

Second order coherence

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In text linguistics the concept of coherence is used to characterize texts as wholes beyond the sentence. In the present article it is demonstrated through textual analyses that the concept may benefit from being divided into first and second order coherence. First order coherence refers to the standard concept of coherence i.e. that sentences are connected by cohesive links and related by causality, time etc. Second order coherence refers to the principle of employing incoherence as a means of organizing text into chunks of coherent parts. It is shown how readers may infer such text structures by detecting incoherence even when the layout of the text does not signal its structure e.g. by indentation of paragraphs.