University Mohamed Kheider of Biskra   **Master One**

Faculty of Letters and Languages   **Discourse Analysis.**

Department of English Studies and Literature   **Applied Language Studies**

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Speech Events

Introduction

The analysis of speech events in relationship to discourse analysis is determined by a number of significant principles that can be summarized as follows:

1. Speech events have contexts or situations to which they are fitted and in which they are typically found.
2. A speech event like 'conversation' can occur appropriately in a wide range of situations, some, like a 'prayer', are highly restricted.
3. The cultural implications of speech events appropriateness or inappropriateness may differ from one culture to another especially with regard to ritual ceremonies such as funerals, prayer, marriages, etc. Certain linguistic and non-linguistic manifestations such as laughter, silence, or tone of voice can greatly impact certain speech events.
4. Several speech events can take place successively or even simultaneously in the same situation, as for instance with distinct conversations at a party.
5. The relationship between speech events and speech acts is hierarchical: an event may consist of a single speech act, but will often comprise several. For example, as it is noted by Dell Hymes for English: 'a sentence, interrogative in form, may be now a request, now a command, now a statement; a request may be manifested by a sentence that is now interrogative, now declarative, now imperative in form.'

1. Characteristics of Speech Events

It is evident that speech events are characterized by various stylistic modes and structures; however, some speech events (or genres) are performed for specific objectives in specific places with particular participants. The success or failure of the speech events in terms of accurate communication acts depends on the pragmatic

competence of the interlocutors (whether passive or active) which in turn involves three major communication skills:

1. Using language for different purposes such as greeting, informing, demanding, promising and requesting.
2. Adapting or changing language according to the needs or expectations of a listener or situation- such as talking differently to a child than to an adult, giving enough background information to an unfamiliar listener, talking differently in a classroom than on a playground.
3. Following rules for conversations and narratives (for instance telling stories, giving reports, recounting events of the day). There are rules for taking turns in conversation, introducing topics of conversations and staying on the topic, rephrasing when misunderstood. There are also rules for appropriate use of non-verbal signals in conversation, distance between speaker and listener, facial expressions, and eye contact. Obviously, rules may vary depending on different languages and cultures.

2. Components of Speech Events

1. **Setting:** all speech events occur of necessity in time and space- sometimes it is one the defining criteria of an event that it takes place at a specific time or in a specific place. Even when a speech event is not restricted to a particular setting, in fact, the setting may affect either the stylistic mode or the stylistic structure. Moreover, Hymes stresses that the analyst should also take note of the 'psychological setting' of an event- the cultural definition of an occasion as formal or informal, serious or festive.
2. **Participants:** traditionally speech has been described in terms of a speaker who transmits a message and a listener who receives it. However, certain discourse analysts put forward at least four participant roles: addressor, speaker, addressee and hearer (or audience). Any description of a discourse (in a given speech community) must include data on who is and what can fill the participant roles. Certain participant features and particularly certain kinds of relationships between participants directly condition the choice of linguistic items in speech.
3. **Purpose:** all speech events (and speech acts) have a purpose, even if occasionally it is only for phatic communion. Speech events purposes are distinguished according to their assigned function, for instance contracts, trade, communal work tasks or negotiation over a disagreement in order to reach a settlement.
4. **Key:** key is usually defined by discourse analysts namely Hymes and van Dijk, as the 'tone, manner or spirit' in which a speech event is performed. Speech events may be identical in setting, participants, message or form; nevertheless, they may differ in key as between mock and serious, perfunctory and painstaking. The signalling of key may be non-verbal, by wink, smile,

gesture or posture, but may equally be achieved by conventional units of speech like tone and stress.

5. **Message Content:** for many speech events topic is fully determined and invariable, though for others, particularly conversation, topic is relatively unconstrained. The effect of topic on style is disparate and varies from one speech community to another, it may have little impact or it can be strongly marked.

Conclusion

On the whole, any detailed description of a speech event must include information on all of the components and on the interrelation between them. As a matter of fact, discourse analysis in the context of the foreign language classroom is best done in a way that provides detailed information on the participants, their status, the situations, and the speech events that are occurring. The reason is that- merely presenting linguistic formulas without such background information- can lead to overgeneralizations on how speech acts function in real-life situations.

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Workshop Session

Practice One: Make a textual and contextual analysis of the following with regard to the nature of the speech event, actual or possible participants, topics, setting, socio-cultural and psychological factors if any.

Case1.

In 1963, H. Boumediene declared: 'The Algerian revolution can no more be contained within its borders than was Colonel Nasser's by the Nile Valley. The socialist revolution can triumph only if it spreads to Morocco and Tunisia.'

