

Language Acquisition: Discourse, Narrative and Pragmatics

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Abstract:

The acquisition of pragmatics involves developing competence in the communicative uses of sentences, especially in speech acts, conversations, speech registers, and extended speaking turns, or “discourse.” Children learn to create “texts,” sequences of at least two related sentences through the experience of scaffolded conversations in the context of action. Their texts become progressively more decontextualized, referring to others’ reactions, intentions and interpretations of events (Theory of Mind), as well as the events themselves. Narrative and expository texts achieve *cohesion* through referential

and semantic links that bridge across sentences; they achieve *coherence* through a global hierarchical structure. (96 words)

Discourse, Narrative and Pragmatics

In linguistics, the term “**discourse**” refers to a structural unit larger than the sentence. Of the many definitions for it in a standard dictionary, linguistics picks out length and coherence as criterial. Discourse minimally involves more than one sentence, and the sentences must be contingent. Just as every string of words is not a sentence, not every sequence of utterances is considered a “**text**.” For discourse, there are requirements of relevance in form and especially in meaning. Texts can be created by more than one participant, as in conversation, or in various forms of monologue, most notably narrative and exposition.

The study of discourse is generally considered the province of **Pragmatics** in that it involves the uses of sentences, (the products of a syntax), when people attempt to communicate information. Analogous to “syntactic competence,” learners must also develop “**communicative competence**,” (Hymes, 1972) where utterances are judged less in terms of form than with respect to how well they meet the requirements of various speech situations. However, to the extent that there are formal dependencies across sentences, for example relationships of co-reference or structural mappings governing ellipsis, the study of discourse may fall under syntax; and the description of degrees of

relevance or coherence between sentences places it within various semantic frameworks. (Poetry, a specialized form of discourse exploits sound patterns as well to create links between successive lines, but those phenomena are only rarely treated within phonology.)

Research on the acquisition of pragmatics in first language learning focuses on four major aspects of communicative competence.

1. Developing **speech acts** or the communicative functions of sentences in conversation. For example, using utterances to report events, to make statements (or declarations) about the world, to request information or action, or to prohibit action (Dore, 1975; Searle, 1969).

2. Emerging **conversational skill** in face-to-face verbal interaction. These include knowing when and how to take a turn in conversation; how to initiate, elaborate, or terminate a topic; and how to respond to a speaker in keeping with the pragmatic constraints set by the preceding utterance (e.g., direct question forms demand answers; indirect questions [“can you pass the salt?”] demand actions). They also include skills in detecting the presence and source of any breakdown in communication and knowing how to repair such breakdowns (Garvey, 1984; McTear, 1985).

3. Adjusting one’s language to fit the social context of the conversation in keeping with cultural conventions and social roles. These involve issues of politeness, formality, and the age or status of one’s listener in what have been called “**styles**” or “**registers**” of speech.

4. Taking an extended turn to tell a story (**narration**), explain an event, give directions for how to make something or how to get somewhere, or to persuade one's listener in an argument (**exposition**). These are referred to as different “**genres**” of extended discourse and require the organization of utterances into coherent and cohesive messages.

Early pragmatics development

A useful framework for understanding early pragmatics development derives from the theory of **speech acts** (Austin 1962, Searle, 1969). According to Austin, speaking is “doing things with words.” All sentences are speech acts, but the clearest illustration is the performance of those acts that can only be done with words, like promising or marrying. For example, the sentence “I now pronounce you husband and wife” is not a description of an event, but its utterance is the event. The marriage pact is not made until those words are spoken by a qualified person in the context of a wedding ceremony. In Austin's view, sentences have three components: their intended function, “**illocutionary** force”; their form, “**locution**”; and their effect on the listener, or “**perlocution**.”

