

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 11 : 4 April 2011

ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.

B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.

A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.

Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.

Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.

S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.

G. Baskaran, Ph.D.

L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

## Lexical Cohesion in the Speeches of His Majesty, King Abdullah II of Jordan

Hatmal O.E. Al Khalidy, Ph.D. Student

L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.



King Abdullah II of Jordan

### Abstract

The study of words and meaning in isolation may not reveal the exact use of words. The analysis of lexical cohesion in speech will help to identify the actual usage of the words. This type of discourse analysis is helpful to understand the texture of a speech or text.

This paper deals with the lexical cohesion aspects in the speeches of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan.

**Key words:** Discourse, Word repetition, Synonyms, Super ordinates and general, opposite and related words, lexical cohesion.

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

11 : 4 April 2011

Hatmal O.E. Al Khalidy, Ph.D. Student and L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

Lexical Cohesion in the Speeches of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan

## **Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

King Abdullah II of Jordan has delivered more than 200 speeches from the year of his inauguration as the King of Jordan in 1999 up to the year 2010. His Majesty's political speeches have dealt with not only political issues but also economic and religious issues.

### **2. Aim of the Study**

The language of politicians is coded carefully in order to influence their audiences about the validity and relevance of their own messages and themes. How lexical cohesion is used in the speeches of His Majesty plays a crucial role in drawing the attention of his audiences. The investigator aims to give examples from the speeches of His Majesty to show how word repetition, synonyms, super-ordinates and the general, opposite and related words function in these speeches.

### **3. Method of the Study**

This paper deals with the political speeches of His Majesty, with the political, economic and religious issues that confront Jordan and the world at large which were delivered locally (in Jordan), or nationally (in any Arab country), or internationally (anywhere in the world).

### **4. Literature Review**

#### ***Discourse analysis - Its origins and development***

Discourse analysis is primarily linguistic study examining the use of language functions along with its forms, produced both orally and in writing (Carter, cited in Wisniewski 2006). Zellig Harris studied the relation between sentences and developed the concept of 'discourse analysis', which became a branch of applied linguistics (Cook, cited in Wisniewski 2006).

Earlier 'discourse analysis' was not regarded as an independent field of study but Harris suggested extension of grammatical examination which reminded and resembled syntactic research. Discourse analysis has become very popular in psychotherapy, psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Trappes-Lomax, cited in Wisniewski 2006). Also during 1960s and 1970s, the researchers interested in pragmatics played an important role in the development of the study of discourse analysis. The Linguists of Prague school emphasized on the arrangement of information in communicative products, the relation between grammar and discourse and the roles of text analysis (McCarthy, cited in Wisniewski 2006).

#### **Definitions of Discourse**

The term *discourse* has very wide meanings. The word *discourse* emerged from Latin '*discursus*' (Wisniewski 2006).

Discourse: a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than sentence. Often constituting a coherent unit such as sermon, agreement, joke, or narrative (Crystal, cited in Wisniewski 2006).

According to Cook cited in Wisniewski 2006, short conversations or even groans might be equally rightfully named discourse.

Beaugrande proposes seven criteria for both written and spoken texts as discourse:

1. **Cohesion** - grammatical relationship between parts of a sentence essential for its interpretation.
2. **Coherence** - in order of statements relates one another by sense.
3. **Intentionality** - the message has to be conveyed deliberately and consciously.
4. **Acceptability** - indicates that the communicative product needs to be satisfactory in that the audience approves it.
5. **Informativeness** - some new information has to be included in the discourse.
6. **Situationality** - circumstances in which the remark is made are important.
7. **Intertextuality** - reference to the world outside the text or the interpreter's schemata (Beaugrande cited in Wisniewski 2006).

According to O'Tuathail cited in Korf (2006) discourse is a set of capabilities that allows us to organize and give meaning to the world and our actions and practices within them.

The basic meaning of 'discourse', in modern ordinary usage, is 'talk'. Originally, the term 'discourse' came from Latin, *discursus*, meaning 'to run', 'to run on', 'to run to and fro'. (Carter, Goddard, Reah, Sanger, & Bowring 2001:141).

### **Features of Discourse**

Since there is no one single "correct" and particular definition for discourse, there is no agreement about all the features of discourse.

According to Saussure, there are two divisions of wide meanings of language. *Langue* refers to a system that enables individuals to speak as they do, and *parole* indicates a specific set of produced statement.

Following this division, discourse relates more to parole, for it always occurs in time and is internally characterized by successfully developing expressions in which the meaning of the later is influenced by the former, while langue is abstract.

