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DISCOURSE AND PRAGMATICS. A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

JOSÉ LUIS OTAL CAMPO*
Universitat Jaume I

ABSTRACT. *Discourse processes are necessary linked to semantics and pragmatics. The approaches adopted in this paper involve a maximalist view of semantics in which the meaning of sentences is seen as a result of complex patterns of interaction between propositional models, metaphor, metonymy, and image-schemas, together with a broad view of inferential pragmatics. It is claimed that semantics, pragmatics, and discourse carry with them a set of internal interacting principles and constraints that provide the input for each level to become operative. For that purpose there is an account of how semantics and pragmatics interrelate, and how such interaction affects discourse. The approach to semantics allows us to capture all forms of connectivity in texts and to cover all forms of conceptual representation linked to linguistic expressions, which play a significant role in inferential activity. The approach to pragmatics sees meaning derivation as a matter of interpreting, rather than decoding, lexicogrammatical cues. In order to explain how the model works a number of principles are proposed and discussed.*

RESUMEN. *Los procesos discursivos están ligados a la semántica y a la pragmática. Los enfoques adoptados en este artículo incluyen una vision maximalista de la semántica, en la cual el significado oracional es el resultado de pautas complejas de interacción entre modelos proposicionales, metáfora, metonimia y esquemas de imagen, junto a una visión amplia de inferencia pragmática. La semántica, la pragmática y el discurso conllevan un conjunto de principios y restricciones internos que proporcionan el input para que cada nivel se haga operativo. Se explica cómo se interrelacionan la semántica y la pragmática, y cómo dicha interacción afecta al discurso. Nuestro enfoque de la semántica permite captar todas las formas de conexión en los textos y cubrir todas las formas de representación conceptual condicionadas por las expresiones lingüísticas, que juegan un papel significativo en la actividad inferencial. Nuestro enfoque de la pragmática considera la derivación de significado como un asunto de interpretación, más que de descodificación, de las claves lexicogramaticales. Se proponen y discuten varios principios para explicar cómo funciona el modelo.*

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the connections between semantics, pragmatics, and discourse[1]. The underlying assumption for this enterprise is the belief that an explanatorily adequate account of discourse processes cannot be independent of semantics and pragmatics. The paper adopts a maximalist view of semantics in which the meaning of sentences is seen as a result of complex patterns of interaction between different cognitive models. These include propositional models, metaphor, metonymy, and image-schemas, as originally propounded by Lakoff (1987). The maximalist approach to semantics is combined with a broad view of inferential pragmatics according to which meaning derivation is regulated by the presumption of optimal relevance, i.e. the speaker's presumed desire to achieve the maximum number of meaning effects for the least processing effort. This view has been amply argued for by scholars working within Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory, among them Carston (1997, 2002; cf. also Wilson and Carston 2007) in the domain of pragmatically guided concept construction and Blakemore (1992, 2002) in discourse. Cognitive model theory attempts to capture all the richness of semantic characterisations. This endows the theory with a huge potential to account for inferential activity and the ability of people to create conceptually connected texts. Inferential pragmatics contains all the criteria necessary to explain how semantic descriptions are used strategically to create text. Text is the result of adequate balancing explicit and implicit information on the basis of relevance. This is done through what –following Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2007) and Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal (2008)– we may call *cued inferencing*, i.e. making inferences on the basis of prompts provided by linguistic expressions (usually underspecified semantic representations) in connection to a context.

2. Aims and methodology

Within this framework, the present paper aims to explore the way in which discourse, which focuses on the construction of meaningful text, is grounded in pragmatics and semantics. In relation to this, it will be claimed that each of these levels of description, i.e. semantics, pragmatics, and discourse, carries with it a set of internal interacting principles and constraints that provide the input for the next level to become operative. Therefore, it is my purpose to give an account of (i) how semantics and pragmatics interrelate; (ii) how such interaction affects discourse. It is in attaining these goals that we will be able to find out to what extent discourse principles and strategies have to be explained in terms of semantic and pragmatic principles.

These goals have required three steps. The first one, which has already been mentioned above, has to do with the selection of compatible approaches to semantics and pragmatics. Thus, it was necessary to find an approach to semantics that allowed us to capture not only direct form-meaning relationships but also how such relationships are used to capture all forms of connectivity in texts. Furthermore, the theory should be broad enough to cover all forms of conceptual representation linked to linguistic expressions (e.g. not only propositional models, but also metaphor and metonymy), to the extent that such representations play a significant role in inferential activity. With respect to pragmatics, we have favoured an approach that sees meaning derivation as a matter of interpretation rather than decoding, one that handles inference in terms of interpreting lexicogrammatical cues (i.e. underdetermined meaning representations).

