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Research Paper

Effect of Textual Coherence Features on Elementary Students' Recall of Stories in Persian Textbooks Based on Halliday and Hassan's Theory

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of textual coherence factors on the improvement of reading comprehension in elementary school students. It aims to analyze the influence of grammatical, lexical, and connective elements on students' ability to recall stories, utilizing the framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Textual coherence, as one of the key components in understanding and conveying meaning in educational texts, plays an important role in improving reading comprehension. This study uses a qualitative method and analyzes 64 stories from elementary school Persian textbooks to identify and analyze textual applications and their effects on students' recall of the stories. Data were collected through questionnaires based on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) SFL. A researcher-made questionnaire was designed, and 180 students were recruited to answer the items on a 5-point Likert scale. Results showed that grammatical, lexical, and connective coherence effectively improve students' text recall. In comparison, the lexical features are more effective than connective and grammatical features, facilitating students' recall of the stories in Persian textbooks. This study reveals that teachers at the elementary level need to focus on textual coherence, especially grammatical and connective, and then lexical features. Implications suggest that textbook designers focus on textual structures in designing educational textbooks since they affect students' recall and improve their reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Coherence, Recall, Systemic functional linguistics, Text*



Introduction

In every linguistic community, depending on social and cultural factors and interpersonal relationships, texts also have specific concepts for conveying meaning in society. Research on educational texts from the perspective of linguistic theories undoubtedly helps to improve them. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL) represents the correlation between language and its functions in contextual settings. The primary contribution of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) lies in its analysis of textual characteristics as both linguistic and metalinguistic elements, facilitating the understanding of interpersonal relationships within a particular social context.

Regarding the analysis of Persian textbooks at six levels in the current research, the researcher analyzed the passages of the sourcebooks, including short stories that can be categorized as literary texts for elementary school students. Therefore, literary linguistics was adopted to review the text structures of the passages of Persian textbooks based on literary linguistic theories. Textual applications in these texts create coherence and, as a result, a better understanding of the text for the reader (Lien, 2013). Coherence is one of the basic elements in a text and is discussed in discourse analysis. The internal coherence of the text refers to the internal relationships between sentences. In other words, the dependence of the interpretation of text elements on the interpretation of other elements in the context of the text (Halliday & Hassan, 1978). These relationships give the text unity, and the readers can distinguish a coherent and interconnected text from a set of separate sentences.

Coherence of Texts

Coherence in texts is a vital part of text linguistics since it is not simply a collection of words, but rather it expresses meaning, interaction, communication, and comprehension. Without a comprehensive and interdisciplinary text organization, a text cannot be understood. The field must continuously influence its processes to help readers understand the content. Therefore, the communication process takes place through texts since there are three main components including the author, the text, and the reader. If each of these components plays its role correctly, the process of text comprehension is carried out effectively. Words are the main means of transmitting knowledge in any setting, and they are done through written or spoken channels (Halliday & Halliday, & Matthiessen, 2014). The text and its features, such as careful choice of words, sentences, and paragraph structures. The coherence of the text plays a key role in the transmission of meanings and concepts in the sentences that make a cohesive text. Cohesive features are recognized as determining factors in text comprehension, along with other factors such as the overall structure of the text and word choice. For the reader to have a clear and coherent mental image of the cohesive markers' interaction with text content is vital since they enable him to place them together in such a way that they create a common meaning. Research conducted in English has shown that text cohesion is an important factor in text comprehension (Ozuru et al., 2010).

In the studies (e.g., Pickren et al, 2022), the factors affecting reading comprehension were examined, and they found that reading comprehension strategies are effective in comprehending the text. However, less research has been done on the potential effects of the cohesive features that affect the readers' comprehension at the elementary level, for children between the ages of five to eleven years old, especially Persian textbook series. Thus, this article examines the role of coherence in the unity of the text organization in pedagogical texts and its effect on learning and analyzing text comprehension (Alpcaci, 2016). This study could be two-fold since it examines applications of coherence in the texts and their effects on elementary students' reading comprehension. However, linguistic criticism theories use linguistics as a tool for analyzing texture, and research into the influence of textual factors on readers' text comprehension affecting texture is still insufficient. Individual and social needs for the study of language and its relationship



with reading comprehension have led to the formation of disciplines such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics (Strohmaier et al, 2023).

