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Master One.

Discourse Analysis.

Discourse Analysis.

1. Historical Background.

The term first came into general use following the publication of a series of papers by Zellig Harris beginning in the 1952 and reporting on work from which he developed transformational grammar in the late 1930's. As a matter of fact, formal equivalence relations among the sentences of a coherent discourse are made explicit by using sentence transformations to put the text in a canonical form. Words and sentences with equivalent information then appear in the same column of an array. This work progressed over the next four decades into a science of sublanguage analysis, culminating in a demonstration of the informational structures in texts of a sublanguage; and subsequently, a fully articulated theory of linguistic informational content.

In the late 1960's and 1970's, and without reference to this prior work, a variety of other approaches to a new cross-discipline of discourse analysis began to develop in most of the humanities and social sciences concurrently with, and related to, other disciplines, such as semiotics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics. Many of these approaches, especially those influenced by the social sciences, favor a more dynamic study of oral-talk-in-interaction. Such dynamic and enthusiastic initiatives in connection with speech investigation may be generally represented by the sociologist Harold Garfinkel who introduced the notion of "conversational analysis" within the context of what he calls Ethnomethodology. Moreover, Michel Foucault, in Europe, became one of the key theorists of the subject, especially of discourse, and wrote 'The Archaeology of Knowledge' on the subject.

2. General Definitions.

It is generally established that discourse analysis (or discourse studies) is a global term for a number of approaches to analyzing written, spoken, signed language use or any significant semiotic event. The objects of discourse analysis (discourse, writing, conversation, communicative event etc...) are variously defined in terms of coherent sequences of sentences, propositions, speech acts or turns-at-talk. Contrary to much of traditional linguistics, discourse analysts not only study language use 'beyond the sentence boundary', but also prefer to analyze 'naturally occurring' language use, and not invented examples. This is known as corpus linguistics which is usually the focus of what is called Text Linguistics. However, the essential difference between

-d- Moreover, H. Trapees-Lomax (2004) focuses on another aspect of discourse analysis which deals with language as a means of education and as a significant goal of the educational process especially in learning both the first and second languages.

-e- However, J.R. Martin (2002) believes that discourse analysis is more significant when its major objective is to provide a comprehensive theory of text analysis and genre.

-f- The founder of modern discourse analysis Z. Harris suggests that the study of language patterns beyond the sentence is not only quantitatively different but also qualitatively with respect to sentence analysis. Therefore, if sentence meaning is intrinsically encoded, that is to say, a semantic property of the language itself, then so is discourse meaning. Likewise, pragmatic considerations such as the speaker's intention implies that interpretation is not just a matter of what the sentence means in relation to the code, but also what the addresser means in relation to the contexts.

4. Types of Discourse Analysis.

There are many types of discourse analysis of natural conversation and each approach puts emphasis on its own propositions, focus and method; however, they share one major principle which is the construction of meaning within communication.

-a- Conversation Analysis.

It is an approach to the study of natural conversation which focuses on the analysis of the ways in which language is used such as reply to a spoken invitation. The interest is in how people use specific words that are assigned certain functions (linguistic), the techniques are usually quantitative.

-b- Discursive Psychology.

This is a form of discourse analysis which emphasizes psychological themes by using concepts of discourse in psychological issues such as memory and attitudes.

-c- Foucauldian Discourse Analysis.

It is an approach which is constructed upon the notions developed by M. Foucault, namely the focus on the historical development perspectives of discourse. It consists of the analysis of significant discursive phenomena with respect to their development and changes over time (for instance domination relationships and how they are constructed through discourse).

-d- Critical Discourse Analysis.

It is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a social practice structure. This is a post modern discourse analysis which contributed in the application of critical though to social situations and the revealing of political

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system; consequently, any act of communication is deemed to be influenced by those important factors:

-a- Racial and Ethnic Identification.

Human beings define themselves through the communities in which they have been born and nurtured.

-b- Economic and Social Class.

We define our culture through the social stratum (strata) of class and economic level which in turn they greatly affect the way we communicate interpersonally.

-c- Gender and Communication.

Human beings develop their cultural identity in light of sexual characteristics and; therefore, this factor influences the acquisition of gender- related interpersonal roles and rules of interaction (affective orientation may be one aspect of this element).

-d- Tradition and History.

The definition of speech communities depends on their cultures, traditions and historical backgrounds.

-e- Law and Order.

It is equally possible to define the cultural components through the law system that a given society adapts. In fact, the legal orders should be respected and obeyed to by all members of the society.

