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Linguistic Cohesion and Institutional Identity in Three Nigerian University Anthems

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Abstract

While studies have explored anthem and cohesion broadly, there is a distinct insufficient research focusing specifically on the cohesive devices inherent in the anthems of tertiary institutions in Osun State, Nigeria. This study addresses that gap by examining the linguistic cohesion in the anthems of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Redeemer's University (RUN), and Osun State University (UNIOSUN).Using a descriptive mixed method based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion, the analysis identified seven grammatical and lexical devices: reference, conjunction, ellipsis, repetition, synonymy, antonymy, and collocation. The findings confirmed that cohesion is crucial for textual unity in the anthems. Repetition was the most frequent device at 35.56%, followed by synonymy (20%), reference and ellipsis (13.33%) each, collocation (8.89%), conjunction (6.67%), and antonymy (2.22%). Significantly, each anthem displayed unique cohesive patterns reflecting its institutional values: OAU's anthem focuses on activism and intellect, RUN's on spiritual devotion and unity while UNIOSUN's on inclusivity and excellence. The study concluded that these linguistic ties are essential for the anthems' clarity, rhythm, and emotional impact. These cohesive ties enhance the communicative power of university anthems and help them to convey institutional values, strengthen identity and sustain pride and unity among their communities.

Keywords: cohesive devices, anthems, Nigerian universities, institutional identity

Introduction

Halliday and Hasan[3] describe cohesion as "the set of meaning relations that is common to all types of text, distinguishing text from 'non-text' and linking the substantive meanings within the text." They further define a text as "a stretch of discourse that exhibits coherence in two dimensions: coherence with the situational context, ensuring consistency in register, and internal coherence, achieved through cohesive ties that bind the text together." A text is a passage,

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[3] Halliday, M. A. K., and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976. p.26

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spoken or written, of whatever length to form a unified whole.[4]It could be prose, verse, conversation, or monologue, ranging from a single proverb to an entire play; a unit of language in use. It is a semantic unit that typically represents meaning rather than form. A Text has texture, which acts as a unit in relation to its surroundings. Texture is defined by the coherent relationship that exists between words in a text. Cohesion refers to the semantic relationships that exist within a text. It occurs when the interpretation of some parts in a text is dependent on other elements.

Cohesion and coherence are closely related and cannot be separated from one another. Cohesion refers to the linguistic means, such as cohesive devices, through which sentences are linked, allowing readers to identify the semantic relationships between them. Coherence, on the other hand, is concerned with the overall unity of a text, where sentences and paragraphs are logically connected to form a meaningful discourse. Cohesion is a fundamental concept in textual analysis. As defined by Halliday and Hasan,[5] it is the linguistic relationships between textual elements that establish the perception of a single, unified whole. This interdependence is vital; Nunan emphasises that it is through these cohesive devices that ideas are linked across sentences and paragraphs, allowing writers to demonstrate how different parts of a text are interrelated.[6] Also, Thornbury stresses that for a text to be communicatively effective, it must effectively 'hang together.'[7]

However, scholars examine cohesion from diverse perspectives beyond its grammatical function. While Halliday and Hasan focus on textual structure, van Dijk approaches it from a cognitive viewpoint, where cohesive devices are interpreted as mental signals that prompt readers to access prior knowledge and construct coherence.[8] Communicatively, Beaugrande and Dressler assert that cohesion directly impacts a text's readability and audibility, ensuring a well-structured and comprehensible output.[9] Yet, cohesion alone is not enough, as Yule cautions that readers require more than just linguistic ties to fully grasp a text's meaning.[10] Furthermore, Martin notes that the application of these devices is genre-dependent; for instance, a persuasive essay might utilise repetition for emphasis, while a sport commentary relies heavily on reference to maintain focus.[11] Cohesion is best described as the semantic relationship that links elements within a text. A text is considered cohesive when its parts are interconnected in a way that conveys meaning to the reader. In essence,

[4] Ibid.
[5] Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976.
[6] Nunan, David. *Introducing Discourse Analysis*. London: Penguin, 1993.
[7] Thornbury, Scott. Beyond the sentence: Introducing discourse analysis. Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2005.
[8] van Dijk, Teun A. *Macrostructures: An Interdisciplinary Study of Global Structures in Discourse, Interaction, and Cognition*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1980.
[9] De Beaugrande, Robert, and Wolfgang U. Dressler. *Introduction to Text Linguistics*. London: Longman, 1981.
[10] Yule, George. *The Study of Language*. 6th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
[11] Martin, James R. *English Text: System and Structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1992.

