DISCOURSE LEVEL _____ Sentence Connectivity

targer than the sentence text

We arrived at the shop just as the butcher was clearing away. As a result
the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones, and the little puppies liked the scraps.

SENTENCE LEVEL   Sentence

the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones, and the little puppies liked the scraps.

CLAUSE LEVEL   Clause

the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones

PHRASE LEVEL   Phrase

their unexpected bones

WORD LEVEL   Word

un- expect -ed

Discourse Analysis
1- Language in Use

D.A. deals with language in context, linking the text/utterance with its social situation.

1960s and 1970s out of work in different disciplines: linguistics, psychology, anthropology, sociology.

Contribution of semiotics and the French structuralist approach to the study of narrative.

Dell Hymes: speech in social settings (1964);

Language as social action: speech-act theory, conversational maxims (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, Grice, 1975), pragmatics, i.e. the study of meaning in context (Levinson, 1983; Leech, 1983).

Discourse Analysis
1- Language in Use

Every day we encounter or take part in a wide range of different types of spoken interactions….

Each situation has its own conventions and formulae, different role relationships, different purposes and different settings.

Discourse analysis is interested in all the above creating a fundamental distinction between:

LANGUAGE FORMS (grammatical, lexical, phonological) and

DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS (what we do with the language)

Discourse Analysis
1- Language in Use

British D.A. was greatly influenced by the work of M.A.K Halliday's functional approach to language (1973). His framework emphasizes the social functions of language and the thematic and informational structure of speech and writing

A **text** is "language that is functional", that is to say …….

"language that is doing some job in some context" (Halliday in Halliday & Hasan, 1985/ 1989: 10).

In this functional perspective, a text is therefore always seen as being strictly related to:

1- its **Context of Situation**, which is defined as the immediate social and situational environment in which a text is being realized,

2- the **Context of Culture** which is the 'outer', more external, or 'higher-order' context surrounding both the text and its specific Context of Situation.
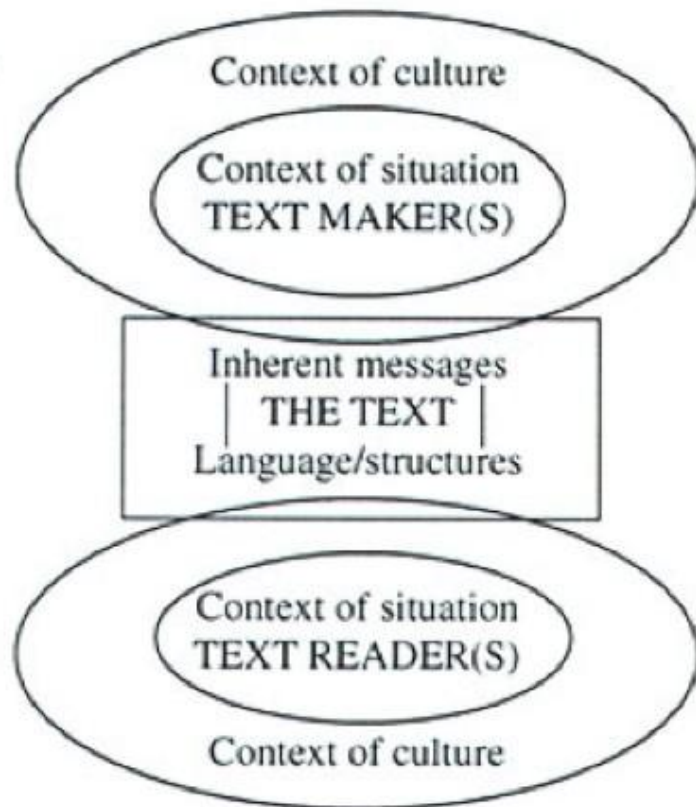
Fig 1: A VIEW OF THE READING SITUATION

A **text**, therefore, is basically made of meanings that, in order to be communicated, need to be encoded and expressed through a system of graphic, phonic or visual signs. As a thing in itself, it is **a consistent semantic unit**.

A text is both an object, a product of its environment, of its **Context of Situation** and **Context of Culture**, and an instance of social meaning in a specific situation.

The relation between **text** and **context** is a systematic and dynamic one:

- on the one hand, **a text is the result of the context** in which it is being realized and where language is being shaped to function purposefully;

- on the other hand, a context is then realized in turn by the text: **through a text a context is being created**.

