CHAPTER 5

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF INSCRIPTIONAL TAMIL
5.1 Introduction

Text is generally defined as the supra sentential unit which is composed of more than one sentence. For theoretical purposes, road signs, notices, sign boards in shops, advertisements, auction notices, news items in the newspapers, short stories in magazines, novels, dissertations, workers manuals and a variety of other written forms can be considered as texts.

Discourse is the spoken counterpart of a text. Discourse has static as well as interactional interpretation. In the static interpretation, discourse is defined as one unit which exists in the form of speech. That is whatever item that is spoken by a particular individual in conversation is interpreted as a discourse. In the interactional interpretation, discourse is defined as the verbal action performed by an individual in a communication situation. In a general way we can assume that a text is a sequence of sentences that exists in written form, and discourse can be interpreted as a sequence of prepositions which exists in spoken form in a communication situation.

Those who studied the text and discourse identified four important aspects in the composition of a text or discourse.

1. the superficial structure of the text
2. the underlying semantic structure of the text
3. the speech act aspects reflected by the text
and 4. the socio-cultural and contextual information represented through the text.

5.1.1 The superficial structure of the text

The superficial structure of the text is ultimately made up of sentences but in some texts intermediate level units like paragraphs, chapters, etc. can be found. The sentences composing a text are sequenced in such a way to maintain the linkages appropriate. The term cohesion is used in order to explain the sequencing and linking of the sentences of a text. Cohesion or linking of sentences can be established between sentences with or without the help of certain markers, generally called as cohesive elements.

5.1.2 The underlying semantic structure of a text

The underlying structure or the semantic structure of a text is identified in terms of the thematic structure. Any text is ultimately made up of a sequence of compositions or semantic counterpart of sentences. The semantic structure in texts are identified in terms of micro and macro structures. The prepositions of a text are linked together in such a way that there is some amount of compatibility
between the prepositions. The semantic compatibility between 
prepositions of a text is explained through the cover term coherence. 
Sometimes the prepositions are arranged with some gaps, and in such 
cases the reader of a text is expected to make use of his world 
knowledge and inferential strategies in order to interpret the 
meaning of the text. Even after using the inferential strategies if 
a person is unable to interpret the text, then the text is supposed 
to be semantically inappropriate. Those who have studied coherence 
among textual elements have pointed out cause, condition, reason, 
result, time, space, etc. as some of the logical factors through 
which coherence is maintained between prepositions and prepositional 
complexes in a text.

5.1.3 Speech Act aspects reflected by the text

Every text is written with a specific purpose. Philosophers 
(Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) have identified different type of 
communicative acts made with the help of language under the cover 
term speech act. Speech Acts are identified under three major 
headings namely, (1) locutionary act (2) illocutionary act and 
(3) perlocutionary act. Of the three kinds of acts illocutionary 
act is considered to be the primary factor governing the use of 
language and language units. It is a general supposition that any 
text will also reflect a macro act and a sequence or hierarchy of 
micro speech acts.
So any text can have besides the grammatical structure, (superficial structure) some semantic (thematic) structure also.

5.1.4 The Socio-cultural reflection

Any text is written within a socio-structure and temporal continuum and so it is bound to reflect, the socio-cultural as well as temporal elements concerning the society. Some text researchers tried to identify the social as well as individual psychology as well as the socio-cultural organisation of the society through an analysis of a text. For instance by analysing some novels or literary creations of a writer (Robert de Beaugrande, 1981 and Van Dijk, 1977), it is possible to identify the socio-cultural backgrounds in which literary creations have been written. Also it is possible to identify the norms of the society through an analysis of the texts.

So, in general through an analysis of a text the grammatical structure of the text, the thematic structure of the text, the illocationary act structure of the text and the socio-cultural background of the text etc. can be identified. Text linguists therefore talk in terms of macro and micro structures in the four aspects of the text presented above.

Texts may be classified under four major headings according to Longacre (1970). They are:
1. Narrative texts
2. Discourse texts
3. Expository texts
and 4. Hortatory texts.

