

Cohesion in Persuasive Media Texts: An Analysis of Ghanaian Newspaper Editorials through the Lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Abstract

This study examines the use of cohesion in Ghanaian newspaper editorials, with the aim of exploring how cohesive devices are employed in persuasive editorial texts. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics' Cohesion framework, the study analyzes twenty (20) editorials purposively sampled from two established newspapers in Ghana: *The Ghanaian Times* and *The Daily Guide*. A mixed-methods design was employed to analyze cohesive patterns linguistically across the corpus. The findings reveal a striking dominance of grammatical cohesion, particularly reference (75.1%) and conjunction (22%), while Ellipsis (1.8%) and Substitution (1.1%) appear only marginally. Lexical cohesion is primarily achieved through Reiteration (83.4%), with Collocation (16.6%) playing a secondary role. These patterns suggest a deliberate editorial strategy in which cohesion is not merely a linguistic necessity but a rhetorical tool for guiding reader interpretation, asserting ideological positions, and maintaining textual unity. Critically, the study argues that cohesive devices in editorial writing are instrumental in shaping the argumentative structure of editorials. The overwhelming reliance on reference and Reiteration suggests that Ghanaian newspaper editorials prefer maintaining topic continuity, reinforcing authorial stance, and foregrounding thematic salience: techniques that are central to the persuasive and ideological functions of editorial texts.

Keywords: Coherence, cohesion, editorials, newspaper, Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Introduction

Newspapers continue to wield significant influence in the media landscape, despite the proliferation of social media in recent years. Archer and Darr (2022) consider newspapers, whether national or local, to have a significant impact on the socio-political life in several societies or countries, such as the United States. Indeed, Koivunen and Vuorelma (2022) assert that newspapers can be considered as the *power center* in many societies. As periodical publications that contain news articles, opinion pieces, and editorials, among other genres (Stephens, 2012), newspapers serve not only as a medium for disseminating information but also as platforms for public debate and discussion (McQuail, 2010). Newspapers play a crucial role in national debates and discussions, serving as vital platforms for shaping public opinion in both global and local contexts (Stephens, 2012; McQuail, 2010).

Among the various genres found within newspapers, editorials hold a distinct relevance. Unlike objective news reports, editorials reflect the collective voice of a newspaper's editorial board and seek to influence readers' attitudes toward social, political, and economic issues. These opinion texts are marked by two important functions: representativeness and persuasiveness. In terms of representativeness, editorials are seen as reflective of the institutions that publish them, making them a focal point of institutional ideological stances (Corner, 2016). According to Mintah (2024), editorials present institutional ideologies in the guise of the editors' educative opinions and often reflect the values and stance of the newspaper as an institution rather than those of individual journalists. This collective voice is essential in reflecting on socio-political issues, where newspapers actively seek to influence public discourse.

On the other hand, the persuasive function of editorials has been the hallmark of scholarly attention to editorials. For instance, Elyazale (2014) considers editorials as argumentative texts in newspapers with the sole purpose of influencing the opinions of large audiences. Such conceptualization highlights the fact that the editorial is heavily filled with opinions that are forcefully presented to the reader. Thus, the editorial is considered adequate if it successfully fulfills its persuasive function. This study, therefore, explores the choice of cohesive devices in Ghanaian newspaper editorials and their contribution to the organization of the texts, thereby fulfilling their persuasive function. It interrogates the question: What patterns of cohesion are observed in the use of cohesive devices in Ghanaian newspaper editorials as they perform their persuasive functions?

Literature Review

The Language of Newspaper Editorials

Considering the functions of newspaper editorials, understanding the linguistic resources that make them effective in performing these functions is crucial for linguistic researchers. For

instance, Shepherd (2013) notes that the language of editorials is typically more subjective and evaluative than that found in standard news reporting. Specifically, it employs rhetorical strategies designed to engage readers emotionally and intellectually. According to Bonyadi (2011), editorials' stance-taking is often characterized by the use of predictive auxiliary modals, such as "*will*" or "*would*," which editors prefer to use in order to persuade readers. Modality, thus, is used to indicate a favorable or unfavorable bias toward a particular subject to manipulate the reader's opinions.