By moving speech into the sphere of action, Speech Act theory points to non-verbal behaviors as precursors to speaking. Using the framework of Speech Acts, Bates, Camaioni and Volterra (1975) identified three phases in the earliest pragmatic development of children: the perlocutionary, illocutionary, and locutionary phases. For example, stretching for something out of reach, an infant might make an involuntary

effort noise. If the noise alerted a helpful adult to the child's activity, so she or he handed the object to the child, one could say that the child's behavior had an effect, but not that the child intended to communicate. The act would be "perlocutionary," but not "illocutionary." A slightly older child might look intently at the adult and grab for a toy in her hand. Bates and her colleagues would ascribe intention to the action with the intent look that accompanied it and call it "illocutionary." The final "locutionary" phase begins when the child has the intention to communicate and uses words to do so (whether or not the perlocution, or effect, is the same as the one intended).

In this vein, Dore (1975) reports a child in the one-word stage, who used intonation to change the illocutionary force of a single locution: "mama" with a falling contour to name her, with a rising contour to make a question, and with an abrupt rise-fall to call her. As their linguistic repertory grows, children can move from "**protoimperatives**" (or "**protodeclaratives**") to actual imperatives and assertions, and eventually to the whole range of functions that words make possible: requesting, prohibiting, greeting, cursing, promising, labeling, etc.

Conversation as discourse:

Among the pragmatic functions toddlers master toward the end of the second year, like answering, repeating, and requesting, those that elicit further speech are key. When children can both speak and elicit speech, they have the basic tools for creating discourse through conversation. Conversations in turn have sets of rules to be mastered.

Grice (1975) and Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, (1974) have described such sets of rules based on observations of successful and unsuccessful conversations. The most basic principles are 1) to take turns and 2) to be “cooperative.” Grice defines Cooperation in terms of four **maxims**, the Maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. When it is a person’s turn in conversation, his or her contribution should provide neither too much nor too little information, and it should be relevant, clear, and true.

The first of these behaviors to show development is **turn-taking**. In many cultures, mothers will treat their infants and toddlers as conversational partners well before the children are capable of effective turn-taking. One may respond to the child’s smiles and burps as well as his vocalizations, thus modeling responses in a turn-taking rhythm and extending periods of **joint attention** with the child. Following another’s gaze and establishing joint attention about an object appear to be themselves important precursors to conversation. Research shows that time spent in joint attention at 6 to 8 months predicts later language measures (Mundy & Gomes, 1998). Indeed, periods of joint attention are the necessary context for conversation. Over the second year, children move from responding to others’ vocalizations with actions to responding mostly with other vocalizations, i.e. conversing.

A second key to promoting conversation is learning to be relevant. The second speaker must make his or her responses share the first speaker’s topic and add new information to it. As novice conversationalists, children depend heavily on assistance (or “**scaffolding**”) from their conversational partner. In general, children have been shown to

respond more to questions than non-questions, and the questions help by directing the nature of the response. Caregivers encourage children's contingent responses by asking questions and doing what Kaye and Charney (1980) call "**turnabouts**," turns which first respond to the child's prior utterance and then request further response. Still, the ability to give contingent responses, despite mothers' scaffolding of children's efforts, is slow to develop.

Preschool conversations between toddlers are tentative at best when neither party can reliably be relevant. Even in adult-child dialogue two-year-old children's responses tend to be mainly non-contingent. In a longitudinal study of dialogues between two young girls between the ages of 4 and 6, McTear (1985) traced the emergence of greater and greater thematic continuity in their conversation as utterances came to serve the dual role of responding to a preceding utterance as well as providing for further talk. However, Dorval and Eckerman (1984) showed that second graders (eight-year-olds) were nearly as likely to give non-contingent responses as contingent ones, with significant improvement not seen until fifth grade (age 11 or so).

