

Discourse Analysis

Day 3

9.00 – 12.00



Qualitative Methods

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- Defining 'discourse'
- Contrasting Conversational Analysis and Discourse Analysis
- What is Discourse Analysis?
 - Principles of interaction
 - Speech Act Theory
 - Cohesion and Coherence in writing



What is discourse?

- Language actually produced by users of a language and normally implies interaction
- Not confined to clauses or sentences but usually extends to cover longer stretches of language
- Includes
 - speech and text
 - monologic and dialogic language



Discourse Analysis (DA) v. Conversation Analysis (CA)

- CA
 - issues such as conformity of interactions to expected patterns
 - analysis of transcripts of spoken interaction
- DA
 - issues such as power relations or gender inequalities
 - analysis of transcripts of conversations and interviews or other types of documents



What is Discourse Analysis (DA)?

- Study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used (language in use)
- Origin from different disciplines (linguistics, psychology, anthropology, sociology)
- Influenced by linguistic philosophers (Austin, Searle, Grice) and functional approaches to language studies (Halliday)



Discourse Analysis and paradigms in linguistics

- Formalism/structuralism (cf Chomsky)
 - language as mental phenomenon
 - study language as an autonomous system
- Functionalism (Prague School, Halliday)
 - language as a social phenomenon
 - study language in relation to its social functions
- ❖ Definitions of discourse have been influenced by both paradigms, as discourse analysis looks at both form and function



Functionalist approaches in discourse studies

- Theme (given)  rheme (new)
- Situational constraints
 - field (purpose of interaction)
 - tenor (roles and relationship between interlocutors)
 - mode (channel of communication)



Principles of interaction (Grice)

- implicature: implied or hidden meaning of an utterance
 - conventional
 - conversational
- Cooperative principle supported by maxims of
 - quantity
 - quality
 - relation
 - manner



Speech act theory (Austin and Searle)

- Speech acts: acts we perform by using language
- When producing utterances, speech acts are also performed
 - locutionary act: the uttering of a sentence with its literal meaning
 - illocutionary act: making a statement, asking a question, making an offer
 - perlocutionary act: effect on audience



Concepts in written discourse

- Cohesion
 - overt (surface) semantic relationships among text elements
 - grammatical and lexical links that link one part of a text to another
 - linguistic means through which texture is achieved
- Coherence
 - covert (underlying) logical and rhetorical relationships among text elements
 - how ideas fit together



“BMW’s are my favorite cars. Cars should not exceed the speed limit. Nevertheless, a new medicine administered to speed recovery.”



Task

- Identify the following types of cohesive devices in L2 writing samples
 - reference
 - substitution
 - ellipsis
 - conjunction
 - lexical cohesion

