Chapter 7
Textual Equivalence: Cohesion

In translation, textual equivalence plays a crucial role in maintaining coherence and logical flow between the source and target texts. Cohesion, as one of the fundamental aspects of textual equivalence, ensures that linguistic elements within a text are linked appropriately to convey meaning effectively. Cohesion in translation refers to the way different parts of a text relate to one another through grammatical, lexical, and structural means.

When translating a text, the challenge is not only to convey the intended meaning but also to maintain its logical flow so that the target audience experiences the text in a way that is equivalent to the original audience. A failure to achieve cohesion can make the translated text sound unnatural or fragmented. This section explores four key cohesive devices: **reference, substitution and ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion.**

7.1 Reference

Reference is a cohesive device that allows writers and speakers to create links between different parts of a text by using pronouns, demonstratives, definite articles, and other referring expressions. Reference is crucial in translation, as different languages employ varying strategies to establish coherence. Reference can be classified into three main types:

7.1.1 Personal Reference

Personal reference involves the use of pronouns such as *he, she, it, they, we,* and *I* to establish connections between different entities within a text.

Example:
John entered the room. *He* looked around nervously.

In this case, *he* refers back to *John*, ensuring textual cohesion.

Challenges in Translation:
Some languages, such as Japanese or Indonesian, do not rely heavily on pronouns, and their omission does not disrupt the text's cohesion. However, in English or French, pronouns play a crucial role in avoiding redundancy. Therefore, translators must decide whether to retain or omit personal references based on the target language's norms.

7.1.2 Demonstrative Reference

Demonstrative reference includes words such as *this, that, these,* and *those* to point to specific elements within a text.

Example:
I bought a new book. *This book* is very interesting.

The word *this* establishes a connection between the two sentences.

Translation Considerations:
Some languages use demonstratives differently. For instance, Spanish requires the noun to be omitted in the second clause:
I bought a new book. *Este* es muy interesante. (*This one* is very interesting.)

7.1.3 Comparative Reference

Comparative reference involves the use of adjectives and adverbs such as *same, different, similar, more, less,* and *better* to link ideas.

Example:
Her dress is more elegant than mine.

Translation Considerations:
Comparative structures vary across languages. For example, English uses *more + adjective*, while French often uses *plus + adjective* or *moins + adjective*. Translators must ensure that such structures are rendered naturally in the target language.

7.2 Substitution and Ellipsis

Substitution and ellipsis are cohesive devices that help avoid repetition by replacing a word or omitting redundant information.

7.2.1 Substitution

Substitution involves replacing one word or phrase with another, often using pro-forms like *one, do, so,* and *not*. There are three types of substitution:

- **Nominal substitution**:
  I ordered a latte, and my friend ordered one too. (*one* substitutes *latte*)
- **Verbal substitution**:
  I like to swim, and she does too. (*does* substitutes *likes to swim*)

- **Clausal substitution**:
  I thought she would fail, but she didn't. (*didn't* substitutes *fail*)

Translation Considerations:
Not all languages use substitution similarly. In some languages, such as Chinese, repetition is preferred instead of substitution.

7.2.2 Ellipsis

Ellipsis refers to the omission of words that are understood from the context.

Example:
John ordered coffee; Mary, tea. (*ordered* is omitted in the second clause)

Translation Considerations:
In English, ellipsis is used frequently, whereas languages like German prefer explicit repetition. A translator must decide whether to retain ellipsis or make the sentence explicit.

7.3 Conjunction

Conjunctions provide logical connections between clauses, sentences, or paragraphs. Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify conjunctions into four types:

7.3.1 Additive Conjunctions

Additive conjunctions (e.g., *and, moreover, furthermore, in addition*) introduce additional information.

Example:
She loves reading novels, *and* she also enjoys writing stories.

7.3.2 Adversative Conjunctions

Adversative conjunctions (e.g., *but, however, on the other hand, nevertheless*) introduce contrast.

Example:
The weather was cold; *however*, they still went hiking.

7.3.3 Causal Conjunctions

Causal conjunctions (e.g., *because, therefore, thus, as a result*) indicate cause-and-effect relationships.

Example:
She studied hard; *therefore*, she passed the exam.

7.3.4 Temporal Conjunctions

Temporal conjunctions (e.g., *then, next, after that, subsequently*) indicate a sequence of events.

Example:
We finished dinner; *then*, we went for a walk.

7.4 Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion refers to the way words are semantically related to each other, creating coherence within a text.

7.4.1 Repetition

Repetition involves the recurrence of words to reinforce ideas.

Example:
He had a *dream*. That *dream* changed his life.

7.4.2 Synonymy

Synonymy involves using different words with similar meanings to maintain variety while ensuring cohesion.

Example:
The *author* of the book is well-known. The *writer* has received numerous awards.

7.4.3 Antonymy

Antonymy involves the use of words with opposite meanings to create contrast and cohesion.

Example:
He was *rich*, but his friend was *poor*.

7.4.4 Hyponymy

Hyponymy involves the relationship between general and specific terms.

Example:
She bought a *fruit*. The *apple* was delicious. (*Apple* is a hyponym of *fruit*.)

7.4.5 Collocation

Collocation refers to the habitual co-occurrence of words in a language.

Example:
Fast food (instead of *quick food*)

Conclusion

Cohesion is an essential aspect of textual equivalence in translation. The effective use of reference, substitution and ellipsis, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion ensures that translated texts maintain coherence and readability. Translators must carefully analyze and apply these cohesive devices to ensure that the target text aligns with the source text's intended meaning while preserving natural linguistic flow. Mastering cohesion enhances the overall quality of translations, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps effectively.