

Discourse analysis

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What is discourse analysis

Discourse can be defined in three ways:

1. Language beyond the level of a sentence
2. Language behaviors linked to social practices
3. Language as a system of thought.

Discourse analysis is usually defined as the analysis of language 'beyond the sentence'. And the analysis of discourse is typically concerned with the study of language in **text** and **conversation**

Basic ideas in Discourse analysis

- ❖ Text analysis (writing)
 - structure of a discourse
 - speech events
- ❖ Conversation analysis (speaking)
 - Turn-taking
 - The cooperative principle
 - Background knowledge

Basics of text analysis

- ❖ Cohesion
- ❖ Coherence
- ❖ Speech events

Basics of conversation analysis

- ❖ Turn-taking
- ❖ The cooperative principle
- ❖ Hedges
- ❖ Implicatures
- ❖ Background knowledge
- ❖ Schemas and scripts

Cohesion

cohesion is the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different elements of a text.

Example:

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**.

★ Cohesive ties (In reference):

Father- he- he- he;

“A” Lincoln convertible- that car- it- “the” convertible

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.



Cohesive ties (in semantics):

[money]: bought- saving- penny- worth- fortune-
sold- pay

[time]: once- nowadays- sometimes

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 [ay for my college education. Sometimes I think I'd rather have the convertible.



Cohesive ties (in grammar):

Tense: bought- did- could- would- sold



Cohesive devices for textual relation:

however

Example:

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.

- ❖ Many cohesive devices, but a text very hard to interpret.
- ❖ Here we don't see any coherence but there is a cohesion.

Cohesive (with many cohesive ties)



Coherent (easy to interpret)

Coherence

Coherence is the relationships which link the meanings of utterances in a discourse or of the sentences in a text.

Example:

HER: That's the telephone

HIM: I'm in the bath

HER: O.K.

- ❖ There are certainly no cohesive ties within this fragment of discourse. Here we see coherence but no cohesion.

Cohesion and coherence

- ❖ Cohesion helps to create coherence.
- ❖ Cohesion does not entail coherence
- ❖ Coherence can be made with/out cohesive ties/ devises.

Conversation knowledge

❖ To interpret the conversation above, we need to possess knowledge of the followings:

➤ Speech event includes interactions such as a conversation at a party or ordering a meal. Any speech event comprises several components.

debate, lecture, interview, game, daily routine, etc.

➤ Interlocutors (the speaker & the hearer): the social distance, interpersonal status, age, gender, etc.

➤ Topic of a conversation

➤ Setting wherein a conv occurs or frame

➤ Culturally specific factors

Conversation Analysis

- ❖ The basic structure of a conversation:
Turn(s)
- The speaker and the hearer take TURNS talking.
one person speaks at one time, and the other listens, and then they switch places.

Example:

A: Hello.

B: Hi

A: How are u?

B: Fine.

Overlaps and interruptions

- ❖ Overlaps: when interlocutors speak at the same time; both take the turn

Example:

A: Didn't you

[know wh-

B:

[But he must've been there by two

A: Yes but you knew where he was going

Repair

overlap

- ❑ How do the interlocutors know when to take the turn?
- ❑ TRP (Turn Relevance Place)
 1. The end of a phrase, clause, or sentence
 2. A falling in intonation
 3. A perceivable pause, usually 0.2 seconds

Example:

Mum: Hello

Son: Oh hello how are u?

Mum: Very well and u?

Son: Thanks

Mum: That's good

(0.5)

Mum: We had torrential rain today (A new topic initiated)

Filled pauses or pause fillers

- To keep the turn and imply to the other that the current speaker has more to say.

- Example:

X: well that film really was... [wasn't what he was good at

Y: [when di-

X: I mean his other **em** his later films were much more **er** really more in the romantic style and that was more what what he was ... **you know** ... **em** beast at doing

Y: so when did he make that one.

The cooperative principle

- ❖ Assumption: interlocutors are cooperative in constructing a conversation.
- ❖ “Gricean Maxims”, for supporting the principle.
- ✓ The Quantity maxim: Make ur contribution as informative as is required, but not more, or less, than is required.
- ✓ The Quality maxim: Do not say that which u believe to be false or for which u lack adequate evidence
- ✓ The relation maxim: Be relevant.
- ✓ The Manner maxim: Be clear, brief and orderly

Example:

During a lunch break, one woman asks another how she likes the sandwich she is eating and receives the following answer.

Oh a sandwich is a sandwich

In logical terms, this reply appears to have no communicative value since it states sth obvious & doesn't seem to be informative at all. But if the woman is being cooperative and adhering to the quantity maxim about being "as informative as is required", then the listener must assume that her friend is communicating sth.

