An Analysis of the Use of Lexical Cohesive Devices: Political Manifestos

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Abstract: The importance attached to political manifestos make political parties dedicate a lot of time and caution in writing up their manifestos so as to attract the electorate to vote for them. Language becomes the main element of consideration in the writing of political manifestos. It is on the premise of the centrality of language use in political manifestos that this paper seeks to explore the use of lexical cohesive devices in the 2012 manifesto of the New Patriotic Party using the theory of Cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The results of this study reveal that repetition is the most dominant lexical cohesive device which is used to emphasize the massive projects the party hopes to carry out and also the commitment the party hopes to attach to the execution of its plans. The use of synonyms in the manifesto helps the electorate to understand the ideology of the party whereas antonyms are used to compare the disparity of work done by incumbent government and what the New Patriotic Party hopes to do to improve the economy. The superordinate words are used to categorise the party’s concrete plans into groups so that the electorate can better understand the party’s plans in detail. The study concludes that, the lexical cohesive devices used in the manifesto help to establish ties and links between the lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and the adverbs in the manifesto.

Keyword: Discourse Analysis, Cohesive Devices, Political Manifestos, NPP.

1. Introduction
This paper analyses lexical cohesive devices in the 2012 manifesto of the New Patriotic Party in Ghana.

Political speeches are very powerful and influential in nature. Aspects of political communication include speeches that are delivered by politicians, writings of politicians, election campaigns, parliamentary debates, political interviews etc. Political speeches range from campaigns, manifestoes, speeches at rallies, other election messages, inaugural speeches, victory speeches, Independence Day speeches, May Day speeches and many other speeches depending on the situation. Political discourse has become a popular concept especially in the area of discourse analysis.

Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012, p. 462) explain that ‘language has been a powerful tool in the hands of political leaders; they manipulate the tool to suit their purposes’. Since politics is basically
about struggling to control power, it is only through language that such could be accomplished, thereby making language a very strong political weapon. And indeed, this language is used in manifestos to persuade the electorates to vote for them.

According to Robertson (2004) a manifesto is a public declaration of principles, policies or intentions especially that of a political party or government to coerce and persuade group of people to vote for them. Fordjour (2012) highlights the role of political speeches such as manifestos play in Ghana. He asserts that even though the country has enjoyed a stable democracy since the re-introduction of constitutional democracy in 1992, the only thing that could derail this current democratic gain is hate speech, especially, by political actors. This gives credence to the crucial role language plays in the practice of politics in Ghana.

Generally, all text-types have their own system of linguistic, rhetorical and organisational characteristics which manifestos are not in exception. Therefore, genre analysts set out to investigate what makes a letter a letter, or what makes a radio announcement a radio announcement. A genre comprises a class of communicative events and the members who participate in it share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience.

Cohesion refers to the formal grammatical and lexical relations between two or more linguistic units in a piece of discourse. These units may be words, phrases or clauses. Cohesion is said to occur when there is an interconnection between linguistic items within the discourse. This is to say that, the meaning of one linguistic unit cannot be effectively decoded without reference to the meaning of another linguistic unit or item.

Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) cohesion theory provided a system of text analysis whereby the relationships that hold between textual components are discovered by means of identifying those cohesive connectives that bring together textual components. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), the semantic unity of a text is achieved by means of cohesion. According to Hoey (1991) cohesion is the grammatical and lexical linking within a text or a sentence that holds a text together and gives it meaning. Also, to Huang (2000), cohesion is the use of linguistic devices to achieve logical development of ideas in writing. Carino (1995) points out that cohesion occurs in a paragraph when a sentence follows logically and clearly from the one before it and leads likewise to the sentence following it. A cohesive text is created in many different ways. In the course of discourse analysis, Connor (1996) defines cohesion as the use of explicit linguistic devices to signal relations between sentences and parts of texts. These cohesive devices are phrases or words that help the reader to associate previous statements with subsequent ones. Beaker (1992) perceives cohesion as the network of lexical, grammatical, and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text. Reah, in her Language of Newspaper also reveals that cohesion as a part of the system of a language does not only help to form complete coherent units, but also allows the ideological approaches of the texts to develop coherently.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) dichotomise two types of cohesive devices; grammatical and lexical devices. Grammatical cohesive devices help to sort the grammatical structure so that they will be clear and comprehensible. Grammatical cohesion embraces four different devices: reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction (Halliday & Hasan: 1976). While lexical cohesion contributes to the specification and explanation of the text meaning, it also helps to interconnect parts of the text (Úrbánová & Oakland).