Stories and Novels belong to the first type. Conversational or dramatic texts belong to the second category. A research article or a dissertation belongs to the expository type. The workers manual or a crockery description belongs to the hortatory text type. Each one of these texts could be differentiated taking into consideration factors like time, participation and persons involved. This classification is a kind of over generalization. But one can make a distinction among texts on the basis of a variety of participants in the textual theme, the domains, the purpose behind the language use, etc.

Our main purpose in this chapter is to analyse the texts of a limited type namely those found in the inscriptions. In the light of the general descriptions made in the introduction of this chapter, first description is made about some of the characteristic features of inscriptional texts and then some discussion is made along with the required illustrations representing the cohesion between the sentences of the inscriptional text.
A brief discussion is also made about the thematic and functional structures of the inscriptional texts. The socio-cultural elements reflecting the context of the inscriptions are described in Chapter - VI.

5.2 Some Characteristic Features of Inscriptional Texts

Most of the inscriptional texts carry very limited number of paragraphs. Those paragraphs identified in the inscriptional text are twenty eight in number (Kol., 108). Many of the inscriptional texts have only one paragraph. With the exception of some inscriptions which carry more than 9 sentences, almost all other inscriptions are composed of three sentences only. The major sentences of the inscriptional texts are in statement form and they carry subject, predicate, object and adjuncts. The subject, object and adjuncts are complex in form and contain many recurring attributive elements. In the subject of sentences attributes may carry information about the country, the state, and the area of the person, his valour, his lineage or the history of his family, etc. and they will appear in recursive form. The object of a sentence may be direct or indirect and they will also carry a complex structure. The predicate of the sentence may be in nominal or verbal form. Many inscriptions carry a finite predicate which is preceded by many non-finite predicates.

The characteristics of the inscriptional text may be exposed from the points of view of (1) structure (grammatical structure)
(2) meaning (thematic structure) and (3) function (speech act structure).

5.2.1 Structure

A large number of inscriptive texts of Tamil inscriptions in Karnataka carry three sentences in its superficial structure. The first sentence begins with a benedictory phrase and describes the era, the year, the month, etc. in which a particular offering was made. The second sentence of the inscriptive text is longer in form and explains the information such as who donated, what, to whom, at what time, how, etc. It also explains the period until, that a particular dharma must be continued. In some of the inscriptive texts, the subjects of the sentences may occur before and after the predicate, and sometimes the same subject may occur twice within the second sentence. Also in the second sentence, before the nominal predicate phrases referring to time many attributes also occur. Even the object phrase carries many attributive elements. Some inscriptions reflect nominal predicates in sentences and normally predicate phrases are simple when compared to subject, object and adjunct phrases.

The third or the last sentence of most of the inscriptions is either in the hortative or negative form, and it carries some amount of caution. The last sentence carries a variety of information such as the following:
1. Praising phrases

2. Command phrases

and 3. Cursing phrases.

In some inscriptions a special type of sentence reflecting the person who has inscribed the inscription or the signature of the dignitaries who actually have given command to the people to inscribe the information. That is, these sentences reflect the people who caused the installation of the inscription.

e.g. i. oka:ptam 1268 .............. aippaci ma:cam

'era 1268'
'Tamil month Aippasi'

patinaintain te:ti .............. na:1 (temporal)

'14th day'

ii. cenkaiyil (Where)

'in Sengai'

na:yana:r (to whom)

'to the deity'

pu:caikkku (for what)

'for puja'

katalitte:var kaiyil (through whom)

'in the hands of Kathali Thevar'
kallu vetṭi kututtapati (how)  
'on the basis of the direction of the inscription'

na:ttavarkalum (who)  

āṅkaiyanaiyakkarum  
'village heads and Angaiya Nayakkar'

naneai puncai (what)  
'wet and dry lands'  

carvama:niyama:ka kallil vetṭi (how)  
'gave as free gift by inscribing on stone'

kututto:m  
'gave - we'

iii.a) yippatikkku oppam cetti:svarate:var (Sid., 68)  
'thus, signature Setti:vara Thevar' (command)  

b) capaiya:r panikka caicanam elutine:n (Chan., 132)  
'by the order of the courtiers, I inscribed'

