2. The standards of textuality: cohesion and coherence

A focus on news discourse
2. Coherence

cconcerns the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of concepts and relations which underlie the surface text are mutually accessible and relevant. ...

• cohesion = connectivity of the surface
• coherence = connectivity of underlying contents
coherence

• A text “makes sense” because there is a continuity of senses among the knowledge activated by the expressions of the text (cf. Hörmann 1976).
• A “senseless” or “nonsensical” text is one in which text receivers can discover no such continuity, usually because there is a serious mismatch between the configuration of concepts and relations expressed and the receivers prior knowledge of the world.
• We would define this continuity of senses as the foundation of coherence, being the mutual access and relevance within a configuration of concepts and relations

(de-Beaugrande Dressler 1981-2001)
• The surface expressions are taken as cues to ACTIVATE concepts
• the concepts are treated as steps in the construction of a continuity of sense
• Attention would be directed particularly toward the discovery of CONTROL CENTRES, i.e. points from which accessing and processing can be strategically done (e.g. conceptual entities; situations...)
Coherence= mutual dependency of concepts below the surface

Wembley loses its auditor weeks before bribery trial

(UK) -- Ernst & Young, the accountancy firm, resigned as auditor to Wembley yesterday, barely a month before the dog track owner and gambling group faces a bribery trial in the United States.

The sudden departure of E&Y, the firm’s auditor since 1999, was included in a statement that announced a permanent replacement for chief executive Nigel Potter, who has stepped aside to defend the charges in the US.

The Guardian, 7/12/2004  (Courtesy of Giuliana Garzone)
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- Bribery trial: who’s alleged of bribery?
- Auditor: companies have auditors. Who’s the company and who’s the auditor?
- Chief executive Nigel Potter: whose company?
Key

• Bribery trial: who’s alleged of bribery?
  – Wembley

• Auditor: companies have auditors. Who’s the company and who’s the auditor?
  – Wembley – Ernst and Young

• Chief executive Nigel Potter: whose company?
  – Wembley (the one that has to defend itself against the bribery accusation)

• That Nigel Potter is Chief executive of Ernst and Young is not made explicit on the surface of the text, but is inferred on the basis of relations among concepts (the CEO is the one to be held accountable for the company’s misconduct)
How is the comment in bold ‘accessible and relevant’ to the rest of the text?

• Safestay Holland Park, London
• Safestay has a reputation for stylish affordable hostels inside interesting buildings, but this new one really raises the bar. Within easy reach of attractions such as Portobello Market, this is a Jacobean mansion dating back to 1605 and has courtyard garden, stone mullions, leaded lights and a squat 1950s annexe – **ok, you can’t have everything**. But Safestay has even turned that to its advantage: the somewhat unattractive addition is a modernistic home to a lounge, cefè and pool room.
...and here?

• From *The Haughmond hotel: review*
• [...] Mell tells us that Martin, her husband, is a self-taught chef, which is astonishing considering the standard of the food, **but it also makes sense**. There are plenty of skilful touches – purees, crisps and “textures” of this and that – but nothing is on the plate just to show-off, as at so many posh restaurants.
Analysis of cohesion/coherence in a feature article

• A form of news story but not so timely
• Must contain all the Ws
• Hung on a “peg” (i.e. a reason for writing it) : something that is happening today, this week or this month
• Factual but includes also comment, analysis and ‘colour’
• Conclusion: essential, wraps the whole piece up or refers back, in some way, to something mentioned right at the start
Task 1: use the following words to fill in the gaps in your handout

- autocracies
- Britain
- daily newspaper
- giving birth
- the
- first
- thinning
- crisis
- industries
Task 1 explained: cohesive devices

• The race is crowded, but *San Francisco* stands a fair chance of becoming the first major American *city* without a daily newspaper.

• Most *industries* are suffering at present, but few are doing as badly as *the news business*.