Halliday & Hasan (1976:288) distinguish lexical cohesion of the following types: Reiteration which comprises repetition, synonym (or near-synonym), superordinate word, general word and collocation. This paper analyses lexical cohesive devices in the 2012 manifesto in Ghana.

2. Review of Related Literature

The term cohesion refers to the formal grammatical and lexical relations between two or more linguistic units in a piece of discourse. These units may be words, phrases or clauses. Cohesion is said to take place when the interpretation of one linguistic item occurs within the discourse. This is to say
that the meaning of one linguistic unit cannot be effectively decoded without reference to the meaning of another linguistic unit or item.

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Halliday and Hasan (1976) posit cohesion as the set of possibilities that exist in the language for making text hang together. Clark (2006) opines that cohesion is the use of repetition, transitional expressions and other devices called cohesive cues to guide readers and show how the parts of a composition relate to one another. A central objective of linguists working on the discourse level is to characterize this connectedness. Linguists have traditionally approached this problem by looking at overt linguistic elements and structures. Cohesion is related to the broader concept of coherence. There are two main types of cohesion; grammatical cohesion which is based on structural content, and lexical cohesion which is based on lexical content. A cohesive text is created in many different ways. In the course of discourse analysis, Connor (1996) defines cohesion as the use of explicit linguistic devices to signal relations between sentences and parts of texts. These cohesive devices are phrases or words that help the reader associate previous statements with subsequent ones.

Again, the concept of cohesion, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976) is a semantic one. It deals with the relations of meaning within any text. It occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another and, thus, a relation of cohesion is set up. The one presupposes the other, and cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. The two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are integrated into a text. It is also cohesion that helps a text to be more comprehensible and therefore, reader – friendlier by forming a unified whole rather than a collection of unrelated sentences or as Thombury (2005:19) puts it, hangs the text together.

3. Statement of the Problem

Scholars such as Haig (2000); Dolezal (2008) and Anamarija (2006) have researched cohesion in manifestos in their electoral context. In the area of cohesion, scholars such as: Azzouz (2009) analysed grammatical cohesion in expository essays; Tsareva (2010) cohesion in students’ argumentative essays; Abdurahman (2013) also analysed cohesion in students’ thesis writing; Hussein (2014) cohesion in expository writing; Ye (2013) achieving cohesion in persuasive writing Sharifa (2015) cohesive devices in Psychology researched papers and Qudah (2016) also analysed lexical cohesive devices in political discourse in president Obama’s 2009 inaugural Address. From extant literature on cohesion, it is explicitly reviewed that there is a great deal of research conducted on cohesion. However, according to Tsareva (2010) and Qudah (2016), the extant literature does not cater for the effects and importance on the use of lexical cohesive devices on political manifestoes. This current study therefore seeks to analyse lexical cohesive devices and their effects on the 2012 manifesto of the New Patriotic Party, NPP.

a. Research Questions

1) What are the lexical cohesive devices used in the 2012 manifesto of the NPP?

2) What are the effects of the use of the cohesive devices on the manifesto?

b. Purpose of the Study

The study seeks to identify the predominant lexical cohesive devices and their effects in the 2012 manifesto of the NPP.
4. Theoretical Framework

This paper employs Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) cohesion theory. This analysis is done by the use of lexical cohesive devices as propounded by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Halliday & Hasan (1976:288) distinguish lexical cohesion of the following types:

a. Reiteration
   - same word (repetition)
   - synonym (or near-synonym)
   - superordinate word
   - general word

b. Collocation
   - Complimentary antonyms

5. Methodology

The qualitative research approach and the textual analytical approach are employed in the analysis of the manifesto. The population of the study consists of 2012 manifesto of the NPP. The sample of this paper is composed of 2012 manifesto of the NPP. The data is analysed based on Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) lexical cohesion theory. The identification of the lexical cohesive devices is done by isolating and coding the lines in entire manifesto. The various types and sub-types of lexical cohesive devices are identified within and between the coded lines in the manifesto.