5.2.2 Theme

The information content of the inscriptions very often refer to the donations made by the people. Of the donations, many are related to the donations made to the temples. Inscriptions carry all the
aspects related to the act of donation. The inscriptions reveal that the donations to the temples are made by kings, officials and common men. It is evident from the inscriptive text that the donations were made not only to the temples but also to the temple dancers, the war heroes and the wives and sons of all heroes. The donations were also made to the warriors who saved the life of the kings and cattle and brought them back to their kingdom from other kings, etc. Some of the aspects of information which form the theme for the inscriptive text are as follows:

i. srina:rasinkapoycalakkilalatrayar........
   paṭukirapotumintupattān..............
mannayarrttaracan
   (Chan., 84 a)
   'while Raya was about to die mannayar-
rttaracan saved him and died'

ii. ma:eccanānhkakaranuralivilporutupattān (Hos., 18)
   'bodyguard died by fighting while the village
   was being destroyed'

iii. varatan.......ma:ttaimittu....pattān (Hos., 98)
   'Varadhan died having saved the livestock'

iv. co:ma:kkal ti:ppa:yaikkalceyvittār (Devana., 14)
   'because Somakkal plunged into the
   funeral pyre, this stone was erected'
Many other aspects reflecting the cultural activity of the people are also found to occur in the theme of the inscriptions. For example, different kinds of measures used for measuring lands, grains, etc. find place. The delicate information about the offerings, information about the boundaries of lands, particulars about land lease, etc. are also found to occur.

5.2.3 Speech Act

Most of the inscriptive texts are in statement form with the exception of the last sentences which are in hortative form. All other sentences provide information about objects and events which form the theme of the inscriptions and so they are in descriptive/statement forms.
eg. i. swastisri cakaraya:ntu a:yirattirunu:re:lu  
cella:ninra ta:runa camvarcarattu pa:\kuni m:cam (Bow., 29)  
'the Panguni month, Taruna year of the Sakara era 1207'

ii. na:ttu na:yaknceyva:r vaiyanan ko:muppanukku  
........ta:in ve:ntum payir ceytukollak  
katavara:kavum....eppe:rpatta varivum utpata  
............. kututto:m (Mal., 39)  
'Vaiyanan, the administrative head of the village gave to Gomuppan the land by way of permitting him whatever cultivation he wants to do and without any taxation what so ever'

iii. yippatikku cantira:tittavaraium anupavippatu (Bang., 98)  
'thus till the existence of moon and sun let them enjoy the benefits'

In general the maximum number of speech acts reflected through the inscriptive texts are three in number, namely,

1. Constative Acts  
2. Praising Acts  
and 3. Cursing Acts
5.3 Cohesion

Cohesion is normally described as the phenomenon of linking the superficial sentences composing a text. Normally, in texts cohesion is maintained through appropriate ordering of sentences or with the help of elements which are meant for linking the constructions or sentences. Those who are involved in the analysis of the cohesion phenomenon found in the texts, have pointed out word ordering, lexical unit based cohesion, grammatical unit based cohesion as the three important aspects of cohesion (Halliday et al, 1976).

Since human beings are capable of functioning with syllogistic reasoning, even if the sentences are arranged in a text without overt markers reflecting cohesion, people are in a position to connect the sentences, if they are in cause, consequence, temporal, spacial and other orders. Inferential strategies of the readers come to their rescue in interpreting the text carrying sequences of sentences without overt, cohesive elements. Sometimes cohesion is maintained between sentences of a text by means of repeating certain lexical items presented in the previous sentences. Text linguistics identifies various types of lexical strategies followed in maintaining the cohesion among sentences. Repetition, particle repetition, modified repetition, ellipses and other similar lexical cohesive devices are normally found in different texts. Cohesion is also maintained through the use of various grammatical elements like pronouns, adverbs, clausal subordinators, etc. Pronominal cohesions could be perceived under the
types such as anophoric, catephoric and euphoric cohesions. The traditional, clausal and logical operators like either-or, neither-nor, if and only if, even-if, although, etc. are widely described from the point of view of cohesion in text linguistic research.

