

## COHESIVE TIES IN ENGLISH ONLINE TRAVEL NEWS OF THE BANGKOK POST, THAILAND

Tanyaret Boonma

Student of Master’s Degree in Linguistics, Suansunadha Rajaphat University

E-mail: s65563831001@ssru.ac.th

Cholthicha Sudmuk

E-mail: Cholthicha.su@ssru.ac.th

Suwaree Yordchim

E-mail: suwaree.yo@ssru.ac.th

Sarada Jarupan

E-mail: Sarada.ja@ssru.ac.th

Kirk Person

E-mail: Kirkroger.pr@ssru.ac.th

### Abstract

This study investigates the use of cohesive ties in English online travel news published by *The Bangkok Post*, Thailand, focusing on their structural and functional roles in enhancing textual cohesion. Based on the framework proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the findings reveal that grammatical and lexical cohesion play crucial roles. The comparative analyses of the types, frequencies, and dominant cohesive ties employed in headlines and body texts of online travel news were also applied. In headlines, lexical cohesion, particularly collocation (20 instances) and reiteration (13 instances), dominates, while grammatical cohesion is less frequent but includes additive conjunctions, ellipsis, and substitution. In body texts, grammatical cohesion is the primary feature, with additive conjunctions (200 instances) as the most frequent type, alongside references, ellipses, and substitutions. Lexical cohesion in body texts prominently features collocation (33 instances) and reiteration (58 instances). Additionally, the study highlights the grammatical features in the structure of headlines and body texts such as tenses and relative pronouns. Headlines predominantly utilize the present simple tense (8 instances) with limited use of the present participle (1 instance). In contrast, body texts exhibit higher frequencies of present participles (45 instances), past participles (43 instances), and relative pronouns (10 instances), contributing to their descriptive and explanatory nature.

**Keywords:** Cohesive Ties, Online Travel News, The Bangkok Post

### Introduction

Cohesive ties serve as fundamental mechanisms that establish logical relationships within a text, ensuring coherence and facilitating reader comprehension (Renkema & Schubert, 2018). Halliday and Hasan (1976) define cohesion as the meaningful relationships that exist within a text, wherein the interpretation of one element is dependent on another. In journalism, particularly in news writing, cohesive ties play a crucial role in presenting information concisely while maintaining reader engagement (Hatim & Mason, 2005). Eriksen and Ihlström (2000) classify news—whether in print or digital formats—as a sub-genre of journalism that necessitates clarity and structural coherence.

The emergence of digital journalism in the late 20th century has transformed news reporting, enabling real-time updates and dynamic content delivery. Travel journalism, as examined by Tiede (2016), serves not only to inform but also to immerse readers in cultural

and historical narratives. Travel news articles frequently adopt anecdotal storytelling, incorporate quotations, and employ vivid language to engage audiences, with cohesive ties playing an essential role in ensuring logical progression and textual cohesion.

Given English’s status as a global language (Crystal, 1997), English-language newspapers hold significant importance in worldwide information dissemination, particularly for non-native English speakers. The Bangkok Post, Thailand’s leading English-language newspaper, has been recognized as the most credible news source in the country (Hutaman, 1975). Catering to an international and bilingual readership, the publication prioritizes linguistic clarity to ensure accessibility for both native and non-native English speakers. The newspaper employs a diverse team of Thai and foreign correspondents, emphasizing precise and comprehensible language to effectively communicate with a global audience.

This study aims to investigate and compare the types of cohesive ties and their dominant types employed by the Bangkok Post’s writers in the headline and the body text of online travel news. The results of this study can serve as a resource in journalism education, benefiting non-native English speaker journalists by providing insights into effective writing techniques and cohesive ties usage in online travel news.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate types of Cohesive Ties in the headline and body text of the English online Travel News of The Bangkok Post, Thailand.
2. To identify the dominant types of Cohesive Ties in the headline and body text of the English online Travel News of The Bangkok Post, Thailand.
3. To compare the dominant types of Cohesive Ties in the headline and body text of the English online Travel News of The Bangkok Post, Thailand.

### **Scope of the Research**

#### **1. Population Scope**

The population of the data in this study was the online travel news in Bangkok Post, Thailand, between the 1<sup>st</sup> of August and to 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, a total of 54 travel news.