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cohesion arises when the interpretation of one element relies on another, that is, when one presupposes the other.[12]

Cohesion is an essential feature of every language, as the ability to connect sentences effectively is vital for communication among both educated and ordinary individuals in everyday interactions. Thus, cohesion represents a universal and indispensable phenomenon across all human languages.[13] Halliday and Hasan proposed methods of achieving cohesion in a text. These are reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion.[14] Reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction are referred to as grammatical cohesion, which involves a close system while lexical cohesion is open-ended in that it relates to other items that had already been mentioned in the text.[15]

References are linguistic elements that point to other items within or outside a text, with their meaning derived either from something previously mentioned or yet to be introduced. They are broadly categorised into endophoric and exophoric references. Endophoric reference, also known as textual reference, points to something within the text and can be anaphoric, where the referent precedes the reference (e.g. Your pen is good. Can I see *it*? Here, *it* is anaphoric of *pen*.), or cataphoric, where the reference comes before the referent (e.g. This will be okay. I mean the colour. Here, *this* is cataphoric of *colour*. Exophoric reference, on the other hand, operates outside the text and relies on the situational context, making it more frequent in spoken language. It includes three main types: personal reference (e.g., I, we, she, they), demonstrative reference (e.g. this, that, these, those, there), and comparative reference (e.g., same, similar, other, more).

Substitution involves the replacement of one linguistic item, such as a word or phrase, with another that performs the same structural function within the text. It is inherently endophoric, which means that, the substitute refers to something within the text. For example, in 'The students came to register their courses; each had a copy of the programme', both *the students* and *each* function as the subject of their respective clauses. Halliday and Hasan classify substitution into three major types based on their structural roles: nominal substitution, where items like pronouns (her, him, them) or determiners (none, each, one, either, both, some, any) replace a noun group; verbal substitution, where the verb do replaces a verb phrase while carrying tense and person distinctions (e.g., My parents enjoy strolling.[16] Steve's parents do also); and adverbial substitution, where words like then and there replace adverbs (e.g., The meeting will hold in the president's house at ten o'clock. I will be there then). A fourth category, clausal substitution, involves replacing an entire clause, as in, My father says he is intelligent. I feel so too.

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[12] Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976.
[13] Al-Dulaimy, Ali, and Hashim Al-Nuaimi. "Cohesion: A Fundamental Element in Writing English Texts." *Journal of Language Studies* 5, no. 3 (2022).
[14] Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976
[15] Ibid. p.303
[16] Ibid.

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Ellipsis, sometimes called 'substitution by zero', is a cohesive device that involves the deliberate deletion of words or phrases that can easily be inferred from the surrounding text, to avoid repetition and make the expression more concise while retaining both grammatical and semantic sense.[17] This omission may occur at different levels in a sentence, such as subject ellipsis, as in 'Kemi prayed and [she] slept'; or verbal ellipsis/predicator ellipsis, as in 'Yesterday, Helen was sent to the market and Tola [was] sent to a school'. Additionally, conjunctions function as logical connectors. They link sentences and ideas to establish different semantic relationships, such as cause, contrast, or time, and are typically categorised as either subordinating or coordinating. According to Unuabonah and Daniel, there are seven main types of subordinating conjunctions: enumeration, reinforcing, result, summative, concessive, replacive, and temporal.[18] Coordinating conjunctions, by contrast, connect elements of equal grammatical status and convey various meaning relationships. The primary coordinating conjunctions, 'and, or, and but', serve distinct purposes: 'and' expresses enumeration, reinforcement, summation and result; 'or' conveys reformulation or replacement; while 'but' introduces contrast or concession.

Lexical cohesive devices are concerned with the semantic relationships that connect sentences within a text, thereby contributing to overall unity and clarity of the text. These relationships are realised through repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy and collocation. This study only focuses on repetition, synonymy, antonymy and collocation. Repetition involves the reiteration of a precise lexical item. It is often used for emphasis, clarity and to prevent ambiguity. A word may reappear in various morphological forms, either as inflectional or derivational in come, comes, came, and coming. For example, Kikelomo bought a *bicycle* for her son. He rode the *bicycle* all day.

Synonymy establishes cohesion by using words with similar meanings to avoid redundancy, such as 'old' and 'ancient' or 'beautiful' and 'attractive'. Antonymy, on the other hand, denotes opposition in meaning, as in generous/stingy or handsome/ugly. Context determines appropriateness, and exact opposites often emerge through prefixes such as legal/illegal or reachable/unreachable. Moreover, collocation is the relationship that exists between lexical items that habitually co-exist. Collocational preferences may restrict interchangeability; for instance, start the engine is acceptable, while begin the engine is not. Collocation is of two types, fixed and free collocation. Free collocation allows the addition of other words while fixed collocations are often idiomatic expressions that remain unchanged. [19]

[17] Unuabonah, Foluke, and Daniel Florence. "Coherence and Cohesion in Discourse." In *Current Approaches to Discourse Analysis*, edited by K. Ayoola, A. Arugba, and O. Oyebode. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 2021.
[18] Unuabonah, Foluke, and Daniel Florence. "Coherence and Cohesion in Discourse." In *Current Approaches to Discourse Analysis*, edited by K. Ayoola, A. Arugba, and O. Oyebode. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 2021.
[19] Ibid.

