

BS English

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Course Code:9067

Study Guide



**Department of English
Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities
ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY**

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

BS ENGLISH

(4-Year Program)

Course Code: 9067

Units: 1–9



Department of English
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
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Islamabad

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FOREWORD

The BS English study guides aim to include all possible queries that students may have and gently stimulate their intellect to probe into further questions. The courses are intended for professional development of the students in various disciplines of linguistics and literature using versatile methods adopted by course writers, while writing the units. The topics and ideas presented in each unit are clear and relevant. Owing, to the same reason, the text is comprehensive and accessible to students having no prior knowledge of linguistics and literature.

The BS English study guides are a powerful tool even for BS English tutors teaching in various regions, focusing upon a uniform scheme of studies for all the courses. Also, these courses will help tutors by providing adequate teaching material for independent teaching. All study guides strictly follow the standardized nine-unit sub-division of the course content for optimum understanding. The short introduction at the beginning provides an overview of the units followed by achievable learning objectives. The study guides also define difficult terms in the text and guide the students to accessible learning. The units are finally summed up in summary points and the assessment questions not only guide students, but also help to revise the content developed upon previously formed concepts. Moreover, they provide links and a list of the suggested readings for further inquiry.

In the end, I am happy to extend my gratitude to the course team chairman, course development coordinator, unit writers, reviewers, editors and typesetters for the development of the course. Any suggestions for improvement in the programme/ courses will be fondly welcomed by the Department of English.

Prof Dr Nasir Mehmood
Vice Chancellor

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Dear Students,

This study guide on the course of ‘Discourse Analysis (9067)’ is designed to introduce the highly diverse and constantly expanding field of discourse analysis. The field of discourse analysis is fully established as an academic discipline and a growing body of scholarly works is, further, strengthening theoretical perspectives, research approaches and methodologies associated with it. Discourse analysis is interdisciplinary in nature and is grounded in fields like philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics and gender studies. Social scientists, scholars, academia and researchers from these interrelated fields are incorporating discourse analysis both in theory and practice to address their discipline -specific issues. Discourse analysis is an influential field in investigating the relationships between language, power and ideology in written and spoken texts of varied nature.

The course familiarizes you with major developments in the field since its inception in the 1970s. It also focuses on major theoretical perspectives, research paradigms and methodological designs associated with the field. Exclusive discussion has been made on the leading approaches of conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis and feminist critical discourse analysis. The prominent foundational theorists of the field and the impact of their work on theoretical and methodological practices have also been highlighted. The notion of ‘discourse’ is critically discussed. Furthermore, a section is exclusively based on representative discourse genres. Moreover, the latest trends of critical inquiry and research have also been discussed.

The following is a brief description of unit-wise course contents:

Unit-1: Introduces the most debated term in the field of discourse analysis, discourse, in greater detail. Multiple definitions with unique descriptive features have been added to develop a holistic understanding of the term and how it is used in different contexts. The complexities involved in the interpretation of discourse have also been highlighted. Furthermore, characteristic features of written and spoken discourses are critically discussed.

Unit-2: Provides background to the inception and development of the field since the 1970s. The role of key theorists and major developments in the field of discourse analysis have also been addressed in this unit. Furthermore, discourse as a constructor and reflector of social reality has also been discussed in greater detail.

Unit-3: Examines discourse analysis and grammar and highlights their interrelatedness and the way these influence and shape each other. Technical concepts like cohesion and coherence are extensively discussed. Furthermore, the terms theme and rheme are introduced as well as references and their types to understand how discourse and grammar are interrelated.

- Unit-4:** Evaluates the interrelationship of pragmatics and discourse analysis. The study of contextual meaning as a central focus of pragmatics is also discussed. Furthermore, fundamental theories, concepts and terms required to undertake pragmatic analysis of discourse have also been considered in detail.
- Unit-5:** Presents conversation analysis as a key approach to studying social interactions. Special attention has been paid to naturally occurring talk as well as institutionalized conversations. Furthermore, the methodology of CA is rigorously presented. Conversation openings and closing have also been discussed. Moreover, conversational aspect of turn- taking is also considered in greater detail.
- Unit-6:** Explores theoretical perspectives and methodological designs of one of the most influential research approach namely critical discourse analysis. CDA's theorization of discourse has been extensively discussed with reference to key practitioners. Methodological strengths and limitations of CDA have also been established in concrete terms.
- Unit-7:** Discusses theoretical perspectives and methodological designs of one of the most influential research approach namely feminist critical discourse analysis. Feminist CDA's theorization of discourse has been extensively discussed with its central focus. Methodological strengths and limitations of feminist CDA have also been established in concrete terms. Furthermore, the idea of gender performativity is, also, discussed in greater length.
- Unit-8:** Analyses some key genres of discourse including the discourse of advertising, the discourse of politics, the discourse of law and literary discourse. Structuralist, formalist, stylistic and discursive features of these prominent discourse genres have also been highlighted. Furthermore, their comparative and contrastive features have been discussed in detail to develop a holistic understanding.
- Unit-9:** Highlights latest trends of research in the interdisciplinary field of discourse analysis. The unit documents some past research studies carried out in the field to highlight multiplicity of research perspectives and research issues.

Wish you an intellectually exciting exploration of the course!

Dr. Rashida Imran
Assistant Professor of English
Course Development Coordinator

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Discourse Analysis is one of the core topics in the academic disciplines of linguistics and literature at the BS English level. The field of discourse analysis is highly complex, dynamic and constantly expanding owing to its multidisciplinary nature. This course is not only an introduction but a kind of survey course to the emergence, major developments, theories and approaches to discourse analysis. With this kind of rich content, it is hoped that the course will provide a solid foundation to the students of the BS English program for enhancing their insight into the field of discourse analysis. The objectives of the course are to:

1. introduce the jargon of discourse, the multiplicity of its definitions and its unique descriptive features
2. provide background to the emergence and development of the field with reference to the key theorists
3. highlight the interrelatedness of discourse analysis and grammar and how both fields influence one another
4. evaluate the impact of pragmatics on the discourse analysis and their interest in analysing real language use
5. examine conversation analysis as a key approach to studying social interactions and the mechanism of turn-taking
6. explore theoretical perspectives and methodological designs of one of the most influential research approaches namely critical discourse analysis
7. discusses the theoretical tenets and methodology of one of the most influential research approaches, within the field of gender studies, namely feminist critical discourse analysis
8. assess some key genres of discourse including the discourse of advertising, the discourse of politics, the discourse of law and literary discourse.
9. describe the latest trends of research in the interdisciplinary field of discourse analysis
10. document past research conducted in the field of discourse analysis from multiple perspectives

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My special thanks to Dr Malik Ajmal Gulzar, Chairman Department of English for his support during the write-up of this course.

My thanks are also due to Dr Zahid Majeed (Director, APCP) and Ms Humera Ijaz (Editor, APCP) and the very cooperative staff at PPU, AIOU Islamabad.

Finally, to my readers, thank you for embarking on this journey with me. Your support and enthusiasm give purpose to my writing. I hope that this book will resonate with you and provide the insights and inspiration you seek.

The remaining shortcomings in the course are my own and any suggestions for the improvement of the course would be wholeheartedly welcome and the same will be incorporated in its subsequent revision.

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Thank you all for being part of this incredible journey.

Dr Rashida Imran
Assistant Professor of English
Course Development Coordinator

Unit–1

INTRODUCTION TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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OVERVIEW

This is the foremost unit which introduces the most debated term in the field of discourse analysis, discourse, in greater detail. Multiple definitions with unique descriptive features have been added to develop a holistic understanding of the term and its application in various contexts. The complexities involved in the interpretation of discourse have also been highlighted. Furthermore, characteristic features of written and spoken discourses are critically discussed.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to: -

- i. define the term discourse
- ii. highlight the significance of the quest for meaning
- iii. differentiate between the two basic approaches to the study of discourse
- iv. understand the critical importance of discourse interpretation
- v. explore the differences between spoken and written discourses

Language, as a sign system, is one of the most significant defining features of our social life since the times immemorial. Language is not merely a means of communication in the traditional sense of the term but also performs various other functions. We use language to express our feelings, thoughts and ideas about the issues which are socially, culturally and politically relevant to our society. Furthermore, language is used to building, sustaining and strengthening our interpersonal relationships. Intercultural as well as cross -cultural engagement is also possible because of language. Hence, it is, purely, the use of language which has transformed peoples of diverse cultures and socializations into a global community. However, as mentioned earlier, language is not restricted to performing communicative functions only and is used to meet different purposes and perform functions of varied nature. Language, as a social practice, adds coherence and sense to our existence. Language, thus, is the most integral aspect of our social life and our vivid experiences as all human learning and knowledge has been materialized in language.

Furthermore, language is not simply restricted to the purpose of ‘saying things’ rather language is used to ‘perform things’ and ‘be things’. Language enables us to do things and perform various actions, for instance, we use language to greet our friends, congratulate our batchmates, advise our siblings, request our seniors and promise our family various things, etc. Similarly, language is used to declare convocations open and confer degrees in academic settings. Similarly, in courtroom proceedings, culprits are sentenced via language. These scenarios are not reflective of the giving and seeking information function of language but of doing things of a varied nature. Similarly, language enables us to be things. Ours and others' social identities are dependent on the use of language. We can speak with the authority of experts or we can talk like the laymen. Our language expresses formal lexical choices when we are in the company of our elders but we may use highly informal language when surrounded by our friends. Thus, language enables us to adopt multiple identities simultaneously as opined by Gee (2011). Language is an essential element to ‘construct’ us as unique individuals and through the process of social interaction, we may either ‘reconstruct’ ‘deconstruct’ or ‘negotiate’ our identities. Therefore, our identity is not ‘absolute’ rather ‘fluid’ but this absolutism or fluidity of our identity is essentially grounded in the language we use. Therefore, this is language which determines our identity and influences and shapes our perceptions about the identities of other individuals. Therefore, it can be concluded that language not merely performs communicative function but encompasses a variety of functions of varied nature, from the simplest function of communication to the most complex one of identity construction.

1.1 The Pursuit for Meaning

Semanticists are concerned with the processes involved in encoding and decoding meaning of words, phrases, sentences and/or utterances ever since human beings started using language as a sign system. It is generally argued that words do not have any of their natural or intrinsic meanings and their plausible meanings are attributed to them by the people during the process of social interaction and with the passage of time, we may find meaning shift based on the uses of words in unique contexts. Arbitrariness is the linguistic term used to refer to this unique characteristic feature of human language which stands for the idea that the meaning of a linguistic sign is not determined or predicted from its word form nor is word form deduced from its meaning or function. Therefore, there is no intrinsic relationship between a signifier and the signified but constructed, hence lies the possibility of deconstruction of the meaning which is evident from the semantic change a word undergoes during the process of social interaction over a period of time. This study of meaning is not a recent scholarly pursuit but ancient philosophers were concerned with the study of meaning long before linguistics was established as a field of scientific study of language. This scholarly pursuit of studying meaning led to the development of two interrelated fields of semantics and pragmatics which deal with two distinct aspects of meaning. What is meaning and how is meaning encoded and decoded in language is answered by Thomas (1995) through a holistic description of meaning:

Meaning is not something that is inherent in the words alone, nor is it produced by the speaker alone or the hearer alone. Making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic), and the meaning potential of an utterance. Meaning, thus, is produced in interaction. It is jointly accomplished by both the speaker and the listener, or the writer and their reader. It involves social, psychological and cognitive factors that are relevant to the production and interpretation of what a speaker (or writer) says, and what a hearer (or reader) understands by what is said (22).

This valuable insight from Thomas (1995) leads us to understand the dynamic nature of meaning as well as the relevant contextual aspects which impact production and interpretation of meaning. What exactly constitutes meaning in language depends on several factors which vary according to the context of language use or discourse genre. For instance, it is often argued that a piece of literary text has the potential to generate an infinite number of interpretative meanings, which led to the much-celebrated notion of 'the death of the author' and the infinity of reader responses, Short (1989) discusses the same issue in greater length and concludes it thus:

It is true that each reader will to some extent interpret a text differently from others, merely as a consequence of the fact that we are all different from one another, have had different experiences, and so on. But it should be obvious that such a subjectivist view of literary understanding runs counter to the presuppositions of stylistic analysis, whose proponents assume, that our shared knowledge of the structure of our language and the processes for interpreting utterances in our community imply a relatively large degree of common understanding, in spite of differences in individual response. For the stylistician, the major fact to be explained is that, although we are all different, we agree to a remarkable extent over the interpretation... the range of interpretations which have been produced for even the most discussed texts is remarkably small compared with the theoretically infinite set of 'possible' readings. (p. 2–3)

The critical notion of the infinity of meanings is not attributed to literary texts only, but any genre of discourse can lead to such discussion. Cameron (2001) reflects on this challenge in much detail, within the context of a critical investigation of Dutch critical discourse analyst van Dijk which was based on a report, published in the British popular newspaper *The Sun*, related to the illegal immigrants, she argues:

A number of things could be said in response to this challenge. First of all, the 'infinite variety' argument should not be taken too far, for clearly it is not true that texts support *any* reading the analyst might care to produce. As Jenny Thomas (1995) points out, meaning making involves interaction between the reader and the text: the text puts some limits on what a reader can do with it. Just as 'How are things, Scott?' could not reasonably be taken by Scott as a proposal of marriage, so *BRITAIN INVADED* offers nothing to the analyst who wants to claim that the *Sun* reproduces sexism, or homophobia, or an obsession with football. To anyone familiar with the *Sun*, these are all quite plausible claims, but they find no support in this particular piece of discourse. (p. 138)

Thus, Cameron (2001) rejects the infinity hypothesis of reader responses and concludes that all interpretations are necessarily related to the text closely. Furthermore, her argument that texts simply do not support any reading an analyst may produce is grounded in the fact that meaning-making involves interaction between the reader and the text which is successful only if the analyst is aware of the structural and stylistic constraints of the text. It also depends on their critical engagement with the text, their analytic practices as well as contextual sensibility. This critical approach leads to what Short (1989) hypothesizes that even the most celebrated texts have a very small range of interpretations as compared to the theoretical infinity of possible interpretive readings.

1.2 Defining Discourse

The term ‘discourse’ is one of the most frequently used and discussed terms within the broader field of discourse analysis. Leading theorists and practitioners have investigated its nature and offered different definitions, descriptions and usages which led to a diversity of defining features of discourse, multiplicity of its meanings and its constitutive elements. In its broadest sense, the term refers to written or spoken language encompassing the way language is used coherently in its context as well as linguistic structures, conventions, practices and strategies used by the speakers and writers to convey meaning.

There are two fundamental approaches to the definition of discourse. Firstly, discourse is defined as language ‘above the sentence level’ and secondly, it is defined as ‘language in use’. The former definition focuses on the structure of language which makes it cohesive. It investigates how words, phrases and sentences are combined in different patterns leading to the development of larger texts. Grammatical analysis of discourse is, often, embedded in this approach. The latter definition, on the other hand, does not restrict itself to a mere description of structural features of language and takes into consideration the social aspect of language and the functions it performs within the context of a particular speech community. If discourse analysis deals with ‘language above the sentence’, it means it looks for patterns which are extended and larger than sentences. In this sense, discourse would stand for a text which is both cohesive and coherent rather than a mere collection of unconnected sentences which do not make any sense. We can understand the application of both these approaches in greater detail by considering the following example used by Cameron (2001).

The baby cried. The mommy picked it up.

You must have instantly realized that this is an instance of discourse rather than two unconnected sentences. It is interesting to find that it is the use of cohesive linker ‘it’ which connects both these sentences in a meaningful way and enables us to reach this conclusion and treat both the sentences as interrelated. Though, ‘it’ is used in the second sentence but it refers back to the baby mentioned in the first sentence. You might have, also, quickly identified that it is an instance of anaphoric reference which refers back to the entity already mentioned in the text. Thus, the approach which considers discourse as language beyond the sentence level adopts the structuralist perspective to the study of language and investigates the linguistic patterns functioning together to creating unity of texture. Now, reconsider the same instance from the perspective of the second approach to the study of discourse which is ‘language in use’.

