

On the Phenomenon of Coherence in Scientific and Technical Discourse

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Abstract

Coherence is the basis of all communication. Coherence relations are central for discourse comprehension.

The present study explores the complex phenomenon of coherence relations in the structure of written civil engineering discourse. It is based on the assumption that coherence relations are of conceptual character and can be treated within a cognitive approach. However, their reconstruction is often based on linguistic signals or explicit marking of the relations within the discourse.

In this paper the main emphasis is placed on the signaling mechanisms of coherence relations besides traditional discourse markers: morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic, their use and/or contexts in civil engineering discourse. In addition, the article sheds light on the relations that do not contain clear indicators, i.e., implicit relations. Lines of thought are illustrated by a selection of examples from civil engineering discourse corpus. It is emphasized that certain types of relations are typically found in a particular genre.

Inferring coherence relations between the segments of a discourse is a prerequisite for discourse comprehension. The study outcomes are important for achieving textual equivalence in the process of translation.

References

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