### **Literature Review**

#### **1. Cohesive Ties proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976)**

Cohesive Ties, as explained by Renkema and Schubert (2018), establish links between sentences and paragraphs, aiding readers in navigating complex stories. Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976) were the first to analyze cohesion. They distinguished five types of cohesive ties, which constitute texture above the level of individual syntactic units. The five types of cohesive ties outlined by Halliday and Hasan include substitution, ellipsis, reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion.

1) Reference involves using words or expressions to refer to other elements within the text, such as pronouns or lexical repetition. It includes personal reference, demonstrative reference, and comparative reference

2) Conjunction involves using words or expressions to link different parts of the text, such as coordinating conjunctions or subordinating conjunctions. It includes additive conjunction, adversative conjunction, causal conjunction, and temporal conjunction

3) Substitution occurs when one element in a sentence is replaced by another word or phrase without changing the overall meaning.

4) Ellipsis involves the omission of words or phrases that can be inferred from the context. This omission doesn't disrupt understanding because the missing elements are implied.

5) Lexical Cohesion refers to the use of words or phrases within a text that are semantically related or connected. This includes repetition of words, synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, and collocations.

Cohesive ties are particularly important as they play a crucial role in conveying the main message of the story in a concise and attention-grabbing way. Effective use of cohesive ties can help to create body parts that are both clear and impactful, capturing the reader's attention and encouraging them to read on.

This study will type of cohesive ties proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) to investigate and identify their usages and dominant types in the body news of English online Travel news.

## **2. Present participle, past participle, and relative pronouns**

Huddleston and Pullum (2002) highlight the dual function of participles in English, serving both verbal and adjectival roles. Present participles (-ing forms) indicate progressive actions, whereas past participles (-ed, -en forms) are commonly used in perfect tense constructions and passive voice structures. These forms act as modifiers within noun phrases, contributing to syntactic flexibility and textual cohesion. Similarly, Quirk et al. (1985) emphasize the role of participles in sentence conciseness, particularly in reduced relative clauses, which enhance fluency and efficiency in writing. Present participles denote ongoing actions, while past participles signify completed events, making them essential elements in structured and cohesive texts.

Chomsky (1957) introduces Transformational Grammar, explaining how relative pronouns (who, which, that) function as connectors between main and subordinate clauses, facilitating complex sentence construction. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) further distinguish between defining (restrictive) and non-defining (non-restrictive) relative clauses. Defining clauses provide essential information, while non-defining clauses add supplementary details. Their study also highlights the omission of relative pronouns in informal contexts, demonstrating flexibility in grammatical structures while preserving clarity.

Besides the five types of cohesive tie outlined by Halliday and Hasan (1976), this study also examines the use of present participles, past participles, and relative pronouns in online travel news articles. Present participles enhance engagement, particularly in headlines, by conveying immediacy and brevity. Past participles, frequently used in passive constructions, contribute to textual cohesion and a formal tone in body texts. Additionally, relative pronouns ensure coherence by linking ideas and structuring complex information. Understanding these linguistic elements is crucial for analyzing journalistic writing and its effectiveness in maintaining clarity and reader engagement.

## **3. Language in Newspaper**

Journalism, including travel news writing, is a formal style of communication used across various media platforms to inform and engage readers. According to Northern Michigan University (NMU) Writing, journalistic composition requires careful attention to the audience and tone. Travel journalism, specifically, plays a crucial role in fostering cultural understanding by offering in-depth insights into destinations. Effective travel writing goes beyond basic descriptions, capturing the essence and atmosphere of a region to create a meaningful connection between the reader and the destination.

Baxter (1955) asserts that clarity and engagement are key to effective travel news writing, achieved through captivating headlines, informative leads, and adherence to the inverted pyramid structure. Direct quotes, descriptive language, sensory elements, factual data, and multimedia content further enrich the reader's experience.

Cohesive ties, as highlighted by Jambak (2014), are essential for clarity and engagement in travel journalism. Transition words and lexical cohesion aid in maintaining logical flow and comprehension. Thipwatee’s (2021) study on cohesive ties in COVID-19 news articles reveals that references and lexical cohesion are commonly used discourse markers, underscoring their importance in news writing. By strategically utilizing cohesive ties, travel journalists enhance readability and deepen audience understanding of diverse cultures and destinations.

### 3.1 Web news

The digital age has significantly impacted journalism, challenging the dominance of print media. Online platforms have gained a more satisfied readership, as seen in studies by Cherian (2015) and Bird (2009), creating competition between online and offline journalism. Research by Henkel et al. (2020) highlights the importance of content quality in this comparison and its effects on professional standards and employment.