The authorities of the Kingdom of Morocco angrily commented: 'This is utterly a declaration of war.'   (A Dictionary of Politics. Florence Elliot & M. Summerskill)

Case2.

'Dey needn't call me worn yet', said she; lifting her shaking hands. 'I can cook yet, and scrub, and scour- I'm wuth a buying, if I do come cheap; tell 'em dat- you tell 'em', she added earnestly. Haley here forced his way into the group, walked up to the old man, pulled his mouth open and looked in, felt his teeth, made him stand and straighten himself, bend his back, and perform various evolutions to show his muscles; and then passed on to the next.

(Carpentier-Lamar. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 1763)

Case3.

'To be perfectly clear, we set forth herewith the main lines of our political programme:

Goal: National independence through:

- The restoration of the Algerian state, sovereign, democratic and social, in the framework of Islamic principles.
- The respect of all basic freedom without distinction of race or confession.'

November 1, 1954. National Secretary's Council.

Case4.

Copenhagen Airline Publicity: We Take Your Bags And Send Them In All Directions!

Case5.

'No general election yet says the Prime Minister.'

'Five people die in an earthquake in Italy.'

'$ 1 million is stolen from a security van.'

Case6.

'Ten minutes gone in the second half....... Liverpool 1 Manchester 1....... Bailey kicks a long ball down field into Liverpool half...... Albiston receives the return ball and..... shoots..... Goallllllllllll!'

Case7.

'International Bank Corporation. Good afternoon.'

'Good afternoon. Mr. Henry Chalmers, please.'

'Mr. Chalmers is at lunch at the moment, sir. Can I put you through to his secretary?'

'No, thank you. Can you give him a message?'

'Certainly, sir what's your name please?'

'Bill Watkins. Could you tell him I called and I'll call back later?'

'Certainly, sir.'

'Thank you. Goodbye.'

'Goodbye, sir.'

Case8.

'This is the final call for Sabena to Brussels flight number SN 608. Any remaining passengers must go immediately to gate 8 where the flight is now closing. Sabena flight number SN 608 closing now at gate 8.'

Practice Two: Indicate the functions of the discourse in the following samples, and support your answer by two linguistic features from each of the sequences. Please make sure to use the elements that have been suggested by M. A. K. Halliday.

1. 'The density of a substance is defined as its mass per unit. The most obvious way to determine the density of a solid is to weigh a sample of the solid and then find out the volume that the sample occupies.'
2. 'Guayota was a Manitou, the spirit of the volcano, and he needed something with him that tied him to the Dragon Islands. He'd said that the creature I'd killed, his child, was immortal.'
3. 'Dreaming of sapphire waters? Our club PRIVATSEA grants you access to the finest yatching lifestyle!'
4. 'In every cry of every Man,

   In every Infant's cry of fear,

   In every voice, in every ban,

   The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.'

5. 'The next train to arrive at platform 2 will be the 15.01 to Newport calling at Filton. Passengers for Newport and all stations to Cardiff are advised to catch the train leaving platform 6 at 15.25 and change at Bristol Parkway.'

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Communicative Competence and Discourse Analysis

Introduction

   The term 'communicative competence' was coined by the anthropological linguist Dell Hymes to emphasize an essential principle of human acts of communication which generally stipulates that the linguistic system (grammatical rules) is not sufficient for speaking and exchanging messages. Hymes states that there are some evident non-linguistic aspects of human competence which enable us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meaning interpersonally within specific contexts. Accordingly, Hymes' interpretation of human interaction is obviously in contradiction with Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence and the distinction he draws between competence and performance. As a matter of fact, Hymes overtly questions Chomsky's theory of idealized linguistic competence. Therefore, this eminent sociolinguist as well as ethnographer of communication was the first, among many distinguished language scholars, to introduce the idea of communicative competence in terms of the appropriateness of socio-cultural significance of an utterance. In other words, the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately does not entirely depend on grammatical rules.

On the other hand, the notion of communicative competence has been used extensively as justification and explanation of communicative language teaching. Indeed, the theory has been given much interest not only by applied linguists and language teachers but also a great number of discourse analysts believe in its utility in connection with the analysis of human discourse. Consequently, many scholars have adopted Hymes' terminology and perspective of application of his notion of communicative competence. The concept has become part of the theoretical justification for a new language teaching approach, discourse interpretation, and eventually new techniques that are compatible with communication as the principal goal of second/foreign language teaching.

