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FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF DISCOURSE MARKERS

До дискурсивних маркерів належать мовні одиниці, які є носіями особливої, "ущербної" семантики, яка проявляється лише при співвіднесенні висловлення, у якому знаходиться один із дискурсивних маркерів, з іншим фрагментом інформації, яка іноді присутня в дискурсі імпліцитно. У статті пропонується функціональна класифікація дискурсивних маркерів, що заснована на функціях, які вони виявляють на рівні дискурсу.

Ключові слова: *дискурсивний маркер, імпліцитна пропозиція, дискурсивні конектори, дискурсивні корелятори, дискурсивні лінкери.*

Discourse markers possess a special, "defective" semantics that is revealed only in discourse by means of correlating the utterance with a discourse marker with another (explicit or implicit) discourse fragment. The article offers a functional classification of discourse markers based on their discourse functions.

Key words: *discourse marker, implicit proposition, discourse connectors, discourse correlatives, discourse linkers.*

In addition to deciding what to say, speakers must decide how to say it. There are a lot of devices language users produce to make their speech product coherent, that is, to connect the utterances within discourse logically, semantically and grammatically. Interpreting discourse, and thus establishing coherence, is a matter of speakers using their linguistic knowledge to relate the discourse world to people, objects and state of affairs beyond discourse itself.

Quite often students of English find it hard to produce a coherent speech product and their utterances look isolated, though from the semantic point of view, their speech is correct. We suggest that this should be explained by the fact that Ukrainian students subconsciously avoid using some language units (or, if they do, they misuse them!), especially those items that have no direct fully corresponding equivalents in the Ukrainian language, like *anyway, in fact, after all*. The interpretation of such units depends on the context and sometimes a dictionary will not help. At the same time, language units of this type are regularly used by native speakers in verbal interaction. And how can the students use them if they do not know their meaning and their function in the text? The answer to this question lies in the fact that these lexical items are devoid of nominative power, their meaning is by no means referential. The semantic meaning they possess is defective as it is revealed only when correlating discourse fragments. It is really hard to teach a student how and when he should use these words as they lack referential meaning, and their scope of inherent semantic meaning and pragmatic specifications for

usage are extremely difficult to define. It follows that we will never be able to understand how they work if we do not try to find their common features and functional characteristics in order to produce their classification. Besides, their meaning is embedded in their functions. In other words, our point is that the units traditionally belonging to different classes of words should be classified as belonging to the same functional class – **discourse markers** on the basis of their discursive characteristics.

The notion of discourse markers was first introduced by D. Schiffrin. She defined discourse markers as sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk and considered them as a set of linguistic expressions that comprised of members of word classes as varied as conjunctions (*because*, *and*, *but*, *or*), interjections (*oh*), adverbs (*now*, *then*), and lexicalized phrases (*y'know, I mean*). Her main conclusion was that these markers could work at different levels of discourse to connect utterances across different planes [3, p. 312; 4, p. 54-75]. A decade later D. Blakemore classified as discourse markers some utterance initial units like *so*, *well*, *still*, *after all* defining the role these expressions play as marking, signaling or indicating how one unit of discourse is connected to another [1, p. 113]. B. Frazer sees discourse markers as serving an integrative function in discourse, contributing to discourse coherence, he defines them as 'discourse glue' and provides their pragmatic classification; his list of discourse markers comprises about 30 lexical items belonging to different classes of words [3, p. 1-16]

We suggest making the group even broader by including to the list of discourse markers all those units of language whose function is to build bridges in discourse by serving in different ways as connective devices which help the listener a) to understand discourse as a single whole; b) to correlate discourse segments in the right and clear way; c) to make conclusions the speaker wants the listener to make. The whole set includes about 50 language units (*however, furthermore, besides, on the other hand, already, still, as a matter of fact, so far, nevertheless,* etc.). At the discourse level these units reveal similar functions – they serve as discourse markers and, in fact, create discourse. They traditionally belong to different parts of speech. We will try to prove that these different terms must belong to single class of items on the basis of functional criteria. The lexical items mentioned above are to be analyzed and treated together because at the discourse level they function as specific means of discourse cohesion and interpretation. It is necessary to stress the following classification of is possible only when it is based on the functions these words reveal at the discourse level – this is their principal function, while their functions within the sentence are considered to be secondary. For example, ***Even Bill is here*** – the function of *even* in the utterance is to intensify the word *Bill*, while the function of *even* in discourse is to render the idea of addition (everybody + Bill). To the class of **discourse connectors** belong: a) function

words traditionally defined as particles (*even, only, again, at least, especially, just, already, so far,* etc.) and b) function words of different groups (*however, therefore, in addition to, so, but, and, besides, nevertheless, thus, etc.)*. The authors of English grammars define most of these units as coordinating adverbs, additive adverbs, adverbial conjunctions or simply adverbs. We suppose it would be reasonable to give up the idea of defining these units as adverbs on the ground that they have nothing to do with a class of adverbs: the meaning they possess is by no means referential, in contrast to the meaning of real adverbs. It follows that all these words belong to functional parts of speech.

Discourse connectors are classified in this article into two groups: discourse correlatives and discourse linkers.

• The main function of the units of the first group defined as **discourse correlatives** is to fit the sentence they belong to into a discourse context by means of correlation. For example, the utterance *He is here **already*** is opposed to the implicit proposition *He was not here before* at the discourse level. Therefore the unit *already* correlates two types of discourse information; the second message is usually not revealed formally but is expressed implicitly. When we say *I saw **only** John*, by means of *only* we want to correlate this utterance with the proposition *I didn't see anyone else*. To sum it up, the words of this group practically always convey some implicit information, which becomes clear only within discourse. At the same time they connect two types of information, explicit and implicit, by means of correlation.

• The second group defined as **discourse linkers** include the units which have a more evident connective function: they usually link two explicit messages within the same discourse. Let us consider the following example: *The house is small for a family of four. **Furthermore** it is in a bad location*. The two sentences are linked together by means of the unit *furthermore*.

And now we wish to return to the connectors of the first group defined as correlatives. The information they convey by correlating two propositions may be of two kinds: additive and contrastive. **Additive** correlatives add some new information to the discourse. Let us consider the following example: *She is sick **again***. By means of the word *again* the new information is **added** to the old one (usually implicit): *She was sick before*. Similarly, if the sentence by means of a correlator is **opposed** to something previously said or thought, this correlator may be defined as **contrasting**: *I met **only** Bill – I didn't meet anyone but Bill; I understand this rule **already** – I didn't understand this rule before*.

Discourse markers of the second group, **linkers**, can be of five types: additive, contrasting, parallel, summarizing and sequencing. **Additive** linkers signal additive relations to the text, for example: *I don't want to go; **besides**, I'm too tired*. **Contrasting** linkers convey the idea of contrast and concession.

Thus by saying: *I know this job of mine isn't well paid.* **Anyway**, *I enjoy it,* we oppose the second message to the first one by means of *anyway*. **Parallel** linkers (e.g. *correspondingly, equally, similarly, likewise, analogously*), **summarizing** linkers (e.g. *thus, so, in general, on balance, in summary)* and **sequencing** linkers (e.g. *first, to begin with, next, lastly, finally)* demonstrate similar qualities at the discourse level: depending on their functional type they introduce information as similar, summing up or relating the order of events thus providing cohesive ties with previous discourse segments.

Research on functional characteristics of discourse markers reveals not only that they are important for the construction of coherent discourse but also that they are responsible for the organization of communicative competence.

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