

The Texture of Discourse

Towards an outline of connectivity theory

Jan Renkema

Tilburg University, The Netherlands

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recapped by Yi-Ting TSAI



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1 Intro : The landscape of discourse studies


Zellig Harris (1952) 2 related aims of discourse studies

1. “Continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limits of a single sentence”
2. “Correlating ‘culture’ and language (i.e., non-linguistic and linguistic behavior).”

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		APPROACH	FOCUS ON
1	SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics)	social and semiotic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• phenomena that occur beyond the sentence boundary
2	RST (Rhetorical Structure Theory)	agnostic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tools for analyzing discourse relationships• Computational Linguistics : build reliable corpora
3	D&C (Discourse and Cognition)	cognitive in character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore the processes involved in understanding combinations of sentences
4	MDA (Multimodal Discourse Analysis)	theoretically-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• describe the relationships between different modes

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		APPROACH	FOCUS ON
1	CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis)		•
2	CA (Conversation Analysis)		
3	D&I (Discourse and Institution)		•

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1. “Continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limits of a single sentence”
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The study aims to deal with Harris's first goal by, in spoken conversation or in written communication, **exploring in depth what makes a sequence of utterances or sentences a discourse.** → *connectivity* theory (texture of discourse)

1 Intro : Challenges for a connectivity theory

connectivity theory (texture of discourse)

- discourse grammar $D \rightarrow S1, S2$ vs formal grammar $S \rightarrow NP VP$
- Enormous variety of linking possibilities
- 7 tasks to fulfill in connectivity theory
 - i. Provide a framework for describing connectivity.
 - ii. Describe the variety of forms in which discourse relations occur.
 - iii. Explain the various functions that discourse relations can have.
 - iv. Construct a taxonomy of discourse relations.
 - v. Formulate form – function correspondences.
 - vi. Predict at any point in a discourse what discourse relations are likely to follow or what readers can reasonably expect as a continuation.
 - vii. Evaluate judgments on discourse relations in the communication process.

1 Intro : Challenges for a connectivity theory

connectivity theory (texture of discourse) - 7 tasks to fulfill in connectivity theory:

- i. Provide a framework for describing connectivity.
- ii. Describe the variety of forms in which discourse relations occur.

Consequence (4) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. I owe you a bottle of wine.

Cause (5) I owe you a bottle of wine, because Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books.

- iii. Explain the various functions that discourse relations can have.

Elaboration or Contradiction (1) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. How many exactly I do not know.

- iv. Construct a taxonomy of discourse relations.

Consequence (3) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. But he is not running out of ideas.

Cause (1) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. But how many exactly I do not know.

1 Intro : Challenges for a connectivity theory

connectivity theory (texture of discourse) - 7 tasks to fulfill in connectivity theory:

v. Formulate form – function correspondences.

cause-effect (4) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. I owe you a bottle of wine.

effect-cause (5) I owe you a bottle of wine, because Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books.

vi. Predict at any point in a discourse what discourse relations are likely to follow or what readers can reasonably expect as a continuation.

- “predictability of the continuation”
- (1) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. How many exactly I do not know.
- (2) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. He is the best known discourse researcher.


vii. Evaluate judgments on discourse relations in the communication process.

- counter-expectation (6) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. And I do not have a driver's license.
- world or specific knowledge/context (7) (A driver's license is said to have a negative influence on a writer's productivity. Here is an example:) Teun van Dijk wrote more than 20 books. And he does not have a driver's license.

connectivity theory (texture of discourse) chapter reference

1. Provide a framework for describing connectivity.
 - CH2: 2 principles on which the Connectivity Model is based, and then illustrate how these principles can guide a view on discourse.
2. Describe the variety of forms in which discourse relations occur.
3. Explain the various functions that discourse relations can have.
 - CH3 Conjunction : how clauses are linked in discourse
 - CH4 Adjunction : various functions of discourse relations (how info in clauses can be linked)
 - CH5 Interjection : how relations between segments function between writer and reader
4. Construct a taxonomy of discourse relations.
 - CH6 (Why is a taxonomy needed? Why this one? What is the use of it? Why this terminology?)
 - CH7 clarify the architecture of the taxonomy
 - CH8 model will be compared with other important approaches in discussing certain major issues in the study of discourse relations
5. Formulate form – function correspondences.
6. Predict at any point in a discourse what discourse relations are likely to follow or what readers can reasonably expect as a continuation.
7. Evaluate judgments on discourse relations in the communication process.
 - CH12 formulating form – function correspondences in corpus studies, showing recent examples of research into discourse continuation, and discussing discourse relations in the communication process.

2 : Discourse, texture and connectivity

- **Discourse** how utterances or sentences are linked
 - (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004): “...meaning unfolding in some particular context of situation” (page 587) and “...something that happens, in the form of talking or writing, listening or reading” (page 524).
 - *discurrere* latin
 - i. ‘to run on,’ like a speaker who runs on about a topic;
 - ii. ‘to run to and fro,’ indicating that something runs from one person to another.
- **Texture**
 - structure of components & describe the character or quality of something
- **Connectivity**
 - = structure helps to detect the essential characteristics of discourse
 - includes **cohesion** and **coherence**
 - (1) The children went to the beach. They came home with sandy shoes.
 - (2) The children went to the beach. They came home with a very special conch.
 - i. cohesion : phenomena **physically** present in a discourse which establish its internal ties;  **verbal elements**
 - interpretation of a constituent depends on another element in the discourse
 - ii. coherence : **mental activities** a reader has to process in order to derive a meaning from contiguous sentences.
 - the interpretation of a constituent depends on knowledge prompted by the information in the discourse.

