

Preparation for university of Ibadan

Proficiency test in English language (DISCOURSE REFERENCE)

Taiwo oyebisi

Edited by:

Dairo Samuel

DISCOURSE REFERENCE

What is discourse reference?

Discourse reference simply refer to cohesion and coherence of a sentence(s)

What is coherence?

Coherence means the semantic relationship between different parts of the same text. Coherence also means the overall understandability of what you write or say.

It can also be defined as the process which combines sentences to a meaningful unit.

What is cohesion?

Cohesion means the grammatical or lexical relationship between different parts of the same text. It also refers to the degree to which sentences are connected.

To achieve good cohesion, you need to know how to use certain words or phrases that serve the purpose of connecting two statements, usually by referring back to what you have previously written or said. Therefore, good cohesion leads to good coherence.

Example of discourse reference/ analysis

I am presently in South Africa. I won't deceive you, I like it

It in the second sentence also means South Africa.

In the above example, we can see that there is relationship between the two sentences of the same text (good cohesion) and the sentences are well and accurately connected i.e it is meaningful (good coherence).

Consider this example: The **hotel s very attractive. Mr. Salami Ibukun is a member of the staff.**

You will notice that the statement has no meaning (i.e. lacks coherence) and there is no relationship between the two sentences (i.e. lacks cohesion).

Cohesion and can be subdivided into categories which are:

Reference

It refers to a specific item within a discourse which cannot be interpreted semantically on their own but make reference to some other item within the discourse for their interpretation.

Example:

Alfa Gafar goes fishing every week. He is a very good fisherman

In the subject of the second sentence 'He' refers back to the subject of the first sentence 'Alfa Gafar' so reference is a relation between two meaningful sentences.

There are two types of reference:

Which are exophoric and endophoric

Exophoric reference refers to something that is not part of a given text and therefore not cohesive

Example:

Biodun: Hey Olalekan, can you see that.

Olalekan: Yes, that was amazing.

According to the example, only Biodun and Olalekan is aware of what they mean by 'that' which does not make any meaning to a third party. It only makes meaning to the two people which is outside the text.

While endophoric reference refers to the textual environment of a given element which can be anaphoric or cataphoric

Example of anaphoric

Wumi makes people's hair every day. She is very good at that.

Example of cataphoric reference

There 'it' is, my so much admired watch

'It' refers to a specific item 'watch' at the end which makes the sentence meaningful.

Substitution

Substitution is a process in which one item within a discourse or text is replaced by another item. Substitution is a relation between level of grammar and vocabulary between words or phrases. A substitute can be seen as a sort of counter which is used in place of a repetition of a particular item

Example

Opeyemi's car is very old and ugly. He should get a nicer one

The example shows that 'one' could easily be replaced by 'car' without changing the meaning of the two sentences.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is very similar to substitution. While substitution refers to replacement of one textual element by the other. Ellipsis simply refers to the omission of an item.

The process can therefore be interpreted as the form of substitution in which an item is replaced by nothing.

Example:

Oluwabukolami 'ate' some chocolate chip cookies and chinakanelson some spicy noodles.

In the example above, the predicator 'ate' was omitted in the second sentence. But it is possible to determine where ate can be placed in the sentence

Therefore, the example can be re-written as

Oluwabukolami ate some chocolate chip cookies and chinakanelson ate some spicy noodles.

I.e. it is possible where there is ellipsis in the text that something is to be supplied or understood.

Examples:

1. Professor Chinelo Nzelibe is a vivacious woman. she is lively, vibrant and energetic.
'She' in the second sentence refers to Professor Chinelo Nzelibe.
2. You can throw it away; the pair of scissors is no longer functional.
'It' in this statement refers to 'the pair of scissor'.
3. He was charged with the following offences; sleeping with his neighbor, his secretary, his niece and his guard's daughter. People condemned him for d incest than for d rest.
 - a. Sleeping with his neighbor
 - b. Sleeping with his secretary
 - C. Sleeping with his niece.
 - d. Sleeping with his guard's daughter.

C is the correct answer because incest means - sexual relations between people classed as being too closely related to marry each other. Niece is the only one that fits into this category out of the options.