

# DISCOURSE ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION STRUCTURE: ANALYSIS OF A HORTATORY TEXT \*

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In this paper discourse is considered as an actualization of the problem-solving process the speaker has in his mind. By taking this notion as a basic strategy for the analysis of discourse structure, this paper analyzes an English hortatory discourse, which has received little attention in the area of discourse analysis, in terms of both discourse organization and information structure. The analysis shows that (1) hortatory discourse is organized by the slots, 'preface, situation, problem, motivation, command, and summary,' and that (2) concerning the information structure of hortatory discourse, directive performative information appears to be pivotal while event which is central in narrative discourse is peripheral, in hortatory discourse. Especially this paper brings us one important notion; context, i.e. the situation in which discourse is produced acts as a main feature affecting both discourse structure and the choice of lexico-grammatical device.

## 1. Introduction

This paper finds itself on the assumptions that discourse is organized and that it has a hierarchical constituent structure. In the latter assumption, I follow Longacre (1979, 1983a, and 1983b) and Hinds (1979) while being opposed to Hoey (1983) who denies the existence of two distinct levels of sentence and paragraph in discourse. Hoey (1983: 14-15) regards these terms, paragraph and sentence, as "an orthographic division in a discourse marked normally by indentation or greater space between lines" and "an orthographic division beginning with a capital letter and finishing with a full stop," respectively. In addition to the above assumptions, the basic position adopted in this paper is that different discourse types have different organizational patterns and information structures.<sup>1</sup>

In what follows I intend to answer the questions: (1) What organizational pat-

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<sup>1</sup> See Longacre (1983a) for the organizational pattern of Narrative discourse and Conversation, and Hinds (1979) for Expository and Procedural discourse. Contrary to this position, Hoey (1983) suggests that every discourse, regardless of whatever it is, belongs to one of the following patterns: Problem-Solution, Matching, or General-Particular Pattern.

Brown and Yule (1983), in their book *Discourse Analysis*, talk about 'information structure' in discourse. However, their use of this term is quite different from mine. While information structure in Brown and Yule has to do with traditionally called given and new information at the level of phrase and clause, this term in my paper has to do with Grimes' (1975) semantic categories of information (see section 3 in this paper for brief explanations about this) in discourse to see what kind of information is considered to be central in a certain discourse.

tern does hortatory discourse have? (2) What kinds of information are considered to be more important than others, and what lexico-grammatical devices are used to mark the important information in hortatory discourse?

Before going into the analysis of a sample English hortatory text, I shall present Longacre's typology of discourse genre, because the taxonomy of discourse types is very important with respect to the preassumed position in this paper that different discourse types have different organizational patterns and information structures. Regarding monologue discourse types, Longacre (1983a) distinguishes four basic discourse types – *narrative*, *procedural*, *behavioral*, and *expository* – on the basis of two basic parameters, using binary features (plus and minus). He defines the two basic parameters, which are 'agent orientation' and 'contingent temporal succession,' as follows:

Contingent temporal succession refers to a framework of temporal succession in which some (often most) of the events or doings are contingent on previous events or doings. Agent orientation refers to orientation towards agents with at least a partial identity of agent reference running through the discourse. (1983a: 3)

Narrative discourse, for example, is positive with regard to both parameters while expository discourse is negative on both counts. In other words, in order for a discourse to be classified as narrative, the discourse must not only have a certain agent orientation, but must also show that most of the events or actions happening in that discourse are in temporal succession.

Furthermore, Longacre subdivides these four discourse types<sup>2</sup> by using two further parameters, which are 'tension' and 'projection.' Tension is assigned to those discourses which contain some sorts of conflict or argument, and projection to those which are future-directed.

Diagram I represents discourse types composed of three parameters which are relevant to a text that I am going to present later.

