WHAT

Discourse Relations & Coherence

This two-part workshop is designed for doctoral students interested in the linguistic analysis of discourse relations and coherence. Indeed, scientific research at the interface between language and cognition has seen a recent flurry in work focusing on meaning at a supra-sentential level (e.g. connectives, discourse relations (temporal, spatial), coherence effects).

Participants will familiarize themselves with two prominent cognitive models addressing meaning relations across sentences in discourse. The discussion will also crucially look at methodological issues concerning the analysis and categorisation of such – often implicit – relations. Finally, we will also address the empirical testability of the proposed models, as we will take a closer look at ways to provide experimental evidence to support them.

WHO

Dr. Thora Tenbrink
(Senior lecturer, Bangor University, UK)

Dr. Jacqueline Evers-Vermeul
(Utrecht Institute of Linguistics OTS, NL)

A combination of theoretical and methodological presentations will be given by these two international experts in the field of cognitive linguistics.

WHEN

The module will take place on Tuesday 24 November 2015.

WHERE

This module is offered at the University of Fribourg.

Registration

15 doctoral students can take part in this module. The registration deadline is on 20 November 2015. The programme reimburses travel expenses as well as meals for students registered at a Swiss university.
This workshop can be used towards obtaining course credits.
In order to register, doctoral students should contact the coordinator at heidi.aro@unifr.ch.

Contact

All practical and administrative questions should be addressed to the programme coordinator, Mrs Heidi Aro, at heidi.aro@unifr.ch

More information (incl. schedule) can be found here:
lettres.unifr.ch/fr/langues-litteratures/anglais/DocProg.html

Organisation

The CRUS doctoral workshop *Language & Cognition* is organised by the University of Fribourg with the collaboration of the University of Geneva and the University of Neuchâtel.

UNI FR
UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG
UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

Dr. J. Evers-Vermeul, OTS, Utrecht, NL

Morning, Tuesday 24 November 2015, salle BQC 3.805		
9h-9h15	D. Maillat	Welcome and introduction
9h15-10h30	Dr. J. Evers-Vermeul	A Cognitive Approach to Discourse Coherence
10h30-11h	Coffee Break	
11h-12h30	Dr. J. Evers-Vermeul	Application and validation of the CCR dimensions
12h00-14h00	Lunch	

Abstract

The notion of "discourse", and more specifically the coherence relations between parts of discourse such as cause-consequence and claim-argument, has become increasingly important in linguistics. However, discourse annotation guidelines provided by various theories (e.g. PDTB, RST, and SDRT) differ in terms of the features of a relation that are analysed and the types of relations that are distinguished.

In this workshop, I will introduce the Cognitive approach to Coherence Relations (CCR), proposed by Sanders, Spooren and Noordman (1992, 1993), which is built on the assumption that coherence relations are cognitive, psychological constructs that language users make use of when interpreting text, and not just descriptive constructs created by linguists.

First, we will look at the four dimensions in CCR and ways to annotate discourse relations along these dimensions in a reliable way. Second, we will examine applications of CCR in a variety of corpus-based studies, and look at psycholinguistic evidence from acquisition and processing studies that validate the cognitive plausibility of the CCR dimensions.

Sanders, T.J.M., Spooren. W.P.M., & Noordman, L.G.M. (1992). Toward a taxonomy of coherence relations. Discourse Processes 15, 1-35.

Dr. Thora Tenbrink, Bangor, UK

Afternoon, Tuesday 24 November 2015, salle BQC 2.813		
14h00-15h30	Dr. T. Tenbrink	Discourse Relations: Space and Time
15h30 -16h	Coffee Break	
16h00-17h30	Dr. T. Tenbrink	Discourse Relations: Methodology for CODA
17h30-18h00	All	Discussion
Workshop Dinner		

Abstract

Much research on discourse relations focuses on the ways in which connections between clauses and sentences can be established, either implicitly or explicitly through markers such as "because", "before", "but", etc. However, the use of such markers in discourse also shows how a speaker conceptualizes the relationships between various aspects of what they are saying. Whenever they occur in discourse, they are therefore reflections of the speakers' mind in this respect.

In this workshop, I will illustrate these effects by focusing on how speakers conceptualise and express relationships in time and space (based on Tenbrink, 2007). In the first half, we will discuss the linguistic options in this regard, and work out some principles for (and differences between) temporal and spatial relationships. In the second half, we will look at how these effects can be investigated by a systematic analysis of speakers' discourse produced under controlled circumstances. As part of this, I will give a brief methodological introduction to Cognitive Discourse Analysis (Tenbrink, 2015) with a specific focus on the analysis of discourse relations.

Tenbrink, Thora. 2007. Space, time, and the use of language: An investigation of relationships. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
Tenbrink, Thora. 2015. Cognitive Discourse Analysis: Accessing cognitive representations and processes through language data. Language and Cognition 7:1, 98 – 137.