

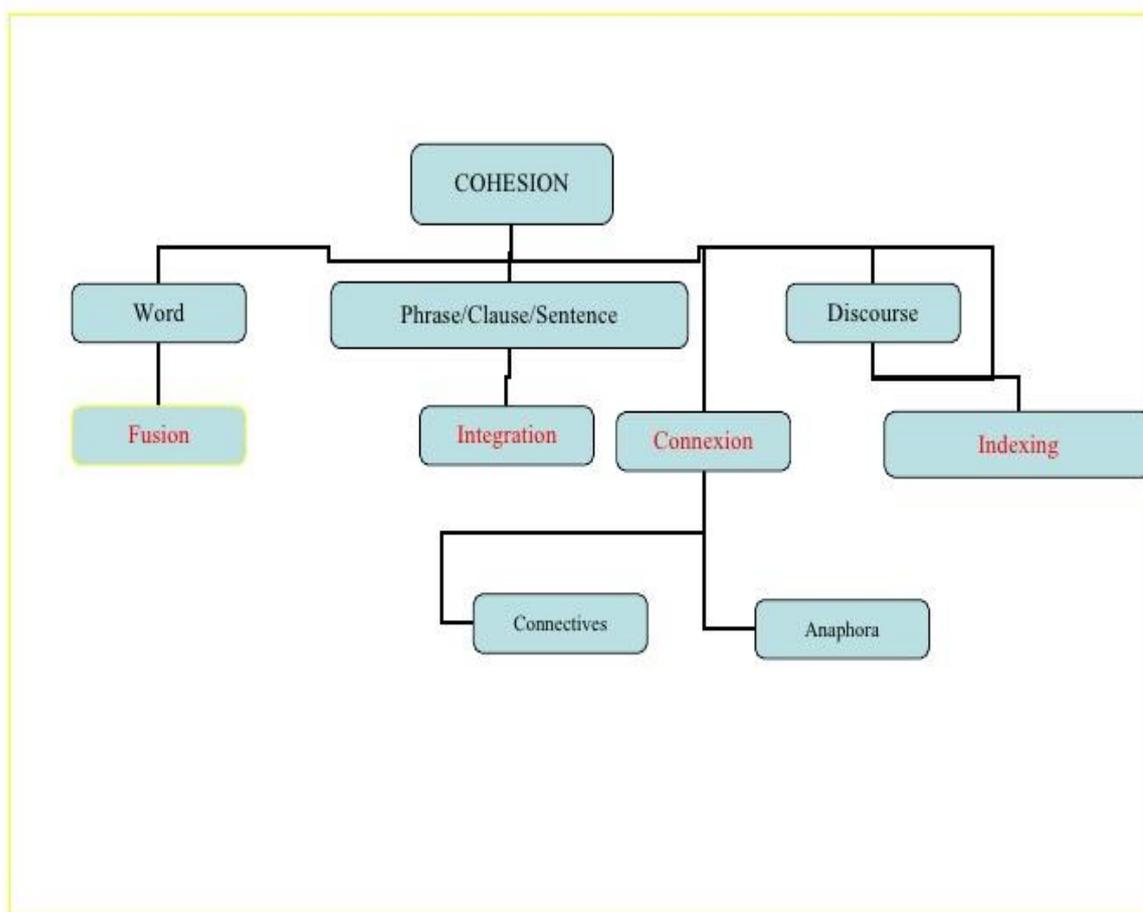


English



29

Analysis and Articulation of Discourse. Cohesion and Coherence.
Anaphora and Cataphora. Connectives. Deixis



UNIT 29

ANALYSIS AND ARTICULATION OF DISCOURSE. COHESION AND COHERENCE. ANAPHORA AND CATAPHORA, CONNECTIVES. DEIXIS

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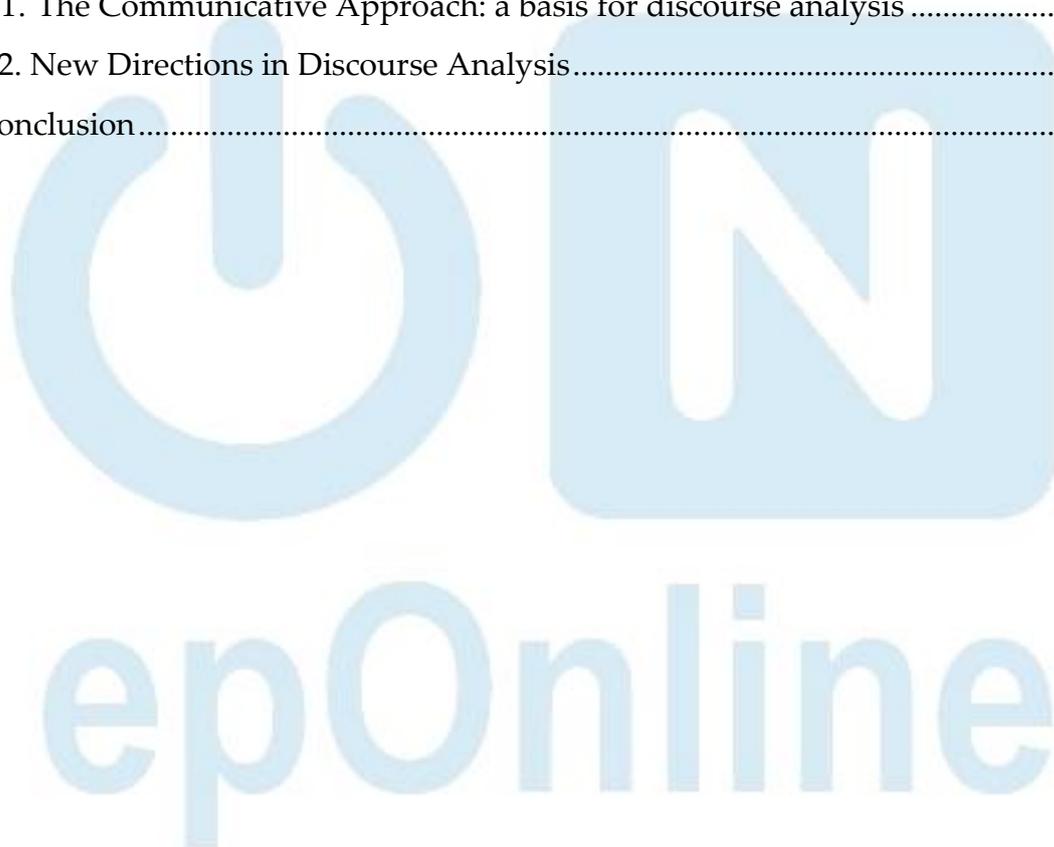
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Web page