	+ AGENT ORIENTATION	- AGENT ORIENTATION	
+ CONTINGENT TEMPORAL SUCCESSION	NARRATIVE	PROCEDURAL	
- CONTINGENT TEMPORAL SUCCESSION	BEHAVIORAL	EXPOSITORY	
	Hortatory	Future Things	+ PROJECTION
	Eulogy	Current Things	- PROJECTION

Diagram I. Discourse Types

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion on the discourse types, see Longacre (1983a).

Note that the parameter Projection subdivides BEHAVIORAL discourse into *hortatory* and *eulogy*. A sample text which I will be analyzing in this paper is a hortatory discourse because it contains a certain agent orientation,<sup>3</sup> and its content is future-directed. However, it never shows any temporal succession. That is, the text following is composed of + Agent Orientation, – Contingent Temporal Succession, and + Projection.

## 2. The Organizational Pattern of Hortatory Discourse

The text under consideration here is a declaration entitled “What we’re doing in Central America and the Caribbean is a CRIME,” by the members of the American legal community, which was published in *USA Today*, dated February 14, 1984. The text first concerns the legality of the policies of the U.S. Administration in South America and the Caribbean, and eventually it shows the signatories’ desire to bring about changes in current U.S. government policies in these areas.

I have arranged the text as follows and, for the convenience of reference, assigned numbers to each sentence.

- (1) Let’s not mince words.
- (2) The invasion of Grenada was illegal.
- (3) Our not-so-secret war against Nicaragua is illegal.
- (4) So is the aid we continue to send to El Salvador’s brutal military.
- (5) Current Administration policies in Central America and the Caribbean violate U.S. law and the Constitution.
- (6) They violate international accords on human rights, the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of American States.
- (7) If the U.S. displays such contempt for international law and its own principles, can we expect any better from other countries?
- (8) In an age when every international crisis carries the grave risk of nuclear war, can we really afford to replace patient diplomacy with reckless military action?
- (9) We, the undersigned members of the American legal community, urge the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Grenada, an end to the covert war against Nicaragua, and the termination of aid to El Salvador.
- (10) What our government is doing is a crime.
- (11) We can no longer allow this crime to be committed in our names.

In analyzing a discourse in terms of its organizational pattern, the basic strategy we can use is to see discourse as an actualization of a *problem-solving process*<sup>4</sup> that

<sup>3</sup> For the agent orientation of the relevant text, see Section 3.2.

<sup>4</sup> For further discussion of *problem-solution* in discourse/pragmatics, see de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981: Chapter 3) and Leech (1983: Chapter 2.5).

the speaker<sup>5</sup> utilizes when producing a discourse. Generally speaking, discourse is addressed to someone and is about something. Since the speaker has a certain goal –e.g. to change the knowledge of the hearer about the world by adding some propositional information to the knowledge of the hearer –when producing a discourse, the addressee is not randomly selected. Rather, the addressee is someone who shares some common interest with the speaker. What about the something of discourse? This might be composed of two components; one is initial state and the other final state. The initial state is composed of a pair of affairs which is subject to a *problem* from the speaker's point of view. Being faced with the problem, then, he will propose a *solution*, which constitutes the final state.

Keeping this basic idea in mind, let us return to the text which we are considering. In this hortatory discourse, I think, sentences (2), (3), and (4) form a *problem* and sentence (9) constitutes a *solution* in terms of the problem-solving process. This problem-solving relationship will be seen clearly if we project these sentences into dialogue, as Hoey (1983: 30) suggests that monologues may be projected into dialogue to clarify the monologues' organization.

Sentences (2) through (4) answer the question 'What is the problem you face?' and sentence (9) the question 'What solution do you offer to this problem?'

Q: What is the problem you face?

A: The invasion of Grenada is illegal. Our not-so-secret war against Nicaragua is illegal. So is the aid we continue to send to El Salvador's brutal military. (These are the problems we face.)

Q: What solution do you offer to these problems?

A: We, the ... members of the American legal community urge the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Grenada, an end to the covert war against Nicaragua, and the termination of aid to El Salvador's brutal military (to solve these problems).