To list some additional traits: discourse is always produced by somebody whose identity, as well as the identity of the interpreter, is significant for the proper understanding of the

message. On the other hand language is impersonal, that is to say, more universal, due to society. Furthermore, discourse always happens in either physical or linguistic context and within a meaningful fixed time, whereas language does not refer to anything. Consequently, discourse only may convey messages thanks to language which is its framework (Wisniewski 2006).

There are several discourse types such as narrative, persuasive, descriptive, expository, conversational, and procedural (Cherney, cited in Dijkstra 2004:264).

### **Types of Discourse**

As there is no agreement about the definition of discourse, the same is true for its types.

According to the Organon model, there are three different types of discourse, one is informative type of discourse, second one narrative type, and third one is argumentative discourse, all related to written communication discourse (Wisniewski 2006).

As regards spoken communication discourse, according to Steger, we have six different types: public debates, reports, interview, message and presentation (Steger, cited in Wisniewski 2006).

### **Previous Studies of Political Speeches**

Savoy (2009) has analysed 189 speeches of the Senators John McCain and Barack Obama during the year 2007-2008. He compared the frequency of words which are used by the two leaders. The result showed that the word "the" occurs more frequently in ordinary language (6.9%) than in the political speeches (4.77%). As regards Sentence Length, McCain's speech had 25.46 words per sentence, whereas Obama's sentences had 26.05 words.

### **Discourse and Texts**

To illustrate the operation of single discourse: If you say 'my head hurts so I must be ill', you will be employing a medical discourse; if you say 'my head hurts so I cannot really want to go to that party', you will be employing some psychodynamic discourse, and if you say 'my head hurts but not the way that yours does when you are trying it on in the way women do', you will be employing a sort of sexist discourse. (Parker as cited in Wooffitt 2005: 148).

Salkie (1995) has divided cohesive devices into two main groups: **lexical cohesion** and **other kinds of cohesion**.

**Lexical cohesion** includes:

a- *Word repetition* which contains *function words and content words*.

b- *Synonyms*

c- *Super-ordinates and general* , so the general word is the *super ordinate* whereas the specific word is called hyponym, and

d- *Opposite and related words* according to him there are two types of opposite one is *binary opposite* and *absolute opposite*.

**Other kinds of cohesion** include:

Firstly *substitutes* which cover noun substitute,

Secondly *more substitutes* which have *verb substitute* and *clause substitute*

Thirdly *Ellipses*

Fourthly *Reference word*

Fifthly *Connectives* which have

- 1- Addition connectives
- 2- Opposition connectives
- 3- Cause connectives
- 4- Time connectives

According to Wisniewski (2006), cohesive devices have five types: *Substitution, Ellipses, Reference, Conjunction and Lexical cohesion*. According to him, lexical cohesion is a branch of cohesive devices which have two types: one is *reiteration* like synonyms, repetition, hyponym or anatomy, and the other is *collocation* which is the way in which certain words occur together, which is why it is easy to make out what will follow the first item.

According to Crane the principles of cohesion are:

1. *Referencing* which has three types in general. Homophoric referencing, which refers to shared information through the text; Exophoric referencing, which refers to information from the immediate context of situation, and Endophoric Referencing, which refers to information that can be “Retrieved” from within the text. According to him there are three main cohesive references personal, demonstrative and comparative
2. *Substitution and Ellipses*, which have three types of classification: nominal, verbal and clausal.
3. *Conjunction*: Conjunction acts as a semantic cohesive type within text in four categories Additive, *adversative*, casual and temporal.
4. *Lexical Cohesion* the two basic categories of lexical cohesion are reiteration and collocation.

- (i) **Word Repetition**
- (ii) **Synonyms**
- (iii) **Super-ordinates and general**
- (iv) **Opposite and related words**

### **i. Word Repetition**

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

11 : 4 April 2011

Hatmal O.E. Al Khalidy, Ph.D. Student and L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

Lexical Cohesion in the Speeches of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan

In fact, repeating words makes a text coherent (Salkie 1995:3).

### **Content and Function Words**

Content words are words which refer to a thing, quality, state or action and which have meaning (lexical meaning) when the words are used alone. Content words are mainly nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverb, e.g. *book, run, musical, quickly*. Content words are also called full words, lexical words.

Function words are words which have little meaning on their own, but which show grammatical relationships in and between sentences (grammatical meaning). For example: conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and, to. These are function words. Function words are also called form words, empty words, functors, grammatical words, structural words, structure words. (Richards, & Schmidt, 2002:116).