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University Anthem

The university community stands as the foremost institution of higher education. Anthems, as a form of poetic composition, function as more than just songs; they are a key part of a university's identity, comparable to its crest or logo. The lyrics are intentionally designed using specific linguistic strategies to embody the institution's ideals and inspire its community. By blending music and rhythm, these compositions deliver a message of praise and are effective tools for fostering unity among members of any organisation, institution, or nation[20]. The same way logos and crests represent universities visually, anthems express their identity through music and rhythm. The interplay of lyrics and melody produces a lasting harmony that embeds the song in memory. Consequently, whenever the melody is heard, the lyrics are instinctively recalled and sung in harmony with it. For this reason, anthem lyrics are meticulously crafted "in a semantic-syntactic sense to manifest specific meanings."[21]

Anthems play an important role in the cultural, political, and social fabric of countries and institutions around the world. They can also help promote university organisations. According to Mwinwelle, Adukpo, and Mwinwelle, the university community is one of the independent institutions that uses anthems as a cohesive connection to keep its members committed to its objectives and goals in order to differentiate and lay out its essential ideas.[22] University anthems are written for certain occasions and generated to remind members and the wider public of the university's fundamental mission, vision, and ideals. It also represents autonomy, much as the national anthem means liberation from imperialism in the case of nations.[23] They are sung during official university events like as graduations, matriculations, conferences, sporting events and other university-sponsored activities.

Based on the foregoing, the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices are examined in the anthems of three universities in Osun State: Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Redeemer's University (RUN) and Osun State University (UNIOSUN).

Brief History of the Selected Institutions

The three institutions (Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Redeemer's University (RUN), and Osun State University (UNIOSUN)) reflect different

[20] Mwinwella, Peter, "Institutional Symbolism and Solidarity: A Stylo-Linguistic Exploration of the Anthem of University of Education." *International Journal of Arts, Language and Linguistics* 2, no. 2 (2020): 15–33.
[21]Oyeleye, Albert Lekan, "'Things Fall Apart' Revisited: A Semantic and Stylistic Study of Characters in Achebe." In *African Literature Today*, edited by E. D. Jones, 17:16–29. London: James Currey, 1991. p. 16
[22]Mwinwella, Peter, John Adukpoand Rainer. Mwinwella. "The Use of Lexical Cohesive Device in Selected Ghanaian Universities Anthems." *International Journal of Social, Political & Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2019): 161–72.
[23]Odebode, Idowu Olusola, "A Sociopragmatic Study of the Nigerian National Anthem." *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture* 7, no. 3 (2020): 23–40.

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phases in Nigeria's higher education development. OAU, which was founded in 1961 and was one of Nigeria's first three universities, began with five faculties and has since expanded to become fifteen, serving over 30,000 students. Guided by a mission to advance knowledge and promote African culture, OAU aims to be among Africa's leading universities.[24] Similarly, Redeemer's University was established by Pastor E. A. Adeboye and licensed in 2005. It began its initial operation with three colleges at the Redemption Camp, Lagos-Ibadan expressway before relocating to its permanent site in Ede in 2014. It has since adopted a faculty-based system and expanded its academic contributions, pursuing a vision of excellence and transformative societal influence. The university's anthem was composed by the late Mrs. Bunmi Oyeyemi Julius Adeoye.[25] Osun State University, on the other hand, was initiated by the Osun State Government in 2006 and recognised as Nigeria's 80th university. It operates a multi-campus structure. Its goal is to produce globally competitive graduates who drive sustainable development, a mission encapsulated in its motto, "Living spring of knowledge and culture."[26]

Empirical Review

Unuabonah (2008) studies the lexical cohesive devices in Chimamanda Adiche's *Purple Hibiscus* and discovers repetition, collocation, hyponymy, meronymy, antonymy and synonymy. Repetition is a commonly used lexical device with 35.4%, while synonymy (4.5%) is the least used lexical device in the text to achieve the theme of political tyranny. The lexical devices are used to project themes such as freedom, political and family tyranny, religious tolerance and intolerance, and present the text as a unified whole. Contrary to the lexical devices examined by Unuabonah, the present study aims to examine the grammatical devices as well as the lexical devices.