Now, let us take a look at the text from the beginning to see what organizational pattern lies in this hortatory discourse, keeping the idea in mind that the problem-solving process the speaker uses plays a significant role in organizing one's discourse.

This text begins with a PREFACE<sup>6</sup> which introduces the discourse as a whole. Sentence (1) gives the overall mood of this text rather than independent propositional content. Like 'well,' 'you know,' and 'you see' in English conversation, sentence (1) –*Let's not mince words.* –gives little information to the hearer, but "tells us something of the speaker's attitude to his audience and to what he is saying" (Leech

<sup>5</sup> Usually, the terms 'speaker' and 'hearer' are used for dialogue discourse and 'writer/author' and 'reader' for written discourse, a so-called text. Even in de Beaugrande and Dressler, 'producer' and 'receiver' are used for 'speaker/writer' and 'hearer/reader' respectively. However, in this paper I use 'speaker' and 'hearer/addressee' as a general term.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'preface' I adopt from Stubbs (1983: 183). In the category of utterance-initial preface, he includes the following: joke preface (e.g. did you hear the one about ...?), story preface (e.g. I meant to tell you ...), etc.

and Svartvik 1975: 23). Also, (1) will activate pre-existing stereotyped knowledge on the hearer's side, i.e. the invasion of Grenada, and other acts of the U.S. in South America are justified for our national interest. In terms of these pragmatic aspects, PREFACE not only involves the speaker's attitude toward the hearer and toward what he is saying, but also anticipates the plunge into the main strand of the text.

After preface, PROBLEM is presented (sentences (2) through (6)). The speaker negatively evaluates the U.S. government's actions in Grenada, Nicaragua, and El Salvador on the basis of international law as well as of U.S. law. That is, sentences (5) and (6) will be read as providing the legal basis to the problem statement of sentences (2)–(4).

One thing worthy of note in the PROBLEM element is that SITUATION (e.g. our U.S. troops invaded Grenada) is stated as part of the PROBLEM rather than as an independent element. The grammatical forms of nominalized phrases, definite articles, and relative clause –*The invasion of Grenada, Our not-so-secret war, and the aid we continue to send ...*–at the outset of the text imply that this is old information contextually given. In other words, SITUATION is presupposed in this text as shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer.

Next, MOTIVATION –sentences (7) and (8)– occurs as a further reason why we should solve the aforementioned problems of (2), (3), and (4) to the future advantage of the U.S. in international society. The rhetorical questions of (7) and (8), which already imply answers on their own, i.e. 'we should not expect....' and 'we can not really afford to replace....,' not only capture the hearer's attention, but heighten the seriousness of the PROBLEM. I think the MOTIVATION element is important because it offers grounds for the forthcoming solution to the PROBLEM. That is, MOTIVATION predicts the punch line.

Then, a COMMAND element results (sentence (9)) as a solution to the problems which have been raised. COMMAND is pivotal in the development of hortatory discourse because the propositional content of COMMAND is always to direct the hearer to some possible future action. That is, by definition, hortatory discourse.

Finally, SUMMARY is presented (sentences (10) and (11)); it recapitulates the propositional content of PROBLEM and COMMAND.

Diagram II illustrates the organizational pattern of the hortatory text in connection with its constituent structure.<sup>7</sup>

Organizational Pattern of the Text	Constituent Structure
Hortatory Discourse	_____ Hortatory Reason Paragraph
Preface	_____ Introduction: S* (1)

<sup>7</sup> On the matter of constituents of a discourse, Longacre's (1983a: 272) description deserves to be mentioned here:

... the constituents of a discourse are discourse level slots which are filled by either a paragraph or an embedded discourse (with the latter ultimately composed of paragraphs as well). Similarly, the constituents of a paragraph are paragraph level slots which are filled by sentences or paragraph (with the latter ultimately composed of sentences as well).

