

Discourse Analysis

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Discourse Analysis - A Cross-Discipline

- Pragmatics
- Speech Act Theory
- Conversational Analysis
- Ethnography of Speaking
- Critical Discourse Analysis
- Systemic Functional Linguistics
- Semiotics and Multi-Modal Analysis

What is Discourse?

- focus on language, meaning and context
- language-in-use (spoken, written and visual); language used to do something and mean something, produced and interpreted in a real-world context
- language use relative to social, political and cultural formations: language reflecting social order but also shaping it; shaping individuals' identities and interaction with society - a social practice
- a complex system of texts and utterances of all kinds (written, spoken, visualized) through which knowledge, power and control is (re-)produced

A definition of Discourse Analysis

“Discourse Analysis examines patterns of language across texts and and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. Discourse Analysis also considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations. It also considers how views of the world, and identities, are constructed through the use of discourse.”

(Brian Paltridge 2012: 2)

Sampling the DA 'Buffet'

- Pragmatics

Co-operative Principle and Maxims of Conversation

Speech Act Theory

- Systemic Functional Linguistics
- Conversational Analysis

Pragmatics

- Pragmatics addresses questions such as:
- How do people communicate more than what the words and phrases of their utterances mean?
- Why do people choose to say and/or interpret something in one way rather than another?
- How do people's perceptions of contextual factors influence what they say or understand?

Conversation works – even when we don't say what we mean: The co-operative principle

Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (Paul H. Grice 1975)

- **Maxim of quality** (be truthful)
- **Maxim of quantity** (be appropriately informative and efficient)
- **Maxim of manner** (be orderly and clear, avoid ambiguity)
- **Maxim of relevance** (be relevant at the time of the utterance)

The maxims are a guide to imply meaning of, for example, non-literal speech.

Interpretation of an utterance relies on more than just the literal meanings.

Breaking the maxims - Conversational Implicature

- In a greeting context

A: “How are you?”

B: “I’m feeling good today, but yesterday I was very ill, and the day before that, even worse, and...”

- Office hour

Student: “What do you think about my paper on Discourse Analysis?”

Professor: “Your paper is beautifully printed, the font has been immaculately well chosen and the positioning of those staples is a work of sheer genius...”

- Friends

Monica: “Clearly we were wrong.”

Chandler: “So excited about your letter!”

'Yes, I do' - Language as Action - Speech Act Theory

The basis of speech act theory (Austin 1962, Searle 1969, 1979) is the assumption that when people say something they are doing something, that language in use has a performative dimension.

Assertives/Representatives = assertions, statements, claims, conclusions

Directives = commands, requests, invitations, dares, orders

Commissives = promises, pledges, threats, vows

Expressives = congratulations, excuses and apologies, greetings and thanks

Declarations = blessings, firing, baptism

(Verdictives) = ranking, assessing, condoning, or appraising

Explicit Performatives

- These utterances are called performative sentences:
- I now **pronounce** you husband and wife.
- I hereby **sentence** you to ten years in jail.
- I **bet** you a hundred dollars.
- I **quit**.
- I **promise** to come to your party.
- I **declare** the winter games open.
- I **name** this ship Queen Elizabeth



Using performative verbs, in the right context, performs the action.

In a very literal sense it is a speech ACT, not just saying something but doing it through speaking.

Identifying Speech Acts

(a) I'm sorry I offended you. _____

(b) I find Jackson Pollock's paintings inferior. _____

(c) Would you help me with my move? _____

(d) It's raining outside. _____

(e) Your position at this company is hereby terminated. _____

(f) Yes, I'll be there tomorrow. _____

Each speech act has several meanings

1) propositional or locutionary meaning - the literal meaning of what is said:

“It's hot in here.”

2) illocutionary meaning - the intention of the speaker.

“It's hot in here” could be intended as:

- an indirect request for someone to open the window
- an indirect refusal to close the window because someone is cold
- a complaint implying that someone should know better than to keep the windows closed (expressed emphatically)

3) perlocutionary meaning - the effect of what is said on the hearer

'It's hot in here' could result in someone opening a window

How do addressees know the illocutionary force of a speaker's utterance?

Language Use is Language Choice

Systemic Functional Linguistics (Michael Halliday)

- **Main assumptions in SFL:**
- All language behaviour is the result of **language choice**.
- Each particular linguistic expression in a text is an option and has its reason.
- Consequently, meaning is generated from the choices made, or not made, by text producers.
- All language simultaneously performs three social functions and has thus three dimensions of meaning (**multifunctionality of language**):
 - ▶ ideational (representation of ‘reality’)
 - ▶ interpersonal (construction of social relationships and identities)
 - ▶ textual (structure and organization of texts)

Transitivity: Active vs Passive Voice

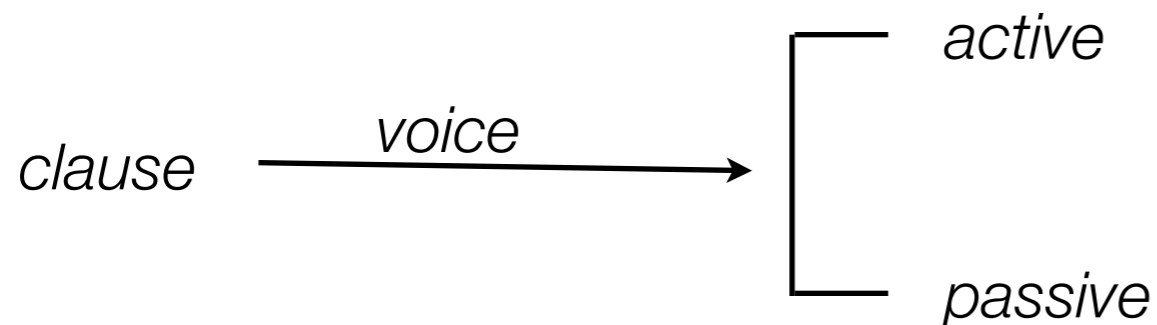
(1) The youngster broke the window.