(Halliday in Halliday & Hasan, 1985/ 1989: 10-11).

Context of Situation

Context of Situation is seen as being comprised of 3 components, or values, or dimension of variation:

Field, Tenor and Mode, or, respectively:

FIELD: what is going on?

TENOR: who is taking part?

MODE: how are the meanings being exchanged?

Field, Tenor and Mode.

Field – the nature of the ongoing <u>social speech event </u>and its <u>subject</u> <u>matter</u>, what is being spoken about;

Tenor – the human participants in the interaction and the relationship between them, involving their <u>status</u> and <u>discourse roles</u>, as well as the <u>attitude</u> they take towards the subject matter and their interlocutors,

Mode – the way that language is functioning in the interaction, which involves a series of features such as the <u>degree</u> to which the <u>process</u> of interaction is shared by the interlocutors, its 'channel', its 'medium' etc.

(see Halliday & Hasan, 1985/ 1989: 12)

Discourse Analysis

Semantic meaning (without the context) serves a pragmatic purpose [pragmatics: what people mean]

Utterance (enunciato). Linguists sometimes use utterances to simply refer to a unit of speech under study. The corresponding unit in written language is text.

Importance of context and shared knowledge.

Discourse Analysis
1- Language in Use

Language as **communicative purpose (function)**

Text: actual use, not an abstract unit of language (its purpose or function, something to act upon)

What a terms **denotes** v. what it **refers to**

Discourse Analysis

Slow Children Crossing

P1's intention
mediated through
DISCOURSE

P2's interpretation
mediated through
DISCOURSE

P1-- TEXT --
P2

speaker   *encoding*   *decoding*   listener
writer   reader

Discourse Analysis
Semiotics (Barthes)

- ***Sign = Signifier + Signified***

- ***SIGNIFIER =*** physical representation of a thing or of a concept. It is the EXPRESSION.

- ***SIGNIFIED =*** meaning. It is the CONTENT.

- ***CONTENT may be:***
  - *denotative* (the 'brain' definition)
  - *connotative* (the 'deeper' meaning - see, for ex., the word 'dog').

Discourse Analysis
Semiotics (Barthes)

- *"There is no place like home"* *(Dorothy, "The Wizard of Oz").*

- *HOME (signifier, physical representation, the expression : morphological, phonetical, lexical)*

- *HOME (signified, the content):*

Denotative content: the brain definition: home as a building, the place where I live;

Connotative content: the deeper meaning, the warmth, the atmosphere

Semiotics – Barthes

- Objects have meanings.

- Such meanings may be:

    - **symbolic** (= connotative meaning)
        - they have a metaphorical meaning

    - **taxonomic** (=denotative meaning)
        - they are included in a system where things are named and organized.
        - They are **classified**.

Barthes and the Rhetoric of Images

Semiotics – Barthes

- Objects, regarded as symbols, have connotative meanings

- Connotative meaning of objects can be:
  - **Existential**
    - Related to life but with non-human elements – market
  - **Aesthetic**
    - Related to design – for instance, still nature
  - **Technological**
    - Related to technology – i.e., when the object is useful for something else

Discourse Analysis
2- Communication

Proposition (we talk about something)

Reference (we make a connection with context)

Examples: *His flight should be here any minute.*

I'm on my way

Speech Act Theory (John Austin 1962, John Searle 1969)

Locutionary Act

Illocutionary Force

Perlocutionary Effect

Discourse Analysis
2- Communication

Speech Act Theory (John Austin 1962, John Searle 1969)
Locutionary Act
Illocutionary Force
Perlocutionary Effect

"Is there any salt?"

In uttering the locution "Is there any salt?" at the dinner table, one may thereby perform the distinct **locutionary act** of uttering the interrogatory sentence about the presence of salt, as well as the **illocutionary act** of requesting salt (**illocutionary force of request**), and the further **perlocutionary effect** of causing somebody to hand one the salt.

Discourse Analysis
2- Communication

Speech Act Theory (John Austin 1962, John Searle 1969)

Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Example (after a dinner with friends):

Man: Let's have coffee at our place

Wife: You're working tomorrow……

This is an *indirect speech act*. The wife could have expressed the same message with a *direct speech* act:

Man: Let's have coffee at our place

Wife: I am tired, I want to go to sleep

Discourse Analysis
2- Communication

Speech Act Theory (John Austin 1962, John Searle 1969)

Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Direct Speech Act: grammatical form and communicative function (i.e. illocutionary force) correspond.