2 : Discourse, texture and connectivity

- Discourse

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‘running on’ : the listener wait for more

(3) The children went very gladly to the beach on their free afternoon.

(4) The children went to the beach. They were very glad. It was their free afternoon.

‘running to and fro’ : addresser and addressee

2 : Discourse, texture and connectivity

- Discourse

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- *discurrere* latin
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- *discursive* and *dialogic*

(5) Genesis 2:23

“This is flesh of my flesh,” or “She shall be called Woman,”

Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

explanatory and argumentative ➡ *discursive*

(6) Genesis 3:1b, 2

He [the serpent] said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.”

QA format ➡ *dialogic*

2 : Discourse, texture and connectivity

- Discourse

- *discursive*

- i. discourse is to be seen as an **expanded macroproposition** (inversion of the idea of macrostructure)
 - macrostructure: containing propositions that can be summarized in one or more macropropositions (Van Dijk, 1980)
 - ii. **intraclausal**(in), **interclausal**(between) → **supraclausal**(within)
 - iii. diversity of verbalization: dependent clauses, independent clauses, nominalization, in the general wording..etc
 - iv. discourse relations parallel constituent relations.

- *dialogic*

- i. audience orientation. or **answers to anticipated readers' questions**
 - ii. capacity (10a) **3 levels of questions:**
 - This politician, who has been living in France for the last two years, will return to his country tomorrow. **What's the purpose of this politician to return to his country?**
 - discourse type (the superstructure) : **"What happened next?"**
 - discourse topic or subtopic (the macrostructure) : schematic knowledge of the topic new elections.
 - form or style of the discourse segment under consideration : evoke a question
 - no specific continuations (9c) Miss Smith and Mr. Johnson did not attend the meeting. Nevertheless, we succeeded in making the necessary decisions.
 - (10c) Tomorrow this politician, who has been living in France for the last two years, will return to his country. If he postpones his journey home, he may not be able to participate in the elections.

2 : Discourse discursive and dialogic

Framework -> RST

Mother Teresa

“Can you give an example?”

1. Mother Teresa often gives people unexpected advice 2. When a group of Americans, many in the teaching profession, visited her in Calcutta, 3. they asked her for some advice to take home to their families. 4. “Smile at your wives,” she told them. 5. “Smile at your husbands.” 6. Thinking that perhaps the counsel was simplistic, 7. coming from an unmarried person, 8. one of them asked, “Are you married?” 9. “Yes,” she replied, to their surprise, 10. “and I find it hard sometimes to smile at Jesus. 11. He can be very demanding.”

2-5
Exemplification

7 Cause

- dialogic
 - answers readers' questions
 - discuss possible interpretations of the function of a discourse segment

2 : Discourse discursive and dialogic

Framework -> RST

The Cause relation in dialogic perspective

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| (13a) | She doesn't know anything about living together. She is unmarried. | -Explanation |
| (b) | She can't have mentioned her husband. She is unmarried. | -Evidence |
| (c) | She can go out with any man she wants. She is unmarried. | -Justification |
| (d) | Maybe you could ask her to come along with you. She is unmarried. | -Motivation |

- dialogic
 - answers readers' questions
 - **discuss possible interpretations of the function of a discourse segment**

2 : Discourse discursive and dialogic

Framework -> RST

- (12a) 2. When a group of Americans, many in the teaching profession, visited her in Calcutta, 3. they asked her for some advice to take home to their families.
- (b) During a visit of a group of Americans she was asked for some advice for taking home.
- (c) Once a group of Americans visited her in Calcutta. Many of them were in the teaching profession. They asked her for some advice to take home to their families.

possibility to add extra information

Not same info,
but same circumstantial relationship

Info expanded in full segment
→emphasis

- discursive
 - discourse relations parallel constituent relations.

6.1: Conjunction, Adjunction, Interjunction

3. **Conjunction** : the linking of segments via **textual elements**

- linking form to form
- ties between building blocks of different forms

4. **Adjunction** : the content characteristics of the segment linkings

- linking information to information
- ways of building blocks of different material to constitute a wall

5. **Interjunction** : the ‘interactional’ qualities of the segment linkings

- linking addresser to addressee
- ways of the composition of building blocks that can indicate what is outlined on the wall

6 : Connectivity model - Adjunction

Ch3~5 Conjunction, Adjunction, Interjunction

3. **Conjunction** : the linking of segments (ties between building blocks of different forms)
 - a. The discourse is based on reference between conjoined constituents from various discourse segments.
 - **non sequiturs** : two sentences cannot be meaningfully connected to each other.
4. **Adjunction** : the content characteristics of the segment linkings (ways of building blocks of different material to constitute a wall)
5. **Interjunction** : the 'interactional' qualities of the segment linkings (ways of the composition of building blocks that can indicate what is outlined on the wall)