Given the opportunity to evaluate the sandwich, her friend has responded without an explicit evaluation, thereby implying that she has no opinion, good or bad, to express. That is, her friend has essentially communicated that the sandwich isn't worth talking about.

Hedges

Hedges can be defined as words or phrases used to indicate that we are not really sure that what we are saying is sufficiently correct or complete.

We can use **sort of** or **kind of** as hedges in the accuracy of our statements, as in descriptions such as:

His hair was **kind of** long

The book cover is **sort of** yellow (rather than It is yellow.)

IMPLICATURES

Implicature is an additional meaning conveyed by a speaker adhering to the cooperative principle.

Example:

Carol: Are u coming to the party tonight?

Lara: I've got an exam tomorrow.

Here Lara's statement is not an answer to Carol's Q. Lara doesn't say *Yes* or *No*. But Carol will immediately interpret that the answer means *No*.

It seems to depend, at least partially, on the assumption that Lara is being ***relevant & informative***, adhering to the ***maxims of relation and quantity***.

Background knowledge

Background knowledge is an information that is not in a text, but is used from memory by a reader to understand the text.

Example:

John was in his way to school last Friday.

He was really worried about the math lesson.

Last week he had been unable to control
the class.

It was unfair of the math teacher to leave him in charge.

After all, it is not a normal part of a janitor's duties.

This example provide us with some insight into the ways in which we 'build' interpretations of what we read by using a lot more information than is presented in the words on the page. That is, we actually create what the text is about, based on our expectations of what normally happens.

Schemas and scripts

Schema is a conventional knowledge which exists in memory.

If u hear s.o. describe what happened during a visit to a supermarket, u don't have to be told what is normally found in a supermarket. U already have a 'supermarket schema' (food displayed on shelves, arranged in aisles, shopping carts and baskets, check-out counter and etc) as part of your background knowledge.

Examples: school, classroom, supermarket, bus, department store, airport and etc.

Script

Script is essentially a dynamic schema in which conventional actions take place.

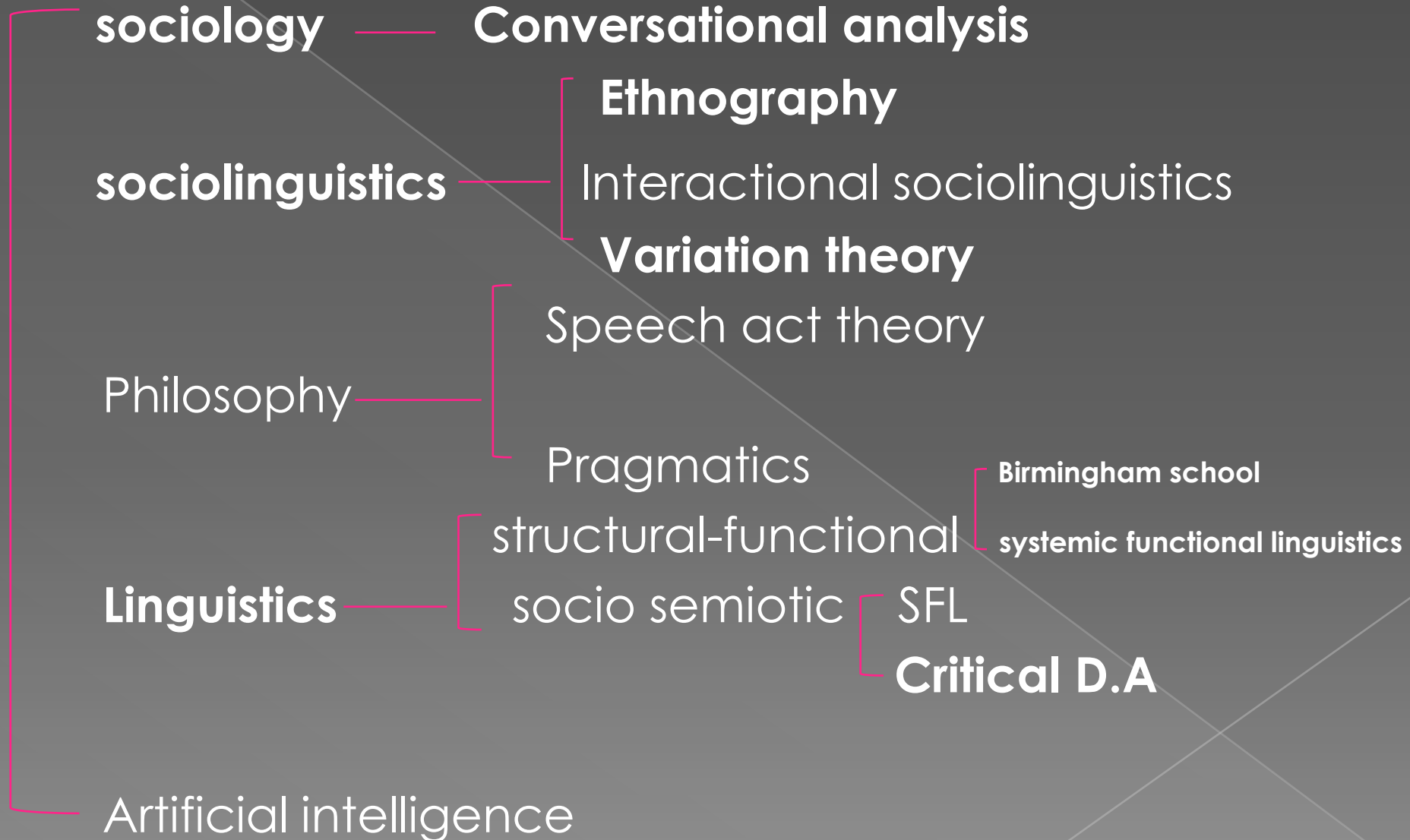
Example:

Trying not to be out of the office for long, Suzy went into the nearest place, sat down and ordered an avocado sandwich. It was quite crowded, but the service was fast, so she left a good tip.

Examples: taking the train, traveling on an airplane, eating at a restaurant, talking to s.o. on the phone.

Clearly. Our understanding of what we read is not only based on what we see on the page (language structures), but also on other things that we have in mind (knowledge structure).

Approaches to DA according to disciplinary origins (Eggins & Slade, 1997)



Genre

The term genre is used highly in Ethnography of speaking, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. In Ethnography of speaking, genre refers to one component in the complex communicative context of interactions. In SFL, used to describe how people use L to achieve culturally recognized goals. In CDA genre is defined as 'a socially ratified way of using L in connection with a particular type of social activity. E.g. Interview, narrative exposition)' (Fairclough 1995a: 14)

Ethnography

Ethnographic approaches to conversation have been led by Hymes and are concerned with the 'situation and uses, the patterns and functions of speaking as an activity in its own right'. Or concerned with understanding the social context of linguistic interactions. In seeking to account for "who says what to whom, when, where, why and how." (Hymes 1972b)

He developed a schema for analyzing context that has the 'speech event' in which L occurs as its prime unit of analysis.

The term “speech event” refers to “activities that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech” (Hymes 1972b: 56) speech events include interactions such as a conversation at a party , or ordering a meal, etc. Any speech event comprises several components and these are listed in Hymes grid.

The Ethnography of communication

The famous "S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G" model

(8 factors which participate in the communication process)

The "S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G" model (Hymes)

A blue square icon with rounded corners and a white stylized letter 'S' inside, representing the 'Setting' component of the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model.

Setting: the time and place of a speech act and, the physical circumstances.

Scene: "psychological setting" or "cultural definition" of a scene

The "S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G" model (Hymes)

P

Participants:

- Speaker
- Hearer and audience

The "S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G" model (Hymes)



E

Ends:

Purposes, goals, and outcomes



A

Act sequence:

Form and order of the event

The "S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G" model (Hymes)

K

Key:

"tone, manner, or spirit" of the speech act

I

Instrumentalities:

Forms and styles of speech

The "S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G" model (Hymes)

N

Norms:

Social rules governing the event and the participants' actions and reaction

G

Genres:

The kind of speech act or event

Variation theory

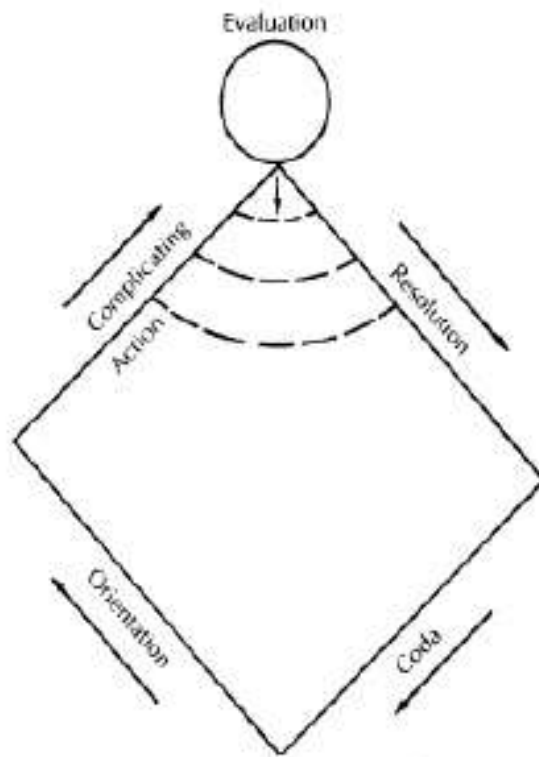
It was developed by Labov (1972) and has made a major contribution to the analysis of discourse. Labov and Waletzky argue that fundamental narrative structures are evident in spoken narratives of personal experience. He argued that the overall structure of a fully formed narrative of personal experience involves 6 stages :