Problem (with Situation)	—	Internal Reason: Attestation Paragraph Thesis: Coordinate P: S (2)-(4) Evidence: Coordinate P: S (5)-(6)
Motivation	—	External Reason: Coordinate Paragraph: S (7)-(8)
Command	—	Thesis: S (9)
Summary	—	Terminus: Reason paragraph Reason: S (10) Thesis: S (11)

Diagram II. Organizational Pattern and Constituent Structure of the Text  
\*(S = Sentence)

In looking at the above diagram, we can see that this hortatory text is a one-paragraph discourse. As preface anticipates the main strand of the text, *introduction* in paragraph structure shows a similar role. That is, it says that what the rest of the paragraph is going to tell you is something that you hearers are reluctant to hear. Problem constitutes *internal reason* which is developed as an *attestation paragraph*. S (2)-(4) and S (5)-(6) have a logical relation; *Thesis* is a consequence of *evidence*, which is a cause for *thesis*. That is, the cause for the speaker's negative evaluation of U.S. Administration policies in South America and the Caribbean is derived from S (5) and (6). Motivation is marked as *external reason* because the reason why the speaker urges the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Grenada is the future presumed position of the U.S. in international society. *External reason* is expounded by *coordinate paragraph* because S (7) and (8) form an underlying *and* relationship. The command element is expounded by *thesis*, which is the result of two reasons, i.e. *internal* and *external reason*. *Thesis* represents the most important part of the *hortatory reason paragraph* as does command in the organization of hortatory discourse. Finally, summary is marked as *terminus* which structures as another *result paragraph*. Predictably, *terminus* recapitulates the structure of the body paragraph as summary paraphrases the overall propositional content of the body of the text.

Although this text considered above shows its organizational pattern to be composed of preface, problem, motivation, command, and summary, I propose that hortatory discourse be organized as follows: preface, situation, problem, motivation, command, and summary. Among these, I suppose, the organizational elements of preface and summary could be omitted. In other words, situation, problem, motivation, and command constitute the body of hortatory discourse.

We see in the above text that the speaker's assumption that the hearer has situational knowledge about what he is going to discuss affects the size of the constituents structure of situation, i.e. down to phrase level. However, this does not mean that situation can be deleted in the organization of hortatory discourse, but just that situation has shaded off into problem in this text.

### 3. The Information Structure of Hortatory Discourse

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the information structure is

different from that of narrative discourse. As shown by Grimes (1975) and Longacre (1983b), event-line information is most important in the development of narrative. Contrary to this, however, I will show that event-line information is on a lower level in the information structure of hortatory discourse. Instead, directive performative and collateral information appear to be in the foreground in hortatory discourse.

Also, as pointed out by Longacre (1977, 1981, and 1983b), Hopper (1979) and others,<sup>8</sup> tense and aspect among many other morphosyntactic devices play a crucial role in signalling the importance of information in narrative discourse. However, it will turn out that this phenomenon is not the same in hortatory discourse. Instead of tense and aspect, directive performative verbs denoting illocutionary acts and imperatives commanding actions appear to convey important information in hortatory discourse.

Grimes (1975), in his book *The Thread of Discourse*, distinguishes seven kinds of information in a discourse:<sup>9</sup> event, participant, setting, background, evaluation, collateral, and performative information.

*Event* in a discourse refers to something that happens. It may be complete, sequential, or durative in terms of time sequence. *Participant* has to do with reference to who or that is involved in events. Grimes defines *setting* in this way: "where, when, and under what circumstances actions take place constitute a separate kind of information called setting" (1975: 51). *Background* information refers to explanation and comment about what happens. So, it tends to have a logical relation to the information that is being explained. *Evaluation* refers to the speaker's internal feeling with respect to other kinds of information. *Collateral* information focuses on what might have been happened, but did not, or what may happen. In other words, it concerns other possible worlds. Lastly, regarding *performative* information, Grimes includes expressions in this category that have implicit performative verbs as well as explicit ones. He even puts deictic expressions like 'this' and 'that' into the category of performative information by assuming that *performatives* presuppose a speech situation which is shared by the speaker and the hearer.

