Discourse Analysis
Linguistics
Unit I
Understanding Icons in this module

The following icons will help you understand the dynamics of this module.

**Reflection**

You will be asked to reflect on educational issues related to the teaching-learning process and on your own experience and professional practice.

**Reading Texts**

Tips & Suggestions

Explanations and brief comments that will help you to put pedagogical concepts into practice

**Tasks**

(for self-correction)

Tasks, reading guidelines, integration activities and case studies that will help you interact with the materials and understand concepts in a clear way. These tasks are not required to be sent to your tutor.

**Forum**

In the forum you will have the chance of discussing different topics suggested by your teachers with other students.
Assignments
to be sent to your tutor

Your tutor will check your performance and provide advice. These are mandatory assignments that you need to complete and pass in order to be allowed to sit for your final exam.

Evaluation

You will be asked to evaluate your performance throughout the module.

Further Reading

Suggested further reading containing further information about the issues discussed in the unit.
Unit I

What is Discourse Analysis?

1. Read the following definition of discourse analysis and reflect on the points below.

Discourse Analysis determines how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context, become more meaningful and unified for their users. It is a rapidly expanding field, providing insights into problems and processes of language use and language learning, and it is therefore; of great importance to language teachers. Traditionally, language teaching has concentrated on pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, and while these remain the basis of foreign languages, discourse analysis can draw attention to the skills needed to put this knowledge into action and to achieve successful communication.

- What is the purpose of Discourse Analysis?
- What does it take into account in order to understand its object of study?
- “Stretches of language considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context”, what does this mean?
- Is it an old discipline?
- Why is it important for language teaching?

Sentence study in language teaching and discourse.

In defence of concentrating on the sentence, different teachers and different learners might have different answers. Teachers of mother tongue students might argue that their students already have oral and communicative skills, that what they need is to learn and demonstrate literacy. They might also point out that these skills, rightly or wrongly, are demanded by examinations boards, and are often considered a sign of acceptable language behaviour by the world at large. Foreign language teachers might say that their students already know how to communicate and interact in their own language; what they need in the
foreign language are formal skills and knowledge (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar) which will provide the basis for communicating and interacting. Exercises, whether for translation or other kind of manipulation, can be neatly presented in sentences, with a tick or a mark for each one, and in this way everybody knows where they are going, and how far they have come in developing the necessary formal basis. Given practise and exposure and maybe a trip to a country where the language is spoken, the rest will follow on its own accord.

Another argument for concentrating on artificially constructed sentences has sometimes been advanced by people involved in linguistics (the study of how human languages in general works, rather than on how to speak a particular one). It is sometimes argued that even if the sentence analysed in linguistics are abstractions, which sometimes should sound very odd, they are still the best material for language study, because they are isolated from the context. Furthermore, it is said, as native speakers of a language seem able to recognize correct and incorrect sentences, the idea of there being language rule exemplified in such sentences, does seem to correspond to some kind of reality, even if people do not always speak according to those abstracted rules.

It might be also argued that the treatment of language in terms of sentences has been quite successful in revealing how language works, that within the sentence we can establish rules and constraints concerning what is and is not allowed, whereas beyond the sentence such rules seem either to disintegrate or turn into rules of a different kind (social rules or psychological rules, which are not within the area of linguistic study at all). So linguistics too tends to come up with grammatically correct, but somewhat peculiar examples such as: “Sincerity might frighten the boy” (Chomsky 1965:63).

- How many arguments are there in favour of sentence-based instructions?
- What does each of them state?
- Do you agree with any of them?
- Is it really useful to teach rules of grammar without considering a context?

All these arguments, from people involved in different ways in the study of language, have weight, and should not be ridiculed or dismissed out of hand, as has become rather fashionable in some language teaching circles. There are types of language use that
demand the ability to formulate grammatical, correctly bound sentences, and being able to exploit the formal sentence grammar is one of the most important elements in being able to communicate in a language. Yet, if we are going to approach language as isolated artificially constructed sentences, even if it is only occasionally and for limited purposes, we do need to make a case for this, and not just do it because that is the tradition: in the mother tongue classroom, for the foreign language learner, or in linguistics. We should also recognize that there is more to producing and understanding meaningful language to communicating than knowing how to make or recognize correct sentences. A person who could do only that, and did so without any other considerations, would be, as the sociologist Dell Hymes (1971) has said, “unlikely to be institutionalised” for saying all kinds of inappropriate, irrelevant, and uninteresting things. Being a communicator, having what Hymes calls communicative competence, involves much more.

