

**LINKING NEWS IN THE DIGITAL AGE: GRAMMATICAL COHESION AND
INTERTEXTUALITY IN CNN INSTAGRAM NEWS CAPTION**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of grammatical cohesion and its contribution to the construction of intertextual meaning in Instagram news captions. Adopting a qualitative discourse analysis design, this research employs a descriptive qualitative method to analyze twenty-five captions selected purposively from CNN's official Instagram account. The analysis is guided by Halliday and Hasan's framework of grammatical cohesion—reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction—and supported by the concept of intertextuality. The findings indicate that referential cohesion and conjunction are the most dominant cohesive devices, as they effectively maintain clarity and continuity in highly condensed texts. In contrast, substitution and ellipsis occur less frequently, reflecting a preference for explicit and unambiguous expression in digital news discourse. Despite their brevity, the captions demonstrate systematic linguistic organization that enables the efficient communication of complex information. Furthermore, the study reveals that intertextuality plays a significant role in meaning construction. The captions frequently draw on prior events, institutional discourse, and widely circulated public issues, allowing them to connect with broader news narratives without extensive elaboration. However, this reliance on shared knowledge positions readers as active participants in the interpretive process. Overall, the study demonstrates that grammatical cohesion and intertextuality function as complementary mechanisms in digital journalism, contributing to both textual coherence and contextual depth.

Keywords: *Grammatical Cohesion, Intertextuality, Digital News Discourse, Social Media Journalism*

A. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital media has transformed the way news is produced, distributed, and consumed. In addition to traditional news websites, social media platforms have increasingly become important channels for news dissemination. Among these platforms, Instagram has developed into a significant space

where news organizations share updates through visually oriented posts accompanied by short captions. These captions function as condensed forms of news discourse, providing audiences with brief summaries of ongoing events while directing attention to broader news narratives. The growing role of social media in shaping contemporary news communication has been widely noted in recent studies on digital

discourse (Jones, Chik, & Hafner, 2021).

Despite their brevity, Instagram news captions must still maintain clarity and coherence in order to convey information effectively. From a linguistic perspective, this coherence is often supported through the use of cohesive devices, which connect different elements within a text and allow readers to interpret it as a unified message. Halliday and Hasan (1976) describe cohesion as a set of linguistic resources that establish relationships between parts of a text, enabling readers to follow the flow of information. In short digital texts such as Instagram captions, grammatical cohesion—including reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction—plays an important role in linking ideas and ensuring that the message remains understandable despite the limited textual space. Recent studies on digital communication suggest that linguistic cohesion remains essential even in highly condensed online texts, where meaning must be conveyed efficiently within limited textual space (Zappavigna, 2018; Page, 2021).

However, textual coherence in news discourse does not rely solely on internal linguistic connections. News texts frequently relate to other texts, events, or previously reported information. This relationship between texts is commonly described through the concept of **intertextuality**. Kristeva (1980) proposes that texts gain meaning through their connections with other texts and the broader discursive environment in which they circulate. Through such relationships, a text can evoke broader meanings by referring to previously established narratives, public discussions, or widely recognized events.

In media discourse, intertextuality often appears when a text refers to earlier reports, official statements, or ongoing developments surrounding a particular issue. These references allow readers to interpret the current text by drawing on their knowledge of related information circulating in the public sphere. In contemporary digital media environments, intertextuality often functions through rapid circulation of information across multiple platforms, where audiences encounter interconnected fragments of discourse (Page, 2021). This phenomenon

becomes particularly relevant in social media environments, where news updates are often presented in short and fragmented forms. Instagram captions, for example, frequently rely on readers' familiarity with previously reported events or widely discussed issues. As a result, even a brief caption can evoke a broader network of news discourse through subtle textual references.

Despite the growing importance of social media in contemporary news communication, linguistic studies focusing on Instagram news captions remain relatively limited. Previous research has examined grammatical cohesion in various types of written discourse, including academic texts and traditional news articles. Other studies have explored the role of intertextuality in media discourse and journalism. Nevertheless, relatively few studies have investigated how grammatical cohesion operates within short social media news captions and how these cohesive devices contribute to the construction of intertextual meaning in digital news environments.

A preliminary observation of several captions posted on CNN's Instagram account shows that these texts frequently

rely on brief references to ongoing events, previous reports, or public statements. For example, captions often include referential expressions such as "the incident," "this decision," or "the statement," which point to information that is not fully explained within the caption itself. In addition, conjunctions such as "meanwhile," "however," and "following this" are used to connect the caption to earlier developments in the news. These patterns indicate that, despite their short length, Instagram captions depend on both grammatical cohesion and implicit connections to other texts in order to convey meaning effectively.

Based on this background, the present study examines the use of grammatical cohesion in Instagram news captions and explores how these cohesive devices contribute to the construction of intertextual meaning. Specifically, this study analyzes captions posted by CNN on Instagram in order to identify the types of grammatical cohesion used and to investigate how these linguistic features help connect short digital news texts to broader news narratives.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address two main questions. First, it examines the types of grammatical cohesion used in CNN's Instagram news captions. Second, it explores how

these cohesive devices contribute to the construction of intertextual meaning within the captions.

Cohesion in Discourse

Cohesion has long been recognized as a fundamental element in discourse organization because it enables readers to interpret a text as a unified whole. Early work by Halliday and Hasan (1976) established that cohesion operates through semantic relationships that connect different parts of a text. These relationships allow linguistic elements to refer to one another, thereby guiding readers in following the flow of information across sentences.

Subsequent research has expanded this perspective by examining how cohesive mechanisms function in different communicative contexts. For instance, Zhang (2021) and Li and Wang (2022) argue that cohesive devices remain crucial in contemporary communication environments, particularly in digital texts where writers must convey complex information within limited textual space. Their findings suggest that cohesion continues to play a significant role not only in traditional

written discourse but also in emerging forms of digital communication. However, most of these studies focus on longer digital texts such as blogs or online articles, leaving the role of cohesion in highly condensed formats such as social media captions relatively underexplored.

Together, these studies demonstrate that cohesion functions as a key linguistic mechanism for organizing discourse and maintaining continuity of meaning across textual units.

Grammatical Cohesion in Digital Texts

Within the broader framework of cohesion, grammatical cohesion represents the grammatical resources that connect elements within a text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify grammatical cohesion into four main categories: reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. These mechanisms allow writers to maintain coherence by linking clauses and sentences through grammatical relationships.

Recent studies have explored how these cohesive mechanisms operate in digital communication

contexts. Chen (2021), for example, observes that referential expressions and conjunctions frequently appear in short online texts because they enable writers to establish connections between ideas without increasing textual length. Similarly, Ahmed and Hassan (2023) report that cohesive devices are widely used in digital discourse to maintain clarity despite the condensed nature of online communication.