1. Comparison of the Terms 'Communicative' and 'Communication'

It is generally observed that numerous textbooks refer to the terms 'communicative' and 'communication' in very different ways. This distinction has been put forward by many authors who are publicly acknowledged for their participation and involvement in the research of second/foreign language acquisition and discourse studies. Moreover, all of them are also known to defend a communicative perspective on the process of learning a foreign language and discourse analyses. Their names include Terrel, van Patten, Sauvignon, Krashen and Nunan. The most important differences between the two terms are summarized as follows:

- **Communicative as Talking:** In some of the textbooks the term 'communicative' refers to oral activities of different nature. In another case, the term 'communication' appears as the title for these oral activities or it refers to open dialogue activities (guided conversation).
- **Communicative as Application of Grammar:** Almost all of the textbooks indicated a similar organization of contents, frequently starting each lesson with a list of lexicon and grammar items. Communication thus refers to grammar in practice, as opposed to theoretical grammar. This grammar is exposed and explained in a traditional way, very commonly including explanations in the first language. More often than not the assessment tools provided by these methods account for these grammatical contents, through out-of-context activities such as multiple choice questionnaires and gap-filling verb exercises.
- **Communicative as Goal:** Many of these textbooks follow a similar lesson sequence namely introduction, practice and communication. Therefore, communication is the final stage of the learning process, not something that occurs all the time.
- **Communicative as Interaction:** A vast majority of activities in these textbooks are designed to be executed verbally and in pairs. Some of the activities here include descriptions of pictures, multiple choice-ended fixed dialogues, sharing information activities, etc. These tasks are elaborated to

repeat, in pairs or groups and in a verbal way, different words, tenses and structures. Communicative therefore refers to the fact that two speakers are engaged in the activity rather than the particular nature of the activity.

- **Communicative as Skill:** A large number of the textbooks focus on the developing of the four communicative skills and thus include some specific activities for each of them. For example, composition topics to be written, written texts to be read and understood, audio dialogues followed by comprehension questionnaires and lists of questions to induce discussion.

2. Characteristics of Communicative Competence

The principal characteristics of communicative competence are summarized by Sauvignon (2002) in the following:

- Communicative competence is a dynamic rather than static concept; in fact, it depends on the negotiation between interlocutors who share to some extent the same symbolic and cultural system.
- Communicative competence applies to both written and spoken discourse.
- Communicative competence is context specific; indeed, successful communication in a particular situation depends on the understanding of its context.
- Communicative competence is defined as the underlying ability not only with respect to the linguistic knowledge but also the awareness of socio-cultural conventions. Moreover, performance is the overt manifestation of this ability, in other words, the verbal and non-verbal behaviour.
- Communicative competence is relative and not absolute; it definitely depends on the co-operation of all the participants involved in the act of communication.

3. Components of Communicative Competence

An interesting definition of communicative competence is suggested by David Crystal (2005) who asserts that it is the person's unconscious knowledge of the rules governing the appropriate use of language in social situation. It is usually contrasted with linguistic competence, the person's unconscious knowledge of the formal patterning of language. Indeed, communicative competence includes our awareness of the factors which govern acceptable speech, such as how to begin and end conversation, how to interrupt, how to address people, and how to behave in special speech situations (for instance apologizing, thanking and expressing formality and informality).

Furthermore, Hymes referring to Chomsky's concept of linguistic competence states that for language to be used to exchange information, ideas or feelings, the speaker must possess both the capacity to construct grammatically correct sentences-linguistic competence- but also the competence to produce socially pertinent utterances. Communication then, depends on communicative competence which can be seen as inclusive of:

- **A Linguistic Component:** the mastery of linguistic rules. It is the acquisition of the syntactic-morphological, phonological and semantic rules that we refer to as grammar.
- **A Discursive Component:** the knowledge and understanding of different types of discourse and their organization as a function of the situation of communication within which they are produced. But it also includes acquiring the ability to distinguish between formal and semi-formal discourse styles, turn-allocation techniques and topic selection, for example.
- **A Referential Component:** the knowledge of the domains of experience and the objects in the world and their relationships; or learning about the world as it is in those countries in which we are likely to speak the language.
- **A Socio-cultural Component:** the knowledge of the social rules and norms of interaction between individuals and within institutions, including knowledge of cultural history and the relations between social objects. For instance, learning about the socio-cultural rules in terms of the distance to be maintained between interlocutors, or the loudness of voice which is appropriate to particular settings and situations.

4. Pragmatic Aspects of Communicative Competence

The pragmatic aspects of communicative competence are those which have to do with how language is used in communication situations in order to achieve the speaker's purposes.