6. Results and Analysis

The result is analysed via the lexical cohesive devices propounded by Halliday and Hasan (1976)’s cohesion theory. These lexical cohesive devices according to Halliday and Hasan cohesive theory, these lexical devices are categorised into two dimensions. These include reiteration and collocation. Reiteration deals with repetition of lexical items, synonym or near synonym and superordinate words. Collocation, on the other hand, deals with complementary antonyms, part/whole or part/part. In doing the analysis, all the lexical cohesive devices that were used in the manifesto are identified.

6.1 Reiteration

It should be stated from the outset that reiteration is an umbrella term that embraces five components namely: repetition, synonymy, antonymy, superordinate and general word. These devices are deployed to convey emphasis and to tie the constituents of the discourse together.

6.2 Repetition

The party relied heavily on total repetition as a salient lexical cohesive device for achieving cohesion across the different parts of the manifesto and for emphasizing the party’s ideas. By doing so, the party tried to persuade the audience of the truth of the ideas expressed including the bright future that was awaiting Ghanaians when the party comes to power. Thus, the party repeated words consequently and this contributed to the creation of the manifesto with a very strong passion.

The exhibitions of the repetition of some words throughout the manifesto create a sense of topic maintenance that contributes to the coherence of the manifesto where all parts are linked into one another. The most important of these are the word “leadership” which had a total occurrence of 30 times, “sector” which was used 34 times, and “development” which have a frequency of 42 and Nana Akufo Addo with a frequency of 26. The repetition of the aforementioned words assisted in unifying the ideas in the manifesto. The table below presents the words that are repeated in the entire manifesto.
According to Abed-Raof (2001) "words which signify the same meanings are synonyms. Synonymy does not mean identical meaning between two words but the two words can be used in different contexts giving a similar meaning" (page: 50). In this respect, Koch (1983) examines synonymy in terms of what she calls "lexical couplet.

Synonymy is a common lexical cohesive device in political speeches and apparently, a manifesto is no exception. In line with this, germane examples need to be brought to the fore. Hence, NPP 2012 manifesto used the following synonyms. The overall aim behind using words that are semantically related is to create a kind of smooth transition from one sentence to another and to show how each sentence is related to one another. The pair of words below is the synonyms used in the manifesto and
all these are semantic and syntactic substitutes. The synonyms occurred 29 times in the entire manifesto.

Ineffective and visionless
Harness and achieved
Leader and candidate
Excel and deliver
Intention and goal
Assist and help
Assist and aid
Transform and change
Obstacles and challenges
Strong and firm
Job and employment
Dignity and integrity
Duty and responsibility
Available and existing
Own and possess
Accommodation and house
Secure and protect
Money and fund
Technique and method
Agriculture and farming
Industry and factory
Election and poll
Robbery and crime
Prosecute and sentence
Freedom and liberty
Aircraft and helicopters
Salary and enumeration
Breach and go against
Narcotic and drug

Some of these registers can be seen in the excerpt from the manifesto below.

‘The NPP will build industry and factory for the Ghanaians…
The party hopes to improve the salary and remuneration to workers…’
Our country has enjoyed freedom and liberty from sometime now…’

(CHP 3.PAR. 2)

6.4 Hyponymy
Cruse (2002) defines hyponymy as a sub-group of a lexical cohesion, where the meaning of one item is included in that of another. Hyponymic relationship mainly involves a superordinate term which refers to word with more inclusive or general meaning, and hyponyms are words with more specific or narrower meaning.

6.5 Superordinate Words
Superordinate is a lexical cohesive device which belongs to the category of semantic relations, it adds lexical variety and word relations to the texts in general and political manifesto in particular. There are 8 superordinate words which have appeared in the entire manifesto.
School
Primary school
Kindergarten
University

Government
Legislature
Judiciary
Executives

Agriculture
Farm
Fisheries
Poultry
Livestock

Cash crops
Cocoa
Sheanuts
Cotton

Cereals
Maize
Rice
Millet
Cowpea
Sorghum

Social amenities
Water
Toilet
Schools
Roads
Health facilities

Security forces
The Armed forces
The police service
Fire services
Immigration service
Customs division
Prison services

