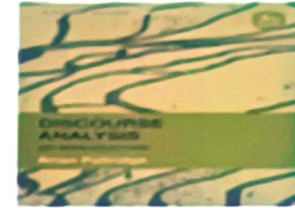


Chapter 6: "Discourse Grammar" from Brian Paltridge's *Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*



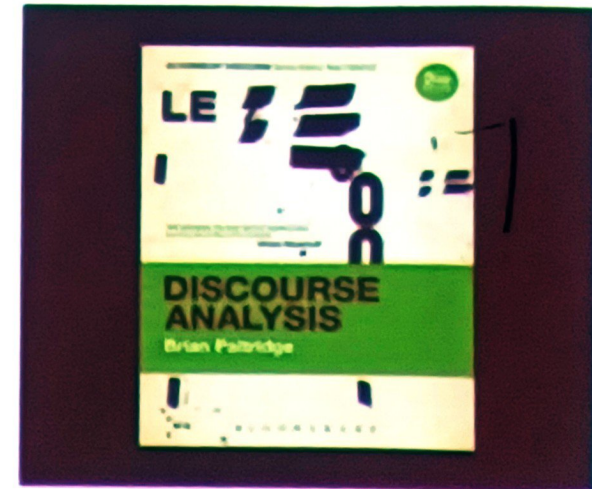
Purposes of Chapter 6: “Discourse Grammar”



- Paltridge’s “Discourse Grammar” argues that grammar must be studied not only at the level of **isolated sentences** but as a resource used **across extended texts and interactions**. The chapter shows:
 - 1. How grammatical choices contribute to **texture** (the sense of a coherent text/ grammatical and lexical cohesion),
 - 2. How **cohesion** is achieved through specific grammatical/lexical devices,
 - 3. How **spoken and written discourse** exploit different grammatical resources for communicative goals.

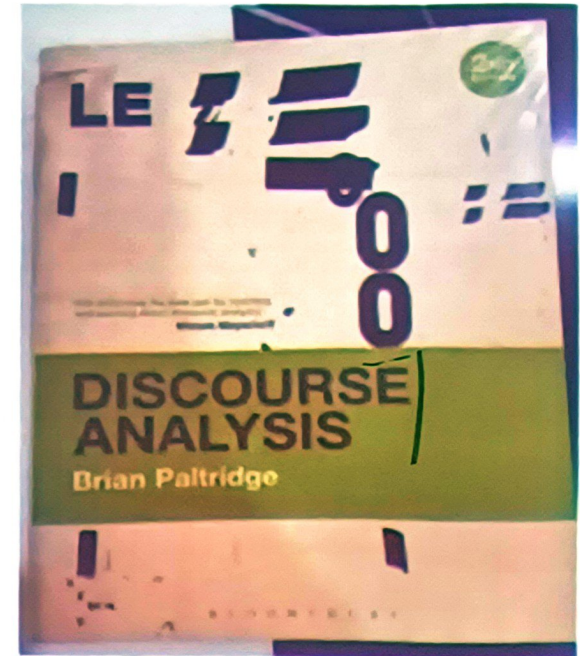
1. What does Paltridge mean by *discourse grammar*?

- 'Discourse Grammar' means to view grammar from the perspective of **language in use** — how grammatical forms function across **stretches of text and in interaction** (not only as sentence-internal rules). This includes attention to prefabricated expressions, discourse markers, turn-taking grammar, and choices that relate to information flow across sentences.



What is the significance of 'discourse grammar'?

- Studying grammar at **discourse** level explains phenomena that **sentence-level** grammar misses — e.g.,
- **why** a speaker uses a particular pronoun,
- how **cohesion** is maintained across paragraphs,
- or how discourse markers shape **stance and sequencing**.



2) Texture, cohesion and coherence (Halliday & Hasan groundwork)

- **Texture** = the property that makes a sequence of sentences into a *text* (a coherent unit). Paltridge leans on the classic distinction between cohesion (linguistic ties that link parts of a text) and broader coherence (conceptual/semantic unity).



Halliday & Hasan's cohesion types (still central)

1. **Reference** (anaphora/cataphora: pronouns, demonstratives linking to other elements),
2. **Substitution** (replacing a lexical item: e.g., "one", "do"),
3. **Ellipsis** (omitting material recoverable from context),
4. **Conjunction** (connectives showing logical/semantic relations),
5. **Lexical cohesion** (repetition, synonymy, antonymy, collocation).