Skill at conversational exchanges also involves being aware of when a turn is not successful. Efforts at repairing misunderstood turns is seen before age three (Garvey, 1984) The youngest children tend to simply repeat their failed messages, while children after three are more likely to revise their messages (Tomasello, Farrar, & Dines, 1984). Three to four-year-old children respond appropriately to a variety of requests for clarification from the caregiver, including those that request simply a repetition of an element of the child's utterance, a confirmation of what was heard, or further

specification of an element in the child's message (Garvey, 1984). However, use of such clarification requests by the child herself to repair her own understanding is still inconsistent in the preschool years. In a variety of communication tasks, preschoolers often fail to question ambiguous information and do not themselves provide maximally informative messages (Garvey, 1984).

Finally, preschool children are also learning how to change their style, or register, of speech according to the needs and desires of their interlocutor. Politeness forms begin to emerge in two-year-olds (Ervin-Tripp, 1977), who have demonstrated that they know to change the degree of directness of their requests when prompted to say it "even more nicely." Four-year-olds have also shown that they speak differently to a two-year-old than to another four-year-old or an adult, making some of the accommodations associated with motherese for the younger children (Hoff-Ginsberg & Kreuger, 1991). Where different dialects are involved, observers have recorded instances of code-switching among three- and four-year-olds; the children used a more formal, mainstream dialect with adults, but more dialect features when addressing peers (Wyatt, 1991).

In the preschool years children take many steps toward learning to produce discourse. In the context of conversation, they gradually move from observations and comments on ongoing activity to discussions of absent people and things involved in past or future events. That is, face-to-face conversation provides the option of using the non-linguistic context to support the interpretation of what is being said. When the speaker cannot rely on the hearers having had the same experiences to help them understand the message, the speech must be more independent of the speaking context, or

“decontextualized.” It must be more explicit, and will typically require more complexity in syntax and cohesion (Tannen, 1982). Early moves to decontextualized speech in a conversational setting retain the potential benefit of interaction—questions and answers back and forth that help the speaker know what the hearer did not understand and to progressively refine her meaning. Thus, conversation provides both the motivation and the medium for children to take longer and longer solo turns.

From conversation to longer texts, narrative and expository

Longer turns in the context of scaffolded conversations with a mature speaker lead children toward their first narrative and expository texts. Narratives are essentially connected passages relating past events (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Even among adults, they can commonly be **co-constructed** in conversation with contributions from two or more participants, but a classic narrative is a self-contained production by one speaker (or writer).

Expository texts share many characteristics of narratives. They, too, are extended turns of decontextualized speech or writing, but their primary purpose is to convey information. There is no requirement that explanations relate events, although they often incorporate narrative passages. Different genres of exposition are more or less structured depending on their purposes and the amount of information that they need to package. A narrative or exposition must be structured to both impart information and govern the flow of the information. Through various linguistic forms, they distinguish what is

background from what is highlighted, what is given from what is new (Hickmann, 2003; Berman & Slobin, 1994).

Mature narratives present not only “what happened” but further engage the listener in giving a perspective on the motivations and consequences of the events related. Using the same words and structures available for individual sentences, stories construct a **hierarchical framework** for the whole text. For example, articles in English (“a” and “the”) identify definite versus non-definite noun phrases within the sentence, but also function across sentences by signaling what is given (has come before) from what is being currently introduced. Languages without articles, like Chinese, recruit other forms, e.g. word-order shifts, to perform the same functions (Hickmann, 2003). In both languages, such linguistic devices are “**multifunctional**,” having one function within the sentence and at the same time another function in the discourse.

In addition, stories set up implicit expectations on the part of the narrator and also the characters in them. Such expectations derive both from world knowledge, of the usual sequence of events, and from the particular circumstances of their setting in a given story. The economical expression of the different levels of **perspective** and expectation represented by the characters distinct from those of the narrator requires the integration of sophisticated cultural, linguistic, and cognitive skills by the speaker. The five-year-old, often considered in command of his syntactic system, is still very much a novice in creating sustained discourse. Many of the elements of successful narration and exposition are still developing as children move into adolescence (Hickmann, 2003: 324).