Through our shared experiences of the way language is used in our social context, we can identify the sequence of the events and a narrative at work by understanding that what happened in the second sentence is actually the effect of the cause depicted in the first sentence. Moreover, though the text does not explicitly tell that the mommy was the biological parent of the baby but our worldview and schemata of motherhood influence us to believe that the mommy was the real mother of the baby. Moreover, there might be a possibility that the mommy did not belong to the baby and she picked it up just to console and pacify it, compelled by her maternal instinct, while the baby's real mommy was not around. However, our worldview and sequence of events in the real world will lead us to the former conclusion that the mommy was the biological parent of the baby. This analysis stands valid when a news headline such as 'Rising inflation, low standard of living' appears in a national daily, it reveals that what happened before is the cause of what happened next. It is interesting to note that without any use of cohesive linkers, we are capable of generating this meaning based on our knowledge of how news discourse operates. Thus, there must be another factor which plays a key role in understanding the meaning of two seemingly unconnected phrases. You might have now understood that much of the interpretation of this discourse is not based on our conventional knowledge of linguistic forms and their function but rather on the way language is used in our social and cultural context. Thus, the second approach to the study of discourse is more inclusive in nature as it focuses on both the linguistic form as well as function (s) it performs in real-life situations. One of the most comprehensive definitions of the term is given by Woods (2006) which is clearly reflective of this approach to the study of discourse:

The relatively recent adoption by linguists of the term 'discourse' for the subject we study when we examine 'language in use' – the real language that real people use in the real world – is at least partly a recognition of the fact that language is very much more than just the sum of the linguistic elements that compose it. Discourse is, at the very least, language plus context – by which I mean the context that we bring with us when we use language; the context that includes our experience, assumptions and expectations; the context we change (and which is itself changed) in our relationships with others, as we both construct and negotiate our way through the social practices of the world we live in (p. x).

Woods (2006) stresses the word 'real' as the real language used by real people in the real context which is further indicative of the idea that discourse embodies not only the extended use of language but also its socio-cultural context. It may refer to larger units of language like conversations, interviews, debates, essays, and narratives, etc. It may also refer to any linguistic or semiotic content produced by electronic, print or digital media.

1.3 Interpreting Discourse

Interpreting discourse is not a very simplified and straightforward activity, rather it involves critical engagement with the text. As discussed in the previous section, the interpretation of discourse is largely dependent on how language is used in our sociocultural contexts. Therefore, the interpretation of discourse is embedded in our worldview, shared knowledge, vivid experiences and cultural schemata to fill in the gaps and develop meaningful connections which are not explicitly expressed by phrases and sentences. This is evident from the example shared by Cameron (2011) which we analyzed while discussing approaches to the definition of discourse. More or less, the same pattern is involved in our interpretation of a wide range of discourse genres. Now consider the following instance:

Mother: Are you joining us at the party tonight at your uncle's place?

Son: I have a test tomorrow.

Mother: Ok

This instance is identical in nature to the instance which we discussed previously. We do not find any obvious cohesive ties used within this stretch of discourse. Nevertheless, it is meaningfully connected and coherent. Thus, coherence is another factor involved in the process of interpretation of the discourse which enables both the mother and the son to make sense of each other's utterances. They decode each other's responses from the information contained in the sentences uttered, but there must be something else involved in the interpretation of this exchange which is the application of the politeness principle. Based on our societal schemata of appropriate linguistic behaviour, invitations are not flatly refused as refusal may sound rude and pose a threat to people's 'face'. As we can understand from the exchange that the son's response is not merely informative but a polite decline of the invitation. None of this is actually stated in the text itself. This characteristic feature often leads to much debated notion of authenticity of meaning. Are the meanings simply stated by the text or invested by the analyst? Angermuller (2014) elaborates this point thus:

From a discourse analytical point of view, texts, even the most conceptual ones, are not closed meaning containers... it needs a cognitive agent to solve its interpretive problems: the reader... as an opaque symbolic materiality, the text is posed between the individual and the world... texts are not repositories for pure ideas, content or messages... they need a reader who completes them by adding missing contexts and thus associating the many anonymous sources and voices of discourse with definite individuals occupying social positions. (p. 63-64)

It is evident from Angermüller's reflections that such types of exchanges are best explained through the conventional actions performed by the speakers in such interactions. Based on the insights derived from the speech act theory, we can understand the brief conversational exchange in terms of actions performed via utterances. The first utterance of hers is not simply an informative statement but a request to him to accompany her to the party. On the other hand, his response is, actually, a polite refusal and not simply stating the reason why he cannot comply with the request which may be regarded as an indirect speech act. This seemingly unconnected exchange becomes meaningful based on the knowledge of how language is used in the social context. It is, therefore, evident from the given example that our world view as well as our shared knowledge and experiences of language use largely influence our interpretation of discourse. This is a common ground for both discourse analysis and pragmatics as both study language in its context of use. In addition to the knowledge of how language is used in a real social context, the interpretation of discourse is largely grounded in the societal schemata and collective societal consciousness. A schema is a preexisting knowledge structure in memory which is triggered while analyzing discourse. In the case of intercultural communication, interpretation may become problematic and lead to ambiguity because of unawareness of the societal schemata of appropriate linguistic behaviour as well as real language use in social and cultural contexts.

1.4 Discourse and Construction of Social Reality

The most valuable insight derived from the works of critical theorists is discourse as a constructor and reflector of social reality. Thus, discourse performs the dualistic function of construction and reflection of societal philosophies and ideologies. The discourses produced by various societal institutions are embedded in the collective consciousness and reproduce social life in all of its intricacies. Discourses produced by various channels of socialization often reveal societal assumptions and practices related to the issues of social, cultural and political relevance. Discourses present dominant beliefs, norms, values, stereotypes and socio-cultural assumptions of a society in all of their material and abstract manifestations.

Discourse has a constitutive property. Michel Foucault referred to the same property of discourse when he defined discourse as practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak. Discourse, thus, enables us to grasp abstract ideas and notions like globalization, cultural imperialism, capitalism and neo-colonialism, etc. Without the constitutive property of discourse; such complex notions would not have been formulated. Within this perspective, Lupton (1992) defines discourse as 'a group of ideas or patterned way of thinking which can be identified in textual and verbal communications and can also be located in wider social structures' (p. 145). A critical investigation of various media discourses

reveals how reality is socially constructed and is subjective in nature. Similarly, discourses produced by cultural productions of a particular society, reveal its generic fabric. Thus, discourse not only constructs but also reflects social reality. Edward Said's critical notion of 'Orient' and 'Occident' is a product of social reality constituted and reflected through discourse. Said revealed the role of cultural productions and discursive representations of the West about the Orient. Construction of the Orient as primitive, irrational and barbaric while the Occident as civilized, rational and cultured is, essentially, grounded in the discourses produced and sustained by media, cultural productions and other epistemological sites. This is further evident through stereotypical representations of different religious, racial, ethnic and linguistic groups by mainstream electronic and print media discourses which is highly reflective of the constitutive property of discourse. Thus, discourse provides invaluable insights into social life, societal structures and social identities of people.

Discourses produced in spoken and written forms not only shape our social and cultural practices but are also shaped by them. Furthermore, discourses not only reflect political, social and cultural ideologies but are also responsible for producing, sustaining, challenging or deconstructing these ideologies. Therefore, discourse is said to perform ideational work. Furthermore, discourses are shaped by other discourses, the ones that have preceded and the ones which might follow. Reality is said to be 'discursively constructed' as people talk about certain things within the backdrop of certain discourses available to them. Change in people's perceptions of a political figure is the finest instance of the discursive construction of reality. Based on the nature of discourses produced, disseminated and consumed, a patriot may turn into a traitor and vice versa. This conditioning of people's psyche is grounded in ideological discourses constructed by dominant societal institutions and most prominently media for the ideological effect.

The term discourse is used both in singular as well in plural form. Multiple discourses may be pervasive about an entity, for instance, child labour. The social discourse may present child labour as a product of poverty and illiteracy. The legal discourse about child labour may project it as a criminal offence if the minimum age limit is not followed while recruiting a worker. The medical discourse may project child labour as a major obstacle to physical and intellectual growth of a minor. Similarly, political discourse may emphasize the need to introduce legislation and social welfare projects to combat its prevalence. These multiple discourses when produced, perpetuated and consumed may generate a set of ideas, beliefs and concepts which we, the consumers of discourses, perceive as the 'reality' of child labour. This is what the theorists term 'reality is discursively constructed and reflected'.

1.5 Spoken and Written Discourse

Discourse analysis as a field of critical inquiry is not specifically restricted to either written or spoken discourse (s). It may investigate language use in any discourse genre and in any medium. A diverse variety of linguistic texts is analyzed in the field from various theoretical and methodological perspectives. Discourse analysts may investigate written discourses of various kinds as well as their semiotic features. Similarly, discourse analysts may focus on spoken discourse as well as their prosodic features. Spoken discourses may include naturally occurring talk, institutionalized conversations, political speeches, talk shows, interviews, electronic media news and advertisements, cultural products like television plays and documentaries, etc. On parallel grounds, written discourses may deal with any kind of socially situated language use in written form including but not limited to print media products, legal discourse, political discourses, textbooks, scriptures, literary texts as well written manifestations of a diversified range of discourses. Irrespective of the theoretical focus of the analysts, they tend to make explicit what is generally taken for granted and show relevance and impact of discourse on people's lives and society at large.

Discourse analysts are interested in investigating language because it is, undoubtedly, the most significant social practice and an integral element of our social structure. Our social identities and relations are rooted in the use of language. However, working with spoken discourse is more challenging in nature as compared to written discourse but at the same time, it is a rewarding project too. It is rewarding because spoken discourse is firmly rooted in real language use because of its non-scripted nature. It is challenging because collecting spoken data involves additional constraints like seeking informed consent, audio/video recordings of the conversations and transcribing data into machine readable form. Capturing semiotic or prosodic data is yet another challenge attributed to spoken data. On the other hand, written discourse may involve seeking informed consent but is ready for analysis at the onset of critical inquiry. Furthermore, working with spoken discourse is a specialized endeavour which requires unique expertise and skills. On the other hand, we are more trained in investigating written discourses as compared to spoken ones. This is partly attributed to the fact that we are academically trained to do so as in close readings of texts of various kinds, however, any talk is hardly analyzed from this perspective. Spoken and written discourses differ with respect to their structural and functional conventions which makes working with one type of discourse a more challenging enterprise as compared to the other. For instance, regarding grammatical intricacy, written discourse is more structurally complex as compared to spoken discourse.

Moreover, written discourse is more lexically dense as compared to spoken discourse which might be fairly simple. Written discourse, also, has a high level of nominalization and it is considered to be more explicit stylistically as compared to spoken discourse. Regarding contextualization, speech is more strongly tied to its context as speakers and listeners rely on some shared assumptions to encode and

decode a message. Spoken discourse is, also, more spontaneous and it is marked by more repetitions, hesitations and redundancy as it is produced in real time and in a real setting. Written discourse, on the other hand, is carefully planned and more organized. However, it is more logical to view these differences not as absolute but rather as fluid with some variations. The selection of spoken or written discourse is largely determined by the theoretical perspectives and objectives of a research project.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. Language, as a sign system, is one of the most significant defining features of our social life since the times immemorial.
- ii. Language is not purely restricted to the purpose of ‘saying things’ rather language is used to ‘perform things’ and ‘be things’.
- iii. Our identity is not ‘absolute’ rather ‘fluid’ but this absolutism or fluidity of our identity is essentially grounded in the language we speak or write.
- iv. The linguistic term used to refer to this unique characteristic feature of human language is called arbitrariness which stands for the idea that the meaning of linguistic signs is not determined or predicted from their word forms nor is word form deduced from its meaning or function.
- v. This preoccupation with the study of meaning led to the development of two interrelated fields of semantics and pragmatics which deal with different aspects of meaning.
- vi. Cameron (2001) refutes the claim of the infinity of reader responses and concludes her argument on the grounds that all interpretations are necessarily related to the text closely.
- vii. The term ‘discourse’ is one of the most debated terms in the broader field of discourse analysis.
- viii. Many key theorists and practitioners investigated its nature and presented different and sometimes radically different definitions, descriptions and usages which led to a vast array of defining features of discourse, the multiplicity of its meanings and its constitutive units.
- ix. There are two basic approaches to the definition of discourse. Firstly, discourse is defined as language ‘above the sentence level’ and secondly, it is defined as ‘language in use’.

- x. Lupton (1992) defines discourse as ‘a group of ideas or patterned way of thinking which can be identified in textual and verbal communications and can also be located in wider social structures’ (p. 145).
- xi. Interpreting discourse is not a very simplified and straightforward activity, rather it involves critical engagement with the text.
- xii. In addition to the knowledge of how language is used in a real social context, the interpretation of discourse is largely grounded in the societal schemata and collective societal consciousness.
- xiii. The most valuable insight derived from the works of critical theorists is discourse as a constructor and reflector of social reality.
- xiv. Discourse has a constitutive property. Michel Foucault referred to the same property of discourse when he defined discourse as practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak.
- xv. Irrespective of the theoretical focus of the analysts, they tend to make explicit what is generally taken for granted and show the relevance and impact of discourse on people’s lives and society at large.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1. How does the study of discourse contribute to our understanding of power dynamics within social interactions?
- 2. What are the key differences between written and spoken discourse, and how do these distinctions impact communication?
- 3. In what ways does discourse shape and reflect cultural identities? Provide examples from different societies.
- 4. How would you describe the processes involved in the interpretation of discourse?
- 5. How can discourse analysis be applied in the field of education to improve classroom communication and foster a more inclusive learning environment?

Unit–2

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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OVERVIEW

This unit provides background to the inception and development of the field in the 1970s. The role of key theorists and major developments in the field of discourse analysis have also been addressed in this unit. Furthermore, interdisciplinary nature of the field of discourse analysis has also been discussed in greater detail.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to: -

- i. define the term discourse with scholarly references
- ii. analyze the diversity of the field of discourse analysis
- iii. trace the historical development of the field
- iv. examine the element of intertextuality
- v. critically evaluate discourse from the perspective of performance

Discourse analysis is a generic term which refers to a variety of approaches used to analyze and interpret written and spoken discourses. The field was established and developed during the 1970s and is, also, labelled as discourse studies. Theoretically, methodologically and analytically, the field of discourse analysis is highly diverse and constantly expanding by a growing body of scholarly work. Thus, there is a considerable variation in the theories and practices of the field. Discourse analysis is, basically, a qualitative research approach in social sciences and humanities which is practised in a variety of academic disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, media studies and gender studies, etc.

2.1 Development of the Field

Discourse analysis analyzes language used in a variety of texts, written and spoken, as well as the contexts in which it is used, disseminated and consumed. It also focuses on the worldview, social relations and social identities as constructed and projected by discourse. The term, discourse analysis, was initially used by Zellig Harris (1952) who was an influential American linguist and notable for his discovery of transformational structures in language. He was, primarily, interested in investigating the structure of language beyond the sentence level. He was, further, interested in exploring how language features are used to create a variety of texts and their unique styles. His foremost important observation is:

connected discourse occurs within a particular situation – whether of a person speaking, or of a conversation, or of someone sitting down occasionally over the period of months to write a particular kind of book in a particular literary or scientific tradition. (p. 3)

Harris (1952) was also concerned with exploring ‘the relationship between linguistic and nonlinguistic behaviour’, which means that how people make sense of or understand when someone says something in a particular situation. It is a common observation that people normally do not exactly say what they intend to mean through their utterances which implies that there may be differences in the intended and stated meaning of utterances. For instance, if one of your friends invites you to a party and you respond with an utterance like, ‘I have a test tomorrow’, your friend will understand that you are not simply being informative rather you are politely declining the invitation. Harris argues that utterance meaning is determined by the specific contextual situation and if the context of utterance changes, it may bring a change in the meaning. Thus, an utterance can be understood differently in different contexts and by different language users if their worldview is not identical in nature.

