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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Dr. RAMESH PETTELA¹, CHANDRIKA KANDRA², SRINIVAS PALEPU³

¹Associate Professor of English

St. Ann's College of Engineering & Technology, Chirala, Andhra Pradesh, India

E-mail. rameshbooci@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor Department of English, Rise Krishna Sai Prakasam Group of Institutions, Vallur, Ongole, Prakasam Dist., Andhra Pradesh, India

E-mail. pamidichandrika@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor Department of English, Rise Krishna Sai Prakasam Group of Institutions, Vallur, Ongole, Prakasam Dist., Andhra Pradesh, India

E-mail. palepusrinivas2@gmail.com

ABSTRACT



Dr. RAMESH PETTELA



CHANDRIKA KANDRA



SRINIVAS PALEPU

This paper will try to explain how discourse analysis will be helpful in ELT and how it is relevant in learning / acquisition process; also, the importance of society and context in L2 learning / acquisition. We follow age-old methods in ELT. There is considerable research done on learning / acquisition process in second language. Teaching language means teaching to communicate. We are negating the importance of sociolinguistic aspects in language teaching. Our conditions are different from those of other countries. India is a multilingual country and English is generally not a second but third (or) fourth language, and it is not an easy task to learn the language without the context for communication. Our methods of teaching grammar will help learners in learning, but not in acquisition. Acquisition requires social context or speech situation, which are lacking. In the language learning procedure, according to Barkhuizen, five fundamentals are necessary, those are learner, input, social context, inter language and output. The first section introduces the field of Discourse of Analysis. The second section is about the approach to language and problems of speech situation and cultural dissimilarities. The third and fourth sections provide theoretical support and talk about communicative competence and creativity in linguistic behavior. There is no single meaning attached to the word 'Discourse'. In its simplest sense, it means 'speech' or 'dialogue'. Some define it as 'language in use', but the large body of opinion stresses the view that discourse is beyond the language. But, "Why Discourse Analysis?". We create, negotiate and interpret personal meaning through communication. The implementation of verbal code phonology, morphology and syntax independent of circumstances is inadequate for certain reason.

Keywords – Discourse analysis, sociolinguistic, multilingual, communicative competence, phonology, morphology and syntax.

INTRODUCTION

In the language learning procedure, according to Barkhuizen (2006), five fundamentals are necessary, those are learner, input, social context, interlanguage and output. Paper deals the practice of DA and its relationship and importance in Language Teaching (LT). The first section introduces the field of Discourse Analysis. The second section is about the problems of speech situation and cultural dissimilarities. The third and fourth sections provide theoretical support and talk about communicate competence and creativity in linguistic behavior.

DISCOURSE

There is no single meaning attached to the word 'Discourse'. In its simple sentence, it means 'speech' or 'dialogue'. Some define it as 'language in use' (cf. Woods,2006. Brown & Yule,1983). But, the large body of opinion stresses the view that discourse is beyond the language (cf. Stubbs,1983. Fairclough,1992). But, "Why Discourse Analysis?". We create, negotiate and interpret personal meaning through communication. The implementation of verbal code – phonology, morphology and syntax-independent of the circumstance is inadequate for certain reasons. When we use language, we don't use only one unit and our communication is affected by non-linguistic factors as well. As a result, there has been widening of the field of research to include the external functioning; its role in actual speech, and what to do with words. In Discourse Analysis, all these aspects have been considered. It does analyze the meaning but not from traditional logic or semantic perspective. It is believed in discourse studies that meaning is construct of the participate engaged in communication (Riley,1985). The social significance of discourse lies in correlation between linguistic meaning and the context of interpretation relates far more to what is done by the participant than what is said, because communication itself is an activity.