The Problem

There are several studies (e.g., Assadi et al, 2024) that investigated the impact of instructional strategies focused on textual cohesion on the reading comprehension abilities of Iranian EFL students. They concluded that the instruction had a significant effect on students' reading comprehension. But they focused on adults and there has not been any literature that deals with elementary students and Persian coursebooks. The present study examines the application of cohesive markers as textual features to make text unified and affect elementary students' reading comprehension of Persian books at six levels. By collecting data from the readers of these books, this study helps to recognize the advantages and weaknesses of the texts and provides a better understanding of the Persian prose used in elementary school books. The analysis of textual applications leads to further research and creates a scientific attitude toward the analysis of the text and its style. Elementary school books, as an important part of the educational system, are analyzed using these methods. This study aimed to assess the degree to which these factors are used in understanding the content and transmitting educational messages in different age groups. Also, identifying language patterns, developing language skills, and familiarizing the authors of Persian books with the methods of composing stories and their impact on understanding the content are other goals of this study.

Literature Review

Numerous studies (e.g., Foruzandeh & Banitaleb, 2014; Malmir & Darakhshan, 2020; Ngongo & Ndandara, 2024; Turgut Dost, 2021; Veysi & Molavi Vardanjani, 2016) have been conducted in various fields within the framework of Halliday's SFL theory. Most studies reported a significant relationship between students' skills in creating coherent text and their reading comprehension. Other researchers have also conducted coherent and confrontational research in various texts.

Randy and Briones (2016) propose a framework for text analysis utilizing SFL. They examined the similarities and differences between the two texts, specifically concerning the SFL principles of tenor/interpersonal metafunction and field/experiential metafunction. Their analysis indicated that both texts exhibit comparable moods and modalities from the perspective of interpersonal metafunction. However, text one tends to present a favorable review through a significant use of declarative statements, whereas text two serves more as a report of pertinent information and interviews. The authors concluded that text one engaged more deeply with material and relational processes that enhance the texture, while text two prioritized content advancement with minimal focus on texture.

Shokoofgi and Ahmadian (2016), the textual coherence of Persian textbooks and their effect on students' comprehension. The authors emphasized the importance of conjunctions and pronouns in creating coherence from the second year of elementary school to the tenth year of secondary school. The research shows that focusing on these elements and practical exercises in writing classes can improve reading skills. Veysi and Oraki (2016) compared the elements of textual coherence of Surah An-Nas and its translation based on the theory of Halliday and Hassan. They showed that while the translation and the original text have similarities, the use of coherence elements such as reference and repetition is greater in the original text.

Karadeniz (2017) has investigated the coherence and continuity in the written works of college students through the lens of Halliday and Hasan's (1978) coherence theory, with a particular emphasis on the domains of coherence and textual continuity. The analysis revealed a notable correlation between the length of the texts and the coherence present in the students' writings. Kailani (2017) conducted an analysis involving 25 nursing students. The care reports

authored by nursing students focus specifically on the coherence of these documents concerning the students' academic performance. Utilizing the SFL framework, the study examined the textual meta-function to evaluate aspects such as cohesion, thematic organization, and the evolution of themes within the reports. The investigation into text cohesion suggested that all reports primarily depended on lexical cohesion and references to create internal links. The consistent recurrence of the same lexical items and the significant application of such elements were particularly noteworthy. Regarding coherence through thematic organization, it was observed that textual themes were primarily utilized, with a marked preference for unmarked themes and an imbalance in the application of marked versus unmarked themes. Thematic progression across the texts largely depended on the technique of theme reiteration. Kailani concluded that coherence is vital for both the understanding and structural integrity of a text.

Turgut Dost (2021) investigated the effects of a course grounded in SFL on the understanding of genre and language among teacher candidates. The research involved nineteen teacher candidates and took place over a single semester. Data collection was conducted through the analysis of two texts: a published children's book and a narrative written by a fourth-grade bilingual student, both of which fall under the fictional narrative genre. These texts were evaluated at the beginning and end of the course. The analysis employed a rubric developed by the course instructor, which was informed by SFL theory. To illustrate the findings, frequency tables and graphs were generated. Additionally, the original responses of participants were included to enrich the context of the results. The overall findings indicated that while participants did not fully leverage metalanguage, they demonstrated an increased ability to identify language and genre-related elements more frequently in both texts. In addition, at the beginning of the course, participants viewed the published text mainly as a tool for delivering information to readers and guiding them on how to interact with literature. Finally, the examination of the student text indicated that, after the course, participants experienced a development in reading comprehension, a broader perspective on the complexities of children's writing, extending beyond mere mechanical aspects.