Indirect Speech Act: grammatical form and communicative function do not correspond.

Is there any salt??

Other examples (requests and proposals):
- Would you like to meet for a coffee? - I have class....
- Can you call Samantha?

Discourse Analysis
2- Communication

Dell Hymes's 4 aspects of communicative competence

- more than grammatical competence to communicate effectively in a language;

- how language is used by members of a speech community to accomplish their purposes.

Four kinds of judgment:

1- Whether (and to what degree) something is formally **possible**

2- Whether (and to what degree) something is **feasible**

3- Whether (and to what degree) something is **appropriate** in relation to the context in which it is used

4- Whether (and to what degree) something is actually **performed**

Discourse Analysis
2- Communication

1- **possible**

2- **feasible**

3- **appropriate**

4- **performed**

1- Something possible within a formal system is grammatical

2- Something reasonable to say and unambiguous (e.g., two sisters were reunited after 8 years at a checking counter;

3- An act of communication which is pragmatically effective (appropriate in different contexts)

4- Co-occurrence (collocations): patterning in language; idioms; proverbs: They are been being careful; too many cooks spoil the broth; by and large; by hook or by crook…..

DA and Written Discourse

Cohesion and Coherence

«Clare loves potatoes. She was born in Ireland».

- The two sentences are cohesive (Clare/she)….
- The pronoun provides a link with the proper noun Clare in the 1st sentence

But they are only coherent if ……………

- Cohesion is only part of coherence in reading and writing.
- Cohesion is a guide to coherence, which is something created by readers in the act of reading a text.
- Coherence is the feeling that a text makes sense and that it is not a jumble of sentences.

DA and Written Discourse

Processing a text …

The surface of a text is characterized by 'markers' of various kinds.

For example –ed suffix is a marker of pastness.

Cohesive markers/devices (pronouns, determiners, demonstratives, other items….) create links across sentence boundaries and chain together items that are related.

However, reading a text is more complex than that.

We have to interpret it and this depends as much on what both author and reader puts/ brings into it.

The reader makes **cognitive links** in the text and recognizes **textual patterns**

DA and Written Discourse

...

These patterns are manifested in functional relationships between pieces of text (**textual segments**): phrases, clauses, sentences or groups of sentences.

Such relationships can be of various kinds:

Phenomenon-reason; **phenomenon-example**; **cause-consequence**; **Problem-solution**; **instrument-achievement**.

There are **signals/clues** that tell us how we should interpret the functional relation between segments. They are the supporting evidence to the cognitive activity of deducing the relation.

Here are some extracts from real texts. Decide what kind of relation exists between segments separated by a slash (/) in each case, and note any supporting evidence such as syntactic parallelism.

1. The BBC has put off a new corporate advertising campaign due to be aired this month, extolling the virtues and values of both television and radio. / A BBC spokesman delicately suggests that this may not be the most appropriate time to be telling the audience how wonderful the Beeb is.

    (*The Observer*, 16 November 1986: 42)

2. In Britain, the power of the unions added an extra dread, / which made British politics a special case; / on the Continent, Margaret Thatcher was regarded as something of a laboratory experiment, rather like a canary put down a mine-shaft to see if it will sing.

    (*The Sunday Times Magazine*, 30 December 1979: 14)

DA & GRAMMAR

Spoken and written discourse show grammatical connections between individual clauses and sentences.

3 types of grammatical links or cohesive devices:

1. **REFERENCE**
2. **ELLIPSIS/SUBSTITUTION**
3. **CONJUNCTION**

DA & GRAMMAR

1. REFERENCE

Links or cohesive devices: Pronouns, demonstratives, determiner *the* and expressions like *such a.*

(for a complete list, cfr. Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 37-9)

Anaphoric reference: looks back in the text

Exophoric reference: refers to the world outside the text (not truly cohesive, because its is not text-internal, but part of the reader's active role in creating coherence)

Cataphoric reference: we have to read on to understand the relation between the items and the referents (engaging the reader's attention)

DA & GRAMMAR

1. A ANAPHORIC REFERENCE

Problems with 'it' and 'this' 'that'

Also in other languages we may have problems with some cohesive items ('sua' in Italian, her? Your?; 'lei' , you?, she?)

