*Mohammed Khider University of Biskra*

*Faculty of Arabic Language Arts & Foreign Languages*

*Division of Foreign Languages*

*Department of English Studies*

(**Major**) Literature and Civilization                              (**Course**) Discourse Analysis

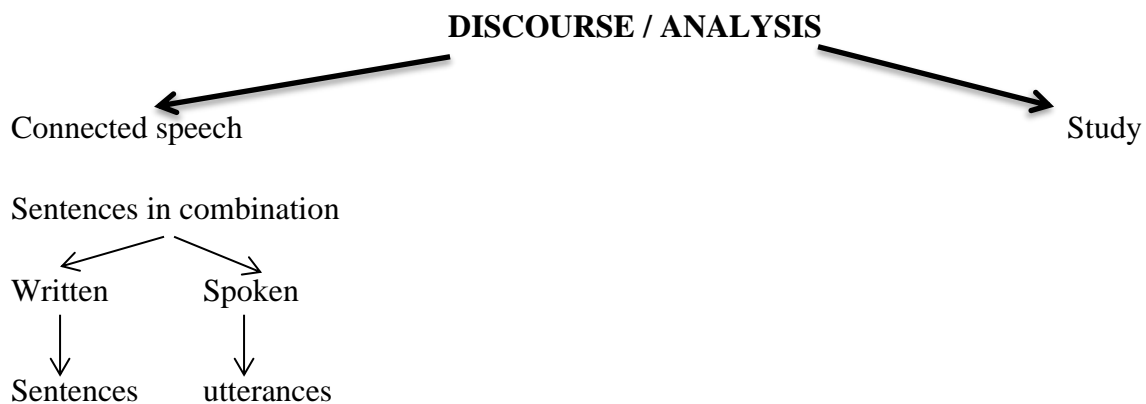(**Class**) First Year Master                                        (**Instructor**) Dr. Manel
TRIKI

## Perspectives and Scope of Discourse Analysis

**Outcomes of the Tutorial**: *By the end of this tutorial, you will be able to:*

1. *Define* discourse and discourse analysis;

2. *Provide* a firm grounding on what discourse analysts do;

3. *Work out* an encompassing definition of discourse analysis;

4. *Learn about* form and function in discourse analysis;

5. *Point out* their main types.

**Terminology Used in this Toturial:**

Discourse analysis, analyzing, form, function, utterance, sentence, conversation, interactional,

transactional, linguistic form, communicative, naturally occurring, pattern, context, content.

**DISCOURSE / ANALYSIS**

Connected speech                                                                    Study

Sentences in combination

Written        Spoken

Sentences     utterances

The major aim of discourse analysis is to produce explicit and systematic, descriptions of units of language use that we have called discourse. Such descriptions have two main dimensions, which we may simply call textual and contextual. Textual dimensions account for the structures of discourse at various levels of description. Contextual dimensions relate these structural descriptions to various properties of the context, such as cognitive processes and representations or socio-cultural factors.

## a. *What do discourse analysts do?*

Broadly speaking, discourse analysts investigate the use of language in context, thus they are interested in what speakers/writers do, and not so much in the formal relationships among sentences or propositions. Discourse analysis, then, has a social dimension, and for many analysts it is a method for studying how language "gets recruited 'on site' to enact specific social activities and social identities" (Gee 1999: 1).

Discourse analysts explore the language of face-to-face conversations, telephone conversations, e-mail messages, etc., and they may study power relations, the structure of turn-taking, politeness strategies, the linguistic manifestation of racism or sexism, and many, many other aspects of language in use. The sky is the limit.

It can be said that when analyzing language from the perspective of a discourse analyst we consider four main assumptions;

- Language is ambiguous in a way that one word or sentence may have different meanings and interpretations.

- Language meaning is always in either "where, when or what", i.e., what language means is always a matter of *where* and *when* it is used and *what* it is used to do.

- The way we use language is inseparable from who we are and the different social groups to which we belong.

- Language is never used all by itself, which means that speakers/writers and hearers/readers always combine language with other aspects such as tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, fonts, layouts, graphs, etc.

In other words, every one of us is doing discourse analysis unintentionally in daily life when trying to figure out what people mean by what they say and when trying to explain or express multiple and complicated meaning to others. Discourse analysis can help us to understand how societies in which we live are put together and how they are maintained through our day to day activities of speaking/writing. Additionally, it may help us understand why people in different groups and societies interact with one another the way they do and how they exert power and influence over one another.

*Discourse analysis is the study of naturally occurring data above the sentence level and beyond language.it is the study of language in context/use.*

*Discourse analysis deals with how real people use real language as opposed to studying artificial created sentences. It is interested in how texts are structured and how they follow regular patterns in a wide range of different situations.*

*Each piece of writing/speaking has a pattern; discourse analysis tries to identify this pattern. DA identifies the structure of speech and writing according to the context and peoples' needs.*

*The principle aim of discourse analysis is to examine how any language produced by man (participants) whether spoken or written (the channel of communication) is used in communication for a given purpose (intention) in a given context (setting). (Brown &Yule, 1983).*