

Abstract

This thesis describes the distribution and pragmatic functions of *discourse connectives* in Formal Spoken Arabic (FSA). The data comprise around 2,900 utterance segments, derived from the transcribed audio-recordings of History and Geography lectures given in Arabic during 1995-2000. The eight speakers are all experienced lecturers in the Arts faculties of four universities, situated in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Sudan.¹

By using a definition of the *thematic slot*, found in Michael Halliday's work *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, a workable model for identifying and coding Arabic connectives has been devised, also where they appear in multiple form, such as *wa li dSa6lika fa* 'and therefore...'. In this process, special attention has been given to the role of connectives as 'topic framing'.

Discourse is a linear movement, or *flow*, and a hierarchical structure at the same time. This investigation has been based on its linear aspect, where the *utterance* is taken as the fundamental unit of discourse, setting the pace at which it proceeds. No boundaries below the utterance have been considered. The segmentation into utterances has been done on semantic and prosodic grounds, since syntactic criteria are not sufficiently available for oral Arabic to make clear-cut distinctions between *paratax* and *hypotax*.

The lexical meanings of connectives are viewed as subordinate to those of the utterances they connect; the mere juxtaposition of two utterances produces a relationship, like the implicit causal tie between the following two English utterances: *The road was icy. She slipped*. This view has been influenced by the relevance theory. It emphasizes the effort involved in verbal communication on the part of the speaker as well as the audience. The speaker will always try not to provide anything but the relevant signals to ensure a successful interpretation, and in every communication situation much is left to be inferred by the audience. Discourse connectives function as indicators in the inferential process, which help to restrict the number of optional interpretations.

The list of labels for discourse functions used in the study has been based on Halliday's model of *expansion*. It implies that speakers expand their topic through uninterrupted sequences of utterances by making use of the three modes of *elaboration* (=), *extension* (+) and *enhancement* (x). The relationships accounted for here are those between segments in uninterrupted sequence. Where there is a break or a *shift*, no functional label has been assigned. In the hierarchy model, the difference between the two states naturally corresponds to that between the basic and the higher levels.

The main contribution of the work is the new methodology it attempts to apply on authentic data and which could be applied to any Arabic corpus, written or spoken, with the ultimate goal of establishing a discourse typology for Arabic. The presentation has been divided into four main sections: *Background, Data, Methods* and *Results*.

Key Words: Arabic Linguistics, Discourse Connectives, Discourse Markers, Lecturing Monologue

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