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING/ACQUISITION

Context of communication plays an important role in the usage of the language. We should have knowledge of physical circumstance of communication, who the participants and how they

are related, etc. for Ellis (1994), social; context is a kind of setting in which the interaction take place. One cannot use the same variety of English in Britain and America. As teachers, we will have to consider the role of learner – whether learner will be using language as a foreigner or, he is learning the language learning is not just the knowledge of abstract rules of grammar. Let's consider an example:

1. A: that's killer
2. Cancer stick
3. B: everybody dies, believe me.
4. I am sorry; I didn't catch your name
5. A: Terence, Terence Bridge
6. Term National Life Insurance (from "wild things2")

The structure in all six utterances acceptable, though not always grammatical. To find out the connotation, we will have to concentrate on the context of conversation, and the social role played by the participants. They are in the hospital where B is working. They are meeting for the first time. Now, the convention to initiate a talk *hello* or *Good morning*. But, here A starts with bizarre expressions in 1st and 2nd. We don't speak with strangers in this manner. We generally are formal in such circumstances. A refers to *cancer sticks*, the word which is not available in any dictionary, but B was smoking a cigarette which is a 'cancer stick'. B's reply is also conspicuous because there is no question to reply, we don't reply to advice. But, it is perfect in the given context, because the doctor is just in front of a dead-body, a person who probably, died without cancer stock, and consequently, doctor's expression *believes me*. Then the fourth line is also inappropriate because A has never mentioned his name, there is no question of *catching*. But, it's a question in the form of a statement. In the fifth line, A mentions his name, and then adds, in 6th, his occupation.

A's advice, 1st line, performs the function of solidarity; he is starting a direct relation without even asking the name, because he is not concerned with the name of the doctor. But, he needs a favor from his profession. When B asks the name of the A, he mentions the work as well, because his profession is more important than his name in the

given context and again, he gives the name of the company and not his designation. In 1st Line, A is actually starting conversation and social relation with B. 3rd line has inferential function and 4th line is a statement. But, it is interrogative, while 5th and 6th lines are again informative. In the 3rd line doctor doesn't ask a formal question, but one can't expect such formality from a person who is smoking in hospital. Here, utterance 1st, 2nd and 3rd form a speech act, while the rest of the utterances from another speech act. Speech situation is the hospital, but the speech community; the community of American English speakers is more dominant than the situation. Consequently, they didn't follow the norms of speaking and behaving in the hospital. Here, in the example the information is conveyed but long with that the social relation is also expressed and that is also the thing that the learner has to acquire with the language.

DISCOURSE AND SLA RESEARCH

First Language (L1) Acquisition is marked for its speed. Is it the consequence of critical period the L1 acquisition process, a child is constantly with the language? He/she uses it, practices it and tries to convey his/her message through that language, no matter whether it is completely acquired or not. He/she is using the language in discourse, so that he/she can negotiate the meaning and the social and physical context will also help him/her. The importance aspect to note is that the child doesn't have any other medium of expression, except the language he/she is acquiring. While for an L2 learner, the other language, L1, is available for communication. There are errors in the language of the child, but they are corrected over the period. A child builds the grammar by listening, what Krashen (1987) has termed Input. Use of discourse in SLA is very much similar to this process. Learners will use the language in actual speech situation, so that context will help them in negotiating the meaning. The only difference is they will have to learn the rules of the grammar in advance, which will play the role of Monitor in output, Krashen is of the opinion that for effective communication acquisition is essential; 'acquisition is central and learning more peripheral' (ibid PP.20) language learning is learning to communicate. For communication, one needs

acquired competence, which can be achieved in actual communication only, like L1 acquisition. Children don't just use language to communicate but also to learn it as well. L2 users can use their learned competence; their knowledge of the grammar of L2 as the Monitor. The input Hypothesis says that learner needs comprehensible input to develop the acquired competence. A learner acquires through and by communication because through communication the learner will get comprehensible input, which may or may not include a new thing, what Krashen terms $i+1$, where I refer to current competence and 1 is new input. The care-taker speech in L1 acquisition plays an important role for this purpose. It is simplified, roughly tuned to the competence level of the child and generally governed by the '*here and now principle*'. Discourse can play the role of caretaker speech in SLA, in actual discourse, we normally prefer to speak what is comprehensible to the participant, if it is difficult; to understand we tend to simplify our utterance. At that time, participants are having socio-cultural context which will help them to get comprehensible input for acquired competence. Speech situation and speech event can play the role of *here and now* phenomena.

The other advantage is that the learner is using the language. The learner is using his/her acquired competence to monitor the output. Apart from that, the learner can understand participant relationship in a better manner, so that there will be less communication gap. Learner, not merely, learns the language, but also learns how to use the language.