The second step has been to find the various levels of discourse activity where semantics and pragmatics play a significant role. Lakoff's account of cognitive models has provided us with the most relevant levels of conceptual description (including cluster models, metaphor, and metonymy) with an impact on inferential activity. For pragmatics, there are two theoretical constructs that have proved essential: the two criteria of relevance, i.e. the balance between cognitive economy and contextual effects, and the balance between explicit and implicit information.

The third and final step has been the study of the principles and strategies that follow naturally from looking into the semantic and pragmatic grounding of discourse phenomena, with a special focus on the distinction between cohesion and coherence, which is crucial to understand how meaningful texts are constructed.

3. Semantics and discourse

As was mentioned in the introduction section, this paper, in consonance with the standard tendency in pragmatics and discourse, takes a maximalist view of meaning representation. The maximalist view tries to capture the richness of conceptual organization in a principled manner. Frame Semantics, originally devised by Fillmore (1985) and later developed by a host of followers and collaborators (cf. Fillmore and Atkins 1992; Fillmore, Johnson, and Petruck 2003; Boas 2006, and the references therein) is the more detailed account of maximalist semantics to date. Its assumptions about conceptual networks of meaning have generally been shared by discourse analysts ever since Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) explicitly dealt with the issue of the conceptual connectedness of texts. A less detailed maximalist account of semantics is supplied by Lakoff's (1987) version of Cognitive Semantics. However, this account is broader in scope since it organizes concepts in terms of converging models that provide speakers with the background information necessary to create coherent metaphorical and metonymic extensions. Fillmore's approach does not take such extensions into account. One classical example of the Cognitive Semantics perspective on concepts is Lakoff's (1987) analysis of the notion of 'mother' on the basis of a cluster of five converging cognitive models: the birth model ('mothers give birth to babies'), the nurturance model ('mothers take care of their children'), the marital model ('the mother is typically married to the father'), the biological model ('the mother supplies the egg that is fertilized by sperm'), and the genealogical model ('the mother is the closest female ancestor'). Lakoff (1987) argues that metaphorical extensions of the concept mother are based on the models in the cluster rather than on the whole concept. For example, *mother tongue* exploits the birth model, but *mother ship* exploits the nurturance model. Other models are not used metaphorically, but are the basis for semantic extensions, like the notion of surrogate mother, which is based upon the biological model of motherhood.

Lakoff's maximalist approach has important consequences for discourse analysis that are missing in other accounts. By way of illustration, contrast the use of the verb "to mother" in *She mothers her children well* and *My wife mothers me; in fact she spoils me* (cf. Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza 2007). The second utterance is a metaphorical extension of 'mother' based on the nurturance model. The first utterance is a literal use of 'mother' that also makes use of the same model. However, there is a degree of asymmetry between the literal and non-literal uses in that it is not possible to extend the first utterance to parallel the second: **She mothers her children well; in fact, she spoils them*. This is so because the literal use understands nurturing as taking care while administering discipline. The metaphorical extension only makes use of partial conceptual structure from the nurturance model in the cluster in order to construct the metaphoric source. It is interesting to note that this observation about the metaphorical use of 'mother' supplies us with an important generalization about the metaphorical extensions of concepts. Following Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2007) we call this generalization, which captures an important aspect of the semantic organization of linguistic expressions, the *First Principle of Metaphoric Source Selection*. But we add the observation that this principle ranges over all uses of metaphorical source domains. We may consider in this respect a simple case of ontological metaphor, such as *China is a lion awakening*. The concept of 'lion', like that of 'mother', is a cluster of models dealing with the animal's behaviour (which is that of a fierce and aggressive predator), appearance (which is impressive and frightening), and habitat (including their dens in woodlands and grassy plains). In the example given above, the metaphor only uses partial structure from the behavioural model: China is seen as the mighty lion that was sleeping, and therefore not dangerous, but is beginning to awake and resume its predatory activities. There is nothing about its actual hunting behaviour and the way it kills and devours its prey, which is information belonging to the same model in the cluster.

