

COHERENCE IN NARRATIVE DISCOURSE OF SCHIZOPHRENIC SPEAKERS

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ABSTRACT

It has long been observed that schizophrenic speakers display peculiar language performance. Accordingly, patients with schizophrenia are difficult to diagnose as to whether they exhibit positive formal thought disorder (FTD). Although several diagnostic assessments of thought disorder have been proposed, the assessments depend largely on individual psychiatrists during a psychiatric interview. Therefore, despite these significances, the researcher applies three linguistic frameworks to this present research: Halliday and Hasan's cohesion (1976; 1984), Grice's cooperative principle (1975), and theme development, which includes participant reference and storyline following Longacre (1983; 1989).

The primary aim is to measure the overall coherence from the narratives of schizophrenic speakers after they have viewed a wordless picture book. The researcher further categorizes the participants into groups according to their characteristics of coherence in narrative discourse in order to find out whether one of these groups shows signs of positive formal thought disorder. The analysis depicts that schizophrenic narratives that are less cohesive, less cooperative and less progressive can be grouped into Group One, "narratives with less coherence". In contrast, other narratives with the opposite results can be grouped into Group Two, "narratives with more coherence". Accordingly, the interviews with the psychiatrists suggest that schizophrenic speakers in Group One show signs of positive formal thought disorder.

KEY WORDS: COHERENCE/ NARRATIVE DISCOURSE/ SCHIZOPHRENIC SPEAKERS

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