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Textual Cohesion in Sibawayh's Al-Kitab: A Comparative Study with Modern Text Linguistics

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Abstract

This study examines the concepts and mechanisms of textual cohesion within the foundational linguistic work of Sibawayh, *Al-Kitab*, comparing his analytical framework with modern text linguistics, particularly the model established by M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan. The paper investigates how Sibawayh addressed the formal and semantic interconnections that govern discourse coherence. By analyzing core textual operations such as reference, substitution, deletion (ellipsis), conjunction, and lexical cohesion (collocation), this research demonstrates that Sibawayh's analytical methodology anticipated key tenets of contemporary discourse analysis, generative-transformational rules, and context-dependent semantics, strictly situating textual cohesion within the structural integrity of the text itself.

Keywords: Textual Cohesion; Sibawayh; *Al-Kitab*; Text Linguistics; Cohesive Devices.

Introduction

All human languages share a fundamental, intrinsic characteristic: they serve as a medium for expressing human thought. The various mental operations occurring within the human mind ultimately seek articulation and manifestation through a systemically ordered set of sounds and structures agreed upon by both sender and receiver—a system designated as language. Language represents the ideal internal organization that imposes upon the speaker a specific conceptualization and view of the surrounding external world.

This idea was eloquently expressed by Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471 AH), who stated: "The purpose of ordering words is not merely the chronological succession of their spoken utterances, but rather the harmonious alignment of their significations and the convergence of their meanings in the manner mandated by intellect." ⁱ

This ordered, systematically governed, and syntactically correct speech is termed the sentence (clause). The sentence serves as the primary focal point of linguistic analysis; it constitutes the foundational unit of syntactic composition upon which discourse or text is constructed. As noted in linguistic literature: "The facts of language, which possess a collective property, collaborate according to established laws that reach their fulfillment at the sentence level. These laws operate synergistically through a system of relations because the constituents of a sentence are interdependent, where one part inherently necessitates another within a relational organization." ⁱⁱ

Consequently, the connectivity between the parts of a sentence, and subsequently between the segments of a broader text, operates according to a crucial network of relationships. The presence or absence of these relational links determines whether a sequence of utterances constitutes a "text" or a "non-text," as conceptualized by modern linguists.

1. Textual Practices and the Issue of Textual Cohesion

The concept of **cohesion** (or consistency) represents one of the most vital notions emphasized by modern text linguistics. The term was prominently operationalized by M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan ⁱⁱⁱ to denote a set of cohesive ties that govern the order, cohesion, and structural-linguistic interconnectivity of sentences. When the interpretation of a specific element within a text or discourse depends on the interpretation of another element, the text exhibits cohesion. In essence, it pertains to "the fabric of discourse, which can be defined as the formal organization of the text insofar as it guarantees its semantic continuity." ^{iv}

Halliday and Hasan categorized inter-sentential relationships—tracked via specific expressions or structural patterns—into five major cohesive families:

1. Reference
2. Substitution
3. Ellipsis (Deletion)
4. Conjunction (Linking)
5. Lexical Cohesion

This taxonomy, subsequently adopted and expanded by linguists, provided significant momentum for linguistic research across three operational levels: micro-sentential (clausal), inter-sentential (cross-clause), and macro-sentential (suprasegmental/textual)^v.

A linguistically cohesive text is one containing a network of structural-linguistic ties extending from the second sentence to the text's termination. These ties manifest through coordinating conjunctions, demonstratives, various types of anaphoric/cataphoric pronouns, conditional markers, and lexical repetition. Text linguistics thus focuses on the formal language mechanisms linking the constituent elements of a text/discourse. To describe textual cohesion, the analyst employs a linear, progressive approach from beginning to end, charting pronouns, local deictic markers, and cross-references while paying rigorous attention to connective devices such as conjunctions, substitutions, ellipses, comparisons, and adversarial conjunctions.