There is a complementary principle, labelled by Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2007), the *Second Principle of Metaphoric Source Selection*, which accounts for the fact that only literal uses of concepts may make use of all the models in a cluster in order to create discourse coherence, while metaphorical extensions may only exploit one of the models in a cluster. This principle is evident from a consideration of transitivity in a literal use of "mother" in contrast with transitivity in a non-literal use. Thus, if Frieda is Mary's mother, and Mary is Jane's mother, then Frieda is Mary's grandmother. However, from the utterance *Necessity is the mother of invention, and poverty is the mother of necessity*, it does not follow that **Poverty is the grandmother of invention*. The reason that explains this apparent irregularity is that, even though both the birth and genealogical models apply in the literal use, the transitivity relationship is licensed only by the genealogical model. In contrast, the non-literal use only exploits the birth model (the idea of birth maps onto the idea of origin) whose logical structure is not sensitive to transitivity relationships. Let us now take into account another cluster of models, that for the concept of aeroplane. We can think of an aeroplane while being constructed, while stationed in an airport, while flying, etc. These different aspects of the notion, or models in the cluster, can somehow be invoked in the interpretation of the word *plane* in *Although he had his own private plane, he decided to take a regular commercial flight to Denver*. But in the sentence *The news were worse than a plane crash*, the focus is on the flight part of the cluster.

Let us now consider the utterance *Spanish is my mother tongue, but for me English is like a mother tongue too*. Strictly speaking, a mother tongue is the language that a person has learned from his parents. A maximalist approach would add to this description some peripheral features: the mother tongue is usually mastered better than other languages; people usually feel more comfortable when they use their mother tongues. It is this knowledge, rather than the central characterization, that is used in the interpretation of "like a mother tongue" above. This selection of a non-central characterization is carried out in accordance with what Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2007) have called the *Peripherality Principle*: if the most central characterization of a concept fails to make sense in discourse, the speaker, in an effort to achieve coherence, will look for the first non-central feature that satisfies the conditions of relevance.

Metonymic activity also has a discourse potential that has so far been ignored in the literature. This may be due to the fact that metonymy was at first regarded by many as a local cognitive phenomenon, of referential nature (cf. Lakoff and Turner 1989, for this view). The view has slowly changed (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal 2002, for a review) on the basis of growing evidence that metonymy is pervasive in much of our cognitive activity. There is solid linguistic evidence, fully compatible with cognitively-oriented accounts of pragmatics like Relevance Theory, that metonymy is at the basis of the production of conversational implicature and illocutionary meaning (Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal 2002; Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2003; Panther 2005; Ruiz de Mendoza 2007; Ruiz de Mendoza and Baicchi 2007). In the following example, the second speaker's response is coherent with the first speaker's question on the basis of our conventional knowledge (a situational frame or scenario) according to which jobs are generally advertised in a special section of newspapers:

(1) How did you find your new job? - I bought the newspaper.

The second speaker only supplies partial access to the whole scenario about finding jobs, but this is enough for interpretation given the heavily conventional nature of the scenario.

In much the same way, what speech act theorists call the "illocutionary force" of an utterance is ultimately calculated on the basis of a metonymic operation whereby part of an action scenario stands for the whole scenario. The utterance *It's getting colder here* may be interpreted as a request for someone to do something like close an open window in a context in which it is evident to the addressee that the current state of affairs affects the speaker negatively. By social convention (and this is a cultural model), we are required to change negative situations into positive situations for others if we are able to do so. Indicating that there is a negative condition provides access to the whole interpersonal scenario. The difference between scenarios giving rise to so-called implicatures and those giving rise to illocutions is merely a qualitative one: the former reflect specific situations based on every-day experience, while the latter are generic configurations capturing information that is common to a broad range of different scenarios that share the idea that the speaker is in need of something. This point has been very convincingly borne out by Ruiz de Mendoza and Baicchi (2007), who have formulated a considerable number of speech act scenarios.

The advantage of this approach to inferencial pragmatics is evident: Gricean (cf. Grice 1975; Bach and Harnish 1979) and post-Gricean (e.g. Sperber and Wilson 1995; Levinson 2000) accounts of inference deal with implicature by positing the existence of maxims, principles, or heuristics that somehow allow the hearer to know that he has to engage in some sort of inferential activity. That is to say, these accounts are capable of dealing with the outcome of inferences, but unluckily they have nothing to say about its nature. To fill this gap, we can postulate metonymic operations are part of the process of implicature derivation.