Van Dijk (2008), also, argues that context is a subjective construct which not only determines the uniqueness of each text but also represents the common worldview and shared assumptions that language users draw on during their social interaction. The link between society and discourse is mediated and depends on language users and how their linguistic practices shape the communicative event in which they are engaged. Thus, in his words, '[i]t is not the social situation that influences (or is influenced by) discourse, but the way the participants define the situation in which the discourse occurs' (van Dijk 2008: x). As described earlier, contexts refer to broader socio-cultural conditions which are constantly modified and evolve. Furthermore, people's interactions are grounded in their contextual situations as language users of a certain speech community. Therefore, if we cannot make sense of the way language is used in certain cultures then we cannot make sense of their texts as texts are essentially grounded in their contexts (Martin 2001). Discourse analysis, then, is interested in 'what happens when people draw on the knowledge they have about language . . . to do things in the world' (Johnstone 2002: 3).

Since the inception and development of the field of discourse analysis, there have been scholarly differences in the nature of discourse analysis. The researchers in the field of social sciences may label their work as an enterprise of discourse analysis but they perceive the term in altogether different ways (Fairclough 2003). He, further, contrasts what he calls 'textually oriented discourse analysis' with approaches to discourse analysis that have more of a social theoretical orientation. He does not see these two views as mutually exclusive, however, arguing for an analysis of discourse that is both linguistic and social in its orientation. Similarly, Mills (1997) highlights how the term discourse analysis has been subjected to a variety of usages within its short history. It has shifted from highlighting one aspect of language use to another.

As discussed in unit 1, discourse analysis not only investigates language beyond the sentence level but also language in use. This view of discourse analysis explores how real people use language in real situations. It, further, investigates how people make sense of the communicative intentions of others, and how people achieve their communicative goals as well as present themselves to others by participating in communicative events. It also focuses on intracultural and intercultural communication by investigating people's linguistic behaviour.

The early foundations of discourse analysis are grounded in the works of philosophers like Austin who explored how language is used in the context to achieve social actions and perform speech acts. The roots of discourse analysis can also be traced back to the fields of structuralism and semiotics which focused on the formal structure of languages and examined signs and their meanings in their context respectively. In the

late 20th century, scholars like Norman Fairclough, van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Deborah Cameron established the foundation for Critical Discourse Analysis focusing on the relationship between language, power and ideology. They also investigated that social inequality is reflected and contested in discourse. Furthermore, scholars like Harvey Sacks established the approach of Conversation Analysis focusing on the mechanism which governs naturally occurring talk as well as institutionalized conversations. The contemporary development in the field is Multimodal Discourse Analysis, an approach to analyze social and digital media multimodal texts integrating language and other semiotic features such as images, gestures, graphics and sounds, etc. The field has also expanded to include global and transnational discourses in the analysis to investigate how language use varies in intercultural or cross- cultural settings. Its methodologies and theoretical frameworks continue to adapt to new contexts and technologies, making it a dynamic area of study in contemporary social sciences and humanities.

2.2 Interdisciplinary Nature of Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is, essentially, interdisciplinary in nature. Although, it has been fully established now as an academic discipline with a growing body of scholarly work but during the primary phase of its inception and development in the 1970s, many of its theoretical perspectives, research approaches and methodological tools were borrowed from other established academic disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy, sociology and linguistics. Discourse analysis' chief concern of analyzing 'real language in use' is grounded in the anthropological tradition of studying the diversity of human cultures through participant observation to capture their true intricacies. As language not only transmits culture but is also transmitted by culture, therefore, anthropologists pay much attention to real language use which is also a central concern of discourse analysis. Language as a form of social practice has been intriguing for discourse analysts from various perspectives just like for sociologists. From philosophy, discourse analysis derives its concern for ordinary language philosophy. Philosophers such as Austin, Searle and Grice are some prominent figures associated with the speech act theory which provides a unique perspective on the human communication system. Its concern with 'language as doing' is embedded in the philosophy of language. To understand utterances, we have to decode not only their stated meanings but also what speakers of those utterances intend to communicate. Furthermore, philosophers have been traditionally concerned with the study of meaning which has been the central concern of discourse analysis too. Discourse analysts are also interested in investigating the nature of meaning and how it is constructed during the process of social interaction. The approach to discourse analysis which is developed from ordinary language philosophy is pragmatics which studies meaning in the context of its use.

Furthermore, discourse analysis' concern with the orderliness of social interaction is grounded in the sociological approach of ethnomethodology. The question of how social order is produced and reproduced has traditionally been a chief concern of sociology. The central idea of ethnomethodology is that social actors are not simply following externally imposed roles but are always actively engaged in creating social order through their behaviour. Conversation is one such aspect of the orderliness of human behaviour and the approach of conversation analysis is grounded in the sociological tradition of ethnomethodology which studies conversation openings, closings and the element of turn-taking, etc.

The field of linguistics has also been very influential in informing theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches to discourse analysis. Discourse analysis' chief concern in understanding the structure of language and linguistic forms is embedded in linguistics. Linguistics' fields of phonology and syntax, in particular, have a great impact on discourse analysis. Linguistics' concern with analyzing the structure of language 'beyond the sentence level' is also a basic premise of discourse analysis. Furthermore, formal and structural properties of human interactions have always been a central concern of linguistics which has influenced the field of discourse analysis greatly. Discourse analysts also investigate the structure of language above the sentence level. In light of this discussion, the interdisciplinary nature of the field of discourse analysis can be easily ascertained. Like other academic disciplines, discourse analysis also draws heavily from various interrelated fields of critical inquiry.

2.3 Discourse Structure of Texts

Discourse structure of texts refers to the structural composition of the texts not only in the typical sense of patterning of grammatical structures but also in the sequential ordering of the ideas presented in the texts. Discourse analysts are, also, interested in finding out how people organize what should typically come at the beginning or the end of an ongoing conversation or in a piece of writing. In other words, how people foreground certain information in the opening of a conversation or at the beginning of a written text, etc. The placement or arrangement varies across cultures and languages. People do not behave identically when it comes to the use of language apart from certain globally established conventions of appropriate linguistic behaviour. For instance, it is customary for Japanese to begin their official communication with a comment on weather conditions while this is not a ritualistic requirement in English speaking world. There are, thus, particular ways of ordering what we say or write in spoken or written communication across cultures. The field of linguistics which deals with this aspect of language use is called intercultural or cross cultural pragmatics. The first analyst who examined the discourse structure

of the texts was Mitchell (1957). He focused on buying and selling situations to find out how people order what they say in such interactions. He introduced the notion of stages into discourse analysis which refers to a sequence of steps language users go through in these interactions. He was, primarily, concerned with the ways people organize their interactions at an overall textual level. He argued that language is used cooperatively and the meaning of language is embedded in its immediate situational context as well as the broader socio-cultural context in which the text is produced. It is a common observation that when we are located in different situational contexts like a shopping mall, a restaurant, a hospital, or a classroom, we know from our experiences of how our interactions are ordered, how the interactions are typically begun and ended and what kind of language is used during these interactions. Hasan (1989) focused on service encounters to find out their obligatory and optional stages. For instance, he points out that greetings are not typical of service encounters in English when someone is buying something. He, further, points out that there are numerous ways in which stages for service encounters can be realized in terms of language use, for instance, could you please show me an Android phone? Can I have an Android phone? And so on. There is, thus, no neat one-to-one correspondence between the structural elements of texts and how they are expressed through language. Similarly, researchers have focused on naturally occurring talk as well as on institutionalized conversations to analyze their structure. They have examined conversational openings and closings as well as turn-taking. They have also investigated how people manage topical shifts and agenda setting, etc.

2.4 Cultural Ways of Speaking and Writing

As we have already discussed, language use is embedded in its specific socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, different cultural groups have different ways of using language in speech and writing as well as different ways of doing things through language. This aspect of language was explored by Hymes (1964) whose work is considered to be a reaction against the views of language which took no or little account of social and cultural contexts which inform the use of language and where language occurs. He exclusively focused on speech events and related aspects of roles and relationships of the interlocutors, agenda and culturally specific settings which impact our linguistic behaviour. For example, the use of please and thanks is highly ritualized in England whereas in the case of Japan, it is not ritualized when involved in buying and selling activities. This does not imply that Japanese culture is rude rather it is very much politeness oriented. However, it is the situational context which creates differences between the linguistic behaviour of both cultures.

2.5 Discourse and Performance

The notion of discourse as performance or performativity is derived from the works of Judith Butler which is grounded in the work of British linguist and philosopher Austin who primarily developed speech act theory in his work 'How to Do Things with Words'. He proposed the idea that utterances can perform actions besides conveying meanings. It was Searle, an American philosopher who further expanded his work and introduced the concept of intended force of an utterance. The notion of discourse as performance derives its impetus from the theoretical ideas presented in these works as Gee (2011) explains:

Discourse is a 'dance' that exists in the abstract as a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times, and places in the here and now as a performance that is recognizable as just such a coordination. Like a dance, the performance here and now is never the same. It all comes down, often, to what the 'masters of the dance' will allow to be recognized or will be forced to recognize as a possible instantiation of the dance. (p. 36)

The notion of performativity is based on the view that in saying something, we do it as propounded by Austin and Searle. That is, we bring states of affairs into being as a result of what we say and what we do. These kinds of speech acts are called performatives. For instance, when a priest in the church says, 'I now pronounce you as husband and wife', the action of marriage is performed. Performance, thus, brings the social world into being (Bucholtz and Hall 2003). Butler, Cameron and others talk about doing gender in much the way that Gee talks about discourse as performance. Discourses, then, like the performance of gendered identities, are socially constructed, rather than 'natural'. People 'are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk' not 'because of who they (already) are' (Cameron 1999: 144). We, thus, 'are not who we are because of some inner being but because of what we do' (Pennycook 2007: 70). It is, thus, 'in the doing that the identity is produced' (Pennycook 2011).

2.6 Discourse and Intertextuality

All discourses, whether they are spoken or written, gain their meaning against the backdrop of other discourses. The term intertextuality highlights the relationship between texts of varied nature produced in the same or different time and space zones. It also refers to the interrelatedness of the texts which are in dialogue with each other with or without explicit references. We thus 'make sense of every word, every utterance, or act against the background of (some) other words, utterances, acts of a similar kind' (Lemke 1995: 23). All texts are, thus, in an intertextual relationship with other texts. As Bazerman (2004: 83) argues: We create our texts

out of the sea of former texts that surround us, the sea of language we live in. And we understand the texts of others within that same sea. Wang's (2007) study of newspaper commentaries in Chinese and English on the events of September 11 provides an example of how writers in different languages and cultural settings draw on intertextual resources for the writing of their texts and how they position themselves in relation to their sources. Intertextuality is important too: that is to say, how language is used not only throughout a single text but also across a set of different but related texts. Texts have histories and so discourses created at different times stand as reference points for each other.

2.7 Diversity in Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is now fully established as an academic discipline and it is studied and practised by scholars, academia and researchers in a variety of fields including but not limited to linguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, literary studies, gender studies, psychology and many other interrelated fields and academic disciplines. The application of discourse analysis in a wide range of fields has led to diversity in theory and practice. Theorists and practitioners have generated multiple approaches to discourse analysis with competing or parallel theoretical perspectives.

Discourse analysts are interested in examining instances of a wide range of language use across disciplines. They may explore, spoken, written or sign language. A wide array of linguistic 'texts' are explored in the study of discourse. These might consist of a conversation or a letter; a speech, a memo or a report; a broadcast, a newspaper article or an interview, a lesson, a consultation or a confrontational encounter, an advertisement, or a piece of literary text. Different approaches sometimes reach similar conclusions though they use different tools and terminologies connected to different "micro-communities" of researchers.

Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory in nature. Most of the discourse analysts are interested in discourse as evidence of reality projecting social life and social relationships. Therefore, it is mostly used to study those issues which have social and cultural relevance; for instance, discourse analysts may analyze media discourses to explore racism and sexism. While other systems of language may focus on individual linguistic units which compose it, for instance, morphology and phonology. Discourse analysis focuses on 'language beyond the sentence' and 'language in use'. Thus, discourse analysis is the study of real language used by real speakers in real situations. Discourse analysts focus on language because it is an integral and irreducible aspect of social reality. Discourse analysts deal with both the form and function of language. Thus, they are not only concerned with how language functions but, also, with the construction of meaning in different social

contexts. Thus, it focuses on the social aspects of communication and the way people use language to create ideological effects. Discourse analysts study the context of texts to analyze various social aspects at work, for instance, language, power and ideology. The context of texts may encompass social and cultural conditions as well as political philosophies, etc. As already discussed, discourse analysis focuses on extended chunks of language which are larger than a sentence such as conversations or texts of various kinds. Discourse analysis, usually, focuses on discourses produced by major societal institutions like religion, law, media and school, etc. rather than ordinary conversations. Different cultural products are, also, analyzed to reveal various forms of social injustices explicitly and implicitly embedded in discourse. In short, discourse analysis is marked by the diversity of theoretical perspectives and a multiplicity of research methods to explore social aspects of the texts grounded within their contexts.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. Discourse analysis is a generic term which refers to a variety of approaches used to analyze and interpret written and spoken discourses.
- ii. The field was established and developed during the 1970s and is, also, labelled as discourse studies.
- iii. Theoretically, methodologically and analytically, the field of discourse analysis is highly diverse and constantly expanding by a growing body of scholarly work. Thus, there is a considerable variation in the theories and practices of the field.
- iv. Discourse analysis is, basically, a qualitative research approach in social sciences and humanities which is practised in a variety of academic disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, cultural studies and gender studies.
- v. The term, discourse analysis, was initially used by Zellig Harris (1952) who was an influential American linguist and notable for his discovery of transformational structures in language.
- vi. Harris (1952) was, primarily, interested in investigating the structure of language beyond the sentence level. He was, further, interested in exploring how language features are used to create a variety of texts and their unique styles.
- vii. Discourse analysis' chief concern of analyzing 'real language in use' is grounded in the anthropological tradition of studying the diversity of human cultures through participant observation to capture their true intricacies.

- viii. Furthermore, discourse analysis' concern with the orderliness of social interaction is grounded in the sociological approach of ethnomethodology.
- ix. Discourse structure of texts refers to the structural composition of the texts not only in the typical sense of patterning of grammatical structures but also in the sequential ordering of the ideas presented in the texts.
- x. The notion of performativity is based on the view that in saying something, we do it (Cameron and Kulick 2003).
- xi. People 'are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk' not 'because of who they (already) are' (Cameron 1999: 144).
- xii. The term intertextuality highlights the relationship between texts of varied nature produced in the same or different time and space zones.
- xiii. Theorists and practitioners have generated multiple approaches to discourse analysis with competing or parallel theoretical perspectives.
- xiv. The context of texts may encompass social and cultural conditions as well as political philosophies, etc.
- xv. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory in nature.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1. What is discourse analysis, and how does it differ from other approaches to studying language and communication?
- 2. Explain the main principles and methodologies used in discourse analysis to analyze spoken or written texts.
- 3. How can discourse analysis be applied to study the representation of gender roles and stereotypes in media and advertising?
- 4. Discuss the role of power and ideology in shaping discourse and its impact on social structures and institutions.
- 5. Provide a practical example of discourse analysis applied to a specific real-world context, such as political debates or online forums, and describe the insights gained from the analysis.

