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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a result of a keen and long-lasting interest of its author in applied linguistics in combination with the factors that enable people to interpret sophisticated texts in both native and foreign language. All in all, although many coursebooks authors try to include genuine texts in their publications, activities that accompany them are generally limited. Tasks which would not only check the understanding of the gist or key vocabulary, but also important details are scarce. The question is whether on the basis of discourse analysis theories it is possible to make it easy for foreign language learners to read texts with full comprehension. The reader of this diploma paper should bear in mind that following the authorities on discourse analysis the author of this work uses the terms 'discourse' and 'text' synonymously.

This paper is divided into two parts: theoretical, where a scholarly set of ideas is presented, and practical, devoted to the account of the study conducted by the author of this paper in order to either undermine or support the ideas presented in the first chapter. The former section is subdivided into three chapters. The first of them provides a thorough description of the term 'discourse' itself, including examples of its various types and functions. The second one presents a historical background of how scholars became interested in the use of language, the manners in which they examined speech and writing, as well as it depicts the division of discursive devices. The last chapter of the theoretical part describes the ways of applying the theory to teaching various aspects of language, such as grammar or vocabulary, however, the emphasis is put on the interpretation of written texts.

The practical part of this paper describes the study conducted on a group of Polish learners of English. The focus of this component was brought to finding lexical chains in texts - a type of exercise which is not to be found in ordinary coursebooks. That variety of tasks was deliberately chosen so as to expand the knowledge of discursive devices to which most teachers pay close attention, namely linking words and phrases, by an additional set of useful tools. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the study was to check the perception and implementation of lexical chains in written texts, it might also be found useful in understanding long speeches, which makes them even more useful for learners. The assignments, together with the key of answers, which were used in the study are included in the appendices section

1. DEFINITION OF DISCOURSE

Since its introduction to modern science the term 'discourse' has taken various, sometimes very broad, meanings. In order to specify which of the numerous senses is analyzed in the following dissertation it has to be defined. Originally the word 'discourse' comes from Latin '*discursus*' which denoted 'conversation, speech'. Thus understood, however, discourse refers to too wide an area of human life, therefore only discourse from the vantage point of linguistics, and especially applied linguistics, is explained here.

There is no agreement among linguists as to the use of the term discourse in that some use it in reference to texts, while others claim it denotes speech which is for instance illustrated by the

following definition: "Discourse: a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke, or narrative" (Crystal 1992:25). On the other hand Dakowska, being aware of differences between kinds of discourses indicates the unity of communicative intentions as a vital element of each of them. Consequently she suggests using terms 'text' and 'discourse' almost interchangeably betokening the former refers to the linguistic product, while the latter implies the entire dynamics of the processes (Dakowska 2001:81). According to Cook (1990:7) novels, as well as short conversations or groans might be equally rightfully named discourses.

Seven criteria which have to be fulfilled to qualify either a written or a spoken text as a discourse have been suggested by Beaugrande (1981). These include:

- **Cohesion** - grammatical relationship between parts of a sentence essential for its interpretation;
- **Coherence** - the order of statements relates one another by sense.
- **Intentionality** - the message has to be conveyed deliberately and consciously;
- **Acceptability** - indicates that the communicative product needs to be satisfactory in that the audience approves it;
- **Informativeness** - some new information has to be included in the discourse;
- **Situationality** - circumstances in which the remark is made are important;
- **Intertextuality** - reference to the world outside the text or the interpreters' schemata;

Nowadays, however, not all of the above mentioned criteria are perceived as equally important in discourse studies, therefore some of them are valid only in certain methods of the research (Beaugrande 1981, cited in Renkema 2004:49).

- Features of discourse.

