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### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SPEECH SEGMENT DISSOCIATION IN DISCOURSE

Annotation

This article deals with the issues based on analyzing the theoretical foundations of the dissociation of speech segments in discourse. The study focuses on how discourse is divided into meaningful, pragmatic, syntactic, prosodic, and cognitive units, and how these units may become separated, restructured, or function independently in communication. The article discusses classical and modern approaches to discourse segmentation, including discourse markers, coherence relations, prosodic boundaries, elementary discourse units, and pragmatic interpretation.

**Key words:** Discourse, speech segment, dissociation, discourse segmentation, coherence, discourse markers, pragmatics, prosody.

### DISKURSDA NUTQ SEGMENTLARI DISSOTSIATSIYASINING NAZARIY ASOSLARI

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqola diskursda nutq segmentlarining dissotsiatsiyasi nazariy asoslariga oid masalalarni yoritadi. Tadqiqot diskursning mazmunli, pragmatik, sintaktik, prosodik va kognitiv birliklarga qanday ajralishini, shuningdek, ushbu birliklarning kommunikatsiya jarayonida qanday ajralib ketishi, qayta tuzilishi yoki mustaqil faoliyat yuritishini o'rganishga qaratilgan. Maqolada diskurs segmentatsiyasiga oid klassik va zamonaviy yondashuvlar, jumladan diskurs markerlari, bog'liqlik munosabatlari, prosodik chegaralar, elementar diskurs birliklari va pragmatik talqin masalalari tahlil qilinadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Diskurs, nutq segmenti, dissotsiatsiya, diskurs segmentatsiyasi, koherensiya, diskurs markerlari, pragmatika, prosodiya.

### ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСНОВЫ ДИССОЦИАЦИИ РЕЧЕВЫХ СЕГМЕНТОВ В ДИСКУРСЕ

Аннотация

Данная статья рассматривает вопросы, основанные на теоретических основах диссоциации речевых сегментов в дискурсе. Исследование сосредоточено на том, каким образом дискурс делится на значимые, прагматические, синтаксические, просодические и когнитивные единицы, а также на том, как эти единицы могут отделяться, перестраиваться или функционировать независимо в процессе коммуникации.

**Ключевые слова:** Дискурс, речевой сегмент, диссоциация, сегментация дискурса, когерентность, дискурсивные маркеры, прагматика, просодия.

**Introduction.** Discourse is a complex communicative structure that consists not only of sentences but also of larger and smaller functional units connected by meaning, intention, context, and interaction. In modern linguistics, discourse is understood as language in use, where utterances are interpreted according to social situation, pragmatic purpose, speaker identity, textual organization, and cognitive processing. Within this framework, the notion of speech segments has become especially important because any discourse, whether oral or written, is organized through a sequence of units that perform different communicative functions.

The dissociation of speech segments in discourse refers to the separation, fragmentation, or relative autonomy of certain speech units within a broader communicative whole. This phenomenon may appear when a segment is syntactically incomplete but pragmatically meaningful, when an intonational phrase functions independently, when a discourse marker separates one idea from another, or when a speaker intentionally breaks the linear flow of speech to emphasize contrast, hesitation, correction, evaluation, or emotional attitude. Therefore, dissociation is not simply a mechanical division of speech. It is a linguistic and cognitive process through which discourse meaning is structured and interpreted.

In spoken discourse, dissociation is closely connected with prosody, pauses, rhythm, and syntactic boundaries.

Degand and Simon argue that there is no full consensus on what a basic discourse unit is and propose that spoken discourse units should be defined through both prosodic and syntactic criteria. This view is important because speech does not always follow written sentence boundaries. A speaker may produce short fragments, repairs, repetitions, parenthetical insertions, or isolated evaluative phrases, all of which may carry independent discourse meaning.

**Literature review.** The theoretical foundation of speech segment dissociation is based on several major linguistic traditions: text linguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, prosody studies, cognitive linguistics, and computational discourse parsing. Early discourse studies emphasized that language should be analyzed beyond the sentence level. Halliday and Hasan's theory of cohesion demonstrated that texts are connected through grammatical and lexical devices, while later discourse analysts developed the idea that coherence is not only a textual property but also a result of interpretation [1]. In this sense, the dissociation of speech segments becomes possible because discourse units may remain meaningful even when they are formally separated from surrounding structures.