With reference to the issue of performative, of course, it has been generally agreed that every sentence, whether it is imperative, interrogative, or declarative, has performative in its deep structure as Ross (1970) convincingly argues. However, I intend to restrict the concept of performative in connection with the discussion of the information structure of discourse because Grimes' application of the concept of performative to information in discourse is too broad and even vague. That is, in this paper, only those expressions that have explicit performative verbs will be considered to have performative information. In addition, I subdivide performative information into five specific categories, following Searle's (1979) classification of English performative verbs in his taxonomy of illocutionary acts; *assertive*, *directive*, *commissive*, *expressive*, and *declarative performative information*.

<sup>8</sup> See Hwang (1981: Chapter 4) and Jones and Jones (1979).

<sup>9</sup> Grimes talks about these kinds of information mainly with respect to narratives. But I think that his categories of information are applicable to other discourse types.

Now, let us look at the text we have considered in order to find what kind of information it contains.

### 3.1. Event

There are examples of event-line information in sentences (2)-(4); *The invasion of Grenada, Our not-so-secret war against Nicaragua, and the aid we continue to send...*

Most commonly, event-line information is indicated by the occurrence of a verb, as we can usually see in narrative. Contrary to this general expectation, however, event-line information in this hortatory text is expressed in the form of nominalization and relativization at the beginning of the text. From this, we can say that events as given information in this text are considered not to move the development of the hortatory discourse forward as they do in narrative. Also, note that event-line information appears to be subsumed within evaluative information; e.g. [[The invasion of Grenada]<sub>event</sub> is illegal]<sub>evaluation</sub>. This tells us that event-line information is placed on a lower level than evaluative information in the information structure of this text.

### 3.2. Participant

Participant reference and its grammatical form, and identification are crucial in understanding the development of hortatory discourse as well as narrative. There are two major participants in the text; one is exophoric 'we' (us, our) in sentences (1), (3), (4), (7), (8), and (10), and the other is endophoric 'we' (our) in sentences (9) and (11). The source of the first 'we' is only recoverable outside the text, so it is called exophoric. But the context of this text tells us who the first 'we' is and that the first 'we' is not identical with the second 'we.' That is, the first exophoric 'we' refers to all Americans including the speaker, while the second 'we' which is identified within the text only has to do with the speaker.

Besides the above participants, there is one more participant: Administration (U.S. government) in sentences (5), (7), and (10).

### 3.3. Evaluation and Background

The lexical items *illegal*, *crime*, and *so* (*so* is the substitution for *illegal*) in sentences (2), (3), (4), and (10) inform us that these sentences involve the speaker's evaluation of events. These evaluations are made on the basis of legality. That is, sentences (5) and (6) as background information provide the basis for the evaluative information.

On the other hand, these pieces of information can be connected by using an appropriate subordinator, *because*. So, they may become

The invasion of Grenada was illegal, our not-so-secret war against Nicaragua is illegal, and so is the aid we continue to send to El Salvador's brutal military *because* current Administration policies in Central America and the Caribbean violate U.S. law and the Constitution and. . . .

This kind of logical relationship between evaluation and background tells us that

evaluative information seems more aggravative than the background information.

Within the evaluative information, a certain grammatical expression seems to be more significant in conveying the same information than others, as van Dijk (1977: 5) says that "different ... syntactic structures may be related to different semantic and pragmatic structures." Note that sentence (10) is a pseudo-cleft sentence while (2)-(4) are descriptive sentences. With respect to the functional aspect of pseudo-cleft sentences in expository discourse, Jones (1977: 186) attributes the thematic function to them. In her book, a theme can be paraphrased as a minimum generalization of a text. Therefore, it is not incidental that the pseudo-cleft sentence (10) appears in *summary* of the organizational pattern of the text (see diagram II). It seems to me that the pseudo-cleft sentence is used when we emphasize something important. Because of this, sentence (10) seems more emphatic than sentences (2)-(4) although they all carry the same evaluative information.