Research on the linguistic features of Ghanaian newspaper editorials has made significant contributions to the field of linguistics. Frimpong (2007) asserts that Ghanaian newspaper editorials primarily use specialized modal auxiliaries, such as a single modal auxiliary like "*can*," to express epistemic and deontic meanings. Other modal auxiliaries, such as *would*, *will*, *can*, *should*, *must*, and *could*, are the most frequently used modals, while the modals *may*, *might*, and *shall* are often neglected in Ghanaian public newspaper editorials. Wiredu's (2012) study of editorials from the oldest Ghanaian public newspaper, *the Daily Graphic*, identifies that complex declarative sentences with multiple rank-shifted structures mainly characterize the editorials. In a comparative study of editorials from Ghanaian and British newspapers, Frimpong (2017) observed that clause subordination was employed as a strategy for expanding ideas in editorial writing. The consistent dominance of nominal clauses across editorials from the two contexts of his study led him to conclude that nominal clauses are indispensable to the editorial genre for their elaboratory functions. Mintah et al. (2025a) characterize the Ghanaian newspaper editorials as a variety that employs prepositional phrases to express circumstantial elements of location, rather than adverbial groups. Despite the importance of cohesion in ensuring comprehension and persuasion in editorials, scholarly attention to this subject within the Ghanaian context remains limited. There exists, therefore, a notable gap in the scholarly literature regarding the exact contribution of cohesive devices towards the performance of persuasion and the ideological function of editorials.

Cohesion in Media Discourse

The examination of cohesion in discourses, particularly in media texts, has been considered essential to understanding how coherence is achieved in discourse. The term *Cohesion* generally refers to the set of linguistic resources that connect parts of a text to make it a unified whole rather than a random collection of sentences (Alyousef, 2020; Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Thus, cohesion binds sentences in texts into a coherent and meaningful discourse. This may be achieved through cohesive devices such as references, conjunctions, ellipses, substitutions, and repetition, among others.

Studies on the use of cohesion in journalistic writings have demonstrated that cohesive devices are a universal means of creating comprehensible journalistic texts that can be read easily and understood. Michael et al. (2013) observe that cohesive devices, such as reference and conjunction, are commonly used to create logical continuity in newspaper articles. The abundance of these devices creates smooth transitions in the formulation arguments. Similarly, Nijat et al.'s (2022) comparative study of cohesion in BBC and TOLO news articles discovered that reference and lexical chains are important cohesion helpers in inter-paragraph comprehension. The prevailing trend in arguments regarding the use of cohesion in journalistic discourses emphasizes the organization of texts over their ideological and cultural contexts.

Ideologically and stylistically, cohesion in media texts, especially in editorials, highlights their persuasiveness. Fowler (1991), for instance, observes that editorial texts employ cohesive structures to convey their authoritative and ideological stance. This assertion appears to find support in Fairclough (1995), who argues that cohesion is crucial in maintaining the institutional voice and intertextuality of media texts. Together, these studies attest that cohesive devices are judgmental and can be utilized as stance-taking devices in editorials. An equally important discussion in the literature is the observation that cohesion operates within the context of language and culture. Tanskanen (2006) argues that the type of discourse plays a crucial role in the usage of cohesion as genres are context-sensitive in their choice of cohesive mechanisms. Through a cross-linguistic comparison, Liu and O'Halloran (2020) observe that Chinese and English news articles exhibit remarkable differences in lexical cohesion density. They observe that whereas conjunction operations were not used in Chinese texts, English texts afforded a higher usage of conjunctions. There is an emerging corpus of studies (though scanty) on cohesion in journalistic writings in the African media context. Okpala and Chukwu (2024) examine editorials in Nigerian newspapers and observe that vocabulary choices and the recurrence of lexis contribute to both semantic coherence and topical extension in Nigerian newspaper editorials. In a related study, Malah et al. (2017) observed a similar pattern in the use of cohesive devices, suggesting that cohesion in African newspaper editorials is predominantly achieved through repetition and recurrence.