(2) The window was broken by the youngster.

(3) The window was broken.

(4) The window broke.

- ▶ Shows how certain meanings are foregrounded while others are suppressed or concealed. Different choices are associated with different viewpoints.



Transitivity Analysis: Process Types

Transitivity is analyzed by asking this question: **Who** has done **what** to **whom**, when/where/how? (Example below: Former AFN Chief Matthew Coon Come)

Action processes: Intentionality and responsibility

<i>Circumstances</i>	<i>Agent</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Patient / Affected</i>
1. During the campaign for national chief	I	crisscrossed	the country.
	I	visited	your assemblies and communities,
	[I]	participated in	your debates,
	[I]	responded to	your inquiries.
2. Today,	we	teach	university programs,
	[we]	publish	books
	[we]	elect	our own political leadership.

'Reality' in the news

How is 'reality' represented in this example? What can you say about lexical and syntactical choices?

“Police have maintained Anthony (Dudley) George was shot and killed as officers returned fire from a rebel group of natives who occupied the park which they say is a sacred burial ground.

The analysis of 'talk-in-social interaction'

Conversational Analysis

- CA originated in the 1960s - Harvey Sacks (founder of CA), Gail Jefferson and Emmanuel Schegloff
- Talk as a linguistic phenomenon AND talk as social action
How do people do social life when they talk?
- Conversation is a highly organized, ordered phenomenon, reflecting people's tacit knowledge of society's organization.
- CA studies social life, business life, healthcare, education, leisure, politics etc.
- Transcript - record of what was said ('narrow' or 'broad')

Transcription Symbols

Symbol	Meaning	Example
(.) (...)	Short/Long Pause	A: I think that (.) it's possible
(12)		
...	Interruption	Driver: No I haven't um...
[Words/phrases spoken at the same time	Police Officer: Had a drink? Caller: It makes me want to [swear Radio host: [Thank you caller
[---]	Illegible	Teacher: Turn to page [---]
:	Prolongation of the immediately-prior sound	O:kay? O:::kay.
WORD	Specially loud sounds	I've got ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT

Basic concepts/tools

- Turn-taking organization
e.g., the construction of turns, pauses, overlaps
- The sequencing of conversation
how utterances in talk are sequentially organized
- The role of repair strategies and procedures
how people deal with interactional 'trouble' during a conversation

Conversation is sequential

- **Adjacency pair:** a sequence of two utterances which are adjacent, produced by two different speakers, ordered as a first part and second pair part, so that a first part requires (sets up an expectation for) a second part (Wooffitt 2001: 53).
- **Adjacency pairs:** provide evidence that there is structure to conversation

First pair parts (FPP)	Request	Offer/Invite/Compliment	Greeting	Question	Blame
Second pair parts (SPP)					
<i>preferred</i>	Acceptance	Acceptance	Greeting	Expected Answer	Denial
<i>dispreferred</i>	Refusal	Refusal	Greeting not returned	Unexpected Answer	Admission

Examples for adjacency pairs

Q1 Child: Have to cut the:se Mummy

NA (1.3)

Q1 Child: Won't we Mummy

NA (1.5)

Q1 Child: Won't we

A1 Mother: Yes

Example from Wooffitt (2001: 53)

Insertion sequences: material that interrupts an adjacency pair:

Q1 A: You know that German film that's on at the Mayfair?

A1 B: Yes?

Q2: A: Do you want to go and see it tonight?

Q3 B: What time does it start?

A3 A: Eight thirty.

A2 B: Yeah, would love to.

Turn-Taking

How is it that generally one speaker speaks at a time and there is a fairly orderly and frequent exchange of speakers? How are turns constructed and allocated?

- **Turn taking model:** A-B-A-B-A-B distribution of talk between two participants
- **A turn/Turn Construction Unit (TCU):** a word, a phrase, a clause, a sentence; prosodic cues (e.g. intonation, pitch, stress, pauses), grammar, and content
- **Transition Relevance Place (TRP):** potential transition point (speaker change)
- **Turn allocation:** (1) the current speaker has selected a next speaker; (2) next speaker self-selects; (c) current speaker continues
- **Pauses, overlaps and interruptions**

A conversation excerpt

Examine this conversation turn by turn, using the following CA terms:

TCUs, TRPs, adjacency pairs, first part, second part, preferred/dispreferred response

- 1 Cindy: Heard from Jill recently? She hasn't written or called in ages.
- 2 Larry: Yeah, she sent me a postcard from England.
- 3 Barb: From England?
- 4 Larry: Oh, maybe it was from France. I can't remember.
- 5 Cindy: What's she [doi-
- 6 Barb: [No, I know it must've been France 'cuz she was gonna stay there all year.
- 7 Cindy: What's she doin in France.
- 8 Larry: Why are you asking about her?
- 9 Cindy: No reason. jus bin thinkin about er.
- 10 Larry: She's on some sort of exchange. Studyin French or somethin.
- 11 Cindy: sounds pretty nice to me.
- 12 Larry: Yeah. well, I dunno. she said she was tired of Europe and she wants to come home.

Summary

Discourse Analysis

- is an ‘umbrella’ term for various approaches that started independently in the 1960s
- is the study of language-in-use and therefore context becomes important
- is a ‘tool box’ to choose from

Discourse

- is used in many disciplines → many definitions
- includes all kinds of semiotic resources: text and talk, visuals, sounds, gestures etc.
- is a process, a social practice and as such shapes society and is shaped by it