Discourse relations, discourse production and discourse common ground: Evidence from single-authored commentaries and monadic and dyadic editing

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This paper examines the organization of discourse grammar from an application-based perspective, comparing single-authored editorials with dyadically and monadically edited skeleton texts of identical genre; the dyadic data are supplemented with metadata documenting the dyads' editing. The study is methodologically compositional across functional approaches to discourse: it supplements discourse-semantic DR (Asher & Lascarides 2003) with coherence strands and grounding (Givón 1993; 2005), and with extra-clausal constituents (Dik 1997) and theme zone (Gómez-González 2001). Discourse is conceptualized as a parts-whole configuration in which the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The focus of analysis lies on the signalling and encoding of discourse relations (DRs) with DRs defined as logical relations holding between two or more discourse units. The linguistic realizations of DRs thus need to utilize both 'sentence grammar' constraining clause production and 'discursive grammar' constraining the production of units above the clause.

The linguistic realization of DRs is addressed from intra- and extra-clausal perspectives: DRs are non-overt if encoded in intra-clausal coherence strands, and overt if signalled with extra-clausal material, e.g. discourse connectives or non-congruently configured theme zones. To obtain insights into the linguistic realization of DRs, an experimental setting was designed in which 9 monads and 9 dyads were asked to edit a skeleton text into a fully operational text of identical genre. The skeleton text was derived from a single-authored commentary stripped of almost all of its extra-clausal constituents while retaining relevant intra-clausal coherence strands and its original sequential organization (Fetzer 2017; Hofmockel, Fetzer & Maier 2017). The participants were expected to edit the skeleton text in accordance with the discursive constraints of the genre. Intrinsic guiding criteria for the selection of additional linguistic material was sociocognitive discourse common ground (Fetzer 2007) with intended readers of the resulting text. The 18 edited texts were compared with 9 single-authored editorials from *The Guardian*.

The results from the three data sets indicate that discourse production and discourse editing utilize both kinds of grammar for the signalling and encoding of DRs. The interaction between the two is reflected in combined realizations: the dyadic data display the lowest degree of overtness (51.5%) and the monadic data the highest (64.9%). The production-format-specific preferences are systematized below:

DR	Commentaries								
	single-authored			monadically edited			dyadically edited		
	N_{total}	N_{overt}	% overt	N_{total}	N_{overt}	% overt	N_{total}	N_{overt}	% overt
Contrast	40	40	100%	40	40	100%	15	15	100%
Continuation	159	42	26.4%	32	13	40.6%	35	20	57.1%
Explanation	40	15	47.5%	14	11	78.5%	11	8	72.7%
Elaboration	325	250	76.9%	140	79	56.4%	65	28	43.0%
Comment	27	4	14.8%	25	20	80%	13	1	7.6%
Sum	**591**	**351**	**59.3%**	**251**	**163**	**64.9%**	**139**	**72**	**51.7%**

Not only discourse grammar but also the communicative intentions of text producers and the intended construal of discourse common ground may account for the different degrees of overtness: single-authored media texts target some generalized audience's discourse common ground, while edited texts seem to aim at more particularized discourse common grounds.

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