Since it is not easy to unambiguously clarify what a discourse is it seems reasonable to describe features which are mutual to all its kinds. To do it thoroughly Saussurean concepts of *langue* and *parole* are of use. Ferdinand de Saussure divided the broad meaning of language into *langue*, which is understood as a system that enables people to speak as they do, and *parole* - a particular set of produced statements. Following this division discourse relates more to *parole*, for it always occurs in time and is internally characterized by successively developing expressions in which the meaning of the latter is influenced by the former, while *langue* is abstract. To list some additional traits: discourse is always produced by somebody whose identity, as well as the identity of the interpreter, is significant for the proper understanding of the message. On the other hand *langue* is impersonal that is to say more universal, due to society. Furthermore, discourse always happens in either physical, or linguistic context and within a meaningful fixed time, whereas *langue* does not refer to anything. Consequently, only discourse may convey messages thanks to *langue* which is its framework (1).

1.2 Types of discourse

Not only is discourse difficult to define, but it is also not easy to make a clear cut division of discourse as such. Therefore, depending on the form linguists distinguish various kinds of communicative products. A type of discourse might be characterized as a class of either written or spoken text, which is frequently casually specified, recognition of which aids its perception, and consequently production of potential response (Cook 1990:156). One of such divisions, known as the Organon model, distinguishes three types of discourse depending of the aspect of language emphasized in the text. If the relation to the context is prevailing, it conveys some knowledge

thus it is an informative type of discourse. When the stress is on a symptom aspect the fulfilled function is expression, as a result the discourse type is narrative. Last but not least in this division is argumentative discourse which is characterized by the accent on the signal aspect.

This distinction due to its suitability for written communicative products more than for spoken ones, faced constructive criticism whose accurate observation portrayed that there are more functions performed. Consequently there ought to be more types of discourse, not to mention the fact that these often mix and overlap. Thorough examination of the matter was conducted, thus leading to the emergence of a new, more detailed classification of kinds of spoken texts.

The analysis of oral communicative products was the domain of Steger, who examined features of various situations and in his categorization divided discourse into six types: presentation, message, report, public debate, conversation and interview. The criteria of this division include such factors as presence, or absence of interaction, number of speakers and their relation to each other (their rights, or as Steger names it 'rank'), flexibility of topic along with selection and attitude of interlocutors towards the subject matter.

However, it is worth mentioning that oral discourse might alter its character, for instance in the case of presenting a lecture when students start asking questions the type changes to interview, or even a conversation. Using this classification it is possible to anticipate the role of partakers as well as goals of particular acts of communication.

The above mentioned typologies do not exhaust the possible division of discourse types, yet, nowadays endeavor to create a classification that would embrace all potential kinds is being made. Also, a shift of interest in this field might be noticed, presently resulting in focus on similarities and differences between written and spoken communication (Renkema 2004:64).

1.2.1 Written and spoken discourse

Apart from obvious differences between speech and writing like the fact that writing includes some medium which keeps record of the conveyed message while speech involves only air, there are certain dissimilarities that are less apparent. Speech develops in time in that the speaker says with speed that is suitable for him, even if it may not be appropriate for the listener and though a request for repetition is possible, it is difficult to imagine a conversation in which every sentence is to be rephrased. Moreover, talking might be spontaneous which results in mistakes, repetition,

sometimes less coherent sentences where even grunts, stutters or pauses might be meaningful. The speaker usually knows the listener, or listeners, or he is at least aware of the fact that he is being listened to, which enables him to adjust the register. As interlocutors are most often in face-to-face encounters (unless using a phone) they take advantage of extralinguistic signals as grimaces, gesticulation, expressions such as 'here', 'now', or 'this' are used. Employment of nonsense vocabulary, slang and contracted forms (we're, you've) is another feature of oral discourse. Among other significant features of speech there are rhythm, intonation, speed of uttering and, what is more important, inability to conceal mistakes made while speaking (Crystal 1995:291, Dakowska 2001:07).

In contrast, writing develops in space in that it needs a means to carry the information. The author of the text does not often know who is going to read the text, as a result he cannot adjust to readers' specific expectations. The writer is frequently able to consider the content of his work for almost unlimited period of time which makes it more coherent, having complex syntax. What is more, the reader might not instantly respond to the text, ask for clarification, hence neat message organization, division to paragraphs, layout are of vital importance to make comprehension easier. Additionally, owing to the lack of context expressions such as 'now' or 'here' are omitted, since they would be ambiguous as texts might be read at different times and places. One other feature typical of writing, but never of oral discourse, is the organization of tables, formulas, or charts which can be portrayed only in written form (Crystal 1995:291).