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1. Introduction

Since its introduction to modern science the term 'discourse' has taken various, sometimes very broad meanings. In order to specify which of the numerous senses is analyzed in the following dissertation it has to be defined. Originally the word 'discourse' comes from Latin '*discursus*' which denoted 'conversation, speech'. Thus understood, however, discourse refers to too wide an area of human life, therefore only discourse from the vantage point of linguistics, and especially applied linguistics, is explained here.

There is no agreement among linguists as to the use of the term discourse in that some use it in reference to texts, while others claim it denotes speech which is for instance illustrated by the following definition: "Discourse: a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke, or narrative" (Crystal 1992:25). On the other hand Dakowska, being aware of differences between kinds of discourses indicates the unity of communicative intentions as a vital element of each of them. Consequently she suggests using terms 'text' and 'discourse' almost interchangeably betokening the former refers to the linguistic product, while the latter implies the entire dynamics of the processes (Dakowska 2001). According to Cook (1990) novels, as well as short conversations or groans might be equally rightfully named discourses.

Seven criteria which have to be fulfilled to qualify either a written or a spoken text as a discourse have been suggested by Beaugrande (1981). These include:

- **Cohesion** - grammatical relationship between parts of a sentence essential for its interpretation;
- **Coherence** - the order of statements relates one another by sense.
- **Intentionality** - the message has to be conveyed deliberately and consciously;
- **Acceptability** - indicates that the communicative product needs to be satisfactory in that the audience approves it;
- **Informativeness** - some new information has to be included in the discourse;

- **Situationality** - circumstances in which the remark is made are important;
- **Intertextuality** - reference to the world outside the text or the interpreters' schemata.

Discourse markers are verbal and nonverbal devices that mark transition points in communication. They presumably facilitate the construction of a mental representation of the events described by the discourse. A taxonomy of these relational markers is one important beginning in investigations of language use. Although several taxonomies of coherence relations have been proposed for monolog, only a few have been proposed for dialog. This article argues that discourse markers are important in language use because they operate at different levels of the dialog. What these levels are and how markers function is discussed by amalgamating 2 leading theories of language use. Based on this theory, a taxonomy of between-turn coherence relations in dialog is presented and several issues that arise out of constructing such a taxonomy are discussed. By sampling a large number of discourse markers from a corpus and substituting each marker for all other markers, this extensive substitution test could determine whether hyponymous, hypernymous, and synonymous relations existed between the markers from this corpus of dialogs. Evidence is presented for clustering this set of discourse markers into four categories: direction, polarity, acknowledgment, and emphatics.

Traditionally, much language study and a good deal of language teaching have always been devoted to sentences. However, we all know that there is more to using language and communicating successfully with other people, than being able to produce correct sentences. Having what Hymes calls Communicative Competence involves much more, and cannot be restricted to pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in language in use, in communication. Different disciplines, not only linguistics but also social psychology, anthropology and specially sociology have developed research concerned with language use. Within linguistics, Discourse Analysis goes far beyond the sentence level and examines how stretches of language, both spoken and written, become meaningful and unified for their users.

1.1. Aims of the Unit

The main aim of *Unit 29* is to examine *discourse analysis and its articulation* by means of such devices as *anaphora and cataphora, connectors and deixis*. Our aim is to offer a broad account in descriptive terms of the notion of discourse and discourse analysis and its

importance in society, and especially, in the language teaching community, from its origins to present-day studies. This presentation will start off by offering the most relevant bibliography in this field as a reference for the reader, and by presenting our study in six chapters.

Section 2 will offer an account of the analysis and articulation of oral and written discourse; it is relevant to introduce first a theoretical framework which shall develop our understanding of central concepts related to their linguistic nature. So we shall review (1) the definition of the term 'discourse', (2) related notions such as (a) the notion of text linguistics, (b) sentence vs. utterance, (c) a definition of speech act and (d) the notion of communicative context in order to frame (3) the definition of 'discourse analysis' and its main features, such as (a) the seven standards of textuality, (b) the role of syntax, semantics and pragmatics, (c) general considerations in oral and written discourse and finally, (d) the main elements in the analysis and articulation of discourse.

Section 3 will offer then an insightful analysis and description of the elements in the analysis and articulation of discourse, that is, cohesion and coherence respectively. *Section 4* will give an account of the most important elements to achieve a cohesive and coherent text: Connectives. *Section 5* will deal with Deixis and its different types. *Section 6* will be devoted to present the main educational implications in language teaching regarding discourse analysis. So, we shall examine the model for a Communicative Approach which is considered to be a basis for discourse analysis and new directions in this respect. *Section 7* will offer a conclusion to broadly overview our present study, and *Section 8* will include all the bibliographical references used to develop this account of discourse analysis.