This research contributes to the discussion of the use of cohesion in newspaper editorials by focusing on Ghanaian newspaper editorials. It is essential to acknowledge that Ghanaian newspapers have a close relationship with the State and political parties. Whereas public newspapers are relatively neutral in their reportage (though they have been observed to promote government agendas, see Mintah et al., 2025b), private newspapers are subjectively swayed towards their paymasters in what they choose to cover (Frimpong, 2015). It is expected, therefore,

that these and other dynamics will predispose Ghanaian editorials to make unique use of cohesive choices.

Methods and Materials

The research employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the patterns of cohesion in newspaper editorials. The mixed-methods approach enabled the complementary analysis of qualitative and quantitative patterns, thereby strengthening the observations made in the data (Cresswell, 2014). Thus, both methods were employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon observed in the data. The data for this study comprises twenty (20) editorials purposively selected from two leading Ghanaian newspapers: *The Ghanaian Times* and *The Daily Guide*. The choice of *The Ghanaian Times*, a state-owned newspaper, and *The Daily Guide*, a privately owned newspaper, was made purposively, as both are among the most widely circulated and influential newspapers in Ghana (Frimpong, 2015; Mintah, 2024).

An equal number of editorials (ten from each newspaper) was selected to ensure balance in representation of State and private newspaper editorials in Ghana. The editorials were collected over five months, spanning January 2023 to May 2023. This timeframe was strategically chosen to ensure both contemporary relevance and manageability of the dataset. The editorials were retrieved from the official online archives of the respective newspapers: www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh for *The Ghanaian Times*, and www.dailyguideghana.com for *The Daily Guide*. For analytical clarity, the selected texts were coded as GT Text1 to GT Text10 (for *The Ghanaian Times*) and DG Text1 to DG Text10 (for *The Daily Guide*).

The research employed Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Cohesion framework for analyzing the data. This model categorizes cohesion into two significant types: grammatical cohesion (including reference, Substitution, Ellipsis, and conjunction) and lexical cohesion (including Reiteration and Collocation). Halliday and Hasan's framework was chosen because of its explanatory strength and successful application in similar linguistic studies. To facilitate accurate and systematic analysis, the cohesive mechanisms based on the theory were used to code and annotate cohesive devices across the twenty editorials manually. The manual coding process ensured close textual engagement and enhanced interpretive validity.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the cohesive strategies employed in Ghanaian newspaper editorials that enable the editorials to function as persuasive, ideologically framed texts. Viewed from the Systemic Functional Linguistic Cohesion framework, the analysis identifies specific patterns of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices used in the newspaper editorials.

Grammatical Cohesive Devices in the Editorials

According to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, grammatical cohesion is materialized through reference, conjunction, Ellipsis, and Substitution. *Table 1* below indicates the frequency of these devices realized in the data.

Table 1. *Frequency of grammatical cohesive devices used in the editorials*

Grammatical Cohesion Type	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Reference	1454	75.1
Substitution	21	1.1
Ellipsis	35	1.8
Conjunction	425	22.0
Total	1935	100.0%

The findings in Table 1 above reveal an overwhelming use of reference devices in the editorials. This indicates that maintaining referential continuity is an important strategy in Ghanaian editorials, reflecting the editorial writers' quest to keep ideas connected across sentences, enhance readability, and establish stances while persuading readers. As a persuasive text, an overwhelming use of references may function to control the discourse focus as the editors attempt to persuade readers. Again, Conjunctions are the second most frequent device used. The presence of Conjunctions indicates the editors' heavy reliance on explicit logical connections to structure the argument and guide readers through the often-complex persuasive reasoning in the editorials. The marginal use of Substitution and Ellipsis may be attributed to the formal nature of the editorials and the need to avoid ambiguity. Thus, their marginal realization suggests Ghanaian newspaper editorial writers prefer explicit and elaborated structures to enhance clarity and minimize misinterpretation.

Reference

As shown in Table 1 above, reference is the most frequently used grammatical cohesive device in the editorials, accounting for 75.1% of all grammatical devices analyzed. This explains the importance of reference in enhancing the coherence of Ghanaian newspaper editorials. The excerpt below presents instances of reference use.

*It is interesting to note that every society is unique because of **its** culture. However, even though all cultures have the same elements, **these** differ in form or nature. Thus, all cultures have elements such as language, food, beliefs and values, education systems, and*

technology, for instance, but **they** come in different forms, types, and shapes (**GT TEXT 6**).