Understanding metonymy is also crucial in order to explain some phenomena of discourse cohesion. In order to have a grasp of the way in which this may happen, consider the following example of a simple two-turn conversational exchange:

(2a) A: What's that light there?
B: Hush! It's a fire.

Evidently, "it" in B's response cannot be anaphoric to "the light" in A's turn (cf. **That light is a fire*) but rather to the idea that the light is caused by a fire. A similar point has been made by Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez (2001) in connection to Panther and Thornburg's (2000) similar exchange, where "it" is anaphoric to the cause of the noise:

(2b) A: What's that noise?
B: It's a burglar.

The anaphoric operation, as noted in Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez (2004), is supported by the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE, which rules out a response like **That noise is a burglar*. As noted in Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2007), this phenomenon has interesting implications for discourse studies: the fact that anaphora –one of the "grammatical" procedures traditionally associated with the creation of cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 1976)– may be grounded in metonymy seems to point to a different treatment of the issue, one in which cohesion is seen as conceptually (rather than grammatically) grounded. This may apply to other cases of anaphora where a singular word refers to a group of people: *I just love my team.* They *are always there supporting me*, where using the singular anaphoric pronoun would not work in the same way (*I love my team.* It *is always there supporting me*). Again, the tendency seems to be for conceptual agreement overriding grammatical agreement.

4. Pragmatics and discourse

Achieving cohesion and coherence is also influenced by pragmatic principles. In fact, some discourse mechanisms pertaining to what is known as cohesion phenomena are grounded in pragmatics. Nominal ellipsis, commonly accepted to be a (grammatical) cohesive device, is a case in point (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976: 150):

(3) Here are my two white silk scarves.
a. Where are yours?
b. I used to have three.
c. Can you see any black?
d. Or would you prefer cotton?

According to Halliday and Hasan "yours" presupposes "two white silk scarves"; "three" presupposes "white silk scarves"; "any black" presupposes "silk scarves"; finally, "cotton" only presupposes "scarves". They conclude that each presupposition is obtained on the basis of the structure of the nominal group: it extends only to cover that part of the presupposed group that would follow the Head of the elliptical group. Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2007) have argued, against Halliday and Hasan, that there is evidence that "yours", the Head of the elliptical group in extension (3a) above, may cover different stretches of the preceding sentence:

(4) a. Here are my two white silk scarves. They look very much like yours but are yours made of silk too? (yours = 'your scarves')
b. Here are my two white silk scarves. Yours are brown linen scarves, aren't they? (yours = 'your scarves')

Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2007) go on to postulate that, because of its pronominal nature, "yours" in these examples only codes a very generic meaning, the idea that it substitutes for a whole noun phrase, whatever its actual make-up. The actual scope of its referential function is not only a matter of grammar, but also of co-textual and contextual requirements. This is clear from the following discourse developments of utterance (4.b) above:

(4b') Here are my two white silk scarves.
a. Yours (= your scarves) are brown linen scarves, aren't they?
b. Yours (= your two white scarves) are not silk, are they?
c. When I saw yours (= your white silk scarves) I thought they were three.

In the examples in (4.b') the scope of "yours" does not depend exclusively on the structure of the rest of the nominal group (or noun phrase) but on the contrast created by some lexical elements in the predicate. For example, the mention to colour and material in (4.b'.a) shifts our attention to these conceptual elements in the nominal group thus giving the number ("two") a marginal role. As a result, "yours" in (4.b'.a) does not necessarily presuppose that the speaker is still talking about two scarves: it could be any number. And, of course, the explicit mention of a different colour and material cancels out the possibility of "yours" presupposing "white" and "silk". This situation contrasts sharply with the one in examples (3b-d) above, where, because of the lack of overriding co-textual factors, Halliday and Hasan's presuppositions actually hold.

According to Otal and Ruiz de Mendoza (2007), the scope of ellipsis is determined by the *Conceptual Structure Selection Principle*. This discourse principle, which is rooted in the pragmatic notion of relevance, has been formulated by the authors as follows: ellipsis or substitution mechanisms select as much structure as is not cancelled out by the discourse unit containing the ellipsis or substitution. This formulation may be improved to make it incorporate explicit mention of the lexical and pragmatic mechanisms that play a role in cancelling out antecedent structure. A more refined wording could take the following form: ellipsis or substitution mechanisms select as much structure as is not cancelled out by the lexical content of the discourse unit containing the ellipsis or substitution mechanism or by cued contextual information brought to bear upon the selection process on the basis of relevance criteria.

