Research Paper

DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This describes the structure of one of the form of spoken discourse. i.e. pattern and relation of the units above rank clause and the way in which such language functions. (as question, command and statement) are realized through grammatical structure and position in discourse.

Definition of Discourse:

Discourse is defined by Harris as:

A stretch of talk by a person before and after which there is silence on the part of the person. This is difficult to satisfy because language has redundancy. Language as a code has signs ready for use; also the codes redundancy is build in the use of it.

Discourse is utterance sequence–appropriate in context which is connected. They are text used in discourse. Discourse is a language activity. It has sentences, it has structure, and it has text sentences organized in various ways. This organization is called Discourse.

Discourse Structure:

Structure of Discourse:

Very little was found in linguistics to start, as it was concerned with language structure, up to the rank of a clause. The clause had no context as they informed only about clause.Halliday and Hasan (1967, 1968): They state that discussion depends on contextualized text but structure of the text cannot be explained. The outside items are used to explain the features inside clause. But the items inside which refer to other clause are not used as large units are structured.

Literary stylistics :

It is unproductive even it explains. Written texts differ from spoken. The amount of time available for composition permits extensive revision and highly polished and organized text is produced.

Two approaches in stylistics: One concerned with narrative begins with complexly organized text and attempts to show structure in terms, of narrative and not linguistic, units. Analysis is based on break down of topic or context in episode or events on which operations such as combinations, transformations can be performed- Chatman (1969),Todorov (1966) and Barthes (1966).

The other approach begins with text has been carefully composed, (grammars choice of the author) discusses literary effects and effectiveness. Halliday (1971) Sinclair (1966)

Short (1970): Short (1970) in examining conversation in literature, noted lexical cohesion in successive utterance by different speakers. He suggests that: The dominant person will tend to use the items that the person in control gives him. Only if he tries to reverse the roles will he try to introduce new vocabulary. Lexical repetition is liked upon as one indicator of deep structure discourse.

Non Literary stylistics: Non Literary stylistics has also concentrated on clause in attempt to distinguish styles of speech and writing.Joos: 1962: proposes five styles ranging from casual to formal. Halliday 1964: Suggests large numbers of registers named after field.eg.Probe into Newspaper. Huddleston 1968: defined register.There is different discourse structures for different situations.

We see our work as primarily sociolinguistic: Fishman 1968- Formulates major question for sociology of language as: 'Who speaks to whom, when and to what end; and the research work is corelational; relating variations in features of various social structure to variations in features of language: Phonetic, grammatical and lexical'. Bernstein - 1962, Geertz -1960,Lawton -1968. The choice of one language code than another Bernstein -1962,Gumperz - 1964.

Important theoretical papers of Hymes: Hymes attempted what really was wanted. Since 1964 he has outlined a program me for the integrated study of language and its use. The ethnography of speaking. His aims are comprehensive. The description of communicative competence: How does a member of a community know when to speak or to be silent, which code to use, when, where and how. In such theory the notions are of speech community, speech situation, speech events, speech acts and functions of speech. This will handle the structure of discourse. An event may consist of single speech acts but will often comprehensive general. In our terms events do not combine to form situations.

Language functions:

Traditionally three major language functions or contextual types have been identified as statement questions and command having their typical realization in declarative interrogative and imperative forms.

However the relationship between this functions and forms in actual language use is more flexible linguistics have reacted differently to language functions. Bloomfield 1933: He turned his back on the problem by observing that: the statement of meaning is the week point in language study

and will remain so until human knowledge advances far beyond its present state. Transformational grammar is by nature unsuited to handle such context -dependent meanings. Katz and postal 1964: They discuss the case of sentence: 'you will go', which can be interpreted as a command equivalent to 'I order you to go,' or declarative statement. The deep grammar of sentence ought to provide to analyze for its surface ambiguity. This problem has led to building an illocutionary force or function of sentences into deep grammar.

Boyd and Thorne 1969: discuss the illocutionary force of sentences containing modal verbs (will, can, would, could) and give analysis of declarative surface structures which suggests that their semantic deep structure is not always that of the statement.' Will,' is an indicator that illocutionary potential of a sentence is a prediction. Model verbs play a role of producing lack of correlation between grammatical forms and functions mentioned. This will extend the range of the meaning of utterance, which is base of all occasions for use.

Full meaning of a sentence from internal structure along with lexical meaning is not necessary as the sentence without context is a pastime for linguist and not characteristic use of language. A large part of meaning of a sentence must be determined by the context in which it is uttered. Everyday language is not used to be verbally explicit, direct and literal but can achieve its subtle ends by reliance on features of context and listeners interpretation procedure of using shared social conventions.

