

## 2. The standards of textuality: cohesion and coherence

A focus on news discourse

## 2. Coherence

concerns 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 (Mainguenu: 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

# Other cohesive devices

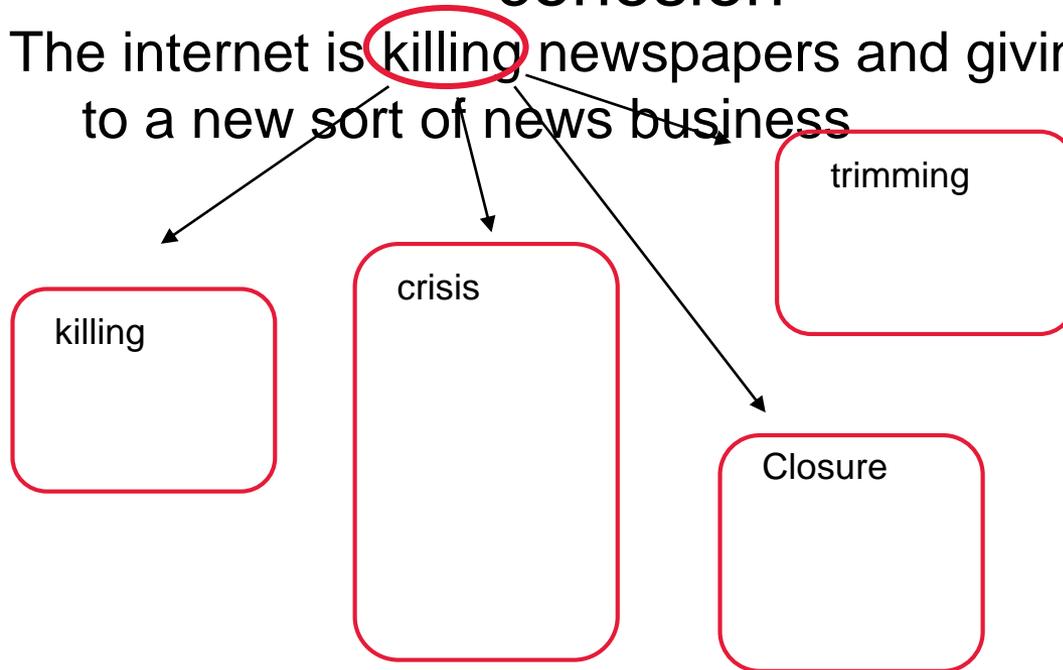
- But the only certainty about the future of news is that it will be different from the past. It will **no longer** be dominated by a few big titles whose front pages determine the story of the day. Public opinion will, rather, be shaped by thousands of different voices, with as many different focuses 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.

Comparative reference

# Elements of cohesion: Lexical

## cohesion

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



✓ Synonyms

✓ Collocates

# Elements of cohesion: Lexical

## cohesion

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

killing  
death  
destroy

crisis  
suffering  
doing badly  
thinning  
dwindling  
lump

trimming  
pared down  
laid off

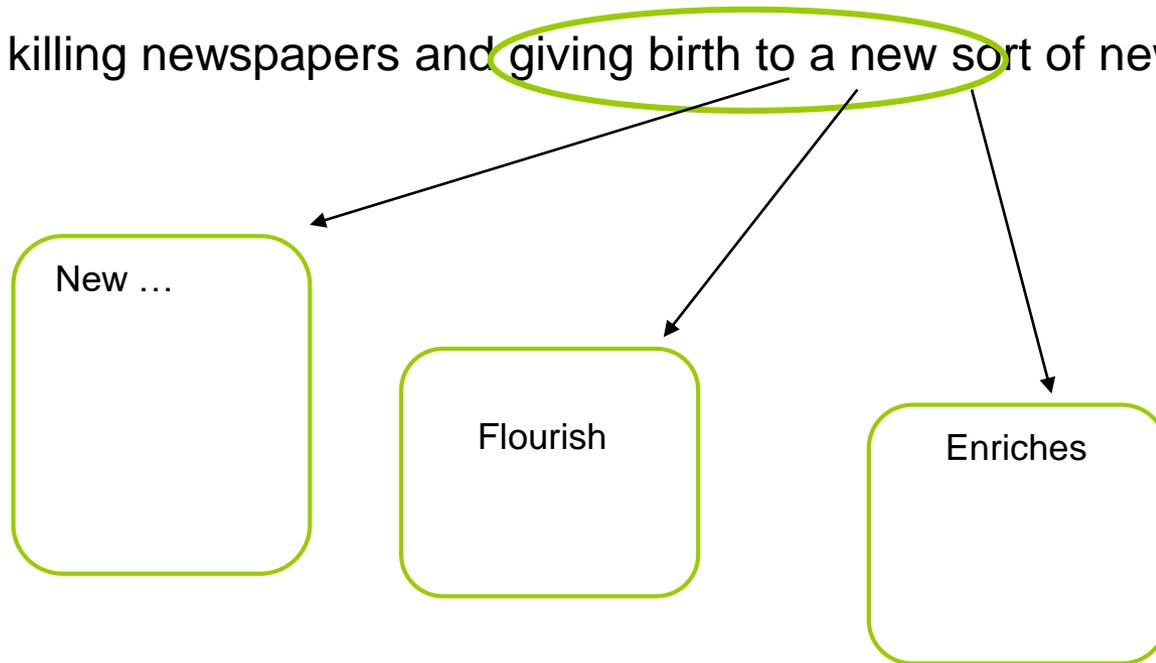
Closure  
Shut down  
Disappear

✓ Synonyms

✓ Collocates

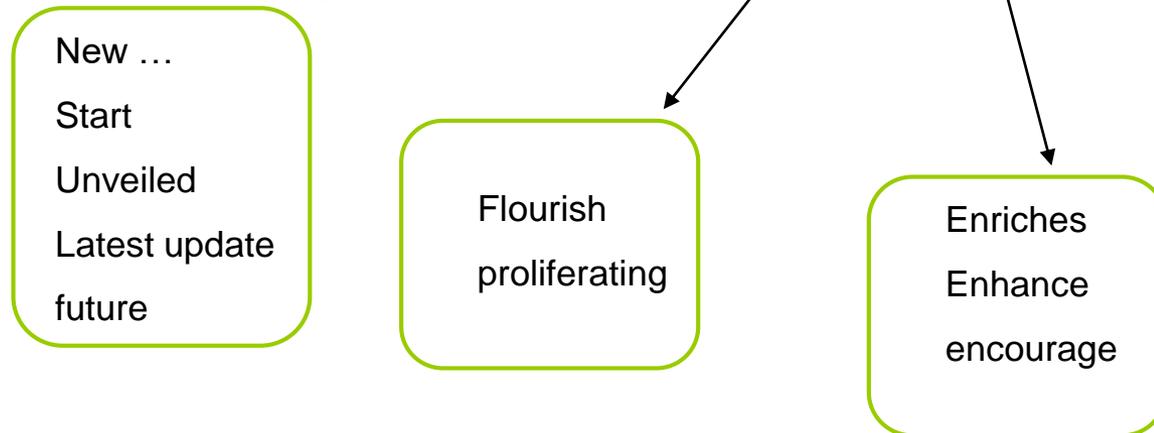
# Elements of cohesion: Lexical cohesion

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



# Cohesion: tense and aspect

past	present	future
...founded in 1865 ...used to enjoy ... claimed to have seen some news	...is killing ...is giving birth ...are suffering ...things are worst ...have shut down ...	...won't even notice ...will be different ...will not be dominated by few big titles ...will be shaped by thousands of different voices



# 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