Constraints and Syntactic-pragmatic Interface of Adversative Structure of the Cohesive Words

Junlei Tian

School of Foreign Languages, China Three Gorges University, Yichang, 443002, China

Abstract: At the semantic level, cohesive words constitute a homogeneous class. For the case of coordinating conjunctions like *but*, *yet*, *however*, they form a distinct syntactic class, these cohesive words belong to the same semantic type and can mark interactivity relations or other species of relations. Through this paper, we try to find various aspects of structural constraints of a discourse via the relation of the hierarchical rule of insertion of the elements of a statement or a discourse. This hierarchical relationship provides us with a reference for corpus context analysis, namely the upstream and downstream of the cohesive word scope.

1. Introduction

As a set of circumstances in the midst of which a written or oral utterance takes place, the speech situation is closely linked to the utterance. Thus, a better knowledge of the speech situation may be necessary, we can analyze it through the following seven aspects [1]:

a) To determine the referent of the expressions used;

b) To know which internal characteristics of a word must be taken into account in the interpretation;

c) To choose between various interpretations of a syntactically or lexically ambiguous statement;

d) To specify the event mentioned in the statement;

e) To determine the speech act performed (affirm the illocutionary value of the statement);

f) To determine the normal nature or not of an utterance;

g) To interpret the countless expressions and structures which refer to a framework of knowledge outside of which they are meaningless.

The explanation of how the french cohesive words "mais" "bien que" "puisque" work, for example, must take into consideration both the status of the joined entities and the specific semantic value. These connectors studied can link not only elements of the same nature and the same function as suggested by studies on coordination, but also very diverse units.

2. Syntactic-pragmatic Interface of Adversative Structure

Charolles pointed out that, syntax is a powerful factor of integration of verbal data which is

based on relationships between terms belonging to determined grammatical categories and likely to occupy predetermined positions [2]. The syntax of the text is noticed only in the context of the act of communication. The transmitter and the receiver are complex entities, this means that the texts modify their form according to any act of enunciation. By a double interruption of communication and with the help of metapragmatic signs, the sender and receiver respectively mark the beginning and the end of the text.

Syntactic cohesion represents what embeds a sentence into the development of the text, merging it with what is before and after. It can be established through pronominalization. Therefore, the presence of pronouns in sentences, such as (1) in table 1:

Table 1: Case (1)

Original text in French
(1) *Les plaisirs du mien, mais tu ne peux les conna ître.*

Texting operations leave traces on the surface of the texts, these traces can be used as clues guiding the search for the underlying structure of the texts. We reinforce the analysis in terms of detachment or segmentation as if the anaphoric form constituted a trace of the displaced constituent and explained the following sentence description:

Table 2: Case (2)

Original text in French
(2) *Je connais les d élices de ton pays, disait Brasidas à un satrape qui comparait la vie de Sparte à celle de Pers épolis, mais tu ne peux conna ître les plaisirs du mien.* (p.56) [3]

Contextualization is important for discourse analysis, so knowing the situation is necessary to establish the referent designated by a pronoun, the speech act performed, the areas of quantification and the intended conclusions. For case (2) in table 2, by saying *Je connais les d élices de ton pays*, is the speaker giving information or showing superiority over his interlocutor? What possible conclusion allows us to oppose the two joint propositions by *mais* in *Je connais les d élices de ton pays, mais tu ne peux conna ître les plaisirs du mien*.

The phenomenon of ellipsis is another way of establishing syntactic cohesion: by reestablishing the implied verb, we can reconstitute a syntactic structure in which each element enters into a dependency relationship in an easier way. In the following sentence:

Table 3: Case (3)

Original text in French
(3) ..., *si l'orang-outang ou d'autres étaient de l'espèce humaine, les observateurs les plus grossiers pourraient s'en assurer même avec démonstration* ; (p.82) [3]

The notion of hypothetical subordinate applies to the first proposition if we reconstitute the main one such as (3) in table 3: ..., *si l'orang-outang ou d'autres étaient de l'espèce humaine, je vous annonce que les observateurs les plus grossiers pourraient s'en assurer même avec démonstration*, like a hierarchical structure in which the peripheral element will find its place. A statement is said to be hypothetical when it makes the validation of its content depend on a reference point or a relationship of a fictitious or imaginary type. Hypothetical statements do not have a specific form.

The use of logical semantics remains insufficient, which requires consideration of the pragmatic dimension which is based on the hypothesis according to which a speaker, by using a statement, presents an argument in favor of a conclusion where he seeks to convince his interlocutor.