### **A Brief Analysis of the Speeches of His Majesty King Abdullah II**

(1) *The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is the core conflict in our region. It is a political conflict, and it demands a just, negotiated solution ... one that brings statehood and freedom for Palestinians and security and more regional acceptance for Israel.* (King Abdullah's speech delivered in USA, 2008.)

In the above example the word *conflict* occurs three times, *Israel* occurs two times, *Palestinians* occurs two times, *and* occurs five times, *the* occurs three times, *is* occurs two times, *it* occurs two times, and the word *a* occurs two times.

The above words in italics *conflict, Israel, and Palestinians* are content words because they have their own meaning, whereas the italic words *and, the, is, it, and a* are function words because they have only a little or no meaning on their own.

Note that the predominant occurrence of selected content words in the above utterance clearly reveals the focus and concern of the speech cited.

Another example:

(2) This is a blessed day, dear to *the heart of every Jordanian, man and woman, the descendants of the founding generation who sacrificed immensely for the independence of the nation and the liberation of the Jordanian individual's will.* (King Abdullah's speech delivered in Jordan, 2006.)

As regards the second example, the word *the* occurs seven times, and the word *of* occurs three times, the word *Jordanian* occurs two times, whereas the word *and* occurs two times.

The word *Jordanian* is a content word, whereas the words *the, of, and* are function words. There are also other content words in the above utterance. However, the content word *Jordanian* becomes the core word around which other content words revolve. In other words, although there may be a good number of content words in an utterance, only a limited

number of them, in the present case only one, carry the burden of the message of the utterance. Listeners instantly identify such word/words and then tune their listening on to the content word/s.

## ii. Synonyms

According to Salkie 1995:9, a synonym is a word that has the same meaning as another word.

Example, from the speeches of His Majesty. King Abdullah II:

(3) I would like to convey my deep *gratitude* and *appreciation* to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz for convening this important international conference with the objective of strengthening dialogue among faiths, cultures and civilisations. (King Abdullah's speech delivered in USA , 2008 .)

The words *gratitude* and *appreciation* are synonyms to some extent.

The occurrence of these two synonyms or synonym-like words in the beginning of the sentence focuses more on the speaker than on the subsequent content words. Speaker's intent and attitude to the issue on hand expressed by the other content words dominate. It is more a personal and appealing act which is well recognized and appreciated by a willing audience. What is narrated by the other content words is already an ongoing process, not new, which is recognized by the statement, but what is new and direct is the acknowledgement and revelation of his position in relation to the ongoing process. Synonyms and synonym-like expressions function also for assertion and emphasis.

Another example:

(4) The return of Arab rights and all occupied territories to its people, would guarantee the prevalence of *balanced* and *equal* security to all countries in the region, including Israel. (King Abdullah's speech delivered in Lebanon , 2002 .)

The words *balanced* and *equal* are near-synonyms.

## (iii) Super-ordinates and Generals

Hyponymy is another way of linking words in a text and creating coherence. It refer back to a word by using what is called a super-ordinate term. For example, from the speeches of His Majesty King Abdullah II:

(5) On this precious occasion, I would like to extend my congratulations and felicitations, and to express my appreciation and feelings of pride, to every citizen, male and female, in this *country* - in the *Badia*, *villages*, *camps* and *cities*. (King Abdullah's speech delivered in Jordan, 2006.)

The word *country* is a General word (Super ordinates) and the words *Badia*, *villages*, *camps* and *cities* are specific words (hyponym). Note the order of occurrence: a general word

followed by specific words. This creates a sense of inclusion and emphasis that everyone or everything is included.

Another example:

(6) And it is the Palestinians' right to enjoy our continued support until they establish their independent state on Palestinian soil; for the Palestinians are our family and our brothers, and we are closest to them in blood ties, in suffering and fate. (King Abdullah's speech delivered in Jordan, 2009.)

The word *family* is a General word (super-ordinate). And the word *brothers* is a specific word (hyponym).

#### **(iv) Opposite and Related words**

Example from the speeches of His Majesty. King Abdullah II:

(7) This is a blessed day, dear to the heart of every Jordanian, *man* and *woman*, the descendants of the founding generation who sacrificed immensely for the independence of the nation and the liberation of the Jordanian individual's will. (King Abdullah's speech delivered in Jordan, 2006.)