Relatively little research has been done on children's engagement with expository texts although they clearly play an important part in their developing understanding of the world. The majority of children's school texts outside of "language arts" are exposition and there is perhaps reason to include it more in early education.

Narrative development

Much more attention has been given to narrative in research and in early schooling. Labov (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) and later Bruner (1986) argue that narratives are a fundamental way in which humans encode and make sense of their experiences. It is a daunting task to understand and describe the many strands of development involved in the process of narration, but much progress has been made since Labov (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972) brought the attention of linguists to naturally occurring narratives in people's everyday lives and sought to apply the basic techniques of structural linguistic analysis to narrative functions. Just a few years later, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) seminal work paved the way for focused study of **microstructures**, or the specific links creating **cohesion** across sentences.

The distinction between **cohesion** and **coherence** in narrative is generally framed in terms of the contrast between linear or "**local**" versus hierarchical or "**global**" discourse organization. So, "linguistic cohesion" is seen for the most part in adjacent clauses, while "thematic coherence" pertains more to **macrostructures** at the global level of plot organizations. By studying narratives from different languages and cultures,

studies can use the contrast of stories made both within and across groups, finding elements subject to individual differences, and finding candidates for discourse universals in the commonalities of macro- and micro-structures across cultures.

Looking at development across time in the ways discourse functions are mapped onto forms in the stories of different age groups in different language communities, researchers have picked out a general progression of which functions are successfully encoded at what age. One can also see how different languages make encoding one or another function more or less difficult to achieve. For example, in English the presence of an early acquired inflectional morpheme for progressive aspect (“-ing”) encourages early marking of events as ongoing. In contrast, children learning German or Hebrew, which both lack a similar inflection for aspect, do not have a comparable signal of the distinction and thus may be later in recognizing the need to recruit available forms, like adverbs, for it (Berman & Slobin, 1994: 34).

Another area of important development in narratives involves the child’s **Theory of Mind (ToM)**. Bruner (1986) makes the distinction between the “**landscape of action**” (i.e. the events that took place) and the “**landscape of consciousness**” (i.e. the protagonists’ reactions, intentions, and interpretations of the events). The ability to understand and express the landscape of consciousness involves a child’s growing awareness of and ability to reason about the mental states of other people (Astington, 1993) as well as the child’s mastery of the language forms that refer to mental states, especially noun clause complements, e.g. “thinks that something is true,” “does not

believe what he sees” (de Villiers & de Villiers, 2000). Such clauses permit the expression of two propositions with different truth values in one sentence; for example, a false clause can be embedded in a true clause so the narrator can express something about the character distinct from his own thoughts.

Research Frameworks for Narrative Development

Several comprehensive studies of narrative development have ensued in the last three decades. Some focused on the macro-structure of the event sequences in the form of “**story grammars**”: e.g. Labov himself (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972), Mandler (1978), Stein (1982), Applebee (1978), McCabe & Peterson (1991). Others focused on the microstructure, and). still others treated the relationships between micro- and macrostructure (Berman & Slobin, 1994; Hickmann, 2003),.

Berman & Slobin (1994) merits particular attention in both the breadth and depth of their study, reported comprehensively in a 1994 volume, and in the host of studies their project has spawned. These “frog stories,” like the pear stories (Chafe, 1980), the bear story (Snow, Tabors, Nicholson, & Kurland, 1995), the cat and horse stories (Hickmann, 2003), and many others, use a single set of stimulus pictures presented to different populations under the same conditions. For example, Mayer’s frog stories, especially *Frog, Where Are You?* (1969) have been told by adults and children of different ages, speaking languages of different typologies, with different language handicaps (Downs syndrome, deafness, Williams syndrome), different linguality (bi- and tri-lingual), and so forth.