Pickren et al. (2022) examined the connections between various textual features. They examined the concepts of word concreteness and referential cohesion, as well as their effects on reading comprehension, through the application of multilevel logistic models. The research involved a sample of 158 native English-speaking students aged between eight and eleven years, representing a diverse spectrum of reading skills. Consistent with the simple view of reading, the findings indicated that both decoding abilities and language comprehension were significantly linked to the outcomes of reading comprehension. Additionally, certain text attributes—such as word frequency, pronoun frequency, word concreteness, and deep cohesion—were found to explain further variance in reading comprehension performance beyond the elements identified in the simple view. Importantly, the emotional resonance of the text, as assessed through lexical ratings of arousal, was identified as a crucial predictor of reading comprehension, exceeding the effects of traditional person-level and text-based factors. These findings contribute to a growing body of literature that emphasizes the importance of integrating emotional elements alongside individual and textual characteristics to better understand reading comprehension performance (Malmir & Derakhshan, 2020).

Ngongo and Ndandara (2024) investigated the function of cohesion as a tool for enhancing text structure in the academic writing of undergraduate students. They recognized that students' prior knowledge could influence their writing abilities. The complexity of academic writing posed challenges, as students needed to effectively combine their understanding of both the subject matter and grammatical elements, including text texture. Cohesion in text was manifested through various devices, including reference, conjunction, ellipsis, and lexical organization. The collected



data were categorized and analyzed to assess how cohesion contributes to text texture. The findings revealed that cohesion was primarily realized through references, which included personal, demonstrative, and comparative types, conjunctions, ellipsis, substitution, and lexical organization, which play a significant role in effective communication. They also noted that references, conjunctions, and repetition were the most frequently utilized cohesion resources. This prevalence may be attributed to the types of texts and the students' challenges in employing a wider range of substitution, ellipsis, and other forms of lexical cohesion.

In sum, the literature has shown that the passages including cohesive elements affect receptive and productive skills, but the frequency of these elements could affect students' reading and listening comprehension regarding their age. For instance, the element of omission as a textual feature is more commonly used in adults' drama than in children, and the element of lexical cohesion is effective in improving students' textual recall. The literature also shows that texts that are well-organized grammatically and lexically can be seen in the words that are coherently connected. The literature indicates that the way words are equated and the elements of coherence play a significant role in the reproduction of the text. The review of the literature also indicates that the highest frequency of occurrence in the pedagogical texts belongs to the subcomponent of personal pronouns.

Theoretical Framework of SFL

Theoretical linguistics addresses Halliday and Hasan's (1976) studies that see language as a means of communication and social roles. This can be a reaction against structuralism and cognitivism that focus on form or mental processes to produce or comprehend texts. SFL, following Halliday and Hasan, deals with both grammatical and semantic structures in discourse and contributes to a deeper understanding of the speech or text in a social context. This field analyzes linguistic units at the textual level and studies linguistic elements beyond the sentence. It considers language as a means of communication regarding the form and function in actual use for determining the intention negotiated by the addresser and addressee in a specific context. They also define language as a semantic-semiotic system and emphasize the functional uses of linguistic elements.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) believe that the structural system of language is formed based on its communicative and functional role and explain various roles for this structural system. In this regard, the formation is a part of the linguistic system to consists of text-forming elements and measures that include thematic structure and coherence. Coherence refers to the semantic relationships between text elements, and it is created when the interpretation of one element depends on another. He considers coherence to be a part of language and believes that coherence is raised in different linguistic layers, such as semantics, lexical grammar, and written phonetics. Therefore, coherence is a feature of the textuality of a text and an indication of the semantic relations within the text that give the text unity and distinguish it from separate sentences. It refers to the alignment of text components, arises from the logical connection between words and sentences, and gives the text unity and solidity (Ramezani Rostambek Tafreshi, 2015).

In critical discourse analysis, Aghagolzadeh (2013) believes that textual features are crucial in shaping the meaning and function of linguistic components within a text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) characterize coherence as a semantic principle that links various elements of a text through coherent features in a text. Coherence occurs when the interpretation of one element is dependent on another element in the text. Thus, coherence is composed of various linguistic devices that establish connections between sentences. It arises not only from the relations between words but also from the continuity of content beyond sentences. emphasizes the importance of the function of linguistic elements in discourse and asks how the structure and style of the text affect human oral interactions (Lotfipour Saadi, 1992). That is, an element is a reference to another element in

such a way that its meaning can be understood by referring to that reference.