Think about **Sentence Study** according to Cook, take also into account what Hymes states about this kind of study and what he suggests to be a communicator.

Analyse the following invented examples for language teaching, grammatical analysis; some are pieces of language which were actually used to communicate. Is there any way of telling which is which? Can you think of situations where these pieces of language might actually have been used?

1. John considers the analyst a lunatic.
2. Which of you people is the fish?
3. Please don’t throw me on the floor!
4. Cross since 1846.
5. I wish someone had told me he was vegetarian: I could have made an omelette.
6. Chicken and vegetable ...hot...medium hot...er rice...pilao rice, er two poppadums and a ...what’s a bhindi bhaji?

Take some time to reflect on your own learning experience of English as a second language. Was it sentence based? What typical exercises did your previous teachers used for vocabulary study, grammatical rules? Did you have the
feeling that you were corrected all the time? Why do you think it was so?

If you have the chance to pay a look at different course books, do so, paying attention to the way new items are introduced to students. Do they look too sentence-based? Do they consider the context?

Discourse and the sentence.

We have, then, two different kinds of language as potential objects for study: one abstracted in order to teach a language or literacy, or to study how the rules of language work, and another which has been used to communicate something and is felt to be coherent (and may, or may not, happen to correspond to a correct sentence or a series of correct sentences). This latter kind of language – language in use, for communication – is called discourse; and the search for what gives discourse coherence is discourse analysis. It is important to notice that the distinction between these two kinds of language (the artificially constructed and the communicating) is often more a question of the way we use or think about a particular stretch of language which someone has used in communication and treat it as a sentence for a translation exercise, or an object for grammatical analysis. Conversely, it is possible to take a sentence from a language teaching or linguistic textbook, go to the country where the language is spoken, say it to someone in an appropriate situation and achieve something by saying it.

Discourse may be composed of one or more well-formed sentences – indeed it often is- but it does not have to be. It can have grammatical “mistakes” in it, and often does. Discourse treats the rules of grammar as a resource, conforming to them when it needs to, but departing from them when it does not. Discourse can be anything from a grunt or single expletive, through short conversation and scribbled notes, or a lengthy legal case. What matters is not its conformity to rules, but the fact that it communicates and is recognized by its receivers as coherent. This leads us to the disturbing conclusion that there is a degree of subjectivity in identifying a stretch of language as discourse- it may be meaningful and thus
communicate to one person in a way which another person does not have the necessary knowledge to make sense of—yet in practice we find that discourse is usually perceived as such by groups, rather than individuals.

Use the graphic organizer below to record information from all you have read so far. Consider the following points:
People involve in each approach, comparisons (if any) and contrasts, general features of each of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Competence</th>
<th>Communicative Competence</th>
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Grammar within and beyond the sentence.

In the same way that there are rules within sentences, limiting which words can follow others, so there might also be rules within discourses, limiting which sentence can follow another one, and if you read: “the knight killed the dragon”, then there might be limits, or constraints, on what can be put as the next sentence. It might be:

_The knight killed the dragon. He cut off his head with his sword._

And this would seem quite reasonable; but could the following be written?

_The knight killed the dragon. The pineapple was on the table._

It is unlikely, but it does not seem to be “wrong”, it could be a story for children and in this fictional world these two sentences might go together, but as you can see the reasons are not linguistic; they have to do with the knowledge of the world where these sentences take place.
According to what you have just read, can you think of two possible answers to the question of how we recognize a stretch of language as unified and meaningful?

Cook states that two possible answers are:

1. First, we employ language rules of the type studied by grammarians and taught in most language textbooks, and that these rules operate between sentences as well as within them.
2. The other is that we employ knowledge (of the world, of the speaker, of social convention, of what is going on around us as we read or listen) in order to make sense of the language we are encountering.

Now, Cook invites us to combine these two answers and read a bit more about language viewed as a formal system and language as part of a wider social and psychological context.

When we receive a linguistic message, we pay attention to many other factors apart from the language itself. If we are face to face with the person sending the message, then we notice what they are doing with their face, eyes, and body while speaking: maybe they smiled, or shook their fist, looked away. In a spoken message we notice the quality of the voice as well: maybe the speaker’s voice was shaking, or they had a particular accent, or hesitated, or slurred their words. These are the paralinguistic features of a spoken message, which are lost if we write the message down. They exist in written messages too, where we may be influenced by handwriting, or typography, and by whether the message is an expensive book or on a scrap of paper.