In the extract above, reference devices such as *it*, *its*, *these*, *their*, and *they* play a significant role in establishing cohesion and coherence within the text. The reference device, in both instances of occurrence, is used cataphorically, serving as an engaging introduction to the discussion, while the remaining references function anaphorically, linking back to previously mentioned items. Generally, the analysis revealed a dominant use of anaphoric references over their cataphoric counterparts. For example, the possessive device *its* in the excerpt above refers anaphorically to *society*, thereby establishing a connection between society and culture. Similarly, *their* refers to the cultures mentioned earlier, while *they* pertains to elements that immediately precede it. The strategic use of these reference devices, particularly the anaphoric ones, contributes to the text's texture by improving its comprehensibility and reinforcing the relationships between the ideas presented.

To further the discussion, the types of references preferred in the editorials were analyzed with the belief that the preferred types were consequential for the reinforcement of persuasion in the editorials. *Table 2* below provides details of reference relations.

Table 2. Reference relations in the editorials

Reference Types	Frequency	Percentage
Personal	437	30.1
Demonstrative	985	67.7
Comparative	32	2.2
Total	1454	100.0%

As shown in *Table 2* above, demonstrative references are the most prevalent, accounting for 67.7% of the total references, with a frequency of 985 occurrences. This suggests that demonstrative references are crucial to editorial writing, an observation that conforms with the findings in the literature (Næss et al., 2020). Personal references follow, comprising 30.1% of the total references. The use of personal pronouns is significant as it helps establish a connection between the writer and the audience which in turn builds engagement in editorials (Alghazo et al., 2023). Comparative references are notably less common, representing only 2.2%. This limited use may reflect a strategic choice by the editorials to prioritize clarity and directness over comparison. The examples in excerpts 2 and 3 below illustrate the use of personal and demonstrative references.

*We are being driven at a dizzying speed on **our** digitization journey. At **this** speed, it would certainly not be long before **we** reach the Promised Land of total digitization, thanks to Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia (DG TEXT 1).*

*The changes in the NDC party's leadership positions appear to have taken many by surprise, as **it** is the first time during the tenure of a Parliament that a party has initiated changes in the front bench of **its** leadership (GT TEXT 1).*

The findings regarding the dominance of demonstrative references over personal and comparative references are essential to the discourse. Rustipa (2015) argues that demonstrative references in texts enable writers to create unity of ideas and establish relationships between the text and its context. The abundance of such references in the editorials, therefore, highlights the editors' priority to continually point to the contexts under discussion through the editorials, guiding readers through the persuasive arguments made. Additionally, maintaining referential continuity is a crucial strategy in Ghanaian editorials, reflecting the editorial writers' effort to keep ideas connected across sentences to enhance readability and stance while persuading readers.

Conjunction

In *Table 1* above, it is recorded that conjunction is the second dominant grammatical cohesive device used in the editorials, representing 22.0% of the total grammatical devices analyzed. An example of conjunctive use is demonstrated below.

*The clash between a squad of soldiers **and** some police officers last Monday, details of which were contained in yesterday's issue of this paper, is a worrying occurrence... The one under review, having taken place in the Central Business District of the nation's capital **and** very close to a primary police formation, should prompt the attention of national security managers... **However**, that should not have resulted in the altercation, especially **since** the rider had also introduced himself as a security officer. It was not **as if** the soldiers were escorting a bullion van, **so** they were working under an atmosphere of urgency (DG TEXT 10).*

In the extract above, the highlighted expressions illustrate the use of conjunctions within the editorial text. These conjunctions include *and*, *but*, *so*, *after*, and *as if* that serve to interlink various components of the editorial, thereby enhancing its overall coherence.

Moreover, the analysis of conjunctions reveals the utilization of diverse conjunctive types within the editorials. These types include additive, adversative, causal, and temporal conjunctions. *Table 3* below illustrates the distribution of these conjunctive subtypes.

