MACRO - AND MICRO - COHESIVE DEVICES IN THAI EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES

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0. INTRODUCTION

The failure of a sentence grammar to describe and explain many syntactic phenomena, such as co - reference across sentences, ellipsis, some sentential adverbs and certain non-basic sentence structures, has led quite a number of linguists to look beyond the boundary of a sentence. Once they leave the realm of sentence, these linguists find themselves in a different territory, the geography of which is not readily comprehensible. They recognize the landscape as consisting of the components they are familiar with, namely the sentences. Some of these sentences appear normal while some others appear almost abnormal. In addition, there seem to be more than one territory beyond the border of sentence. Some find themselves in the land of dialogues and some in the land of texts. Their reports show that the difference involves not only the number of speakers but also the planning, or the lack of planning, in the organization of sentences. Those who have been studying dialogues focus their attention on interactive processes and communicative effects. They call the object of their study discourse. Those who have been looking at texts pay attention to the structural properties of the text, an extension of their earlier preoccupation with sentence structure. Some members of the latter group refer to the object of their study as text but there are those who use the term discourse. Whatever terminological preference one may have, the term " discourse analysis " has come to be accepted to refer to the study of linguistic units which are at a higher level than sentences or clauses.

Those who have engaged themselves in the exploration and investigation of discourse of all types seem to agree that, unlike sentences, discourses are very elusive. An extensive study of sentences in a language can usually yield a rather satisfactory inventory of sentence patterns or even a set of phrase structure rules which can account for the structure of sentences in that language. However, an extensive study of discourses does not enable one to arrive at even a tentative sketch of discourse patterns. A set of discourse structure rules which should enable one to determine whether a particular piece of language is a discourse seems to be an unattainable goal. The notion of " grammaticality " or even " acceptability " seems almost inapplicable to discourse. Beaugrande (1985:48) went so far as to state that :-

> " The distinction between a text and a non - text therefore cannot be determined by formal definition; it can only be explored as a gradation of human attitudes, actions and reactions.....The text is distinguished by its " textuality ", based not only on cohesion and coherence but also on intentionality, situationality, intertextuality and informativity. "

This is a rather extreme opinion on the well - formedness of a discourse or text, an opinion which should distress language teachers especially.

The purpose of this paper is to present a more moderate view of discourse. It will be shown that there is a great deal of structural similarity between sentence and discourse in Thai, a language in which there exists no orthographic notation to mark sentence boundary (Vongvipanond 1981). Very frequently, unless one has been trained to be syntactically sophisticated, one has to rely on the dependency relation, or the " cohesion ", of constituents

130

of a sentence to identify its boundary, just as one would have to do in trying to determine discourse boundary. Thai is a topic prominent language (Ekniyom 1981), so structural dependencies among sentence constituents are rather loose and variable, especially sentences which occur in a discourse. This loose and variable cohesion is found similarly in sentences as well as in discourses, at least in expository discourses.

1. DISCOURSE AS A LINGUISTIC UNIT

The definition of language as a system of symbols, which consists of form, or sound image, and meaning has been a well accepted notion in linguistics. De Saussure (1959) is usually credited for propagating this notion. Quite frequently, however, symbols are interpreted as words, or lexemes. However, it is obvious that communication is not possible with lexemes alone. Lexemes have to be grouped into symbols of higher level, called constructions. With the exclusion of the speaker's intent and the listener's choice of interpretation, the meaning of these higher - level symbols is derived from the meaning of each symbol and its relations. This is what underlies the model of semantic interpretation as proposed by Katz and Postal (1964). In this paper, we will adopt the term " linguistic unit " to refer to these linguistic symbols, whether they are a single lexeme or a construction.

The concepts of the linguistic unit and a hierarchy have been schematized in a very detailed manner in the tagmemic framework, such as in the work of Pike and Pike (1977). However, for our present purposes, we will recognize only three levels of linguistic units: lexeme, sentence, and discourse. Through this distinction of linguistic units into three levels, we hope to show the structural and functional parallelism between sentence and discourse.

Semantically, a lexeme represents a semantic concept, which can be defined as a part or portion of conceptualized or perceived reality. Functionally, a lexeme serves as an identifying label and building block, or constituent at the lowest level of a linguistic construction. There are four types of lexeme: nominal elements; verbal elements; relators; and grammatical qualifiers. Nominal elements include lexemes which are usually classed as nouns, pronouns, some adverbs, nominalized verb phrases and nominalized sentences. Verbal elements include verbs, modal auxiliaries, adjectives and adverbs. Relators include conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs and discourse connectors. Grammatical qualifiers include markers for nouns to denote number, person, gender, or definiteness, tense and aspect markers for verbs and prepositions, or markers of case relations between noun phrases and a verb.

A sentence is a construction and a formal representation of a proposition. A proposition is a semantic notion and it can be defined as a unit of information which provides a comment about a topic. To represent this unit of information, a sentence is made up of a predicate, to represent the comment, and a nominal phrase, to represent the topic. Sentences can vary according to the types of their predicate. There are three types of predicate: verbal, nominal and sentential. Through compounding and embedding processes, sentences can be more complex constructions.