Coherence is the possibility of linking some things with things that have come before or will come later. Therefore, the textual analysis includes the semantic layer (meaning), the Lexico-grammar layer (form), and the phonological written layer (objective manifestation). The theory of textual coherence in SFL examines the factors that relate the components of the text to each other and coordinate the text. Halliday and Hassan (1976) and Halliday's Matthiessen (2014) presented a model of this theory that includes three main factors: lexical, grammatical, and connective features. Each of these features is divided into subsets that serve a significant function in creating textual coherence and making the components of the text work together coherently (Mousavinia & Ghalavandi, 2022).

Research Questions

The present study sought to address the following research questions:

RQ1. How do textual features affect elementary students' recall of the Persian textbook stories?

RQ2. How do teachers at the elementary level facilitate students' recall and comprehension of stories in Persian textbooks by focusing on textual features? Why?

Methodology

Design and Corpus

This research adopted a qualitative design to analyze six levels of Persian textbooks at the elementary level. A descriptive and analytical approach was used to collect data on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) SFL frameworks. The corpus of the study included 64 short stories from elementary Persian textbooks to examine the textual features of coherence and their effect on students' reading comprehension. The research includes grammatical, lexical, and connective features that make the texts cohere.

Participants

The participants included 180 students who participated in studying the stories and answering the content recognition questionnaires. The research sampling method was purposive, and the research population included the students in six elementary schools in Abadan, Iran. The students in six levels of the elementary school, convenience sampling, were conducted from different stories from the first to sixth grades of the elementary school. There were 30 students in each level, ranging from level one to six. This research aims to examine the use of textual coherence factors in Persian textbook stories and their effect on their comprehension.

Table 1

Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

Variables	Cronbach's coefficient (Alpha>0.7)	alpha	Composite reliability coefficient (Cr>0.7)	Average Variance extracted (AVE>0.5)
Textual Features	0.836		0.838	0.871

Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (which measures internal consistency), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are all equal to the relevant range; it can be confirmed that the research model has appropriate convergent reliability and validity. AVE assesses the internal consistency of the items within the questionnaire. It is advisable for the reliability of a construct to be no less than 0.70. A high level of composite reliability serves as a strong indicator that all items are functioning constantly, measuring the same construct.



Data Analysis

Based on the qualitative nature of the study, the data were analyzed by calculating the frequency and percentages of textual features of coherence in Persian passages. Then Spearman Correlation analysis was employed to assess the relationship between the participants' perceptions of text recall and the number of textual features.

Results

Textual Features

Three sets of grammatical, lexical, and connective features are represented in Tables 2 to 6. The data include the participants' responses to the content recognition questionnaire. The status of the subscales of textual features are displayed in Table 1.

Table 2

Grammatical Features of Textual Coherence

Item	Grade	Text number	Personal pronoun	Comparative structure	Demonstrative pronouns	Sentence	Noun compound phrase	Verb phrase
1	One	1 to 3	1	0	2	1	0	0
2	Two	4 to 12	76	10	30	26	18	20
3	Three	13 to 22	110	28	72	28	64	42
4	Four	23 to 32	98	19	80	32	67	49
5	Five	33 to 48	190	36	138	41	67	58
6	Six	49 to 64	226	55	127	34	74	68
Total		1987	701	148	449	162	290	237
%		100	35.28	7.45	22.60	8.15	14.59	11.93

As shown in Table 2, grammatical features of textual coherence in 64 short stories, the highest frequency of occurrence (701, 35.28%) is assigned to the personal pronouns, and the lowest frequency is comparative structures (148, 7.45%) addressing micro-components of the texts. Generally, the frequencies range from the highest to the lowest ones including personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, noun compounds, verb phrases, sentences, and comparative structures.

