Pragmatic Functions of Lexical Connectors in German Spontaneous Synergetic Discourse

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the functional load of lexical connectors in German spontaneous synergetic discourse. The research material is based on the spoken spontaneous, authentic polylogues by native German speakers as one of the synergetic speech activity types. The main purpose of the research is to describe the functional and pragmatic aspect of the rhythmization of spontaneous spoken multi-personal discourse using lexical means and study their interaction mechanism. The lexical and semantic connections of spontaneous speech contributing to the creation of its integral Gestalt are revealed. Recombination of a set of lexical elements makes it possible to ensure the integrity of polylogue unities, their intertextuality, i.e. the presence of certain formal and semantic relations between its constituent elements. In the material under study, lexical repetition as a connector performs various pragmatic functions in creating the main thematic lines of polylogue unities, the integrative or architectonic, function. The rhythm of multi-personal speech is formed by all linguistic means, determined by the quantitative factor. The rhythm provides the speech with semantic coherence and integrity and makes it more comprehensible. Periodic repetition of lexical units in different components of the textual hierarchy creates a rhythmic "skeleton" of the discourse, which corresponds to both the plane of expression and the plane of the linguistic sign content, i.e. the most important principles of the architecture of speech.

Keywords: spontaneous polylogue, rhythmization, connector, repetition, recurrence, macro-theme, sub-theme, micro-theme.

Introduction

The processes of rhythmization play an important integrative and systemic role in nature, society, human activity, and language. We continuously observe alternation and repetition of different phenomena, processes, elements in a certain sequence, frequency, and regularity. The rhythmization of all existential manifestations of the world is based on recurrence, the recombination of a set of shared system elements.

In speech, it is the arrangement of vocal, verbal, syntactical and morphological elements in accordance with the semantic objective. The rhythmic organization of discourse is based on the integrating essence of speech rhythm, which is understood as the recurrence of speech units and connections and relationships between them.

Proceeding from the fact that the speech continuum, like any other living system, is a compound, its parts interact with the help of the rhythmization of units on various levels. The main purpose of this study is to describe the functional and pragmatic aspect of the rhythmization of spoken spontaneous multilateral discourse using lexical means and study the mechanism of their interaction. Lexical and semantic means play an active role in the integration of the components of the text and are some of the leading means of creating its integral Gestalt.
In our opinion, to describe the macro-thematic unity of synergetic discourse seems to be one of the most important objectives in the development of its theory. A polylogue, or polylogue unity (P.U.), as one of the types (along with dialogue) of synergetic discourse contains the main topic, or macro-theme, sub-themes and micro-themes as parts of the sub-themes. Thus, PU is a complex structural combination of its basic units, interconnected to varying degrees and various means. Naturally, the question arises: what performs the function of "fastening" the semantic lines of a P.U. as an entity?

**Literature Review**

In Russian linguistics, the components connecting a speech fragment are referred to as "скрепы" (fasteners), and in the English-language linguistics as "connectors" (Papina, 2002: 60). The latter term has become entrenched in modern linguistics, defining connectors as linguistic units that create interconnections in the text.

A connector is defined as a linguistic unit whose function is to express the type of relations (logical-semantic, illocutionary, or structural) between the two connected predicative components, expressed implicitly or explicitly (Inkova-Manzotti, 2001, p. 13).

Connectors can also be interpreted more narrowly: as a means of linking independent sentences in context (Minyakova, 1983, p. 5).

E. Baizikova, a Czech researcher, singles out content connectors, in particular the theme, the author's motive, "different semantic relations between text units" (Baizikova, 1981, p. 141-142). She refers to various language means as linguistic connectors: factors of the category of person, gender, verb tense and aspect, etc. According to E. Baizikova, non-linguistic connectors include sound and graphic phenomena, setting, and paralinguistic means. Among the language connectors, the researcher distinguishes lexical repetitions (verbatim, recurring, differentiating repetitions) and grammatical means—repeating and attaching connectors (ibid.).

It should also be added that the prosodic level of the language also contains many connectors that help create a single structure of speech.

A large number of studies have been devoted to different types of repetition as the main stylistic device in various types and genres of speech (Kukharenko, 1955; Golovkina, 1964; Nozdrina, 1980; Bravo, 1983; Sarina, 1999; Moskalchuk, 2003; Skvorodnikov, 2014; Yuzhanikova, 2014; Knyazeva 2016; Norman, 2019; Naumova, Shutova, 2020, etc.).