A discourse is also a linguistic unit which is well defined both semantically and structurally. Semantically, a discourse is an account about a theme, which can be an animate or inanimate object, an event, a phenomenon, an issue, etc. An account is structurally manifested as a set of sentences; therefore, a discourse is usually defined almost unanimously (Halliday and Hasan 1976, Pike and Pike 1977, Longacre 1983, Werth 1984, and Fillmore 1985) as a non - random set of cohesive and coherent sentences. Cohesion and coherence are semantic as well as structural properties of a discourse. According to Longacre (1983), discourses can be semantically as well as structurally classified into four main types, on the basis of two main criteria, namely agent orientation and contingent succession. The four main types of discourse are narrative, procedural, behavioral and expository discourses, as shown in Diagram 1.

	CONTINGENT SUCCESSION	AGENT ORIENTATION
NARRATIVE	+	+
PROCEDURAL	+	—
BEHAVIORAL	—	+
EXPOSITORY	—	—

Diagram 1: Types of discourses

The above definitions should leave no doubt as to the status of a discourse as a well defined linguistic unit.

2. COHERENCE AND COHESION

The notions of coherence and cohesion are both semantic and syntactic. Semantically, coherence is the effect of the fact that all the propositions within a discourse contribute a piece of information to the theme of the discourse. The study of expository discourse in Thai reveals that structurally, coherence is achieved through the lexemic network.

The lexemic network is the use of selected sets of lexemes, or identifying labels for some portions of conceptualized reality. For example, the use of the following two sets of terms in a discourse on " the change in lottery language ", a part of an article on lottery language written by Naruemon Charoenma.

SET 1

phasǎahǔay	= lottery language	kham	= word
khwaammáay	= meaning	hǔay	= lottery
kìawkhɔ̂n	= to refer to	cháy	= to use

SET 2

adìit	= past	pàtcuban	= present
kaanplianplɛɛŋ	= change		
lə̂ək	= to become obsolete		

Semantically, cohesion is the various relations of all the propositions included in a discourse. In Thai expository discourse, cohesion is structurally manifested through ellipsis, anaphoric chains, overt linkages of sentences which represent these propositions and the choice of sentence structure to represent different points of empathy.

Ellipsis is the omission of certain constituents of a sentence since the referent of the omitted constituents is known or is given information and can usually be co - interpreted with some constituents in preceding or following sentences, or can be inferred through situational contexts.

An anaphoric chain consists of various types of anaphor or pro-form such as personal pronouns, demonstrative nominal phrases, synonyms, and repetition of certain constituents.

Overt linkages include various types of relators or connectors, such as conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs and discourse connectors.

Point of empathy is the standpoint which the speaker or author of a discourse chooses in structuring the information he or she wants to present. The following two sentences have the same meaning except for the difference in the author's choice of point of empathy. They both mean that the dictionary defines the term " money " as a legal tender of debt. The structural difference between these two sentences reflects the difference in the point of empathy chosen by the different authors of the discourses from which the sentences have been taken. Sentence (a) is people-oriented and the indefinite " we " is used as the subject of the sentence. The definition of the word is, in this sentence, to be obtained by an act of looking it up in a dictionary. Sentence (b), is theme-oriented and the dictionary, or pótcanaanúkrom, is used as the subject and the definition is given by the dictionary, rather than obtained by people who use the dictionary.

A. ⌈kham wâa ŋən⌉ thâa (raw) duu taam
    word that money if we look according to

    pótcanaanúkrom cà? dây ⌈khwaammǎay wâa
    dictionary will get definition that

    wátthù? thîi chamrá? nîi dây taam kòtmǎay⌉
    object which pay debt can according to law

"As for the word "money", if we look it up in a dictionary,
we will obtain the definition that it is a legal tender
of debt."

B. ⌈kham wâa ŋən⌉ pótcanaanúkrom hây ⌈khwaammǎay
    word that money dictionary give definition

    wâa wátthù? thîi chamrá? nîi dây taam
    that object which pay debt can according to

    kòtmǎay⌉
    law

"As for the word "money", the dictionary defines it as a
legal tender of debt."

Coherence and cohesion are both requisites for all discourses. It is possible to have a discourse which is coherent but is not cohesive. Short notes taken by secretaries, students' lecture notes and drafts of answers to exam questions can be coherent discourses, since under usual circumstances these notes and drafts often focus on a particular issue or topic. These are not well - formed discourses. They are but ' a set of ' sentences sharing the same topic which are not held together by cohesive devices. Likewise, one can randomly pick the first sentence of the first ten pages of a novel and add the most possible cohesive devices to link all the selected sentences. It is not difficult to imagine how incoherent these well - connected sentences can be. There is an extremely slim chance for these randomly selected sentences to be interpreted as a discourse despite all the cohesive devices which are used to link them together.

3. MACRO - AND MICRO - COHESIVE DEVICES

The discussion presented above supports the notion that discourse is a semantically and structurally well defined linguistic unit. Now we turn to a question for which no satisfactory answer has been provided. Is discourse a well defined construction like the sentence? Before we answer that question we need to know what the properties of a well - defined construction are. Fillmore (1985) provided one of the best answers though he employed the term " text " instead of " linguistic unit " or " construction " in his work to refer inclusively to all types of linguistic unit, including constructions like sentence or discourse. He differentiated three dimensions of relations for all units of linguistic form: intertextual relations, extratextual relations and intratextual relations. Intertextual relations exist between a given unit, or in our case a construction, and other units. These relations can be of the alternative type or the associative type. Through the relations of alternativity, a functional class or category of units or construction can be established. Through the relations of association, one can see the repertory or linguistic domain to which a unit belongs. Extratextually, there are relations between a unit and the world within which a unit is produced and the world which it represents.

It is the intratextual, or intra - unit, relations which are of interest and relevant to the question we are dealing with. Fillmore recognized two types of intra-