

Spoken Discourse Models and Teaching Natural Spoken Language

ANNA MARIA CSAKI*

ABSTRACT: It is not uncommon for a teacher to hear students, returning from a first visit to a native-speaking country, tell of their initial dismay at “not understanding anything at all” and feeling that the language they had studied was completely different to that which they heard upon arrival – not to mention the students’ inability to speak like the natives, or, as McCarthy and Carter explain, produce “natural spoken output”¹. Thanks to the ability of technology to collect great amounts of real-life language samples, corpus linguistics has observed how the spoken language works and has created models to represent its dynamics and help solve this dilemma. This essay aims to examine the Discourse Analysis models to address the question of what constitutes natural spoken language and how to help students achieve it.

Keywords: Discourse models, Natural spoken language.

1. Introduction

Learning a language traditionally implies studying the rules of written text, especially grammar and syntax, with the expectation that learning to speak is part of the same process, to be mastered in time. The Common European Framework of Reference

* Università degli Studi di Trieste, Trieste, Italia.
annamaria.csaki@dispes.units.it.

1. R. CARTER, M. MCCARTHY, *Exploring Spoken English*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002, p. 53.