In my view, defining the Conceptual Structure Selection Principle in terms of relevance is necessary for two reasons. First, it constrains the way in which the lexical content of the discourse unit carrying the cohesive device is handled to create the appropriate contrasts with the antecedent. Thus, a sequence like the following modification of (4.b'.d) would be considered odd:

(4b'.d') Here are my two white silk scarves. ?Yours are expensive Ankara brown linen scarves, aren't they?

The oddity does not arise from contrasting elements, which are admissible to some extent, but from the addition of new elements that have no counterpart in the antecedent clause ('expensive' and 'Ankara'). Second, relevance criteria allow us to select the scope of the antecedent in cases of linguistic indeterminacy:

(5) The captain believed the aircraft was damaged and could not resume the flight. In that case, as a passenger, what would you have done?

On grammatical grounds, "in that case" may refer either to the fact that the captain believed the aircraft was damaged or to the possibility that it could not resume the flight. But the default interpretation is the latter simply because it is more consistent with our knowledge about air travel and people's behaviour. Contrast between the relevant parts of the clause supplying the antecedent and the clause containing the anaphoric device is based upon world knowledge, just as with coherence.

The kind of analysis offered here, which posits a strong conceptual motivation for anaphoric mechanisms, calls for a reconsideration of the traditional contrast between cohesion and coherence. Recall that only the latter is generally considered conceptual, while cohesion is explained in strictly grammatical terms. Again, the answer is to be found in Relevance Theory, where researchers like Blakemore (1992, 2002) have drawn a distinction between conceptual and procedural connectivity. The former is based on the nature of the encyclopaedic entries for lexical items, that is to say, on world knowledge or what Fillmore and associates have called frames, as we have discussed in section 3. The latter is a question of how language signals the way in which the inferential phase of comprehension is to be constrained. For Blakemore, many discourse markers, which for Halliday and Hasan are generally grammatical devices of cohesion, are to be regarded as procedural in this specific sense. “In that case”, which is very close in meaning to “if so”, would qualify as such a marker by functioning as an instruction to the hearer to interpret whatever follows by taking for granted the truthfulness of the preceding utterance and with reference to what it depicts. The difference with “if so” is merely a question of the degree of certainty assigned to the preceding utterance:

(5’) The captain believed the aircraft was damaged and could not resume the flight. If so, as a passenger, what would you have done?

In (5’), “if so” has a strong default antecedent, that is to say, it substitutes for, “the aircraft was damaged”; but, unlike “in that case”, in (5) the antecedent is not taken for granted to be true. The default assumption about the scope of the antecedent, as with other cases, is determined by relevance criteria.

5. Discourse strategies

A discourse strategy is a set of procedures that directs the hearer’s attention to a given meaning interpretation in terms of the overall connectivity of a text. This being the case, discourse strategies have a procedural function, like discourse markers. But discourse strategies do much more than simply control the way a connection is to be made; they work in support of the general means-ends nature of communication.

The relevance-theoretic perspective on communication has allowed Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal (1997) and Otal (2004) to distinguish between generic and local communication strategies. The former, which are prerequisites for the latter, derive from the general balance that we find in linguistic communication between explicit and implicit information. The latter strategies consist in specific sets of procedures used by the speaker to get the addressee to modify his cognitive environment (i.e. the set of assumptions he has in his mind) in such a way that the speaker attains his communicative goals. By way of example of local strategies, imagine that my best friend, John, has a terrible toothache but he is terrified at the prospects of going to the dentist's. In order to persuade him to go, I say:

(6) Dr. Jones has done all my dental work and I have never felt any pain; he's just great.

I have a non-communicative goal: getting my friend to go to the dentist's so he will solve his dental problem, which I believe is good for him. My plan to achieve this goal is to use verbal communication in a relevant way, which requires an analysis of my friend's psychological make-up. On the grounds of this analysis, I set up a specific communicative goal: I want my friend to modify his assumptions about the risks of going to the dentist's. This I do by mentioning my own experience with a certain dentist, which is my communicative strategy that works at the local pragmatic level. My local strategy implicitly communicates a very strong assumption: many dentists will do you harm but my dentist is an exception so you should try my dentist and solve your dental problem. That is, I expect my friend to come to the conclusion that since Dr. Jones has never done any harm to me, he will not cause any harm to him either. Explicitly, what I communicate is simply that I have had previous positive experience with Dr. Jones and that, because of this, I consider him a great professional.