According to many linguists, the functional load of repetitions is very diverse. The integrity of the structural organization of an entity, manifested in the repetition of its essential characteristics, is what makes this entity a linguistic sign. A.F. Papina investigates the types and kinds of lexical and grammatical repetitions that form the connector rows of the text (Papina, 2002). L.I. Zilberman defines repetitions as the alternation of primary and secondary nomination as the substitution devices (Zilberman, 1988, p. 31). O.S. Akhmanov and S.E. Nikitin define them as "nomenclature descriptors", i.e. key connecting words, and "modal descriptors" that communicate and convey meaningful information and perform the function of speech fasteners (Akhmanova, Nikitina, 1965, p. 112). According to G.G. Moskalchuk, repetitions or repetitive complexes are semantic and structural units of coherence, defined as a set of repeating logical and syntactic material, opposed structurally to the entire set of non-repeating lexical and syntactic material (Moskalchuk, 2003).

It seems interesting to analyze the connecting function of recurrence of lexical units in a spontaneous polylogue to identify its semantic and structural organization. This synergetic type of communication has long been neglected by researchers preferring dialogue. It should be noted that the replication mechanism is of particular importance in synergetic communication. However, the alternation of conversational turns in a polylogue reveals a unique feature inherent only in this form of communication. It is determined by the participants' quantitative factor, interpersonal and role relationships in the speech act. A polylogue is a communicative speech act, which on the one hand implies the obligatory response, as in a dialogue; on the other hand, due to its peculiar nature, it does not imply a response from all participants, except for one or several at the same time. The stimuli and reactions in the conversational turns of a polylogue have their own specifics that distinguish it from the dialogue. Thus, a subsequent conversational turn in a polylogue may be a response to a stimulus not from the immediate addressee but temporarily verbally passive participants. Besides, responses may not refer to a previous turn, but an earlier turn not necessarily by the immediate addressee and not necessarily by the immediate addressee; that is, there may be a delayed response to a distant stimulus. The subsequent conversational turn may also contain several sub-topics and be a reaction to various previous addressees' statements, which is not characteristic of a dialogue (Yakovleva, 2005).

**Research Materials and Objectives**

The identification of semantic connections between polylogue units is based on the fact that semantically related words perform the function of fasteners, whose meanings contain one common semantic feature in each speech product. The presence of repeating common elements of meaning makes it possible to combine words into
a common thematic series. The key words join thematic lines of P.U. by means of their regular recurrence. Keyword recurrence can be expressed by literal repetition (direct, contact repetition); extended repetition (repetition with qualifying elements); inflectional repetition (with morphological changes); adjacent repetition (repetition in different syntagmas and sentences); distant (frame) repetition (repeating elements are separated from each other by several conversational turns).

The research material is spontaneous polylogues of native German speakers, graphically recorded to convey their natural features caused by the spontaneous nature of speech production. For research purposes, we deliberately did not bring the syntax of spoken oral discourse in line with the codified norm of written language.

The main thematic line of polylogues is a set of definitions for a certain subject matter represented in the speech continuum. This line presupposes the heterogeneity of its additional constituent elements. These elements, being built into the main thematic line, not only complement it but also substantiate, contributing to the full content disclosure. Thus, a specific thematic hierarchy is built on the above mentioned main themes and subthemes; that is, a system is formed. The recurrence of lexical units in the subthemes of the main theme contributes to this system formation. Subthemes are not always autosemantic; they can often be decoded only in the general context.

The main research objective is to determine the role of recurrent lexical units in organizing the thematic components of a polylogue into a single entity and establishing their pragmatic function.

Analysis and Results

The thematic block "School" (polylogues 1, 2, 3) is divided into three macro-themes: 1. "Advantages and disadvantages of the modern school", 2. "Parents-Teachers relationship", 3. "Desired type of school", which include, in turn, sub-themes and even smaller micro-themes.