Table 3

Lexical Features of Textual Coherence

Item	Grade	Text number	Repetition	Homonym	Synonym	Antonym	Common nouns	Proper nouns
1	First	1 to 3	1	0	0	1	21	3
2	Second	4 to 12	45	14	15	9	384	134
3	Third	13 to 22	32	18	24	22	513	101
4	Fourth	23 to 32	59	29	49	25	660	92
5	Fifth	33 to 48	118	85	68	58	590	122
6	Sixth	49 to 64	140	62	91	55	685	184
Total		4509	395	208	247	170	2853	636
%		100	8.76	4.61	5.48	3.77	63.27	14.11

Table 3 displays the frequencies of lexical features of textual coherence. The highest frequency of occurrence with (2583, 63.27%) is assigned to common nouns and the lowest frequency with (170, 3.77%) belongs to the antonyms. In sum, the frequencies are in range from the highest to the lowest ones including common nouns, proper nouns, repetitions, synonyms, homonyms, and antonyms.

Table 4

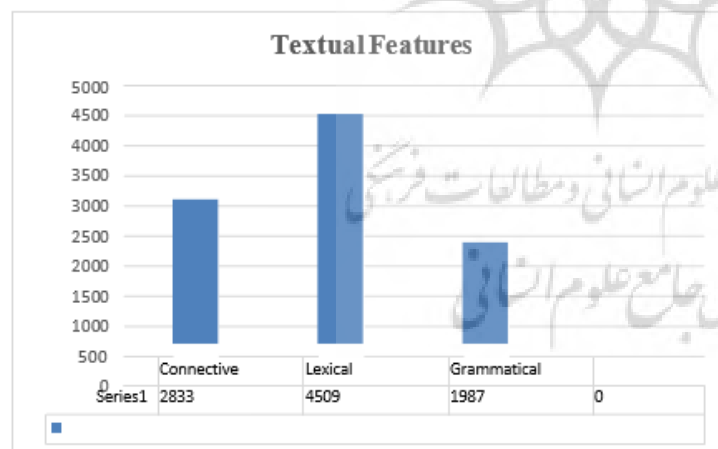
Connective Features of Textual Coherence

Item	Grade	Text no.	explanatory	contradictory	additional	causal	conditional	temporal
1	First	1 to 3	0	1	6	0	1	0
4	Second	4 to 12	2	7	88	9	16	5
13	Third	13 to 22	13	12	247	24	24	22
23	Fourth	23 to 32	21	16	377	26	33	25
33	Fifth	33 to 48	52	23	560	81	86	51
49	Sixth	49 to 64	56	35	760	52	58	44
Total		2833	144	94	2038	192	218	147
%		100	5.08	3.32	71.94	6.78	7.70	5.18

As shown in Table 3, regarding the connective features of textual coherence, the additive features get the highest frequency of occurrence (2038, 71.94%), and the lowest frequency of occurrence is related to the contradiction features (94, 3.32%). with 93. The ranges from the highest to the lowest textual features of connectives are: additional, conditional, causal, temporal, explanatory, and contradictory. Figure 1 shows a comparison of textual features of the Persian textbooks at the elementary level.

Figure 1

Comparison of Textual Features of Data



Participants' Perceptions of Comprehending the texts

Participants' perceptions of comprehending the texts were collected via a content recognition questionnaire that elicited the students' ideas regarding text recall and understanding. The data are descriptively analyzed to measure the correlation between the three variables of textual features that facilitate the recall of the stories in the textbooks as it is displayed in Table 4.

Table 5
Textual Features

Textual Features	N	Average	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	df	Sig.
Grammatical	150	3.83	0.68	.345	1.372	2	.539*
Lexical Features	150	2.72	0.59	.745	1.162		
Connective Features	150	1.53	0.37	.894	1.021		

Table 5 indicates that the average responses of students to grammatical, textual, and connective features are 3.83, 2.72, and 1.53, respectively. Furthermore, the indices of Skewness and kurtosis fall within the specified range of normality since the indices indicate values greater than 0.05. To examine the relationships between the variables, Pearson Correlation analysis was calculated for the parametric nature of the data distribution. The correlation between the two variables is approved as ($r=.53$), which shows that the variables are significantly correlated. Regarding the effectiveness of each set of features, two sets of grammatical and lexical features are more effective than connective features from the participants' point of view. Table 5 represents the regression coefficient statistics that indicate a comparison of participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of textual features on recalling texts.

Table 6
Regression Coefficient Statistics of Textual Features

Description	Coefficient	Standard error	Critical area	P
Recall of Texts vs. Textual Features	0.326	0.088	3.214	0.001

According to the above table, the sign of the regression coefficient indicates a positive effect. In general, if the critical area indicates that the effect is significant. Considering the critical area value and the p-value, it can be seen that the textual features have a considerable impact on students' recall of texts. In other words, the effect of the textual features on students' recall of the texts is 0.32, and the critical area value for this coefficient is 3.21 and greater than 1.96, which indicates that this coefficient is significant at ($p>0.05$).