The syntactic units connected by the argumentative "mais" can be of various forms. These can be clauses, elements of sentences and even the largest units of speech. Pragmatics aims to address

the mechanisms of discourse interpretation in which the logical cohesive words defined by Moeshler (1998: 77) appear as follows [4]:

A pragmatic connective is a linguistic mark,belonging to various grammatical categories coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, adverbs, adverbial phrases, which:

a- Articulates any maximal linguistic units or discursive units.

b- Gives instructions on how to connect these units.

c- Imposes to draw conclusions from the discursive connection which would not be drawn in its absence.

Pragmatics studies everything which, in the sense of a statement, is due to the situation in which statement is used, and not just the linguistic structure of the sentence used. [1]

Taking pragmatics into account will therefore make it possible to include in the semantic description the argumentative role of the connector which contributes to presenting an argument in favor of a certain conclusion, explicitly or implicitly. In fact, it will be a question of explaining the participation of the cohesive word "mais" within an argumentative movement which is carried out by relating statements which are oriented towards a given conclusion.

3. Structural constraints

If conversational analysis has until now posed functional or structural constraints on the sequence and interpretation, argumentative analysis has been content to pose constraints on the orientation of the constituents articulated by the so-called argumentative cohesive words.

Knowing the different types of markers of discourse structure can facilitate our understanding of its sequence and structural constraint. According to the work of Roulet (1980, 1981) and Grice (1979), linguistically, three types of relationships exist between the constituents of discourse: two fundamental types, namely the initiative and reactive illocutionary functions, which link the constituent interventions of the exchange, and the interactive functions, which link the constituents of the intervention, by adding, in addition to the specific illocutionary or pragmatic function, pragmatic cohesive words, simply marking a sequence or a disconnection in the hierarchical structure of the discourse. Four degrees of the interactive functions of the constituents of discourse can then be distinguished: zero, implicit conversational, implicit conventional and explicit, therefore (Roulet, 1985: 30-32) [5]:

➢ *The first degree is characterized by the absence of linguistic marker; the illocutionary or interactive function depends solely on the cotext and the context.*

➢ *The second degree is characterized by the presence of a potential marker which, while favoring a functional reading, leaves room for a certain ambiguity.*

➢ *The third degree is characterized by the presence of an indicative marker which, without naming the function, indicates it unequivocally.*

➢ *The fourth degree is characterized by the presence of a denominative marker, which explicitly indicates the illocutionary or interactive function.*

Table 4: Case (4)

Original text in French
(4) *Les choses en cet état eussent pu demeurer égales, si les talents eussent été égaux, et que, **par exemple**, l'emploi du fer et la consommation des denrées eussent toujours fait une balance exacte ;* [3]

In the statement above (4) in table 4, the presence of the indicative marker ***par exemple*** indicates an explicit conventional relationship between discourse constituents.

From Charolles' point of view [6],

The act of reference aims to obtain an agreement not between two thoughts (that of a speaker and that of an interlocutor) but between two thoughts about something and this through the production, in context, of a referential expression. (2002: 9)

Charolles considers that

Languages provide speakers with expressions for encoding very specific conceptual instructions and processing instructions, which explain the expected references intended to guide the speakers in the context in which they are used. (2002: 5)

To constitute an adequate reaction and authorize the continuation of the exchange, an intervention must generally meet a certain number of conditions, namely the sequence constraints (Roulet, 1985: 42-43):

A) The thematic condition imposes on the reactive constituent the same discursive theme as that of the initiative constituent;

B) The propositional content condition requires the reactive constituent to be in a semantic relationship with the initiative constituent;

C) The illocutionary condition imposes on the reactive constituent an illocutionary function corresponding to that of the initiative constituent;

D) The argumentative orientation condition requires the reactive constituent to be co-oriented with the initiative constituent.

In short, the sequences on a constituent are constrained by it on the thematic, propositional, illocutionary and argumentative levels, any sequence satisfying these various constraints selects an interpretation of this constituent. (Roulet, 1985: 93)

From the logical and coherent point of view of an expression or statement, a close relationship exists between coordinating conjunctions such as "et", "mais", "ou", "car", "donc", "ni", and those of subordination such as "bien que", "malgré que", "puisque"; we can call this relationship the **hierarchical rule of insertion**.

Here we take the following example (PERELMAN & OLBRECHTS-TYTECA, 2008: 211):

Table 5: Case (5)

Original text in French
(5) *Ton ami ne m'a pas parlé de toi,* **bien qu'***il en ait eu l'occasion.*

In this general subordinate proposition, the cohesive word "bien que" destroyed the equivalence of the two propositions such as (5) in table 5: *Ton ami ne m'a pas parlé de toi* (proposition A), *il en ait eu l'occasion* (proposition B).