Developing Narrative Coherence

Models of plot structure (or “**story grammars**”) provide the frame for describing and analyzing children’s growth in coherence. Labov’s influential schema (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) is one of the first to define the minimal characteristics of a well-formed story. It should have an **onset**, an **unfolding**, and a **resolution** (roughly, a beginning, middle, and end). In a later formulation (Labov, 1972), the onset of a fully-formed narrative has an **abstract**, a brief statement of what the story is about, and also provides an **orientation** or **setting**, the “who, where, and when.” The unfolding is the obligatory nucleus of the story and consists of one or a series of **complicating actions**, that lead to a **high point** and then to the **resolution** or result. At the end of the story, the narrator provides a **coda**, a short passage that indicates that the story is over and may bridge back to the conversation the story was embedded in. In this schema, the strictly “**narrative**” **clauses** recall the temporally-ordered experience being recounted; the “free” clauses or “**evaluative**” **elements** have no fixed position in the text, but occur throughout and together give the motivation or commentary to the story. Evaluative statements convey the narrators’ personal involvement in the story through expressing their own or the characters’ desires, intentions, thoughts, or opinions--Bruner’s “landscape of consciousness.” Evaluation is found in “free” clauses or can be embedded in the fixed narrative clauses in the form, for example, of intensifiers, similes, hypotheticals, etc. which go beyond a simple direct telling of what actually happened.

Stein's model (1982) is similar to Labov's but focuses more attention on the unfolding components of the story. In her story grammar, after a **setting**, there are **episodes**, each with an **initiating event** and an **internal response** which motivate an **attempt** leading to a **consequence** and resulting in a **reaction**. One aspect of growth in children's stories, then, occurs in their progressively more complete episode structure. (See also Mandler [1978], McCabe & Peterson [1991], Trabasso & Rodkin [1994]; Berman & Slobin, Part IIa [1994].)

Some authors have highlighted different schema for stories in various cultures and subcultures (Gee, 1989). Still, a basic sequence for the development of children's ability to tell a story from a set of pictures, (like those reported in Applebee, 1978, or Berman & Slobin, 1994), is more or less as follows:

1. Three- to four-year-olds only occasionally provide minimal narrative sequences (two or three dynamic events related in a temporal chain), but more often respond to the request to "look at the pictures...and then tell a story" with picture descriptions which treat each scene as an isolated event. Applebee (1978) elaborates further on pre-narrative development, characterizing children's most primitive stories as "**heaps**," lists of unrelated referents and events.
2. In a second phase, children organize "**chains**" of events ordered in time. These tend to focus on the most salient pictures, rather than the events that advance the story.

3. Next, a **causal structure** emerges (Trabasso & Rodkin, 1994). Early causal relationships generally begin by relating local or adjacent events and only later become more global.
4. At an intermediate level, children may manage one or two well-formed **episodes**, but are not able to sustain the organization throughout. Among the many stories analyzed by Peterson and McCabe (1991) one frequently seen category includes those that end at the high point, (i.e. do not manage to bring the story to a resolution).
5. The most mature stage projects a causal structure over the whole story, where events relate to an initial goal and attempts to reach the goal. The outcome is coordinated with respect to the goal and includes evaluative commentary, all organized in what Berman and Slobin (1994), following Guiora, call an “**action-structure**” that beyond its content communicates through its organization the hierarchy of importance within the story.

Support for these stages also comes from studies of children’s comprehension of and judgments about texts. Esperet (cited in Hickmann, 2003), for example, presented children with four types of candidate texts: 1) unconnected sentences, 2) event scripts, with a temporal order but no episodic structure, 3) incomplete stories, and 4) complete stories. Consistent with the findings from production studies, the five- to seven-year-olds could differentiate true stories from unconnected sentences, but only the older children,

the nine- to eleven-year-olds showed sensitivity to the difference between complete and incomplete stories and scripts.

Well-formedness also appears to affect children's processing of stories. When subjects are presented with **canonical** stories and stories where different narrative units are deleted or displaced, even five-year-olds will show better recall for the canonical stories, and generally will repair anomalous stories in retelling by making them more compatible with their canonical versions (Mandler, 1978).