- Abstract (summary of story, with its point)
- Orientation (in respect of place, time & situation)
- Complication (temporal sequence of events)
- Evaluation (narrator's attitude towards narrative)
- Resolution (protagonist's approach to crisis)
- Coda (point about narrative as a whole)

The Element	Explanation
Abstract	The introductory part of the narrative A brief summary of the event to spark attention.
Orientation	Description of the people or characters who will interact in the story.
Complication Action	The actual events of the narrative. The occurrences that move it ahead.
Evaluation	The point, or reason, the narrative is being told.
Resolution	Conclusion; end of the narrative
Coda	Relevance of the narrative to every-day life

(Elliott 2005: 42)

- ✓ These elements are not necessarily present in all narratives.
- ✓ These elements are not distributed in the same way in all narratives.



- a. **Abstract:** what was **this** about?
- b. **Orientation:** who, **when**, what, **where**?
- c. **Complicating action:** **then** what happened?
- d. **Evaluation:** **so** what?
- e. **Result:** what **finally** happened?

A complete narrative begins with an orientation, proceeds to the complicating action, is suspended at the focus of evaluation before the resolution, concludes with the resolution, and returns the listener to the present time with the coda. The evaluation of the narrative forms a secondary structure which is concentrated in the evaluation section but may be found in various forms throughout the narrative.

(Labov: 1972)

Example:

Speaker A is the interviewer and speaker B responds with the narrative.

A: What was the most imp fight that you remember, one that sticks in ur mind?

Abstract (the introductory part)

B: Well, one I think was with a girl.

Orientation (who, when , what, where?)

Like I was a kid, u know, and she was the baddest girl in the neighborhood. If u didn't bring her candy to school, she would punch u in the mouth; and u had to kiss her when she'd tell u. this girl was only about 12 years old, man, but she was a killer. She didn't take no junk; she whupped all her brothers.

Complication (then what happened?)

And I came to school one day and I didn't have no money. My ma wouldn't give me no money. So I go to school and this girl says "where's the candy?" I said: I don't have it." She says, powww!

Evaluation (so what? Or the point or reason the narrative is being told)

so I says to myself, There's gonna be times my mother won't give me money because (we're) a poor family. And I can't take this all, u know, every time she don't give me any money." so I say, "Well, I just gotta fight this girl. She's gonna hafta whup me. I hope she don't whup me."

Resolution (conclusion)

And I hit the girl: Powww! And I put sth on it. I win the fight.

Coda (relevance of the narrative to everyday life)

That was one of the most important.

Birmingham school

In the early 1970s, Sinclair and Coulthard tape-recorded mother-tongue classes. The classes were traditional, teacher-fronted lessons where knowledge was typically transmitted by the pupils answering the teacher's display Q. engaging in some sort of activity or just listening to the teacher talking.

Systemic Functional Linguistics

The central concern of SFL is how people use L with each other to accomplish everyday social life and how social worlds are, in turn created in and through L.

The SFL orientation to spoken discourse is similar to that of CA, in that both are concerned to describe the relationship between L and its social context.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.

Genres in CDA are seen as social actions occurring within particular social and historical contexts.

As Miller stated, similarities in form and function are seen deriving from the similarity in the social action undertaken, therefore, Texts are looked at the textual regularities they display and what class, gender and ethnic bias they incorporate, what social practices they reflect.

This new conception of genre in CDA sees genres as both social and textual categories which are dynamic and changing.

Genres are not only arise out of the social context but also they shape the social context.

Corpus linguistics and variation in discourse

Corpus linguistics sprang from a desire to be more objective about language and to free description from subjective intuition.

Corpus linguists believe that external evidence, looking at language use, is a better source for description than internal evidence, or native speaker intuition.

Corpus linguistics may be performed in two ways:

1. Quantitative approach
2. Qualitative approach