We are also influenced by the situation in which we receive messages, by our cultural and social relationship with the participants, by what we know and what we assume the sender knows. These factors take us beyond the study of language, in a narrow sense, and force us to look at other areas of inquiry (the mind, the body, the society, the physical world) in fact, at everything. There are good arguments for limiting a field of study to make it manageable; but it is also true to say that the answer to the question of what gives
discourse its unity may be impossible to give without considering the world at large: the context.

The process of eliminating the unique combination of circumstances in which language happens (a process known technically as *idealization*) results in the same kind of sentences as those invented examples for translation or grammatical analysis.

Read the following transcript of a conversation. What additional information do you need to make sense of it? The context

A. That blonds girl over the road there...Careful don't bang your head ...Sometimes she looks...
B. What? Which one? Ow!
A. I said to you don't bang your head. Sometimes she looks quite pretty, sometimes she looks pretty ugly.
B. I'm ok, leave me alone.

Conclusion

We have, then, two approaches to language: sentence linguistics and discourse analysis. It is not a question of setting these two up as irreconcilable enemies, trying to make one a hero and the other a villain, for both ultimately need each other. The distinction, though convenient for us at the moment, is not absolute, and as we cannot communicate with only the rules of semantics and grammar, so we just as surely cannot communicate very well without them.
Let’s check our understanding about these two approaches: Place the following features under the corresponding heading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence linguistic data</th>
<th>Discourse analysis data</th>
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The origins of Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and its context of use. It started in the 60s and 70s as a result of work carried out in several fields, and it is now a significant aid in the teaching of English. Read the following fragments to trace its beginnings:

Discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used. It grew out of work in different disciplines in the 1960s and early 1970s, including linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Discourse analysts study language in use: written texts of all kinds, and spoken data, from conversation to highly institutionalised forms of talk.

At a time when linguistics was largely concerned with the analysis of single sentences, Zellig Harris published a paper with the title “Discourse Analysis” (1952). Harris was interested in the distribution of linguistic elements in extended texts, and the links between the text and its social situation, though this paper is a far cry from the discourse analysis we are used to nowadays. Also important in the early years was the emergence of semiotics and the French structuralist approach to the study of narrative. In the 1960s, Dell Hymes provided a sociological perspective with the study of speech in its social setting (e.g. Hymes 1964). The linguistic philosophers such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975) were also influential in the study of language as social action, reflected in speech-act theory and the formulation of conversational maxims, alongside the emergence of pragmatics, which is the study of meaning in context (see Levinson 1983; Leech 1983)

British discourse analysis was greatly influenced by M. A. K. Halliday’s functional approach to language (e.g. Halliday 1973), which in turn has connections with the Prague School of Linguistics. Halliday’s framework emphasizes the social functions of language and the thematic and informational structure of speech and writing. Also important in Britain were Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) at the University of Birmingham, who developed a model for the description of teacher-pupil talk, based on a hierarchy of discourse units. Other similar work has dealt with doctor-patient interaction, service encounters, interviews, debates and business negotiations, as well as monologues. Novel work in the British tradition has also been done on intonation in discourse. The British work has principally followed structural-linguistic criteria, on the basis of the isolation of units, and sets of rules defining well-formed sequences of discourse.

Also relevant to the development of discourse analysis as a whole is the work of text grammarians, working mostly with the written language. Text grammarians see texts as language elements strung together in relationships with one another that can be defined. Linguists such as Van Dijk (1972), De Beaugrande (1980), Halliday and Hasan (1976) have made a significant impact in this area. The Prague School of linguists, with their interest in the structuring of information in discourse, has also been influential. Its most important contribution has been to show the links between grammar and discourse.

Discourse Analysis has grown into a wide-ranging and heterogeneous discipline which finds its unity in the description of language above the sentence and an interest in the contexts and cultural influences
which affect language in use. It is also now, increasingly, forming a backdrop to research in Applied Linguistics, and second language learning and teaching in particular.

At this stage in the development of discourse, it may be a good idea to go over the theory of speech acts and indirect speech acts briefly, for a better understanding of the history of discourse analysis.

Create a time line illustrating the origins of discourse analysis.

“Speech act theory” (Austin, Searle)

It was the particular search for the (purely) constative (utterances which describe something outside the text and can therefore be judged true or false) which prompted John Austin to direct his attention to the distinction with so-called performatives, i.e. utterances which are neither true or false but which bring about a particular social effect by being uttered (e.g. “With this ring I thee wed” – by speaking the utterance you perform the act). For a performative to have the desired effect, it has to meet certain social and cultural criteria, also called felicity conditions.