Synthetically, a cohesive text is one whose parts are structurally tied, whose frameworks are integrated, and whose semantic continuity is established via syntactic and lexical tools. Specifically:

- **Reference** denotes the relation of pointing back or forward to an intended referent. It functions primarily as a semantic relation rather than a purely grammatical one. Reference can be situational (exophoric), accounting for external context and pragmatic parameters, or textual (endophoric), relying on internal textual loops. As Jamil Hamdaoui observes: "Halliday and Hasan assigned paramount importance to reference in their seminal work 'Cohesion in English,' regarding reference as a semantic rather than a syntactic relation—meaning it is not governed strictly by formal grammatical constraints, except for the semantic compatibility between the referring item and the referent." ^{vi}
- **Substitution** refers to an internal textual process wherein one item is replaced by another. It operates as a grammatical-lexical process occurring between words or phrases; the relationship between the substituted item and its substitute is one of contrast/counterpart rather than identical semantic co-reference (as in reference).
- **Ellipsis (Deletion)** is an internal textual operation defined as "zero substitution." Unlike overt substitution, it leaves no physical phonological trace, yet its presence is systematically identified through inter-sentential relationships rather than within an isolated sentence structure.
- **Conjunction** serves as a cohesive device specifying the systemic and organized manner in which subsequent discourse connects with preceding discourse across clause sequences and sentence strings.
- **Lexical Cohesion** constitutes the final major dimension of textual integration. It is divided into two primary types: repetition (re-occurrence of a lexical item, synonymy, or near-synonymy) and collocation/syntagmatic cohesion (the co-occurrence of a pair of lexical items actualized or potentialized due to their semantic association)^{vii}.

These ties represent the primary cohesive mechanisms integrating a text, according to Halliday and Hasan. Importantly, Halliday and Hasan restrict cohesion to the internal properties of the text itself, rather than attributing it to the cognitive competence or interpretive role of the reader in constructing coherence.

Having established this theoretical framework derived from Western linguistics, we now turn to the classical heritage of **Sibawayh** to examine the extent to which these concepts and operations were recognized and applied in his work—even if under different terminological designations—and to ascertain whether Sibawayh predicated textual unity on the formal properties of the text or on the cognitive competence of the recipient.

2. Textual Practice in Sibawayh: Textual Cohesion and Its Foundational Rules

The principles of structural connectivity and textual cohesion occupied a central position in Sibawayh's linguistic analysis throughout *Al-Kitab*. This focus is natural, given that syntactic connection (*rabt*) is a dominant characteristic of Arabic syntax, functioning as a relational marker between elements within a discourse. The mechanisms of connective linking in Arabic are exceptionally rich and diverse, leading Ibrahim Anis to note: "We do not exaggerate when we assert that Arabic is preeminently a language of connection; it possesses connective instruments rarely paralleled in other languages." ^{viii}

Sibawayh employed the term **Al-Ta'liq** (Syntactic Suspension/Dependency) to designate mechanisms of structural connection. He cited his teacher, Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad, regarding the connective function of the sudden-occurrence particle *'idha* (إِذَا - "when/lo!") in the Quranic verse:

"And if adversity befalls them for what their hands have put forth, behold, they despair." (Ar-Rum: 36) ^{ix}

Sibawayh observed: "This clause is syntactically suspended (*mu'allaq*) upon the preceding clause, just as the particle *Fa* (فَ) would be suspended upon the preceding clause." ^x

In Arabic, structural connection is divided into two categories: **Semantic Connection** (*rabt ma'nawi*) and **Formal/Literal Connection** (*rabt lafzi*). The latter is particularly relevant to our discussion, as it mirrors the concept of inter-sentential conjunction and continuity in modern linguistics. Sibawayh addressed this formal connectivity extensively throughout *Al-Kitab*.

Regarding pronominal linking, he stated:

"If you say: 'Zaydakum marratan ra'aytu' [Your Zayd, once I saw!], it is syntactically weak, unless you insert the pronominal suffix -hu [i.e., 'ra'aytuhu']..."^{xi}

Sibawayh's observation demonstrates his profound linguistic intuition regarding the structural integrity of the Arabic sentence and the underlying relations binding its constituent parts. He emphasized that the Arabic sentence requires explicit cohesive markers (*rabt*), without which the utterance suffers from structural weakness and semantic ambiguity. Similarly, regarding conjunction via particles, Sibawayh analyzed the particle *Fa* (فـ) introducing a conditional apodosis (result clause). He maintained that a conditional result can only be properly formed via a verb or through the insertion of *Fa*. He illustrated this formal binding as follows:

"As for the result introduced by *Fa*, it is exemplified in your saying: 'In ta'tini fa-ana sahibuk' [If you come to me, then I am your companion]." ^{xii}

