

SEQUENTIAL STRUCTURE OF DISCOURSE SEGMENTS SHAPED BY THE INTERPLAY OF RECIPIENT DESIGN OR SALIENCE

Istvan Kecskes (State University of New York, Albany)

This paper argues that speaker utterance is not just the result of recipient design. While fitting words into actual situational contexts speakers are driven not only by the intent that the hearer recognize what is meant as intended by the speaker (social), but also by individual salience that affects production subconsciously (egocentrism of speaker). The interplay of these social and individual factors shapes speaker utterance. The effect of individual salience (which is usually subconscious and uncontrolled) may result in uttering semantic units that make their own context, and occasionally may cause misunderstandings. It will be claimed and demonstrated through examples that recipient design usually requires an inductive process that is carefully planned in most cases while salience effect generally appears in the form of a deductive process that may contain repairs and adjustments. The speaker has something on his/her mind, and this intention is formulated abruptly, rather carelessly without specific planning.