Eriksen (2000) identified two main trajectories in web news: hard news, which focuses on timely reporting, and soft news, which provides in-depth information through archives. Despite early concerns, web media solidified its place as a primary news source by 1999, with distinct identities in design and content.

Web news is fluid, differing from print with changes in content, article positioning, and the abandonment of editions. Future research should explore how these fluid characteristics align with user behavior and needs.

In conclusion, this study has centered on elucidating the static defining characteristics of the web news genre concerning its presentation and conceptual elements.

## Research Methodology

### 1. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the selected topic in depth. The data for this research is collected from the Bangkok Post newspaper, a well-established English-language newspaper in Thailand.

### 2. Research Steps

A qualitative approach has been adopted to study the cohesive ties in online travel news from the Bangkok Post, Thailand, with five steps as the following:

1) Collect the data from Bangkok Post online Travel News and execute the samples by random selecting method.

2) Analyze the conjunctions and references in the samples by Hyper research version 4.5.1, using Halliday and Hason’s framework (1976) starting from the headline and body text.

3) Analyze the substitution, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion by using the analysis criteria starting from the headline and body text.

### 3. Data Collection

The population of the data in this study was the online travel news in Bangkok Post, Thailand, between the 1<sup>st</sup> of August and to 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, a total of 54 travel news.

A random selection method was employed to draw the samples from the whole 54 news. This methodological choice was deliberate, aiming to ensure an equitable and unbiased representation of travel news articles within the dataset. Through the process of simple random sampling, each of the 54 articles had an equal and random chance of being selected as part of the final sample, comprising 10 travel news articles. There are 287 sentences in total.

The random sampling method was chosen to maintain a balance between representation and manageability in analyzing the online travel news discourse, in line with best practices in qualitative research (Alarcon & Morales, 2011). The random selection of 10

articles from the 54 news pieces in this study increases the chance that the smaller group of data possesses characteristics similar to the larger group. This approach guarantees an equitable selection process, allowing for both a comprehensive and focused analysis.

This qualitative analysis tool is used to examine conjunctions and references within the selected texts, helping to identify patterns and relationships within the discourse. The qualitative coding process follows Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) framework. Additionally, inter-rater reliability was assessed by cross-checking the coded data to ensure consistency in identifying cohesive ties and enhance the rigor of the methodology.

#### 4. Data Analysis

The analysis is conducted using the following approaches:

1) HyperRESEARCH Software – This qualitative analysis tool is employed to examine conjunctions and references within the selected texts, helping to identify patterns and relationships within the discourse. The qualitative coding process follows Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) framework. Additionally, inter-rater reliability was assessed by cross-checking the coded data to ensure consistency in identifying cohesive ties and enhance the rigor of the methodology.

2) Criteria-Based Analysis –The criteria based on Halliday and Hasan framework (1967) was used to analyze reference, conjunction, substitution, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion by narrow down the data to arrive at a final selection. This method enables reliable and valid judgments for the analysis. To quantify lexical and grammatical cohesion, a criteria-based analysis was applied for each sentence, counting every cohesive tie in line with Halliday and Hasan’s theory.

### Research Results

This study explores the use of cohesive ties in English online travel news articles published by The Bangkok Post, Thailand. By analyzing headlines and body texts, the study examines the types, frequencies, and dominant cohesive ties used, offering insights into their structural and functional roles in the headlines and body texts of online travel news.

The analysis of headlines reveals the presence of both grammatical and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion includes conjunctions, ellipsis, and substitution, while lexical cohesion involves reiteration and collocation. The findings indicate that additive conjunctions appeared once, ellipsis was present in one instance of pseudo-gapping and TP-ellipsis, and a single occurrence of verbal substitution was identified. In terms of lexical cohesion, reiteration was observed through repetition, synonymy, superordinate terms, and general words, totaling 13 occurrences. Additionally, collocation emerged as the most frequently used lexical cohesion type, with 20 instances.

Compared to headlines, body texts exhibit a broader range of cohesive ties, particularly grammatical cohesion. Reference was a key grammatical cohesive device, with 19 demonstrative and 16 comparative references identified, while personal references were absent. Additive conjunctions were the most frequently used, with 200 occurrences, followed by temporal (20), adversative (18), and causal conjunctions (2). Ellipsis was observed twice in the form of NP-ellipsis, while nominal substitution appeared four times. Lexical cohesion in body texts featured reiteration in the form of repetition, synonymy, superordinate terms, and general words, totaling 58 occurrences. Collocation, another essential lexical cohesive device, was recorded 33 times, underscoring its role in ensuring textual coherence.