1.2. Notes on Bibliography

An influential introduction to the analysis of discourse is based on relevant works of Cook, *Discourse* (1989); van Dijk, *Text and Context* (1984); Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (1983) and notes on the articulation of discourse regarding cohesion and coherence are namely taken from Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics* (1988) and, still indispensable, Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (1976). Classic works on the influence of semantics, pragmatics and sociolinguistic on discourse analysis, include van Dijk, *Studies in the Pragmatics of Discourse* (1981); Hymes, *Communicative Competence* (1972) and *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (1974); Halliday, *Explorations in the Functions of Language* (1975) and *Spoken and Written Language* (1985); and Searle, *Speech Act* (1969).

The background for educational implications is based on the theory of communicative competence and communicative approaches to language teaching are provided by Canale, *From Communicative Competence to Communicative Language Pedagogy* (1983); Canale and Swain, *Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing* (1980); Hymes, *On communicative competence* (1972). In addition, the most complete record of current publications within the educational framework is provided by the guidelines in B.O.E. (2002); the Council of Europe, *Modern Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. A Common European Framework of reference* (1998); Hedge Tricia, *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom* (2000); and Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, *Discourse and context in language teaching* (2000). New directions on language teaching is provided by the annual supplement of AESLA 2001 (Asociación Española de Lingüística Aplicada)

2. The analysis of discourse

In order to offer an account of the analysis and articulation of oral and written discourse, it is relevant to introduce first a theoretical framework which shall develop our understanding of central concepts related to their linguistic nature. So we shall review (1) the definition of the term 'discourse', (2) related notions such as (a) the notion of text linguistics, (b) sentence vs. utterance, (c) a definition of speech act and (d) the notion of communicative context in order to frame (3) the definition of 'discourse analysis' and its main features, such as (a) the seven standards of textuality, (b) the role of syntax, semantics and pragmatics, (c) general considerations in oral and written discourse and finally, (d) the main elements in the analysis and articulation of discourse.

2.1. On defining the term *discourse*

The term 'discourse' comes into force when we deal with the highest grammatical level of analysis in the rank scale, that is, paragraphs and texts, which are considered to be 'larger stretches of language higher than the sentence' (Aarts, 1988). At this level, language does not occur in solitary *words* or *sentences* (simple, complex and compound) in grammatical terms, but in sequences of sentences, that is, *utterances* in terms of meaning and use in connected discourse. Then we shall deal with sequences of utterances which interchange in order to establish relations of social interaction either in spoken or written language in communicative events (utterance pairs and responses in letters, greetings and telephone conversations).

'Discourse' then represents 'the complex picture of the relations between language and action in communicative contexts' which account for the functions of utterances with underlying textual structures' (van Dijk, 1981). The origins of the term are to be found within the fields of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, which had a rapid growth in the 1970s: the former confronting with data and problems of actual language use, the latter introducing the notions of speech acts, felicity conditions and context. This means that semantic coherence of sentence sequences should be complemented with coherence at the pragmatic level of speech act sequences.

Hence it must be borne in mind that a pragmatic theory cannot be limited to an account of single speech acts, expressed by single sentences, but also must explain the structure of speech act sequences and general speech acts, realized by sequences of sentences of discourse and conversation. Yet, following van Dijk (1981), 'a speech act is accomplished by an utterance in some context, and such an utterance does not necessarily consist of one single sentence. In other words, a pragmatically text grammar should specify the conditions under which whole discourses, when uttered in some context, could be said to be appropriate with respect to that context'.

2.2. Related notions

Up to here, we have encountered some notions which need to be examined in order to fully understand our current analysis on the pragmatics of discourse, thus (1) 'text linguistics', (2) 'sentence vs. utterance', (3) 'speech acts' and (4) 'communicative context'.

2.2.1. The notion of text linguistics

The notion of text linguistics designates 'any work in language science devoted to the text as the primary object of inquiry' (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1988). In fact, many fields have approached the study of texts: linguistics (from grammar, morphology and phonology), anthropology (different speech acts in different cultures), psychology (speaker and hearer behaviour), stylistics (correctness, clarity, elegance, appropriateness, style), literary studies (text types) and so on, but the most important fields are sociology (which explores conversational studies and gives way to discourse analysis), semantics (coherence, cohesion, connectors) and pragmatics (speech acts, contexts) which shape the text into a pragmatic coherent structure (van Dijk, 1984).

Yet, the oldest form of preoccupation with texts and the first foundation for the analysis of texts and its articulation is drawn from the notion of text linguistics which has its

historical roots in *rhetoric*, dating from Ancient Greece and Rome through the Middle Ages up to the present under the name of text linguistics or discourse. Traditional rhetoricians were influenced by their major task of training public orators on the discovery of ideas (invention), the arrangement of ideas (disposition), the discovery of appropriate expressions for ideas (elocution), and memorization prior to delivery on the actual occasion of speaking.

In the Middle Ages, rhetoric was based on grammar (on the study of formal language patterns in Greek and Latin) and logic (on the construction of arguments and proofs). Rhetoric still shares several concerns with the kind of text linguistics we know today, for instance, the use of texts as vehicles of purposeful interaction (oral and written), the variety of texts which express a given configuration of ideas, the arranging of ideas and its disposition within the discourse and the judgement of texts which still depends on the effects upon the audience.

2.2.2. Sentence vs. utterance

As stated above, language does not occur in solitary words or sentences but builds texts in sequences of sentences. This means that a *sentence* is defined in grammatical terms, that is, it is considered to be the highest unit in the rank scale (either simple, complex or compound), and also to be indeterminate since it is often difficult to decide where one sentence begins and another start (particularly in spoken language). Yet, an *utterance* is defined in terms of meaning and use in connected discourse, that is, in terms of its communicative function. We can say an utterance is a stretch of language (oral or written) which may vary in extension from a single word to a whole book.