Naturally, this division into two ways of producing discourse is quite straightforward, yet, it is possible to combine the two like, for example, in the case of a lesson, when a teacher explains something writing on the blackboard, or when a speaker prepares detailed notes to be read out during his speech. Moreover, some of the foregoing features are not so explicit in the event of sophisticated, formal speech or a friendly letter.

- Discourse expressed formally and informally.

The difference in construction and reception of language was the basis of its conventional distinction into speaking and writing. Nevertheless, when the structure of discourse is taken into consideration more essential division into formal and informal communicative products gains importance. Formal discourse is more strict in that it requires the use of passive voice, lack of contracted forms together with impersonality, complex sentence structure and, in the case of the English language, vocabulary derived from Latin. That is why formal spoken language has many features very similar to written texts, particularly absence of vernacular vocabulary and slang, as well as the employment of rhetorical devices to make literary-like impact on the listener.

Informal discourse, on the other hand, makes use of active voice mainly, with personal pronouns and verbs which show feelings such as 'I think', 'we believe'. In addition, contractions are frequent in informal discourse, no matter if it is written or spoken. Consequently it may be said that informal communicative products are casual and loose, while formal ones are more solemn and governed by strict rules as they are meant to be used in official and serious circumstances.

The relation of the producer of the message and its receiver, the amount of addressees and factors such as public or private occasion are the most important features influencing selecting

either formal or informal language. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that the contemporary learner, who may easily travel and use his linguistic skills outside class, will encounter mainly informal discourse, which due to its flexibility and unpredictability might be the most difficult to comprehend. Accordingly, it seems rational to teach all varieties of language relying on authentic oral and written texts (Cook 1990:50).

2. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS - ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Discourse analysis is a primarily linguistic study examining the use of language by its native population whose major concern is investigating language functions along with its forms, produced both orally and in writing. Moreover, identification of linguistic qualities of various genres, vital for their recognition and interpretation, together with cultural and social aspects which support its comprehension, is the domain of discourse analysis. To put it in another way, the branch of applied linguistics dealing with the examination of discourse attempts to find patterns in communicative products as well as and their correlation with the circumstances in which they occur, which are not explainable at the grammatical level (Carter 1993:23).

2.1 Starting point of discourse analysis

The first modern linguist who commenced the study of relation of sentences and coined the name 'discourse analysis', which afterwards denoted a branch of applied linguistics, was Zellig Harris (Cook 1990:13). Originally, however, it was not to be treated as a separate branch of study - Harris proposed extension of grammatical examination which reminded syntactic investigations (2).

The emergence of this study is a result of not only linguistic research, but also of researchers engaged in other fields of inquiry, particularly sociology, psychology, anthropology and psychotherapy (Trappes-Lomax 2004:133). In 1960s and 1970s other scholars, that is philosophers of language or those dealing with pragmatics enormously influenced the development of this study as well. Among other contributors to this field the Prague School of Linguists, whose focusing on organization of information in communicative products indicated the connection of grammar and discourse, along with text grammarians are worth mentioning (McCarthy 1991:6).

A significant contribution to the evolution of **discourse analysis** has been made by British and American scholars. In Britain the examination of discourse turned towards the study of the social functions of language. Research conveyed at the University of Birmingham fruited in creating a thorough account of communication in various situations such as debates, interviews, doctor-patient relations, paying close attention to the intonation of people participating in talks as well as manners particular to circumstances. Analysis of the factors essential for succession of decently made communication products on the grounds of structural-linguistic criteria was another concern of British scholars. Americans, on the other hand, focused on examining small communities of people and their discourse in genuine circumstances. Apart from that, they concentrated on conversation analysis inspecting narratives in addition to talks and the behavior of speakers as well as patterns repeating in given situations. Division and specification of types

of discourse along with social limitations of politeness and thorough description of face saving acts in speech is also American scholars' contribution (McCarthy 1991:6).

- Sphere of interest of discourse analysts.