Narcotics/Drugs
Cocaine
Alcohol
Marijuana
‘Our security forces include the Armed forces, the police service, the fire service and the immigration…
Our cash crops such as cocoa, sheanuts and cotton …’ (CHP 2.PAR. 3)

6.6 Collocation
6.6.1 Complimentary Antonyms

Antonymy is used to express contrast between words and serves the purpose of emphasizing ideas. The results of the study have revealed that the lexical cohesive device of antonymy is among the ones which received attention in the manifesto. The complimentary antonyms are used in the manifesto to compare the disparity of work done by the incumbent government and what the party hopes to do to improve the economic sector of the nation. From the analysis, the complimentary antonyms occur 13 times in the manifesto.

Private – public
Prosperity – poverty
Good – bad
Manage – mismanage
Employment – unemployment
Competent – incompetent
Reduce – increase
Corruption – transparency
Maximize – minimize
Major – minor
Adequate – inadequate
Developed – underdeveloped
Graduate – non-graduate

‘The NPP will not run an ineffective and visionless government as the NDC is doing...
We will lead Ghanaians to prosperity not into poverty...’ (CHP 3.PAR. 6)

Table 2. Summary of lexical cohesive devices in the manifesto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical cohesive devices</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reiteration – Repetition</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synonymy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superordinate words</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collocation- complimentary antonym</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 above, presents a summary of lexical cohesive devices which are analysed in the entire manifesto. From table 49 above, repetition occur as the most dominant lexical cohesive devices which was used with a frequency of 38 representing 43% of the total number of cohesive devices employed in the entire manifesto. The heavy reliance on repetition as a salient lexical cohesive device in the manifesto helps to achieve cohesion across the different parts of the manifesto and also emphasise the party’s ideas. By doing so, the party tried to persuade the audience of the truth of the ideas expressed including the bright future that was awaiting Ghanaians when the party comes to power.

As can be seen from table 2, Synonyms follow with a frequency of 29 representing 33% of the total number of lexical cohesive devices used. The effect of using synonyms or words that are semantically related in this manifesto is to create a kind of smooth transition from one sentence to another and to show that each sentence is related to one another.

Complimentary antonyms are the third lexical device used with a frequency of 13 representing 15% of the number of cohesive devices used in the entire manifesto. The antonyms are used in the manifesto to contrast and compare the disparity of work done by the incumbent government and what the party hopes to do to improve the economic sector of the nation.

Finally, superordinate words are the least used cohesive device employed with a frequency of 8 representing 9% of the total lexical items. The use of the superordinate term helps the manifesto to
form complete coherent units not only that but also allows the ideological approaches of the manifesto of the party to develop coherently.

7. Conclusion

The paper analysed lexical cohesion in the 2012 manifesto of the NPP. The manifesto employed some lexical cohesive devices; these are repetition, synonymy, superordinate words and collocation which are complimentary antonyms. From the analysis, repetition is the most dominant cohesive device employed. The use of this device emphasises the massive projects the party hopes to achieve and also the commitment that the party hopes to attach to the execution of these plans. The uses of synonyms in the manifesto make it possible for the electorates to understand the ideology of the party well. The superordinate words are used to categorise the concrete plans into groups so that the electorates can better understand the plans into details. Finally, complimentary antonyms are used to compare the disparity of work done by the incumbent government and what the party hopes to do to improve the economic sector of the nation.

The effect of these lexical cohesive devices used in the manifesto help to establish ties and links between the lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and the adverbs in the manifesto. The study confirms the finding of Savola (2005) on analysis on the language and structure of general election manifesto of British Labour Party that manifesto employs persuasive registers to convince electorates to vote for that party through the use of adjectives. The study also confirms the finding of a research done by Qudah (2016) that political manifestos made more use of repetition of words to lay emphasis in order to foreground the party’s commitment to the plans it hopes to execute.

The study again confirms one of the findings of Savola’s (2005) study that political manifestos are perfect examples of text or genre which seek to influence people, more precisely, the voters. The study also confirms Reah’s (1990) finding on the use of lexical cohesive devices that cohesion is the system of a language not only helps to form complete coherent units but also allows the ideological approaches of the manifesto to develop coherently. This is what happened exactly in the analysis of cohesive devices in the 2012.

8. References