2.2.3. Speech acts

The speech act theory holds that the investigation of structure always presupposes something about *meanings, language use and extralinguistic functions*. One of the speech acts basic characteristics is undoubtedly the establishment of a special kind of social interaction between 'speaker' and 'hearer' where the former tries to change the mind of the actions of the hearer by producing an utterance, oral or written. We may classify the intention of the speaker (statements, questions, commands and exclamations) according to the kind of sentences he states (declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamative respectively).

Similarly, we can relate the type of intention to the utterance type, that is, the speech act used depending on its purpose and language function. According to Searle

(1969) speech acts (and therefore purposes) are divided into *assertives* (to tell people how things are by stating); *directives* (to try to get people to do things by means of commanding and requesting); *expressives* (to express our feelings and attitudes by thinking, forgiving, or blaming); *declaratives* (to bring about changes through our utterances by means of bringing about correspondence between the propositional content and reality, through baptizing, naming, appointing or sacking); and finally, *commissives* (to commit ourselves to some future actions by promising and offering).

2.2.4. Communicative context

This sequence of utterances usually takes place in a communicative context. The term *context* is defined as 'the state of affairs of a communicative situation in which communicative events take place' (van Dijk, 1981). A context must have a linguistically relevant set of characteristics for the formulation, conditions and rules for the adequate use of utterances, for instance, it must be 'appropriate' and 'satisfactory' for the given utterance.

The notion of context is rather static when it is merely used to refer to a state of affairs. Hence, we may introduce the term 'communicative' so that an event may be successful if a given context changes into a specific new context (i.e. speaking face to face vs. speaking on the phone). Generally speaking, we may say that conditions for morphological, syntactic and semantic well-formed utterances may change from oral contexts to written ones. Thus, utterances which are formally appropriate with respect to their contexts, may not be actually 'acceptable' in concrete communicative situations, and conversely.

2.3. On defining discourse analysis

The term 'discourse analysis' is also called 'the study of conversation'. As stated above, the integration of sociology is of vital importance to a science of texts since it 'has developed an interest in the analysis of conversation as a mode of social organization and interaction' (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1988). Many studies have been conducted on how people take turns in speaking and on the mechanisms, which combine texts as single contributions into discourses as 'sets of mutually relevant texts directed to each other'.

In the present section we shall review the main features in the analysis of discourse analysis: (1) the seven standards of textuality, (2) the role of syntax, semantics and

pragmatics, (3) general considerations in oral and written discourse and finally, (4) the main elements in the analysis and articulation of discourse.

2.3.1. The seven standards of textuality

Discourse analysis reveals then major factors about the standards of textuality (either oral or written) by exploring first, two semantic standards: '*cohesion*' (how the components of a surface text are mutually connected within a sequence) and '*coherence*' (how the concepts and relations which underlie the surface text are mutually accessible and relevant); secondly, pragmatic standards such as the attitudes of producers by means of such devices as '*intentionality*' (the goal-directed use of conversation) and receivers by means of '*acceptability*' (immediate feedback), and also '*informativity*' (the selection of contributions to conversation).

The communicative setting is described in terms of '*situationality*' (particularly direct communicative context; intonation contours) and '*intertextuality*' (text types in operation, that is, how to frame your text in regard to other people's texts in the same discourse). Moreover, the regulative principles of efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness can immediately regulate any disregard for the demands in the text.

2.3.2. The role of syntax, semantics and pragmatics

For many years, syntax and semantics were studied with little regard for the ways people used grammar and meaning in communication and the use of language was relegated to the field of pragmatics. Nowadays, the questions of use (pragmatics) are freely treated in syntax and semantics and the notions of '*cohesion*' and '*coherence*', usually related to semantics, can be also helpful when studying a text only if they deal with how connections and relations are actually set up among communicative contexts.

Then in a text pragmatics explores the attitudes of producers by means of such devices as '*intentionality*' (the goal-directed use of conversation) and receivers by means of '*acceptability*' (immediate feedback), and '*informativity*' (the selection of contributions to conversation). In addition, the communicative setting is described in terms of '*situationality*' (particularly direct communicative context; intonation contours) and '*intertextuality*' (text types in operation, that is, how to frame your text in regard to other people's texts in the same discourse).

On the other hand, semantics explores the relationship between syntactic structures (and therefore grammatical categories building phrases, sentences and clauses) and the

logical relationship between them in a text by means of coherence and cohesion, having as a result the whole text under the shape of a pragmatic coherent discourse.

2.3.3. Oral vs. written discourse

According to Rivers (1981), writing a language comprehensibly is much more difficult than speaking it. When we write, she says, we are like *communicating into space* if we do not know the recipient of our piece of writing, whereas when we communicate a message orally, we know who is receiving the message. We are dealing here once again with a traditional division of language into the two major categories of speech and writing.

We observe that both categories, speaking and writing, share similar features as well as differ in others regarding the nature of each category. Following Byrne (1979), we can establish similar resources for both speaking and writing at a linguistic level, thus on its grammar and lexis, but *not to the extent to which some resources apply directly to the nature of the two channels*. Thus, as speech is the language of immediate communication, most linking devices will also occur in the spoken language although less frequently than in writing where they are *essential for the construction of a coherent text*.

Therefore, we shall namely focus on the construction of longer texts and their *coherence, cohesion* and *effectiveness*. When examining writing (as the way of making contact at a distance), we cannot forget graphological devices which compensate for the absence of oral feedback and paralinguistic devices that exist in oral communication. Then, we shall concentrate on *cohesion* and *coherence* as they establish intrasentential and intersentential links in written and oral discourse.