Oyeleye and Oduola examine social pragmatic aspects of cohesion in Nigerian Pentecostal Church Sermons, from the theoretical standpoint of Mey's Pragmatic Act and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar.[27]The study demonstrates that participants' knowledge of the interactional setting and the potential impact of a practice in a specific context influence their pragmatic conduct. The textual mata functional elements such as references, and substitutions are interpretable in pragmatic terms to establish the social and ideological significance of the gospel messages as social-religious events in the Nigerian context. Halliday's Systemic Function Grammar adopted by Oyeleye and Oduola is a point of convergence to this present study. However, the two studies differ in terms of data, as the present study is designed to explore anthems of three universities in Osun State, Nigeria.

[24]OAU (Obafemi Awolowo University). "Historical Background." Accessed June 28, 2022. http://oauife.edu.ng/about-oau/history.
[25] Redeemer's University Nigeria (RUN). "Historical Background." Accessed June 28, 2022. https://run.edu.ng/our-history/.
[26] Historical background UNIOSUN https://uniosun.edu.ng/index.php/about-us/our-history.html accessed 28th June, 2022.
[27]Oyeleye, Albert Lekan and Oduola, Olalekan, "Social Pragmatics in the Aspect of Cohesion in Nigerian Pentecostal Church Sermons." In *Discourse Stylistics, Sociolinguistics and Society*, edited by Ayo Osisanwo, Ibrahim Olaosun, and Idowu Odebode, 407–27. Stirling-Horden Publishers, 2018.

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Oyeyemi attempts a linguistic text analysis of the Nigerian National Anthem using the Integrated Theory of Text Linguistics (ITTL).[28]He discovers that the national anthem's words and structure have changed fundamentally. He highlights the notion of grouping prominence and cohesiveness, considering the data as a type of poetry with few words but rich semantic content. This research is comparable to the current study in genre but differs in data and approach. Conversely, the current research seeks to uncover the cohesive devices of selected university anthems in Osun State, Nigeria.

Erdenb considers national anthem as a unifying tools in selected Western nations. He compares three Western world's anthems:[29] 'God Save the Queen' of Britain, 'La Marseilaise' of France, and 'Star Spangled Banner' of the USA. He concludes that national anthems of the Western world have certain similarities and slight variances. However, they all build to develop or maintain a sense of national identity as well as social cohesion. Praising the monarchy and incorporating religious themes, 'God Save the Queen' upholds the nation's traditional values. In contrast, 'La Marseillaise' primarily instils fear in the hearts of the society's participants before praising the French people and 'Star-Spangled Banner' elevates the American flag as a significant symbol overall. Nevertheless, they all use the same strategies, which include reiterating revered and cherished ideas like freedom, hatred, and almighty power.

Furthermore, Alabi (2020) explores the anthems of five first generation federal universities in Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University Anthem (OAUA), University of Ilorin Anthem (UILA), Nigerian Defence Academy Anthem (NDAA), University of Uyo Anthem (UUA) and Federal University Lafia Anthem (FULA). The stylistic frameworks deployed by the author include foregrounding, lexical repetition, phonological functions and graphological deviation. He concludes that these universities are centres of knowledge, as seen in the use of lexical and phonological repetition, punctuation, and capitalisation, which instil confidence in students and faculty at these schools. The work is related to the current study in genre, as they both investigate the aesthetics of university anthems. But they differ in data and theory.

Gunas et al. investigate aspects of cohesion and coherence in the student's writing performance at senior high schools.[30] The study adopts 390 students' descriptive and narrative essays from 13 senior high schools in Langke Rembong district in Indonesia. Findings reveal that 30 of the 390 descriptive essays are partially cohesive and coherent while 330 of the 390 descriptive essays are fully incohesive and incoherent. Also, 75 of the 390 narrative essays are partially cohesive and coherent while 315 of 390 narrative essays are fully incohesive and incoherent. Having identified the students' low writing

[28]Oyeyemi, Agbeleoba Samuel, "The Nigeria's National Anthem: A Text Linguistic Exploration." *International Journal of English Language Research* 6, no. 1 (2018): 31–38.
[29]Erden,Yalçın, "National Anthem as a Unifying Tools: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Western National Anthems." *Eurasian Journal of English Language and Literature* 1, no. 2 (2019): 44–50.
[30]Gunas, Tobias, Raimunndus Beda, and Yosefina Helenora Jem. "Cohesion and Coherence Aspects in the Students' Writing Performance at Senior High School." *Journal of English Education and Literature* 1, no. 2 (2020): 57–67.

performance, the study advocates that tutors of the English language should assist in the development of the students' writing skills. In theory, the two studies examine cohesion. But they differ in data because while the current study focuses on the anthems of three Nigerian universities, Gunas et al (2020) examined the written work of classroom students in Indonesia.