Table 3. *Conjunctive relations in the editorials*

Conjunction Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Additive	278	65
Adversative	38	9.0
Causal	51	12.0
Temporal	58	14
Total	425	100.0%

The findings presented in *Table 3* reveal that additive conjunctions dominate, comprising 65% of the total conjunctive devices analyzed, which indicates a preference for building upon ideas in the texts. In contrast, adversative conjunctions account for only 9%. The limited use of adversative conjunctions suggests a limited emphasis on contrasting viewpoints in the editorials. Causal and Temporal conjunctions represent 12% and 14%, respectively, highlighting their roles in establishing relationships and sequences within the text. This distribution deepens the editorials' focus on continuity and agreement of ideas in the texts as they persuade the readers. The patterns observed reflect a deliberate choice to enhance textual cohesion and clarity in the editorials. Examples:

*The Commission has since been advocating at various forums that the celebration aims to make the 1992 Constitution a living document, one that is deeply ingrained in the minds **and** hearts of Ghanaians, for the deepening of democracy **and** good governance (GT TEXT 5).*

*Reforms in the country's education sector, which resulted in the introduction of a nationwide junior secondary school (JSS) system, **now** known as junior high school (JHS), in the 1987/88 academic year, also introduced the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). The BECE was the conduit for placing successful candidates in senior secondary schools (SSS), **now** senior high schools (SHS). Interestingly, an admission quota was **subsequently** introduced (GT TEXT 3).*

In the examples above, the use of conjunctions serves to enhance the coherence and clarity of the text. In Example 5, the additive conjunction 'and' is employed twice to link the nominals 'minds' and 'hearts', as well as 'democracy' and 'good governance'. This illustrates how additive conjunctions facilitate the connection of similar ideas in the texts. Further, in example 6, the temporal conjunction *now* indicates a transition to highlight the evolution from JSS and SSS to JHS and SHS. Again, *subsequently* functions as a temporal conjunction, establishing a direct relationship between the introduction of the *admission quota* and its impact on the education

system. Thus, conjunctions play a critical role in structuring relationships within the editorials.

Further, causal and adversative conjunctions were less frequent in the editorials. Some instances of their use in the editorial texts are illustrated below.

*That government, **despite** the foregoing, has been able to roll out such a scheme underscores its commitment to ensuring the welfare of the citizenry (DG TEXT 7).*

*The few isolated cases of alleged abuse of journalists, in our opinion, especially **since** state actors do not commit them, do not constitute sufficient blemishes to warrant our demotion on the chart of media freedom (DG TEXT 8).*

From Example 7, the adversative conjunction '*despite*' signals a shift in idea from the previous clause. On the other hand, example 8 employs the causal conjunction to provide justification, which enhances coherence in the editorial. The predominant reliance on additive conjunctions, which significantly surpasses the usage of adversative, temporal, and causal conjunctions, is consistent with Sitio et al.'s (2023) observation that additive conjunctions are preferred in newspaper editorials to strategically build on specific arguments in their persuasions rather than contrast them with others.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is one of the least used grammatical devices in editorials and plays almost an insignificant role in the performance of cohesion in this genre. This finding was expected as earlier studies on media discourse have observed that Ellipsis is less relevant to media texts (Sajo & Yabo, 2022; Sitio et al., 2023). This may be the case because ellipses, as a linguistic element, are predominantly used in spoken discourse rather than written texts (Alyousef, 2020). Example:

*We have for many years endured the challenges posed by the dearth of love for the country, which is why people employed as public servants do not give their best for mother Ghana as they **should** (DG TEXT 2)*

Example 9 above illustrates the use of ellipses in achieving textual coherence. In example 9, the lexical verb *give* is omitted, leaving the modal auxiliary *should* to stand alone in the last clause of the sentence. The Ellipsis in this instance is easily recoverable and would be redundant, thereby diminishing the communication. This verbal Ellipsis in example 9 effectively links prior ideas with new ideas in the editorials to improve coherence and facilitate reader comprehension of the editorials.