GRAMMAR AND STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

When we communicate, in actual discourse, we do not use completely grammatical structures, the 'so called' well-formed sentences. Actually, we are not concerned with the grammatical aspects; we are concerned with the communication of the message. At that time, nobody talks about native-like command or pronunciation. If the learner is provided such an opportunity, it will increase the confidence level because learner is communicating in L2. This kind of initial communication motivates the learner to learn the language. Dulay and Burt (cited in Krashen, ibid) call it affective-filter. Three

important factors are motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Successfully communication in L2 motivates the learner to learn and to use the L2; it provides self-confidence and decreases the level of anxiety. Most of the L2 learners have their learned competence for L2, but they could not use it because of anxiety and the lack of self-confidence. Discourse will help them to use their knowledge of the language and to transform it in acquired competence.

Another important aspect is strategic competence. Usage of the language is not straight forward; we cannot always use it equally efficiently. Several times, we are unable to recall certain words, or we try to convey something by using some other form, like we ask questions, using only wh-words or sentences as we can see in the example. We use a number of strategies must be learnt in actual communication or the performer has to develop strategy for the given situation and event. Chomsky's (1959) problem with the behaviorist view of language was that language is always new, it is creative, and it is not just imitation. Various strategies used by the performer are the best examples of creativity. Using strategies is not enough, but as a participant we will have to understand the strategies used by the others for effective communication. Interlanguage will be the natural consequence of L2 acquisition. There will be errors, which may or may not be monitored by individual learner. At such time teacher will help the learner, and focus learner's attention on the error/s. Apart from that the participant can also be helpful in corrections. After all, failure of communication is not just speaker's or hearer's responsibility.

CONCLUSION

Communication will be helpful in the understanding of social context, providing input, eliciting output and the learner is active in discursive practices. Thus, out of five, four essentials given by Barkhuizen are considered here. Speech errors are natural even in L1(Fromkin,1993), we will have to correct them. When we consider discourse, we can correct not just linguistic errors. But, we can also talk about the errors. But, we can also talk about the errors related with social structure and participant relationship. We will have to teach grammatical

competence can be acquired through discourse. Demo* argues that there should be recording of classroom, so that by analyzing L2 classroom communication the teacher can help the learners in giving better input. He can also identify the importance of teaching material and can innovate on the basis of this communication. For me, communication is always helpful in Language Teaching, not just classroom communication. Language is essentially for communication. After all, as Krashen (197, p.1) puts it, "language acquisition occurs when language is used for what it was designed for communication".

*Demo, Douglas A. (Online Paper) Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers.

<http://www.cal.org/resources/Digest/0107demo.html>

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Appendix

Try to analyze the following instances of discourse on the basis of the question given:

- I. In the library a person shouts orderly, "Oye, bring a cup of tea."
His friend tells him, "this is library."
The person in lower tone, "Oye, bring a cup of tea."
1. What is the problem in the given utterances?
 2. Which kind of knowledge is not acquired by the first participant?
 3. Have you ever faced such situation?
 4. What do you expect in the library?
 5. Why is "Oye" used by the participant?
 6. Think of some such other jokes based on Linguistic ability or disability of the participant.

- II. 1. A: that's killer,
2. Cancer stick
3. B: everybody dies, believe me.
4. I'm sorry; I didn't catch your name
5. A: Terence, Terence Bridge.
6. Term National Life Insurance

(from "wild things2")

1. Who are the participants?
2. What is the relationship between the participants?
3. What is the meaning of Cancer stick?
4. What is wrong in 4th utterance?
5. What is the implication of 6th utterance?
6. What is the basic problem in analyzing this discourse?
7. Do you think knowledge of the grammar is enough to understand such utterances/discourse?

- III. 1. A: second, you have to learn
2. How to behave.
3. B: like Bruster?
4. A: Bruster is a billionaire.
5. Billionaires don't have to behave.
6. B: and, what is your job?
7. A: I will teach you everything.
8. B: how do I say 'no' in elite circles?
9. A: in elite circles, you never say 'no'.
10. you say, 'I will think about it.'
11. B: I will think about it.

(from "Girl Called Rosemarie")

1. Who are the participants?
2. What is the relationship between the participants?
3. What is the meaning of I will think about it, in the given discourse? What is the meaning of the same otherwise?
4. Which kinds of questions are there? How are they responded to?
5. You are not facing problems in analyzing this course as you had in the previous case why?