B: Was gefällt euch denn an der Schule, oder was gefällt euch denn gar nicht an der Schule?
C: Daß wir immer Hausaufgaben aufbekommen, gefällt mir nicht.
A: Ja, in der Oberstufe ist es jetzt aber so wenn man die Hausaufgaben macht, is' es gut. Die werden eigentlich im Grunde genommen gar nicht kontrolliert. Es wird aber mit dem Stoff, den man in den Hausaufgaben machen sollte, weiter gearbeitet. Man muß es also können, und es liegt im ..., im eigenen Ermessen, das zu lernen oder nicht.
D: Ich würde sagen, daß die ideale Schule eher auf, mehr auf den, einen Beruf hin arbeiten sollte und nicht nur Grund ..., Grundwissen vermitteln sollte.
E: Ja, ich meine also, daß das, was Friedrich gesagt hat, jetzt vielleicht für die Realschulen und Hauptschulen also zutrifft, aber jetzt in der Oberstufe bereitet man sich ja doch schon mehr auf den Beruf vor, weil man also ein' Hauptbereich gewählt hat, zum Beispiel mathematisch-naturwissenschaftlich oder gesellschaftswissenschaftlich. Man kann sich da ja auch zum Teil schon Fächer aussuchen und Fächer also... die möchte man nicht machen oder die interessieren einen nicht, die braucht man dann halt nicht zu machen.
A: Ich finde die Freistunden nicht so gut. Ich hab' zum Beispiel oft eine Stunde oder zwei Stunden frei, und dann kann ich machen, was ich will. Na, das ist zwar am Anfang ganz interessant, aber hinterher da weiß man auch nicht, was man machen soll. Und dann Hausaufgaben ist auch wieder langweilig, in der Schule zu machen, höchstens für die nächsten Stunden.

This polylogue unity is the macro-theme 1 (MT1), where three subthemes (S.T.) can be distinguished: ST1 — “Homework”, ST2 — “Profession-oriented character of academic disciplines”, ST3 — “Gaps in the timetable.”

ST1 contains one micro-theme “Homework in high school is not marked, and it is up to the student to do it.” ST1 contains two micro-themes: a) "The ideal school should work" for the future profession, and not just provide the knowledge base; b) "School disciplines should be studied by choice in accordance with the future profession." ST3 also contains two micro-themes: a) "Gaps in the timetable are bad"; b) "Doing homework at school is boring."

Let us investigate how the connector series formed by repetitions of lexical units unite all these themes into a single discursive pattern.

The "binding" function of the connector row in ST1 is represented by the adjacent contact, extended repetition of the lexical unit "Schule", the adjacent repetition of the word "Hausaufgaben" in replies A, B, C. They are included in different syntagmas and phrases. The function of this repetition is the linking of conversational turns.

The noun "Hausaufgaben" is repeated in the last phrase of the final P.U. of the A’s conversational turn (in another S.T.). Being repeated at the beginning and the end of the P.U. in different turns at a considerable distance from each other, this lexical unit forms a "frame" or "ring" (distant frame repetition). The main pragmatic function of this type of repetition is to highlight the speaker’s thoughts, focusing the interlocutors’ attention on this aspect of the problem. This repetition contributes to the implementation of the pragmatic function of maintaining the interlocutors’ attention to the topic of the conversation and forming a certain attitude to the content of the statement and the communication of their own opinion on the issue under discussion.

Besides, this repetition can be defined as inflectional. The composite noun “Hausaufgaben” is repeated in A’s
second conversational turn in different case forms (die Hausaufgabe — Akk., den Hausaufgaben — Dat.). Declensional changes in a word do not affect the integrity of the lexical content and are associated with the expression of different grammatical meanings. The speaker uses the repetition of the composite in A’s remarks for the pragmatic purpose of expressing their own point of view on the problem and its argumentation. Repetition of the word three times conveys the speaker’s assessment of the current state of affairs, which they are not happy with.

The connector row in ST₁ is represented by such lexical units as "Beruf", "Fächer", "Schule".

The noun "Beruf", being an adjacent repetition, serves as a "fastener" for the two subthemes developed in D’s and E’s responses.

The contact repetition (repetition of a lexical unit directly one after another) of the plural form of the noun "das Fach" and its subsequent triple pronominal substitution, typical for spontaneous speech, emphasize, on the one hand, the close logical cohesion of this type of substitution with the noun itself and the reasoning sequence, and on the other hand, draw the listeners’ attention to the repeated element of the message as the most important one.

The complicated contact repetition of the noun "die Schule" in ST₂ performs the function of opposition: the speaker emphasizes the difference between schools teaching natural sciences and humanities. This repetition also serves as a link between ST₁ and ST₂.

Connector series ST₁ is formed by the lexical unit "Stunde" presented in different types of repetition: adjacent, contact and complicated.

The adjacent repetition of the composite "Freistunden" and the noun "Stunde" in the last phrase of A’s final conversational turn serves as a fastener for the two subthemes "Gaps in the timetable are bad" and "Doing homework at school is boring."

The contact repetition of the noun "Stunde" (Ich hab’ zum Beispiel oft eine oder zwei Stunden frei) performs the clarifying function.

The complicated repetition of the word "Freistunden" and the phrase "Zwei Stunden Frei" perform the semantic function of clarification or addition. To clarify what has been said, such repetition makes speech sound natural as opposed to a previously thought out form.