It is evident that the local discourse strategy is a serious attempt to endow my utterance with optimal relevance: the utterance balances implicit and explicit information as efficiently as possible with the goal to have the strongest communicative impact on the hearer and thus achieve the non-communicative goal of helping my friend. This balance between implicit and explicit information is a consequence of higher-level discourse strategies that have already been discussed in quite a lot of detail in Ruiz de Mendoza and Otal (1997) and Otal (2004), who distinguish (i) information strategies, (ii) contextual strategies, and (iii) negotiation strategies.

There are two information strategies. These are speaker's strategies that represent ends of a continuum along which the speaker will situate his linguistic output:

1) Use a signal that is poor in explicit assumptions and leaves a lot to inference.
2) Use a signal that is rich in explicit assumptions so that inferential activity is reduced to a minimum.

There are also two contextual strategies that are also ends of a continuum, but they work from the addressee's standpoint:

1) Make use of the minimum contextual information and rely maximally on textual features.
2) Make use of the maximum contextual information and rely minimally on textual features.

Negotiation strategies are made up of a number of repair procedures plus some (optional) cooperative attempt(s) by the interlocutor(s) either to make the repair or to make manifest where they believe the repair is needed.

The way information strategies work to ensure relevant communication at the local level is clear from the following modification of (6) above:

(6') Dr. Jones has done all my dental work. I should have felt a lot of pain while he did my dental work but I never felt any; because of this I know Dr. Jones is just great.

It is clear that excessive emphasis on information strategy [2] results in a communicatively awkward message. The use of "and" between the first and second clauses in (6) serves the procedural purpose of indicating that the second clause is pragmatically coherent with the first. In what way is a question of letting relevance criteria guide us in our search for relevant connections. This application of relevance criteria renders the explicitation in (6') completely useless from a communicative perspective. Similar considerations apply to the unnecessary use of "because of this" to signal a consequence-cause relationship: the speaker knows that the addressee understands that a dentist that will not do any harm whatsoever to people has to be a very good dentist.

6. Conclusion

Discourse is a tightly controlled strategic activity regulated by principles that are grounded in semantics and pragmatics. We have thus studied a number of semantic and pragmatic phenomena that have evident consequences for the development of discourse. These phenomena have been recognized with the help of some of the analytical tools provided by cognitive semantics (e.g. notions such as cluster models, centre-periphery, metaphor, metonymy) and by the varied implications of the pragmatic Principle of Relevance, especially those concerned with the balance between efforts and effect, on the one hand, and between explicit and implicit information, on the other.

Our study of the way we make use of cognitive models in discourse has allowed us to postulate the principle of *Metaphoric Source Selection*: the metaphorical extension of a concept can only select partial structure from this concept to construct the metaphoric source.

The recognition of degrees of centrality in semantic specifications underlies the *Peripherality Principle*. This is a discourse principle, grounded in the Principle of Relevance: when the most central characterization of a concept is not capable of creating discourse coherence, speakers turn to less central specifications and select the one that best satisfies the conditions of relevance.

The present study has also addressed the question of the discourse potential of metonymic operations. We agree with other scholars that metonymy underlies such pragmatic phenomena as implicature-derivation and (indirect) illocutionary activity. We additionally show that metonymy is also essential for a correct understanding of some cases of discourse cohesion. In connection to this, there is evidence that anaphora is a conceptual rather than a grammatical mechanism.

Relevance has revealed itself as crucial in constraining the selection of semantic features that will be used to determine the flow of discourse. But pragmatic activity has an even more important role in regulating discourse. In order to show what this role is, this paper has addressed the question of the pragmatic grounding of so-called cohesion and coherence in discourse. Within this framework, the present paper claims that ellipsis and substitution are discourse phenomena subject to pragmatic constraints and argues for the existence of the *Conceptual Structure Selection Principle*, which accounts for the semantic scope of ellipsis and substitution devices: these have within their scope as much structure as is not cancelled out by the discourse unit that contains the cohesion device.

The final part of this paper has focused upon the analysis of discourse-strategic behaviour. Discourse strategies are non-conventional sets of procedures that allow speakers to create and interpret procedurally and conceptually connected texts. They are grounded in low-level and high-level pragmatic principles explored by the author in previous work.

Notes

* Correspondence to: José Luis Otal Campo, Universitat Jaume I, Dep. d'Estudis Anglesos, Campus del Riu Sec, 12071 Castellón. E-mail: otal@ang.uji.es.

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