-6- Perspectives and Scope of Discourse Analysis.

-A- Discourse Analysis and Cultural Context.

It is easily understandable that the interpretation of the term culture represents an essential issue in defining the relationships which naturally exist between the discourse and its cultural background. As a matter of fact, the concept has been defined in various ways in different disciplines. However, it is generally agreed that culture represents the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms and actions by virtue of which individuals communicate and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs (Henkel p 77). Accordingly, the cultural context refers to the culture, customs and background of epoch in language communities, hence, participants utilize a discourse or text which is directly derived from their culture.

Therefore, discourse analysis displays a close tied up with the cultural context and it can not avoid being influenced by the socio-cultural factors such as the social roles, status, social structures which determine the value system of society. In order to

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-B- Conversation Analysis.

Conversation is a significant mode of discourse which represents excellent examples of the social and interactive nature of communication. In foreign language learning, the mastery of conversational parameters is primordial in any successful act of communication. Necessarily, foreign language learners should be aware of the essential conventions, rules and cultural traits that determine conversation in the target language. Nonetheless, the process may be facilitated if the first and foreign languages share the same cultural background. In fact, the organization and development of conversation are nearly identical in all human languages and it is usually divided into four major sequences:

-a- Attention-getting: it is the first and crucial rule of conversation which children learn very early in life. The attention-getting conventions within each language- both verbal and non-verbal- need to be carefully assimilated by learners. Without knowledge of such conventions, foreign language learners encounter tremendous difficulties to participate in the conversation. The main reason is that they are unable to turn off their hearer to the topic they wish to discuss.

-b- Topic-nomination: once the speaker has secured the hearer's attention, the subsequent task is of topic-nomination. One can observe that rules for nominating topics in conversations which involve both verbal and non-verbal cues are highly contextually constrained.

-c- Topic-development: after the identification and agreement of the topic, participants in a conversation then embark on topic development using conventions of turn-taking to accomplish many functions of language. Topic clarification manifests itself in various forms of heuristic functions. In the case of conversation between foreign language learners and native speakers, topic clarification often involves seeking or giving repair of linguistic forms that contains errors.

-d- Topic-termination: it is an art that even native speakers of a language have difficulty in mastering at times. We experience situations in which a conversation has ensued for some time and neither participant seems to know how to conclude it with verbal or non-verbal termination. Consequently, it is important for foreign language teachers to be fully aware of the significance of the rules of conversation and to help learners to both perceive those rules and follow them in their own conversations.

-C- Corpus Linguistics.

It is a branch of discourse analysis that has experienced phenomenal growth and interest over the last decade or so, an approach to linguistic research that relies on computer analyses of language. The corpus is a collection of texts- written or transcribed speech or both- that is stored in electronic forms and analyzed with the help of computer software programs.

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University Mohamed Kheider, Biskra.

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Master Two.

Discourse Analysis.

Communication, Discourse Analysis and Foreign Language Teaching.

1. General Introduction.

It is generally assumed that, until recently, language teaching has concentrated on grammatical rather than communicative competence. Although there have been major changes in the methodology of language teaching over the years the underlying principle which has remained is that units of learning should be defined in grammatical terms. An essential problem for anyone wanting to write a language course based on communicative or functional principles is that whereas there are many detailed grammatical descriptions of English, there is currently no adequate functional or discourse description.

However, the alternative to a grammatically structured syllabus is one which is structured communicatively, where the students learn to produce communicative acts in a relevant sequence and acquire at any one time only those aspects of grammar necessary for the realization of a particular act. In other words, instead of being presented with a coherent grammar of the language and having to construct for himself the linguistic manifestations for particular functions, the student may be given little more than a series of guidebook phrases for greeting, apologising or complaining and have to construct his own grammar of the language.

On the whole, one may observe that the search for suitable authentic texts can be arduous, but the disadvantages of created text are equally great. The significant indictment that subject specialists should absolutely avoid is the elaboration of materials that are, in Widdowson's terms, *text*, that is exemplifications of the rule system, rather than discourse.

2. Discourse and Communication.

Discourse is used for communication; usually people use utterances to convey information and to lead each other toward an interpretation of meanings and intentions. This role greatly increases the scope of discourse analysis, simply because one has to address how the language of utterances is related to aspects of the communication process (such as knowledge or intentions) that bear an indirect (and often controversial) relationship to language.

-A- Modes of Communication.