The adjacent and distant tautology of lexical units in different conversational turns unites all sub-themes into one macro-theme "Advantages and disadvantages of the modern school."

A similar pattern can be observed in the polylogue unity 2

A: Ideale Schule, ideale Schulen...

B: Ja, ne Schule, wo die Kommunikation zwischen Lehrern und Eltern klappt, das würde ich so für wichtig halten. Also wenn man sich anguckt, daß auf den meisten Schulen jetzt so Elternsprechtagen ist — entweder sehr stark besucht sind, wenn wirklich ein wichtiges Thema da ist, aber da muß schon wirklich ein Konfliktfall da sein, aber im Regelfall eben keiner kommt. Und daß einfach Erziehung zu Hause und Erziehung in der Schule so furchtbar beziehungslos nebeneinandersteht.

A: Aber wollen die Lehrer das überhaupt, daß beide Eltern dort erscheinen? Bekommen die nicht einen Schrecken? Ist das nicht direkt psychologischer Schock, wenn solch ein Interesse plötzlich aufflackern sollte für die schulischen Bereiche?

B: Nur, mir wären Eltern, die ein Interesse zeigen an dem Unterricht lieber als — so wie das heute ist, so Schreckgespenst, wenn die Eltern schon kommen, hat man schon gleich so’n bißchen unangenehmes Gefühl im Genick, hat man irgendwas gemacht, wollen sie sich vielleicht beschweren, und ich mein,’ davor müßte das eigentlich wegkommen, ne.

A: Was, was meinen Sie, wann gehen Eltern heutzutage zur Schule? Aus welchem Anlaß?

C: Eltern gehen meistens dann zur Schule, wenn das Kind in blauen Brief bekommt hat, bzw. Wenn sie merken, daß das Kind auf Vier minus bzw. Fünf plus steht. Vorher gehen Eltern in der Regel nicht zur Schule.

The macro-theme "Parent-teacher relationship" is represented by the following sub-themes: ST₁; "Upbringing at home and school are separated from each other", ST₁; "Parents do not like coming to school, teachers do not like inviting them because they are afraid of finger-pointing", ST₁; "What makes parents come to school."

The connector series ST₁ is represented by lexical units "Schule", "Erziehung", and "Eltern".

The adjacent repetition of the word "Schule" ensures linking A and B’s conversational turns. Within B’s response, this type of self-repetition determines the semantic and logical structure of the response and contributes to the arrangement of its lexical and syntactic components.

The use of the noun "Schule" in a different case and number forms serves to reinforce the expressed thought. In this case, inflectional repetition of a word is not associated with a fixed place in the conversational turn.

The attributive complicated contact repetition "ideale Schule, ideale Schulen" serves the function of drawing attention to the topic of discussion. The complicated repetition of the noun "Eltern" substantiates what was said.

The contact repetition of the word "Erziehung" in this case fulfills the function of opposition (Erziehung zu Hause und Erziehung in der Schule) and the gradation function (growing discontent).
In the ST₂ connector series, the lexical unit "Eltern" is prominent as an adjacent allo-repetition for the connection of A and B's adjacent conversational turns. Contact self-repetition of a given word in B's response has the connotation of a negative assessment of the situation.

The connector series ST₁ is represented by lexical units "Eltern", "Schule", and "Kind".

The framework repetition of the words "Eltern", "Schule" in C conversational turn performs the function of the communicative division of the reply into the theme and rheme (given and new). Repetition in the final position carries the main semantic load, performing the summary function.

The adjacent self-repetition of the word "Kind" performs the function of phrase rhythmization, arranging the lexical and syntactic composition of the subordinate clauses that make up the period.

The distant repetition of the words "Schule", "Eltern", "Elternsprechtage" in different conversational turn serves as a "fastener" of the subtopics in the macro-theme.

In the competence polylogue 3, the macro-theme "The desired type of school" includes four sub-themes: ST₁; "Will a small school provide equal chances for the education", ST₂; "The ideal school provides an opportunity to do homework at school under the teachers' supervision", ST₃; "Are grades necessary?", ST₄; "Is the student load too big?"