The range of inquiry of discourse analysis not only covers linguistic issues, but is also concerned with other matters, such as: enabling computers to comprehend and produce intelligible texts, thus contributing to progress in the study of Artificial Intelligence. Out of these investigations a very important concept of schemata emerged. It might be defined as prior knowledge of typical situations which enables people to understand the underlying meaning of words in a given text. This mental framework is thought to be shared by a language community and to be activated by key words or context in order for people to understand the message. To implement schemata to a computer, however, is yet impossible (Cook 1990:69).

Discourse analysts carefully scrutinize universal circumstances of the occurrence of communicative products, particularly within state institutions. Numerous attempts to minimize misunderstandings between bureaucrats and citizens were made, resulting in user-friendly design of documents. The world of politics and features of its peculiar communicative products are also of concern to discourse analysts. Having carefully investigated that area of human activity scholars depicted it as characterized by frequent occurrence of face saving acts and euphemisms. One other sphere of life of particular interest to applied linguists is the judicature and its language which is incomprehensible to most common citizens, especially due to pages-long sentences, as well as peculiar terminology. Moreover, educational institutions, classroom language and the language that ought to be taught to enable learners to successfully comprehend both oral and written texts, as well as participate in real life conversations and produce native-like communicative products is the domain of discourse analysis. Last but not least, influence of gender on language production and perception is also examined (Renkema 2004, Trappes-Lomax 2004).

2.2.1 Spoken language analysis

The examination of oral discourse is mainly the domain of linguists gathered at the University of Birmingham, who at first concentrated on the language used during teacher - learner communication, afterwards altering their sphere of interest to more general issues. However, patterns of producing speech characteristic of communities, or members of various social classes within one population were also of ethnomethodologists' interest. A result of such inquiries was discovering how turn taking differs from culture to culture as well as how standards of politeness vary. In addition, manners of beginning discussions on new topics were described (McCarthy 1991:24).

What is more, it was said that certain characteristics are common to all societies, for instance, indicating the end of thought or end of utterance. The words that are to point the beginning or the closing stages of a phrase are called 'frames'. McCarthy (1991:13) claims that it is thanks to them that people know when they can take their turn to speak in a conversation. However, in spite of the fact that frames can be noticed in every society, their use might differ, which is why knowledge of patterns of their usage may be essential for conducting a fluent and natural

dialogue with a native speaker. Moreover, these differences are not only characteristic of cultures, but also of circumstances in which the conversation occurs, and are also dependent on the rights (or 'rank') of the participants (McCarthy 1991:13).

Apart from that, it was pointed out that some utterances are invariably interrelated, which can enable teachers of foreign languages to prepare learners adequately to react as a native speaker would. Among the phrases whose successors are easy to anticipate there are for instance: greeting, where the response is also greeting; apology with the response in the form of acceptance or informing - and acknowledging as a response. Such pairs of statements are known as adjacency pairs. While the function of the reply is frequently determined by the former expression its very form is not, as it depends on circumstances in which the conversation occurs. Thus, in a dialogue between two friends refusal to provide help might look like that: *no way! I ain't gonna do that!*, but when mother asks her son to do something the refusing reply is more likely to take different form: *I'm afraid I can't do that right now, can you wait 5 minutes?* Frequently used phrases, such as "I'm afraid", known as softeners, are engaged when people want to sound more respectful. Learners of a foreign language should be aware of such linguistic devices if they want to be skillful speakers (McCarthy 1991:121).

2.2.2 Written texts analysis

Since the examination of written language is easier to conduct than the scrutiny of oral texts, in that more data is available in different genres, produced by people from different backgrounds as well as with disparate purposes, it is more developed and of interest not only to linguists but also language teachers and literary scholars. Each of them, however, approaches this study in a different way, reaching diverse conclusions, therefore only notions that are mutual for them and especially those significant for language methodology are accounted for here. What is worth mentioning is the fact that in that type of analysis scholars do not evaluate the content in terms of literary qualities, or grammatical appropriateness, but how readers can infer the message that the author intended to convey (Trappes-Lomax 2004:133).