Furthermore, concerning the conditional particle 'In (إِنْ - "If")', which governs two verbal clauses, its presence transforms one clause into a condition (*shart*) and the other into its result (*jawab*). The syntactic governance ('amal) of conditional 'In operates canonically when the result clause is fundamentally a verb. Sibawayh explained that the particle governs the conditional clause, while the combination of the particle and the conditional clause jointly governs the result clause:

"Know that conditional particles impart the jussive case (*jazm*) upon verbs, and the result clause becomes jussive due to what precedes it. Al-Khalil maintained that when you say: 'In ta'tini atika' [If you come to me, I will come to you], the verb 'atika' receives the jussive case through the compound unit 'In ta'tini', just as it becomes jussive when serving as a response to an imperative in: 'T'tini atika' [Come to me, I will come to you]..." ^{xiii}

These examples, among numerous others throughout *Al-Kitab*, clearly demonstrate that Sibawayh viewed formal connectivity (*rabt*) as an indispensable structural requirement for imparting cohesion and formal consistency upon discourse.

3. Intonation and Ellipsis (Deletion) in Sibawayh

Intonation serves as a distinctive feature differentiating sentences that are phonologically identical in formal surface structure but distinct in semantic intent. Its relationship to **ellipsis** (deletion) lies in providing contextually implicit phonological cues that indicate omitted (*mahdhuf*) versus overt elements, thereby falling within the formal analysis of structural relations between linguistic units.

Sibawayh integrated this suprasegmental cue into his methodology, recognizing its crucial role in analyzing formal structural relationships between linguistic units within a given context. He demonstrated its syntactic function in clarifying semantic ambiguity and explaining transitions between grammatical categories based on the pitch variations (contour height) during sentence utterance. Intonation in Arabic thus performs a vital syntactic function, distinguishing between disparate meanings of a single surface structure^{xiv}.

The operational link between ellipted structures and intonational patterns is strikingly illustrated in Sibawayh's analysis of Jarir's poetic verse^{xv}:

'A-'abdan halla fi Shu'ba ghariba ... A-lu'man la aba ka wa-aghtiraba?

(A slave who settled in Shu'ba as a stranger... Is it vileness—may you have no father—and exile?)

Sibawayh analyzed the structural configuration as follows:

"As for the word 'abdan [a slave], it admits two interpretations: if you wish, it can be interpreted as a vocative (*nida*); and if you wish, it can be interpreted as reliant upon an underlying clause: 'Ataftakhiru 'abdan?' [Do you boast of a slave?], wherein the verb has been deleted (*mahdhuf*)."^{xvi}

Here, the intrinsic nature of the vocal tone (intonation contour) shifts the utterance from a simple vocative to an interrogative. This shift necessitates an underlying deleted verb if the utterance is parsed interrogatively. Although Sibawayh did not restrict intonation exclusively to elliptical structures, he demonstrated that when ellipsis occurs, the missing element becomes syntactically mandatory to reconstruct, thereby directly contributing to the structural cohesion and semantic consistency of the text.

Sibawayh also connected intonational variation to shifts in temporal reference within identical surface structures:

"When one says: 'Huwa ya'falu' [He is doing], it signifies that he is currently in the state of performing the action, and its negative is 'Ma ya'falu'. But when one says: 'Huwa ya'falu' while the action has not yet occurred [future intent], its negative is 'La ya'falu'."^{xvii}

Regarding **ellipsis** as a primary cohesive feature of discourse, Sibawayh documented its widespread usage among native Arabic speakers, noting:

"Know that among the items they delete are words that, despite being original to their speech, are omitted through frequent usage until they drop out entirely."^{xviii}

Sibawayh designated this phenomenon using terms such as **Idmar** (implicit representation) and **Ikhtizal** (reduction/abridgement)—terms that closely mirror modern textual concepts, reinforcing the historical priority and analytical accuracy of his methodology.