- **Functional Competence:** the functional competence refers to the ability to accomplish purposes in a language. There are a large number of different kinds of purposes for which people commonly use language such as social, economic or educational activities.
- **Sociolinguistic Competence:** the sociolinguistic competence is the ability to interpret the social meaning of the choice of linguistic varieties and to use language with the appropriate social meaning for the communication situation.
- **Interactional Competence:** the interactional competence involves knowing and using the mostly-unwritten rules for interaction in various communication situations within a given speech community and culture. It includes, among other things, knowing how to initiate and manage conversations and negotiate meaning with other people. It also comprises knowing what sorts of body

language, eye contact, and proximity to other people are appropriate, and acting accordingly.

- **Cultural Competence:** the cultural competence is the ability to understand from the standpoint of the members of a culture and to behave in a way that would be understood by the members of the culture in the intended way. Cultural competence therefore involves grasping all aspects of a culture, but particularly the social structure, the values and beliefs of the people, and the way things are assumed to be done.

Conclusion

In summary, one can assert that the concept of communicative competence mainly implies the knowledge that the act of communication is formally possible in a language, but also whether it is feasible, appropriate or performed in a particular speech community. Besides, we have demonstrated that communicative competence is a process which encompasses some essential elements in relationship to Grammar which implies the use of the rules of language in order to understand and utter the language correctly. The Discourse represents the ability to comprehend and to produce coherent texts (written or spoken) within various genres. Pragmatics constitutes the ability to grasp and produce utterances suitable for the context in which they are uttered. Strategies enable the speaker to efficiently use the skills available to him and to exchange messages. Fluency displays the interrelation between the elements of communicative competence. Lastly, we can state that foreign language teaching/learning and discourse studies are based upon the idea that the ultimate goal of language acquisition and interpretation is communicative competence.

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Workshop Session

Practice One: Pick up at least two (2) words or expressions that represent the required linguistic characteristic in the following paragraph. Briefly justify your choice.

'In the evening we decided to pitch camp as the weather was not encouraging. The wind was high and gathering storm clouds predicted a wild wet night. Moreover, we had arrived at a spot which looked promising for a camp. A level expanse in the lee of a high hill afforded some shelter from the wind; fresh water was near at hand in a stream which flowed across the plain; a copse of trees provided adequate supplies of fuel; and the dry grasses which abounded on the hillside would enhance the comfort of our beds. On the other hand, each member of the party was allotted a task. Some erected the tents; others prepared a scanty meal; yet others attended to the needs of the ponies, now exhausted after a very strenuous day. As the angry sun sank, the bustle of activity hushed into silence and each man settled down to sleep.'

The linguistic characteristics: Intentionality. Coherence. Situationality. Informativity.

Practice Two: Please explain the contextual indicators that allow a better understanding, interpretation or identification of the characters, events or institutions in the following samples. You are advised to first evaluate your communicative competence without recourse to Internet or any paper documentation.

1. The farce began in 1827 when Hussein, the Turkish Dey was provoked into losing his temper and slapped the consul across the face with his fly whisk.
2. When in a trance he was summoned by Gabriel to Jerusalem, to be borne aloft on a winged white horse through the seven heavens to the throne of God in the Sacred House.
3. In July 1962 the President, Ben Khedda, dismissed him from command of the army; he reacted by marching on Algiers one month later.
4. The lower house is elected by the people and has more power, the upper house is made up of a number of peers most of these are appointed by the Queen.
5. This company took the name of two brothers Dick and Mac who had run it in the 1940's; it is a large group of US food restaurants and has become a symbol of US commercial success.

Practice Three: Please indicate the most important speech acts that are realized through the following sequences. Your choice of the type of speech act should be justified.

1. 'Those who are dead are not gone; they are in the water that run, the sigh of the bush, in the moaning of the woods.'
2. 'To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health. I pledge you my faithfulness.'
3. 'I don't want any of your damn things at my doorstep!'
4. 'I suppose you were too busy to do your job!'
5. 'If I were you I would follow the orders!'
6. 'You were making a point in my favour and I failed to spot it.'
7. 'Let her go, do you think money grows on trees, she'll have something to say about that when she gets back!'
8. 'The only flaw in this felicitous situation is my neighbour Peter.'

Notes: (i) Students are strongly advised to answer the proposed activities.

(ii) You are also encouraged to ask for further clarifications, explanation or you may make your own comments.

(iii) The sample key to the tasks will be available in the next documents.

(iv) Your questions will be categorized, analysed and collectively answered very soon.