Apart from differences between written and spoken language described beforehand it is obviously possible to find various types and classes of discourse depending on their purpose. Written texts differ from one another not only in genre and function, but also in their structure and form, which is of primary importance to language teachers, as the knowledge of arrangement and variety of writing influences readers' understanding, memory of messages included in the discourse, as well as the speed of perception. Moreover, written texts analysis provides teachers with systematic knowledge of the ways of describing texts, thanks to which they can make their students aware of characteristic features of discourse to which the learners should pay particularly close attention, such as cohesion and coherence. In addition, understanding these concepts should also improve learners' writing skills as they would become aware of traits essential for a good written text (3).

One of the major concerns of written discourse analysts is the relation of neighboring sentences and, in particular, factors attesting to the fact that a given text is more than only the sum of its components. It is only with written language analysis that certain features of communicative products started to be satisfactorily described, despite the fact that they were present also in

speech, like for instance the use of 'that' to refer to a previous phrase, or clause (McCarthy 1991:37). As mentioned before (1.2.1) written language is more integrated than the spoken one which is achieved by more frequent use of some cohesive devices which apart from linking clauses or sentences are also used to emphasize notions that are of particular importance to the author and enable the reader to process the chosen information at the same time omitting needless sections (3, Salkie 1995:XI).

2.3 Links within discourse

Links in discourse studies are divided into two groups: formal - which refer to facts that are present in the analyzed text, and contextual - referring to the outside world, the knowledge (or schemata) which is not included in the communicative product itself (Cook 1990:14). Since it is difficult to describe the processing of contextual links without referring to particular psychological inquiries, therefore, this section is devoted to representation of formal links.

By and large five types of cohesive devices are distinguished, some of which might be subdivided:

- **Substitution:** in order to avoid repeating the same word several times in one paragraph it is replaced, most often by *one*, *do* or *so*. *So* and *do* in its all forms might also substitute whole phrases or clauses (e.g. "Tom has created the best web directory. I told you so long time ago".)
- **Ellipsis:** it is very similar to substitution, however, it replaces a phrase by a gap. In other words, it is omission of noun, verb, or a clause on the assumption that it is understood from the linguistic context.
- **Reference:** the use of words which do not have meanings of their own, such as pronouns and articles. To infer their meaning the reader has to refer them to something else that appears in the text (Tom: "How do you like my new Mercedes Vito?" - Marry: "**It** is a nice van, **which** I'm also thinking of buying".).
- **Conjunction:** specifies the relationship between clauses, or sentences. Most frequent relations of sentences are: addition (*and*, *moreover* e.g. "*Moreover, the chocolate fountains are not just regular fountains, they more like rivers full of chocolate and sweets.*"), temporality (*afterwards*, *next* e.g. "He bought her perfume at a local perfume shop and afterwards moved toward a jewelry store.") and causality (*because*, *since*).
- **Lexical cohesion:** denotes links between words which carry meaning: verbs, nouns, adjectives. Two types of lexical cohesion are differentiated, namely: reiteration and collocation. Reiteration adopts various forms, particularly synonymy, repetition, hyponymy or antonymy (.).

Collocation is the way in which certain words occur together, which is why it is easy to make out what will follow the first item.

It is clear from the analysis of written language that when people produce discourse they focus not only on the correctness of a single sentence, but also on the general outcome of their production. That is why the approach to teaching a foreign language which concentrates on creating grammatically correct sentences, yet does not pay sufficient attention to regularities on more global level of discourse, might not be the best one (Cook 1990, McCarthy 1991, Salkie 1995).

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

To attain a good command of a foreign language learners should either be exposed to it in genuine circumstances and with natural frequency, or painstakingly study lexis and syntax assuming that students have some contact with natural input. Classroom discourse seems to be the best way of systematizing the linguistic code that learners are to acquire. The greatest opportunity to store, develop and use the knowledge about the target language is arisen by exposure to authentic discourse in the target language provided by the teacher (Dakowska 2001:86).

Language is not only the aim of education as it is in the case of teaching English to Polish students, but also the means of schooling by the use of mother tongue. Having realized that discourse analysts attempted to describe the role and importance of language in both contexts simultaneously paying much attention to possible improvement to be made in these fields.