The Tamil Inscriptional text as it has a limited number of sentences, the elements reflecting cohesion are found to be less in number when compared to the other Tamil Texts found in various written domains. However, the phenomenon of cohesion found in the inscriptional text is identified in terms of

1. sentence ordering
2. repetition of lexical and other language elements
and 3. use of grammatical/cohesion markers.

5.3.1 Sentence Order

In the inscriptional text we come across sometimes sentences sequenced one after the other without a marker enabling the reader to connect the sentences. In such cases cohesion is considered as covert. In such cases reasoning is brought to the purview to identify the connection. In some examples the form of the sentence occurring as a subsequent sentence to another sentence may help one to identify the structural connection. For example, sentences in elliptical conjoining forms are used to maintain the cohesion.
eg. ponnum kututtu ..... kantaka kalanium

vitte:n. pononrukku .... vilakkerikka

katavo:m

(Bow., 30)

'having given the gold, I offered the wet land also,
let us lit the lamp from the interest of one gold coin'

5.3.2 Repetition

Repetition is a process involved in repeating certain words, phrases and clauses in reduced form or full form or modified form. The process of repetition of certain elements drawn from one sentence in subsequent sentences is used as a strategy for maintaining the structural cohesion. The repetition types found in the Inscriptional Tamil which takes care of structural cohesion are classified under four categories namely,

1. Lexical repetition within the sentence
2. Phrasal repetition
3. Clausal repetition

and 4. Text Pattern repetition

5.3.2.1 Lexical Repetition

In word repetition process, a word which appears in a sentence is assumed to be a cohesive marker and hence it is being repeated in
the subsequent sentences of a text with or without modification. The following are some of the examples from the inscriptions reflecting lexical repetition.

eg. i. ca:nα:ntai ..... pannuvit:ta:n


panninavan ..... perumapillai (Chin., 85)

'Samandai caused to establish Rishabadeva.......
the one who established is Perumappillai'

ii. yitirumurr:ram ceyvittain .... tan:tanayakan


yitirumurr:ram tillaikkuttta vinnakar (Srini., 58)

'the one who installed the Sanctum
Sanctorum is Dhandanayaka..........
This Sanctorum is (called) Tillaikkuttavinnakar'

5.3.2.2 Phrasal Repetition

If a phrase of a previous sentence or clause, if repeated in subsequent sentences or clauses with the purpose of maintaining cohesion, then it is considered as cohesion through phrasal repetition. Phrasal repetition may be categorised as simple or complex.

In the following examples a phrase yittanmam is repeated in order to maintain the continuity of the text:

eg. 1) vayira:ntai ........ a:vutaiya:r

'Vayirandai'
svayampu na:yakrkkku
'to Swayampu Nayakar of Avudaiyar temple'

kuṭutta pon na:lukku
'of the four gold coins given'

pon onrukku amutu celuttuvo:ma:ka
'for one gold coin food let us offer'

2) yikkoryil civapra:ma:nan .........yippon
'this temple's Saivite Brahmin this gold'

kaikkontu .........amutu celuttakka:ta:vo:m (Bow., 29)
'having received we bind to offer food'

i. a:vutaiyar sivayampu na:yakar - yikkoryil
'Avutayar Swayampu Nayakar this temple'

ii. ponna:lukku pononrukku - yippon
'of the four gold coins one coin this gold'

This example shows complex phrasal repetition because two or three types of phrases are subjected to the repetitive process.

eg. i. .... te:kkal varatarukku
'Varadhar of the place Thekkal'
yinnaːttíl aːlampaːtı
'Alampadi village in this country'

naːncai puŋcaɪ ....... cellakkatavatu
'dry and wet lands.... bound to be offered'

ii. yaːvaroruttar yinnaːtu perru varumavarkalukku,
'we are bound to safeguard all those who come to this'

yivuːrkkʊ varum aniyaiyamullatu naːnkale:...........
'country also from injustice'

kaːppaːrri tara katavoːm (Mal., 11)