Schiffrin's theory of discourse markers is especially important for this topic. She argues that markers such as well, so, but, because, however, and you know organize discourse by connecting ideas, managing turns, and signaling relationships

between segments [2]. From this perspective, discourse markers can both connect and separate speech segments. For example, however may introduce contrast and dissociate the following statement from the previous one, while well may signal hesitation, transition, or a shift in communicative direction. Recent studies continue to examine discourse markers as tools of coherence and interpretation; a 2024 study emphasizes their role in text fluency, coherence, and cognitive interpretation.

Another important theoretical direction is Rhetorical Structure Theory, developed by Mann and Thompson. This theory explains discourse as a hierarchical structure consisting of nuclei and satellites, where segments are connected by relations such as cause, elaboration, contrast, condition, concession, and evidence [3]. Dissociation in this framework may occur when a segment is detached from the main nucleus but still contributes to the global interpretation of the discourse. For example, parenthetical comments, background explanations, and evaluative insertions may function as satellite segments.

In spoken discourse research, prosodic segmentation plays a central role. Speech is not always divided according to grammatical sentences. Instead, speakers organize utterances through pauses, pitch movement, stress, rhythm, and intonation. Degand and Simon's research on basic discourse units argues that spoken discourse segmentation should rely on both syntax and prosody, because neither criterion alone is sufficient. This idea is essential for understanding dissociation: a speech segment may be syntactically dependent but prosodically independent, or syntactically complete but prosodically attached to the previous unit.

Recent computational linguistics has also contributed to this discussion. Studies on discourse unit detection show that segmentation is the first and necessary step in automatic discourse parsing. The DISRPT 2025 shared task focuses on elementary discourse unit segmentation, connective identification, and discourse relation classification across different languages and frameworks. These studies demonstrate that the boundaries between discourse segments are not always obvious and may differ depending on theoretical model, language, genre, and annotation principles.

The literature also shows that dissociation is related to cognitive processing. When listeners interpret discourse, they do not process all information equally. Some segments are foregrounded, others are backgrounded; some are interpreted as central, while others function as comments, corrections, emotional reactions, or clarifications. Therefore, dissociation reflects how the speaker guides the listener's attention and how the listener reconstructs coherence from separate units.

Recent studies have expanded the theoretical understanding of discourse segmentation and speech segment dissociation by combining linguistic, computational, and pragmatic approaches. In 2025, Ogrodniczuk and colleagues investigated how different discourse frameworks identify discourse units and where they disagree [4]. Their study is significant because it shows that discourse unit detection is a foundational but theoretically unstable task. Different frameworks may segment the same text differently, depending on whether they prioritize syntax, pragmatics, prosody, or rhetorical relations.

**Discussion and analysis.** The dissociation of speech segments in discourse can be understood as the process through which a speech unit gains relative independence from the surrounding discourse while still contributing to the general communicative meaning. This process appears in both spoken and written discourse, but its forms differ according to medium, genre, communicative purpose, and language structure.

In written discourse, dissociation is often marked by punctuation, paragraph division, discourse markers, parenthetical constructions, contrastive connectors, and rhetorical organization. For example:

The experiment produced positive results. However, several methodological limitations should be considered.

Here, the second sentence is dissociated from the first through the discourse marker however. The marker does not destroy coherence; rather, it reorganizes the relation between two segments as contrast. This shows that dissociation and coherence are not opposites. A segment may be separated in form but connected in meaning.

In spoken discourse, dissociation may occur through intonation, pause, hesitation, repetition, or repair:

I wanted to explain the problem — well — not the whole problem, but the main part.

The segment well functions as an independent discourse marker. It interrupts the syntactic flow but guides interpretation. The phrase not the whole problem, but the main part is also dissociated as a repair segment. It corrects and narrows the previous meaning. Such examples show that dissociation is often connected with real-time thinking and speech production.

From a pragmatic point of view, dissociated segments may perform several functions. First, they may clarify information. Second, they may express the speaker's attitude. Third, they may mark contrast or correction. Fourth, they may manage interaction. Fifth, they may create emphasis. For instance:

This decision, frankly speaking, was unexpected.