-a- Code Model.

The main participant role assumed by the code model of communication is a sender. A close examination of this process indicates that a sender has three sequentially ordered roles. First, a sender has an internally represented proposition (perhaps we can think of this as a 'thought') that s/he intends to make accessible to another person. Second, a sender transforms a thought into a set of externally and mutually accessible signals, here drawing upon knowledge of a code that is shared with an intended recipient of the message. Finally, a sender transmits thought (through code-derived signals) to its intended recipient; the recipient then relies upon essentially the same procedures to decode the signals, retrieve the message, and thus access another's thought.

As a matter of fact, W.Labov suggests a method of comprehensive discourse analysis which rests upon an assumption that discourse coherence depends upon a complex hierarchical organization derived from the linguistic analysis of phonology and grammar. Although social context is clearly important to the proponent of the code model, context is viewed as a constraint- on the way people use the code- not as something that pervades the definition of categories in the code.

-b- Inferential Model.

Even though the view of communicator, the message, and the code are quite different in the inferential model than in the code model, the inferential model of communication also depends upon a principle of inter-subjectivity which has a pervasive role. First, the goal of communication is the achievement of inter-subjectivity, i.e. one person's recognition of another's intentions. Second, inter-subjectivity is achieved through a procedure in which recipient recognition of intentions mirrors the communicator's display of intentions. Third, procedures for realizing inter-subjectivity are based in prior knowledge; people share the same linguistic code, as well as the same principles of communication. Thus, inter-subjectivity remains a fundamental principle of verbal communication.

In sum, both Gricean pragmatics and speech act theory assume a model of communication that is centred on the inferencing of speaker meaning, while also allowing the code a role in such inferencing. Inferences about speaker meaning are allowed not only by conventional meanings that are linguistically encoded (either at a sentential or textual level), but also by the operation of the co-operative principle- a particular kind of cognitive context- in conjunction with background and situational knowledge.

-c- Interactional Model.

The interactional model of communication shifts our view of participant roles (the communicator and the recipient), the message, and the medium. This medium assumes that what underlies communication is behaviour- regardless of whether that behaviour is intentional or not. However, this belief shifts much of the responsibility for communication from initiator (one who displays information) to recipient (one who witnesses and interprets information). Therefore, this model is less code-dependent and more context-dependent; it underlies three approaches to discourse: interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, and conversation analysis. These parameters represent an inherent part of communicative competence which assumes a relationship between code and culture in which culture encompasses linguistic knowledge; communicative competence is cultural knowledge that includes social and psychological principles governing the use of language.

3. Application of Discourse Analysis in Language Teaching and Learning.

1. Introduction.

Discourse analysis has drawn great attention among linguists, as language exists in texts rather than in sentences, texts have become the main focus in connection with investigations of the nature of language. To attain a good command of a foreign language, learners should either be exposed to it in genuine circumstances and with natural frequency, or painstakingly study lexis and syntax assuming that students have some contact with natural input. Classroom discourse seems to be the best way of systematizing the linguistic code that learners are to acquire. The greatest opportunity to store, develop and use the knowledge about the target language is arisen by exposure to authentic discourse in the target language provided by the teacher (Dakowska, 2001).

It has also been settled that what is essential to be successful in language learning is interaction, in both written and spoken form. In addition, students' failures in communication which result in negotiation of meaning, requests for explanation or reorganization of message contribute to language acquisition. One of the major concerns of discourse analysts has been the manner in which students ought to be involved in the learning process, how to control turn-taking, provide feedback as well as how to teach different skills most effectively on the grounds of discourse analysis' offerings (Trappes-Lomax, 2004).

It is necessary at this point to consider the concept that language is 'functionally structured'- the implication is that functions should be taught in a certain order either because some are more important than others for social or professional reasons, or because certain functions can be, usefully grouped together. For example the first few functions are usually introduced in the following order: identification,

invitations, likes and dislikes; description of people and places, impatience, not knowing, surprise and disbelief. Generally, the course comprises units which consist of:

- An explicit presentation of a simplified version of the descriptive model;
- Intensive listening to extracts from recordings of authentic materials, with as wide a range as possible of styles, subjects, participants, for analysis;
- Language laboratory simulation of the analysed features of genuine sequences through classroom interaction, imitation and drill-like exercises.

2. Mc Carthy's Applications of Discourse Analysis to Teaching Grammar and Vocabulary.

-a- Teaching Grammar.