Substitution

Substitution is the least frequently used grammatical cohesive device in the data, occurring only 21 times. McCarthy (1991) posits that "substitution is a speaker/writer choice" (p. 43) and that it is not a requisite component of formal writings. Thus, while Substitution can enhance

textual cohesion and avoid redundancy, it remains a stylistic option rather than a necessity in a formal text like editorials. Example:

Addressing the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama, Bahrain, on Monday, Mr Bagbin touted the values of good democratic governance and said Ghana's parliament was pursuing the same for the utmost benefit of citizens (GT TEXT 2)

From Example 10 above, the term 'same' replaces the nominal group 'the values of good democratic governance'. Such nominal substitutions not only reinforce the relationship between the ideas but also contribute to the total coherence of the editorials. The least use of Substitution in the editorials highlights the strategic attempt of Ghanaian newspaper editorials to present their arguments formally and their quest to avoid ambiguity in their persuasion.

Lexical Cohesive Devices in the Editorials

From the analysis, the lexical cohesive devices identified in the corpus include Reiteration (i.e., repetition, synonymy, superordinate, and general words) and Collocation. *Table 4* below shows the distribution of these lexical cohesion subtypes realized in the data.

Table 4. Lexical cohesion forms in the editorials

Lexical Cohesion Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Reiteration	879	83.4
Collocation	175	16.6
Total	1054	100.0%

The results indicate that the newspapers rely heavily on Reiteration over Collocation. The reiterative cohesive patterns enable the editorials to reinforce key arguments, ensure clarity, and emphasize their points. This also anchors the persuasion around specific lexical choices. Thus, the dominance of Reiteration highlights a rhetorical strategy employed by the newspapers to keep central ideas salient in the readers' minds for persuasive purposes.

Reiteration

According to *Table 4* above, 83.4% of the repetitive devices are found in the editorial corpus. This dominance highlights the importance of Reiteration in enhancing textual coherence. Indeed, earlier studies assert that Reiteration serves as a strategic tool for editors to construct persuasive narratives, engage readers, and effectively reinforce key arguments (Al Huneety et al., 2019). The frequent use of Reiteration over Collocation not only highlights essential ideas in editorials but also facilitates reader comprehension and sustains interest, consequently influencing public opinions on issues. The distribution of the subtypes of reiterations, including the occurrence of

repetition, synonymy, superordinate, and general words in the editorials, is presented in *Table 5* below.

Table 5. *Reiteration forms in the editorials*

Reiteration Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Repetition	790	89.9
Synonym	48	5.5
Superordinate	25	2.8
General Word	16	1.8
Total	879	100.0%

The findings in *Table 5* indicate that repetition is the predominant reiteration device employed in the editorials, occurring 790 times, which accounts for 89.9% of all the reiterations. Synonymy ranks as the second most prevalent form, constituting 5.5%; superordinate terms follow, appearing 25 times and representing 2.8%; and lastly, General Word relations are the least frequent, occurring 16 times and representing 1.8%. The predominance of repetition suggests that authors emphasize key topics to reinforce their significance within the editorials. This enhances reader engagement and retention. As a rhetorical strategy, repetition through the recurrence of key words or phrases aligns with the persuasive function of the editorial as it emphasizes the editorial's viewpoints. It also fosters thematic consistency by foregrounding the central theme of the editorials. For instance, in example 11 below, Reiteration is employed to maintain character focus within the text. The word *girls* appears in several clauses in the excerpt.

*Chiana Senior High School recently shot to infamy following the despicable display of uncouthness by eight **girls** of that school... the first of its kind in the country by teenage **girls** against not only a societal elder but the President and father of the land. If there is anything like a breakdown of child unacceptable upbringing, the case of the Chiana **girls** is classical evidence (DG TEXT 3).*

Further, the relatively low use of synonyms, superordinate terms, and general words suggests a limited variety in lexical cohesion in the editorial texts. While these forms still contribute to textual cohesion, they are clearly secondary to direct repetition. Moreover, the Synonyms provided subtle variation and nuanced texture in the data. Consider the excerpt below:

*Chiana Senior High School recently gained notoriety following the despicable display of **uncouth behavior** by eight girls from that school. Public discourse about the deteriorating State of morality in our local communities, mainly due to social media and foreign influence, was sparked by the sad and unacceptable occurrence. A disciplinary*

*action taken against the **moral gaffe** has been reversed by President Akufo-Addo, who was the target of the **inappropriate invectives** anyway. (DG TEXT 3)*