• Hyponymy
Other cohesive devices

- The race is crowded, but San Francisco stands a fair chance of becoming the first major American city without a daily newspaper. The San Francisco Chronicle, founded in 1865, is trimming its already pared-down staff in an attempt to avoid closure. And if it does disappear?
  - Collocation
  - Cataphor
  - Marked structure
  - Typical of news language (Mainguenau: 2007): suspense creation
Other cohesion devices (reference)

- Most industries are suffering at present, but few are doing as badly as the news business. Things are worst in America, where many papers used to enjoy comfortable local monopolies, but in Britain around 70 local papers have shut down since the beginning of 2008. Among the survivors, advertising is dwindling, editorial is thinning and journalists are being laid off. The crisis is most advanced in the Anglo-Saxon countries, but it is happening all over the rich world: the impact of the internet, exacerbated by the advertising slump, is killing the daily newspaper.

*Anaphoric encapsulation* is a cohesive device by which a noun phrase functions as a resumptive paraphrase for a preceding portion of a text.
Other cohesive devices

• Among the survivors, advertising is dwindling, editorial is thinning and journalists are being laid off.

• Parallelism at clause level
• Parallelism at sentence level
Other cohesive devices

- The internet is killing newspapers and (is) giving birth to a new sort of news business
  - Grammar dependency at phrase level
  - Ellipsis
Other cohesive devices

• **Most industries** are suffering at present, **but few** are doing as badly as the news business.

   – Ellipsis
But the only certainty about the future of news is that it will be different from the past. It will no longer be dominated by a few big titles whose front pages determine the story of the day. Public opinion will, rather, be shaped by thousands of different voices, with as many different focuses and points of view. As a result, people will have less in common to chat about around the water-cooler. Those who are not interested in political or economic news will be less likely to come across it; but those who are will be better equipped to hold their rulers to account. Which is, after all, what society needs news for.
The internet is killing newspapers and giving birth to a new sort of news business.
The internet is killing newspapers and giving birth to a new sort of news business.
Elements of cohesion: Lexical cohesion

The internet is killing newspapers and giving birth to a new sort of news business

New ...

Flourish

Enriches
Elements of cohesion: Lexical cohesion

- The internet is killing newspapers and giving birth to a new sort of news business

New …
Start
Unveiled
Latest update
future

Flourish
proliferating

Enriches
Enhance
encourage
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...founded in 1865</td>
<td>...is killing</td>
<td>...won’t even notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...used to enjoy</td>
<td>...is giving birth</td>
<td>...will be different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...claimed to have seen some news</td>
<td>...are suffering</td>
<td>...will not be dominated by few big titles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...things are worst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...have shut down</td>
<td>...will be shaped by thousands of different voices</td>
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The birth of news
May 14th 2009

The internet is killing newspapers and giving birth to a new sort of news business.

The race is crowded, but San Francisco stands a fair chance of becoming the first major American city without a daily newspaper. The San Francisco Chronicle, founded in 1865, is trying to already pared-down staff in an attempt to avoid losing. And if it does disappear? ‘People under 20 won’t even notice,’ says Gavin Newsom, the city’s mayor.

Most industries are cutting back on spending. Things are worst in America, where many papers tried to enjoy comfortable local monopolies, but in Britain around 70 local papers have folded since the beginning of 2008. Among the factors, advertising is shrinking, content is becoming more and journalism is being hit hard. The UK is more advanced in the Anglo-Saxon countries, but it is happening all over the rich world: the impact of the internet, exacerbated by the advertising downturn, is hitting the daily newspapers.

Does that matter? Technological change has destroyed all sorts of once-powerful products, from the handloom to the Walkman, and the world has mostly been better for it. But news is not just a product; the press is the fourth estate, a pillar of the policy. Journalists investigate and criticize governments, social workers help decide what is right or wrong. Technology can function perfectly well without news, but democracies cannot. Will the end of the daily newspapers, the main source of information for most educated people for at least the past century, the scourge of corrupt politicians, the conscience of nations—damage democracy?

