

What is discourse?

(1) Administrative

- a) Syllabus review
- b) Next week reading (website)

(2) Examples from the last class

- a) *Ernie: Tell 'em about the show.*
Eric: (to the audience) Have we got a great show for you tonight folks! Have we got a show for you (aside to Ernie) Have we got a show for them?
- b) Signs at the pool
 - i) *Please use the toilets not the pool.*
 - ii) *Pool for members only.*

(3) What's discourse

- a) Anything beyond a single sentence (clause, utterance)
- b) Relationship between language form and language function
 - i) Both form on a lower level and higher (what is discourse structure?)
 - DALT Reader activity #2. What problems do we face in analyzing this discourse?

A: I mean, I don't like this new emblem at all

B: The logo

A: Yeah, the castle on the Trent, isn't it horrible.

C: Did you get a chance to talk to him?

A: Yeah.

C: How does he seem?

- ii) But discourse is not the same as function; we are interested in the process a piece of language gets its function through the interaction with context and situation. E.g. How subject-verb inversion becomes understood as question in (2a)
- c) Language use (e.g. social practices)
 - i) Communicating some message (transactional function) is only one of many functions of language. But a lot of language use is not to exchange information but to establish/strengthen social relations, signal the structure of interactions, or negotiate common ground.
- d) Discourses in broader terms (discourse of power, manipulation, racism, CDA), hence the split between neutral stance of many linguists and bias of many sociologists.

(4) Spoken and written discourse

- a) Differences
- b) Compare these examples

And then, in the blowing clouds, she saw a band of faint iridescence colouring in faint shadows a portion of the hill. And forgetting, startled, she looked for the hovering colour and saw a rainbow forming itself. In one place it gleamed fiercely, and, her heart anguished with hope, she sought the shadow of iris where the bow should be. Steadily the colour gathered, mysteriously, from nowhere, it took presence upon itself, there was a faint, vast rainbow.

(D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, chapter 16)

normally after + very heavy rain + or something like that + and + you're driving along the road + and + far away + you see + well + er + a series + of + stripes + + formed like a bow + an arch + + very very far away + ah + seven colours but ++ I guess you hardly ever see seven it's just a + a series of + colours which + they seem to be separate but if you try to look for the separate (kAz) – colours they always seem + very hard + to separate + if you see what I mean ++

(Postgraduate student speaking informally)

(5) Data, approach, process, ... (based on DA Ch1)

- a) Prescriptivism vs. descriptivism
- b) Competence vs. performance
- c) Real language used vs. personal introspection
- d) Rules vs. regularities
- e) Product vs. process
 - i) Sentences as objects
 - ii) Text as product
 - iii) Discourse as process

(6) Cohesion and coherence

- a) *Claire loves potatoes. She was born in Ireland.*

The parents of a seven-year-old Australian boy woke to find a giant python crushing and trying to swallow him.

The incident occurred in Cairns, Queensland and the boy's mother, Mrs Kathy Dryden said: 'It was like a horror movie. It was a hot night and Bartholomew was lying under a mosquito net. He suddenly started screaming.

'We rushed to the bedroom to find a huge snake trying to strangle him. It was coiled around his arms and neck and was going down his body.'

Mrs Dryden and her husband, Peter, tried to stab the creature with knives but the python bit the boy several times before escaping.

(from *The Birmingham Post*, 12 March 1987, p. 10)

(7) Relation between utterances/sentences themselves

- a) E.g. cause – consequence, phenomenon – reason
- b) Signals for interpreting these relations
 - i) *Feeling ill, he went home*