In excerpt 12 above, the Synonyms in the words' *uncouthness*,' *'moral gaffe*,' and *'inappropriate invectives*' contribute to textual unity by referring to the same core event —the girls' misconduct —as each expression provides an evaluation of the event to emphasize the editor's condemnation of the act. The variations in the terms prevent monotony while keeping focus on the same event. The same excerpt 12 demonstrates Superordinate relationships among terms. For instance, *infamy* serves as a superordinate term for *uncouthness*, while *moral gaffe* encompasses *inappropriate invectives* and *uncouthness*. Such a hierarchical organization of the text contributes to the coherence of the sentences, binding the text into effective cohesive units. The realizations here demonstrate how Ghanaian newspaper editorials employ lexical variation to maintain thematic focus while engaging in their persuasive goals.

Collocation

Collocation, the habitual co-occurrence of lexical items within texts (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), contributes to the fluency and naturalness of written language, thereby facilitating effective communication. In the analysis of the editorials, Collocation was identified as the least frequent lexical relation. Example:

*A call by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo re-emphasizing the need for strengthening the relationship between the Church and the State should be reflected upon not only by the **Christian community** but also by the Muslim and other **religious communities** in the country. This is important because, as the President has stated, it will contribute to the construction of a **progressive and prosperous country**. This is a truism, especially in Ghana, where **religious tolerance** is par excellence. This is a country whose Chief Imam, Vice President, and other high-profile Muslims do not have any problem attending **Christian programs**, and this is where Muslims easily share with Christians whatever they have to observe their **religious festivals**. In fact, elsewhere, **religious intolerance** has caused disharmony, harming the **peaceful coexistence** of different religious groupings (GT TEXT 10).*

From example 13 above, we observe the use of lexical items that frequently co-occur within the editorials. For instance, the phrase *Christian community* is a standard collocation. Similarly, terms such as *religious tolerance*, *Christian programs*, *religious intolerance*, and *peaceful coexistence* typically appear together in the data. Though these phraseology patterns were less attested in the data, their discoursal function to enhance coherence has been observed in the literature (Shaxzoda, 2023). They enhance editorials to present a unified message. As these

familiar combinations of lexical items are realized in the texts, the editorials become more comprehensible for readers, and this facilitates a clearer understanding of the topics presented.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the patterns of cohesive devices in Ghanaian newspaper editorials and their contribution to the persuasive functions of these editorials. The study's findings clearly demonstrate that cohesion is a crucial linguistic resource through which Ghanaian newspaper editorials achieve persuasive effectiveness. The results reveal a high preference for grammatical cohesion, particularly in reference and conjunctions, as a key tool for achieving coherence. Reference devices, especially demonstrative and personal references, serve as textual anchors that ensure continuity of topic and guide readers through the editor's perspective. Conjunctions, predominantly additive, reflect a rhetorical strategy that emphasizes the reinforcement of arguments rather than contrast or opposition. About lexical cohesion, the dominance of Reiteration, particularly repetition, affirms the editorials' strategic emphasis on key themes and ideological stances. Repetition is employed as a rhetorical device to highlight key issues and reinforce the editor's perspective. At the same time, less frequent synonyms, superordinates, and general words contribute to the lexical texture of the texts by providing variation and nuance. Collocation, though less prominent than Reiteration, is used to create associative meaning and naturalness in expression subtly. The relatively low occurrence of Ellipsis and Substitution reflects the formal and explicit nature of Ghanaian newspaper editorials, indicating the editorials' priority of clarity and precision in the texts.

Notably, the study suggests that Ghanaian newspaper editorials are not only ideologically framed texts but also strategically cohesive and rhetorically constructed. Through the systematic deployment of cohesive devices, editorial writers craft persuasive narratives that seek to legitimize certain ideologies and guide public perception on socio-political issues. These cohesive strategies are not random but deliberate linguistic choices that reveal how language serves broader communicative and persuasive goals in Ghanaian newspaper editorials.

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AI Statement

This document has benefited from AI-driven tools that were minimally used to proofread the manuscript. While the incorporation of these technologies may introduce some AI-generated linguistic patterns, it is important to note that the core intellectual content, data interpretation, and conclusions presented are entirely the work of the authors.

Statement of Absence of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the research, findings, or recommendations presented in this paper. All conclusions drawn are independent and unbiased.

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