Further on in his essay, Austin abandons the distinction between constatives and performative and replaced it by a new distinction between different “aspects” of an utterance and a generalised claim that all utterances are really performatives. The latter is the key assumption of speech act theory (the theory of “how to do things with words”), by making an utterance, language users perform one or more social acts. These are called “speech acts”. In the wake of the generalised performative claim, Austin introduced the distinction between three types of action. For instance, by speaking an utterance (locution), you may perform the social act of making a promise (illocution, what the speaker does by using the utterance), and, as a result, convince your audience of your commitment (perlocution – what the speaker’s done, having made the utterance).

A number of further important elaborations of speech act theory lie in the work of John Searle. One is that he allocates a central place to communicative intentions (this is based on the assumption that a speaker has wants, beliefs and intentions which are indexed in the performance of utterances). At the same time, he develops a typology of speech acts, which for him, is rooted in the range of illocutionary verbs that occur in a given language. A third contribution of Searle is the development of a theory of indirect speech acts. This concept is based on the observation that by uttering, say, what appears to be a
statement (e.g. “It’s hot in here”), language users often indirectly perform another type of illocutionary act (in the case of the example: voice a request to open the window).

The undeniable merit of speech act theory lies in advancing a view of language use as action. In Searle’s words (Searle, 1969:17)

“A theory of language is part of a theory of action, simply because speaking is a rule-governed form of behaviour. Now, being rule-governed, it has formal features which admit of independent study. But a study purely of those formal features, without a study of their role in speech acts, would be like a formal study of the currency and credit systems of economies without a study of the role of currency and credit in economic transactions. A great deal can be said in the study of language without studying speech acts, but any such purely formal theory is necessarily incomplete. It would be as if baseball were studied only as a formal system of rules and not as a game.”

Taken from http://bank.rug.ac.be/da/da.htm

REFERENCES:

Formal and contextual links

We have seen how our feeling that a particular stretch of language in some way hangs together, or has unity, (that it is, in other words, discourse), cannot be accounted for in the same way as our feeling for the acceptability of a sentence. In order to account for discourse, we need to look at features outside the language. At the situation, the people involved what they know and what they are doing. These facts enable us to construct stretches of language as discourse; as having a meaning and a unity for us. The way we recognize correct and incorrect sentences is different. We can do this through our knowledge of grammar without reference to outside facts.

We can describe the two ways of approaching language as contextual, referring to facts outside language, and formal, referring to facts inside language. A way of understanding this difference may be to think of formal features as in some way built up in our minds from the black marks which form writing on the page, or from the speech sounds picked up by our ears, while contextual features are somewhere outside this physical realization of the language – in the world, or pre-existing in the minds of the participants. Stretches of language treated only formally are referred to as text.

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 of more than one sentence, we cannot say that there are no formal links between sentences in discourse. There are some, as we shall see, and although language teaching and mainstream linguistics has traditionally concentrated only upon those formal features which operate within sentences, discourse analysis may suggest ways of directing teachers’ and students’ attention to formal features which operate across sentences as well. We shall now try to categorize these formal links and then examine how far they will go in helping to explain why a succession of sentences is discourse, and not just a disconnected jumble.

Formal links between sentences and between clauses are known as cohesive devices.
The form of the verb in one sentence can limit the choice of the verb form in the next, and we may be justified in saying that a verb form in one sentence is ‘wrong’, or at least ‘unlikely’, because it does not fit with the form in another. If we look at the exchange below between two piano movers,

*A:* Right, who’s goin’ to lift the bottom?

    Well, someone’s got to take a hold of it.

*B:* I ain’t goin’ to.

*A:* Don’t . . . Come on?

for example, we can see that the verbs (‘s going, ‘s got to take, ain’t goin’, don’t, come on) are all in the present (although they refer to the future). There seems to be a degree of formal connection between them, a way in which the first tense conditions all the others, and it would be very strange if the exchange had been:

*A:* Right, who’s goin’ to lift the bottom?

    Well, someone had got to take a hold of it.

*B:* I shan’t have been goin’ to.

*A:* Don’t . . . Come on will you?

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**Parallelism**

What links are there between sentences in the following?