Methodology

The institutional anthems of three universities were purposively selected among the tertiary institutions in Osun State. The selected anthems cut across the types of institution ownership in Nigeria viz federal (OAU), state (UNIOSUN) and private (RUN). This study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. It underpins a textual and statistical analysis of the cohesive devices (grammatical and lexical) inherent in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Redeemer's University, Ede (RUN) and Osun State University (UNIOSUN) anthems. The lyrics of the selected anthems were extracted from the universities' websites (see appendix).

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis below discusses the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices inherent in OAU, RUN and UNIOSUN's anthems. Three major grammatical cohesion are first discussed before we attempt the four lexical cohesion inherent in the data.

Grammatical Cohesion

The grammatical cohesion includes reference, conjunction and ellipsis.
Reference: There are instances of anaphoric and cataphoric references in OAU's anthem. The pronoun *I* in

Great Ife, *I* love *you*

functions as a cataphoric reference because it points forward to the speaker, singer or any member of the university community. *You*, on the other hand, is an anaphoric reference of Great Ife, which had already been mentioned line 1 and 7. This interplay of cataphoric and anaphoric references personalises the anthem, thereby creating a bond between the speaker (student/member of the community) and the institution itself. However, in RUN's anthem, the personal pronoun *our* and *we*

'our'	stanza 1, line 2
'we'	stanza 1, line 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8; stanza 2, line 1, 5

are cataphoric references. They point forward to identify the Redeemer's University as a collective community. In stanza 1, line 2, *our* in (with all *our* heart set on high) anticipates the unified dedication of staff and students. Similarly, *we* is represented as *we'll* in (for the truth we'll always stand – stanza 1, line 3) and presented as *we* in the subsequent lines, particularly in stanza 1, indicate a shared identity and purpose. Thus, these pronouns foreshadow the active agents of the anthem's vision, before explicitly revealing who *we* are, the team at Redeemer's university. In the second stanza,

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Stanza 2, line 1- united a team *we* are
Stanza 2, line 5 – *we* are building day by day

pronoun *we* refers back to the team that had already been mentioned in stanza 2, line 1-2. Thus, *we* in stanza 2 recalls this same community, hence, maintaining cohesion and continuity of reference throughout the anthem. On the other hand, our and we are anaphoric and cataphoric references respectively in UNIOSUN's anthem.

'our' – stanza 1, line 4; stanza 2, line 1, 2
'we' – stanza 2, line 1, 2; stanza 3, line 1, 2

The pronoun *our* in stanza 1, line 3 (30-80 is our pin) and in stanza 2, lines 1 and 2 (our mission we must fulfil / our vision we must achieve) is an anaphoric reference. It points to Osun State University that had been mentioned in stanza 1, line 1. We is a cataphoric reference. It refers to the stakeholders (students, staff, and management) mentioned in stanza 3, line 3. These references foster cohesion and emphasise the unity of purpose within UNIOSUN community.

Conjunction: In the OAU's anthem, the conjunction *and* in line 6 (*For learning and culture, sports and struggle*) is a coordinating conjunction. It links the different faces of the institution such as learning, culture, sport and struggle, to show the university's commitment to academics, culture, physical development and activism. It yokes the varied areas of campus life, thereby reflecting the holistic nature of education at Obafemi Awolowo University. In stanza 1, line 4, of RUN's anthem, *and* in (*In this great land far and wide*) and stanza 2, line 4, (*What character 'nd learning can do*) function as a connective. And in stanza 1, line 4, joins *far* and *wide* to symbolise the global reach of the university's vision, while *and* in stanza 2, line 4 connects *character* and *learning* to portray the integration of moral and intellectual excellence at Redeemer's University. Similarly, in the UNIOSUN's anthem, the conjunction *and* in stanza 1, line 2 (*Spring of learning and culture*) and stanza 2, line 3 (*Across all the colleges and in all the campuses*) acts to coordinate the elements in the text. The first connects *learning* and *culture* to highlight the university's focus on knowledge and heritage, while the other unites *colleges* and *campuses* to emphasise the institution's multi-campus structure and communal identity.

Ellipsis: Verbal and clausal ellipsis are evident in OAU's anthem. In

Great Ife (^) Africa's most beautiful campus.
Line 2-3

The verbal element 'is' has been elided from the structure. The full structure should read "Great Ife is Africa's most beautiful campus." Also, cases of clausal ellipsis are notable in lines 4-7.

