

Modes of Discourse: The Local Structure of Texts (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics)

By Carlota S. Smith


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In studying discourse, the problem for the linguist is to find a fruitful level of analysis. Carlota Smith offers a new approach with this study of discourse passages, units of several sentences or more. She introduces the key idea of the "Discourse Mode", identifying five modes: Narrative, Description, Report, Information, Argument. Smith analyzes the properties that distinguish each mode, focusing on grammatical rather than lexical information. The book also examines presentational matters: topic and focus; variation in syntactic structure; and subjectivity, or point of view.

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