*He vastly enriched the world by his inventions. He enriched the field of knowledge by his teaching. He enriched humanity by his precepts and his personal example. He died on December 17, 1907, and was buried in Westminster Abbey with the honours due to a prince of men...*  

( Arthur Mee (ed.): Immortal Heroes of the World)

Another link within discourse is effected by parallelism, a device which suggests a connection, simply because the form of one sentence or clause repeats the form of another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Adverbial</th>
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16
He vastly enriched the world by his inventions.

He enriched the field of knowledge by his teaching.

This is often used in speeches, prayers, poetry, and advertisements. It can have a powerful emotional effect, and it is also a useful aide-mémoire. Here, for example, is part of a Christian prayer:

‘Teach us, Good Lord, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and to ask for no reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will.’ (St Richard’s Prayer)

Here the discourse proceeds through a repeated grammatical structure (to X and not to Y the / for Z) into which different words are slotted, creating a rhythm which is finally broken in the last phrase in a way which may seem to imitate the sense of relief and reward the prayer concerns. (In a secondary school where this was regularly used in morning prayers it had to be abandoned because the pupils exploited the rhythm created by the parallelism to make it sound like a football chant!) This example employs parallelism to link clauses, but the same principle is used to link sentences too. A televised address to the French people by President Pompidou began:

‘Le Général de Gaulle est mort. La France est veuve.’ (General de Gaulle is dead. France is a widow)

Here the two sentences are linked because they follow the grammatical pattern, definite article + proper noun + copula + complement, a link whose purely formal nature is revealed by the fact that it does not really survive translation into English, where the definite articles are not needed and an indefinite one is. In French the two sentences are further linked by the contrasted masculine and feminine genders reinforcing the metaphor of deceased husband and bereaved wife.

Parallelism, which suggests a connection of meaning through an echo of form, does not have to be grammatical parallelism. It maybe a sound parallelism: as in the rhyme, rhythm, and other sound effects of verse. One might even extend the idea and talk of semantic parallelism where two sentences are linked because they mean the same thing. Comic duos often exploit this for humorous effect. The first comedian says something in a high-flown style, and the other repeats the same information in a colloquial one:

A: The Good Lord, in his wisdom, has taken her away from us.

B: You mean the old girl’s snuffed it.
Referring expressions

These are words whose meaning can only be discovered by referring to other words or to elements of the context which are clear to both sender and receiver. The most obvious example of them is third person pronouns (she/her/hers/herself; he/him/his/himself; it/its/itself; they/them/their/theirs/themselves). If we are listening to a story and somebody says “So, I ate it” we may well know the meaning of “it” from somewhere earlier in the story. We choose the most likely meaning for it from the text. It is important to notice that our knowledge of the meaning or it is only partly formal though. It involves our knowledge of the world as well, and if the story had gone:

There was a pineapple on the table. So I ate it.

...we would assume the speaker had eaten the pineapple, not the table (even though the word table is nearer) because we know that people are more likely to eat pineapples than tables. A computer would have to be given knowledge about human eating habits before it could interpret this. There are extraordinary cases, however, and in a story anything can happen, even the digestion of tables.

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 he or it. This makes a kind of chain, running through the discourse, in which each expression is linked to another:

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

It is not only third person pronouns which work in this way. The meanings of “this” and “that”, and “here” and “there” have also to be found either formally in another part of the discourse or contextually from the world.

The meaning of a referring expression is not always in another sentence or clause, of course. If two people arrive at the door with a piano and say:

Where shall we put it?

We can assume that it means the piano. We choose the most likely meaning for “it” from the world, and in this case the meaning is contextual. When this is the case we call it exophoric reference. One of the people with the piano might have had a pencil between their teeth, but would probably have been annoyed if we had taken it to mean the pencil and said:

Put it on the mantelpiece.
Sometimes people assume that the meaning of a pronoun is clear when it is not. Then, there are misunderstandings, and we have to say:

Not the pencil, you idiot, the piano!

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.

Look at this opening section of a children’s book:

*Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it. And then he feels that perhaps there isn’t. Anyhow, here he is at the bottom, and ready to be introduced to you. Winnie-the-Pooh.*

*When I first heard his name, I said, just as you are going to say, ‘But I thought he was a boy?’*

A. A. Milne: Winnie-the-Pooh)

Identify referring expressions, and the word(s) they refer back to. Are there any doubtful cases, and how do you resolve them? (How do you know whether he refers to Pooh or Christopher Robin? What does the first word *Here* mean?)