Discussion

The current research examined the impact of textual coherence features on improving recall and comprehension of elementary school students from the perspective of SFL. The first research question addresses the textual features affecting elementary students' recall of the Persian textbook stories. Analyzing the data indicated that the frequencies of lexical, connective, and grammatical are given in the hierarchy from the greatest to the lowest. This shows that the textbook designers focus on the use of lexical features more than connective and grammatical ones. The lexical features that make the texts cohere are repetition, homonyms, synonyms, antonyms, common nouns, and proper nouns.

The use of lexical features is significantly higher than the other textual features. This may be the cause that affects elementary students' recall of Persian textbook stories. The study showed that textual coherence plays a significant role in better understanding of texts by students. These lexical features were utilized more frequently than connective and grammatical features, indicating their importance in creating cohesive texts. The high use of lexical features may also explain why elementary students had better recall of the textbook stories, as these features help to create a more memorable and engaging text. Overall, the study highlighted the significance of textual coherence

in aiding students' understanding of the texts and emphasized the importance of utilizing lexical features in creating cohesive and comprehensible texts for educational purposes.

The second effective textual features are connective ones, including explanatory, contradictory additional, causal, conditional, and temporal. They are used to connect words, phrases, and sentences. Connective textual features play a crucial role in enhancing the flow and coherence of a text. Explanatory connectives help provide further clarification and elaboration on a particular point or idea, ensuring that the reader fully understands the information being presented. Contradictory connectives, on the other hand, serve to introduce contrasting viewpoints or arguments, adding depth and complexity to the discussion. Additionally, causal connectives establish cause-and-effect relationships between different elements in the text, shedding light on the reasons behind certain events or outcomes. Conditional connectives are used to introduce hypothetical scenarios or conditions, allowing for the exploration of different possibilities or outcomes. Finally, temporal connectives help to organize information chronologically, guiding the reader through a sequence of events or ideas clearly and logically. Together, these connective textual features serve to create a cohesive and narrative text that keeps the reader engaged and informed.

The third effective variable in facilitating students' recall of stories in the Persian textbooks at the elementary level is the use of grammatical features that make the sentences and structures cohere in the text. This is consistent with the findings of Ngongo and Ndandara (2024), who emphasize students' understanding of text structure organization and grammar as well. Grammatical features are personal pronouns, comparative structures, demonstrative pronouns, sentences, noun compounds, and verb phrases. Personal pronouns are words that are used to refer to specific people or things. They include words like "I," "you," "he," "she," "it," "we," and "they." Comparative structures are used to compare two or more things, such as "bigger than," "more expensive than," or "less important than." Demonstrative pronouns, like "this," "that," "these," and "those," are used to point to specific people or things. Sentences are groups of words that express a complete thought and typically include a subject and a verb. Noun compounds are words made up of two or more nouns that are used together to form a single noun, such as "bookshelf" or "birthday cake." Verb phrases are groups of words that include a main verb and one or more auxiliary verbs, such as "is going," "have been," or "will have been."

The correct application of grammatical elements contributes significantly to the coherence, precision, and grammatical correctness of a text. The effective utilization of grammatical features is essential for improving the overall quality of written material. The findings of Randy and Briones (2016) align with the results of the current research that the right grammatical structures make the texts' unity, accuracy, and grammaticality. This means that the ideas presented are cohesive and flow smoothly, the information is conveyed clearly and precisely, and the text is free from errors that could detract from its readability. In essence, the proper use of grammar not only helps to convey the intended message effectively but also showcases the writer's proficiency in language usage.

Students need to have grammatical knowledge and then use appropriate words within the structures. Students need to understand the fundamental principles of grammar to effectively communicate in writing. This includes knowing the basic rules of sentence structure, such as subject-verb agreement and proper punctuation. Additionally, students must be able to choose the right words to convey their thoughts clearly and accurately. By mastering these skills, students can express themselves more clearly and persuasively in their writing assignments. Furthermore, having a strong grasp of grammar can also help students improve their reading comprehension and overall language skills. Therefore, it is essential for students to not only learn the rules of grammar but also practice applying them in their writing.



