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MODES OF DISCOURSE

In studying discourse, the problem for the linguist is to find a fruitful level of analysis. Carlota Smith offers a new approach with this study of discourse passages, units of several sentences or more. She introduces the key idea of the “Discourse Mode,” identifying five modes: Narrative, Description, Report, Information, Argument. These are realized at the level of the passage, and cut across genre lines. Smith shows that the modes, intuitively recognizable as distinct, have linguistic correlates that differentiate them. She analyzes the properties that distinguish each mode, focusing on grammatical rather than lexical information. The book also examines linguistically based features that appear in passages of all five modes: topic and focus, variation in syntactic structure, and subjectivity, or point of view. Operating at the interface of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, the book will appeal to researchers and graduate students in linguistics, stylistics, and rhetoric.

CARLOTA S. SMITH is Centennial Professor of Linguistics at the University of Texas. She is the author of *The Parameter of Aspect* (second edition, 1997). Her current research is at the interface of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, especially in texts.

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THE LOCAL STRUCTURE
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CARLOTA S. SMITH
University of Texas



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To John

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> xiii
Introduction	1
PART I DISCOURSE STRUCTURE	
1 The study of discourse	7
1.1 Discourse Modes	8
1.2 Approaches to the study of texts	9
1.3 Overview of key ideas	12
1.4 Conclusion	19
2 Introduction to the Discourse Modes	22
2.1 The entities introduced in texts	23
2.2 Text progression in the temporal modes	25
2.3 Text progression in the atemporal modes	31
2.4 Foreground and background in text passages	34
2.5 Rhetorical and linguistic background	38
3 Text representation and understanding	49
3.1 The pragmatic background for discourse interpretation	49
3.2 Types of inference	51
3.3 Mental models and representations	55
3.4 The analysis of text passages in Discourse Representation Theory	56
PART II LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE MODES	
4 Aspectual information: the entities introduced in discourse	67
4.1 Aspectual categories	67
4.2 General Statives	72
	ix

x *Contents*

4.3	Abstract Entities	74
4.4	Linguistic correlates of situation entities	75
4.5	Aspectual information in Discourse Representation Structures	82
5	Temporal and spatial progression	92
5.1	Sentences in context: patterns of tense interpretation	92
5.2	Introduction to the temporal system of English	99
5.3	Tense interpretation in Discourse Representation Theory	105
5.4	Spatial information in language	115
5.5	Features of temporal expressions	118
6	Referring expressions in discourse	123
6.1	Atemporal text progression and Primary Referents	123
6.2	Referring expressions	132
6.3	The familiarity status of referring expressions	141
6.4	Referring expressions and Discourse Representation Theory	149
PART III SURFACE PRESENTATIONAL FACTORS		
7	Subjectivity in texts	155
7.1	Responsibility for subjectivity	156
7.2	Expressions of communication	159
7.3	Contents of mind	162
7.4	Evaluative and evidential subjectivity	163
7.5	Perception and perspectival sentences	169
7.6	Formalizing the interpretation of subjectivity	175
7.7	Summary and conclusion	183
8	The contribution of surface presentation	185
8.1	Presentational factors	187
8.2	The topic–comment partition	188
8.3	The Focus–Background partition	201
8.4	Dual partitioning and the representation of topic and focus	209
8.5	Conclusion	212
9	Non-canonical structures and presentation	213
9.1	Non-canonical constructions	214
9.2	Argument constructions	215
9.3	Non-argument preposing: Adjuncts	228

Cambridge University Press
 0521781698 - Modes of Discourse: The Local Structure of Texts
 Carlota S. Smith
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

		<i>Contents</i>	xi
9.4	Multi-clause sentences		233
9.5	Paragraphs		236
9.6	Presentational information in Discourse Representation Structure		238
 PART IV DISCOURSE MODES AND THEIR CONTEXT 			
10	Information in text passages		243
10.1	The Discourse Modes		243
10.2	Multiple analyses of text passages		247
10.3	Formalization in Discourse Representation Structures		254
11	Discourse structure and Discourse Modes		258
11.1	Organizing principles of texts		258
11.2	Discourse relations		260
11.3	Discourse Modes and text structure		265
11.4	Conclusion		266
	Appendix A: The Texts		267
	Appendix B: Glossary		286
	<i>References</i>		294
	<i>General index</i>		314
	<i>Index of names</i>		318

Preface

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Cambridge University Press
0521781698 - Modes of Discourse: The Local Structure of Texts
Carlota S. Smith
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xiv *Preface*

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