There are a number of questions posed by discourse analysts with reference to grammar and grammar teaching. In particular, they are interested in its significance for producing comprehensible communicative products, realization of grammar items in different languages, their frequency of occurrence in speech and writing which is to enable teaching more natural usage of the target language, as well as learners' native tongue.

While it is possible to use a foreign language being unaware or vaguely aware of its grammatical system, educated speakers cannot allow themselves to make even honest mistakes, and the more sophisticated the linguistic output is to be the more thorough knowledge of grammar gains importance. Moreover, it is essential not only for producing discourse, but also for their perception and comprehension, as many texts take advantage of cohesive devices which contribute to the unity of texts, but might disturb their understanding by a speaker who is not aware of their occurrence.

For instance, anaphoric reference which is frequent in many oral and written texts deserves attention due to problems that it may cause to learners at various levels. It is especially important at an early stage of learning a foreign language when learners fail to follow overall meaning turning much attention to decoding information in a given clause or sentence. Discourse analysts have studied schematically items of texts and how learners from different backgrounds acquire and later on produce them. Furthermore, it is advisable to provide learners with contexts which would exemplify how native users of language take advantage of anaphoric references, ellipses, articles and other grammar related elements of language which, if not crucial, are at least particularly useful for proficient communication.

In addition, teachers should be aware of possible difficulties in relation to sentence connectors. Particular attention should be paid to these aspects of grammar especially during the introduction of new material to prevent making mistakes and errors. The most prominent role in producing sophisticated discourse, and therefore one that requires much attention on the part of teachers and learners is that of words and phrases which signal internal relation of sections of discourse, namely

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conjunctions. Mc Carthy points out that there are more than forty conjunctive words and phrases which might be difficult to teach. Moreover, it is evident that items like *and, but, so, then,* which are most frequent in the spoken form of language may take more than one meaning. In fact, sentence connectors not only contribute to the cohesion of the text, but are also used when a participant takes the floor in order to link his turn to what has been said before.

At this point we think it would be very interesting to present some useful tips in teaching grammar within discursive perspectives:

- **Teaching Grammar via a Situational Presentation.**
1. The use of pictures: clear, simple and appropriate.
2. Check the essential vocabulary (at the start).
3. Build the context slowly, carefully and clearly- guide the students and keep them involved throughout. Don't tell them what they can tell you. By continually asking them questions you are also checking they understand.
4. Have an obvious target- a model (sentence) which will be a logical conclusion to your context build.
5. If possible, show your context to a colleague or friend beforehand to see if they think it is clear and appropriate.

- **Teaching Grammar via a Text or Recording.**
1. Texts and recordings can be a very effective way of illustrating meaning of a particular language.
2. The approach involves a greater challenge for high-level students.
3. Skills work and language focus are integrated.
4. Target language is surrounded by other language, which is more 'real'.
5. Students are exposed to the target language before having to focus on it.
6. There is greater variety and interest.
7. Texts/recordings can come from course books, authentic sources.

-b- Teaching Vocabulary.

Lexis may frequently cause major problems to students, because unlike grammar it is an open-ended system to which new items are continuously added. That is why it requires close attention and, very often, explanation on the part of the teacher, as well as patience on the part of the student. The conclusion was drawn that it is most profitable to teach new terminology paying close attention to context and co-text that new vocabulary appears in which is especially helpful in teaching and learning aspects such as formality and register. Discourse analysts describe co-text as the phrases that surround a given word, whereas, context is understood as the place in which the communicative product was formed.

1. Lexical Chains.
From studies conducted by discourse analysts emerged an important idea of lexical chains present in all consistent texts. Such a chain is thought to

be a series of related words which, referring to the same thing, contribute to the unity of a communicative product and make its perception relatively easy. Additionally, they provide a semantic context which is useful for understanding, or inferring the meaning of words, notions and sentences. Therefore, it is undeniably helpful to know collocations as they might assist in understanding of communicative products and producing native-like discourse.

Lexical chains display a number of discursive semantic phenomena like reiteration, synonymy and hyponymy. Reiteration is simply a repetition of a word later in the text, or the use of synonymy, but what might require paying particular attention in classroom situation is hyponymy. While synonymy is relatively easy to master just by learning new vocabulary dividing new words into groups with similar meaning, or using thesauruses (dictionary of words and phrases grouped together according to similarities in their meanings), hyponymy and super-ordination are more abstract and it appears that they require tutelage. Hyponym is a particular case of a more general word. Thus, it should not be difficult to observe the difference between synonymy ad hyponymy: while Poland, Germany and France are all hyponyms of the word 'country', they are not synonyms.

