

SPREMI, Thursday 20 April 2023, 3pm

Arken, Helikon (Fabriksgatan 2, Åbo)

Zoom: <https://aboakademi.zoom.us/j/66312703059>, Meeting ID: 663 1270 3059).

STRUCTURING DISCOURSE THROUGH DISCOURSE RELATIONS AND RELATIONAL SIGNALS

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The discourse structure of a (multi-sentential) text is primarily represented in terms of relational coherence, which explains how the text segments (sentences or clauses) are linked to each other by discourse relations. Discourse relations encode a meaning relationship (e.g., causal, additive, temporal) between two text segments, which represent propositions (facts, events or situations), speech acts (e.g., claims or requests), or beliefs (of the speaker/writer). For example, in the sentence “*John could not go to the party because he was busy with his work*”, the two segments (clauses) represent two events which are linked by a *Reason* relation. Discourse relations are signalled by discourse connectives (e.g., *although, if, thus, when*) and also by many other textual features (e.g., *parallel syntactic constructions* as a signal of *Contrast* relations).

In this talk, I briefly introduce the core theoretical constructs of discourse structure, and outline some important characteristics of relational coherence. Then, I discuss how discourse relations are indicated by relational signals, and report on my previous research on this topic. Finally, I present my recent work on Bangla (an Indo-Aryan language, which I natively speak), and report on the development of a discourse-annotated corpus and a lexicon of Bangla discourse connectives.