It is not always as simple as following the chain back until we come to a name or a noun. Even in a passage as deceptively childlike as this, there are several more complex examples. “Here” refers either to an imaginary situation or to the picture on the facing page, which shows Pooh coming downstairs. “It” at the beginning of the second sentence refers to coming downstairs (and not to his head, of course), and then the next “it” refers to another way. The next “here” refers to a new imaginary situation, “I” is the author, and “you” is the reader – although here a trick is played and the author talks to us as though we are there, listening rather than reading. This story is written to be read out aloud, and in many contemporary cultures, reading out loud is something done mostly for children. That, together with the subject matter, accounts for our feeling at this point that the story is being sent to a child, the “you”. So we can see how complicated this network of referring expressions is, and how skilled even quite young children are at understanding it. Yet if, as teachers, we concentrate our attention on formal links within sentences, we are taking all these skills for granted, and may leave our students completely at sea.
Here is another chapter opening from the same children’s book. What is different about the use of the pronouns?

Nothing seemed to know where they came from, but there they were in the Forest: Kanga and Baby Roo.

A. A. Milne: Winnie-the-Pooh, Chapter 7)

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, both enticing us to look further, and plunging us into the middle of a situation as though we already knew what was going on.

So, let’s attempt to summarize the different kinds of referring expressions. First of all, keep in mind the most common ones: 3rd personal pronouns (all kinds),

Here, there,

This, that, those,

Then, remember how these referring chains can be classified according to the directions to follow in order to find the word carrying the meaning:

- An exophoric reference refers to language outside of the text in which the reference is found.
  - A homophoric reference is a generic phrase that obtains a specific meaning through knowledge of its context. For example, the meaning of the phrase "the Queen" may be determined by the country in which it is spoken. Because there are many Queens throughout the world, the location of the speaker provides the extra information that allows an individual Queen to be identified.

- An endophoric reference refers to something inside the text in which the reference is found.
  - An anaphoric reference, when opposed to cataphora, refers to something within a text that has been previously identified. For example, in "Susan dropped the plate. It shattered loudly" the word "it" refers to the phrase "the plate".
  - A cataphoric reference refers to something within a text that has not yet been identified. For example, in "Because he was very cold, David promptly put on his coat" the identity of the "he" is unknown until the individual is also referred to as "David".

Here you have more examples:
- The monkey took the banana and ate it. "It" is anaphoric under the strict definition (it refers to the banana).
- Pam went home because she felt sick. "She" is anaphoric (it refers to Pam).
- What is this? "This" can be considered exophoric (it refers to some object near the speaker or, colloquially, to a situation which is happening).
- The dog ate the bird and it died. "It" is anaphoric, and ambiguous (did the dog or bird die?).

To conclude, referring expressions fulfil a dual purpose of unifying the text (they depend upon some of the subject matter remaining the same) and of economy, because they save us from having to repeat the identity of what we are talking about again and again.

<table>
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<th>Repetition and lexical chains (elegant repetition)</th>
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Timotei is both mild to your hair and to your scalp – so mild you can wash your hair as often as you like. Timotei cleans your hair gently, leaving it soft and shiny, with a fresh smell of summer meadows.

This Schedule and Policy shall be read together as one contract and any word or expression to which a specific meaning has been attached in any part of the said Schedule or Policy shall bear such specific meaning wherever the word or expression may appear.

Both these extracts avoid referring expressions. Why? Would it make any difference if the second extract was rewritten with referring expressions instead of repetition? Can you think of other discourse types which often avoid referring expressions, and, if so, what are the reasons for this?

**Repetition** of words can create the same sort of chain as pronouns, 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 synonymous or more general words or phrases are used. So instead of writing:

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

...they might write:

The pineapple . . . the luscious fruit . . . our meal . . . the tropical luxury

The kind of link that we choose will depend upon 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 (though this view or legal discourse can be challenged). As teachers, we need to sensitize students to the interplay of discourse type and the choice between referring expressions, repetition, and elegant repetition.

**Substitution**

Another kind of formal link between sentences is the substitution of words like “do”, “one” or “so” for a word or groups of words which have appeared in an earlier sentence. It would be very long-winded if we had always to answer a question like “Do you like mangoes?” With a sentence like “Yes, I like mangoes” or “Yes, I think I like mangoes”. It is much quicker, and it means the same, if we say “Yes, I do” or “Yes, I think so”. Unfortunately, much traditional language teaching, in its zeal 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. Why do you think they do so? Do you agree with that?