The words *man* and *woman* are opposite to each other in two crucial features: Firstly, a person in reality is either *man* or *woman*. Generally, therefore, each kind of words includes two possibilities only (*man* or *woman*). They are in fact known as Binary Opposites. Secondly, anatomically and physiologically speaking, an individual is mainly either 100 per cent *man* or at the same 100 per cent *woman*. Thus a person in general cannot be partly *man* and *woman*. This type of opposition is called Absolute Opposites. Note that there may be exceptions in real world, but language use often allots binary features to words of this type.

Consider the speech of His Majesty:

Since the day I was entrusted with my responsibilities, I have always felt and understood the suffering and concerns of every citizen - *male* and *female* - in this country.

This statement simply follows the grammatical categories offered by the language for its syntactic constructions. And yet the statement carries both the authority of the King as well as his concern for the citizens of his country. The use of *male and female* covers all the citizens including those in the borderline cases, either anatomically/physiologically or psychologically.

As regards the related words: words related to each other help to create coherence. For example:

(8) We have reaffirmed on these basis, the importance of respecting the *independence* and *sovereignty* of the State of Kuwait, and guaranteeing its security and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders. (King Abdullah's speech delivered in Lebanon , 2002.)



The words *sovereignty* and *independence* are related words.

Another example:-

(9) Frustration and despair, poverty and the sense of absence of justice anywhere in this world can constitute a fertile environment for the spread of *violence* and *terrorism*.

The words *violence* and *terrorism* are related words. (King Abdullah's speech delivered in Lebanon, 2002.)

## To Conclude

A carefully deliberated speech from leaders always tries to be inclusive. The speech identifies the problems, issues and shortcomings as well. However, the ultimate goal and tenor of such speech is the welfare of all in the present as well as in the future. Carefully chosen words stand linked to each other to bring out a wholesome message. As for His Majesty's speech, the focus is not alliteration, use of metaphors and imagery or even appeal to emotions. The speech assumes a proper tenor to convey what is positive for his countrymen, not arouse or exploit emotions. The mechanics of display and exhibitionism are not exploited whereas dignity is cultivated and maintained.

---

---

## References

Crane, P. A. (n.d.). *Texture in Text: A Discourse Analysis of a New Article Using Halliday and Hasan's Model of Cohesion* [White paper]. Retrieved February 2011, from [library.nakanishi.ac.jp/kiyou/gaidai\(30\)/08.pdf](http://library.nakanishi.ac.jp/kiyou/gaidai(30)/08.pdf)

Carter, R., Goddard, A., Reah, D., Sanger, K., & Bowring, M. (2001). *Working with texts: A core introduction to language analysis* (Second Edition). London: Routledge.

Dijkstra, K. , Bourgeois, M. S., Allen, R. S., & Burgio, L. D. (2004). Conversational coherence : discourse analysis of older adults with and without dementia. *Journal of Neurolinguistics*, (17), 263-283.

Jorgensen, M., & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method* (First edition). London: Sage Publications LTD.

Korf, B. (2006). Who is the rogue? Discourse, power and spatial politics in post-war Sri Lanka. *Political Geography*, (25), 279-297. Retrieved from [www.elsevier.com/locate/polgeo](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/polgeo)

Richards, J., & Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Salkie, R . (1995). *Text and Discourse analysis*, London. Routledge.

Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

11 : 4 April 2011

Hatmal O.E. Al Khalidy, Ph.D. Student and L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

Lexical Cohesion in the Speeches of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan

Speeches of King Abdullah II of Jordan. (2002, 2006 ,2008 , 2009).

[http://www.kingabdullah.jo/press\\_room/speechpage.php?ki\\_serial=567&menu\\_id=607  
&lang\\_hmka1=1](http://www.kingabdullah.jo/press_room/speechpage.php?ki_serial=567&menu_id=607&lang_hmka1=1)

Wooffitt, R. (2005). *Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis A comparative and Critical Introduction*, London. Sage Publications LTD.

Wisniewski, K. (2006). Discourse analysis [White paper]. In <http://www.tlumaczenia-angielski.info/>. Retrieved January 2011, from <http://www.tlumaczenia-angielski.info/linguistics/discourse.htm>.

=====  
Hatmal O.E. Al Khalidy, Ph.D. Student,  
Department of Linguistics, (KIKS)  
University of Mysore  
Mysore 570 006  
Karnataka, India  
[Hatmal88@yahoo.com](mailto:Hatmal88@yahoo.com)

L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.  
Central Institute of Indian Languages  
Manasagangotri  
Mysore 570 006  
Karnataka, India  
[ramamoorthy\\_ciil@yahoo.com](mailto:ramamoorthy_ciil@yahoo.com)