

### **Testing dependent and equipollent relations in discourse**

The purpose of this presentation is to evaluate Asher and Vieu's (2005) tests for coordination and subordination as a reliable tool for testing dependent and equipollent relations in FDG. I argue that these relations belong to the outcome of Formulation at the Representational Level, instead of being functions of Discourse Acts at the Interpersonal Level.

At the Interpersonal Level, Moves and Discourse Acts build coherence chunks of discourse that are heavily dependent on contextual factors and participant goals. Coherence combinations of IL units can be highly conventionalized, such as question-answer pairs, repetitions and paraphrases, or lists such as the counting backwards in series of ten numbers in a fish auction. Moreover, the goals of participants may trigger argumentative, narrative, descriptive or expositive chunks of discourse. In its simplest form, for instance, a coherent argumentative discourse contains an argument given in defense of a standpoint that is explicit or abstracted from the context; in its most complex form, the argumentative discourse may approach conventional models as assumed in each culture. Other sources of coherence at the Interpersonal Level involve Pragmatic Functions along the lines recognized in FDG: Focus-Background, Topic-Comment, Contrast-Overlap.

Dependent and equipollent relations are also sources of coherence. However, I believe that they do not depend on participant goals and knowledge of conventional modes, but on meaning relations between propositional contents. Although FDG places these relations at the Interpersonal Level (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008), I suggest that they should be placed at the Representational Level. This idea is supported by the fact that we can apply semantic tests to identify dependence and equipollence relations. In particular, I explore the potential of Asher and Vieu's (2005) for this purpose.

Based on analysis of Catalan data, I argue that Asher and Vieu's tests 1 and 2 are a useful tool to test dependence (subordination) and equipollence (coordination) relations in discourse. Tests 3 and 4 are, however, problematic: application of test 3 is sensitive to topic scope, giving different results than test 2 for equipollent relations but not for dependence relations; text 4 only works well with sequential equipollent relations (typically found in narratives), but it is useless for non-sequential ones (a list of independent arguments, for instance). This latter problem can be solved in FDG by placing rhetorical relations such as Narration at the Interpersonal Level.

### References

Asher, Nicholas and Laure Vieu (2005), 'Subordinating and Coordinating Discourse Relations', *Lingua*, 115, 519-610.

Hengeveld, Kees and J. Lachlan Mackenzie (2008), *Functional Discourse Grammar. A typologically-based theory of language structure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.