These findings indicate that grammatical cohesion plays a particularly important role in short forms of digital discourse, where efficient linguistic strategies are required to organize information within restricted textual space.

Intertextuality and Media Discourse

While cohesion explains internal textual connections, discourse is also shaped by relationships between different texts. This dimension of textual interaction is captured by the concept of intertextuality, first introduced by Julia Kristeva (1980). Intertextuality emphasizes that texts do not exist independently but are embedded within networks of other texts and discourses.

Building on this perspective, Norman Fairclough (1995) argues that intertextuality frequently appears in media discourse through references to previous reports, institutional voices, and public statements. Such references allow texts to incorporate multiple perspectives and connect current events with broader social narratives.

Recent studies further highlight the importance of intertextuality in contemporary media communication. Park (2022) notes that intertextual references enable media texts to evoke broader social contexts, while Martinez (2023) observes that intertextuality functions as a mechanism through which journalists link individual news reports to ongoing public debates. These studies collectively suggest that intertextuality plays a crucial role in constructing meaning in media discourse by connecting individual texts to wider discursive networks.

Social Media News Discourse

The increasing role of social media in news dissemination has transformed the linguistic characteristics of journalistic communication. Digital platforms such as Instagram allow news organizations

to distribute information through short captions accompanying visual content. As a result, news discourse in social media environments often appears in condensed and fragmented forms.

Recent research highlights that social media news texts frequently rely on contextual references to convey meaning efficiently. Garcia and Lee (2021) argue that audiences interpret short digital news updates by connecting them with previously encountered information across multiple media platforms. Similarly, Thompson (2024) suggests that Instagram news captions often evoke broader narratives through brief textual references rather than through detailed explanations.

These findings indicate that both cohesive mechanisms and intertextual references may play important roles in organizing meaning in social media news discourse. However, despite the growing importance of social media in journalism, relatively limited research has examined how grammatical cohesion operates within short news captions and how these cohesive elements contribute to the construction of intertextual meaning.

Although previous studies have examined grammatical cohesion in written discourse and intertextuality in media texts, these areas have largely been studied separately. Research on cohesion tends to focus on longer forms of writing such as academic texts or news articles, while studies on intertextuality often emphasize broader media discourse rather than short digital texts. As a result, little attention has been given to how grammatical cohesion operates in highly condensed texts such as Instagram news captions, and how these linguistic features may contribute to the construction of intertextual meaning. This lack of integration creates a gap in understanding how short social media news texts function both internally and in relation to wider discourse.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative discourse analysis to investigate the use of grammatical cohesion and the construction of intertextual meaning in Instagram news captions. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the study aims to explore linguistic patterns and interpret how cohesive devices function within the discourse context rather than to measure statistical relationships.

Discourse analysis is particularly suitable for examining how language

operates in real communication settings, including digital media environments. Through this approach, the study analysis how grammatical cohesion is used in short news captions and how these cohesive elements contribute to linking the captions to broader news narratives.

Data Source

The data for this study are taken from captions posted on the official Instagram account of CNN. This account was selected because it is one of the most widely followed international news organizations on Instagram and regularly publishes news updates in the form of short captions accompanying visual posts.

Instagram captions from this account represent a form of condensed news discourse, where information about ongoing events is summarized in a brief textual format. These captions often refer to previous developments or widely reported issues, making them relevant for analysing both grammatical cohesion and intertextual references in digital news communication.

Data Collection

The data were collected using a purposive sampling technique. Captions were selected based on their relevance to the research focus, particularly those that report current events or ongoing issues.

To ensure consistency, the study selected 25 Instagram news captions posted on the CNN Instagram account within a specified period. Each caption was documented and compiled into a dataset for analysis. Visual elements such as images or videos accompanying the captions were not analysed in this study, as the focus is specifically on the linguistic features of the textual captions.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was conducted through several stages using a discourse analytical framework. First, each Instagram caption was carefully examined to identify instances of grammatical cohesion. The identification of cohesive devices followed the framework proposed by **Halliday and Hasan (1976)**, who classify grammatical cohesion into four main categories: **reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction**. These categories were used as analytical criteria to determine how linguistic elements within the captions are connected to create textual continuity.

Second, the identified cohesive devices were categorized according to their type and function within the captions. This step aimed to

understand how grammatical cohesion contributes to the organization of meaning within short digital texts. As noted by **Halliday and Matthiessen (2014)**, cohesive devices function as semantic resources that enable readers to interpret relationships between different parts of a text.

Third, the captions were analysed to identify elements of **intertextuality**. The concept of intertextuality refers to the way a text draws upon or references other texts and discourses, as originally proposed by **Kristeva (1980)** and further elaborated in discourse studies by **Fairclough (1995)**. In this study, intertextuality was identified through references to prior news events, institutional statements, or previously circulated public information.

Finally, the findings were interpreted by examining how grammatical cohesion contributes not only to internal textual organization but also to the construction of intertextual meaning within the captions. This analytical step follows the view of **Fairclough (1995)** that discourse analysis should consider both the internal linguistic structure of texts and

their connections to broader discursive contexts.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The analysis indicates that Instagram news captions depend on tightly organized patterns of grammatical cohesion while simultaneously drawing on intertextual references that connect brief messages to broader public discourse. These linguistic strategies allow highly compressed texts to maintain clarity and relevance in fast-moving digital news environments. The following section examines how cohesive devices and intertextual links operate across individual captions to shape meaning in contemporary social media journalism.

Caption 1. "Teens using AI to diet may be told to eat almost 700 fewer daily calories than they need"

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion operates as a foundation for meaning construction in short digital news discourse. The pronoun "they" functions as a personal reference that refers back to "teens," creating continuity within the clause while avoiding unnecessary repetition.

In Halliday and Hasan's framework, such referential cohesion enables readers to maintain a stable interpretation of participants throughout the sentence. The comparative structure introduced by "than" further strengthens the semantic relationship by contrasting recommended calorie intake with actual physiological needs. This comparison does more than organize grammatical relations; it frames the issue as a measurable discrepancy, implicitly highlighting the potential risk associated with algorithmic health guidance.

At the same time, the caption does not operate as an isolated text. The phrase "using AI to diet" activates broader discourses surrounding artificial intelligence, body image, and digital health technologies. In line with Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, the caption derives meaning through its connection to ongoing public debates about the reliability of automated decision-making in personal health management. Readers are expected to interpret the warning embedded in the caption by drawing on previously encountered information about nutrition, technology, and adolescent well-being. The text therefore functions

as part of a wider network of discourse rather than as a fully self-contained explanation.