(^) conscious, (^) vigilant, and (^) progressive.
Line 4
(^) forward ever, backward never
line5
(^) for learning and (^) culture, (^) sports, and (^) struggle
line 7

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The clause *we are* is elided from the excerpts above. The complete structure should be

We are conscious, *we are* vigilant, and *we are* progressive.
We are forward ever, backward never

We are for learning and *we are* culture, *we are* sports, and *we are* struggle

Similar to OAU's anthem, the clause *we are* has also been elided from RUN's anthem.

Stanza 2, line 3: (^) declaring to the whole world
Stanza 2, line 6: (^) taking charge with humble hearts
Stanza 2, line 7: and onward pressing (^) marching on

The full structure should be: '*we are* declaring to the whole world,

we are taking charge with humble hearts,
and onward pressing *we are* marching on

UNIOSUN's anthem also records elliptical cohesion. This is notable in the three stanzas of the anthems.

... (^) spring of learning and culture stanza 1, line 1-2
(^) a citadel of excellence stanza 1, line 3
... (^) Our vision we must achieve stanza 2, line 1-2
… (^) we are committed to you stanza 2, line 1-2

The verbal element *is the* is elided in stanza 1, lines 1-2; connective *and* and the article *a* are elided in stanza 1, line 3. In stanzas 2 and 3, the connective *and* is also elided. Thus, the full structure should appear as Osun state university *is the* spring of learning and culture *and a* citadel of excellence

stanza 1, line 1-3
Our mission we must fulfil *and* our vision we must achieve
stanza 2, line 1-2
Uniosun we are proud of you *and* we committed to you
stanza 3, line 1-2

Ellipsis appears in the anthems to avoid repetition. It therefore, creates more rhythmic structures that enhance the poetic tone of the anthems, and emphasise pride and identity while maintaining brevity and musical flow.

Lexical Cohesion

The lexical cohesion in the texts includes repetition, synonymy, antonymy and collocation.

Repetition exists in the selected anthems to achieve cohesion. For instance, words like *great Ife* and *great* are repeated in OAU's anthem. Also, *the, vision, day by day, changewe* and *and* are repeated in RUN's anthem while *our, all, must we* and *to* are repeated in UNIOSUN's anthem. The stanza and lines where the words can be found are explained below.

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great Ife line1, 7, 8, and 9
great line 10

The phrase *Great Ife* emphasises the institution under discussion, with *great* serving as a term of praise/eulogy that celebrates its excellence and prestige. OAU has produced outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to national leadership and various sectors in the society. It is also regarded as the first truly Nigerian-owned or indigenous university, distinguishing it from the University of Ibadan, which, although situated in Nigeria, was originally founded by the British.

'the'– stanza 1, line 1, 3, 6, and 7; stanza 2 line 3, and 8
'vision' – stanza 1, line 1, and 6
'day by day' – stanza 1, line 5; stanza 2, line 5
'change' – stanza 1, line 7; stanza 2, line 8
'we' – stanza 1, line 3(we'll), 5, 7, and 8; stanza 2, line 1, and 5
'and' – stanza 1, line 4; stanza 2, line 4, and 7
;to' – stanza 1, line 6; stanza 2, line 3, 8

The word *vision* is repeated for emphasis, first stated clearly in stanza 1, line 7, as "to change the world we are living in." This repetition highlights the university's core mandate and aligns with the mission of its founder and visitor, Pastor E. A. Adeboye. The repetition of the phrase *day by day* across stanzas 1 and 2 emphasises the continual and progressive nature of the university's vision and mission. Complementing this, the pronoun *we* highlights the collective responsibility for executing the vision. Specifically, the second stanza confirms that every member of the Redeemer's University (students, staff, parents, the governing council, and the proprietor) is an active agent in achieving the institution's goals.

'of'	stanza 1, line 2, 3; stanza 3, line
'must'	stanza 2, line1, 2,
'all'	stanza 2, line 3, 4; stanza 3, line 3
'you'	stanza 3, line 1, 2, and 4
'we'	stanza 2, line 1,2; Stanza 3, line 1,2
'to'	stanza 3, line 2, 4

The recurring words within the UNIOSUN's anthem serve key linguistic and rhetorical purposes, effectively reinforcing institutional pride, commitment, and unity. The persistent use of the preposition *of* throughout the anthem (Stanzas 1 and 3) establishes strong associative relationship which links the university directly to its core qualities (learning, culture, and excellence). The modal verb *must* in stanza 2, conveys a sense of obligation and determination, stressing the community's collective duty to fulfil the university's mission. Furthermore, the repeated use of *all* (stanzas 2 and 3) underscores inclusivity, signifying that every member is essential to its growth. The anthem personifies the university by employing the pronoun you (stanza 3). It expresses deep affection and loyalty, while the use of *we* highlights the community's collective identity and shared responsibility. These repetitions collectively establish rhythm and emphasis, powerfully reinforcing the anthem's themes of communal pride and dedication.