Developing narrative cohesion

The most influential framework underlying discussions of development in this area derives from Halliday and Hasan's *Cohesion in English* (1976). They describe (and propose coding for) the micro-structure of a text, the **semantic links** between elements across sentences. Halliday and Hasan present a comprehensive taxonomy for five types of cohesion—**Reference**, **Substitution**, **Ellipsis**, **Conjunction**, and **Lexical**. They listed over a dozen subtypes for each, and in their coding indicated the direction, distance (number of intervening sentences) between the cohesive element and its source, and whether the link was direct or **mediated**, linked to its source through another cohesive element which is also linked to the same source. Most links are considered to be **anaphoric**, referring to an element in the preceding text, but can also be **cataphoric**, referring to an element in text that follows. Reference that can be determined only from the situation outside the text is **exophoric**, as opposed to textual or **endophoric** links.

In general, as children get older, one sees fewer instances of deixis and exophoric references, and more connectivity within the text. The most crucial ties concern those that maintain **reference** to the entities in the stories and those that locate the events in **space** and **time**. For tracking shifts in spatial location, one element is established as an **anchor** and then subsequent actions take place in some relation to the anchor. For time, the story sets a tense for the **event time** and then moves back and forth on a time line between the event time and the **utterance time** (Hickmann, 2003).

The key principle is that the text, whether narrative or expository, must establish its own reference points in a way that does not presuppose prior knowledge of them. Once they are established, reference to them must be maintained consistently, until new elements are introduced and become available for **presupposition** by subsequent elements. Managing presupposition is a task that requires both linguistic knowledge of the particular forms used in a given language and conceptual awareness of the knowledge state of the listener. For example, in English, the use of the definite article “the” or a personal pronoun (“she,” “it,” “they”) presupposes an antecedent. To use them in a **first mention** without an antecedent is anomalous or immature. But once an entity has been mentioned, it becomes anomalous not to use the presupposing forms. Ex. “John returned from a trip. He brought news of his travels,” not *“he brought news of a trip.” Younger children will generally use these forms in relation to their own knowledge base. In telling a narrative, though, the knowledge of the hearer is almost always different from the speaker’s, so the narrator must suppress his or her own reference points and maintain the ties from the listener’s **point of view**—or in some cases, from the character’s.

A fundamental error for young narrators is to use a presupposing form for first mention and indeed we see that four- and five-year-olds give appropriate **newness marking** of first mentions at or below chance levels, whereas by nine or ten years old, they reach near adult levels (92%, Hickmann, 2003:196). Note that young Chinese speakers have the same task of marking newness, but their language does this with word order, whether the element comes before or after the verb. Since word order has so many other functions linguistically, the task of marking newness is even more complicated for Chinese than for English learners.

Similarly, for **maintaining reference** in English, one option is to use a zero form (ellipsis), e.g. “He went up the rock and 0 called for the frog.” The choice of the null subject requires both discourse knowledge of when it is appropriate and syntactic knowledge of how to conjoin verb phrases. Berman and Slobin (1994:181) report that nearly all of the English preschoolers used null subjects in their stories, but not for discourse purposes. Unlike subject ellipsis among older narrators, the preschoolers used them either ungrammatically or conversationally, (in response to questions their listeners used to prompt them to continue). Here, the obstacle appears to be that the younger children have not completely mastered the conditions on phrasal conjunction (“he went and 0 called”).

Cohesion is also enhanced by communicating a clear temporal order. Early stories tend to give no indication of the relative timing of events. By kindergarten, half of the children give adverbial sequencers like “then,” “and then,” or “next.” By second grade or so, more children begin to use adverbial time clauses and create complex

relationships between events (Pearson & Ciolli, 2004). (See also Berman and Slobin [1994] for a description of the emergence of temporal links in the frog stories.)