Unit–3

**DISCOURSE
ANALYSIS AND GRAMMAR**

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OVERVIEW

This unit examines discourse and grammar and highlights their interrelatedness and the way these influence and shape each other. Technical concepts like cohesion and coherence are extensively discussed. Furthermore, the terms theme and rheme are elaborated as well as references and their types to understand how discourse and grammar are interlinked.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to: -

- i. explain the interrelationship of discourse and grammar
- ii. determine how discourse and grammar influence each other
- iii. illustrate the difference between coherence and cohesion in discourse
- iv. identify the theme and rheme in the text
- v. interpret the relationship between reference and the context

Language is a complex system that enables communication among individuals and serves as one of the most important unifying factors of a society. The study of language encompasses various aspects related to its structure, word formation, sounds and meaning construction processes. Two of its most important and interrelated aspects are discourse and grammar. Discourse refers to not only language but also the broader context of language use, including the organization of information, the structure of conversations, and the social and cultural implications of communication. Discourse, thus, is the use of language in context, extending beyond individual sentences to encompass entire conversations, written texts, and even larger communicative events. It also embodies the large socio-cultural context in which language use is grounded. It investigates the way speakers or writers connect sentences and ideas, bring coherence to the message, and how language is used to achieve specific communicative goals. Discourse analysis is the study of these patterns and structures that govern communication. As stated earlier, discourse is profoundly influenced by the social context in which it occurs. Cultural norms, social hierarchies, and power dynamics can significantly impact how language is used. For instance, the choice of vocabulary, politeness strategies, and interactional styles may vary depending on the participants' roles, power relations and setting.

Grammar is the system of rules that governs the structure of sentences and the formation of words in a language. It provides the framework for constructing meaningful expressions. The study of grammar involves understanding syntax, morphology, and phonology. Each of these sub-systems deals with a unique aspect of language. For instance, syntax deals with the arrangement of words to form grammatically correct sentences. It encompasses the rules for word order, sentence structure and phrase formation. Different languages have diverse syntactic structures and understanding these variations is crucial for effective communication and language learning. Similarly, morphology is concerned with the internal structure of words and how they are formed. It includes the study of morphemes which are the smallest units of meaning or grammatical form within a language. Morphemes can be classified into two categories: free morphemes, which can stand alone as words and bound morphemes, which must attach to other morphemes to convey meaning. Free morphemes include structural and lexical morphemes whereas bound morphemes include inflectional and derivational morphemes. Another important element of the grammatical study of language is phonology which focuses on the sounds of a language and how they are organized into phonemes, which are the distinctive sound units that differentiate meaning. The study of phonology is essential for understanding pronunciation patterns and accent variations. The study of grammar may include semantics and pragmatics which deal with two distinct aspects of meaning. The former investigates literal meanings of words while the latter deals with studying meaning in the context.

3.1 Interrelatedness of Grammar and Discourse

Grammar and discourse are interrelated in the sense that discourse stands for 'language beyond the sentence level' and 'language in use' whereas grammar provides the systematic framework to analyze the form and structure of a language. Thus, grammar provides the structural foundation for discourse. It sets the rules for constructing phrases, clauses, sentences and utterances, which are the building blocks of any communicative act. The organization of ideas and the use of cohesive devices in discourse rely heavily on grammatical structures. On the other hand, discourse influences grammar as well. The communicative context and the intended message can lead to variations in syntactic structure, word choice, and the use of specific grammatical constructions. Grammatical forms and functions are highly important in this regard as there is no neat and one-to-one coordination between a grammatical form and its function. Therefore, the intended meaning of an utterance cannot be fully understood by the grammatical form only but by the context of 'language in use'. Thus, discourse and grammar are not only interrelated but interdependent in their conceptualization and application. There are grammatical variations for spoken and written forms of language. For instance, in spoken language, sentences are less rigidly structured compared to written language due to the fluidity and interactive nature of conversation. Written language, on the other hand, is highly structured and rigidly regulated by grammatical rules and principles. Grammar analysis involves examining the grammatical structures used in texts or discourse genres of varied nature. This includes identifying syntactic patterns, subject and verb agreement, word classes, verb tenses, and other grammatical features that contribute to the overall meaning, cohesion and coherence of the communication.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of language use, researchers often combine discourse and grammar analysis. By examining both the broader context and the underlying linguistic structures, they uncover how language functions to achieve specific communicative goals and express social and cultural norms. Thus, discourse and grammar are two essential components of language that are intricately linked. Discourse provides the context and organization for effective communication, while grammar establishes the rules and structures that underpin language use.

The relationship between grammar and discourse is dynamic and reciprocal, shaping the way we interact, convey meaning, and effectively communicate. By studying the interplay between discourse and grammar, we can develop a better understanding of the complexities of human communication and enrich our understanding of language as a powerful tool for communication and the expression

of creative ideas. For instance, discourse relies heavily on pronouns and referencing expressions to avoid redundancy and maintain cohesion. Clear and consistent use of pronouns enhances the flow of information and aids in comprehension. The choice of grammatical structures and language style can significantly impact the tone and intention of the discourse. Different grammatical structures can convey different levels of formality and informality.

3.2 Discourse Perspective of Grammar

The study of grammar, owing to the progressive nature of critical inquiry in the field, has witnessed a marked difference in its underlying theoretical perspectives. Traditionally, it was treated as a system of language prescribing rules for the creation of correct syntactic structures. However, this essentialist sentence based perspective has been shifted to a discourse-based perspective which focuses on language beyond the sentence level as well as language use in real life. Hughes and McCarthy (1998), for instance, have argued that traditional grammatical explanations do not account for longer than sentence constructions of language in the texts representing the real world. Linguists like Halliday also investigated grammatical patterns and vocabulary in the process of encoding and decoding meaning in the text as well as its connection with the contexts of its usage. Celce-Murcia (1997) proposed that grammatical forms must be analyzed in the context of their occurrence in written or spoken text for meaningful engagement rather than in disconnected or isolated sentences.

Hughes and McCarthy (1998) argued that discourse-based grammar is more productive as compared to traditional sentence-based grammar as it highlights the interrelatedness of form, function and context which traditional grammar lacks as it does not focus on the context of an utterance. Therefore, discourse-based grammar is more revealing as its descriptive focus lies on the appropriateness of our linguistic choices in various contexts.

3.3 Cohesion in Discourse

Hasan (1989a, 1989b) highlighted two critically important attributes of the texts from the discourse perspective which are ‘unity of structure’ and ‘unity of texture’. Unity of structure refers to patterns which are combined to create information structure, focus and flow in a text enabling the readability of the text. On the other hand, unity of texture stands for the ways language items tie meaning together not only in the text but also tie meaning in the text to its social context of occurrence. Hasan (1989b: 71) described texture as being ‘a matter of meaning relations’. An important notion in this regard is that of a tie which connects the meanings of words to each other as well as to the world outside the text. The basis for cohesion, and in

turn texture, thus, is semantic in nature. For instance, the meaning of linguistic entities that refer outside of the text, such as 'it' and 'that', can be derived from the social context in which the text is embedded. If you go to a restaurant and order chicken steak and the waiter asks you, 'How would you like to have it?' Your knowledge of the context will help you to infer the meaning of 'it' as what should be served either vegetables, mashed potatoes or French fries with chicken steak. Thus, cohesion is the aspect which integrates discourse and grammar in such a way that both shape and are shaped by each other. Cohesion stands for the structural ties in the text which serve as a unifying factor to connect different phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs and give the text the form of a unified whole. Cohesion, also, refers to the linguistic devices used to link various parts of a text in meaning-making and also connect the text to its context. Cohesive relationships are established through cohesive devices including but not limited to referring expressions, collocates or the words which frequently occur together, semantic relations, substitution and ellipsis, etc. All these cohesive linkers contribute to the unity of texture of a text and help to make the text cohesive. Cohesion is an essential element in constructing meaningful and effective discourse by creating connections and establishing relationships between different parts of a text. It plays a crucial role in maintaining coherence, facilitating comprehension, and conveying meaning effectively. Cohesion ensures that a piece of language, whether spoken or written, flows smoothly and logically, allowing the reader or listener to follow the progression of ideas and unity of thought.

As described earlier, cohesion is not limited to written language; it is equally vital in spoken language, where cohesive devices help listeners follow a speaker's flow of thought and understand the intended message. A cohesive text is readable, understandable, and engaging. In contrast, lack of cohesion can lead to confusion and difficulty in grasping the intended meaning resulting in miscommunication. Concluding, cohesion is the glue that holds a text together and is essentially required for the smooth flow of thought and logical progression of the central thesis of the texts.

3.4 Reference

Reference is a cohesive device that involves using words or expressions to refer to entities, ideas, or concepts in a text or its socio-cultural context. Reference enables the reader to retrieve the identity of an item either within or outside of the text. The purpose of reference is to establish connections between different parts of the text and help the reader or listener identify the entities being talked about. The main reference patterns are anaphoric, cataphoric, exophoric and homophoric reference. The anaphoric reference occurs when a word or expression refers back to something

that was mentioned earlier in the text. The word used for anaphoric reference is known as anaphor. An anaphor helps avoid repetition and maintains cohesion by linking the current part of the text to the preceding one. Examples of anaphors include pronouns which are used in the place of nouns to avoid repetition. For instance, 'Iqbal was a great philosopher. His poetry reflects the idea of self-reliance. In this case 'his' is an example of anaphoric reference. If a reader is not sure what is being referred to, they will typically read back in the text to find the answer. Pronouns in subjective, objective as well as possessive cases are used as anaphoric expressions and refer back to the entities mentioned in the text or its context.

Cataphoric reference occurs when a word or phrase refers forward to another word or phrase which is used later in the text. The word used for cataphoric reference is known as a cataphor. Cataphoric references are less common than anaphoric references and are often used to create anticipation or establish the background for upcoming information. An example of a cataphor is, 'I barely saved myself from it, a giant cobra was ready to sting in the dark.' In this example, the identity of 'it' follows, rather than precedes the reference item. It is thus an example of a cataphoric, rather than anaphoric reference.

Exophoric reference involves using words or expressions to refer to entities or concepts outside the text, often relying on the physical or situational context. Exophoric references are not explicitly mentioned in the text and require the reader or listener to infer the intended referent from the surrounding context. For example, 'That accident was terrible', in this sentence 'that' is an exophoric reference because it refers to an incident outside the text, in the physical environment. Contextual sensibility is required to successfully interpret exophoric references otherwise it may lead to ambiguity and misunderstanding of the intended meaning of the text.

Homophoric reference is where the identity of the item can be retrieved by reference to cultural knowledge, in general, rather than the specific context of the text. An example of this type of reference is 'The Queen'. This phrase usually referred to the Queen of England, and typically the late Queen Elizabeth.

Proper use of reference is essential for effective communication as it helps the reader or listener keep track of the entities being discussed and understand the relationships between different parts of the text. Ambiguous or unclear references can lead to confusion and misinterpretation. In addition to pronouns, other linguistic devices can also function as references, including demonstratives and noun phrases. Furthermore, context plays a crucial role in understanding and interpreting the use of references. The co-text and the knowledge shared between the speaker and

listener or writer and reader are vital for resolving references and determining the intended referents.

3.5 Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion can be described as lexical ties or lexical relationships in the meanings of lexical entities in the text. Lexical cohesion is created between content words and the relationship between them. It may be reflected through the use of repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and collocation. Certain words may be repeated in the text to create meaningful connections either through words with similar or opposite meanings. Collocation refers to the words which frequently occur together like bread and butter, etc. Collocation is not restricted to a single text but is part of textual knowledge in general in which pairs of words can logically occur together. This knowledge of collocation is another way in which a text has the property of texture. Another feature of the text which creates lexical cohesion is the use of lexical bundles. Byrd and Coxhead (2010:32) define lexical bundles as three or more words that occur in fixed or semi-fixed combinations ‘that are repeated without change for a set number of times in a particular corpus’. Different software programs are used to identify varying sets of lexical bundles in large data sets. The frequency of their occurrence provides valuable insights into the way speakers and writers create unity of texture in their texts. Some typical examples of lexical bundles include ‘as a result of’, ‘on the other hand’, etc. The use of conjunctions, also, contributes to the unity of texture in the texts. These are certain words or phrases that serve to structure and organize discourse. They help indicate relationships between ideas, transitions between topics, or shifts in attitude or tone. Some of the chief representative instances are ‘but’, ‘however’, ‘in addition to’, ‘nevertheless’, finally’, etc. The aspects of substitution and ellipses also contribute to the unity of texture. Substitution refers to replacing one linguistic form with another to avoid repetition. In the case of ellipses, on the other hand, essential information is omitted leading a listener or reader to infer it from the previous information given in the text.

3.6 Theme and Rheme

Theme and rheme are important elements which contribute to the unity of texture in the text. The relationship between theme and rheme is important in developing focus and flow of information in the text. Theme is ‘the element which serves as the point of departure of the message’ (Halliday 1985: 38). It also introduces ‘information prominence’ into the clause. For instance, in the sentence, ‘Arbitrariness is a widespread term signalling no natural relationship between a linguistic form and its meaning’, arbitrariness is the theme whereas ‘is a widespread term signalling no natural relationship between a linguistic form and its meaning’ is the rheme.

The theme sets the context for the new information while the rheme is the new informative part of a clause or sentence. It may, also, stand for the information that is introduced or highlighted for the first time which serves as the focus of the message. The rheme represents the viewpoint or the comment on the theme, providing new information that develops the textual structure. Theme and rheme contribute to structuring and processing information. The concepts of theme and rheme are also used in the examination of thematic progression (Egins 2004), or method of development of texts (Fries 2002). Thematic progression refers to how the theme of a clause may select meaning from a preceding theme or rheme. This is a basic way in which information flow is created in a text.

In longer texts, the use of theme and rheme helps maintain unity of structure. By introducing themes that refer back to previously mentioned information, speakers or writers remind the audience of the context and establish connections between different parts of the texts. Rhemes, on the other hand, provide new information and build on the established themes, advancing the narrative or argument. Theme and rheme are fundamental elements in discourse organization, providing a way to structure information and convey meaning effectively. By understanding the concepts of theme and rheme, we gain insights into how information is organized and conveyed in sentences and longer units of discourse, contributing to effective communication across different discourse genres.

3.7 Coherence

Coherence refers to the overall sense of unity and connectedness in a text or conversation. Achieving coherence involves organizing information logically and sequentially to ensure that the message is clear to the recipient and there is no ambiguity. It, also, refers to the overall sense of unity and understanding in a text. A coherent discourse is logical and easy to follow, with ideas connected in a meaningful manner. Coherence is a fundamental concept in discourse and highlights the elements within a text or conversation that are connected to create meaningful and understandable communication.

Coherence, also, refers to the overall logical and meaningful organization of a text either in spoken or written form. It is concerned with the flow of ideas and information, ensuring that the text makes sense and is easy to follow. Coherence is achieved when the content is well-structured and arranged in a manner that is easy for the reader or listener to understand. Some of the key elements that contribute to coherence include the logical ordering of ideas and information in a linear sequence, allowing the audience to follow the progression of the text effortlessly. Furthermore, continuity of the topic in the sense that the text should maintain a

consistent focus on the main topic or subject, avoiding unnecessary digressions that might confuse the reader would make it further coherent. Similarly, the use of transition words and phrases (e.g., furthermore, however, in addition) signals relationships between ideas and facilitates smooth transitions between sentences and paragraphs. Every piece of information included in the text should be relevant to the main topic and contribute to the overall message. Adequate contextual information should be provided to help the target audience in understanding the references and implications of the text.

3.8 Interrelatedness of Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and coherence are closely related and often work in harmony to create effective communication. Cohesion provides the necessary links between different elements in a text, helping to establish relationships between sentences and paragraphs. It enables the reader to recognize how ideas are connected and understand the flow of information. Coherence, on the other hand, ensures that the text is structured in a way that makes sense to the reader or listener. It allows the audience to grasp the main ideas and the purpose of the communication.