Moreover, Sibawayh linked deletion directly to context-dependent syntactic relations via the principle of **selectional restrictions** (*al-'alaqah al-intika'iyah*). The deletion of a syntactic unit is strictly contingent upon the presence and operational scope of specific particles within a given structural context. He illustrated this in his discussion of the particles 'Aw (أَوْ - "or") and 'A-wa (أَمْ - "is it that... or?"):

"When you say: 'A-lasta sahibana, a-wa-lasta akhana?' [Are you not our companion, or are you not our brother?] or 'Ma anta akhana, a-wa-ma anta sahibana?' [You are not our brother, or are you not our companion?], and when you say: 'A-la ta'tina a-wa-la tuhaddithuna?' [Will you not visit us, or will you not speak to us?],—if you intend confirmation (taqrir) or similar meanings and then repeat the interrogative particle, the speech is not proper unless you restart the interrogation. But if you say: 'A-lasta akhana aw sahibana aw jalisana?' [Are you not our brother, or our companion, or our sitting-mate?], you merely intend to ask: 'Are you not in one of these states?' whereas in the former you intended: 'Are you not in all of these states combined?'"^{xix}

It is worth noting that Sibawayh regularly employed interpretive meta-phrases to reconstruct deleted textual elements, such as: "Fa-ka-'annah qad qala" (It is as if he had said), "Ka-'annah qala" (As though he said), and "Ay" (that is to say). These meta-phrases represent syntactic operations linked with implicit representation (idmar). They prove that the search for ellipted elements in discourse is fundamentally a search for formal structural balance and semantic coherence. This analytical focus on the interplay between clausal components and social context led Sibawayh to investigate the **deep structure** (al-binyah al-'amiqah) of the sentence. Through transformational rules (specifically deletion), deep structures are realized as **surface structures** (al-binyah al-sabhiyyah). Deciphering these surface forms requires synthesizing internal syntactic constituents with the surrounding social situation (al-maqam). Sibawayh thus sought to uncover semantic meaning through formal syntactic analysis, establishing a textual practice that elucidates the deep structure of discourse via sentence configurations.

4. Collocation/Syntagmatic Dependency (Al-Tadam) in Sibawayh

Syntagmatic Dependency (Al-Tadam) refers to a structural requirement wherein the occurrence of one linguistic unit within a sentence inherently necessitates the occurrence of another. Examples include the dependency of a verb upon its subject in a verbal sentence, a subject (mubtada') upon its predicate (khabar) in a nominal sentence, a preposition upon its genitive noun, and an annexed noun (mudaf) upon its possessor (mudaf ilayh). In modern terminology, these co-occurrence relations are defined as syntagmatic cohesion or collocation^{xx}.

In his formal analysis of syntactic structures, Sibawayh described obligatory syntagmatic dependency between linguistic units as a relationship of mutual completion. Analyzing the cohesive bond between a noun and its modifying adjective (al-na't wa-al-man'ut), he wrote:

"If you needed to qualify a noun and said: 'Marartu bi-Zaydin' [I passed by Zayd], intending 'the Tall one', but the listener does not recognize which Zayd until you add 'al-Ahmar' [the Red/Tall], the noun has not been completed until the adjective is uttered. Thus, 'al-Ahmar' functions as an indispensable completion, running parallel to the noun itself."^{xxi} Similarly, regarding the obligatory dependency between a relative pronoun (al-mawsul) and its relative clause (al-silah), Sibawayh analyzed the sentence "A-akhawaka alladhani ra'aytu?" [Are the two men I saw your brothers?], observing: "Because 'ra'aytu' [I saw] is the relative clause attached to 'alladhani', it completes the noun phrase. It is structurally equivalent to saying: 'Are those two your companions?'"^{xxii}

Sibawayh applied the same logic to prepositions and their complement nouns, stating that separating a preposition from its genitive noun is structurally unacceptable because "the preposition is conceptually merged into the genitive noun."^{xxiii} He observed a similar relationship regarding possessive constructions (al-idafah):

"Ghulamu man tadrib adrib?" [Whose servant you beat, I shall beat?], because whatever is annexed to the interrogative/conditional 'man' takes on the syntactic status of 'man' itself."^{xxiv}

Through these structural analyses, syntagmatic dependency (al-tadam) emerges as a formal, textual indicator guaranteeing textual integration. This principle corresponds precisely to the second sub-type of lexical cohesion in modern text linguistics—collocation—wherein structural and lexical affinity governs the co-occurrence of paired terms.

5. Rules of Substitution in Sibawayh

The relationships governing the constituents of a syntactic structure are inherently dependent. In modern linguistics, these structural relations are classified under selectional/paradigmatic relations. The occurrence of a verb^{xxv} (*علاقات الانتقاء*) presupposes a subject; a nominal subject presupposes a predicate; a preposition presupposes a genitive noun.