Developing the Evaluative Function

Stories must have coherence and cohesion to be interpretable, but they must develop evaluative elements to be meaningful. Actions make most sense when we know the actors' motivation and intentions, and stories are more engaging when they relate the actors' emotions and desires and the narrator's reactions. The narrator must paint the "landscape of consciousness" for the listener.

The earliest references to mental states in young children's narratives talk about the simple emotions or desires of the characters – happiness, sadness, fear, and anger in the case of emotion, and what they want or like in the case of desires (. However, such expressions of mental state are still rather rare in the narratives of five-year-olds although children at this age have a fairly well developed theory of mind (Astington, 1993). Over the period between 5 and 9 years of age children begin to incorporate more and more of the landscape of consciousness into their stories, and more complex emotions like surprise or guilt or jealousy and references to the characters' cognitive states (what they believe, know, or are thinking about) begin to emerge (Berman & Slobin, 1994; Pearson & Ciolli, 2004).

Relation to emerging literacyThe relationship between theory of mind and discourse appears to be reciprocal. In order to tell an authentic story, rich with the

internal reactions and cognitions of the characters, the child must have a conceptual understanding of mental states, a well-developed theory of mind. Similarly, a mature communicative competence requires the child to be able to judge the communicative intentions and desires of their interlocutor as well as infer their state of knowledge or ignorance about the topic of discourse. At the same time, the rich narratives that are told or read to children and their active participation in back and forth conversation about them provide the developing child with some of the best evidence from which to build a theory of mind (Nelson, 1996).

Indeed, the pragmatic frameworks which guide the interaction of speakers in communicative situations build, with each new element of mastery, the tools to take the child to the next step, continually closer to adult norms for discourse. Many aspects of children's oral language predict their later skill with written discourse through the middle school years (Tabors, Roach & Snow, 2001).

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Keywords:

Pragmatics, communicative competence, speech acts, scaffolded conversations, speech registers, discourse, texts, decontextualized speech, Theory of Mind, narrative, expository text, cohesion, semantic links, coherence, global hierarchical structure, episode, story grammar, Grice's Maxims, joint attention.

Suggestions for Cross-listings

We count at least 80 articles in the list of topics which treat elements discussed in this article “**Discourse, Narrative and Pragmatics.**” In addition to these three specific topics as listed under psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, philosophical, anthropological, second language and sign language perspectives, the following individuals and topics are either mentioned in our article or seem to us particularly related to our article. (If one were to limit the choice to 10, we suggest the ones with stars.):

Searle
 Bruner, Jerome
 Labov
 Sacks, Harvey
 Tannen
 *Cohesion and coherence (linguistic approaches)
 *Communicative Competence
 Conversation Analysis
 Dialogue and Interaction
 *Discourse Anaphora
 Evaluation in text
 Evolution of Pragmatics
 *Foregrounding
 Genre and Genre Analysis
 Macrostructure
 Metapragmatics

Neo-Gricean pragmatics

Oral traditions and spoken discourse

Pragmatics and the Theory of Mind

*Coherence: a psycholinguistic approach,

*Referential relations in spoken discourse

*Register, overview

Relevance theory

*Representation in language and mind, Theories of

*Scaffolding Shared Knowledge

*Speech Act Classification and Definition

Speech Act literal and non-literal

Syntax - Pragmatics interface, Overview of

Text Analysis and Stylistics

Variation and Language

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Peter de Villiers received his BA in Philosophy and Psychology from Oxford University and his Ph.D in Experimental Psychology from Harvard University. After teaching at Harvard University as an Assistant Professor of Psychology, he came to Smith College in 1979 where he is now the Sophia and Austin Smith Professor of Psychology. Co-author of two book on language acquisition and a language arts curriculum for deaf students, he currently studies the acquisition of pragmatic skills in normal and language disordered children, focusing particularly on children's understanding of communicative roles and speech acts, their question asking, and their narrative skills. He also studies the acquisition of complex syntax in deaf students' signed and spoken language and its relationship to theory of mind and false belief understanding and the literacy development of those students.