It has also been settled that what is essential to be successful in language learning is interaction, in both written and spoken form. In addition, students' failures in communication which result in negotiation of meaning, requests for explanation or reorganization of message contribute to language acquisition. One of the major concerns of discourse analysts has been the manner in which students ought to be involved in the learning process, how to control turn-taking, provide feedback as well as how to teach different skills most effectively on the grounds of discourse analysis' offerings (Trappes-Lomax 2004:153).

3.1 Application of discourse analysis to teaching grammar

There are a number of questions posed by discourse analysts with reference to grammar and grammar teaching. In particular, they are interested in its significance for producing comprehensible communicative products, realization of grammar items in different languages, their frequency of occurrence in speech and writing which is to enable teaching more natural usage of the target language, as well as learners' native tongue (McCarthy 1991:47).

While it is possible to use a foreign language being unaware or vaguely aware of its grammatical system, educated speakers cannot allow themselves to make even honest mistakes, and the more sophisticated the linguistic output is to be the more thorough knowledge of grammar gains

importance. Moreover, it is essential not only for producing discourse, but also for their perception and comprehension, as many texts take advantage of cohesive devices which contribute to the unity of texts, but might disturb their understanding by a speaker who is not aware of their occurrence.

Anaphoric reference, which is frequent in many oral and written texts, deserves attention due to problems that it may cause to learners at various levels. It is especially important at an early stage of learning a foreign language when learners fail to follow overall meaning turning much attention to decoding information in a given clause or sentence. Discourse analysts have analyzed schematically occurring items of texts and how learners from different backgrounds acquire them and later on produce. Thus, it is said that Japanese students fail to distinguish the difference between *he* and *she*, while Spanish pupils have problems with using *his* and *your*. Teachers, being aware of possible difficulties in teaching some aspects of grammar, should pay particular attention to them during the introduction of the new material to prevent making mistakes and errors (McCarthy 1991:36).

The most prominent role in producing sophisticated discourse, and therefore one that requires much attention on the part of teachers and learners is that of words and phrases which signal internal relation of sections of discourse, namely conjunctions. McCarthy (1991) claims that there are more than forty conjunctive words and phrases, which might be difficult to teach. Moreover, when it comes to the spoken form of language, where *and*, *but*, *so*, *then* are most frequent, they may take more than one meaning, which is particularly true for *and*. Additionally, they not only contribute to the cohesion of the text, but are also used when a participant of a conversation takes his turn to speak to link his utterance to what has been said before (McCarthy 1991:48).

The foregoing notions that words crucial for proper understanding of discourse, apart from their lexical meaning, are also significant for producing natural discourse in many situations support the belief that they should be pondered on by both teachers and students. Furthermore, it is advisable to provide learners with contexts which would exemplify how native users of language take advantage of anaphoric references, ellipses, articles and other grammar related elements of language which, if not crucial, are at least particularly useful for proficient communication (McCarthy 1991:62).

3.2 Application of discourse analysis to teaching vocabulary

What is probably most striking to learners of a foreign language is the quantity of vocabulary used daily and the amount of time that they will have to spend memorizing lexical items. Lexis may frequently cause major problems to students, because unlike grammar it is an open-ended system to which new items are continuously added. That is why it requires close attention and, frequently, explanation on the part of the teacher, as well as patience on the part of the student.

Scholars have conducted in-depth research into techniques employed by foreign language learners concerning vocabulary memorization to make it easier for students to improve their management of lexis. The conclusion was drawn that it is most profitable to teach new terminology paying close attention to context and co-text that new vocabulary appears in which

is especially helpful in teaching and learning aspects such as formality and register. Discourse analysts describe co-text as the phrases that surround a given word, whereas, context is understood as the place in which the communicative product was formed (McCarthy 1991:64).

