide a balanced representation across the five types of cohesion: repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy. This selection ensures a fair distribution of examples for each cohesive device, allowing for a focused and manageable analysis. The chosen 10 data points offer insights into how these devices contribute to maintaining coherence and continuity in the conversation, highlighting their role in creating a smooth and engaging discourse.

Repetition

Data 1

    Jennifer   : "**They love you**. Oh my God, this. Wow. Oh, my goodness. Take it all in, Jenny. **They love you so much**. Thank you so much for being here."

In this instance, Jennifer repeats the phrase "They love you" in quick succession within the same sentence. This repetition emphasizes the strong affection the audience has for Jennie. The repeated phrase serves as a cohesive device that not only highlights the importance of the audience's admiration but also contributes to a positive atmosphere in the conversation. By repeating "They love you," Jennifer intensifies the emotion, making it clear that Jennie is highly appreciated by her fans. The repetition also strengthens the connection between Jennie and her audience, making the message more memorable and impactful.

Data 2

    Jennie   : "I was just telling **everyone**, how amazing of a show that you have here and like **everyone** working here too they made me still so..."

Jennie repeats the word "everyone" in the sentence. First, she mentions "I was just telling everyone," and then she refers to "everyone working here too." This repetition emphasizes the idea that it is not just a few people but everyone involved in the show who has made her feel welcome. The repetition helps to underline the broad and inclusive nature of her appreciation for the people around her, strengthening the sense of gratitude in her statement.

Data 3

    Jennifer   : "Now talk to us about Blackpink. Don't you all want to hear about Blackpink? So, I heard you trained for **six years** to be a part of the group."

    Jennie   : "**Six years.**"

In this case, Jennie uses the exact phrase "six years" in direct response to Jennifer's question about how long she trained to be part of Blackpink. The repetition of "six years" serves as a brief but impactful statement, emphasizing the length of her training. The repetition of the same words draws attention to the significance of the duration, which likely required dedication, discipline, and hard work. This simple repetition helps underline Jennie's commitment to her craft.

Synonymy

Data 1

Jennie : "Whoa wow, I don't even know where to begin, but it was, you know, I at that time it felt like such a long time. I was like, when when, is when is my time to you know get out to the world? But now that I think back all the training that I did and it's basically like **you're going to a school that is going to help you become a pop star**, so like from the moment you go to the studio Academy, the place that we would train every day, like there's different types of vocal lessons, different types of dance lessons, language lessons and you're, you know, **you're being taught how to like to be a superstar.**"

In this example, Jennie uses two synonymous phrases to describe her training experience: "you're going to a school that is going to help you become a pop star" and "you're being taught how to like to be a superstar." Both phrases convey the same core idea that her training was aimed at shaping her into a pop star. The first phrase focuses on the structure of the training, likening it to an educational institution, while the second phrase emphasizes the teaching process. These variations in wording keep the conversation engaging while maintaining the same central message about the lessons and experiences that contributed to her becoming a superstar.

Data 2

Jennie : "Oh my God. The crazy part is I haven't figured it out yet. I'm trying to figure out what triggers my switch and I did that on stage, but I guess, I guess **it's something that's in my body**. I'm sure you really relate—like once I hear, you know, the music or once I zone in, it **just happens really naturally**. It's a gift that I appreciate and I love about myself."

In this instance, Jennie uses two synonymous phrases to describe how she connects with her performance. "It's something that's in my body" suggests that her ability to perform comes from within, almost as an inherent or instinctive talent. On the other hand, "just happens really naturally" conveys the effortless flow of her performance when she gets into the zone. Although the two phrases are different in wording, they both communicate the idea that Jennie's ability to perform is innate and effortless, emphasizing how her connection to the music is natural and instinctual. The variation in language keeps the conversation dynamic while reinforcing the same core concept.

Antonymy

Data 1

Jennifer : "You guys performed at Coachella with Blackpink, right. This year, but this year you're going to take the stage to yourself soon. What are you looking like, how does it feel?"