2. Modals.

One other significant contribution made by discourse analysts for the use of vocabulary is noticing the omnipresence and miscellaneous manners of expressing modality. Contrary to popular belief that it is conveyed mainly by use of modal verbs it has been proved that in natural discourse it is even more frequently communicated by words and phrases which may not be included in the category of modal verbs, yet, carry modal meaning. Lexical items of modality inform the participant of discourse not only about the attitude of the author to the subject matter in question (phrases such as I believe, think, assume), but they also give information about commitment, assertion, tentativeness.

Major Tips in Teaching Vocabulary through Classroom Interaction.

1. Use pictures or drawings instead of explaining the meaning of a word then proceed with a classroom discussion.
2. Use relia (the actual object) and make students describe and explain its meaning.
3. Use mime and allow students to guess what you mean.
4. Use contrasts (through mime or picture) to indicate the opposites.
5. Use synonyms and antonyms of a lower level.
6. Use spoken gap-fill sentences instead of asking the meaning of a word (e.g. I ate four pieces of cake... I was very... 'greedy').

7. With higher levels, try to use more student-centred approaches to increase learner independence. Higher levels need to be challenged directly from the teacher. One way is to provide contextualized sentences- a sentence containing the word and making the meaning clear.

8. Matching exercises can combine some of the above approaches. For example, match words with pictures, words with synonyms, words with simplified definitions, words in sentences with simplified definitions.

9. Following a reading task, students can look at given words in the text and match them with, or deduce, their meaning.

10. Course books usually have an excellent and varied selection of vocabulary tasks including all of the above. In general, teachers should avoid too much of a teacher-centred approach and instead encourage students to work more independently.

Discourse analysts maintain that knowledge of vocabulary-connected discourse devices supports language learning in diverse manners. Firstly, it ought to bring students to organize new items of vocabulary into groups with common context of use to make them realize how the meaning of a certain word might change with circumstances of its use or co-text. Moreover, it should also improve learners' abilities to choose the appropriate synonym, collocation or hyponym.

-c- Teaching Conversation Development.

Nolasco and Arthur (1987) suggest dividing activities developing conversation into four types or categories as follows:

1. **Controlled Activities:** including many quite traditional 'closed' activities, in which speech is rigorously limited by instructions, such as:
   - The giving and eliciting of personal information by substitution;
   - Memorizing dialogue and repeating it either along with the original recording or with another student acting as prompter;
   - Caricatured, exaggerated (and therefore humorous) imitation of native speaker sounds and intonation;
   - Information gap activities, sometimes involving movement around the classroom, for example, students are given half of an exchange and have to find the student with the other half;
   - Questions likely to elicit target grammatical structures;
   - The use of flow diagrams, giving the topic or function of each utterance, but not its realization (greet, agreement etc...).

2. **Awareness Activities:** making extensive use of tape, compact disk, video recordings of native speakers in conversation, such as:

   - Identifying words and phrases used as turn-taking mechanisms;
   - Watching vision without sound or hearing sounds without vision and guessing at the contents of the missing channel;

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3. **Fluency Activities:** making use of communicative activities such as role play, games, and discussion.
4. **Feedback Activities:** in which students, using tape, video, or observation of each other, analyse their own interaction and, for example:
- Note the presence or absence of features identified by awareness activities;
- Note the strategies they have used to achieve certain purposes;
- Overtly discuss communication problems in the culture of the language they are learning

Conclusion.

The purpose of discourse analysis is not to provide definite answers, but to expand our personal horizons and make us realize our own shortcomings and unacknowledged agendas or motivations- as well as that of others. Discourse analysis aims at revealing the motivation and politics involved in the arguing for or against specific statement, notion, or value. The concrete result will be the awareness to the qualities and shortcomings of each and the inception of an informed debate. Though this debate will never be settled, it allows for the correction of bias and the inclusion of minorities within the debate and analyzed discourse.

Discourse or critical analysis always remains a matter of interpretation. As there is no hard data provided through discourse analysis, the reliability and the validity of one's research/findings depends on the force and logic of one's arguments. Discourse analysis and critical thinking is applicable to every situation and every subject. The new perspective provided by discourse analysis allows personal growth and a high level of creative fulfilment. However, discourse analysis does not provide definite answers; it is not a "hard" science, but an insight/knowledge based on continuous debate and argumentation.

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