1. teːkkal  -  yinnaːtu
2. aːlampaːtı  -  yivuːrkkʊ

5.3.2.3 Clausal Repetition

If a clause occurring in a sentence is repeated with or without modification in the subsequent sentences with the purpose of maintaining cohesion, then this type of repetition is called as clausal cohesive repetition like the phrasal repetitive cohesion. We could also find simple and complex clausal repetition types in the inscriptions.

eg. i. parameːsvara pattan .......... periyeːriyil
tanta nilam eṭṭu
'the land given by Parameshwara Patta in the village Perieryeri is eight in number'
Inscriptional text also provides sufficient evidence for the occurrence of textual pattern repetition. Repeating a particular type of sentence pattern with due modification of some lexical items, is used as a strategy in the inscriptional text to sequence and serialise the information given in the text. For example, if a particular king has offered two different types of offering to two different temples belonging to two different areas, then both the offerings are brought within the same inscriptional text in a serial form, making use of the same kind of sentence and textual pattern. Such a type of pattern repetition is also conceived of as a factor maintaining cohesion in the inscriptional text. Many inscriptions reflect such text pattern repetition.

1) A - to + B - and + C - and + D - and
   A' - to + B' - and + C' - and + D' - and
   A'' - to + B'' - and + C'' - and + D'' - and
   A''' - to + B''' - and + C''' - and + D''' - and

eg. a) vi: rapatrate:varku
   A - canti onrukku tiruvamutu arici na:nai:lium *
   B - kariyamutu yiran:tu *

yippati ettukkantakamum .... kuṭutte:n (Mul., 179 a)
'thus I gave eight Kandaka measure of lands'
C - ataikkayamutu yiran tumult ♦

D - yillaiyamutu na:lum

'to Veerapatra Thevar for one meal four measures of rice, two varieties of vegetable side dish and two betel nuts and four betel leaves'

b) pava:niya:rkuc

A' - canti onruckku tiruvamutu arici na:na:lium ♦

B' - kariyamutu yiran tumult ♦

C' - ataikkayamutu yiran tumult ♦

D' - yilaiyamutu na:lium

c) i:svariya:rkuc

d) vaisnaviya:rkuc (Kol., 108)

5.3.3 Inter-sentential Cohesion

Cohesion phenomenon can also be explained on the basis of the scope of the entities that are linked together. If two sentences are linked together with or without markers we can think of inter-sentential cohesion. If the cohesion between clauses that are found within a sentence is detected, then that cohesion can be brought under the cover term intra-sentential cohesion or inter-clausal cohesion within sentences. Cohesion in a text can also be classified
on the basis of the nature of the elements functioning as cohesion markers. Under this variety we can conceive of lexical and grammatical cohesion. In lexical cohesion lexical items are used in order to maintain cohesion between sentences, and in grammatical cohesion function words and grammatical categories like pronouns, substitutes adverbial elements and operators, etc. will be used to maintain the cohesion. In the inscriptive text we find a number of examples reflecting the above mentioned cohesion types.

1) Lexical Cohesion

eg. i. yittirumurram ceyvittān ...........
    tantana/yakan
    'the one who installed the sanctum sanctorum is Dhandanayaka'

ii. yittrumurram tillaikkuttā vinnakar (Sri, 58)
    'this sanctum is (called) Tillaikkuttavinnakar'

2) Grammatical Cohesion

eg. i. pāpamum anupavippo:m
    'we will suffer due to sin'

marrum
    'and'
5.4 Coherence

We have already mentioned the structure of the clauses and sentences occurring in a text and the various devices that are used for the maintenance of the connection between the superficial structure of text sentences in clauses. These devices are referred to as cohesion devices.

Textual sentences or clauses carry meanings of their own. These meanings are linked together by means of conceptual linking devices. These conceptual linking devices which are generally subsumed under the cover term coherence may be reflected through certain markers. Such markers are found to be identical with the cohesive markers.