### 3.4. Collateral and Performative Information

In the category of collateral information, I put the following:

- (1) Let's not mince words.
- (7) If the U.S. displays such contempt for international law and its own principles, can we expect any better from other countries?
- (8) . . . can we really afford to replace patient diplomacy with reckless military action?

Sentence (1) can be interpreted to mean that what I am going to tell you is another possible world that you, hearers do not want to hear about, and may not yet even know. (7) and (8) predict future events which might happen under certain conditions. These pieces of collateral information seem to move the development of the text forward by describing other possible worlds. Particularly, given a hortatory discourse, imperative sentence (1) expresses the illocutionary force of the hortatory text as a whole, although the sentence itself is not performative.<sup>10</sup>

What about performative information in this text? I class the following as directive performative information.

- (9) We, the undersigned members of the American legal community, urge the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Grenada. . . .
- (11) We can no longer allow this crime to be committed in our names.

Sentences (9) and (11) meet the condition I made above for classification as performative information because they have performative verbs, 'urge' and 'allow,' as well as a first person subject. Directive performative verbs carry foreground information in hortatory discourse because their "propositional content is always that the hearer H does some future action A" (Searle 1979: 14). I conclude from this

<sup>10</sup> Although this text does not show any second person imperatives, it has been noted by Longacre (1981, 1983a, 1983b) that (second person) imperatives/command forms are the main materials in hortatory discourse.

that directive performative information is the backbone in hortatory discourse and that directive performative verbs and imperatives characterize the main line development of hortatory discourse.

**3.5. Setting**

There is a setting in sentence (8): *In an age when every international crisis carries the grave risk of nuclear war.* This is a local setting because it sets the scene for the propositional content of sentence (8) rather than for the overall propositional content of this text. In the information structure of the text setting is placed at the bottom because even if we delete the setting information, this text holds *coherence*, which “is a semantic property, based on the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences” (van Dijk 1977: 93).

The information structure of this hortatory text is presented with reference to relevant lexico-grammatical forms.

Directive Performative Information	Directive Performative Verbs (e.g. urge, command, order etc.)
Collateral Information	(Second Person Imperatives) First Person Imperatives (e.g. let us....) Rhetorical question/Modal
Evaluative Information	Pseudo-cleft Sentence Descriptive Clause (e.g.... is illegal)
Background Information	Explanatory Clause (e.g. they violate ...)
Event	Nominalized/Relative Clause
Setting	Adverbial Phrase

Diagram III. Information Structure of the Text

Compared to narrative discourse in which events are central, in hortatory discourse, directive performative information is considered pivotal. Also, with respect to morpho-syntactic devices, directive performative verbs, and imperatives mark the main line information in the development of hortatory discourse while tense and aspect play a significant role in signalling the importance of information in narrative discourse.

**4. Concluding Remarks**

In this paper I have tried to show that the organizational pattern of hortatory

discourse consists of *preface, situation, problem, motivation, command, and summary*, among which *situation, problem, motivation, and command* constitute the body of the discourse. In addition to that, I have attempted to demonstrate that the information structure is different from that of narrative discourse on the presumed position that different discourse types have different structures. As a result of the analysis of the information structure of a simple hortatory text, it has been found that directive performative information is pivotal while event-line information is supportive in the development of hortatory discourse.

Although my presentation is based on an English text, the organizational pattern of hortatory discourse which I have proposed here is considered to be applicable to other languages' hortatory discourses because "it would appear that hortatory discourse is a cultural universal" (Longacre 1983a: 10).

Finally, in concluding this paper I want to mention one thing which I realized during the analysis: *context* not only affects the speaker's choice of grammatical forms (e.g. nominalization at the outset of a discourse) but also his choice of organizational pattern (e.g. *situation's* shading off into *problem*) in a discourse. Therefore, discourse context can be considered a main variable which determines a certain organizational pattern of a discourse as well as the choice of particular grammatical forms.

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