The study found that lexical cohesion was the dominant type in headlines. Collocation, with 20 occurrences, and reiteration, with 13 occurrences, were the most frequently used cohesive ties. These findings suggest that lexical cohesion plays a significant role in shaping

concise and engaging headlines, helping to enhance reader comprehension and retention. In contrast to headlines, grammatical cohesion was the most dominant in body texts, particularly additive conjunctions, which appeared 200 times. Other grammatical cohesive ties, such as reference, ellipsis, and substitution, also contributed to textual cohesion. Lexical cohesion, though less dominant, played an important role through reiteration (58 occurrences) and collocation (33 occurrences). The frequent use of additive conjunctions indicates a strong reliance on grammatical cohesion to ensure the clarity and logical progression of ideas in body texts.

The grammatical structure of headlines was also analyzed to determine the dominant tenses used. The present simple tense appeared most frequently, with 8 instances, followed by the present participle tense, which was observed once. These findings indicate a preference for the present simple tense in travel news headlines, which aligns with the need for clarity and immediacy in journalistic writing. The analysis of body texts revealed a significant use of participles and relative pronouns. Present participles were used 45 times, contributing to a dynamic and descriptive style. Past participles appeared 43 times, playing a crucial role in conveying completed actions or states. Additionally, relative pronouns, which were recorded 10 times, helped connect ideas and enhance textual cohesion. These grammatical features collectively contribute to the overall readability and coherence of body texts in online travel news articles.

In conclusion, this study highlights the role of cohesive ties in structuring English online travel news articles. While lexical cohesion, particularly collocation and reiteration, is dominant in headlines, grammatical cohesion, particularly additive conjunctions, prevails in body texts. The findings suggest that different cohesive strategies are employed depending on the section of the news article, contributing to effective communication and reader engagement. These insights enhance the understanding of linguistic cohesion in online travel journalism and provide valuable information for language learners, educators, and professionals in the field.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study shed light on the intricate use of cohesive ties in English online travel news articles, particularly in *The Bangkok Post*. By examining both headlines and body texts, the study provides insights into the distinctive strategies employed to achieve coherence and facilitate reader comprehension.

In the analysis of headlines, the results indicate that lexical cohesion, especially through collocation and reiteration, plays a dominant role (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Collocation occurring 20 times, stands out as a pivotal cohesive device in crafting concise and engaging headlines. This can be understood as a reflection of journalistic style, where clarity and brevity are paramount (Sari, 2020). The 13 instances of reiteration through repetition, synonymy, superordinate terms, and general words further highlight the importance of lexical cohesion in conveying key concepts succinctly (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Shapiro et al., 2006). These cohesive ties work to ensure that the headline grabs the reader’s attention while still providing enough information to understand the main idea of the article.

The findings also suggest that the use of grammatical cohesion in headlines is less frequent but still present, with additive conjunctions, ellipsis, and substitution contributing to the flow of information as suggested in Imtiaz (2019). The singular instances of ellipsis, particularly pseudo-gapping and TP-ellipsis, indicate that such techniques are selectively used for their ability to omit redundant information, streamlining the message (Alarcon & Morales, 2011). This reflects the need for efficiency in online news writing, where space and attention span are limited.

In contrast, the body texts of the articles employ a wider range of cohesive devices, with a strong emphasis on grammatical cohesion. The frequent use of additive conjunctions (200 instances) highlights their roles in linking ideas and maintaining a logical flow (Imtiaz, 2019; Shapiro et al., 2006). Reference devices, particularly demonstrative and comparative references (35 occurrences), further enhance continuity and introduce new information smoothly (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). The lack of personal references suggests a formal tone in travel journalism, focusing on objectivity rather than personal viewpoints (Sari, 2020). Cohesive ties not only provide structural clarity but also serve as rhetorical tools that guide reader comprehension and retention.

The absence of personal references in body texts is analyzed to determine whether it reflects journalistic objectivity or specific editorial practices at The Bangkok Post. The preference for demonstrative and comparative references over personal references supports the idea that this publication prioritizes objectivity and a formal tone (Hatim & Mason, 2005). Unlike narrative which relies more on lexical cohesion (Shapiro et al., 2006), hard news articles generally emphasize factual accuracy and immediacy, resulting in a higher occurrence of grammatical cohesion through conjunctions and references.