These items can be used when an entity has already been marked as the focus of attention, by using a deictic word: *a, the, my, this, that*…

DA & GRAMMAR

1. ANAPHORIC REFERENCE

«Analyzing where a business stands in relation to its market and competition, enables it to identify potential opportunities for growth and potential threats. It is then possible to set strategic objectives and to predict the human financial resources needed to achieve them» (Intelligent Business, Intermediate, Longman: 23)

«Globalisation is forcing businesses to make cost savings by reducing operating costs. One way to do this is by outsorcing…» » (Intelligent Business, Intermediate, Longman: 58)

"Germany's Angela Merkel has restated her support for Jean-Claude Juncker to take over as president of the European Commission, at a mini-summit in Sweden. The chancellor said that while she was "happy" to say she wanted Mr Juncker for the top job, **it** was not "the main topic" of the two-day talks." (BBC news, 10 June 2014)

DA & GRAMMAR

1.b EXOPHORIC REFERENCE

Related to the immediate context. Reference to a world shared by both sender and receiver.

«Leave it on the table»

The Pope, the PM, the Queen.

Problems with L2 students:

«Do you like the classical music?» (music being heard)

«Do you like classical music?» (are you fond of that type of music?)

"The secure video conference room in the basement of the West Wing fell silent. Next to me, Secretary Bob Gates sat in his shirtsleeves with his arms folded and his eyes fixed intently on the screen. The image was fuzzy, but unmistakable. One of the two Black Hawk helicopters had clipped the top of the stone wall surrounding the compound and crashed to the ground. Our worst fears were coming true.."(The Times, 10 June 2014)

DA & GRAMMAR

1.C CATAPHORIC REFERENCE

Related to referents to come, to be mentioned later. Reader's attention hooked.

The untold message is: «Read on and find out more».

«It has often been compared to New Orlean's Mardi Gras as an outdoor celebration. Certainly New York's Mulberry Street and surrounding block have been as crowded over the last few days as Royal and Bourbon Streets in the French Quarter are for the Mardi Gras. More than three million people are estimated to have celebrated the 61° annual Feast of the San Gennaro down in Greenwich Village since it began on Thursday».

(The Guardian, 15 September 1987, quoted by McCarthy M. 1991: 42)

DA & GRAMMAR – Cohesive devices (reference)

1

LOOMINGS

CALL me Ishmael. Some years ago – never mind how long precisely – having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off – then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.

DA & GRAMMAR – Cohesive devices

2. ELLIPSIS/SUBSTITUTION

<u>Ellipsis</u>: Omission of elements. Speaker/writer choice made on a pragmatic assessment of the situation.

«The children will carry the small boxes, the adult the large ones»

(anaphoric);

«If you could, I'd like you to be back here at 5.30»

(cataphoric, but usually in front-placed subordinate clauses);

Verbal ellipsis, more complex:

A: Will anyone be waiting?   B: Bill will, I think (auxiliary echoing ellipsis)

A: Has she remarried? B: No, but she will one day, I'm sure (auxiliary contrasting)

DA & GRAMMAR – Cohesive devices

2. ELLIPSIS/SUBSTITUTION

Whole stretches of clauses may be omitted:

«Matteo Renzi said he would add 80 euros to some salaries as soon as he could, and he has»

Substitution is similar to ellipsis as it operates whether at the nominal, verbal or clausal level.

- One(s). I offered him an ice cream. He said he didn't want one.

- Do: Why don't you find another boyfriend? I might do that.

-So/not: Do you need a lift? If so, wait for me, if not, I'll see you there.

- Same: He chose the beef, I chose the same (I did the same)

DA & GRAMMAR – Cohesive devices

3. CONJUNCTION

A conjunction presupposes a textual sequence, and signals a relationship between segments of the discourse.

Type	Sub-types	Examples
Elaboration	apposition	In other words
	clarification	or rather
Extension	addition (adversative)	and/but
	variation	alternatively
Enhancement	spatio-temporal	there/previously
	causal-conditional	consequently/in that case

(Halliday 1935: 306)

TEAM WORK

Analyze the following texts. Look for cohesive devices.