From studies conducted by discourse analysts emerged an important idea of lexical chains present in all consistent texts. Such a chain is thought to be a series of related words which, referring to the same thing, contribute to the unity of a communicative product and make its perception relatively easy. Additionally, they provide a semantic context which is useful for understanding, or inferring the meaning of words, notions and sentences. Links of a chain are not usually limited to one sentence, as they may connect pairs of words that are next to one another, as well as stretch to several sentences or a whole text. The relation of words in a given sequence might be that of reiteration or collocation, however, analysts are reluctant to denote collocation as a fully reliable element of lexical cohesion as it refers only to the likelihood of occurrence of some lexical items. Nevertheless, it is undeniably helpful to know collocations as they might assist in understanding of communicative products and producing native-like discourse (McCarthy 1991:65).

Since lexical chains are present in every type of discourse it is advisable to familiarize learners with the way they function in, not merely because they are there, but to improve students' perception and production of expressive discourse. Reiteration is simply a repetition of a word later in the text, or the use of synonymy, but what might require paying particularly close attention in classroom situation is hyponymy. While synonymy is relatively easy to master simply by learning new vocabulary dividing new words into groups with similar meaning, or using thesauri, hyponymy and superordination are more abstract and it appears that they require tutelage. Hyponym is a particular case of a more general word, in other words a hyponym belongs to a subcategory of a superordinate with narrower meaning, which is best illustrated by an example: *Brazil, with her two-crop economy, was even more severely hit by the Depression than other Latin American states and the country was on the verge of complete collapse* (Salkie 1995:15). In this sentence the word *Brazil* is a hyponym of the word *country* - its superordinate. Thus, it should not be difficult to observe the difference between synonymy and hyponymy: while Poland, Germany and France are all hyponyms of the word *country*, they are not synonymous. Discourse analysts imply that authors of communicative products deliberately vary discursive devices of this type in order to bring the most important ideas to the fore, which in case of English with its wide array of vocabulary is a very frequent phenomenon (McCarthy 1991, Salkie 1995).

One other significant contribution made by discourse analysts for the use of vocabulary is noticing the omnipresence and miscellaneous manners of expressing modality. Contrary to popular belief that it is conveyed mainly by use of modal verbs it has been proved that in natural discourse it is even more frequently communicated by words and phrases which may not be included in the category of modal verbs, yet, carry modal meaning. Lexical items of modality inform the participant of discourse not only about the attitude of the author to the subject matter in question (phrases such as *I believe, think, assume*), but they also give information about commitment, assertion, tentativeness (McCarthy 1991:85).

Discourse analysts maintain that knowledge of vocabulary-connected discourse devices supports language learning in diverse manners. Firstly, it ought to bring students to organize new items of vocabulary into groups with common context of use to make them realize how the meaning of a certain word might change with circumstances of its use or co-text. Moreover, it should also improve learners' abilities to choose the appropriate synonym, collocation or hyponym (McCarthy 1991:71).

3.3 Application of discourse analysis to teaching text interpretation

Interpretation of a written text in discourse studies might be defined as the act of grasping the meaning that the communicative product is to convey. It is important to emphasize that clear understanding of writing is reliant on not only what the author put in it, but also on what a reader brings to this process. McCarthy (1991) points out that reading is an exacting action which involves recipient's knowledge of the world, experience, ability to infer possible aims of discourse and evaluate the reception of the text.

Painstaking research into schemata theory made it apparent that mere knowledge of the world is not always sufficient for successful discourse processing. Consequently, scholars dealing with text analysis redefined the concept of schemata dividing it into two: content and formal schemata. Content, as it refers to shared knowledge of the subject matter, and formal, because it denotes the knowledge of the structure and organization of a text. In order to aid students to develop necessary reading and comprehension skills attention has to be paid to aspects concerning the whole system of a text, as well as crucial grammar structures and lexical items. What is more, processing written discourse ought to occur on global and local scale at simultaneously, however, it has been demonstrated that readers employ different strategies of reading depending on what they focus on (McCarthy 1991:168).