Hence, cohesion and coherence are essential aspects of discourse that contribute to effective communication. Cohesion deals with the linguistic connections that tie the text together, while coherence focuses on the logical organization of ideas to create a meaningful and easily understandable discourse. Writers and speakers use various linguistic devices and structural strategies to achieve cohesion and coherence, ensuring that their messages are clear and accessible to the intended audience.

Both cohesion and coherence work together to ensure effective communication in various forms of written and spoken language, such as essays, stories, conversations, speeches, and more. The use of references, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical cohesion, further, enhances this aspect. Grammar plays a critical role in establishing cohesion and coherence in discourse. By following grammatical rules and structures, writers and speakers ensure that their message is conveyed clearly and comprehensibly.

The use of anaphora and cataphora creates a piece of cohesive and coherent text. Anaphora refers to the use of pronouns or other expressions to refer back to previously mentioned elements, creating cohesion within a text. Cataphora, on the other hand, involves referring forward to elements that appear later in the discourse. Both these devices are heavily reliant on grammatical structures to establish meaningful connections between different parts of a text both in its written and spoken forms.

3.9 Challenges in Discourse and Grammar

While discourse and grammar are essential for effective communication, they also present various challenges for language users. For instance, ambiguity arises when a sentence or phrase can be interpreted in multiple ways, leading to potential misunderstandings. Proper use of grammar can help reduce ambiguity and ensure clarity in the use of idiomatic expressions or phrases whose meaning cannot be derived from individual words. Learners of a language often struggle to understand and use these expressions correctly especially if they have no contextual awareness of their usage. Similarly, various stylistic devices and the use of figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, add depth and richness to discourse but can also lead to complexity by making it challenging to interpret and use appropriately. Different contexts and situations require specific language registers and styles. Adapting grammar to match the appropriate register can be complex, especially for second language learners who do not have the required contextual sensibility of accurate and appropriate language use.

Thus, discourse and grammar are integral aspects of language that facilitate effective communication. Discourse organizes language in meaningful ways, while grammar provides the rules and structures for constructing coherent and comprehensible sentences. The interaction between discourse and grammar is a dynamic process that shapes language over time. Understanding these elements and their interplay is crucial for achieving clarity, precision, and effectiveness in discourse. A basic understanding of the interrelatedness of discourse and grammar can lead to improved language proficiency and enhance the overall quality of discursive communication in both spoken and written contexts. Discourse and grammar are deeply interconnected, with each influencing the other in several ways. The way language is used in discourse can influence grammatical structures over time. Language is constantly evolving and certain patterns of speech and writing may become more prevalent in a language, leading to linguistic changes. Grammar provides the structural framework for organizing ideas in discourse. Proper use of grammar ensures that sentences are well-formed and coherent, leading to effective communication. Without grammar, discourse would lack structure and clarity and, similarly, discursive practices impact grammatical structures in their spoken and written realizations.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. Discourse refers to the broader context of language use, including the organization of information, the structure of conversations, and the social and cultural implications of communication.
- ii. Discourse is the use of language in context, extending beyond individual sentences to encompass entire conversations, written texts, and even larger communicative events.
- iii. It also embodies the large socio-cultural context in which language use is grounded. It investigates the way speakers or writers connect sentences and ideas, bring coherence to the message, and how language is used to achieve specific communicative goals.
- iv. Grammar is the system of rules that governs the structure of sentences and the formation of words in a language. It provides the framework for constructing meaningful expressions and conveying precise meanings.
- v. The study of grammar involves understanding syntax, morphology, and phonology. Each of these sub-systems of language deals with a unique aspect of language.
- vi. Syntax deals with the arrangement of words to form grammatical sentences. It encompasses the rules for word order, sentence structure, and phrase formation.
- vii. Different languages have diverse syntactic structures and understanding these variations is crucial for effective communication and language learning.
- viii. Similarly, morphology is concerned with the internal structure of words and how they are formed.
- ix. Achieving coherence involves organizing information logically and sequentially to ensure that the message is clear to the recipient and there is no ambiguity.
- x. Cohesion stands for the structural ties in the text which serve as a unifying factor to connect different phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs and give the text the form of a unified whole.
- xi. Reference is a cohesive device that involves using words or expressions to refer to entities, ideas, or concepts in a text or its socio-cultural context.

- xii. Lexical cohesion is created between content words and the relationship between them, it may be reflected through the use of repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and collocation.
- xiii. Both cohesion and coherence work together to ensure effective communication in various forms of written and spoken language, such as essays, stories, conversations, speeches, and more.
- xiv. The relationship between theme and rheme is important in developing focus and flow of information in the text.
- xv. The concepts of theme and rheme are also used in the examination of thematic progression (Egins 2004), or method of development of texts (Fries 2002).

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1. How can an analysis of the relationship between grammar and discourse shed light on the cultural and social dimensions of language use and what insights can be gained about identity, power, and ideology through this examination?
- 2. How does the relationship between cohesion and coherence in a text contribute to its overall effectiveness in conveying meaning and what are the key linguistic elements that ensure seamless connections and logical progression between ideas within the discourse?
- 3. How does the context in which a reference is used impact its interpretation and relevance within communication?
- 4. How does the thematic structure and thematic progression in a text enhance its clarity and reader engagement and what role does the theme-rheme relationship play in shaping the overall discourse's information flow and coherence?
- 5. How does the use of reference in discourse, such as pronouns, demonstratives and definite articles, depend on the context of communication and how does context influence the resolution of ambiguous references to ensure effective communication?

Unit–4

PRAGMATICS AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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OVERVIEW

This unit focuses on the interrelatedness of discourse and pragmatics. It highlights how an integrated approach of discourse and pragmatics to language use can generate invaluable insights into processes of meaning construction and transmission in social contexts. The unit, further, aims at defining and describing fundamental concepts and key terms used in the study of pragmatic analysis of discourse. Furthermore, the unit introduces major theories of the field and develops basic competence and skills for a more critical and detailed exploration of the field to enhance theoretical and methodological understanding.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to: -

- i. differentiate between ‘conceptual meaning’ and ‘speaker meaning’
- ii. analyse the significance of context in the study of meaning
- iii. illustrate the difference between anaphora and cataphora references
- iv. differentiate between direct and indirect speech acts
- v. explain maxims of conversational cooperation
- vi. evaluate the importance of politeness in communication
- vii. understand the interrelatedness of discourse analysis and pragmatics

The word pragmatic is etymologically derived from the Greek word ‘pragma’, meaning ‘deed’. The term is commonly used in real life to refer to something like ‘realistic’ or ‘practical’, for instance, someone has a pragmatic approach to life. Technically speaking, pragmatics, as a field of critical inquiry, is interested in investigating how language is used to do things and mean things in real-life situations, an aspect of language which we considered in the very first unit of this book.

Pragmatics, as a subfield of linguistics, deals with the study of meaning in the ‘context’ of an utterance. Thus, pragmatics is concerned with real language use in real-life situations and as the process of meaning-making is not independent of its context, therefore pragmatics is often labelled as the study of contextual meaning. Furthermore, pragmatics examines the ways context contributes to the development of the meaning of words, phrases and utterances in real-life communicative settings. Therefore, the study of the context of an utterance and its impact on the construction and transmission of meaning is critically important in the field of pragmatics. In other words, pragmatics focuses on the meaning as conveyed by the speaker or writer and interpreted by the listener or reader engaged in a communicative event. In this sense, pragmatics is the study of ‘speaker and/or writer meaning’ or what speakers and writers intend to communicate through their speech and writing. This is the foremost important aspect of interrelatedness of pragmatics and discourse analysis as both fields are interested in investigating ‘language in use’. Furthermore, both fields explore how meaning is constructed and interpreted based on situational, social, and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, Pragmatics not only investigates the contextual meaning of an utterance but also takes it as its basic premise to examine the fundamental element of the brevity of human interactions. It focuses on how speakers and writers rely heavily on the assumption of ‘shared knowledge’ and communicate more than actually expressed by their words, phrases and sentences. Similarly, listeners and readers are also dependent on shared knowledge assumptions to decode the hidden or implicit meanings which are not directly stated by words either spoken or written. This is another important aspect where pragmatics and discourse analysis coincide as both fields analyze the interaction between speakers and listeners. They consider how speakers convey meaning and how listeners interpret and respond to that meaning.

Viewed in this sense, pragmatics and discourse analysis are interrelated in investigating intended or implied meaning which is not derived from the words uttered or written but transmitted through communicative intention of the speakers and writers. Pragmatics is contrasted with semantics on the same grounds, whereas the latter focuses on literal, dictionary or conceptual meanings of words or phrases,

the former focuses on the communicative intention of the speakers and writers and seeks to examine how the construction and transmission of meaning is dependent on how language is used in real-life interactions of a certain speech community. Thus, pragmatics and discourse analysis are concerned with language as it is used in real-life situations, rather than as an abstract system of rules. They study spoken and written texts in their natural contexts.

Moreover, pragmatics is also interested in analyzing the interrelatedness of form and function as there is no neat and one-to-one coordination between a linguistic form and its function, a linguistic form may serve multiple functions and similarly multiple linguistic forms may be used to denote a single function. In short, pragmatics studies a stretch of spoken or written discourse which is essentially grounded in the context of real language use and the way language is used by speakers and writers enabling listeners and readers to make sense and decode meanings which are not explicitly stated. Discourse analysis also investigates language structure including its form and function and explores the ways people use language to communicate more than expressed by words. Multimodal analysis of discourse goes beyond language and considers other features of communication, such as symbols, signs, etc. specially in media discourses to understand the processes of encoding and decoding of meaning.

4.1 Context and its Significance

Discourse analysts are interested in examining ‘language above the sentence level’ as well as ‘language in use’. Pragmatics, also, investigates real language use in real-life situations and the way people encode and decode the meaning of their social interactions. Human interactions are essentially grounded in their context and without contextual awareness, we cannot fully comprehend or make sense of our communication. Therefore, the notion of context is critically important in understanding the communicative intentions of speakers or writers. Contextual understanding is important not only in understanding ordinary talk but also in more formal types of institutionalized conversations which exhibit asymmetrical power relations. Similarly, certain discourse genres are essentially grounded in their context and the construction and transmission of meaning cannot be fully understood without subjecting the text into its milieu. Literary, media and political discourse are prototypes of such genres. Therefore, discourse analysis not only focuses on the nature of language used in a text but also subjects the text into its context of production to decipher its meanings.

The term context may refer to a linguistic context which is often termed as co-text. It stands for other linguistic entities or words used in the same text whether the text

consists of a phrase, sentence, paragraph or even larger stretches of a full-length text, etc. The linguistic co-text largely influences our interpretation of a particular word, phrase or sentence. The co-text may altogether change our anticipated meanings or certain predictions during the process of our active engagement with the text. For instance, if the word 'bank' is used in a sentence with accompanying words like 'transaction' and 'savings', we fully understand that it refers to a financial institution and not the bank of a river. Furthermore, context also refers to the physical setting, for instance, a signboard with a sign of a cigarette with a diagonal crossing line in a public place stands for the idea that it is a smoking forbidden territory, a hospital, etc. Moreover, context may stand for an immediate situational setting where words are uttered. For instance, you are trying to fix a technical issue with one of your electric appliances in your kitchen and one of your friends offers their services. Consequently, instead of resolving the issue as you have expected, the gadget turns out to be more problematic. Desperately, you say 'Thank you, you are a genius!' in a rising tone. The physical situation as well as your sarcastic remark and rising tone communicate to a nearby spectator that it is not an honest expression of genuine gratitude but rather a subtle and implicit expression of disapproval and criticism. If your friend refrains from further assistance, it means that he/she has successfully decoded your communicative intention which is altogether different from what has been explicitly stated in your words. Thus, the knowledge of the physical situation leads to a successful interpretation of the meaning of an utterance. However, if your remark is overheard by someone who has not witnessed the scene, may reach an inference which is quite similar to the proposition made by your utterance. Studying meaning in its context blurs the boundaries between discourse analysis and pragmatics as both are interested in investigating language use in its context.

Context, often, stands for the larger socio-cultural context or knowledge of the social world which is reflected through societal values, cultural practices, political philosophies and socio-psychological factors influencing communication. In everyday life, we come across certain texts which require socio-cultural information to analyze meanings in their entirety like media discourse, literary discourse, discourse of politics and cultural productions, etc. Literary products are always subjected to their larger socio-cultural context to derive their meanings in essence. Have you ever wondered how we make sense of a tautology like 'Lahore is Lahore', which apparently seems to be meaningless and does not have any communicative value but this is the knowledge of the socio-cultural context which makes this statement meaningful and reveals its communicative significance? Therefore, it is evident that contextual sensibility is the basic requirement to understand the implicit and subtle meanings of utterances and the communicative intentions of the speakers. Thus, the critical relevance and importance of context in

the processes of encoding and decoding meaning is the central focus of scholarly investigation in both Pragmatics and discourse analysis as language use is not only grounded in its context but also informed by its context.

4.2 Reference: Referring Expressions and Referents

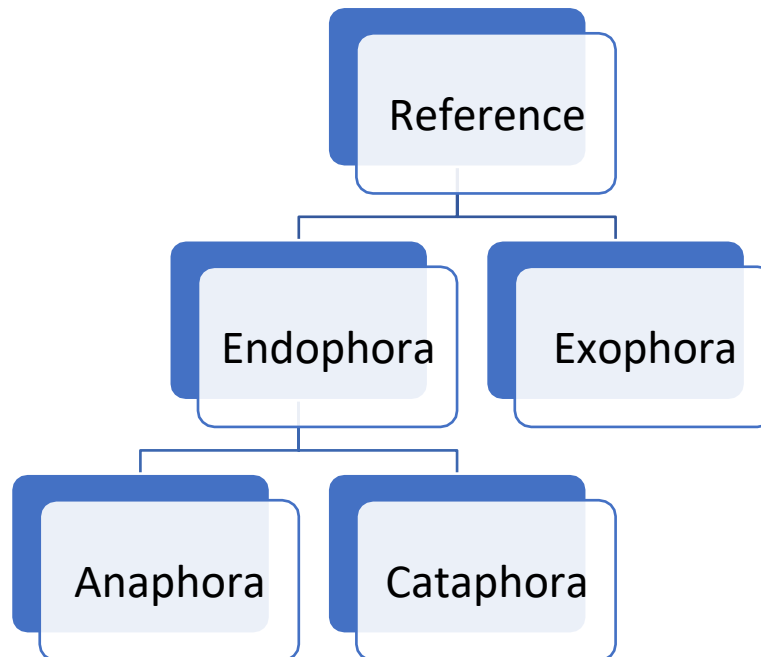
As described earlier, participants involved in a communicative event refer to the immediate situational context as well as the larger socio-cultural context to make communication meaningful and decode the implied meaning of the talk exchange successfully. Reference is a linguistic term which is defined as the act of using language to refer to the entities in the context. Thus, reference is an act in which a speaker or a writer uses linguistic forms to enable the listener or reader to identify something in the text or in the real world. These linguistic forms are termed referring expressions while the entities which they refer to in the real world are called referents. For instance, in the utterance, 'I like to read the poetry of Robert Frost', 'I' is the referring expression which refers to the speaker of this utterance who is the referent.

Similarly, proper noun 'Robert Frost' is the referring expression which refers to the modern American poet 'Robert Frost' in the real social world who is the referent. To perform an act of reference, we can make use of proper nouns as is the case with 'Robert Frost' in the previous example. Similarly, you may remember a class fellow who was often referred to as 'Newton' by the teachers because of his intelligence. We can, also, use pronouns to refer to people.

