

To Mom and Dad
in thanks for your
prayer support, love, and
concern,
with love,

Sylvia

A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A MACHIGUENGA TEXT

by

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ABSTRACT

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Discourse analysis theories provide us with a heuristic means of analyzing and explaining many features of language more efficiently.

In this thesis, an eclectic model of discourse analysis, drawn from Longacre, Levinsohn, Thurman, and Grimes, is applied to a Machiguenga text from the narrative genre. The text is examined from several different perspectives. Analytical procedures and findings are written section by section, covering setting, background, collateral, onomatopoeia, performatives, peak, participant reference, and notional and surface structure.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iv |
| ABSTRACT | v |
| LIST OF FIGURES | viii |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS | ix |
| CHAPTER | |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 General statement of the problems and objectives | 1 |
| 1.2 A philosophy of discourse | 3 |
| 1.3 Definition of terms | 4 |
| 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE | 6 |
| 2.1 Foundational literature | 6 |
| 2.2 The theoretical framework | 13 |
| 2.3 The state of the art | 19 |
| 3. ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES AND FINDINGS | 21 |
| 3.1 Participant reference | 21 |
| 3.1.1 Identificatory nouns | 21 |
| 3.1.2 Pronominal affixes as a means of identifying participants | 22 |
| 3.1.3 Paragraph structures as a means of identifying participants | 29 |
| 3.1.4 Participant introduction | 39 |
| 3.2 Sequence signals | 41 |

| | | |
|--------------|--|-----|
| 3.3 | Non-events | 48 |
| 3.3.1 | Setting | 48 |
| 3.3.2 | Background | 55 |
| 3.3.3 | Performative | 60 |
| 3.3.4 | Collateral | 61 |
| 3.3.5 | Onomatopoeia | 64 |
| 3.4 | Peak | 68 |
| 3.5 | Notional and surface | 73 |
| | structure profile | |
| 3.6 | Constituent parts | 75 |
| 4. | CONCLUSIONS | 78 |
| APPENDIX A | (The text with translations) | 81 |
| | Glossed text | 82 |
| | Free translation | 91 |
| | Literal translation | 95 |
| APPENDIX B | - Analytical Chart | 100 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | 118 |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Statement of the Problem and Objectives

The present study attempts to apply heuristic discourse analysis devices to a narrative Machiguenga text. It is a study in practicality; that is, taking a theoretical framework and putting it to use.

The Machiguenga people, a group of about 5,000, represent one dialect of the Campas, one of the largest indigenous groups inhabiting the Amazon jungle. The Campa language is classified, with no controversy, as being of the pre-Andine branch of Arawakan by all major classifications from Rivet (1924) to Greenberg (1956) and Voegelin (1965). Loukotka (1968) gives alternate forms for the title Machiguenga as Machiganga, Ugunichire, or Mashigango. According to him, it is spoken in the department of Cuzco, Peru, on the Mantaro, Apurimac, Urubamba and Paucartambo Rivers.

The name Machiguenga means "the people." The Machiguenga have a basically agrarian society. They hunt, fish, and garden (using the slash and burn method).

The text, Toteini, was graciously provided for me with a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss by Wayne and Betty Snell. The Snells have worked in the Machiguenga dialect under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics for around 25 years. Along with the text, the Snells provided me with two Spanish free translations of the text, written by bilingual Machiguenga people.

To analyze the text, a combination of the Thurman-Grimes and Longacre-Levinsohn analysis charts are used, because each model highlights different features. The Longacre-Levinsohn chart considers word order highly important. It examines tense, introductory phrases, and temporal and locative change. The Thurman-Grimes chart concentrates on other areas. It separates different types of events and non-events, and marks participant reference clearly.

The Longacre-Levinsohn chart is most useful in the study of the grammatical, syntactical aspects of the analysis (including temporal, locative, and introductory words,) while the Thurman-Grimes chart is more helpful when looking at how different kinds of information function semantically.