In other words, the insertion of "bien que" considerably modified the premises of B which would have an accepted value (p: *il en ait eu l'occasion --> r : il allait me parler de toi*), and effectively provoked the subordination of A to B. Thus, the affirmation produced by these two simply coordinated facts has been denied with the interference of the hierarchical rule of insertion such as (6) in table 7: In fact, judgments carry an implicit interpretation that gives them sufficient meaning. This hierarchical relationship shown in table 6 and table 8, provides us with a reference for corpus context analysis, namely the upstream and downstream of the cohesive word scope.

Table 6: Table on the relationship of the hierarchical rule of insertion of case (5)

Premises	Accepted value	Reality	Cause
il en ait eu l'occasion	*il allait me parler de toi*	*Ton ami ne m'a pas parlé de toi*	insertion of « bien que »

An example present in our corpus:

Table 7: Case (6)

Original text in French
(6) *Qu'on ne dise donc point que* [proposition A: <u>*le souverain ne soit pas sujet aux lois de son État*</u>], ***puisque*** [proposition B: <u>*la proposition contraire est une vérité du droit des gens*</u>] *que la flatterie a quelquefois attaquée*. (p.58) [3]

Table 8: Table on the relationship of the hierarchical rule of insertion of case (6)

Premises	Accepted value	Reality	Cause
la proposition contraire est une vérité du droit des gens	*le souverain soit sujet aux lois de son État*	*(Qu'on ne dise donc point que) le souverain ne soit pas sujet aux lois de son État*	insertion of «puisque»

4. Conclusions

Observing the analysis above, we could say that this **hierarchical rule of insertion** is necessarily consistent with the argumentation theory of Anscombre and Ducrot (1997): from the interaction between the statement and the argumentation, the act of arguing attributes to any statement three properties, namely an argumentative aspect, an argumentative orientation and a thematic aspect. From a pragmatic point of view, this rule is an interesting complement for referential expressions. In fact, discourse of the argumentative type has its own properties. [7]

Ducrot (1980) distinguished two values of "mais": refutation *mais* and argumentation *mais*. [8] In *p* mais *q*, the cohesive word "mais" does not directly indicate an informative opposition between *p* and *q*, the opposition is achieved only via an argumentative movement highlighted by the conclusion *r*. This argument needs the **existence of a situational reference** to draw the conclusion *r* which serves as a link between *p* and *q*. Ducrot calls this situational reference topos, which is always presented in the form of an **implicit premise** (*p'*) associated with *P*. (Table 9)

For example:

Table 9: Case (7)

Original text in French
(7) *Cette fille est belle mais intelligente.*

In case (7), *p'= en général, une belle fille est sotte*.

The speaker presents an argument for a certain conclusion (r'=*n'est pas intelligente*), but he invalidates this argument by stating an opposite conclusion (q=*mais intelligente*), since *p'* is part of the universe of the speaker's belief and gives additional information to the interlocutor.

As Luscher (1994: 218) points out, it is possible that this «implicitation provoque l'essentiel des effets obtenus par l'interprétation de cet énoncé» and is not only an exploitation of a particularity of the cohesive word *mais*.

As implicitly known information, the premise *p'* first arouses the curiosity of the interlocutor, and then negates his judgment made according to the statement *p*, and finally pushes him towards the opposite side in order to draw the conclusion *q* and to carry out the act of argumentation *P* mais *Q*.

In addition, we must take into consideration the distributional constraints for the use of "mais", such as the presence of a syntactic and explicit negation for the adversative "mais", which would cause the transformation of a concessive value.

Acknowledgements

References

[1] Ducrot O & Schaeffer J-M, New encyclopedic dictionary of language sciences: Editions du Seuil, 1995, pp. 131, 764-767.

[2] Charolles M, Coherence, consistency and relevance of discourse. Linguistic works: International Journal of French Linguistics, De Boeck Université, 1995, pp. 125-151.

[3] Rousseau J.-J., Discourse on the Origin of Inequality. Paris, Gallimard, 1985.

[4] Moeschler J. & Rebou L.A., Pragmatics of discourse. From the interpretation of the statement to the interpretation of the discourse. Paris, Armand Colin, 1998.

[5] Roulet E., Articulation of discourse in contemporary French. Berne, Peter Lang, 1985.

[6] Charolles M., Reference and referential expressions in French. Paris, Ophrys, 2002.

[7] Anscombre J.-C. & Ducrot O., Argumentation in language. Liège, Mardaga, 1997, third edition, 184 pages.

[8] Ducrot O. et al., The words of the discourse. Paris, Les éditions de Minuit, 1980.