The second research question addresses teachers who use short stories to facilitate students' recall and comprehension concerned with the content of stories in Persian textbooks by focusing on the textual features of those stories. At the elementary level, teachers can facilitate students' recall and comprehension of stories in Persian textbooks by focusing on various textual features. This is in line with Alpcaci's (2016) studies that by highlighting key vocabulary words, discussing the main ideas and themes, and encouraging students to make connections between the text and their own experiences, teachers can help students better understand and retain the information presented in the stories. Additionally, teachers can use comprehension strategies such as summarizing, questioning, and predicting to deepen students' understanding of the text. This agrees with Pickren et al (2022), who believe that by engaging in meaningful and functional activities connected to the stories, teachers can cultivate a more interactive and dynamic learning atmosphere that encourages active participation among students. Ultimately, by focusing on textual features and implementing effective teaching strategies, teachers can help students develop stronger reading comprehension skills and a deeper appreciation for Persian literature.

In sum, textual features have been able to significantly improve the students' recall and understanding of stories in the textbooks of grades one to six at the elementary level. The incorporation of various textual features, such as grammatical, lexical, and connective ones, has proven to be highly effective in enhancing elementary students' comprehension and retention of the content presented in their textbooks. This result is consistent with Lien (2013), who notes that textual features not only help to organize the information in a clear and structured manner but also serve as helpful cues for students to better grasp the main ideas and key concepts of the stories. Assadi et al (2024) confirm the results of the study that engaging with these textual features enables students to actively participate in the learning process, making connections between different parts of the text and deepening their understanding of the material. Furthermore, the use of textual features has undoubtedly played a crucial role in improving the students' ability to recall and comprehend the stories in their textbooks across grades one to six at the elementary level.

Conclusion

Analyzing the stories of elementary Persian books showed that proper and balanced use of these factors can facilitate the understanding of the subject and increase students' learning. Results of the study show that grammatical, connective, and lexical features help students to become more familiar with the concepts and to better understand the story concepts. In this regard, they can enhance their comprehension of complex concepts and improve their understanding of the storylines presented. By engaging with challenging language structures and vocabulary, students are encouraged to think critically and analyze the content more deeply. In addition, the use of lexical strategies like synonyms, antonyms, and repetitions in texts may broaden students' knowledge base and expand their cognitive abilities, ultimately leading to a more comprehensive grasp of the subject matter. As a result, simultaneously incorporating the three textual features in the texts can positively impact students' learning outcomes and foster a more profound understanding of the content.

The results also show that educational texts with a high degree of grammatical and lexical coherence can help students become more effectively and deeply familiar with concepts. These types of texts make the process of comprehension easier and more understandable for students by creating strong connections between different parts of the text and eliminating ambiguities. Grammatical and lexical coherence allows students to easily understand the overall structure of the text and remember concepts better.

Pedagogical implications suggest that teachers at the elementary level should focus on enhancing students' understanding of the coherence of texts. This means helping students recognize how different parts of a text connect and flow together to create a clear and logical

structure. By emphasizing the importance of coherence, teachers can help students improve their reading comprehension skills and better understand the main ideas and themes of a text. Moreover, teachers should also work on boosting students' knowledge of text components, such as understanding the different parts of a story (e.g., characters, setting, plot) or the elements of an informational text (e.g., main idea, supporting details). By helping students develop a deeper understanding of these text components, teachers can support students in becoming more proficient readers and writers.

Teachers and curriculum designers can facilitate the learning process for students by using texts that have high cohesion. It is also suggested that necessary training in the use of cohesion factors in texts be provided in teacher training courses so that they can apply this knowledge in their teaching process. In general, text coherence holds significant importance in improving the reading comprehension of elementary school students. The appropriate instruction of textual features can significantly facilitate the learning process and help students better understand and remember story concepts. These findings can help teachers and curriculum designers tap into this knowledge to produce more efficient and effective educational texts that will lead to improved quality of teaching and learning.

The study presents several limitations that should be acknowledged by future researchers to deal with challenges. For instance, the study may have lacked diversity in terms of demographics or failed to account for potential confounding variables. In addition, the study design itself may have had flaws, such as a lack of control groups or a limited scope of analysis. These limitations highlight the need for more comprehensive and robust research to enhance the overall comprehension of the subject matter. Subsequent research may take into account expanding the sample size, including a wider range of participants, utilizing more rigorous research methods, and exploring different variables to ensure a more thorough investigation. By addressing these limitations, future researchers may build upon the existing study and contribute valuable insights to the field.

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