

# Discourse Analysis

## CH.2

### DEVELOPMENT

### APPROACHES TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS



# THREE WAYS OF LOOKING AT DISCOURSE

1. **The formal approach** (discourse as language above level of sentences)

imp → structures/rules/conventions

2. **The functional approach** (discourse as language in use)

imp → what people do with language in real situations & how listeners interpret these actions.

3. **The social approach** (discourse as social practice)

imp → identity/ power/ ideology

effective DA requires what?

discourse= multifaceted phenomenon



# Language Above the Clause

- origin of the term of 'discourse' → Harris 1950s
- purpose of Harris's work → connections between sentences and between texts and their cultural/social contexts
- method → distributional analysis
- later developments → Halliday & Hassan
- 2 key concepts in formal analysis → cohesion & coherence
- Harris contribution??



# Language in Use

- discourse → language in use
- meaning ≠ words/ grammar = who/where/why
- people communicate → perform actions
- e.g., I promise to help you
- shaped by:
  1. Halliday (focused on the functions of language in society)
  2. Austin & Grice (who developed pragmatics)
  3. Labove (showing how language use varies across communities, but always serves social purposes)
- studying language in use can take several forms (actions & signalling identity and stance)

language ≠ neutral



# Language and Social Practice

- discourse  $\neq$  tool for communication = part of larger social practice
- the way we speak  $\rightarrow$  who? believes? position?
- Foucault  $\rightarrow$  discourse as tool of creating knowledge
- Gee  $\rightarrow$  discourse vs. Discourse
- discourse is always ideological (political speeches)
- importance of studying discourse as social practice?
- this approach cannot stand alone!



# Cohesion, Coherence, and Intertextuality

- the central concern of DA?

- 3 key factors:

1. cohesion
  2. coherence
  3. intertextuality
- 
- texture

- Halliday & Hasan (1976) → grammatical & lexical cohesion
- grammatical cohesion → (reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction)  
reference → (anaphoric, cataphoric, exophoric)
- lexical cohesion → (repetition, synonyms, semantic fields)
- cohesion operates at linguistic level

**cohesion alone is not sufficient!!**



- coherence → reader's interpretation
- coherence → interaction of information
- what does coherence ensure?
- cohesion ≠ coherence
- interpretive frameworks play a key role in coherence

BEFORE

AFTER



- intertextuality → situates texts within broader web of other texts

e.g., shopping lists/ political speeches

- texts are rarely self-contained!!
- Bakhtin's argument?

e.g., Trump says "Look at what happened in Paris,"

- Fairclough's notion of interdiscursivity

e.g., using hashtags on social media

- patterns of intertextuality differ across genres;

**Intertextuality → shapes the meaning of texts & the social relationships**



# All the Right Moves

- genre?
- genre ≠ text types  
= tools
- genre analysis → focuses on purpose rather than merely on structure
- genres → moves
- **Swales's moves/steps:**
  1. establishing the field
  2. reviewing prior research
  3. creating a research gap or niche
  4. presenting the current study.
- genres vary in their degree of conventionalization;
- the communicative purpose of a genre → goals of texts



# Discourse Communities

- a single genre can serve multiple communicative purposes for diverse participants?

e.g., university lecture (genre)

- genres in discourse communities function beyond achieving practical goals;

e.g., In a research article (genre)

- “The political and ideological dimensions of genres are central to their role in discourse communities.”

e.g., a government press release (genre)



# Constructing Reality

- texts are never ideologically neutral;

e.g., “For your comfort and peace of mind during your journey CCTV is fitted to this bus,”

e.g., Sainsbury’s sign on CCTV monitoring constructs multiple readers;

- these texts → grammar, lexical choices, and social languages



# Ideology and Indexicality

- Texts → ideologies
- meaning → on context (placement, audience, and associated practices)

e.g, “this bus is fitted with CCTV,” and

**Sainsbury’s signs warning against shoplifters**

- these connections → texts describe and prescribe ....
- Indexical meaning → texts point to aspects of their context, but it can also be created without words!!

e.g., **STOP sign at a street intersection**

- Silverstein’s concept of indexical orders explains how meaning is layered:  
particular person, place, or thing;  
links this to social or cultural models;  
relates to broader ideologies or Discourses

e.g., **surveillance signs in hotels or airports**



# THE TEXTURE OF TALK

- what is texture?
- texture → structural patterns+ shared expectations
- CA→ the structure of talk
- Pragmatics→ underlying expectations
- Grice's cooperative principle??
- Grice's maxims:→ quality+quantity+relevance+manner
- flouting maxims = creating implicature
- e.g.,

A: "Do you think Ahmed will be on time today?"

B: "Well, the sun usually rises in the east."

- NOT all violations generate implicature!! (e.g., **Where's your brother right now? He's out**)
- implicature functions when occurring within the cooperative framework...



# How we do things with words

- languages ≠ describing world = performing actions
- Austin's concept of performatives (e.g., **I now pronounce you married**)
- Austin later expanded this idea by introducing Speech Act theory
- imp ≠ literal meaning , but their force
- Austin's 3 layers of force in speech acts:  
**locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary**
- challenge in analyzing speech act → expressing them indirectly



## Austin's concept of felicity conditions:

- Conventional form – the utterance must follow accepted formulas (e.g., “I now pronounce...” in weddings).
- Authority of the speaker – only authorized figures (judges, priests, captains) can perform certain acts.
- Context and participants – the audience must be eligible and willing (e.g., two people must consent to marriage).
- Time and place – some acts only work in specific contexts (e.g., ship captains marrying people aboard).



# Sense and sequencing: Conversation analysis

Pragmatics → conversations are logical

CA → conversations are orderly

Speech Acts → the speakers' intentions & context

CA → the sequential placement of utterances

central concept in CA = sequential structure

Adjacency pairs → Schegloff and Sacks (1973) (e.g., question/answer, greeting/greeting, invitation/acceptance)

these pairs → conditional relevance (a question invites an answer)

Speech Acts → external conditions (authority & social roles) ≠ CA → internal conditions

e.g., A: I love you. B: Thank you

preferred responses are not necessarily what speakers personally desire;