The modal verb "may" introduce a cautious tone that reflects journalistic responsibility while simultaneously signaling potential danger. However, the brevity of the caption also reveals an implicit reliance on reader knowledge. The mechanism through which AI calculates calorie requirements is not explained, nor are the long-term consequences of insufficient intake explicitly stated. This reliance on assumed background knowledge illustrates what Fairclough describes as reader dependency, where comprehension depends on familiarity with prior discourse. Consequently, while grammatical cohesion ensures internal clarity, the intertextual nature of the caption shifts part of the interpretive burden onto the audience, raising subtle concerns about accessibility in fast-paced digital news environments.

Caption 2. "More airport disruptions expected as TSA agents quit amid first weekend without full pay"

In this caption, grammatical cohesion is primarily realized through

the conjunction “as,” which establishes a causal relationship between the resignation of transportation security agents and the anticipated increase in airport disruptions. Within Halliday and Hasan’s model, this conjunction functions as a cohesive device that organizes events into a logical sequence, guiding readers to interpret workforce action as the immediate cause of operational instability. The phrase “without full pay” further contextualizes the situation by introducing an economic condition that explains the agents’ decision to leave their positions. Together, these cohesive elements create a concise yet coherent narrative of cause and consequence within a single sentence.

Beyond its internal structure, the caption also relies heavily on intertextual connections to broader socio-political developments. The reference to the “first weekend without full pay” implicitly points to earlier institutional decisions, such as funding disputes or government shutdowns, that have already been discussed in the public sphere. Consistent with Kristeva’s understanding of intertextuality, the caption assumes that readers recognize these prior events

and can link the current disruption to a continuing political and economic situation. Meaning is therefore constructed not only through linguistic cohesion but also through the audience’s familiarity with ongoing news coverage.

The caption foregrounds the consequences experienced by travelers while providing limited attention to the structural conditions affecting workers. The emphasis on “airport disruptions” positions public inconvenience as the central concern, potentially overshadowing the labor issues that prompted the resignations. This framing reflects Fairclough’s observation that media discourse often prioritizes institutional stability and consumer experience over systemic labor conditions. Furthermore, the compressed format of the caption reduces the complexity of the situation to a single causal link, which may simplify public understanding of what is likely a multifaceted policy issue. In this sense, cohesion enables clarity, but it also contributes to the selective representation of social reality.

Caption 3. “Italy ruling tells millions with Italian roots they have lost the right to citizenship”

This caption illustrates how grammatical cohesion operates through referential relationships that structure meaning within a compressed news format. The pronoun “they” functions as a personal reference that refers back to “millions with Italian roots,” ensuring continuity of participant identity across the clause. In Halliday and Hasan’s framework, such reference enables readers to interpret the legal decision as directly affecting a specific population group without repeating the full noun phrase. The verb phrase “have lost” further contributes to cohesion by signaling a completed action, framing the legal ruling as an irreversible outcome rather than a temporary condition. Through this cohesive structure, the caption presents the decision as both definitive and consequential.

Beyond its internal organization, the caption relies heavily on intertextual connections to legal and political discourse surrounding citizenship and national identity. The phrase “Italy ruling” implicitly references judicial

authority and prior legal proceedings, while the concept of “Italian roots” invokes broader debates about ancestry-based citizenship policies. Consistent with Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality, the caption draws meaning from these existing institutional and historical narratives without explicitly explaining them. Readers are expected to interpret the significance of the decision by connecting it to previously circulated discussions about migration, nationality, and legal rights.

The caption frames citizenship primarily as a legal entitlement that can be granted or withdrawn by state authority. The wording “have lost the right” foregrounds institutional power while backgrounding the lived experiences of those affected. This linguistic framing reflects what Fairclough describes as the ideological function of discourse, where legal decisions are represented as neutral administrative actions rather than as socially contested processes. Moreover, the brevity of the caption places interpretive responsibility on readers to understand the broader legal context, highlighting a potential accessibility gap for audiences

unfamiliar with citizenship law. In this way, grammatical cohesion ensures clarity at the sentence level, yet the intertextual reliance on legal knowledge shapes how meaning is ultimately constructed.

Caption 4. "Afghan man who served alongside US forces dies after less than a day in ICE custody, family and advocates say"

This caption demonstrates the use of grammatical cohesion through both reference and clause expansion, creating a layered representation of identity and circumstance. The relative clause "who served alongside US forces" functions as a descriptive reference that links the individual to a recognized institutional role, establishing credibility and moral positioning within the narrative. In Halliday and Hasan's terms, this cohesive structure provides additional contextual information that guides readers to interpret the subject not merely as a detainee but as a former ally. The temporal phrase "after less than a day" further organizes the sequence of events, emphasizing the rapid progression from detention to

death and thereby intensifying the perceived urgency of the situation.

Intertextually, the caption draws on ongoing public discourse surrounding immigration enforcement and detention practices. The reference to "ICE custody" signals a connection to broader debates about immigration policy, detention conditions, and humanitarian responsibility. According to Kristeva's framework, the caption gains meaning through its relationship to previously reported incidents involving migrant detention and government accountability. The inclusion of the attribution "family and advocates say" introduces additional voices into the discourse, reflecting the multiplicity of perspectives often present in media narratives.

The caption positions the event within a moral framework that emphasizes loyalty and vulnerability. By foregrounding the individual's service to US forces, the text implicitly contrasts the expectation of protection with the reality of detention. This contrast reflects Fairclough's argument that discourse can construct legitimacy and moral judgment through selective representation of social roles. At the

same time, the reliance on institutional terminology such as “custody” may obscure the physical and emotional conditions experienced by detainees, illustrating how bureaucratic language can distance readers from the human consequences of policy decisions. Thus, cohesion structures the narrative, intertextuality situates it within immigration discourse, and critical interpretation reveals underlying tensions between authority and humanitarian responsibility.

Caption 5. “White House chief of staff Susie Wiles has early stage breast cancer, Trump announces”

In this caption, grammatical cohesion is realized through the naming of institutional roles and the attribution of information to a recognized authority. The phrase “White House chief of staff” functions as an identifying reference that situates Susie Wiles within a specific political hierarchy, enabling readers to interpret the significance of the health announcement in relation to governmental leadership. The reporting verb “announces” establishes a relational link between the statement and the authority figure responsible for

delivering it, reinforcing the credibility of the information. Within Halliday and Hasan’s model, this attribution operates as a cohesive mechanism that connects the message to its institutional source.

