

Review of Moder, C. & Martinovic-Zic, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Discourse across language and cultures*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42 (1), 2008, 167-170.

This edited volume consists of eighteen chapters by separate authors that address different aspects of oral and written discourse in a variety of languages.

The opening chapter (written by Carolyn Moder) provides a succinct historical background to the formal analysis of discourse and presents the theoretical models and frameworks utilized by the contributors. Moder explains that, over the last 30 years, approaches to analyzing language units beyond the sentence level have included Contrastive Rhetoric, Rhetorical Typology, Discourse Analysis, and Translation Studies, each coming from distinct disciplines with their own preoccupations and research practices. She carefully traces the developments within these approaches, critiquing their limitations and advocating a cross-fertilization of ideas and methodologies.

According to Moder, the present volume is an attempt to aid in the unification of the diverse field of discourse study by providing concrete investigations illustrating the different analytical models and confirming or disconfirming hypotheses regarding discourse similarities and differences among disparate language groups. It also raises important questions regarding the way in which human experience is processed into discourse, the function of discourse features like lexical choice, definiteness, foregrounding, and backgrounding, the extent to which discourse patterns are constructed around cultural values or

linguistic forms, and the most effective way to learn and translate discourse patterns.

The seventeen studies that follow are directed at linguists and researchers actively analyzing discourse cross-culturally. There is a wealth of technical detail regarding analytical procedure and data presentation (e.g., tree structures for graphing dialogue paragraphs, quantitative analysis of mean length of turn or words per intonation unit, utilization of pre-existing corpora for discourse analysis, and creation of experimental settings to elicit specific types of discourse), all of which should stimulate further work among researchers.

The following chapters would be of particular interest to analysts of spoken discourse. Wallace Chafe (Ch. 3) compares the expression of events, states, people, things, and topics in English and Seneca, paying particular attention to polysynthetic (holistic) verbs in Seneca which include the participants in the action word itself. Rebecca Damron (Ch. 4) examines the form and function of prosodic elements in Urdu and Pakistani English, two languages with very different morphosyntax coexisting in the same culture. This permits her to draw conclusions regarding the effects of culture upon prosody. Maite Taboada (Ch. 5) utilizes Rhetorical Structure Theory to analyze a dialogue completion task carried out in English and Spanish. She reveals that rhetorical relations can be affected by subject matter, dialogue stages (initialization, task-performance, and closing), and politeness rules. Patricia Mayes (Ch. 10) compares Japanese and American cooking classes and discovers differences in degree of formality, discourse content, and participants' motivations. Jelena Jovanovic and Aida

Martinovic-Zic (Ch. 12) analyze verbs of motion in oral narrations of Mercer Mayer's picture book *The Frog Story* and natural conversation of adult speakers of Serbo-Croatian and American English. Serbo-Croatian lexicalizes motion by adding prefixes to verbs, while English places particles (e.g. *up, in, down*) after verbs. Mary Seig (Ch. 13) scrutinizes episode boundaries in narratives about *The Frog Story* produced by American and Japanese university students receiving the stimulus in book vs. scroll format. The two formats yield differences in intonation units, number of words, and referential elements.

For analysts working with written discourse, the following chapters will be of interest. Robert Longacre (Ch. 2) utilizes text linguistics to analyze Arthur Hailey's novel *The Final Diagnosis*, focusing upon the interrelationships among text types, templates, constraints, and morphosyntactic structures. Dan Slobin (Ch. 11) inspects verbs of motion in different languages, deriving his data from translations of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, narrations of *The Frog Story*, and newspaper reports in different languages. Joanne Neff, et. al. (Ch. 15) apply Contrastive Rhetoric and developmental studies methods to compare argumentative texts written by journalists and university students in Spain and the U.S. They examine differences in structural aspects (e.g., words per T-unit, words per clause) and information presentation (e.g., use of subordination and coordination). Elizabeth Arcay Hands and Ligia Cossé (Ch. 16) dissect academic texts in Venezuelan Spanish and English produced by monolingual and bilingual authors, assessing the transfer effect of L2 literacy on L1 academic writing. Tania Gastão Saliés (Ch. 17) investigates image schemas in expository texts

written in Brazilian Portuguese and English by analyzing the syntax, lexicon, and attention units and linking them to cognitive and pragmatic constraints. Ruth Berman (Ch. 18) evaluates Hebrew texts written by elementary, high school, and graduate students in order to determine the developmental differences in their use of noun phrase structure and register.

Because of their greater accessibility and direct applicability to classroom practice, the following chapters would be worthwhile for ESL or EFL teachers, teacher trainers, or program administrators. As already mentioned, Carol Moder (Ch. 1) gives a valuable overview of the diverse approaches within the field of discourse analysis. Euen Hyuk Jung (Ch. 6) analyzes apologies produced by Koreans learning English, utilizing role plays (a technique very familiar to ESL teachers) to elicit her data. Hikyung Lee (Ch. 7) looks at how Korean immigrants of different generations use English discourse markers (e.g., *you know, like, I mean*) in colloquial speech. Both of these chapters would be beneficial to language practitioners teaching Koreans, since they provide essential comparisons between Korean and English discourse structures. Suzanne Fleischman and Marina Yaguello (Ch. 8) contrast the uses of the discourse markers *like* and *genre* in English and French and shed light on the way in which learners of each language may process such discourse markers. This would be of utility to English, French, and bilingual education teachers. Ron Scollon (Ch. 9) examines reported speech in written academic, journalistic, and advertising texts in Chinese and English and demonstrates differences in the quantity and manner in which citations and quotations are employed in each type

of discourse. This would be relevant to ESL or English for Special Purposes instructors dealing with Chinese university students in China or in immigrant communities. Instructors and policymakers interested in the development and spread of English as a world language would be enlightened by William Eggington's thought-provoking Ch. 14, which documents the way in which English currently influences international discourse patterns.

Regrettably, the volume lacks a closing chapter to sum up the overall findings of the studies and thus leaves the reader without closure. It also contains a significant number of typographical errors that should have been caught during the editing process. These are, however, minor flaws.

Overall, the volume contains well-crafted studies that will advance discourse research as a whole. The wide range of settings and languages underscores the variability in human discourse structures, and the diverse data collection techniques and analytical approaches reveal the breadth and inventiveness that currently characterize the field.

It should be noted that the volume is not appropriate for someone new to discourse analysis. The majority of the studies require considerable background in linguistics or rhetoric and very close reading. They are most suitable for graduate students carrying out thesis work or researchers in discourse analysis. Those readers who require or desire a more digestible introduction to the analysis of discourse should consult a basic textbook like Coulthard (1994), Cameron (2001), or Johnstone (2002).

References

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