A reference can be classified into two basic types. When a referring expression mentions a referent for the first time in the sense that there is no previous reference in the text, this is called an exophoric reference. Exophoric reference is dependent on the context outside of the text either immediate situational context which may be termed as setting or the real social world. Thus, in the previous example, Robert Frost is an exophoric reference who refers to a person in the social world who was not previously mentioned in the text.

On the other hand, when a referring expression refers to an entity, already mentioned within the text, it would be an example of an endophoric reference. For instance, in a sentence like, 'Shakespeare is considered to be one of the greatest dramatists of his times. He has, undoubtedly, produced many tragedies of unmatched quality', the pronoun 'he' is an example of endophoric reference because it refers back to Shakespeare who is already mentioned in the sentence. Endophoric reference is, further, classified into two types: anaphora and cataphora. In the previous example 'he' links back to something that is mentioned in the

preceding text, this is called anaphora while cataphora is the opposite of anaphora as the referring expression often links forward to a referent in the text that follows. This is evident in the given example, ‘She was about to put her foot on it in the darkness, it was a large cobra ready to sting in the dark’, the pronoun ‘it’ refers to cobra and this is an instance of cataphora reference as ‘it’ appears in the text before the referent ‘cobra’. Reference and its different kinds are presented in the following pictorial form for the sake of clarity.



Referring expressions are not only used to refer to the entities in the context but also to make the text both cohesive and coherent. They are commonly labelled as cohesive devices or cohesive linkers. The words which point to the entities they refer to are called deixis. These are very common words which we frequently use in everyday talk exchanges and these cannot be interpreted if the listener is not aware of the context especially the physical context of the speaker. These are words such as here and there, this or that, now and then, yesterday, today or tomorrow, as well as pronouns such as you, me, she, him, it, them, etc. There are some sentences which are very difficult to interpret if we do not know the relevant contextual information. For instance, an utterance like ‘Come here, hand it over to me and discuss this issue with her right now’ would be very vague and difficult to interpret if we do not know what do ‘here’, ‘it’ ‘this’, ‘her’ and ‘now’ refer to and we do not have any idea about the relevant background contextual information. These words are technically known as deictic expressions, from the Greek word deixis which means ‘pointing’ via language.

Deictic expressions are classified into three kinds: person deixis, spatial deixis and temporal deixis. Words and phrases used to point to people are called person deixis, for instance, him, her, it, them, these students, etc. Words and phrases used to point to location are called spatial deixis, for instance, here, there, near, far, etc. While temporal deixis refers to words and phrases used to point to time, for instance, now, then, recently, previously, etc.

Discourse analysis and pragmatics are interested in investigating the use of references in language. However, there is a difference in perspective. Pragmatics focuses on the use of references as an element of encoding and decoding meaning. On the other hand, discourse analysis not only highlights its role in the meaning making process but also takes into consideration its usage in making linguistic text cohesive and coherent. Furthermore, anaphoric references can reveal the structure of discourse by signaling which pieces of information are backgrounded or foregrounded and how new information relates to previously mentioned information. Similarly, in more complex texts, cataphora can be used to manage the flow of information and to handle intricate discourse structures where multiple entities and events are interrelated. Thus, anaphora and cataphora are critically important in both written and spoken communication and enhance the coherence, efficiency and stylistic quality of discourse, making them significant to be studied in pragmatics and discourse analysis.

4.3 Inference and Shared Assumptions

In one of the previous sections, we discussed the role of ‘contextual sensibility’ in interpreting the pragmatic and discursive meaning of an utterance. This contextual sensibility entails relevant information which is necessary to derive the intended meaning of an utterance besides recognizing what words ‘conventionally’ mean in a sentence. This idea of contextual sensibility enables a speaker or a writer to presuppose that the listener or the reader has the relevant information to infer the meaning correctly. This relevant information is often labelled as ‘shared knowledge assumptions’, the assumptions or the worldview which is shared by both a speaker and a listener or a writer and reader to successfully encode and decode a message.

An inference is defined as additional information used by the listener or a reader to create a connection between what is generally stated by the words used by a speaker or a writer and what is actually communicated. For instance, if an advertisement of a particular fast food chain states, ‘It’s the taste’, our worldview and shared knowledge assumptions about the role of the advertising industry in promoting consumer culture will enable us to believe in the positive connotation of the message that the taste is good. On the other hand, the same statement made by

someone not fond of taking meals at home, will essentially communicate a negative connotation that homemade food does not taste good. Similarly, if a newspaper headline states, ‘The White House has announced.’, it is presupposed by the news writer that readers know that the White House is used to refer to the president of the USA and when the readers successfully decode the message, it would be an instance of drawing inference. In one of our previous examples of a teacher asking, ‘Where is Newton sitting?’ and the student’s response that he is out of the class reflects that the students have successfully inferred that the teacher is asking about a particular student in the class and not about the scientist. This, also, implies that for a meaning to be successfully inferred both the speaker as well as the listener must share the same worldview, otherwise correct inferences may not be drawn. For instance, an utterance made in an intercultural setting, where people do not share the same worldview, may lead to not only conversational ambiguity but also difficulty in inferring the true meaning of an utterance. Studying inference is important in discourse analysis too as it examines how texts and conversations are structured and how they function in communication. Inference is vital for interpreting the connections between different parts of a discourse. It also helps in understanding functions of discourse markers. Thus, inference is a crucial mechanism in both pragmatics and discourse analysis as it enables listeners and readers to derive meaning, establish coherence and understand the deeper implications and structures of written and oral communication beyond the surface level.

4.4 Presuppositions and Entailments

In the previous section on inference, we have seen that a speaker or a listener as well as a writer or a reader must share the same worldview to successfully encode and decode a message. What a speaker or writer assumes or presupposes is true or shared by the listener or the reader can be described as a presupposition. Speakers and writers often design messages by not only adhering to the principle of brevity and conciseness of the message but also based on large-scale assumptions about what their listeners or readers already know, therefore, a lot of contextual and background information is not, unnecessarily, repeated. For instance, in an utterance like, ‘Have you stopped smoking?’ the speaker makes the presupposition that once you used to smoke. A newspaper might construct a headline like, ‘The government is not paying attention to problem X’, with the presupposition that problem X exists. Communication would not be successful, if a presupposition made by a speaker or writer is false. In this case, a listener or reader would not be able to infer the meaning correctly. Though, sometimes presuppositions can be mistakenly made but most of the time these are appropriate and true.

An entailment, on the other hand, is something that can be logically inferred or drawn from an utterance. For instance, if an utterance states, 'She will celebrate her son's achievement the next week', the logical entailment would be that she, at least, has a son. Thus, it can be concluded that effective communication largely depends on correctly framed presuppositions as well as logically drawn entailments. Presuppositions and entailments are not only studied in pragmatics but are also relevant to the field of discourse analysis. Presuppositions contribute to the coherence and cohesion of a discourse by linking different parts of the text through shared assumptions and also uncover implicit information in a text, which is crucial for a deeper understanding of the discourse. Presuppositions can reveal underlying power dynamics and ideological stances in discourse while entailments ensure the logical flow of information in a discourse. They help in analyzing how ideas and arguments are developed logically.

4.5 Speech Acts

A speech act is defined as an action performed with an utterance in a real communicative setting. The notion of speech acts is attributed to British philosopher John Austin (1911- 1960). He postulated that one of the chief functions of the language is to perform some significant social actions. Austin, initially, classified speech acts into two kinds: constatives and performatives. A constative speech act describes some sort of social reality. For instance, 'The economic situation of developing countries is improving day by day'. Constatives have truth value as they can be assessed and declared to be either true or false. On the other hand, performatives are quite different as they are intended to achieve interactional goals in a communicative setting. For instance, when you tell someone, 'I will help you no matter what happens', you are not merely uttering a simple sentence rather you are performing the speech act of 'promising'. This type of speech acts can be realized by performative verbs like 'requesting', 'ordering', 'threatening', 'advising' and 'congratulating, etc. Speech acts are also classified as locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. A locutionary speech act is performed by merely articulating an utterance. On the other hand, an illocutionary speech act refers to the communicative intention of an utterance, whereas a perlocutionary speech act refers to the impact caused on the listener. For instance, a locutionary speech act is performed by simply making an utterance like, 'Can you switch on the light?' and if the listener correctly perceives this utterance as an instance of a request or an order and not a simple question about his/her ability to switch on the light, then an illocutionary act is, also, performed as the listener correctly derives the communicative intention of the speaker. Similarly, if the listener switches on the light by complying with the request, perlocutionary speech act is, also, performed. Speech acts are, also, classified as direct and indirect speech acts. A direct speech

act is performed when there is no discrepancy in the linguistic form and function of an utterance. On the other hand, an indirect speech act is performed when a certain linguistic form is used to have an altogether different function. This is quite evident from the table given below:

Utterance	Structure	Function	Speech Act
Can you pass the salt?	Interrogative	Request	Indirect
Silence, please!	Imperative	Command/ Request	Indirect
When will you visit us?	Interrogative	Question	Direct

Consider the utterance ‘Can you pass the salt?’ In this example, we are not asking a question about someone’s ability. We do not normally use this structure as a question at all. We normally use it to make a request. That is, we are using the syntactic structure of a question, but with the function of a request. This is an example of an indirect speech act. If you observe your daily interaction with your parents, siblings and friends, you will find out that most of the time, it is based on performing indirect speech acts. For instance, you are in a class and suddenly you realize that you have left your book at home, just imagine in how many different ways you will communicate to your class fellow, sitting next to you, to share their book with you instead of simply asking, ‘Can I share your book?’ Indirect speech acts are closely associated with what is generally known as ‘politeness’ which provides us an interesting insight into interpersonal communication. Speech acts are not only central to pragmatic analysis of languages but are also equally relevant to discourse analysis as it examines how speech acts are sequenced in interaction such as question-answer pairs or request-acceptance sequences. It also examines how participants use speech acts to achieve their interactional goals and manage relationships. It also focuses on the structure of interactions such as turn-taking and the organization of conversation. For example, how questions lead to answers and how statements might lead to agreements or disagreements. Furthermore, understanding how speech acts link different parts of a discourse contributes to the overall coherence and cohesion of the text or conversation.

4.6 Politeness

Generally speaking, the term politeness refers to socially and culturally prescribed norms of polite or civilized behaviour. Individuals within a cultural group are, normally, aware of the principle of politeness and are expected to follow them to build solidarity and develop interpersonal relationships. However, within an interaction, a specific type of politeness is at work which is closely associated with

the idea of face which refers to the public self-image of a person. Face can also be described as an individual's 'social self' which needs to be recognized and respected by others. Thus, politeness stands for showing awareness of another person's face.

People may employ different politeness techniques when engaged in an interaction depending upon the relationship between them. This relationship can be described as either socially distant or close to each other. This might be well explained in terms of power relationships between the participants based on age, gender and social class, etc. For instance, compare the utterance 'Excuse me, Mr President, can you answer a few questions please' with 'Hey, Zara, what is going on?' You might have noticed that both these utterances demonstrate two different levels of politeness employed. The former utterance is an instance of being socially distant to each other as is the case of the president of a state and a journalist while the latter is an instance of social closeness between two intimate friends. As we have discussed in the previous section, participants in an interaction may use indirect speech acts as compared to direct ones while asking for help. For instance, let us reconsider the utterance 'Can you pass the salt, please?' from the politeness perspective. In this case, the use of the direct speech act 'Pass the salt' is an instance of an order which is against the principle of politeness. Therefore, these are usually avoided. The speech acts which threaten another person's face are termed as face-threatening speech acts like orders, warnings, etc. On the other hand, face-saving speech acts like requests, etc. reveal awareness of the politeness principle. Thus, politeness, also, stands for enhancing the use of face-saving speech acts and reducing the use of face-threatening speech acts. Politeness strategies vary in intercultural settings and may have variations in cross-cultural situations. A critical investigation of politeness theory is central to the analysis of discourse as it provides insights into how speakers manage social relationships and mitigate face-threatening acts in communication. Discourse analysis benefits from understanding politeness strategies to uncover the underlying social dynamics in discourse. Politeness strategies often reflect power relations in discourse. For instance, a subordinate might use more elaborate politeness strategies when addressing a superior to show respect and mitigate the imposition. Analyzing these strategies reveals underlying power structures and social hierarchies.

4.7 Cooperative Principle

The cooperative principle is attributed to the linguistic philosopher Paul Grice who proposed that conversations are, generally, cooperative in nature which implies that participants involved in a conversational exchange cooperate with each other to

make their conversation meaningful and result oriented. Grice's cooperative principle states, "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975: 45). This principle is often explained in terms of four maxims, labelled as Gricean maxims' which are described as under:

- i. **The quantity maxim:** Make your conversational contribution as informative as it is required but neither more nor less than required.
- ii. **The quality maxim:** Your conversational contribution should be true and based on facts. Do not say something which you believe is either false or you do not have sufficient evidence to support it.
- iii. **The relation maxim:** Make your conversational contribution relevant to the topic or agenda of discussion.
- iv. **The manner maxim:** Make your conversational contribution clear, precise and orderly. Avoid obscurity of expression.

In a real-life interaction, interlocutors, often, adhere to the prescriptive norms of cooperative principle and its underlying assumptions. However, it is also commonly observed that participants do not seem to be paying attention to the maxims of quality, quantity, relevance or manner but even then their communicative intentions are clearly revealed to others. This is partly because of the reason that people believe that conversation contributions are cooperative and they know that language is 'used' in this way in the community. Discourse analysts often investigate instances of naturally occurring talks or institutionalized conversations from the perspective of cooperation to highlight its intercultural variations.

Discourse analysis and pragmatics provide a comprehensive and well-structured framework for studying language in use to enhance our understanding of how meaning is constructed, negotiated and conveyed in communication. Discourse analysis investigates patterns in language production and interpretation in various contexts, while pragmatics provides insights into how speakers' intentions and social norms influence and shape communication. Integration of theoretical perspectives presented by theorists in both fields can reveal invaluable insights into how language both constructs and reflects social realities and human behaviour.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. The word pragmatic is etymologically derived from the Greek word pragma, meaning 'deed'.
- ii. Technically speaking, pragmatics, as a field of critical inquiry, is interested in investigating how language is used to do things and mean things in real-life situations.
- iii. Furthermore, pragmatics examines the ways context contributes to the development of the meaning of words, phrases and utterances in real-life communicative settings.
- iv. It also focuses on how speakers and writers rely heavily on the assumption of 'shared knowledge' and communicate more than actually expressed by their words, phrases and sentences.
- v. Discourse analysts are interested in examining 'language above the sentence level' as well as 'language in use'.
- vi. Pragmatics, also, investigates real language use in real-life situations and the way people encode and decode the meaning of their social interactions.
- vii. Certain discourse genres are essentially grounded in their context and the construction and transmission of meaning cannot be fully realized without subjecting the text into its milieu. Literary, media and political discourse are prototypes of such genres.
- viii. Context stands for the larger socio-cultural context or knowledge of the social world which is reflected through societal values, cultural practices, political philosophies and socio-psychological factors influencing communication.
- ix. Thus, the critical relevance and importance of context in the processes of encoding and decoding meaning is the central focus of scholarly investigation in both Pragmatics and discourse analysis as language use is not only grounded in its context but also informed by its context.
- x. Reference is a linguistic term which is defined as the act of using language to refer to the entities in the context.
- xi. Thus, reference is an act in which a speaker or a writer uses linguistic forms to enable the listener or reader to identify something in the real world.