There are also at least three more regulative principles that control textual communication: the *efficiency* of a text is contingent upon its being useful to the participants with a minimum of effort; its *effectiveness* depends upon whether it makes a strong impression and has a good potential for fulfilling an aim; and its *appropriateness* depends upon whether its own setting agrees with the seven standards of textuality (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1988).

2.3.4. The analysis and articulation of discourse

The analysis and articulation of discourse was virtually limited to relations within the sentence up to the third quarter of this century. It was thought that relations beyond the sentence involved a complex interplay of linguistics with other concerns such as rhetoric, aesthetics, and pragmatics. However, literary critics and social anthropologists

began to shed light on this issue from the constructs evolved by de Saussure, the Prague School, and other linguists whose work extended and embraced stylistics and other aspects of textual studies.

In the following sections then we shall approach the analysis and articulation of discourse from the disciplines of syntax, pragmatics and namely semantics, together with a grammatical approach when necessary on morphological and phonological features. Hence in this chapter we shall only analyze two of the seven standards of textuality: cohesion and coherence. We shall start by offering an analysis of cohesion where we shall include the concepts of anaphora, cataphora, let us deal with them in the next section.

3. Cohesion and coherence

The terms 'cohesion' and 'coherence' have become very popular as interest has extended in linguistics generally from what happens within utterances or sentences to what happens between or beyond them.

3.1. Cohesion

The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text.

Cohesion occurs where the INTERPRETATION of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one PRESUPPOSES the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When it happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text.

Cohesion is part of the system of a language. The potential for cohesion lies in the systematic resources of reference, ellipsis and so on, that are built into the language itself. The actualization of cohesion in any given instance, however, depends not merely on the selection of some option from within these resources, but also on the presence of some other element which resolves the presupposition that this sets up. It is obvious that the selection of the word *apples* has no cohesive force by itself; a cohesive relation is set up only if the same word or a word related to it such as *fruit*, has occurred previously. It is less obvious, but equally true, that the word *them* has no cohesive force either unless there

is some explicit reference for it within reach. In both instances, the cohesion lies in the relation that it is set up between the two.

We have seen how to account for discourse we need to look at features outside the language: at the situation, the people involved, what they know, what they are doing... These facts enable us to construct stretches of language as discourse; as having a meaning and a unity for us. Now although it is true that we need to consider contextual factors to explain what it is that creates a feeling of unity in stretches of language, we cannot say that there are no formal links between sentences in discourse. Cohesion accounts for these formal links: it is the set of linguistic resources that every language has for linking one part of a text to another. Formal links between sentences and between clauses are known as cohesive devices. According to Halliday and Hasan, there are four devices through which cohesion is achieved in English, namely, reference, ellipsis (including substitution), conjunction and lexical organization. Let us deal with them in some more detail.

3.1.1. Reference

Referring expressions are words whose meaning can only be discovered by referring to other words in the text (that is, endophoric reference) or to elements in the context which are clear to both sender and receiver (exophoric reference: reference out of the text to an item in the world, example; look at 'that')

According to Halliday and Hasan, the following reference devices can be considered:

- Personal pronouns:

Mark works as a doctor. He really enjoys his job.

- Demonstratives:

This is the reason why I decided to leave my country: I was made redundant.

- Comparatives:

A: I'm fed up with this job.

B: The same happens to me.

In an extended piece of discourse, a common procedure, known as ANAPHORA, is for the identity of someone or something to be given once at the beginning, and thereafter referred to as 'she' or 'it', 'there', etc. This makes a kind of chain, running through the discourse, in which each expression is linked to another:

a pineapple.....it.....it.....it.....

Sometimes the chain has to be followed in the opposite direction. We are given the pronoun first, and then kept in suspense as to its identity, which is revealed later. This is known as **CATAPHORA**, and it is a favourite opening device of authors who begin stories and novels with an unidentified 'he' or 'she':

'Nobody seemed to know where they came from, but there they were in the Forest: Kanga and Roo.' (A. A. Milne: Winnie - the - Pooh)

Referring expressions fulfil a dual purpose of unifying the text and of economy, because they save us from having to repeat the identity of what we are talking about again and again. Foreign language teachers, assuming that comprehension difficulties arise from new vocabulary, can overlook the difficulties students can have in interpreting the meaning of referring expressions within discourse.

3.1.2. Substitution

Another kind of formal link between sentences is the substitution of words like do or so for a group of words which have appeared in an earlier sentence:

Q: Do you like pineapples?

A₁: Yes, I do

A₂: Yes, I think so.

Unfortunately, much traditional language teaching, in its real for practising verb tenses and using new vocabulary, has concentrated exclusively on longer forms ('Answer with a full sentence, please!') and deprived students of briefer, more authentic options.

3.1.3. Ellipsis

Sometimes we do not even need to provide a substitute for a word or phrase which has already been said. We can simply omit it, and know that the missing part can be reconstructed quite successfully. Instead of answering 'Would you like a glass of beer?' with 'Yes, I would like a glass of beer' we can just say 'Yes, I would?'. Or if someone says 'What are you doing?' We can just say 'Eating a mango' because we know that 'I am' is understood and does not have to be said. Omitting part of sentences on the assumption that an earlier sentence or the context will make the meaning clear is known as ellipsis.

3.1.4. Conjunction

Another type of formal relation between sentences -and perhaps the most apparent- is provided by those words and phrases which explicitly draw attention to the type of relationship which exists between one sentence or clause and another. These are conjunctions.

According to Halliday & Hasan the most general categories are those of:

- Opposition (or, on the other hand, however, conversely) and clarification (for instance, thus, in other words).
- Addition (and, furthermore, moreover) and variation (anyway, well, to sum up, by the way).
- Temporal (formerly, then, firstly, next...) or causal-conditional (so, consequently, because, as a result...).