Intertextually, the caption draws on established conventions of political communication, where health disclosures by public officials often become matters of public interest. The reference to a prominent political figure signals connections to broader narratives about transparency, leadership continuity, and public trust. In Kristeva’s terms, the caption derives meaning from these shared expectations about political accountability and the public’s right to information regarding government officials.

The caption demonstrates how authority shapes the framing of personal health information within political discourse. The emphasis on “Trump announces” positions the message as an official declaration rather than as a personal statement from the individual affected. This framing reflects Fairclough’s observation that institutional voices

often dominate media narratives, determining how information is presented and interpreted. Furthermore, the concise format of the caption may limit readers' understanding of the medical context, highlighting the tension between informational efficiency and comprehensive explanation in digital news environments.

Caption 6. "Thousands of meatpacking workers walk off job in first strike in 40 years"

This caption illustrates how grammatical cohesion operates through quantification and temporal reference to construct the scale and significance of collective action. The numerical expression "thousands" functions as a cohesive element that establishes magnitude, signaling the breadth of worker participation. The phrase "first strike in 40 years" introduces a temporal reference that links the current event to historical labor activity, creating continuity between past and present conditions. In Halliday and Hasan's framework, such temporal cohesion enables readers to interpret the strike as an extraordinary

occurrence rather than a routine workplace action.

Intertextually, the caption connects to broader labor discourse concerning worker rights, wage conditions, and industrial relations. The term "strike" carries established historical and political associations, evoking previous instances of organized labor resistance. According to Kristeva, this lexical choice activates collective memory and situates the event within a longstanding tradition of labor activism. Readers are therefore encouraged to interpret the action not simply as a workplace dispute but as part of a wider pattern of social negotiation between employees and employers.

A critical discourse perspective highlights how the caption frames the strike as a moment of disruption while leaving underlying causes largely implicit. The absence of explicit reference to wages, working conditions, or safety concerns shifts attention toward the event itself rather than the structural factors that motivated it. This selective representation reflects Fairclough's argument that media discourse often simplifies complex

socio-economic conflicts into easily digestible narratives. As a result, while cohesion ensures clarity about the scale of the strike, the intertextual reliance on prior knowledge may obscure the systemic issues that shape labor relations.

Caption 7. "Cuba's power system suffers total collapse"

This caption demonstrates the use of grammatical cohesion through possessive reference and evaluative description. The possessive form "Cuba's" functions as a referential marker that identifies the national system affected, linking the infrastructure failure directly to the state. The phrase "total collapse" introduces an intensifying descriptor that signals the severity of the situation, creating a clear semantic focus on systemic breakdown. Within Halliday and Hasan's model, this concise structure enables readers to interpret the event as both comprehensive and critical.

Intertextually, the caption draws on broader narratives about energy infrastructure, economic conditions, and governance in the region. The concept of a nationwide power failure is

rarely understood in isolation; instead, it is interpreted through previously circulated discourse about resource management, political stability, and technological capacity. In Kristeva's terms, the caption gains significance through its relationship to these existing narratives, allowing a brief statement to evoke complex socio-economic realities.

The phrase "total collapse" carries strong evaluative implications that may shape public perception of national competence. This wording suggests systemic failure rather than temporary disruption, potentially reinforcing narratives about institutional weakness or crisis. Fairclough emphasizes that such lexical choices are not neutral; they contribute to the construction of social meaning by framing events in particular ways. Moreover, the absence of explanatory detail places interpretive responsibility on readers to infer causes and consequences, illustrating once again how digital news captions balance brevity with the risk of oversimplification.

Caption 8. “Trump’s handpicked Kennedy Center board approves two-year closure”

This caption illustrates how grammatical cohesion operates through possessive reference and evaluative modification to construct a narrative of institutional decision-making. The possessive form “Trump’s” functions as a referential marker that establishes ownership and authority, linking the decision-making body directly to a political figure. The adjective “handpicked” further modifies the noun phrase “Kennedy Center board,” suggesting intentional selection and personal influence. Within Halliday and Hasan’s framework, this combination of possessive reference and descriptive modification creates cohesion by clarifying the relationship between the actor and the institution responsible for the action. The verb “approves” introduces a decisive action, while the phrase “two-year closure” specifies the duration of the outcome, reinforcing the finality and scope of the decision.

Intertextually, the caption draws on broader discourse surrounding political appointments, cultural

governance, and institutional autonomy. The phrase “handpicked board” carries implicit associations with executive authority and potential political alignment, evoking ongoing discussions about leadership influence over public institutions. Readers are likely to interpret the closure not merely as an administrative decision but as part of a wider narrative about political control and organizational direction. In line with Kristeva’s perspective, the caption gains meaning through its connection to established debates about governance, accountability, and the relationship between political power and cultural institutions.

The adjective “handpicked” introduces an evaluative tone that subtly shapes readers’ perception of legitimacy. This lexical choice may suggest that the board’s decision is influenced by loyalty or political alignment rather than independent judgment. Fairclough emphasizes that such evaluative language plays a significant role in constructing institutional authority within media discourse. At the same time, the caption provides limited context regarding the reasons for the closure or the stakeholders affected, illustrating

how condensed news formats can foreground decision-making while backgrounding its social consequences. In this way, cohesion organizes the actors and actions within the sentence, while intertextual references to political influence shape how the decision is interpreted by the audience.

Caption 9. "Palestinian protester held in immigration detention for over a year is released"

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion operates through descriptive reference and temporal extension to construct a narrative of prolonged restriction followed by resolution. The noun phrase "Palestinian protester" functions as an identifying reference that situates the individual within a specific political and national context, while the participial clause "held in immigration detention for over a year" provides additional temporal information that links the duration of confinement to the eventual action of release. In Halliday and Hasan's framework, this extended clause structure creates continuity between past conditions and present

outcomes, guiding readers to interpret the release not as an isolated event but as the culmination of a lengthy process. The temporal expression "for over a year" strengthens this cohesion by emphasizing endurance and delay, implicitly suggesting the significance of time in shaping the perceived fairness of the situation.

Intertextually, the caption connects to broader public discourse surrounding immigration enforcement, protest rights, and political detention. The reference to "immigration detention" evokes institutional practices that have been widely debated in media and legal contexts, particularly regarding due process and civil liberties. In line with Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, the caption relies on readers' familiarity with ongoing discussions about immigration policy and human rights to interpret the significance of the release. The text therefore functions as part of a wider narrative about state authority and individual resistance, rather than as a purely procedural update.

The caption foregrounds the final act of release while leaving the reasons for detention largely implicit.

