DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

**Discourse Analysis**

In the study of lang., some of the most interesting questions arise is in connection with way lang. is “used”, rather than what its components are.

In Pragmatics we are concerned about how lang. -users interpret what other lang.-users intend to convey.

**DA**

In DA, we focus upon how it is that lang.-uses make sense of what they read in texts, understand what speakers mean despite what they say, recognize connected as opposed to incoherent discourse, and successfully take part in that complex activity called conversation.

**What is Discourse?**

Any connected piece of speech or writing larger than a sentence. A discourse may be produced by a single speaker or writer, or by two or more people engaging in a conversation, or in a written text.

**Discourse**

**Interpreting (analyzing) Discourse**

A good deal of what gets communicated through language is “ unspoken” in the sense that it involves conveying meanings other than or in addition to the literal meaning of what is said. The importance of this fact emerges particularly clearly in the analysis of discourse.

Language-users rely heavily on these processes (unspoken) that almost the ongoing coherence of any verbal exchange or utterance longer than a sentence be described without them.

For ex. NO SHOES , NO SERVICE.

**Text Linguistics**

The study of text is called text linguistics. An important feature of the study of texts, written or oral, are the notions of coherence and cohesion ; those features that contribute to the sense of unity in a text.

**COHESION**

Is the presence of *explicit linguistic* *links* which provide recognizable structure such as s/he, this, after, therefore, but. Every one of these items serve to provide some kind of link between two other smaller or larger pieces of discourse.

**Cont.**

Naturally, the proper use of cohesive devices has long been recognized as a fundamental aspect of good writing.

**For ex.**

My father once bought a Lincoln convertible. He did it by saving every penny he could. That car would be worth a fortune nowadays. However, he sold it to help pay for my college education. Sometimes I think I’d rather have the convertible.

**For ex.**

My father bought a Lincoln convertible. The car driven by the police was red. That color doesn’t suit her. She consists of three letters. However, a letter isn't as fast as a telephone call.

**COHERENCE**

Is the degree to which a discourse makes sense in terms of our knowledge of the world. For ex.:

**Conversation**

Many of us think that conversation as not being highly organized. But the fact conversation is relatively spontaneous does not mean it is unstructured . Here we will take a close look at two aspects of conversational structure, openings and closings, and the system of turn-taking.

**How can we approach the study of conversation?**

The detailed analysis of conversational data, usually in the form of written transcriptions.

**Conversation analysis**

The analysis of discourse behavior shows two tendencies. One trend is to analyze how people manage their discourse behavior with respect to their cultural backgrounds and their interactive goals at the time of talk.

**Cont.**

The other tendency is to try to discover explicit rules for the management of conversational problems, such as turn-taking, closing,……etc.

**Conversation Analysis**

In order to study the communicative behavior, it is necessary to work with the units of interaction. Hymes (1972) suggested a nested hierarchy of units called the speech situation, speech events, and speech acts. The three units are a nested hierarchy in the sense that speech acts are part of speech events which are, in turn, part speech situations.

**Speech Situations**

Hymes described speech situations as “ situations associated with speech”.

Examples of speech situations such as ceremonies, fights, hunts….etc. Speech situations can be referred to as the context .

**SPEECH EVENT**

It is seen as the basic unit for the analysis of spoken interaction. A speech event takes place within a speech situation and is composed of one or more speech acts. It is also possible for a speech act to be the entire speech event which might be the only event in a speech situation.

**Speech Act**

The third level in the hierarchy of the speech. “ Speech act” is the simplest and the most troublesome at the same time. It is the simplest because it is the “ minimal term of the set”. It is the troublesome because it has a slightly different meaning from the meaning given to the term in pragmatics.

**SPEAKING**

Also Hymes suggests that there are certain components of speech that we should look for. Hymes puts them into eight groups, each labeled with one of the letters of the word “ SPEAKING”

**Turn - taking**

Conversation can be described as an activity where two or more people take turns at speaking. Typically, only one person speaks at a time and there tends to be an avoidance of silence between speaking turns. If more than one participant tries to talk at the same time, one of them usually stops.

Cont.

Researchers observed that turns are constructed of units which turn out to be syntactic units: words, phrases, clauses, and sentences.

Each unit has a completion point : participants can be expected to know what it would take for an instance of that unit type to be completed.

Speakers can mark their turns as complete in various of ways:

By asking a question, or by pausing at the end of a completed syntactic structure like a phrase or a sentence.

Other participants can indicate that they want to take the speaking turn, also in a number of ways.

They can start to make short sounds, usually repeated, while the speaker is talking, and often use body shifts or facial expressions to signal that they have something to say.

The completion of such a unit constitutes a transition-relevance place and turn exchanges occur at these places.

**Adjacency pairs**

A term used to refer to a single stimulus-plus-response sequence by participants. APs have been analyzed in terms of their role in initiating, maintaining and closing conversations (e.g. the various conventions of greeting, leave-taking, topic-changing)

**Openings**

How to start a conversation!

( a telephone call )

Typical opening include identifications, greetings, and routine health inquiries and then one moves into “ topic call”.

**Closings**

This is particularly crucial in a conversation ( a telephone call ).

A proper closing sequence has to take place, the purpose of which appears to be for both speakers to establish that the other has no new topics to introduce. Only then can the farewell sequence take place.