The segment frankly speaking is syntactically optional but pragmatically important. It dissociates the speaker's evaluative stance from the propositional content of the sentence. The main information is this decision was unexpected, while the inserted segment shows the speaker's attitude.

Theoretically, such cases prove that discourse is not linear in a simple grammatical sense. It is layered. One layer contains propositional content, another contains pragmatic evaluation, another organizes coherence, and another reflects interactional management. Dissociation occurs when these layers become visible through separate speech segments.

In discourse analysis, dissociation is also connected with foregrounding and backgrounding. A speaker may separate a segment in order to make it more noticeable. For example:

One thing is clear: the results cannot be ignored.

The segment one thing is clear prepares the listener for the main claim and gives it emphasis. Although it is not the core proposition, it controls interpretation. Similarly, in academic writing, phrases such as it should be noted that, from this perspective, and in contrast create segmental boundaries and guide the reader through argumentation.

In computational discourse studies, this issue becomes even more complex. Automatic systems must identify whether a clause, phrase, or sentence should be treated as an elementary discourse unit. Recent research shows that frameworks may disagree on segmentation principles. This disagreement confirms that speech segment dissociation is not purely formal. It depends on theoretical assumptions about what counts as a discourse unit.

Therefore, the dissociation of speech segments should be analyzed through an integrated model. Such a model includes syntactic completeness, semantic contribution, pragmatic function, prosodic independence, discourse marker presence, and cognitive salience. Only this multidimensional

approach can explain how separated segments maintain their role in discourse coherence.

The dissociation of speech segments appears in both English and Uzbek, but the linguistic means used to mark it may differ. English often relies on fixed discourse markers, punctuation, word order, and intonation. Uzbek, as an agglutinative language with flexible word order, frequently uses particles, modal expressions, intonation, repetition, and syntactic-final markers to organize discourse segments.

In English, discourse markers such as however, therefore, well, so, anyway, actually, and I mean are common tools of segmentation. For example:

I agree with the proposal. However, the implementation process needs revision.

The marker however clearly separates the second segment and signals contrast. In Uzbek, a similar meaning may be expressed through *biroq*, *ammo*, *lekin*, *shunga qaramay*:

Men bu taklifga qo'shilaman. Biroq uni amalga oshirish jarayoni qayta ko'rib chiqilishi kerak.

Here, *biroq* dissociates the second segment from the first and introduces a contrastive relation.

In spoken Uzbek discourse, particles and introductory expressions often create dissociated segments:

To'g'risini aytсам, bu qaror kutilmagan bo'ldi.

This is close to the English sentence:

Frankly speaking, this decision was unexpected.

In both languages, the introductory segment expresses speaker attitude. However, Uzbek may also use forms such as *nima desam ekan*, *bilasizmi*, *demak*, *xullas*, *aytmoqchi*, which function similarly to English *well*, *you know*, *so*, *anyway*, and *by the way*.

A key difference is that Uzbek discourse often allows greater flexibility in word order, so segment dissociation may be created through topicalization:

Bu masalaga kelsak, uni alohida o'rganish kerak.

English usually expresses this with a preposed thematic segment:

As for this issue, it should be studied separately.

In both cases, the first segment is dissociated thematically; it introduces the topic and prepares the listener for the main statement.

Prosodic dissociation is also significant in both languages. In oral Uzbek, pauses after particles such as *demak*, *xullas*, or *endi* may signal a new discourse segment. In English, similar functions are performed by *so*, *well*, or *now*. Therefore, although the grammatical systems differ, both languages use segment dissociation to manage coherence, emphasize meaning, and guide interpretation.

**Conclusion.** The dissociation of speech segments in discourse is a complex linguistic phenomenon that reflects the dynamic organization of communication. It occurs when a speech unit becomes relatively independent from the surrounding discourse while continuing to contribute to the general meaning. This phenomenon may be expressed through syntax, prosody, discourse markers, punctuation, pauses, repetition, repair, or pragmatic insertions.

The analysis shows that dissociation should not be understood as a breakdown of coherence. On the contrary, it often helps create coherence by clarifying relations between ideas, emphasizing important information, showing the speaker's attitude, and guiding the listener's interpretation. In spoken discourse, dissociation is closely connected with intonation, rhythm, pauses, and spontaneous speech features. In written discourse, it is usually marked by punctuation, paragraphing, connectors, and rhetorical structures.

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