This selective representation reflects Fairclough's observation that media discourse often compresses complex legal and political processes into simplified outcomes. The absence of explanatory detail may create interpretive uncertainty, particularly for readers unfamiliar with the case or the legal framework governing detention. As a result, grammatical cohesion ensures a clear sequence of events, but the reliance on intertextual knowledge shifts part of the interpretive burden onto the audience, raising questions about accessibility and transparency in digital news communication.

Caption 10. "Kouri Richins convicted of murdering husband in fatal poisoning"

In this caption, grammatical cohesion is realized through the use of nominal reference and causal specification, constructing a concise representation of criminal responsibility. The proper noun "Kouri Richins" functions as a referential anchor that identifies the central participant, while the phrase "convicted of murdering husband" establishes a legal relationship between the individual and the crime. The prepositional phrase "in fatal poisoning"

further specifies the method of death, creating a cohesive chain of information that links identity, action, and consequence. Within Halliday and Hasan's model, this sequence of clauses organizes the narrative into a logical progression that allows readers to interpret the conviction as the definitive outcome of a legal process.

Intertextually, the caption draws on established conventions of crime reporting, where legal terminology such as "convicted" signals the conclusion of judicial proceedings. This lexical choice connects the text to broader institutional discourse surrounding criminal justice, evidence, and sentencing. According to Kristeva, such terminology carries accumulated meaning from previous legal narratives, enabling readers to recognize the authority of the court system without requiring detailed explanation. The caption therefore gains interpretive force from its alignment with familiar patterns of courtroom reporting.

The caption presents the conviction as a completed and uncontested fact, emphasizing legal finality while minimizing the complexity of the judicial process. This framing

reflects Fairclough's argument that institutional language often conveys authority through certainty and brevity. At the same time, the absence of contextual details — such as motive, timeline, or defense arguments — may limit readers' understanding of the broader circumstances surrounding the case. Thus, while cohesion provides clarity about responsibility, the compressed format reinforces a simplified representation of justice that prioritizes decisiveness over nuance.

Caption 11. "Africa's great divide: Why the continent's split is so exciting for science"

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion can operate through metaphorical reference and thematic framing to construct a sense of scientific significance. The possessive structure "Africa's" functions as a referential marker that identifies the geographical domain under discussion, while the phrase "great divide" introduces a metaphorical expression that links physical separation to scientific discovery. The colon serves as a cohesive device that connects the descriptive title to the explanatory clause "Why the continent's split is so

exciting for science," creating a logical progression from phenomenon to interpretation. In Halliday and Hasan's framework, this structural cohesion guides readers to interpret the geological event not merely as a physical change but as a source of scientific opportunity.

Intertextually, the caption draws on established discourse in earth science concerning tectonic movement and continental formation. The phrase "the continent's split" evokes widely recognized theories about geological evolution and the long-term transformation of landmasses. In accordance with Kristeva's perspective, the caption gains meaning through its relationship to existing scientific narratives about planetary change and natural history. Readers are expected to interpret the significance of the event by connecting it to prior knowledge of geological processes and scientific exploration.

The caption frames the phenomenon in an optimistic tone through the evaluative phrase "so exciting for science." This wording foregrounds the benefits of discovery while potentially downplaying the social

or environmental consequences that geological change may bring to local populations. Fairclough emphasizes that such evaluative language reflects the priorities of particular discourse communities, in this case the scientific community. Consequently, the caption illustrates how cohesion organizes information around a positive narrative of progress, while intertextual connections to scientific discourse shape the interpretation of natural events as opportunities for knowledge rather than sources of risk.

Caption 12. "Webb telescope photos show mysterious little red dots"

This caption illustrates how grammatical cohesion operates through nominal reference and descriptive modification to construct curiosity and uncertainty. The noun phrase "Webb telescope photos" functions as a referential unit that identifies the source of visual evidence, linking the observation to a recognized scientific instrument. The verb "show" establishes a relational connection between the images and the phenomenon being observed, while the adjective "mysterious" introduces an evaluative element that signals

incomplete understanding. In Halliday and Hasan's model, these cohesive elements work together to maintain clarity while directing attention toward the unknown nature of the discovery.

Intertextually, the caption connects to broader discourse surrounding space exploration and astronomical observation. The reference to the Webb telescope invokes previous reports about advanced imaging technology and deep-space research, situating the discovery within a continuum of scientific investigation. According to Kristeva, this intertextual linkage allows a brief caption to evoke complex scientific narratives about the origins of galaxies and the limits of human knowledge. The phrase "little red dots" further reflects a common pattern in scientific communication, where tentative observations are described before definitive conclusions are reached.

A critical discourse perspective highlights how the caption constructs a sense of wonder while maintaining scientific uncertainty. The use of the adjective "mysterious" encourages curiosity but also signals the provisional

nature of the findings, illustrating the balance between excitement and caution in science reporting. Fairclough notes that such language choices shape public perception by framing scientific discovery as both intriguing and credible. However, the lack of explanatory detail may create interpretive gaps for readers unfamiliar with astronomical terminology, again demonstrating how digital news captions rely on prior knowledge to achieve meaning efficiently.

Caption 13. "Potentially toxic 'forever chemicals' may harm adolescent bone health"

This caption relies on grammatical cohesion through descriptive modification and modal expression to construct a cautious warning about environmental risk. The noun phrase "forever chemicals" functions as a referential label that condenses a complex scientific concept into a recognizable term, while the quotation marks signal that the phrase originates from established scientific and media discourse rather than from everyday language. Within Halliday and Hasan's framework, this lexical choice creates cohesion by enabling readers

to connect the current statement to previously circulated information about persistent industrial chemicals. The modal verb "may" introduces a degree of uncertainty, positioning the claim as a potential risk rather than a confirmed outcome. This linguistic strategy reflects the conventions of health reporting, where caution is maintained to avoid overstating scientific findings.

Intertextually, the caption draws on ongoing public debates about environmental contamination and long-term health effects. The phrase "forever chemicals" evokes a broader narrative concerning industrial pollution, regulatory oversight, and public safety. Readers are expected to recognize the term from prior exposure to environmental reporting, demonstrating how meaning emerges through accumulated knowledge rather than through explicit explanation. In this sense, the caption functions as part of a continuing conversation about environmental responsibility and the protection of vulnerable populations, particularly adolescents.

The emphasis on potential harm foregrounds risk while leaving the sources of exposure largely

unspecified. The absence of contextual detail may limit readers' ability to understand how these chemicals enter everyday environments or what preventive actions might be taken. This selective presentation reflects a common tension in digital news communication, where brevity supports immediacy but may also restrict depth of understanding. Cohesion ensures clarity at the sentence level, yet the reliance on shared background knowledge underscores the role of reader interpretation in constructing the full meaning of the message.