3.3.1 Top-down and bottom-up text processing

Distinguishing noticeably different approaches to text processing led to distinction of manners of attending to written communicative products. Bottom-up processes are those which are involved in assimilating input from the smallest chunks of discourse: sounds in speech and letters in texts, afterwards moving to more and more general features. This technique is frequently applied by lower-level learners who turn much attention to decoding particular words, thus losing the more general idea, that is the meaning of a given piece of writing. In the same way learning a new language begins: first the alphabet, then words and short phrases, next simple sentences, finally elaborate compound sentences. While it is considered to be a good way of making learners understand the language, a wider perspective is necessary to enable students to successfully produce comprehensible discourse (Cook 1990, McCarthy 1991).

Alternatively, top-down processing starts with general features of a text, gradually moving to the narrower. This approach considers all levels of communicative products as a total unit whose elements work collectively, in other words, it is more holistic. Not only does the information in a text enable readers to understand it, but it also has to be confronted with recipient's former knowledge and expectations which facilitate comprehension. It is important to make students aware of these two ways of dealing with written discourse and how they may be exploited

depending on the task. When learners are to get acquainted with the main idea of a particular communicative product they should take advantage of top-down approach, while when answering detailed true-false questions they would benefit from bottom-up reading (Cook 1990, McCarthy 1991).

3.3.2 Types of text

Obviously, all texts have a certain feature in common, namely they are intended to convey some meaning. This function, however, might be fulfilled in a number of different ways: a road sign 'stop', and a six hundred pages long novel are both texts which might serve that purpose, yet, there are certain characteristics that distinguish them. The above example presents the idea somewhat in the extreme, although, enumerating several other common types of texts might affirm that the notion of text is a very broad one and is not limited to such varieties as those that can be found in language course books (Cook 1990, Crystal 1995).

Differences between texts might be striking, while menu is usually easy to read, legal documents or wills are not. All of them, however, have certain features that others lack, which if explained by a qualified teacher might serve as a signpost to interpretation. Additionally, the kind of a given text might also provide information about its author, as for example in the case of recipes, warrants or manuals, and indirectly about possible vocabulary items and grammar structures that can appear in it, which should facilitate perception of the text. Having realized what kind of passage learners are to read, on the basis of its title they should be able to predict the text's content, or even make a list of vocabulary that might appear in the communicative product. With teacher's tutelage such abilities are quickly acquired which improves learners' skills of interpretation and test results (Cook 1990, McCarthy 1991, Crystal 1995)

3.3.3 Patterns in text

Having accounted for various kinds of associations between words, as well as clauses and sentences in discourse, the time has come to examine patterns that are visible throughout written communicative products. Patterning in texts contributes to their coherence, as it is thanks to patterns that writing is structured in a way that enables readers to easily confront the received message with prior knowledge. Salkie (1995) indicates that the majority of readers unconsciously makes use of tendencies of arranging texts to approach information.

Among most frequently occurring patterns in written discourses there are inter alia claim-counterclaim, problem-solution, question-answer or general-specific statement arrangements. Detailed examination of such patterning revealed that problem-solution sequence is frequently accompanied by two additional parts, namely background (in other words introduction) and evaluation (conclusion). While in some elaborate texts the background and the problem might be presented in the same sentence, in other instances - when reader is expected to be familiar with the background, it might not be stated in the text itself. Although both cohesive devices and problem-solution patterns often occur in written communicative products only the former are designated as linguistic means, since patterning, when encountered, has to be faced with assumptions, knowledge and opinion of the reader (McCarthy 1991, Salkie 1995).

One other frequently occurring arrangement of texts is based on general-specific pattern which is thought to have two variations. In the first one a general statement is followed by a series of more specific sentences referring to the same broad idea, ultimately summarized by one more general remark. Alternatively, a general statement at the beginning of a paragraph might be followed by a specific statement after which several more sentences ensue, each of which is more precise than its predecessor, finally going back to the general idea (McCarthy 1991:158).

As McCarthy (1991) points out, the structure of patterns is fixed, yet the number of sentences or paragraphs in a particular part of a given arrangement might vary. Furthermore, one written text might contain several commonplace patterns occurring consecutively, or one included in another. Therefore, problem-solution pattern present in a text might be filled with general-specific model within one paragraph and claim-counterclaim in another. As discourse analysts suggest making readers aware of patterning might sanitize them to clues which enable proper understanding of written communicative products (McCarthy 1991:161).

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