The study looks at participant reference, sequence signals, peak, setting, background, collateral, performatives, onomatopoeia, and notional and surface structure features. There are features which are not analyzed due to a lack of an intimate knowledge of the language.

The intent is to provide a global view of discourse features working together, rather than an intensive look at the function of one feature.

It will be understood that since the analytical discoveries of this study come from only one text, they should be checked against other texts before they are accepted as normative communication patterns in the Machiguenga language.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 A Review of Literature in the Field of Text Analysis and Pertinent Opinions

A foundational question in text analysis is the definition of a text itself. Thus, as a basic foundation to text analysis, the first area I would like to touch on is the definition of a text. De Beaugrande and Dressler go into this in some depth. They define a text as, "A COMMUNICATIVE OCCURRENCE which meets seven standards of textuality," (1981:3). The first two standards are text-centered notions, those of cohesion and coherence. Cohesion concerns the ways in which the components of the surface text are mutually connected within a sequence. It is a surface structure phenomenon resting on grammatical dependencies. Coherence concerns the manner in which the components of the notional structure are mutually accessible and relevant. I feel these first two standards are not disputable. A text should meet the criterion of coherence and cohesion.

The following five standards concern user-centered notions. They are: intentionality or purpose; acceptability or the receiver's attitude; informativity or the information load and content; situationality; and intertextuality. It is their opinion that if a text does not meet all of these five user-centered requirements, it is not inherently a text. For example, a highly scientific text on how to separate the atom may be quite clear to the physicist scientist, yet have too high an information load to communicate effectively to a linguist. By the standards set, it would be a text to the scientist, yet not to the linguist. De

Beaugrande and Dressler feel, then, that a text will not always be a text, depending on the situation into which it is forced. According to their definition of a text, if it does not communicate to a certain audience, it is not a valid text. They could say, for example, to the many people who do not understand the Bible, it is not a valid text. The requirement of acceptability gives another example along this line. According to their theory, because Joe Football Player is not interested in his history book, to him the book is not a text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976:1,2) give the following definition of a text:

The word TEXT is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole. We know, as a general rule, whether any specimen of our own language constitutes a TEXT or not.

A text is a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or sentence; and it is not defined by its size. A text is sometimes envisaged to be some kind of super-sentence, a grammatical unit that is larger than a sentence but is related to a sentence in the same way that a sentence is related to a clause, a clause to a group and so on: by CONSTITUENCY, the composition of larger units out of smaller ones. But this is misleading. A text is not something that is like a sentence, only bigger; it is something that differs from a sentence in kind.

A text is best regarded as a SEMANTIC unit; a unit not of form but of meaning. Thus it is related to a clause or sentence not by size but by REALIZATION, the coding of one symbolic system in another. A text does not CONSIST of sentences; it is REALIZED BY, or encoded in, sentences. If we understand it in this way, we shall not expect to find the same kind of structural integration among the parts of a text as we find among the parts of a sentence or clause. The unity of a text is a unity of a different kind.

3. ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES AND FINDINGS

3.1 Participant Reference

In order to identify participants in a discourse, there are a number of factors which must be accounted for. Which participants are identified by which pronominal references? On the other hand, which factors control the usage of free nouns, pronouns, and pronominal affixes in referring to participants?

Wise's (1971) study of identification of participants in Nomatsiguenga discourse has been helpful in my study of identification of participants in Machiguenga, since the two dialects are related.

The Campa language family, of which both Machiguenga and Nomatsiguenga are members, has a difficult system of pronominal reference. Wise states (1971:xiii), "Nomatsiguenga is representative of the Campa languages in which pronominal affixes occur far more frequently than nouns or free pronouns in narrative discourse...the problem of pronominal reference is accentuated in Nomatsiguenga...."

The problem of pronominal reference is accentuated in Machiguenga also. In the text being studied, nouns which identified participants occurred only six times, with three of those referring to the bird into which the main participant was transformed at the end of the text. Free pronouns occurred seven times. Pronominal affixes occurred frequently. Often they did not contain any apparent surface structure clue as to which of two or participants they identified.