Caption 14. "I cannot in good conscience support the ongoing war in Iran': High-ranking US intelligence official resign"

In this caption, grammatical cohesion is achieved through the integration of direct quotation and reporting structure, creating a clear relationship between personal conviction and institutional action. The quoted statement "I cannot in good conscience support" functions as a first-person reference that foregrounds moral judgment, while the reporting clause "High-ranking US intelligence official resign" links the expressed belief

to a concrete professional consequence. From a Hallidayan perspective, this structure establishes cohesion by connecting speech and action within a single narrative sequence, allowing readers to interpret resignation as a response to ethical conflict.

Intertextually, the caption engages with broader discourse surrounding military intervention, political accountability, and dissent within government institutions. The phrase "ongoing war in Iran" situates the statement within a geopolitical context that has likely been discussed across multiple media platforms. Readers are expected to interpret the significance of the resignation by drawing on prior knowledge of international tensions and policy debates. In line with Kristeva's understanding of intertextuality, the quotation serves as a point of entry into a wider conversation about the moral responsibilities of public officials during times of conflict.

The caption frames the resignation as an act of principled resistance, emphasizing the ethical dimension of decision-making within

state institutions. The use of the phrase “in good conscience” introduces a moral vocabulary that invites readers to evaluate the legitimacy of the war itself. At the same time, the brevity of the caption leaves unanswered questions about the official’s role, authority, or influence within the intelligence community. This limited context illustrates how digital news discourse can highlight symbolic actions while leaving structural complexities largely unexplored.

Caption 15. “Trump lashes out after he fails to convince European allies to help in war with Iran”

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion operates through sequential structure to represent political conflict and diplomatic tension. The conjunction “after” establishes a temporal and causal relationship between two events: the failure to persuade allies and the subsequent reaction described as “lashes out.” Within Halliday and Hasan’s model, this cohesive device guides readers to interpret the emotional response as a consequence of diplomatic frustration. The pronoun “he” functions as a personal reference

that maintains continuity of the central political figure across the sentence, ensuring coherence without repetition.

Intertextually, the caption connects to ongoing discourse about international alliances and military cooperation. The reference to “European allies” invokes established geopolitical relationships, while the phrase “war with Iran” situates the event within a broader narrative of regional conflict. Readers are expected to interpret the significance of the reaction by recalling previous negotiations, policy disagreements, or public statements. In this way, the caption draws meaning from a network of diplomatic discourse rather than from the immediate text alone.

The verb phrase “lashes out” carries strong evaluative connotations, suggesting impulsiveness or emotional intensity. This lexical choice shapes the reader’s perception of leadership behavior, potentially framing the response as reactive rather than strategic. Fairclough emphasizes that such word choices are not neutral; they contribute to the construction of political identity within media narratives. The caption therefore illustrates how

cohesion organizes events into a clear sequence while evaluative language subtly influences interpretation of political conduct.

Caption 16. "Tracking current TSA wait times at select major airports"

This caption illustrates a different pattern of grammatical cohesion, one that relies on nominalization and present participle structure to signal an ongoing informational function rather than a completed event. The word "Tracking" functions as a process indicator that frames the caption as part of a continuous monitoring activity. The noun phrase "current TSA wait times" establishes the object of observation, while the prepositional phrase "at select major airports" specifies the scope of the information. Within Halliday and Hasan's framework, these elements create cohesion by linking process, object, and location into a unified informational unit.

Intertextually, the caption connects to routine travel discourse and public service communication. The reference to airport wait times evokes familiar experiences of security screening and transportation

management, positioning the caption within a broader network of travel-related information. Readers are likely to interpret the message as a practical update intended to assist planning and decision-making. In this sense, the caption reflects the informational function of news media in everyday life, where communication serves not only to report events but also to facilitate public convenience.

The caption represents a shift from dramatic news narratives toward service-oriented communication. The focus on efficiency and real-time monitoring reflects the increasing role of digital platforms in providing immediate, actionable information. However, the lack of contextual detail about the causes of delays may limit deeper understanding of systemic issues within transportation infrastructure. This illustrates how digital news discourse can prioritize usability and speed while leaving structural explanations in the background.

Caption 17. "A unique combo of two top diets slowed brain aging by over 2 years"

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion operates through evaluative description and numerical specification to construct a persuasive health message. The phrase “A unique combo of two top diets” functions as a nominal reference that emphasizes novelty and authority, suggesting that the dietary approach stands out among alternatives. The verb “slowed” establishes a cause-and-effect relationship between the intervention and the outcome, while the numerical expression “by over 2 years” provides measurable evidence that strengthens the perceived credibility of the claim. In Halliday and Hasan’s framework, such quantification enhances cohesion by linking action to a clearly defined result.

Intertextually, the caption draws on broader discourse surrounding nutrition science, aging, and preventive health strategies. The reference to “top diets” implies prior evaluation or ranking within health research, encouraging readers to interpret the finding as scientifically validated. This reliance on established dietary narratives reflects Kristeva’s view that texts gain meaning through their connection to recognized knowledge systems. Readers are

therefore invited to situate the reported result within a larger conversation about lifestyle choices and cognitive health.

The emphasis on measurable improvement may contribute to an optimistic interpretation of dietary intervention, potentially encouraging readers to view nutrition as a straightforward solution to complex biological processes. The absence of methodological detail — such as sample size, duration, or limitations of the study — may oversimplify the relationship between diet and aging. This pattern reflects a broader tendency in health reporting to translate scientific findings into accessible, headline-friendly claims. While cohesion ensures clarity and impact, the interpretive responsibility ultimately rests with readers to assess the strength and applicability of the evidence.

Caption 18. “Trump asked Latin America to use military force against drug trafficking. Here are the risks”

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion operates through directive language and evaluative framing to structure a policy-oriented message. The verb “asked” establishes a relational link between a

political leader and a regional audience, positioning the request as an act of influence rather than command. The phrase “use military force against drug trafficking” introduces a clear action proposal, while the follow-up clause “Here are the risks” functions as a cohesive transition that signals a shift from policy description to critical evaluation. Within Halliday and Hasan’s framework, this sequential structure organizes the text into a problem–response pattern, guiding readers from proposal to consequence.

Intertextually, the caption connects to longstanding discourse surrounding transnational crime, regional security cooperation, and the militarization of anti-drug strategies. The reference to “Latin America” invokes historical narratives about international intervention and cross-border enforcement, while the phrase “drug trafficking” carries established associations with organized crime and public safety. Readers are expected to interpret the significance of the proposal by drawing on prior knowledge of regional security debates. In this sense, the caption operates within a broader geopolitical conversation about the balance

between law enforcement and sovereignty.