Conjunctions supply the logical connection between parts of the text. Language learners need to know both how and when to use them. Their presence or absence in discourse often contributes to style, and some conjunctions can sound very pompous when used inappropriately.

3.1.5. Repetition and lexical chains

Repetition of words can create the same sort of chain as pronouns or demonstratives, and there are sometimes good reasons for preferring it. In Britain, mother tongue learners of English are discouraged from using repetition on the grounds that it is 'bad style', and encouraged to use a device known as 'elegant repetition', where synonyms or more general words are used. So instead of writing:

The pineapple.....the pineapple.....the pineapple

they might write:

the pineapple.....the tropical fruit.....our meal.

The kind of link that we choose will depend on the kind of discourse we are seeking to create, and elegant repetition is not always desirable. It may sound pretentious in casual conversation, or create dangerous ambiguity in a legal document. As teachers, we need to sensitize students to the choice between referring expressions, repetition and elegant repetition, depending on the type of discourse.

Lexical chains need not necessarily consist of words which mean the same. They may also be created by words which associate with each other; this association may be by some formal semantic connection (good, for example, associates with its opposite 'bad'; 'animal' with any example of an animal like 'horse'; 'violin' with 'orchestra' of which it is a part), or it may be because words are left to belong to some more vaguely defined lexical group (rock star, world tour, millionaire, yacht).

To finish with this section, we will explain that cohesion has often been neglected in language teaching, where sentences have been created and manipulated in isolation. It has been assumed that student difficulties arise primarily from lack of vocabulary or the complexity of grammatical structure at sentence level, whereas difficulties can as easily arise from problems with cohesion: finding the referent for a pronoun, for example, or recovering a phrase or clause lost through ellipsis.

The results of this neglect are familiar to teachers and learners at all levels, for they affect both production and processing. In production they can result in the creation of a stretch of language in which every sentence, in isolation, is correct, yet the overall effect is one of incoherence or inappropriateness. In processing they manifest themselves in a sensation known to all language learners: that of understanding every word in each individual sentence, but still not understanding the whole. The current revival of interest in cohesion dates only from the mid 70s and, in particular, from the publication of Halliday & Hasan's *Cohesion in English* in 1976.

3.2. Coherence

The principle of coherence is derived from the Latin *cohaerere* which means 'to stick together'. Coherence is the linking of thought to thought in such a way that the meaning can be easily followed from sentence to sentence. Without this connection or continuity, the reader's mind would be jarred and confusion would result. If you are to guide your reader's thoughts so that he can follow our ideas easily, your sentences and paragraphs must hold together so that there is no break in the development of your thought. This quality of coherence can be achieved in part by careful attention to certain points of grammar.

More important in the achievement of coherence than the mechanical linking of thought is the logical progression of thought. A paragraph should be so constructed that its sentences follow each other in a natural order with each sentence definitely linked to the previous one.

Sentences may be confusing because of their incorrect or indefinite reference of pronouns, misplacement of certain word, phrase, or clause. Their incoherence does more than just jar the reader's mind; it also suggests a ridiculous meaning that the addresser/writer never intended. Clearness requires that the words, phrases, and clauses which express ideas that are closely related, should be near one another in the sentence.

For any text or discourse to be coherent, it must make sense, have a unity and be well-formed. Coherence has been seen as one of the prime conditions or characteristics of a text: without coherence, a text is not properly a text. Written texts most obviously illustrate coherence, but even conversation has coherence in the sense that each utterance is expected to be relevant and communication clear. By what Grice calls the 'co-operative principle', speakers work tacitly together to achieve a norm of coherent and effective exchanges; and by what he calls the 'maxims of relation' and of 'manner' hearers expect relevance and clarity. Even when at first hearing there is no obvious relevance it is inferred, and because everyone does this, exchanges are made economical. So if speaker A says 'Can you come to the theatre on Monday?' and speaker B says 'there's a match on T.V.', speaker A will see this as a negative response. What is implied, by speaker B is something like 'No, I can't come to the theatre because...'

Even in the interpretation of a written text, inferencing is essential for the reader to make sense of it. The tendency has been to think of coherence as the duty of the author, so facts, cultural knowledge, etc., must be presupposed to avoid tediousness. Yet coherence is equally, almost unconsciously, the duty of the reader; it's part of the whole process of reading. As a result of the reader's mental engagement with a text, supplying frames of reference, etc., reading is an extremely rewarding experience, and the more rewarding the greater the cognitive effort demanded.

So important is the notion of coherence to text structure that if any two sentences are read in a sequence, a semantic or logical connection between them will be assumed. So, the sentences 'Fred died last week. The neighbours attended the funeral' seem to be related temporally, and such chronological sequences are characteristic of narrative. Here there are no obvious explicit markers of cohesion, but with other semantic relations, coherence without connectives is harder to process, for ex: 'Nottingham is a city which has undergone a great deal of development. It has retained some of the charm that once earned for it the title of queen of the Midlands'. connectives like 'yet' and 'however' would make the argument clearer.

In sum, a text can be coherent without cohesion. A text that is cohesive without coherence, however, is hardly a text:

A man walked into a bar. Bars sell good beer. It's brewed mostly in Germany. Germany went to war with Britain...