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Synonymy is used across the selected anthems to establish shared ideals of unity, progress, and excellence. They promote commitment, unity and purposeful growth. In OAU anthem, the synonymous words create unity and strengthens progress and activism in the institution.

aluta and struggle	line 5 and 7 respectively
conscious, vigilant	line 3
progressive and forward	line 3 and 5, respectively

In line 5, *aluta* and *struggle* signify resistance and resilience, which have been a tradition in the university. OAU is known to fight against all forms of injustice and oppression. In the same vein, *conscious* and *vigilant* in line 3, signal alertness and intellectual awareness of the institution's community. Again, *progressive* and *forward* in lines 3 and 5, express advancement which emphasises the university's commitment to continuous growth and development. These words unify the anthem's message of enlightenment, courage, and unwavering pursuit of excellence. On the other hand, the words that are synonymous in RUN's anthem reinforce the themes of unity and purposeful progress.

Running and pressing on	stanza 1, line 5 and stanza 2 line 7, respectively
United and team	stanza 2 line 1

The words *running* in stanza 1, line 5 and *pressing on* in stanza 2, line 7 convey the idea of continuous movement toward a divine goal. They symbolise determination and steadfastness, essential in the unrelenting pursuit of the university's vision to transform the world through education and faith. Similarly, *united* and *team* in stanza 2, line 1, emphasise harmony and collective strength. These words highlight the unity and cooperation among all members of the Redeemer's University community: students, staff, administrators, as well as the visitor, who work as one body to fulfil the divine and academic goal. UNIOSUN's anthem shares synonymous words, such as:

university and citadel of excellence	stanza 1, line 1&3
mission and vision	stanza 2 line 1&2 respectively
fulfil and achieve	stanza 2 line 1&2 respectively
college and campuses	stanza 1 line 3&4 respectively

In stanza 1, lines 1 and 3, the terms *university* and *citadel of excellence* define the university as a hub of learning and intellectual strength, a place where knowledge and moral ideals thrive. Similarly, *mission* and *vision* (stanza 2, lines 1 and 2) represent the university's overarching purpose and long-term goals. The verbs *fulfil* and *achieve* in stanza 2, lines 1 and 2, convey the effective achievement of aims and objectives, emphasising determination and commitment. Finally, *colleges* and *campuses* (stanza 1, lines 3 and 4) represent the institution's structure; UNIOSUN has six campuses throughout the state (Osogbo, Okuku, Ikire, Ifetedo, Ejigbo, and Ipetu-Ijesha). Together, these similar terms portray UNIOSUN's commitment to comprehensive education, institutional excellence and continuous progress.

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Antonymy is only evident in OAU's anthem. It clearly contrast *forward* and *backward* in line 5.

Forward ever, backward never (Line 5)

This pair communicates conflicting meanings that represent development versus regression. The usage of these antonyms strengthens the university's ideological position of perpetual learning, culture, and resistance against oppression. It encapsulates a prayer for the institution, a drive for excellence, and an unwillingness to back down in the face of adversities.

Collocations in the three anthems enhance meaning and rhythm by combining words that naturally appear together to highlight each university's basic values. In OAU's anthem for instance, words like

Aluta, struggle, and oppression

express the university's tradition of activism and resistance. Aluta and struggle reflect ongoing effort and resolve, whereas oppression represents what is being resisted. The lines emphasise OAU's dedication to justice, freedom, and intellectual courage. Also,

onward, pressing, and matching

in RUN's anthem represent determination and progress. They represent the university's determination to achieve its holy goal and alter society through endurance and faith. These words highlight Redeemer's University's dedication to ongoing development, purpose, and spiritual and academic advancement. In UNIOSUN's anthem,

vision and mission
colleges and campuses

express the university's dedication foe growth, excellence and inclusivity. While *vision* symbolises future ambitions and *mission* outlines tangible methods to attain them. Similarly, *colleges* and *campuses* collocate to highlight the institution's multi-campus structure, emphasising its vast academic reach and cohesiveness across multiple learning environments. These pairs reinforce UNIOSUN's commitment to growth, excellence, and inclusiveness.