- xii. An inference is defined as additional information used by the listener or a reader to create a connection between what is generally stated by the words used by a speaker or a writer and what is actually communicated.
- xiii. Face can also be described as an individual's 'social self' which needs to be recognized and respected by others. Thus, politeness stands for showing awareness of another person's face.
- xiv. Grice's cooperative principle states, "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975: 45).
- xv. Discourse analysts often investigate instances of naturally occurring talks or institutionalized conversations from the perspective of cooperation to highlight its intercultural variations.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1. In what ways do discourse analysis and pragmatics complement each other in exploring the dynamics of language in social contexts
- 2. What do you understand by the term 'implied meaning'? Demonstrate how implied meaning can be different from the stated meaning with some model examples. Does intercultural ambiguity arise out of complexity in decoding the intended meaning?
- 3. What is contextual sensibility? Discuss the significance of context in the study of meaning. Also, discuss various types of context.
- 4. Differentiate between referring expressions and referents with the help of examples. How are these related to deictic expressions?
- 5. Apply Grice's cooperative principle on a selected chunk of media conversation and demonstrate how the selected conversation is cooperative in nature.

Unit–5

CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

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OVERVIEW

This unit deals with conversation analysis as a key approach to studying social interactions. The chapter highlights its distinctive features which make it an influential approach within the range of approaches to the analysis of spoken discourse. Special attention has been paid to naturally occurring talk as well as institutionalized conversations. Furthermore, the methodology of conversation analysis is rigorously presented. Conversation openings and closing have also been discussed. Moreover, conversational aspect of turn-taking is also considered in greater detail.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to: -

- i. give background to the development of the approach
- ii. critically review the salient aspects of conversation analysis
- iii. discuss the methodology of conversation analysis
- iv. highlight strengths and limitations of conversation analysis
- v. explain the element of turn-taking

One of the most significant defining features of our social life is our constant need to use language, a form of social practice, to interact with people to perform various functions. We deal with people to manage a wide range of affairs on a daily basis. We interact with the people to build, sustain and strengthen our social relations. We are involved in conversations to instruct and guide people to achieve certain communicative and non-communicative objectives. It is a common observation that people are often engaged in conversations to greet, congratulate, advise, counsel, teach, apologize, motivate, encourage and convince people to act or behave in a certain way. We often feel the need to share our feelings, thoughts and ideas with the people around us either in the personal or professional domain of our life. We are often involved in conversations to either share our success stories or relate our disappointments with our near and dear ones. Many times, we find ourselves involved in discussions related to the political and economic state of affairs of our country. All these activities are essentially materialized in conversations of varying lengths depending upon their agenda and setting. The role of conversations is so crucial to our existence that it seems our life is but a series of conversations.

5.1 Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis (CA) is an important approach within the broader field of discourse analysis which rigorously and systematically analyzes naturally occurring talks and institutionalized conversations. Sociologists Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson are the chief proponents of this approach who developed it in the 1960s and 1970s, since then the field is constantly expanding and growing and it has gained much prominence as the centralized approach to studying spoken interactions.

As stated earlier, CA primarily deals with spoken discourses which implies that a discourse analyst working within the theoretical approach and methodological design of conversation analysis is often interested in analyzing spoken discourse and is less likely intrigued by written discourse (s). CA, as an approach to spoken discourse, is not merely restricted to the study of conversation only but is equally suitable and applied to naturally occurring talk in professional domain and workplace settings which are often labelled as ‘institutionalized talk’. There is a growing tendency to apply CA to political speeches as well as a wide range of media genres including but not limited to interviews, talk shows, focused groups and panel discussions, etc. Thus, it becomes evident that CA analyzes spoken data of various kinds including media discourses.

CA is primarily interested in naturally occurring talk which is not scripted and which is a product of fluid interaction between the interlocutors. As mentioned

earlier, CA is developed to analyze talk rather than written texts. However, a conversation analyst may like to transcribe talk into the written form by following transcription conventions for a more detailed and objective analysis. Conversations never happen in a social vacuum and essentially require human participants who can initiate and close a conversation based on any agenda of mutual interest. These agendas may range from personal to political. Conversations normally involve two or more than two participants as opposed to a monologue and/or a soliloquy.

CA closely observes sequential patterns of the conversation and the central concern of the approach is the element of turn-taking. As described earlier, conversations are different from monologues in the sense that conversations involve two or more participants who take turns to achieve the mutual goal of interaction. Analysis of turn-taking is based on observable data which may provide evidence of how participants contribute to making their conversations ongoing and successful to achieve an already established mutual goal. CA practitioners are interested in any aspect of conversation which is relevant to understanding surface and deeper structure of conversation. CA practitioners are also interested in investigating how participants make sense of the intended meaning of an utterance in the conversations. Moreover, besides turn-taking, CA practitioners are interested in investigating general mechanism of asking and answering questions in an ordered talk. They may also investigate openings and closings of conversations as well as how topical shift is managed by the participants.

CA exhibits a marked preference for observable sequential patterns of conversation. Thus, in its essence, CA is an objective investigation of the 'talk' itself without referring to any element which is external to the conversation and which is not made relevant by the participants themselves. In this way, CA is strikingly different from other approaches to discourse analysis which take into consideration the context of an utterance in understanding the process of encoding and decoding its meaning. Therefore, CA is remarkably a 'data-centered' approach and a conversation analyst does not consider any factor which is not intrinsically related to the talk and is an external element.

CA, in short, is an objective analysis of the talk itself just like a biologist analyzes a living organism under the microscope without taking into consideration any of the factors which create or impact the external environment of the living organism. On a similar pattern, a CA practitioner would not be interested in considering the societal roles and relationships of the participants, their ethnic or linguistic identities, their belief system, their lived experiences or approaches to various issues of social, cultural or political relevance and hence not interested to investigate the relationship of these external factors with the talk itself. CA approach is often

criticized and challenged on these grounds for not examining talk holistically because these external factors may have a significant impact on the linguistic behaviour of the participants during the conversation.

However, we cannot draw a generalization that a CA practitioner would never consider these external factors in any circumstances. On the contrary, these external factors may be considered relevant and may be appropriate in the analysis of conversation if they are signaled and made relevant by the participants themselves. Otherwise, they are totally disregarded and a conversation analyst would only focus on the observable data of the conversation only.

This very idea of disregarding any external elements to conversation because the participants have not made them relevant finds its reflection in another approach to qualitative inquiry labelled as 'ethnomethodology'. The proponents of this approach believe that social structure or social order must be studied based on concrete actions of people rather than finding explanations in abstract theoretical paradigms.

This insistence of CA practitioners on talk itself has been the subject of much critical discussion and heated debate primarily focusing on the idea of 'power in discourse'. For instance, some feminist scholars working within the field of CA have raised serious concerns regarding the methodology of the approach. The challenge the objectivity of CA on the grounds that an ongoing interaction which involves both sexes is quite different from the conversation having participants of the same sex only. It is generally observed that men tend to dominate conversations involving both sexes. In this case, men will take more turns as compared to women. Moreover, they will exercise more authority in managing topical shifts as compared to women. Women on the other are more likely involved in the 'labour' of keeping interaction ongoing. This gender dichotomy in conversation is, clearly, reflective of a larger social order and cultural assumptions of appropriate gender behaviour. Therefore, this external social reality must be considered and made relevant to the analysis of conversation data. However, CA practitioners dismiss this observation because gender binaries will only be included in the analysis of data, if participants make it relevant in their conversational contributions. If this is not the case, it is not considered in the analysis of the talk.

CA's insistence on observable data of talk while eliminating any abstract external influences also reveals its spirit of empiricism which focuses on evidence which can be verified. This, CA relies only on the talk itself with an emphasis on analyzing the talk more closely to reach some definite conclusion about its structure and process of turn-taking. An interesting analogy can be drawn between the way an analyst analyses a stretch of talk within the framework of CA and a microbiologist

analyzing a unicellular organism under the microscope, both methods would reveal certain evidence which was not observable without following the techniques of objective and empirical analysis.

5.2 Turn Taking

As discussed earlier, CA exclusively focuses on the dynamics of talk in interaction and its various features. Turn-taking is one such aspect of conversation which has been subjected to fine-grained analysis by the CA practitioners and it has led to certain findings which may appear to be too obvious and common sensical. However, on a closer investigation, they may turn out to be less obvious than they initially seemed to be. Turn-taking is one such aspect of naturally occurring talk which is assumed to be so obvious that it can be ‘sensed’ by an ordinary observer and an expert analyst alike.

Conversations involve human participants who are required to take turns to make the conversation achieve its communicative agenda. However, turn-taking is not a haphazard activity, rather it is managed in a particular way. Turn-taking is organized in a principled way and typically it ‘belongs’ to one speaker at a given point during a conversation which implies that one speaker speaks and contributes to conversation. According to the turn-taking conventions, multiple speakers will not take simultaneous turns at a time and will not talk together. Similarly, there will not be longer periods when nobody speaks at all. However, there can be some occasional pauses or moments of silence which are very customary of naturally occurring talk but when they grow longer and sound awkward, a participant may take the turn and thus, conversation goes on. Similarly, simultaneous speech may occur during a conversation but that is considered problematic and not desirable and efforts are made to repair the damage caused to ongoing conversations. During this stage, one speaker may win the floor and continue speaking while others become silent and wait for their turns at the appropriate moment. Thus, winning and holding the floor is a constant process and is constantly negotiated and renegotiated during a conversation.

Interestingly, CA contends that talk is ‘locally managed’ which entails that conversations are not governed by some pre-established principles which make it binding on the participants to follow certain conventions or to act and perform in a certain way, rather its patterns, features and organization naturally emerge from what participants do during the course of a conversation. Thus, CA’s findings are, in fact, a detailed description of what happens in a conversation and how talk is managed by the participants. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that CA is more interested in the intriguing questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’ and is less interested

in ‘what’ of conversational features. Nevertheless, ‘how’ and ‘why’ aspects cannot be fully grasped without bringing ‘what’ into the analysis bracket. CA is interested in finding out how the participants manage to implement the aspect of turn-taking enabling the conversation to proceed in an orderly and organized manner and not in a disorganized and disorderly fashion. It is interesting to find out that conversationalists are not necessarily conscious of the fact that they are following certain conventions of taking turns and they take their ability to participate in a conversation for granted.

Making explicit what ordinary conversationalists take for granted is precisely what CA sets out to achieve. There might be some intercultural variations in turn-taking but more or less a regular pattern is at work in almost all kinds of social interactions. How do participants behave to produce such regularities and after asking other similar questions, Harvey Sacks proposed a model of conversationalists’ behaviour which was a joint enterprise with his colleagues, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Sacks et al. 1974). The model presents the idea that the participants are aware of the fact that a turn consists of one or more ‘turn constructional units’ which may be described as an utterance in spoken discourse comprising a phrase, clause or sentence. Turn constructional unit is followed by ‘turn transition relevance place’ where speaker change may occur. However, this change is not haphazard but orderly, as the model suggests through its second element of turn-taking. The model proposes that participants follow a certain mechanism of allocating turn to the next speaker when transitioning in turn-taking is required. Sacks et al. (1974) suggest not all the participants have an equal chance to take the next turn to gain floor, rather there is a set of rules which are reproduced here in the summarized form as under:

- i. The current speaker selects the next speaker by either inviting him/her to participate and/or by signaling through any nonverbal cue like gaze, etc.
- ii. If the current speaker does not nominate anyone to take the turn, whoever speaks first takes the turn and holds the floor. In this case, there is a possibility of simultaneous speech which is naturally resolved and at times labelled as overlapping speech. Some cases of overlapping speech arise out of miscalculation of the next speaker that the completion point has reached but it may also signal interruption which reflects hostility by denying the current speaker his/her legitimate right to speak.
- iii. The current speaker may reach a completion point and continue, if neither of the previous two scenarios takes place. This mechanism of allocating turns will be repeated when the ‘turn transition relevance place’ occurs again during the conversation. However, naturally occurring talk, at times, is not as smooth in turn-taking as projected by the model. We may come across some irregular patterns in turn-taking depending upon the role and power relations of the participants, setting, agenda, topical constraints, etc.

Jennifer Coates (1996) argues that simultaneous speech does not always signal either miscalculation of completion point or hostile interruption to gain the floor, rather it serves some supportive function as is the case between women friends who may endorse each other's point of view or express solidarity, etc. Cameron (1997) highlights this supportive function prevalent in the conversational exchange between young men and friends too. Furthermore, Carole Edelsky (1981) provides evidence that supportive simultaneous speech can also occur in institutional contexts. These observations are quite contrary to the model proposed by Sacks et.al (1974) which projects one speaker at a time as a fundamental requirement and there is no scope for simultaneous speech which is neither an error nor a violation but rather a normal feature of certain kinds of talks in certain settings. There might be intercultural variations too in the mechanism of turn-taking. Therefore, a CA analyst must be attentive to the minute details of the data being analyzed and to the patterns that appear to be salient to participants themselves.

CA investigates another important feature of turn-taking which is labelled as adjacency pairs which refer to the sequential relationship between two related utterances, where the second turn is typically produced in response to the first. Instances of adjacency pairs include questions and answers, greetings and responses, and requests and granting or denial of those requests. CA has provided detailed insights into the structural and sequential organization of adjacency pairs, highlighting how participants in conversation collaboratively shape and manage interaction.

Repair is another important concept within CA. It refers to the mechanisms through which participants address problems or difficulties that arise during conversation. When communication breakdowns occur, participants engage in repair processes to clarify misunderstandings, correct errors, or seek clarification. CA research has shown that repair is a routine and systematic feature of conversation, with various strategies employed to resolve problems and maintain the flow of interaction.

5.3 Methodological Strengths of Conversation Analysis

As discussed earlier, CA has greatly contributed to our understanding of the structure, organization and mechanism of turn-taking of a naturally occurring talk. It reveals underlying patterns and complexities which govern talk and provides fine-grained information about the interactional processes which shape our communication. CA practitioners have enabled us to revisit our traditional assumptions about conversations of different domains and highlighted the complex, fluid and dynamic nature of naturally occurring talk. The foremost strength of CA lies in its spirit of empiricism. It disregards any element which is external to the talk and conducts a micro-analytic analysis of transcribed data based on audio-

video recording of naturally occurring talk. Its roots are firmly grounded in empirical research with an emphasis on authenticating research findings. CA's insistence on 'observable data' provides a solid basis for examining the intricacies involved in social interactions through verifiable research findings.

Generally speaking, the field of discourse analysis involves transcription of audio or video recorded texts for a detailed analysis, for instance, a critical discourse analyst may transcribe an instance of media discourse to understand how ideology is embedded in its discourse. Similarly, a discourse analyst may transcribe electronic media advertisements to understand how language is used to make its discourse powerful, potent and persuasive. Thus, CA shows a marked preference for detailed transcription and it is one of the most fundamental requirements for systematic and rigorous implementation of its methodology. CA further emphasizes that detailed transcription should not only capture linguistic data including false starts, hesitation, pauses, overlapping talk, tone, pitch and intonation but also paralinguistic features of the language. Exhaustive transcription allows for a fine-grained investigation of intricacies involved in interactional processes.

As described earlier, CA's methodology is very systematic which lends it technical soundness. Hence, CA is a process-oriented approach which applies all procedural steps in a very organized and orderly manner while studying conversations. Analysts investigate peculiar features, sequential patterns, mechanisms of turn-taking, and regularities in the structural organization of talk in interaction to understand the processes of constructing and negotiating meaning. By following systematic CA methodology, an analyst may lead to research findings which are not only authentic but also replicable.

CA was, initially, developed to analyze institutionalized conversations which are governed by asymmetrical power relationships between the interlocutors. For instance, a courtroom conversation between a judge and an accused, a conversation taking place at a clinic between a doctor and a patient as well as a classroom conversation between a teacher and students. However, CA primarily focuses on naturally occurring talk which is neither scripted nor rehearsed. Naturally occurring talk or talk in naturalistic settings represents our societal interactions and captures them in their entirety as compared to institutionalized conversations which are governed by power dynamics. Hence, CA's marked preference for everyday talk provides us interesting insights into the workings of our social interactions which shape our communication. The richness of real-life data or ordinary conversations not only highlights the complexity of real-life interactions but also provides revealing insights into communicative strategies adopted by the interlocutors during the interactional process. CA's insistence on capturing real-life data adds to the validity and reliability of research findings.