Will you pick up your coat?

Pick up your coat?

We may account for equivalence of the above sentences within a deep structure of grammar. But if we expect to account for the same equivalence in function with:

Is that your coat on the floor? This would be to ignore the social nature of the meaning and to put too much of social life into grammar.

Halliday 1970: He is concerned not the function or the meaning of the given utterance of a sentence but with the function of presence and surface ordering elements in a sentence. He says without examination of grammar there is no need of classification of language use. Unless one uses external that is psychological or sociological generalization about language use.

He finds structure of clause has three functions: 1. Ideational - expressing content 2.Interpersonal - maintaining social relations.3.Textual - enabling links to be made with the situation and cohesive texts to be constructed.

Thematization:

Halliday's textual component which deals with contextual relevance of elements of the clause, attempts to explain why surface structure of a particular clause is as it is.

One option is thematization as pointed out by Fibras: 1959, 1964:

In English this is done by placing the crucial elements of a message in the first place in the sentence eg. (a) They showed a Pharaohs body mummified on blue Petre. (b) On Blue Petre they showed you a Pharaohs body mummified.

In analysis both sentences will be coded identically as -pupil initiation moves.

Here the teacher's theme is 'Egyptian mummies' and not 'TV programme'. The pupil initiation is likely to be successful only if it is seen to be thematically relevant.

How language functions are used to show meaning and function?

It is rather the level of function of an utterance, in a social situation and at a particular place in a sequence, as a specific contribution to a developing discourse.

Recent discussion of speech acts by Searle:

A crucial distinction is between the sentence and the act it is used to perform.

Unit of linguistic communication is not – symbol, word or sentence but production of those in performance of an act. 'Searle': He sees the theory of language as part of theory of action, requiring for completeness, the study of the role of formal features in speech acts to complement the independent features of form.

Classroom interaction:

Since 1940, there is growing interest in study of language interaction inside classroom. Flanders 1960, focused on what teachers say inside classroom and pupil's achievement and involvement. This system was criticized and also was used by hundreds in their studies. Some categories were closely related to linguistic data asking question, lecturing, and giving directions. While others were of different kind accepting, feeling, praising or encouraging. Some categories have direct grammatical realization and discourse function for others it is hard to provide realization. Barnes 1969 worked well on questions asked by teachers and participation of pupils.

Aim: To produce a descriptive system with four minimum criteria outlined by 'Sinclair 1973'.

A. Descriptive apparatus should be finite or one may say nothing and create classification or illusion (we must predict next utterance) .

B. Class and criteria must be made clear that is symbols and terms in the data must be clear.

C. Descriptive system should be comprehensive.

D. One impossible system of combination of symbols. If descriptive system has --- w--- and ---d (It is two symbol system structure that is --- ww--- dd--- dw). The three symbol system is : wwd, wdd, dwd, ddd, www this ends in ---w. Therefore we have made a structural description.

Descriptive system by Bellack 1960:

Bellack proposed a structure for lessons will four units.

a) Game Four units b) Sub-Game   c) Cycle and d) Move
- ab = Pedagogical - cd = discourse terms.

The lowest unit move is sub divided into four types:

1. Soliciting 2. Responding 3. Structuring 4. Reacting.

1. Soliciting: Here moves are to elicit. (a) An active response (verbal) on part of person addressed (b) Cognitive response – encouraging persons addressed to attend something. (c) Physical response – all questions are solicitations

2. Responding: these moves bear reciprocal relationship to soliciting moves and occur only in relation to them. Their function is to fulfill the expectation of soliciting moves. e.g. Students answers to teacher's questions are classified as responding moves.

3. Structuring: This serves pedagogical function of setting the context between students and teachers. e.g. Teacher launch class with structuring moves in which focus attention is on the topic or problem during that session.

4. Reacting: Pedagogically these moves serve to modify – by clarifying, synthesizing or expanding and to rate (positive or negative) what has been said previously.

Cycle:

-Moves combine together to from cycle.

-A cycle begins with structuring or soliciting move.

-A cycle contains one or more reacting or responding moves

and continues until next structuring or soliciting moves which initiates a new cycle. This is structure of discourse.

