

## UNITY AND COHERENCE – Prof. Sanjay Swarnkar.

All successful compositions have one quality in common- unity-without unity, any piece of writing remains just, a piece of writing. Writing which has structure or pattern is united. Every speech or writing must have unity and coherence. If the writer or speaker has a little idea of the subject on which s/he is speaking or writing, will soon wander away from the subject and make digressions. Without comprehensive knowledge of the subjects. s/he will be confused and his/her expressions will not be clear and sometimes the same idea or concept will be repeated so s/he will never come to a clear conclusion and the reader/listener will not be able to grasp what s/he is speaking/writing about unity deals with singleness of the topic. In other words every writer/speaker should deal with a single subject. Focusing on a single subject helps the writer/speaker unfold his/her theme gradually and logically. Diversified topics in the same composition would demand omniscience while a topic narrowed down would enable the writer/speaker to make an important statement about something s/he knows really well. It is time that there is no ready-made recipe or formula for successful writing. However we must pay attention to some of the principles of unified writing.

1. **The writer/speaker should have a sense of direction:-** When a reader/listener feels that there is no sense of direction s/he feels confused. The main idea should never be forgotten otherwise the reader/listener will get confused. If a writer takes his reader through too many high ways and by ways, the reader gets disoriented and consequently fatigued.
2. **The writer/speaker must have a clear mind:-** Individuals are separate beings. Language-speech and writing enables them to get-together. When a person does not have a clear idea, s/he cannot express it clearly. A reader expects a writer to have explored his/her subject fully so that s/he knows well what s/he is writing about. The reader expects the writer to subscribe to the familiar forms of reasoning and use them in writing. A reliable and recognizable pattern in the development of an argument re-assures the reader that the writer has a clear mind.
3. **The ideas must be grouped in a skillful way:-** A sentence is not just a procession of words. Similarly, a paragraph is not an assembly of sentences. These linguistic forms are used to convey ideas from the writer to the reader. Ideas must be grouped according to their significance and their relationship to the other ideas. There must be impressive beginning, a sensible development and a satisfying conclusion. Any idea, however interesting, should be given up in case it does not belong there. Too much grouping of too many ideas is bound to be self-defeating.

4. **There should be inner harmony:-** When different sound are blended on a principled basis, we get harmony. In the same way jarring notes are eliminated or there would be cacophony. An idea that does not belong there, a word that looks out of place or any element that endanger the structure of writing system should not be allowed to take place.
5. **The Writer and the Reader should not be confused:-** Mistaking one thing for another is confusion. Careless and insufficient research about the topic and irresponsible arrangement and development of the topic demonstrate that the writer is confused. Needless to say s/he will leave the reader also confused.
6. **The Writer/Speaker should have a through knowledge of the subject:-** The reader/listener is like a hungry man who has been promised a good meal. s/he feels hurt and humiliated if s/he is not served a good meal. The reader/listener will not like half-baked ideas and it will contribute to his/her dissatisfaction so argument or an idea incompletely transmitted cannot guarantee complete understanding. On the other hand a composition that is unified and complete, guarantees success.
7. **No other competing ideas, equal as well as greater, should be allowed:-** To ensure unity, the writer should deal with one theme. Other themes, however precious, should not be allowed to mar the unity. On the day of his wedding day, the bride groom alone is given privileged treatment- he rides the horse. All the others, respective of their age and designation, walk by the side. The theme is the groom that cannot be burdened with other equally important or more important guest themes.
8. **The Writer/Speaker should make his/her subject interesting, satisfying and informative:-** The Writer/Speaker has no right to demand time and attention of a reader if the subject matter is uninteresting. The first part, that is, Introduction should give a fore taste of what is to follow. Once the beginning is good, the second part be handled properly. A good, unified composition does not make the reader feel that the treatment has been insufficient. Similarly the last part that is conclusion should be made memorable. If it is either left out or poorly handled, it means the composition is a failure.

These Principles are by no means exhaustive, They are just illustrations. Some of these principles, perhaps, may be considered as overlapping. Even so, adherence to them will, no doubt, make us think and think consecutively and that will be an asset to our country. Mahatma Gandhi unified the nation in fighting for freedom. We would lose our hard-won freedom if there is disunity. Therefore, for nations, as for compositions, Unity is strength.

So for the term coherence is concerned, first of all we should know what coherence is. A mad man's talk as well as the delirious person's outburst is called incoherent because there is no progress of thought. Each sentence in the talk may be wholesome grammatically but

the sentences do not establish the fact that they are related. When the listener fails to perceive the relationship, s/he is unclear about the intention of the speaker. There is no smooth flow of ideas but only jerky sentences in an incoherent writing. There are parts but they do not give the impression that they belong to a whole. There is no logic which holds the sentences together. The reader can not travel comfortably from sentence to sentence since there are no bridges between sentences.

But coherence shows the relationship between the elements and the construction. It shows how the elements are connected. It is related with singleness, that is, with the main idea but coherence is concerned with relatedness, that is, how the words, the sentences and the paragraphs are connected. Irrelevant details and ideas disturb the unity of a composition where as improperly linked words and ideas disturb its coherence. Unity is essential but not sufficient condition to guarantee coherence. However, abandoning unity would definitely ruin coherence. Just as one word in a sentence naturally leads to another, one sentence in a paragraph should lead to another and one paragraph in a composition should lead to another. At each level there should be ample markers to assist the reader recall the past and anticipate the future and notice how one idea is related to the other. Such a provision of markers promotes quick comprehension which is significant in effective communication. Abrupt starts and stops should be avoided in a composition since they mar the readability and comprehensibility of a sentence.

Successful writers employ the linking 'devices' to achieve the effect of coherence. These linking devices are also called 'transitional', 'Connectives' 'interlockers' and 'hooks'.

They are two types. The first type is the overt or direct where as the second type is covert or indirect. The connectives which are overt and which ensure a smooth transition can be single words and they can also be groups of words And, Moreover, furthermore, In addition not only----but also etc.

Coherence is also achieved indirectly by the use of pronominal forms for antecedent noun phrase for example:

(A man was living in a hut.)

(He recalled he lived in it for years.)

Another way to achieve coherence is by writing synonyms. Further more the use of articles helps coherence indirectly.

A Girl was waving a placard

The girl just waved the placard without raising any slogans.

In addition to these devices, the tense, the voice of verbs aid coherence indirectly. The continuous use of particular tense ensures coherence with respect to time. The use of relative pronouns such as who, whom, that, which helps locating gender and number and as a result helps coherence. Structural devices like coordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs link clauses of equal rank. Subordinating conjunctions show relation such as cause, condition, comparison, concession, place, time, purpose, result manner and so on.

We should know that an idea is neither major nor minor inherently. When we describe it, we present our point of view that it is either more valuable or less valuable than something else for the purposes of our argument. The relative significance we give an idea with respect to another idea is communicated to our reader by the type of connective we have used coordinating or subordinating. Subordinate ideas are put in subordinate clauses and modifiers whereas independent ideas are put in independent clauses.

In this way we can say that connectives not only tie sentences together but also establish what, according to the writer, the relative status of the sentence is. Connectives by making the passage coherent, help the reader to follow the argument of the writer comfortably. Besides, they help the writer to organize his/her material and to present ideas in an effective way. So it is in the writer's own interest to learn how to use connectives effectively. It is true that if connectives are carefully used, they, no doubt, lead to coherence and lucidity but if they indiscriminately used and over-used, defeat the writer's purpose of communication and earn for him/her what s/he dreads most that is reader's alienation.

