|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra** |  |
|  | **Faculty of Arts and Languages** |  |
| **Module: Linguistics** | **Dept. of Arts and Foreign Languages** | **Level: First Year LMD** |
| **Semester: 02** | **English Division** | **Academic Year: 2019-2020** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Lecture № 04: Discourse Analysis** |

**A. Definitions of Discourse**

Discourse can be defined in two ways:

**A** **structural definition** of discourse defines it as a unit of language above the level of the sentence. This approach looks for constituents which have particular relationships with each other and that can occur in a restricted number of arrangements. The problem with this approach is that the units in which people speak do not look like sentences and are often not grammatically correct.

**A functional approach** to discourse claims that language has multiple functions. The task of discourse analysis using this approach is to analyse the functions of language, the way that language is used (*meaning as use*), what we do with language when we use it. In other words discourse analysis views discourse as a social phenomenon rather than a purely linguistic one.

Discourse refers to both written texts and oral texts. It is important to identify whether a text is written or oral. There are also some texts which have both written and oral characteristics at the same time. Internet chat for example is essentially a written form of speech. On the other hand a university lecture may be a spoken form of writing. So it is important to analyse the spoken and written characteristics of discourse.

**B. Discourse analysis and Other Disciplines**

Discourse analysis influences and is influenced by a number of other disciplines. It is highly practical and is used in all areas of communication (especially institutional areas such as medicine, law and education) and with all forms of talk – speech and written texts, everyday language, specialised language, formal and informal language. Discourse analysis also examines how language is used to sustain social institutions and manipulate opinion; how it is used in the expression of ideology and the exercise of power. Discourse analysis can also be used to develop awareness of linguistic features in the interpretation of literary texts.

**C.** **Cohesion and coherence**

A sequence of sentences is a “text” when there is some kind of dependence between the sentences. The task of textual analysis is to identify the elements that cause this dependence. These elements are elements of ***cohesion*** (cohesive elements) and elements of ***coherence***.

**1.** **Cohesion**

We know, for example, that texts must have a certain structure that depends on factors quite different from those required in the structure of a single sentence. Some of those factors are described in terms of ***cohesion***, or the formal ties and connections that exist within texts. There are several ***cohesive ties*** in this text.

**a) Conjunctive relations**

What is about to be said is explicitly related to what has been said before, through such notions as contrast (*but, however, nonetheless*), result (*so, therefore, nevertheless* etc.) and time (*when after, before,* etc.).

**b) Coreference**

These are features which cannot be semantically interpreted except by reference to some other feature in the text. They can be of two types – anaphoric relations (example 1), which look backwards for their interpretation, and cataphoric relations (example 2), which look forwards.

1. A boy washed a puppy in a small bath. **It** started struggling and shaking and **he** got really wet. When **he** let it go, **it** jumped out of the bath and ran away.
2. **He** washed **it** in a small bath. **It** started struggling and shaking and **he** got really wet. When the boy let it go, the puppy jumped out of the bath and ran away.

**c) Substitution**

Substitution is when a cohesive element replaces a previous word or expression. Pronouns (I, me, etc.) and words of personal reference (myself, yourself etc.) are examples of cohesion by substitution.

**d) Ellipsis**

Ellipsis occurs when a structure is omitted and can only be recovered from previous discourse.

**Example**:

John: Have you been working?

Oliver: Yes, I have.

**e) Repetition**

Repetition is when an expression, or part of an expression is repeated. This is very common in speech. The repetition of tense and other syntactic patterns is very important for cohesion.

**Example:**

"We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." (Sir Winston Churchill)

**f) Lexical relationships**

There is a lexical relationship when one lexical item has a structural relationship with another, for example *synonymy*, *hyponymy*, and *antonymy*.

**Example:**

Myths narrate sacred histories and explain sacred origins. These traditional narratives are, in short, a set of beliefs that are a very real force in the lives of the people who tell them. (synonym)

Coherence

The textual world (what the text is about) is made up of concepts and relations. Coherence concerns the way in which concepts and relations are mutually accessible and relevant. In other words, a coherent text is one which is easy for us to understand because it is easy for us to make a mental representation of it. Remember that it is possible for a text to be cohesive but not coherent as in the following text: “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.”