**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.” knowing that “like a glass of beer” will be understood. Or if someone says “What are you doing?” we can just answer “Eating a mango” instead of “I am 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.
Conjunction

Yet 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. These words may simply add more information to what has already been said (and, furthermore, add to that) or elaborate or exemplify it (for instance, thus, in other words). They may contrast new information with old information, or put another side to the argument (or, on the other hand, however, conversely). They may relate new information to what has already been given in terms of causes (so, consequently, because, for this reason) or in time (formerly, then, in the end, next) or they may indicate a new departure or a summary (by the way, well, to sum up, anyway). There are many words and phrases which can be put into this category in English, and many different ways in which they can be classified. They indicate the relationship of utterances in the mind or in the world and are thus in a way contextual. 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.

Conclusion

We now have a means of assessing the extent of formal links within a piece of discourse. Later, we shall see that these links are neither necessary nor sufficient to account for our sense of the unity of discourse. Their presence does not automatically make a passage coherent, and their absence does not automatically make it meaningless.

As teachers, we should notice that a clear understanding of the formal connections between sentences may help to explain one of the ways in which foreign language students sometimes write supposedly connected sentences, each of which is well-formed in itself, but which somehow add up to very strange discourse. It can also help us to identify why a student is not achieving the stylistic effect he or she is seeking. It should be clear that the correctness and the effect of some expressions cannot only be judged within the sentence, but must be judged in connection with other sentences in the discourse as well. See if you can identify and categorize all the formal links which connect the three sentences in the following invented dialogue:

A: It’s a mystery to me, how the conjuror sawed that woman in half.
C. Well, Jane was the woman he did it to. So presumably she must know.

**Practice on formal links**

By the end of unit 1, we mentioned the need of taking into account contextual factors in order to achieve the meaning of stretches of language of more than one sentence. Traditionally, most of the attention has been paid to those formal features which operate within sentences, but from a discourse analysis point of view, we are going to analyze formal features which operate across sentences. Remember we also call these formal links “cohesive devices”.

Let’s consider the following synopsis taken from a website on movies reviews.

**Synopsis**

S1 Visionary filmmaker Christopher Nolan (Memento, The Dark Knight) writes and directs this psychological sci-fi action film about a thief who possesses the power to enter into the dreams of others. S2 Dom Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) doesn't steal things, he steals ideas. S3 By projecting himself deep into the subconscious of his targets, he can glean information that even the best computer hackers can't get to. S4 In the world of corporate espionage, Cobb is the ultimate weapon. S5 But even weapons have their weakness, and when Cobb loses everything, he's forced to embark on one final mission in a desperate quest for redemption. S6 This time, Cobb won't be harvesting an idea, but sowing one. S7 Should he and his team of specialists succeed, they will have discovered a new frontier in the art of psychic espionage. S8 They've planned everything to perfection, and
they have all the tools to get the job done. **S9** Their mission is complicated, however, by the sudden appearance of a malevolent foe that seems to know exactly what they're up to, and precisely how to stop them. **S10** What do you think? **S11** Will he be able to do so?

**S12** No? **S13** Yes? **S14** Don’t miss it. **S15** If you do, you will regret it. **S16**

“Inception” could become one of your favorite films. **S17** I highly recommend it.

**S19** Jason Buchanan, Rovi

### Analysis

**Verb form**

S1: writes, directs, possesses

S2: doesn’t steal, steals ideas

S3: can, can’t

S4: is

S5: have, loses, is forced

S6: won’t be harvesting

S7: should .... succeed, will have discovered

S8: have planned, have

S9: is, seems, are, stop

S10: think

S11: will ....be able
In general, we can see that, at the beginning, the speaker’s choices of verb forms reflect the fact that he is talking about someone else, a third person. He uses the present tense, mainly, since he is talking about the character’s actions in a movie. It’s the tense mostly use when we tell stories. Why do you think this is so?

We can also see, by the end of the synopsis, his choice of verb form changes since he is persuading to the second person (you) to watch the movie.

**Parallelism**

Refreshing our mind, we can say that parallelism is the repetition of the form/structure of a sentence on another. Unfortunately, in this synopsis we don’t have any instance of parallel forms across sentences; however, we can see that S2 is made up by two parallel structures.

**Referring expressions**

So, let’s attempt to summarize the different kinds of referring expressions. First of all, keep in mind the most common ones:

- 3rd personal pronouns (all kinds),
- Here, there,
- This, that, those,

Then, remember how these referring chains can be classified according to the directions to follow in order to find the word carrying the meaning:

- An **exophoric reference** refers to language outside of the text in which the reference is found.
A homophoric reference is a generic phrase that obtains a specific meaning through knowledge of its context. For example, the meaning of the phrase "the Queen" may be determined by the country in which it is spoken. Because there are many Queens throughout the world, the location of the speaker provides the extra information that allows an individual Queen to be identified.

