The Nature of Cohesion in Selected Gĩkũyũ Texts

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The present study was aimed at identifying, describing and categorising the elements that help to join different sentences in selected Gĩkũyũ texts. This study falls in the broad area of discourse analysis. The texts selected for this study were those written in continuous prose and were from the literary and the reportage text categories. The work followed the Halliday and Hasan’s model of Cohesion to identify, describe and categorise cohesive devices in these texts. Gĩkũyũ texts analysed showed evidence of the five categories of cohesion proposed in the Halliday and Hasan’s model of cohesion. These are the reference, lexical organisation, conjunction, ellipsis, and substitution cohesive devices. The data showed evidence of only one sub-category of substitution as a cohesive device. This is a kind of verbal substitution known as verbal reference. Nominal and clausal substitutions did not occur at all in the data. Future researchers may analyse more Gĩkũyũ data or data from other Bantu languages to find out if nominal and clausal substitutions occur cohesively. Only the nominal subcategory of ellipsis occurred cohesively in the data. Clausal and Verbal ellipsis were cohesive only within the sentence. However, a type of ellipsis not mentioned in the Halliday and Hasan’s model of cohesion was found to be cohesive: an a-link construction, common in Bantu languages was ellipted to be recovered in preceding sentences. Future researchers may analyse more Gĩkũyũ data or data from a related language such as Swahili or Kikamba, to find out if a-link constructions occur cohesively. The present study provides a theory-governed description of cohesion in Gĩkũyũ. This is useful for the writers of Gĩkũyũ grammars used for the teaching of this language. The study also contributes to the increasing body of knowledge in Bantu linguistics, Gĩkũyũ being a Bantu language. This thesis is organised into six main chapters. Chapter 1 is composed of the background information introducing the study. Chapter 2 investigates other research findings that relate to the current one, and the theoretical framework in which this study is carried out. Chapter 3 contains methodology, data presentation and analysis. Categorisation of the cohesive devices identified in chapter four is done in chapter five. To conclude the thesis, chapter six presents a summary of the entire work, and identifies gaps requiring research in this field.