Table 1: Statistical Analysis of Cohesive Devices in the Selected Anthems

S/N	Cohesive Devices	OAU	RUN	UNIOSUN	Total	Percentage
1.	Reference	2	2	2	6	13.33
2.	Conjunction	1	1	1	3	6.67
3.	Ellipsis	2	1	3	6	13.33
4.	Repetition	3	7	6	16	35.56
5.	Synonymy	3	2	4	9	20
6.	Antonymy	1	0	0	1	2.22
7.	Collocation	1	1	2	4	8.89
					45	100

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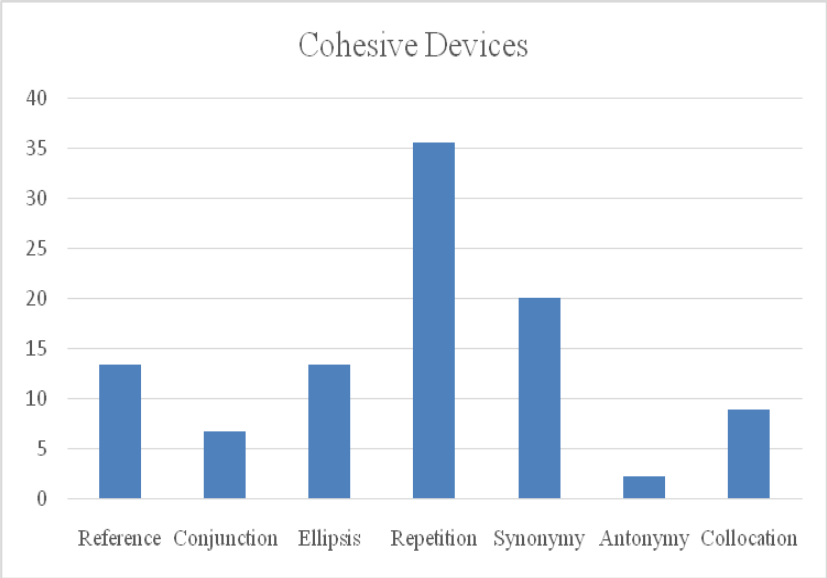
Source: Authors' Compilation (2025)

Figure 1: Cohesive devices in the selected anthems



Source: Authors' Compilation (2025)

The texts are not independent of themselves, in descending order, findings reveal that repetition has the highest frequency (35.56%). This is followed by synonymy with 20%. Reference and ellipsis with share the same frequency, 13.33% each. Thereafter, collocation has 8.89%, conjunction holds 6.67% and antonymy has the least frequency with 2.22%. These cohesive devices to hold the texts together lexically and grammatically.

Conclusion

The study investigated the cohesive devices inherent in the anthems of three selected universities in Osun State, Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (OAU), Redeemer's University, Ede (RUN) and Osun State University (UNIOSUN). Employing Halliday and Hasan's cohesion as framework, the analysis showed that the anthems exhibited cohesion through reference, conjunction, ellipsis, repetition, synonymy, antonymy, and collocation, which together established unity and coherence within the texts.[31] Among these, repetition, which was the most dominant, reflected the rhythmic and emphatic nature of anthem compositions. This was followed by reference and ellipsis. They showed the structural and semantic interconnection of the lyrics of the anthems. Antonymy was exclusive to the OAU's anthem, where it reinforced the institution's activist tone. In contrast, the other anthems relied more on synonymy and collocation to express unity and institutional ideals. In

[31]Halliday, M. A. K., and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976.

conclusion, the study emphasised that cohesion functions as a linguistic and rhetorical tool that fosters oneness, musicality and ideological strength of the university anthems.

APPENDIX I
Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Anthem.[32]
Great Ife! Great Ife!
Africa's most beautiful campus.
Conscious, vigilant, progressive
Aluta against all oppression
Forward ever, backward never
For learning and culture, sports and struggle
Great Ife! I love you
There's only one Great Ife in the universe
Another Great Ife is a counterfeit
Great! Great! Great! Great! Great!

APPENDIX II
Redeemer's University (RUN) Anthem[33]
Stanza 1
The vision has been planted
With all our heart set on high
For the truth we'll always stand
In this great land far and wide
We are running day by day
With the vision we have seen
To change the world we are living in
As we are ablaze for God!

Stanza 2
United a team we are
In Redeemer's varsity
Declaring to the whole world
What character'nd learning can do
We are building day by day
Taking charge with humble hearts
And onward pressing marching on
To change the world for God!

APPENDIX III
Osun State University (UNIOSUN) Anthem[34]
Osun state university
Spring of learning and culture

[32]Nairaland. "Obafemi Awolowo University Anthem." Accessed June 28, 2022. https://www.nairaland.com/1496932/school-anthem-share-yours
[33] Redeemer's University Nigeria (RUN) "Motto, Logo & Anthem." Accessed June 28, 2022. https://run.edu.ng/motto-logo-anthem/.
[34]YouTube. "UNIOSUN Anthem." Video. Posted by "UNIOSUN," March 22, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sI53dCjjeH8&t=69s.

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