4. Connectives

To achieve coherence, a writer must arrange his ideas in an orderly fashion and bind them together by means of connective words, phrases, clauses, or sentences, so that the reader can follow the writer's ideas without difficulty, as it happens when: INDICATING ORDER

first, next, finally

INDICATING TIME

now, at the same time, meanwhile, then, later

INDICATING POSITION IN SPACE

to the right, on the left, in the distance

ADDING IDEAS

moreover, in addition, and, also, furthermore, similarly, besides

ILLUSTRATING IDEAS

for instance, for example

FOR CONTRASTING IDEAS

but, on the other hand, nevertheless, still, however, yet, otherwise

SHOWING RESULT

consequently, therefore

The function of connectives is to express various kinds of relations between utterances, that is why the connectives listed above are sets of expressions in relation with different grammatical categories:

Conjunctions. They join sentences by means of subordination and co-ordination. and, or, because, for, so...

Disjunctions. to van Dijk the logical truth condition of disjunction is that at least one disjunct must be true. In natural language 'or' is generally exclusive in the sense that at least and at most one disjunct must be true. This means that when saying the proposal the speaker intention is to do one or the other but never both of them.

Conditionals. Facts can determine or condition each other. For instance:

The weather was terrible, therefore we stayed at home.

because, for, therefore, so, since, due to, hence, thus, etc.

Contrastives. Unexpected and contrastive relations between facts are expressed by: but, though, yet, nevertheless, in spite of, and similar connectives.

5. Deixis

It is a term used in linguistics to denote those aspects of an utterance that refer to and depend upon the situation in which the utterance is made. *Deictic* words indicate the situational 'co-ordinates' of person (*I/ you, us/ them*), place (*here/ there, this/ that*), and time (*now/ then, yesterday/ today*).

The term 'deixis', from the Greek¹ word for pointing, refers to a particular way in which the interpretation of certain linguistic expressions ('deictics' or 'indexicals') is dependent on the context in which they are produced or interpreted. For example, I refers to the person currently indicated finger, and so on; these deictic expressions introduce a fundamental relativity of interpretation: uttering 'I am here now' will express quite different propositions on each occasion of use. As people take turns talking, the referents of I, you, here, there, this, that, etc. systematically switch too (children find this quite hard to learn).

5.1. Types

Person deixis

The traditional grammatical category of person involves the most basic deictic notions. First person, for example, encodes the participation of the speaker, and temporal and spatial deixis are organized primarily around the location of the speaker at the time of speaking. The traditional paradigm of first, second, and third persons is captured by the two semantic features of speaker inclusion (S) and addressee inclusion (A): first person

¹ In pragmatics and linguistics, **deixis** (Greek: δειξις display, demonstration, or reference, the meaning "point of reference" in contemporary linguistics having been taken over from Chrysippus, Stoica 2,65) is a process whereby words or expressions rely absolutely on context.

(+S), second person (+A), and third person (-S, -A). The traditional notion of 'plural' can be analyzed with 'plus one or more additional individuals'.

Person systems often encode other features, such as gender (masculine - he, feminine - she, neuter - it) and honorific distinctions (example: 'usted' in Spanish).

Time deixis

The deictic centre is normally taken to be the speaker's location at the time of the utterance. Therefore, now means some span of time including the moment of utterance, and one reckons ten years ago by counting backwards from the year including the speaking time.

'Tense' is another aspect of temporal deixis, an obligatory deictic category for nearly all sentences in English. For example, the English present tense may be regarded as specifying that the state of events holds or is occurring during a temporal span including utterance - time.

Space deixis

Deictic adverbs like here and there are perhaps the most direct examples of spatial deixis. As a first approximation, 'here' a more remote region from the speaker. The demonstrative pronouns this and that contrast in the same way - Spanish makes a 3 - way distinction (éste, ése, aquél).

Discourse deixis

In a spoken or written discourse, there is frequently occasion to refer to earlier or forthcoming segments of the discourse (as in 'in the previous/next paragraph', or 'Have you heard this joke?'). Since a discourse unfolds in time, it is natural to use temporal deictic terms (like 'next'), but spatial terms are also often employed, as in 'in this chapter'.

6. Educational implications in language teaching

6.1. The Communicative Approach: a basis for discourse analysis

Regarding the educational implications of discourse analysis in language teaching, we must trace back to the origins of the assessment model of communicative competence as a basis for the analysis and articulation of discourse. This communicative approach emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as the work of anthropologists, sociologists, and sociolinguists on foreign and second language teaching. In the 1980s, prominence was given to more

interactive views of language teaching, which became to be known as *the Communicative Approach* or simply *Communicative Language Teaching*. The key was to consider language as social behaviour, seeing the primary goal of language teaching as the development of the learner's communicative competence.

Hence, learners were considered to need both rules of use to produce language appropriate to particular situations, and strategies for effective communication. Scholars such as Hymes (1972), Halliday (1970), Canale and Swain (1980) or Chomsky (1957) levelled their contributions and criticisms at structural linguistic theories claiming for more communicative approaches on language teaching, where interactive processes of communication received priority. Upon this basis, the introduction of cultural studies is an important aspect of communicative competence as communicating with people from other cultures involves not only linguistic appropriateness but also pragmatic appropriateness in the use of verbal and non-verbal behaviour. This issue is the aim of an ethnography of communication theory in order to approach a foreign language from a pragmatic and linguistic point of view and the key theory for the development of our present study, the analysis of discourse.

The verbal part of communicative competence, and therefore, the analysis of discourse, comprises all the so-called four skills: *listening, reading, speaking and writing*. It is important to highlight that language is both productive and *receptive*. Hymes stated the four competences at work regarding the elements and rules of oral and written discourse are as follows: *linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and fluency* (Hedge 2000).