Picked apart

A newspaper is a package of context—politics, sport, share prices, weather and so forth—which exists to attract eyeballs to advertisements. Underestimates for newspapers, the internet is better at delivering some of that than paper. It is easier to search through job and property listings on the web, so classified advertising and its associated revenue is migrating onto the internet. Some content, too, works better on the internet and share prices can be more frequently updated. Weather can be more geographically specific to readers are migrating too. The package is thus being picked apart.

The newspaper’s decline is both cause and effect of the worrying finding by the Pew Centre that the number of Americans aged 10–24 who got any news at all the previous day has dropped from 74 per cent to 25 per cent over the past ten years. But that figure may be misleadingly high. Because newspapers pack together all sorts of different content, many of those who claim to hate to have some news probably did so for a few seconds before turning the page to the sports scores. Acquaintance as shallow as that with the news is probably no great loss to society. Pew surveys of moral knowledge suggest that young people are about as well (or badly) informed as they were in 1970.

And the newspaper companies’ hesitation does not necessarily presage the death of the news business. For they are part from the newspaper and electronic transition from paper to electronic distribution. News organisations are currently basing two sets of content—those of printing and distributing their product for the print world and providing digital versions for the web—even though they have yet to find a business model that works online. Up to now, most have been offering their content free online, but that is unsustainable, because though there isn’t enough advertising revenue online to pay for it. So enter the amount of news produced must limit, or readers must pay more. Some publications, such as the Financial Times and the Wall Street Journal, which has more than m online subscribers and has just promised to develop a new system of micropayments for articles, already charge for content. Others will follow. Rupert Murdoch, the Journal’s owner, has said he expects other titles to start charging too. With news available free on Google and Yahoo, readers may, of course, not be prepared to pay even for deeper or more specialised stuff, but since they do in the paper world, where free-sheets and paid-for publications coexist, there seems no reason why they wouldn’t online.

Better mobile devices may encourage them to do so. Apple’s iPhone is the first reader-friendly mobile phone, and the latest update to its software, due shortly, will enable news providers that currently give away content on the iPhone to start charging. Amazon has just unveiled a new, larger version of the Kindle, its e-book reader, better suited to displaying newspapers. Similar devices are available from other firms, with many more on the way. Better technology coupled with new payment systems will not solve the acute problems faced by newspapers today, but should eventually provide new models to enable news to flourish in the digital age.

And already, there are signs that it will. News sources are appearing online. Many is true, are unavailable. Most are badly funded. Some are the creation of deranged extremists. Some like Mykter, an American site which pitches news stories with interactive maps of the protagonists’ networks of influence, and Nickack, the revealing and depressing blog of an anonymous British policeman, which won the Orwell prize last month. Maybe society’s understanding of itself and could not have existed in the old world.

But the only certainty about the future of news is that it will be different from the past. It will no longer be dominated by a few titles whose front pages determine the story of the day. Public opinion will, rather, be shaped by thousands of different voices, with as many different foci and points of view. As a result, people will be less in common to chat about around the water-cooler. Those who are not interested in political or economic news will be less likely to come across it, but those who are will be better equipped to hold their views in account. Which is, after all, what society needs news for.
Cohesion/Coherence

• Intro
  – Peg:
  – Main topic:
  – Leading question:? 

• The body
  – Reasons for the crisis of newspapers 
    – Future perspectives:

• Conclusion

General pattern: problem-solution
Cohesion/Coherence

• Intro
  – Peg: San Francisco Chronicle
  – Crisis of newspapers (due to the impact of the Internet and the advertising slump)
  – Leading question: Can the newspaper crisis have detrimental effects on democratic societies?

• The body
  – Reasons for the crisis of newspapers
    • Many people turn to the web for contents/services previously provided by newspapers (e.g. job and property listings- classified advertisement)
    • Advertising revenue migrating to the web
  – Future perspectives:
    • going electronic + charging for content
      – New technological affordances (i-phones)
      – New payment system (micropayment for articles)
    • Greater plurality of sources

• Conclusion
  – Newspapers may die, but news will have a new start online