The phrase “Here are the risks” positions the news outlet as an evaluator rather than a neutral reporter, signaling a deliberate move toward analytical framing. This linguistic shift reflects Fairclough’s observation that media discourse often combines reporting with interpretation, shaping how policy decisions are assessed in the public sphere. At the same time, the brevity of the caption leaves open questions about the specific risks being referenced, requiring readers to seek additional information to fully understand the implications of the proposal.

Caption 19. “Former judges side with Anthropic and raise concerns about Pentagon’s use of supply chain risk label”

This caption illustrates how grammatical cohesion operates through coordinated verbs to present alignment and critique within institutional discourse. The verbs “side with” and “raise concerns” function as parallel actions that connect judicial authority to a corporate entity and a government institution. Within Halliday

and Hasan's model, this coordination creates cohesion by linking multiple participants within a single argumentative structure. The phrase "supply chain risk label" introduces a technical term that condenses a complex regulatory concept into a concise expression, enabling efficient communication of policy debate.

Intertextually, the caption draws on discourse surrounding national security, technology regulation, and government oversight of private industry. The reference to former judges suggests legal expertise, while the mention of the Pentagon signals institutional authority in matters of defense. Readers are expected to interpret the disagreement by connecting it to ongoing discussions about transparency, procurement practices, and the relationship between government agencies and emerging technology companies. The text therefore gains meaning through its placement within a network of legal and technological discourse.

A critical reading highlights how the caption frames the issue as a matter of institutional disagreement rather than conflict. The phrase "raise concerns"

conveys caution and professionalism, reinforcing the credibility of the speakers while softening the tone of criticism. This linguistic moderation reflects Fairclough's observation that institutional discourse often relies on measured language to maintain authority and legitimacy. At the same time, the technical terminology may create a barrier for readers unfamiliar with policy language, illustrating how specialized vocabulary can shape accessibility in public communication.

Caption 20. "Trump clash with UK over Iran puts King Charles' US visit at risk"

In this caption, grammatical cohesion is realized through causal linkage and possessive reference, constructing a clear relationship between diplomatic tension and potential consequence. The noun "clash" signals conflict between political actors, while the phrase "puts King Charles' US visit at risk" establishes a cause-and-effect sequence that connects international disagreement to a specific diplomatic outcome. The possessive structure "King Charles'" functions as a referential marker that identifies the individual whose travel plans are affected, ensuring continuity

of participant identity within the sentence.

Intertextually, the caption connects to broader discourse concerning international alliances and geopolitical negotiation. The reference to a dispute “over Iran” evokes ongoing debates about regional security and foreign policy coordination among allied nations. Readers are expected to interpret the potential disruption of a royal visit as a symbolic indicator of strained diplomatic relations. In accordance with Kristeva’s perspective, the caption draws meaning from its relationship to established narratives about cooperation and tension among global partners.

The phrase “at risk” introduces a sense of uncertainty that amplifies the perceived seriousness of the disagreement. This wording suggests that diplomatic relationships are fragile and subject to rapid change. Fairclough emphasizes that such expressions contribute to the dramatization of political events, shaping public perception of instability in international relations. At the same time, the caption leaves the specific causes of the clash largely unexplained, again

demonstrating how condensed news formats prioritize immediacy over detailed context.

Caption 21. “Inside JB Pritzker’s power play in Illinois’ senate primary — and what it means for a 2028 run”

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion operates through metaphorical language and forward-looking reference to construct a narrative of political strategy. The phrase “power play” functions as a metaphorical expression that frames political maneuvering in competitive terms, suggesting calculated action rather than routine participation. The conjunction “and” links present events to future implications, creating continuity between current electoral activity and the possibility of a “2028 run.” Within Halliday and Hasan’s framework, this connective structure enables readers to interpret political behavior as part of a longer trajectory rather than as an isolated incident.

Intertextually, the caption draws on established discourse surrounding electoral competition, leadership ambition, and campaign planning. The reference to a future presidential campaign situates the current event

within a broader timeline of political development, encouraging readers to view local actions as signals of national aspiration. In this way, the caption reflects the intertextual nature of political reporting, where present decisions are interpreted through the lens of anticipated outcomes.

The metaphor “power play” introduces an evaluative dimension that frames politics as a strategic contest. This framing may shape readers’ perceptions of leadership behavior by emphasizing ambition and tactical calculation. Fairclough notes that metaphor is a powerful tool in discourse because it influences how social actions are understood. Here, cohesion links present and future events, while metaphorical language constructs a narrative of political positioning and long-term planning.

Caption 22. “Israel says it killed Iranian intelligence minister in latest assassination of regime leadership”

This caption illustrates how grammatical cohesion operates through attribution and sequential reference to construct a narrative of military action. The reporting verb “says” functions as a source marker

that attributes the claim to a specific authority, establishing credibility while maintaining journalistic distance. The pronoun “it” serves as a referential device that connects the action directly to the state actor, ensuring continuity of agency within the sentence. The phrase “latest assassination” introduces a temporal reference that links the event to previous incidents, creating a sense of ongoing sequence within the broader conflict.

Intertextually, the caption draws on extensive discourse surrounding regional tensions, intelligence operations, and targeted killings. The reference to an “intelligence minister” signals high-level political significance, while the term “regime leadership” carries ideological implications about governance and legitimacy. Readers are expected to interpret the event within the context of continuing geopolitical confrontation. In line with Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality, the caption gains meaning through its connection to prior reports of similar actions.

The phrase “says it killed” reflects the cautious language of news reporting, acknowledging the source of

information without independently verifying the claim. This linguistic strategy demonstrates how media organizations manage credibility in situations involving conflict and uncertainty. Fairclough emphasizes that attribution is a key mechanism through which authority and responsibility are negotiated in discourse. Thus, cohesion organizes the sequence of events, while intertextual reference situates the action within a continuing narrative of regional conflict.

Caption 23. "7 ways to protect your money from potentially higher inflation and unemployment"

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion operates through numerical sequencing and direct address to construct a practical and reader-oriented message. The phrase "7 ways" functions as an organizing device that signals structure and predictability, guiding readers to expect a list of actionable strategies. The possessive pronoun "your" establishes a direct relationship between the text and the audience, creating a sense of personal relevance and immediacy. Within Halliday and

Hasan's framework, such referential cohesion helps position the reader as an active participant in the discourse, rather than as a passive observer of events.

Intertextually, the caption connects to broader economic discourse surrounding financial uncertainty, inflation trends, and labor market instability. The reference to "higher inflation and unemployment" evokes widely circulated discussions about economic cycles and household financial resilience. Readers are expected to interpret the advice in relation to ongoing economic conditions, demonstrating how meaning emerges through shared awareness of financial risk. In this sense, the caption reflects a common pattern in contemporary media communication, where information is framed as guidance for personal decision-making in response to structural economic change.