Alongside structural dependency, text linguistics relies heavily on the rule of substitution—the paradigm of substituting appropriate lexical items into specific grammatical slots. This rule serves two foundational analytical functions:

1. Explaining the generation of novel sentences via the speaker's linguistic competence.
2. Categorizing parts of speech based on contextual distribution and paradigmatic substitutability.

This approach was later expanded by Noam Chomsky in his Generative-Transformational Grammar, wherein phrase-structure tree diagrams map constituent relationships and functional equivalences, allowing elements to be substituted based on formal and functional symmetry.

The substitution principle possesses deep roots in Sibawayh's *Al-Kitab*. Sibawayh utilized substitution systematically to analyze sentence structures and describe underlying frameworks:

"Sibawayh relied on formal substitution rules to describe syntactic structures, seeking to uncover the internal dimensions of grammatical relations among replaceable constituents. His ultimate objective was to model the cognitive system (al-nizam al-dhihni) of the native speaker. Through meticulous observation, Sibawayh established that syntactically and functionally equivalent components could be interchanged within a given context."^{xxvi}

For instance, in the chapter titled "Chapter on Verbs That May Operate or Be Annulled" (Bab al-Afal allati Tustam'alu wa-Tulgha), Sibawayh noted:

"If these verbs are overtly operational, they occupy the same structural slot as 'Ra'aytu' [I saw], 'Darabtu' [I struck], and 'A'taytu' [I gave] in terms of syntactic governance and base construction... As in your saying: 'Adunnu Zaydan muntaliqan' [I presume Zayd is departing] and 'Adunnu 'Amran dhahiban' [I presume 'Amr is going]..." ^{xxvii}

Through precise grammatical taxonomy, Sibawayh demonstrated that items structurally parallel to Zaydan or Muntaliqan can be selected from the lexicon and substituted into the same slot under identical syntactic rules. Thus, he substituted 'Amran for Zaydan, Za'amtu for Adunnu, and Abaka for Akhaka in expressions such as: "Wa-Zaydan adunnu akhaka, wa-'Amran za'amtu abaka" [And Zayd I presume your brother, and 'Amr I claim your father] ^{xxviii}.

Similarly, in analyzing circumstantial accusatives (hal), Sibawayh noted:

"Among the constructions occurring in the accusative as a circumstantial state is the phrase: 'Huwa rajulu sidqin ma'luman dhak' [He is a man of truth, that being known] and 'Huwa rajulu sidqin ma'rufan dhak' [He is a man of truth, that being recognized]." ^{xxix}

Sibawayh recognized the formal and functional equivalence between ma'luman and ma'rufan, allowing one to substitute for the other.

Grammatical description requires analyzing structures systematically to establish core rules that reveal the underlying properties of language. Sibawayh executed this methodology with extreme analytical precision. Through paradigmatic analysis, he demonstrated that different linguistic components can fulfill identical contextual functions. For instance, positional relations permit the personal pronoun Huwa (he) to substitute for the demonstrative Hatha (this) in the sentence "Hatha 'Abdullahi muntaliqan", yielding "Huwa Zaydun ma'rufan" ^{xxx}.

Importantly, substitutability in Sibawayh's framework does not imply complete morphological or case-ending identity between two items; rather, functional and semantic equivalence drives positional substitution. As Sibawayh explicitly stated:

"An item may occupy a structural position without taking the identical case marking of the item it replaces. For instance, in your saying: 'Marartu bi-rajulin yaqulu dhak' [I passed by a man who says that], 'yaqulu' [he says] occupies the positional slot of the participle 'qa'ilin' [saying], even though its morphological case marking is not identical." ^{xxxi}

Thus, syntactic context governs substitution rather than superficial lexical classification. Sibawayh maintained a clear distinction between purely lexical categorization and functional grammatical categorization. He applied this principle to functional particles, demonstrating that the exclusionary particle Ghayr (غَيْر) can substitute for 'Illa (إِلَّا) based on functional and semantic overlap:

"In every syntactic position where exclusion via 'Illa' is permissible, substitution with 'Ghayr' is likewise permissible... because 'Ghayr' is a noun occupying its structural slot and carrying the semantic force of 'Illa'." ^{xxxii}

6. Addition (Al-Ziyadah) in Sibawayh and Its Textual Impact

The structural function of linguistic units is determined by their internal syntactic relations. The addition (al-ziyadah) of extra functional units imparts new structural configurations, introduces nuanced semantic dimensions, and enhances overall textual cohesion.