First, the *linguistic* competence, as it deals with linguistic and non-linguistic devices in the oral and written interaction involving all knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Secondly, the *pragmatic* competence as it also deals with the knowledge the learner has to acquire the sociocultural rules of language. Regarding the rules of discourse, it is defined in terms of the mastery of *how to combine grammatical forms and meanings* (Canale and Swain 1980). When we deal with appropriateness of form, we refer to the extent to which a given meaning is represented in both verbal and non-verbal form that is proper in a given sociolinguistic context. This competence enables a speaker to be contextually appropriate or in Hymes's words (1972), to know when to speak, when not, what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner.

Thirdly, the rules of *use* and *usage*, proposed by Widdowson (1978) have to do with the *discourse competence*. Here, *usage* refers to the manifestation of the knowledge of a language system and *use* means the realization of the language system as meaningful communicative behaviour. Discourse analysis is primarily concerned with the ways in which individual sentences connect together to form a communicative message. This competence addresses directly to the mastery of *how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres* (Canale and Swain 1980) by means of *cohesion* in form and *coherence* in meaning. Cohesion deals with *how utterances are linked structurally and facilitates interpretation of a text* by means of cohesion devices, such as pronouns, synonyms, ellipsis, conjunctions and parallel structures to relate individual utterances and to indicate how a group of utterances is to be understood as a text. Yet, coherence refers to the relations among the different meanings in a text, where these meanings may be literal meanings, communicative functions, and attitudes.

Finally, we come to the fourth competence at work, the *strategic competence*. (Canale 1983) where verbal and nonverbal communication strategies may be *called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence*. This may be achieved by *paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance, guessing as well as shifts in register and style*. Hedge (2000) points out that strategic competence consists of using *communication strategies* which are used by learners to compensate for their limited linguistic competence in expressing what they want to say.

6.2. New Directions in Discourse Analysis

From a practical perspective in education, providing experiences for contact with *language in context* proved difficult for foreign language teachers as they were forced to rely on textbooks and classroom materials in teaching language. However, nowadays new technologies may provide a new direction to language teaching as they set more appropriate context for students to experience the target culture. Present-day approaches deal with a communicative competence model in which first, there is an emphasis on significance over form regarding how to deal with discourse types, and secondly, motivation and involvement are enhanced by means of new technologies.

Regarding writing skills, there is a need to create classrooms conditions which match those in real life and foster acquisition, encouraging reading and writing (letters, advertisements, filling forms, official papers). The success partly lies in the way the language becomes real to the users, feeling themselves really in the language. Some of this motivational force is brought about by intervening in authentic communicative events.

Otherwise, we have to recreate as much as possible the whole cultural environment in the classroom for us to make the articulation of discourse fluent and effective.

This is to be achieved within the framework of the European Union educational guidelines through the European Council (1998) and, in particular, the Spanish Educational System which establishes a common reference framework for the teaching of foreign languages where students are intended *to carry out several communication tasks with specific communicative goals within specific contexts*. Thus, foreign language activities are provided within the framework of social interaction, personal, professional or educational fields.

Writing and oral skills in discourse articulation are mentioned as one of the aims of our current educational system. It is stated that students will make use of this competence in a natural and systematic way in order to achieve the effectiveness of communication through the different communication skills, thus, *productive* (oral and *written communication*), *receptive* (oral and *written comprehension* within verbal and non-verbal codes), and *interactional* role of a foreign language as a multilingual and multicultural identity.

This effectiveness of communication is to be achieved thanks to recent developments in foreign language education which have indicated a trend towards the field of intercultural communication. The Ministry of Education proposed several projects within the framework of the European Community, such as *Comenius projects* and *Plumier projects*. The first project is envisaged as a way for learners to experience sociocultural patterns of the target language in the target country, and establish personal relationships which may lead to keep in contact through writing skills. Besides, the Plumier project uses multimedia resources in a classroom setting where learners are expected *to learn* to interpret and produce meaning with members of the target culture. Both projects are interrelated as students put in practice their writing and reading skills by means of keeping in touch through e-mails with their friends and read their messages, apart from fostering the oral skills.

Current research on Applied Linguistics shows an interest on writing skills, such as on the pragmatics of writing, narrative fiction and frequency on cohesion devices in English texts, among others. We may also find research on intercultural communication where routines and formulaic speech are under revision of contrastive analysis between English and Spanish. However, the emphasis is nowadays on the use of multimedia and computers as an important means to promote a foreign language in context.

7. Conclusion

Throughout this unit, discourse has been regarded as language in use for communication. When talking about discourse, what matters is the fact that it communicates and is recognized by its receivers as coherent, that is, as meaningful and unified.

We must remember that all language occurs in communicative units usually larger than single words or sentences. Therefore, we need to consider activities in our teaching units which help develop discourse skills in our students. We will stimulate their communicative competence by going beyond the sentence level, analyzing the cohesive links between clauses and sentences and considering texts in their context.

This unit is a result of a keen and long-lasting interest in applied linguistics in combination with the factors that enable people to interpret sophisticated texts in both native and foreign language. All in all, although many coursebooks authors try to include genuine texts in their publications, activities that accompany them are generally limited. Tasks which would not only check the understanding of the gist or key vocabulary, but also important details are scarce. The question is whether on the basis of discourse analysis theories it is possible to make it easy for foreign language learners to read texts with full comprehension. The reader of this unit should bear in mind that following the authorities on discourse analysis the terms 'discourse' and 'text' are used synonymously.

To sum up, we may say that language is where culture impinges on form and where second language speakers find their confidence threatened through the diversity of registers, genres and styles that make up the first language speaker's day to day interaction. Language represents the deepest manifestation of a culture, and people's values systems, including those taken over from the group of which they are part, play a substantial role in the way they use not only their first language but also subsequently acquired ones.

The assumptions of discourse analysis we have reviewed in this study are then important not only for understanding written and oral discourse patterns and the conditions of their production, but also for a critical assessment of our own cultural situation.

* * *

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