By incorporating perspectives from Discourse Analysis and Stylistics, this study provides a deeper understanding of how cohesive elements influence readability, engagement, and persuasion in travel journalism as indicated in Tiede (2016). Examining cohesive ties from this broader perspective reveals their impact beyond structural coherence, offering insights into their role in effective news communication.

Although lexical cohesion is less prevalent in body texts compared to headlines, it still plays a significant role. Reiteration (58 occurrences) through repetition, synonymy, and superordinate terms, along with collocation (33 occurrences), supports the cohesion of the text (Sari, 2020; Shapiro et al., 2006). These strategies ensure that the article remains coherent, making complex information more accessible to the reader.

The study also explored the grammatical structures used in both sections. The frequent use of the present simple tense in headlines aligns with the need for immediacy and clarity in conveying breaking news or key information (Alarcon & Morales, 2011). In body texts, the use of present participles (45 occurrences) and past participles (43 occurrences) contributes to the dynamism and descriptive quality of the writing, enhancing the reader's engagement with the article (Sari, 2020). Relative pronouns (10 occurrences) further assist in connecting ideas and ensuring fluidity within the text (Shapiro et al., 2006).

Overall, this study illustrates how different cohesive strategies are employed based on the specific section of the article. Headlines prioritize lexical cohesion to attract attention and deliver a clear message, while body texts rely more on grammatical cohesion to ensure logical progression and clarity. The interplay between these cohesive ties contributes to the overall readability and effectiveness of online travel news articles, offering insights into the linguistic mechanisms behind successful journalistic writing.

These findings are of great significance for language learners and educators, as they highlight the importance of cohesive devices in structuring meaningful texts (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Moreover, for professionals in the field of online journalism, this study emphasizes the need for a balanced and effective use of both lexical and grammatical cohesion to engage readers and convey information clearly (Shapiro et al., 2006).

## References

Alarcon, J. B., & Morales, K. N. S. (2011). Grammatical cohesion in students' argumentative essays. *Journal of English and Literature*, 2(5), 114–127.

- Baxter, G. W. (1955). Nagasawa Kikuya, Shina bungaku gaikan and Aoki Masaru, Shina bungaku gaisetsy. Edited by Paul H. Clyde and Donald Shively (Book Review). *Journal of Asian Studies*, 14(2), 270.
- Bird, S. B. (2009). The future of journalism in the digital environment. *Journalism*, 10(3), 293–295.
- Celce-Murcia, M., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). *The grammar book: An ESL/EFL teacher’s course*. Heinle & Heinle.
- Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic structures*. Mouton.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Eriksen, L. B., & Ihlstrom, C. (2000, January). Evolution of the web news genre: The slow move beyond the print metaphor. In *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 10-pp). IEEE.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. Longman.
- Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (2005). *The translator as communicator*. Routledge.
- Henkel, I., Thurman, N., Möller, J., & Trilling, D. (2020). Do online, offline, and multiplatform journalists differ in their professional practices? *Journalism Studies*, 21(10), 1365–1383.
- Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hutaman, J., & Tawilapakul, U. (2018). *A study of metaphors employed in the Bangkok Post newspaper* (Doctoral dissertation, Thammasat University).
- Intiaz, A. (2019). How a text binds together: Discourse analysis of a newspaper article. *Journal of Language and Discourse Studies*, 10(3), 56–78.
- Jambak, V. T., & Gurning, B. (2014). Cohesive devices used in the headline news of *The Jakarta Post*. *Linguistica*, 3(1), 146298.
- Kapuscinski, G. (2014). *The effects of news media on leisure tourists' perception of risk and willingness to travel, with specific reference to events of terrorism and political instability* (Doctoral dissertation, Bournemouth University).
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. Longman.
- Renkema, J., & Schubert, C. (2018). *Introduction to discourse studies*. John Benjamins.
- Sari, D. F. (2020). Lexical cohesive devices in news story texts of *The Daily Analisa*. *Journal of Language Studies*, 12(4), 87–102.
- Shapiro, I., Brin, C., Bédard-Brûlé, I., & Mychajlowycz, K. (2006). The use of cohesive devices in news language. *RELC Journal*, 37(3), 279–297.
- Thipwatee, A., & Lerdpaisalwong, S. (2021). Cohesive devices used in COVID-19 news articles: The case study of BBC and CNN. *Social Sciences Research and Academic Journal*, 16(2), 15–28.
- Tiede, R. M. (2016). *The importance of travel journalism* (Master’s thesis, Texas Christian University).