In Al-Kitab, Sibawayh provided key examples demonstrating how transformational additions alter syntactic structures. For example, inserting redundant prepositions for rhetorical emphasis (ta'kid) alters the structural weight of an utterance without destroying its core proposition. Analyzing the insertion of Min (مِنْ) before a subject in negative structures, Sibawayh wrote:

"In the sentence: 'Ma atani min ahadin illa Zaydun' [There came not to me anyone except Zayd], the underlying base structure is: 'Ma atani ahadun illa Zaydun'. The particle 'Min' entered purely for emphasis (ta'kid)." ^{xxxiii}

Commenting on this passage, Al-Sirafi noted an additional semantic function: the insertion of Min transforms the scope of ahad from a specific individual negation to an absolute categorical/generic negation (nafy al-jins) ^{xxxiv}.

Similarly, the addition of the extra preposition Bi- (بِالْبَاءِ الرَّائِدَةِ) serves to intensify textual emphasis. Analyzing the clause "Kafa bi-ka farisan" [Sufficient are you as a knight!], Sibawayh noted: "The intended core meaning is 'Kafayta farisan', and the preposition 'Bi-' was inserted as a functional addition." ^{xxxv}

Furthermore, adding the particle Fa (فَ) to a relative clause introduces a critical semantic distinction, shifting an utterance from a probabilistic statement to a definitive causal assertion. Analyzing the relative clause "Alladhi ya'tini fa-lahu dirhaman", Sibawayh observed:

"When you say 'Alladhi ya'tini lahu dirhaman' [He who comes to me receives two dirhams], it is syntactically equivalent to 'Abdullahi lahu dirhaman'. However, inserting 'Fa' specifies that the monetary reward is strictly contingent upon the act of coming. By introducing 'Fa', the speaker renders the arrival the explicit cause (sabab) for the entitlement." ^{xxxvi}

Without Fa, the reward might be an existing entitlement independent of the arrival; with Fa, the clause acquires a definitive conditional-result semantic structure (shart wa-jaza) ^{xxxvii}.

Sibawayh's treatment of coordination via Wa (وَالْوَاوُ) further illustrates his focus on structural integration:

"Consider your saying: 'Laysa Zaydun bi-jabanin wa-la bakhilan' [Zayd is not a coward nor stingy]... The canonical orientation favors the genitive case (al-jarr) because you intend to join the two predicates under a single negative governance..." ^{xxxviii}

Sibawayh handled the transformational rule of addition through a framework that highlights both structural versatility and semantic nuance. His approach mirrors principles later adopted in Generative-Transformational Grammar, confirming

his historical precedence. As Abd al-Qadir Hasan remarked: "The functional utility assigned to semantic addition particles by later grammarians does not depart from what Sibawayh established over five centuries prior." ^{xxxix}

Crucially, Sibawayh's analysis demonstrates that "additional" lexical elements are not redundant clutter; rather, they perform indispensable functional and textual roles. Removing them alters or corrupts the speaker's intended meaning.

Throughout his work, Sibawayh focused consistently on syntactic structures—what he termed *al-kalam* or *al-kalim*, corresponding to the contemporary concept of "text." He analyzed constituent parts and evaluated their structural coherence through a rigorous descriptive methodology. Notably, Sibawayh restricted cohesion strictly to the formal properties of the text itself, without making cohesion dependent on the cognitive competence of the listener. In doing so, his theoretical stance aligns directly with text linguists who define textual integration via intrinsic textual mechanisms rather than external reader competence.

Conclusion

A comparative examination of Sibawayh's *Al-Kitab* alongside the textual cohesion framework of Halliday and Hasan reveals that Sibawayh established pioneering principles for textual analysis.

Evaluating the five major families of inter-sentential relations—reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion—demonstrates that Sibawayh recognized these connective mechanisms, employing classical terms such as intonation (*al-tanaghum*), collocation (*al-tadam*), syntactic connectivity (*al-rabt/al-ta'liq*), and positional replacement (*al-ihlal/al-istibdal*).

Sibawayh did not merely analyze isolated sentences; he systematically explored the cognitive and structural relationships governing discourse generation. While the sentence remained his primary analytical unit, his descriptive methodology successfully captured deep-structure transformations, positional substitutions, and contextual semantics. *Al-Kitab* thus stands not only as a foundational manual of Arabic grammar, but as an early masterpiece of formal text linguistics.

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