Halliday and Hasan

Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (born 1925) is a linguist who developed an internationally influential grammar model, the systemic functional grammar, originally by studying Chinese. The model has been applied to other languages as well; it is especially useful for describing non-Indo-European languages.

These categories explain many of the grammatical devices Paltridge discusses as resources for making discourse hold together.

Example

“John came in. **He** sat down.” — *He* is reference (**anaphora**).

“Do you want coffee or tea?” — “**Tea.**” — the single-word answer is **ellipsis/substitution**.

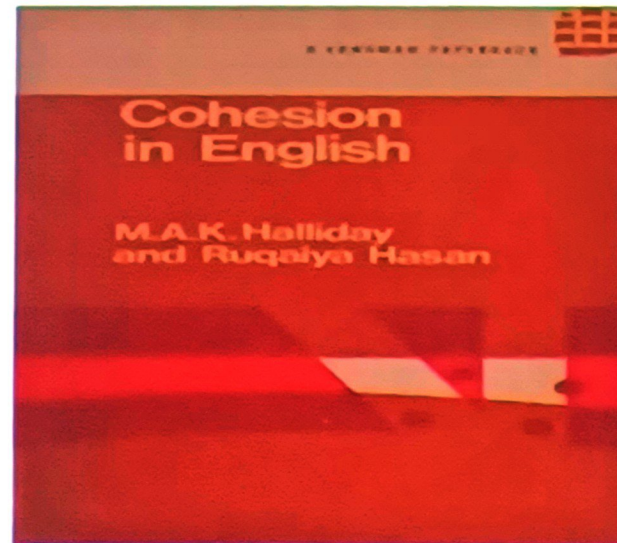


1. Reference (anaphora/cataphora)

- **Reference (anaphora/cataphora):** Links items across sentences; crucial for given/new patterns (what's assumed vs. what's introduced). Pronouns, definite articles, demonstratives are the main tools.
- In a narrower sense, **anaphora** is the use of an expression that depends specifically upon an **antecedent** expression and thus is contrasted with **cataphora**, which is the use of an expression that depends upon a **postcedent** expression.
- ****The anaphoric (referring) term is called an anaphor.**

2. Substitution & Ellipsis

- **Substitution & Ellipsis:** Economize language by avoiding repetition; common in spoken interaction and informative for pragmatic relations (contrast, correction, shared knowledge).



3. Conjunction

- **Conjunction:** Logical connectives (and, but, therefore, however) organize discourse relations (additive, adversative, causal, temporal). These are important for building argument structure and narrative sequencing.

4. Lexical cohesion

Lexical cohesion: Repetition, synonyms, hyponymy, collocation create topic continuity. Lexical ties often operate over larger stretches than grammatical ties and are especially salient in written texts.

operationalize

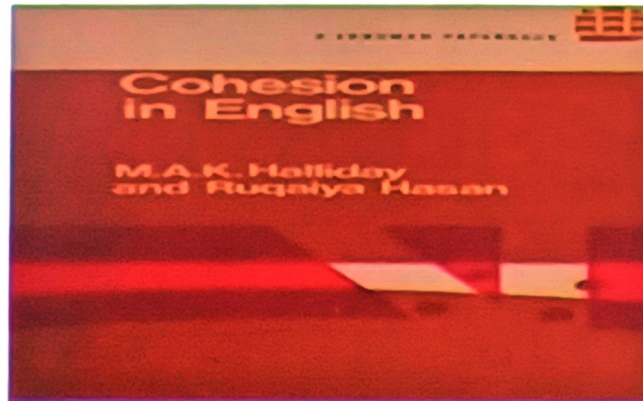


4) Information structure & theme/rheme (how grammar packages information across discourse)

- It defines **theme** as the element that **comes first in a clause** that represents what the clause is about.
- A **rheme** is the part of a sentence that provides **new information** about the topic, often indicating what is being said about the theme. Rheme is defined as the rest of the clause that typically contains new information.
- There are different types of themes including unmarked topical, marked topical, textual, and interpersonal.

Significance of ‘Discourse Grammar’

- Paltridge emphasizes that grammar helps manage **information flow**: what is presented as given (old) vs new, what is foregrounded, and what is backgrounded. This links to theme/rheme or topic/comment distinctions used in systemic functional accounts and to pragmatic choices (word order, clefting, fronting). These choices are part of discourse grammar because they operate across sentence boundaries and affect continuity.



Mini example:

- “**As for the meeting**, John won’t come.”
- **The fronted phrase** signals topic continuity and links the clause to prior discourse.