The emphasis on individual responsibility may subtly shift attention away from systemic causes of economic instability. By focusing on protective strategies, the caption frames financial security as a matter of

personal management rather than collective policy. Fairclough notes that such framing can reinforce the idea that individuals must adapt to economic conditions rather than question the structures that produce them. Thus, cohesion supports clarity and engagement, while the intertextual connection to economic discourse shapes how responsibility and risk are understood.

Caption 24. "Carbon dioxide levels are higher than humans have ever experienced"

This caption illustrates how grammatical cohesion operates through comparative structure to construct a sense of historical significance and urgency. The phrase "higher than humans have ever experienced" establishes a temporal comparison that links present environmental conditions to the entire span of human history. Within Halliday and Hasan's model, this comparative relation creates continuity between past and present, enabling readers to interpret the statement as evidence of unprecedented change. The use of the present tense "are" reinforces the immediacy of the situation, suggesting

that the condition is ongoing rather than hypothetical.

Intertextually, the caption draws on extensive scientific and public discourse surrounding climate change and environmental sustainability. The reference to carbon dioxide levels connects the text to widely recognized indicators of global warming and atmospheric change. Readers are likely to interpret the statement through prior exposure to environmental reporting, scientific research, and policy discussions. In accordance with Kristeva's perspective, the caption gains meaning from its relationship to these broader narratives about planetary health and ecological responsibility.

The statement's simplicity and certainty contribute to a strong sense of urgency while leaving the underlying causes and consequences largely implicit. The absence of contextual detail may limit readers' understanding of how carbon emissions are generated or what actions might mitigate the problem. This pattern reflects the communicative tension in environmental reporting between raising awareness and providing

comprehensive explanation. While cohesion ensures a clear and memorable message, the reliance on shared background knowledge again places interpretive responsibility on the audience.

Caption 25. “Frustrated Democrats walk out of tense Epstein briefing with Bondi and Blanche on Capitol Hill”

This caption demonstrates how grammatical cohesion operates through evaluative description and spatial reference to construct a narrative of political confrontation. The adjective “frustrated” functions as an emotional descriptor that frames the behavior of the political actors before the event itself is described. The verb phrase “walk out” signals a deliberate action that conveys disagreement or protest, while the prepositional phrase “on Capitol Hill” establishes the institutional setting in which the event occurs. Within Halliday and Hasan’s framework, these elements create cohesion by linking emotional state, action, and location into a coherent sequence of political behavior.

Intertextually, the caption connects to broader discourse surrounding governmental

investigations, legal accountability, and partisan conflict. The reference to an Epstein briefing evokes ongoing public discussions about criminal investigations and political responsibility. Readers are expected to interpret the significance of the walkout by drawing on prior knowledge of controversy and institutional tension. In line with Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality, the caption functions as part of a continuing narrative about transparency and oversight within government institutions.

The adjective “tense” and the description of lawmakers as “frustrated” introduce an interpretive frame that emphasizes conflict and emotional intensity. This linguistic choice shapes readers’ perception of the event as confrontational rather than procedural. Fairclough highlights that evaluative language plays a central role in constructing political meaning, as it influences how actions are interpreted by the public. The caption therefore illustrates how cohesion organizes the event into a clear narrative, while descriptive language contributes to the dramatization of political disagreement.

The analysis of twenty-five Instagram news captions shows clear and consistent patterns in how grammatical cohesion and intertextuality operate in short digital news texts. Although the captions are brief, they display a strong level of organization that allows complex information to be conveyed effectively. The findings suggest that grammatical cohesion provides the structural basis for clarity and continuity, while intertextuality expands the meaning beyond the immediate text.

A key pattern across the data is the frequent use of referential cohesion, especially through pronouns, possessive forms, and descriptive noun phrases. These features help maintain continuity of participants and events without unnecessary repetition, supporting conciseness. The consistent use of reference indicates that digital news discourse depends on economical linguistic choices to ensure readability. Conjunctions also play an important role in linking ideas and events. Temporal and causal connectors such as *after*, *as*, and *meanwhile* are commonly used to signal relationships between pieces of information. Their frequent use shows

that even short texts need clear markers to maintain logical flow.

In contrast, substitution and ellipsis appear less frequently in the dataset. While they are present, they are not as dominant as reference and conjunction. This pattern reflects the priorities of news discourse, where clarity and directness are essential. Writers tend to avoid structures that might create ambiguity, particularly when accurate understanding is important. Beyond internal structure, intertextuality is central to how meaning is constructed. Many captions refer to previous events, institutional actions, or widely known social issues. These references allow short texts to connect with larger narratives without detailed explanation. However, this also assumes that readers already have some background knowledge, shifting part of the interpretive work to the audience.

The relationship between grammatical cohesion and intertextuality reflects the nature of digital journalism. Social media platforms promote fast communication, requiring texts to be both concise and meaningful. In this setting, cohesion

ensures internal clarity, while intertextuality provides broader context. Together, they enable short captions to function as entry points to wider news discussions. Cohesion organizes the text and supports comprehension, while intertextuality connects it to ongoing social and institutional contexts. This interaction highlights how meaning in digital news emerges through both precise language use and shared contextual understanding.

D. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the use of grammatical cohesion in Instagram news captions and to explore how these cohesive devices contribute to the construction of intertextual meaning in digital news discourse. Through a qualitative discourse analysis of twenty-five captions posted on the CNN Instagram account, the research demonstrates that short digital texts rely on systematic linguistic strategies to maintain clarity while simultaneously connecting to broader social narratives.

The analysis also reveals that intertextuality plays a crucial role in shaping the interpretation of Instagram news captions. Many texts derive

meaning from their connection to previously reported events, institutional authority, and widely recognized public issues. Rather than presenting complete explanations, captions often rely on readers' familiarity with ongoing discourse. This pattern reflects the communicative dynamics of digital media environments, where information circulates rapidly across platforms and audiences encounter interconnected fragments of news content.

Cohesive devices provide the structural framework that ensures internal clarity, while intertextual references extend the meaning of the text by linking it to broader discursive contexts. This interaction enables short captions to function as efficient yet meaningful forms of journalistic communication in contemporary social media environments. In theoretical terms, the study contributes to discourse analysis by demonstrating how traditional linguistic concepts such as cohesion remain relevant in emerging digital communication contexts. From a practical perspective, the findings offer insights into how news organizations adapt language to meet the demands of speed, brevity, and

accessibility in social media communication.

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