Not all the sentences of a text and their meanings are linked through overt markers. Sometimes meaning linkage may be established by appropriate sequencing of the sentences. In most of the texts the meaning connection is perceived through the use of inferential strategies by the text reader. If the connection is not perceived, then the text is described as a complex or incomprehensible text.
Coherence between the meanings of clauses and sentences has been studied by many linguists and they have established various patterns of coherence between text sentences and clauses. Cause-effect, condition Vs consequence, condition-result time, statement Vs expectation, expectation Vs contra-expectation are some of the patterns of coherence realised through the sequence of text sentences. The text with coherent sentences if interpreted appropriately will lead to the identification of the text meaning.

Coherence could be established between sentences and clauses of the inscriptive texts. Causal coherence, conditional coherence, temporal coherence, etc. are found to occur in Inscriptional Tamil, and they could be classified accordingly depending upon the markers used to represent the coherence. They can be classified as coherence with or without structural realization and as sentential and clausal coherence. Some of the examples are presented below:

5.4.1 Coherence without overt marker

eg. i. tirunanta: vilakkukku na:l lu ponnum

kuṭuttu ....... kalanium viṭṭe:n

ii. ponnonrukku ........... vilakkerikka

kaṭavo:m (Bang., 30)
5.4.2 Coherence with marker

eg. i. ca:nai:ntai ........... pratiṣṭai

pannuvittai:n

ii. panninavan ........ peruma:ppillai (Chin., 85)

5.4.3 Causal Coherence

cause + other factors

i. capai panikka (cause)

'since the court has ordered'

ii. paniya:l (overt coherence marker)

'due to that order'

iii. ca:canam elutine:n (Chan., 129)

'I have written the document'

5.4.4 Conditional Coherence

i. yittanmam yippatiyallatu

marre:te:nu:um atarku ceyya

ninaippo:ma:kir ...........

........ pa:pam anupavippo:m (Sid., 92)
'If we undo the dharma as is prescribed......
we will suffer due to sin'

5.4.5 Temporal Coherence

e:ri kattuviccu

'having dug the lake'

mu:nu tu:mpumitu:vitattu

'having constructed three canals'

tamam u: ku:utattu

'having given the offering'

nimamiti:vitta:n (Hos., 142)

'he has given the land'

5.4.6 Inter-Clausal

Clause

i. utan ku:ttattu atika:rikal e:va

vari:li:ttu ku:uttattatu (Kol., lll)

'the administrators of the committee ordered
and offered as tax free'
5.4.7 Inter-sentential Coherence

i. pantitar ................ cempici:yarukku kututtatu
   'this is the one given to Sembisiyar by Pandithar'

ii. yipatikku cantiratittavaraium anupavippattu (Bow., 98)
    'thus, this be enjoyed until the existence of moon and sun'

5.5 Speech Act

Sentences and Clauses of a text besides showing a superficial structure and meaning, also reflects speech acts. The speech act of a sentence is otherwise called as the functional meaning of the sentence. Most of the inscriptionsal text sentences are functionally constatives and they are used to refer to the state of affairs. Some sentences are perlocutionary. In that they are used as cautions or threats.

5.5.1 Constatives

eg. yivviruvo:m ...... celuttakkatavo:m (Bow., 35 a)
   'we two are responsible for payment'
5.5.2 Greeting

eg. i. yippati niruttinam cantati viruttikka (Hos., 36 B)
'the off-spring of he who continues this dharma'

ii. cupamevivirupputu (Chik., 20)
'let (one) live with prosperity'

5.5.3 Cursing

i. virotam panumuva:r .......
pa:pam anupavippa:r (Sid., 92)
'he who rejects, (this dharma) will suffer'

ii. narakattile pukuva:r (Chin., 96)
'they will enter the hell'

Since Inscriptional Tamil is purely a written form of language, and its main function is to inform about the philanthropic activities of kings and others, very limited type of speech acts alone are employed. One important feature is the absence of sentences reflecting the act of questioning. Assertion, greeting, cursing are the only limited type of speech acts reflected through the inscriptive sentences.