The system of analysis:

(1) The development of the system: Lessons are highly structured but our problem was to discovers how much of this structure was pedagogical and how much linguistic. It seemed presence of linguistic introduction was boundary of linguistic unit but this is not useful criterion. e.g. Head master welcomes children (explains). Class teacher explain subject (explains). Then lesson starts (explanation).Small interactive period with one pupil. Head master and teacher are only introduced to a series of hierarchically ordered units by explaining of school, education, period, and subject.

In Bellack system the discourse so far would consist of series of structuring moves. To avoid linguistic structure to confuse with pedagogic structure one should look up from smallest linguistic unit.

Rank Scale for descriptive model:

A unit at a given rank is made of one or more units of rank below. e.g. a unit of given rank, 'word' is made of one or more units of the rank below (morpheme) and combines with other units of the same ranks to make one unit at the rank above. The unit at lower rank has no structure i.e. smallest unit cannot be divided further. This small unit at discourse level will have no structure. The sentence is highest unit. Unit at highest rank is one which has structure which can be expressed in terms of lower unit. So sentence is highest unit of grammar.

Paragraphs have no grammatical structure but they have sentence of all types. Where there are no grammatical constraints on what a individual can do, variations are often dubbed as 'stylistic'. Classroom discussion was unconstrained string of units so the organization was pedagogical. So analysis structure required change of level and not of rank.

Teacher's utterances were observed:
How questions were asked by teachers?
How signals were by students?
Which reply was appropriate.?
Here two ranks were needed: utterance and exchange.

Utterance : Utterance means or is defined as everything said by one speaker before another began to speak.

Exchange: Exchange is defined as two or more utterances.Here the difficulties were observed in these categories. The example has three utterances but how many exchanges?

Teacher: Can you tell me why do you eat all that food?
Pupil: Yes, to keep strong.
Teacher: To keep strong? Yes to keep strong. Why do you want to be strong?

The boundary occurs in middle of teacher's second utterance. This shows that there is unit (Yes). This unit (Yes) is less than or smaller than utterance.

Bellack calls this as- (Yes)
Yes = Boundary = Move

We wondered why these moves combined to form utterances. Exchanges have their boundary in utterances.

Structure of exchanges in terms of moves:

Exchange in classroom is initiation by teachers followed by response by pupils, followed by feedback as in above example.

Observations were that: 'OK', 'well', 'good', 'right'-- were frequently used by teachers. These functioned as boundaries in the lesson. The end of one stage and beginning of another. According to Silverman 1972: He gives examples of job interviews.

Perce: 1973, gives examples of broadcast interviews. According to 'Perce', stages and boundaries are in the both above given interviews and they are called as frame. The teacher may use any word/s but frame occurs beginning of a lesson.

e.g. Text - 'A' ------- Now I want to tell you about a King
       Text - 'B' ------- Well, we will have geography.

Frame: The frame is used when the topic changes or stage changes and the frame is used also to begin a lesson. Frames are not a part of discourse but we call them ----- Focus. Bellack calls them moves.

Unit above Exchange:

The boundary elements, frame and focus were the first positive evidence of the existence of a unit above exchange. The boundary, frame and focus are units above exchange. They are labeled as transactions. Transaction types are --- giving information, directing pupils activity and question answer routine. These cannot be isolated.

Unanswered questions: Whether we will be able to provide structures for transactions? Whether the way exchanges are combined to form transactions will prove to be a feature of teachers' style.

Lesson: Lesson is the highest unit of classroom discourse consisting of one or more transactions. This is called as lesson.

Practical: Four ranks were first used: MOVE, EXCHANGE, TRANSACTION and LESSON.

We found coding at lower rank was difficult i.e (move). Coding was difficult because moves were structured, so we needed another rank, with which we can describe their structure this we call as ---- 'ACT'.

Act and moves: 'Act and Moves' in discourse are similar to morphemes and words in grammar. The words are made of morphemes. Moves are made of acts. Move has structure in terms of acts. Morphemes cannot alone realize words so acts cannot alone realize moves.

Discourse Acts:

The discourse acts must be distinguished from grammatical structures otherwise there is no need in proposing new level of language description. If acts turn out to be classes, then they would replace our confusing notions of sentences and the discourse higher ranks will arrange themselves at the top. However a grammatical structure is not sufficient to determine which discourse act a particular grammatical unit realizes. Therefore relevant situational information and position in discourse must be taken in to account. The lowest rank of discourse over laps with the top of grammar scale.

Conclusion:

1) No need of one to one correspondence.
2) Lowest rank of discourse overlaps with top of grammar scale.
3) Similar overlap at top discourse scale.
4) Discourse lies between non-linguistic organization & grammar.

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