Jennie : "Wow, still feels very, very **unreal**. Um, I can't get my head around it. I was so lucky to have, you know, had my experience as Blackpink at Coachella and it's one of my favorite moments in my lifetime, you know."

In this exchange, Jennie contrasts "unreal" with the notion of "real" or something she can truly grasp or understand. By using the word "unreal", she emphasizes the immense contrast between her current situation (performing solo) and the dreamlike nature of it. The antonym "unreal" is used to express her amazement at reaching a new stage in her career after her successful time with Blackpink, highlighting the surprising nature of her new journey as a solo artist.

Data 2

Jennie	: "Oh my God. The crazy part is I haven't figured it out yet. I'm trying to figure out what triggers my switch and I did that on stage, but I guess, I guess it's something that's in my body. I'm sure you really relate—like once I hear, you know, the music or once I zone in, it just happens really **naturally**. It's a gift that I appreciate and I love about myself."

In this example, Jennie contrasts "naturally" with the process of figuring out what triggers her energy. "Naturally" refers to the effortless and instinctual part of her performance when she gets into the zone. The antonymous contrast here highlights the difference between her conscious effort to "figure it out" and the ease with which it happens when the right triggers fall into place. This contrast illustrates Jennie's struggle to control her performance versus the natural flow of her energy when performing.

Hyponymy

Data 1

Jennifer	: "What kind of snacks do you like?"
Jennie	: "**Banana cake.**"
Jennifer	: "Yum, anything else?"
Jennie	: "**Shrimp snacks.**"

In this instance, "banana cake" and "shrimp snacks" are both specific types of "snacks," which is the broader category. "Snacks" is the hypernym, while "banana cake" and "shrimp snacks" are hyponyms, referring to specific instances of food items that fit under the broader category of snacks. By using hyponyms, Jennie provides more detail and makes the conversation richer and more tangible. It helps her highlight particular preferences and adds specificity to her description. The use of hyponymy in everyday conversation creates a more engaging and informative exchange, where the listener can easily relate to the specific items being discussed.

Data 2

Jennifer	: "What do you have for us to try?"
Jennie	: "This is called Korebab, which means **whale food**."
Jennifer	: "Whale food?"
Jennie	: "Yeah, a whale food, it doesn't make a difference."

Here, "whale food" is a hyponym of the broader category "food." "Food" is the hypernym, and "whale food" is a specific type of food that Jennie is referring to. The term "whale food" provides more detailed information about the specific food she's talking about within the larger category of food, giving the conversation more color and context.

Meronomy

Data 1

Jennifer	: "What do you have for us to try?"
Jennie	: "These are just like the classic, classic Korean snacks that everyone enjoys. These two are seafood-based."
Jennifer	: "Which one should I try?"
Jennie	: "I wanted to go with this one, so this is a **shrimp** one."

In this case, "shrimp" is part of the broader category of "snacks." "Shrimp" is a specific type of food within the larger "snack" category, which makes "shrimp" a meronym to "snacks". Jennie is specifying a part (a "shrimp snack") within the broader category of "snacks."

CONCLUSION

The analysis of lexical cohesion in Jennie's interview revealed the frequent use of repetition as the most common cohesive device, contributing significantly to the overall coherence of the conversation. Repetition appeared 21 times, reflecting its importance in maintaining focus and reinforcing central themes. Synonymy and antonymy followed closely, each appearing 12 times, serving to diversify the language and emphasize contrasts. Hyponymy and meronymy were used less frequently, with hyponymy observed 5 times and meronymy 3 times. This shows that while repetition plays a central role, more specific devices like hyponymy and meronymy are still important in providing clarity and depth.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that speakers in informal, spontaneous settings like interviews utilize repetition more to enhance engagement and clarity. Additionally, using a mix of synonymy and antonymy can help maintain listener interest by introducing variety and contrast. For future studies, it would be beneficial to examine the role of hyponymy and meronymy in greater detail, particularly in spoken discourse, as these devices contribute to the richness of communication despite their less frequent use in this context.

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