3. A: Die Schule sollte so klein als möglich sein, bin ich der Meinung, weil da der Schüler in der Lage ist, sich... 
B: ... das sehen wir natürlich ganz spezifisch...
A: ... individuell am besten zu entwickeln.
C: Also so klein wie möglich?
D: Nö, so klein wie möglich nun gerade auch nicht, dann müßte ja jeder einen Privatlehrer haben. Es soll also schon einen Klassenverband geben, ne.
A: ... nun selbstverständlich, das ist Voraussetzung.
E: Ich möchte auch das zustimmen, das sehe ich auch als einen Punkt einer idealen Schule an, daß angeboten wird, die Schularbeiten in der Schule zu machen, weil ich nämlich meine, daß ansonsten, wenn die zu Hause gemacht werden, die Chancengleichheit der Kinder nicht mehr in dem Maße gegeben ist. Es kommt nämlich dann auf, ob die Schularbeiten beaufsichtigt werden, ob den Kindern geholfen wird, ob ihnen da doch was zusätzlich zugegeben wird oder nicht. Das halte ich für verfehlt. Ich meine, daß die Schule dieses Angebot machen müßte, ansonsten bin ich der Auffassung, daß es zur Aufgabe der Schule gehört, nicht nur Wissen zu vermitteln, sondern auch zu erziehen.
C: Was können die Eltern da machen?
D: Ja, die ... ich will sie, möchte dem allerdings doch sehr ..., sehr heftig widersprechen, was da eben gesagt wurde; zwar gut, also Chancengleichheit und was weiß ich nicht alles, aber der Staat darf nun oder die Bildungspolitik darf nun nicht auch noch die ... in die Familien, ins Familiendings mit eingreifen, und das ist doch dann die Konsequenz...
A: Sie können kein Kind einfach nur so aus der Schule kommen lassen, hinsetzen, Schulaufgaben, und am nächsten Tag geht das Kind zufrieden und so richtig mit erledigten Hausaufgaben in die Schule.
D: Wir sollten lieber danach fragen, wie wir uns die Schule wünschen. Ich wünsche mir eben eine weniger leistungsbezogene Schule.
B: Ach nein, das sehe ich überhaupt nicht so ...
D: Doch, doch, das ist also ...
B: ... leistungsbezogen sehen wir ganz anders, weil wir jetzt älter geworden sind und meinen automatisch auf Grund der vielen Dinge, die wir mittlerweile erlebt haben, die Kinder heute viel streßmäßiger erzogen.
A: Glauben Sie, die Kinder sind überfordert?
D: Ja.
B: Ne, glaube ich nicht.
D: Doch, bin ich überzeugt von.

The ST₁ connector series is formed by the lexical units "Schule", "Schüler", and the phrase "so Klein wie möglich".

The adjacent repetition of the noun "die Schule" in the following syntagma in the form of the "Schüler" root repetition (morphological repetition) connects parts of a complex sentence. The adjacent and frame repetition, "so Klein wie möglich," ensures linking the conversational turn and unites the entire ST₁.

The adjacent and distant repetitions of the noun "Schule", inflectional(die Schule - N., in der Schule - D., aus der Schule - D., einer Schule - G., der Kinder - G., den Kindern - D., das Kind - A., das Kind - N.) and complicated (Schularbeiten, Schulaufgaben, Hausaufgaben Chancengleichheit, Familiendings) repetitions of lexical units are a means of communicating the emotional state of the interlocutors when discussing a burning issue in ST₁.

The ST₂ connector series is formed by the lexical units "leistungsbezogen" and "Schule".

The distant repetition of the word "leistungsbezogen" links the spaced D and B's replies and expresses a fundamentally different speakers' position on the problem.
The adjacent attributive complicated self-repetition of the noun "Schule" performs the clarifying function. The adjacent allo-repetition of the noun "das Kind" serves to link the B and A's responses and simultaneously connects ST₁ and ST₂. Still, this word in different subthemes is a keyword in discussing different problems: in ST₁ — grades cause stress in children; in ST₄ — student overload at school.

Conclusion
Thus, the recurrent properties of linguistic units in the connector series of sub-themes are those "connecting bridges" that ensure a coherent, integrative semantic entity. By intertwining, semantic blocks form a single intricate "pattern" of P.U., create its semantic, structural, and communicative unity. The recombination of a set of elements makes it possible to provide the integrity of polylogue unities, their intertextuality, the presence of certain formal and semantic relations between its constituent elements. In the material under study, lexical repetition as a connector performs various pragmatic functions in the creation of the main thematic lines of polylogue unities, the key one being the integrative, architectonic function. The rhythm of a multi-person speech product is formed by all linguistic means, determined in this case by the quantitative factor. The rhythm provides its semantic coherence and integrity and makes it more accessible for adequate perception. Periodic repetition of lexical units in different textual hierarchy components creates a rhythmic "skeleton" of discourse, which corresponds to the expression plane and the content plane as the most important principles of speech architecture.

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