

STUDIES IN PHILIPPINE LINGUISTICS

Volume 8 Number 2 1991

*Discourse approaches to cohesion: A study of
the structure and unity of a Central Bontoc
expository text 204 pp.*

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ISSN 0116-0516 ISBN 971-1059-18-5

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Sample Citation Format

Ma. Lourdes S. Bautista. 1977. "The noun phrase in Tagalog—English code switching". *Studies in Philippine Linguistics* 1:1, 1–16. Online. URL: <http://www.sil.org/asia/philippines/> [etc.] + access date.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

A well-written text is like a beautiful mansion with many rooms richly and tastefully furnished. Peeping in through one window, we are amazed at the beauty within; but if we stop there and never move on to other windows, we gain only one perspective on the artistry and workmanship which were expended to achieve it. To look at a text from one theoretical perspective will give many insights into the structure and coherence of a discourse; but if we look again and again from several different vantage points, other aspects of the texture of the language are revealed. This is what we have attempted to do in our study of the *Innana* text.

6.1 Discourse, segmentation, and paragraphs

In chapter 2, we examined the propositional relations existing between sentences and mapped out the paragraph structure of the whole text. Then we made an attempt to identify the roles of the various paragraph types. This paragraph analysis was helpful in understanding the *Innana* text. The same sort of analysis needs to be applied to a variety of texts by a number of authors.

6.2 Spectrum, transitivity, and profile

Chapter 3 represented the first steps in what needs to be an across-the-board analysis of tense/aspect in its discourse context. We showed clearly that, in conjunction with hierarchical considerations, the author of the *Innana* text made careful use of tense/aspect, especially in the independent clauses of sentences, to achieve heightened and lowered tension in each of the procedural rituals.

Chapter 3 gave suggestions only for expository discourse, and those very tentative. It would be good to extend the application of this theory to other discourse genres, and so come up with a more rational understanding of the use and control Central Bontoc speakers have over verbs and clauses.

6.3 Cohesion from sentence to sentence

After studying the *Innana* text in chapter 3 from the perspective of spectrum and profile, and having seen that through a combination of tense/aspect, preposed sentence introducers, and paragraph structure that the author of the *Innana* text had clearly indicated which parts of the text were more important, it was fascinating to note in chapter 4 that these insights were reinforced from the lexical perspective by a study of intersentential cohesion. In chapter 4 we recognized the many ways in which the author gave cohesion from sentence to sentence throughout the text. Then, in the light of the text profile, the significance of the author's selective use of cohesive devices became apparent. This systematic use of cohesive devices was most obvious with substitution, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion. We expect that further work on sequential cohesion will reinforce this discovery that the use of intersentential cohesive devices is systematic and closely tied to the text profile.

6.4 Effectiveness

Since time began, people have been vitally concerned that what they say achieve its desired effect. It is not surprising that there should be surface-structure elements closely related to this aim of achieving one's goals in a discourse. Thus in chapter 5 we looked at four systems that contribute towards making a text effective: backbone, the tree system, the filing system, and focal content.

To be effective a text must have a backbone that produces thematic coherence and situational relevance. The tree system manipulates the sentences of a text to produce a hierarchical structure in which some sentences are subordinated to others. The result of this was seen in our paragraph analysis of chapter 2. The filing system keeps track of information and participants throughout a text. We looked at this briefly in chapter 5 when we traced three of the files of the *Innana* text and noted their unique index systems.

Focal content is a system requiring further study. In section 5.4 we saw that the author indeed gave ample evidence for his implicit focal content claims. But this study needs to be broadened before a system of focal content references will emerge for Bontoc discourse.

6.5 Theoretical implications

The basic contributions of this study are fourfold:

- (1) Chapter 2 reinforces the findings of Longacre, Borman, and Waltz that paragraphs are used selectively and systematically. Nothing in our analysis contradicts this basic premise.
- (2) Chapter 3 illustrates that in a single well-written Bontoc text the author has used an intricate weave of clause type, modality, discourse particles, hierarchical embedding, and tense/aspect to control tension within the discourse as a whole and, more particularly, within each section of the text. As a result of our study we can begin to outline discourse spectra for Bontoc procedural and expository discourse. We saw that the Hopper and Thompson transitivity criteria, though helpful, need further adaptation to accommodate to Philippine languages.
- (3) At first glance, chapter 4 seems simply to elucidate the options a Central Bontoc speaker has to effect intersentential cohesion in a text. But when taken in conjunction with the findings of chapter 3, they provide startling confirmation of Halliday and Hasan's thesis that intersentential cohesion is systematic. The evidence for this is presented in both chapters 4 and 5.
- (4) Chapter 5 illustrates Hale's four systems which contribute towards making a discourse effective. It presents evidence that an author syntactically distinguishes different strands of *information running through a text*—this is what Hale calls the *filing system*. Finally, this chapter gives salient evidence for the relationship between a text and its real-world context.

6.6 Recommendation

In sum, it is our recommendation that studies of this type be pursued further not only in Central Bontoc, but also in other Philippine languages, so that we will gain a better understanding of the discourse structure of Philippine languages. This would greatly facilitate language comparison. Once such a comprehensive study has been done, the differences between the discourse structures of Philippine languages could more easily be reduced to tabular form for easy reference and comparison. This in turn would facilitate good idiomatic translation from one Philippine language to another.