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## The influence of context on the interpretation of the segments in a discourse relation

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Discourse annotation frameworks stipulate different segmentation rules, but the basic notion is the same: the segments of a relation should convey sufficient information for the intended discourse relation to be inferred. This assumption is also implemented in most automatic discourse relation classifiers. However, there is also a general consensus in the field that annotators need to take into account the context of a relation during discourse annotation (see Lascarides, Asher & Oberlander, 1992; Song, 2010).

The current contribution experimentally examines the influence of context on the interpretation of a discourse relation, with a specific focus on whether there is an interaction between characteristics of the segment and the presence of context. In the experiment, participants were asked to insert a connective from a predefined list between two segments. One group only saw the two segments of the relation, while the other group saw the two segments including two preceding and one following context sentence.

Distributions of inserted connectives differed between the conditions for 8% of all items. Manual inspection of these items revealed that presence of context lead to higher annotator agreement when

- the first segment of a relation refers to an entity or event in the context, or introduces important background information
- the first segment consists of a deranked subordinate clause attaching to the context
- the context sentence following the relation expands on the second.

We plan to present a more detailed discussion of the results, using examples to illustrate the findings. We will also discuss possible explanations for the lack of effect of context, and the implications for discourse annotation.

**References:** • Lascarides, A., Asher, N., & Oberlander, J. (1992, June). Inferring discourse relations in context. In *ACL Proceedings*. • Song, L. (2010). The Role of Context in Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(6), 876-879.