- An endophoric reference refers to something inside the text in which the reference is found.
  - An anaphoric reference, when opposed to cataphora, refers to something within a text that has been previously identified. For example, in "Susan dropped the plate. It shattered loudly" the word "it" refers to the phrase "the plate".
  - A cataphoric reference refers to something within a text that has not yet been identified. For example, in "Because he was very cold, David promptly put on his coat" the identity of the "he" is unknown until the individual is also referred to as "David".

Here you have more examples:

- The monkey took the banana and ate it. "It" is anaphoric under the strict definition (it refers to the banana).
- Pam went home because she felt sick. "She" is anaphoric (it refers to Pam).
- What is this? "This" can be considered exophoric (it refers to some object near the speaker or, colloquially, to a situation which is happening).
- The dog ate the bird and it died. "It" is anaphoric, and ambiguous (did the dog or bird die?).

In our synopsis, we can find the following referring expressions:

S3: himself, his, he → S2: Dom Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) Endophoric, Anaphoric Reference. (EnAR)
S5: he → S4: Cobb (EnAR) (here, it is not necessary to go back to S2 since the author decided to repeat the name of Cobb, and thus, he makes it the nearest source of meaning.
S7: he, his → S4: Cobb (EnAR)
S8: they, they → S7: he (Cobb) and his team of specialists (EnAR)
S9: their, they, them → S7: he (Cobb) and his team of specialists (EnAR)
S10: you Exophoric reference. (ExR)
S11: he → S9: a malevolent foe (EnAR)
S14: it → S16: Inception Endophoric, Cataphoric, Reference (EnCR)
**Repetition and lexical chain**

**Repetition**

In this category we are going to collect those words which are repeated all along the text. Even if the word appears later with a suffix or prefix (e.g., walk → walking → walks// movies → movie) we will consider them as repetitions.

Film: S1, 15
Mission: S5, 9
Weapon: S4, 5
Cobb: 4, 5, 6

**Lexical chain or elegant repetition**

It involves synonyms, expressions, phrases which basically refers to the same object.

S1: This psychological sci-film → S16 Inception

S1: a thief → Dom Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) → S4: the ultimate weapon

S1: others → S3: his targets

S2: ideas → S3: information

S5: final mission → S8: job

Please, notice that the words “ideas” and “information” are not synonyms if we think of them in isolation; however, within the context of the synopsis, they refer to the same stolen “things”.
Substitution

The most common words used to substitute others are:

“Do” which usually replaces verbs/verb phrases.

“So” which usually replaces clauses.

“One/ones” which usually replaces nouns/noun phrases.

S15: do: substituting “miss” (S9)
S11: so: substituting the clause “stop them” (S9)
S6: one: substituting the word “idea”.
(Unfortunately we don’t have any example with “one “across sentences.)

Ellipsis

S6: but (he will be) sowing one.
S12: No (he won’t be able to do so)?
S13: Yes (he will be able to do so)?

Conjunction

S5: but: (Contrast)
S6: this time (Time conjunct)
S9: however (Contrast)

Co-occurrence

Co-occurrence refers to those words which tend to co-occur, that is, appear in the same context. So, if we are talking with the doctor at the hospital, there’s a high probability that certain words will come up, for example: pain, medicine, appointment, etc.

In our synopsis:
We can also analyze the context of the movie, which is embedded in the context of the synopsis. Attempt to analyze the cohesive devices in the following synopsis:

You may not find examples of all of them.
S1 Robert Neville (Will Smith) is a brilliant scientist. S2 However, he could not contain the terrible virus that was unstoppable, incurable, and man-made. S3 Somehow immune, Neville is now the last human survivor in what is left of New York City and maybe the world. S4 For three years, Neville has faithfully sent out daily radio messages, desperate to find any other survivors who might be out there. S5 But he is not alone. S6 Mutant victims of the plague - The Infected - lurk in the shadows... watching Neville's every move... waiting for him to make a fatal mistake. S7 Perhaps mankind's last, best hope, Neville is driven by only one remaining mission: to find a way to reverse the effects of the virus using his own immune blood. S8 But he knows he is outnumbered... and quickly running out of time. S9 You can’t miss it. S10 “I am a legend” is a movie that will take your breath away.

END OF UNIT I