The applicability of the CA approach in a range of disciplines highlights its theoretical and methodological significance. CA as a research method is frequently used in fields like linguistics, discourse studies, sociolinguistics, communication studies, anthropology, sociology and clinical psychology, etc. The usefulness of CA in such a diverse range of academic disciplines further intensifies the idea of its technical soundness. CA's findings have greatly impacted and influenced interdisciplinary research.

As discussed earlier, owing to its interdisciplinary relevance, the field of CA is constantly growing and expanding. Theoretical and methodological insights gained by CA practitioners from these interdisciplinary fields have, further, contributed to the technical soundness of its methods of data collection, transcription, presentation, analysis and interpretation. All these technical advancements have, further, established CA as a credible approach to research by enhancing the validity and reliability of its findings.

CA is embedded in the qualitative research approach of ethnomethodology which investigates everyday reality and how people produce reality through their representations of self and others during interaction. Conversation analysts focus specifically on the dynamics of talk to understand how people make sense of intended meanings during their social interactions. This theoretical framework allows CA to delve into the social construction of reality through conversation, uncovering the underlying social actions, norms, and practices that shape communication.

5.4 Limitations of Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (CA) is a valuable and widely recognized approach to studying conversation, yet it is not free of certain shortcomings. Some of the key limitations of CA include its exclusion of broader socio-cultural background which influences and shapes communication and communicative practices. If this aspect of conversation is taken into consideration, it may enhance our understanding of the factors which govern communication. Furthermore, CA focuses on a very small sample size to investigate conversation owing to its time-consuming methodology of transcription and detailed analysis but it fails to account for the variations caused by diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Thus, findings obtained through CA may be transferable but not generalizable. Moreover, different CA practitioners may select different segments of conversation for analysis. Their subjective choices may lead to different interpretations of the same data which may be problematic in establishing CA as an objective approach. Similarly, CA practitioners are required to obtain 'informed consent' to record conversations. The presence of an observer may alter and influence participants' linguistic behaviour as well as interactional

practices leading to research findings which may not fully represent spontaneous conversations occurring in natural settings. To counter this challenge, on the other hand, if conversations are recorded without seeking informed consent of the participants involved then it raises serious ethical concerns.

CA as a field continues to evolve, adapting to new technologies and exploring emerging areas of inquiry, making it a vital and dynamic area of research within sociolinguistics and related disciplines. It remains a significant and influential method for studying the complexities of conversation, offering valuable insights into the social and interactional processes that shape human communication.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. One of the most significant defining features of our social life is our constant need to use language, a form of social practice, to interact with people to perform various functions.
- ii. We interact with the people to build, sustain and strengthen our social relations. It is a common observation that people are often engaged in conversations to greet, congratulate, advise, counsel, teach, apologize, motivate, encourage and convince people to act or behave in a certain way.
- iii. Sociologists Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson are the chief proponents of this approach who developed it in the 1960s and 1970s and since then the field is constantly expanding and growing and it has gained much prominence as the centralized approach to studying spoken interactions.
- iv. CA closely observes sequential patterns of the conversation and the central concern of the approach is the element of turn-taking.
- v. CA is remarkably a data-centered' approach and a conversation analyst does not consider any factor which is not intrinsically related to the talk and is an external element.
- vi. This very idea of disregarding any external elements to conversation on the grounds that the participants have not made them relevant finds its reflection in another approach to qualitative inquiry labelled as 'ethnomethodology'.
- vii. CA's insistence on observable data of talk while eliminating any abstract external influences also reveals its spirit of empiricism which focuses on evidence which can be verified.

- viii. Making explicit what ordinary conversationalists take for granted is precisely what CA sets out to achieve.
- ix. CA has greatly contributed to our understanding of the structure, organization and mechanism of turn-taking of a naturally occurring talk.
- x. It reveals underlying patterns and complexities which govern talk and provides fine-grained information about the interactional processes which shape our communication.
- xi. The foremost strength of CA lies in its spirit of empiricism. It disregards any element which is external to the talk and conducts a micro-analytic analysis of transcribed data based on audio-video recording of naturally occurring talk.
- xii. CA's insistence on 'observable data' provides a solid basis for examining the intricacies involved in social interactions through verifiable research findings.
- xiii. Turn-taking is one such aspect of conversation which has been subjected to fine-grained analysis by the CA practitioners and it has led to certain findings which may appear to be too obvious and common sensical.
- xiv. Jennifer Coates (1996) argues that simultaneous speech does not always signal either miscalculation of completion point or hostile interruption to gain the floor, rather it serves some supportive function as is the case between women friends who may endorse each other's point of view or express solidarity, etc.
- xv. Some of the key limitations of CA include its exclusion of broader socio-cultural background which influences and shapes communication and communicative practices.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What are the main principles and methodologies used in conversation analysis to study the structure and organization of naturally occurring conversations, and how does this approach contribute to our understanding of communication patterns?
2. How do participants in a conversation manage and negotiate turn-taking, and what are the factors that influence the smooth flow of interactions in different cultural and social contexts?
3. Explain the concept of adjacency pairs in conversation analysis and provide examples of how these sequential patterns impact the meaning and coherence of conversations.
4. What are the advantages and strengths of using conversation analysis as a methodological tool in social science research, and how does it offer unique insights into the dynamics of everyday communication?
5. What are some common criticisms or limitations of conversation analysis as an approach, and how do researchers address these concerns to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings?

Unit–6

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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OVERVIEW

The unit deals with exploring theoretical perspectives and methodological designs of one of the most influential research approaches namely Critical Discourse Analysis. CDA's theorization of discourse has been extensively discussed by grounding it in the works of its key practitioners. Methodological strengths and limitations of CDA have also been established in concrete terms.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to: -

- i. Describe the defining features of Critical Discourse Analysis
- ii. determine the usefulness of CDA in studying spoken and written discourses
- iii. critically review CDA's methodology
- iv. analyse strengths of CDA
- v. evaluate CDA as a grand narrative
- vi. highlight limitations of its methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis, henceforth CDA, is neither a monolithic theoretical perspective nor a unified methodological design but a complex field of critical inquiry which offers a diverse range of approaches within post-positivist interpretative research paradigm to analyze complex relationships between language, power and ideology in written or spoken discourses of varied nature. van Dijk (2015), a prominent theorist, key practitioner and founding member of the field, describes CDA thus, ‘Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context’ (p.466).

CDA is, therefore, principally driven by an emancipatory agenda of critiquing and challenging power abuse, represented explicitly and implicitly, in a wide range of discourses. According to Wodak (2006), one of the leading and key practitioners of the field, ‘CDA [is] fundamentally interested in analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control when these are manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to critically investigate social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, and legitimized by language use’ (p. 53). Therefore, van Dijk (1993) argues that the main purpose of CDA is to identify and highlight social inequalities. He, also, articulated a guiding perspective for critical discourse analysts which states:

Unlike other discourse analysts, critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large...Their perspective, if possible, is that of those who suffer the most from dominance and inequality. (p. 253-254)

This theoretical view of van Dijk is reflective of CDA’s central focus of critical investigation of discourses to highlight the perspective of silenced voices subjected to all forms of social, cultural and political power abuse, discrimination and exploitation. Viewed in this sense, CDA has a politically vested agenda and is representative of the underprivileged and marginalized communities. CDA is grounded in some unique principles, Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271- 280) describe some of these as under:

- i. CDA addresses social problems.
- ii. Power relations are discursive.
- iii. Discourse constitutes society and culture.
- iv. Discourse does ideological work.
- v. Discourse is historical.
- vi. The link between text and society is mediated.
- vii. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
- viii. Discourse is a form of social action.

One widespread general misunderstanding about CDA is that it is a special method of doing discourse analysis. However, there is no such an all-purpose method of discourse analysis which can address various issues and research problems. Furthermore, CDA methods of discourse studies are cross -disciplinary in nature. Therefore, other relevant methods in the humanities and social sciences may be used besides CDA to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. CDA is a specific perspective within the critical research on discourse which has the following general features, among others:

- i. CDA addresses social problems and political issues rather than simply studying discourse structures without subjecting them to their social and political contexts.
- ii. The critical analysis of social problems is generally multidisciplinary.
- iii. CDA does not simply describe discourse structures, it explains them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure.

CDA, more specifically, focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power abuse (dominance) in society (van Dijk, 2015: 467). CDA is not only valued owing to its methodological approaches for the analysis of complex relationships between language, power and ideology but is acknowledged as an important philosophical paradigm, as claimed by Wood & Kroger (2000):

[Critical] discourse analysis is not only about method; it is also a perspective on the nature of language and its relationship to the central issues of the social sciences. More specifically, we see discourse analysis as a related collection of approaches to discourse, approaches that entail not only practices of data collection and analysis but also a set of metatheoretical and theoretical assumptions and a body of research claims and studies (Wood & Kroger, 2000: x).

As described earlier, the field of CDA is highly diverse theoretically, methodologically and analytically as compared to other approaches to social research. The nature and objectives of particular research serve as the critical criterion in determining which specific approach of CDA is applicable in a particular context, as van Dijk (2015) asserts:

Since CDA is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework... there are many types of CDA, and these may be theoretically and analytically quite diverse... Thus, the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA will feature such notions as power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institutions, social structure, and social order, besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions. (p. 468).

Theoretical and critical perspectives given by prominent scholars establish CDA as an instance of analytical activism with an explicit political agenda of highlighting the dominated, silenced and marginalized voices and challenging social inequality and power abuse in any of its latent or manifest forms. However, this goal of social liberation cannot be achieved until it is contextualized in the broader social spectrum, as Wodak (1996), cited in (Titscher et al, 2000: 146) argues that discourse analysis is, 'interpretative and explanatory in nature. Critical analysis implies a systematic methodology and a relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations to reveal its meaning.' However, this meaning cannot be understood in isolation without exposing the text to its context. The idea of context is of critical relevance and is treated significantly in the process of discourse analysis. Angermuller (2014) refers to the same point of view when he observes:

The discourse analytical trends of the 1950s and 1960s define as the context of a sentence mostly the neighbouring sentences whose combination forms a 'discourse' (that is text). Since the 1970s, 'extra-linguistic' aspects (that is context) have also entered the analysis. (p.22)

Therefore, it is evident that context captures both linguistic co-text as well as extra-linguistic aspects to successfully interpret the meaning of a text. Therefore, CDA serves to be the most appropriate research design for analyzing language and its interrelatedness with the socially and discursively constructed reality. CDA also takes into consideration multiple and intersecting 'voices' which populate a text. Kress (1995) makes an important observation in this regard:

Texts are the sites of the emergence of complex of social meanings, produced in the particular history of the situation of production, that record in partial ways the histories of both the participants in the production of the text and of the institutions that are 'invoked' or brought into play, indeed a partial history of the language and of the social system, a partiality due to the structuring of relations of power of the participants. (Kress, 1995:122)

CDA is an ever-growing and expanding field of research with a wide range of theoretical and methodological practices largely determined by the research objectives and theoretical perspectives of the analyst related to the issue under investigation.

6.1 Discourse in CDA

The term 'discourse' is one of the most deliberated terms in the broader field of discourse analysis. The nature and meaning of the term 'discourse' have been critically investigated by a number of key theorists and discourse analysts working

within the domain of the philosophical and theoretical paradigm of CDA. Hence, their critical inquiry has led to the creation of a vast array of defining features of discourse, the multiplicity of meanings of discourse in varying contexts and its structuralist and formalist features.

Without the constitutive property of discourse; we would not have been able to comprehend the complex nature of social life and various ideologies influencing our societal structures and our worldview. It is often argued that discourse has a dualistic function; it both constructs as well as reflects reality. Viewed in this sense, '[Discourse is] a group of statements which provides a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. Thus, the term refers both to the production of knowledge through language and representations and the way that knowledge is institutionalized, shaping social practices and setting new practices into play (du Gay, 1996, p. 43).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997), the two most influential figures within the field of CDA, are most frequently acknowledged in defining discourse and describing its features in a very comprehensive way. Their definition is largely cited in the field:

CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice' Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258)

Discourse is not only socially constitutive but it is also socially conditioned. It constitutes various ideologies, reproduces and sustains them but at the same time, it transforms them. For instance, the critical notion of islamophobia is constituted and conditioned by the discourses produced about it but debunking of the notion is also grounded in discourse. Many competing discourses produced by Islamic scholars and in particular by political leaders have a transforming impact. For instance, Imran Khan's speech at the United Nations was an attempt to deconstruct this ideology and show how it is inherently discriminatory. Though discourses are

materialized and realized through texts, they are broader than the texts and include the larger social and cultural structure and practices that surround and inform their production and consumption (Fairclough, 1992; Philips & Hardy, 1997). Discourse as a political practice establishes, sustains and reinforces power relations, and the collective entities (classes, blocs, communities, groups) between which power relations sustain. Discourse as an ideological practice constitutes, naturalizes, sustains and changes significations of the world from diverse positions in power relations. (Fairclough, 1992: 67)

As already described, the notion of discourse and text has been subjected to a proliferated number of uses in various contexts, for instance, Lupton (1992) defines discourse as 'a group of ideas or patterned way of thinking which can be identified in textual and verbal communications and can also be located in wider social structures' (p. 145). Sunderland (2004)'s conceptualization of discourse is, also, quite similar in nature to that of Lupton (1992)'s description. She selected suitable stretches of discourse from fiction which were reflective of a gendered ideology prevalent in the wider socio-cultural context as 'linguistic traces'. From the discussion made so far, it is evident that the term discourse has multiple meanings in varying contexts. Therefore, a critical discourse analyst must consider varied definitions of discourse in order to develop a holistic understanding of the term and appropriate treatment of the term in research.

CDA practitioners chiefly analyze the discourses produced by various institutions of a society. For instance, media discourse is one of the most suitable sites for a CDA analyst as it not only shapes the perception of its consumers but is, also, considered to be a powerful institution for ideological effect. Therefore, CDA practitioners take an explicit socio-political stance and highlight the perspective of those who suffer the most from dominance and social inequality.

CDA is the spokesperson for marginalized segments of society. Despite of CDA's usefulness in social research, it is subjected to severe criticism because of its 'explicit' and 'biased' political agenda of bringing social transformation and this critical perspective of CDA challenges the notion of 'objectivity' and 'neutrality' of research but CDA practitioners are proud of its biased agenda. Thus, CDA is a form of social action which reveals explicit and implicit power abuses in discourse. One general misunderstanding related to CDA is that it is a special method of doing discourse analysis. However, this is not the case as CDA methods are not rigidly conventionalized. CDA has also been criticized for this very reason as it does not offer any 'replicable' method and, in fact, there are as many CDA methods as are the practitioners. Every CDA analyst selects a method informed by their research perspectives and, thus, all CDA methods stand valid and purpose oriented.

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach grounded in structural linguistics and critical theory. It has borrowed its conceptual perspective and analytical framework from both fields. Though critical theory is not an established academic discipline as linguistics or anthropology but has influenced various disciplines like literary studies, philosophy, psychology and sociology. The works of post-structuralist theorists such as Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault have greatly influenced the field of critical theory. They have greatly altered our traditional perceptions about reality, subjectivity and knowledge. They explore the nature of reality and whether or not its existence is dependent on our perceptions and representations of it. Furthermore, they are concerned with the issue of identity, is it absolute or fluid? Moreover, they are interested in investigating the nature of knowledge and its objectivity and truth value. Critical theory is the basic source of usage of the world discourse which proclaims that reality is constructed in and through discourse through the practices of speaking and writing. The discourses we produce construct reality which is subjective in nature. CDA is interested in investigating all these aspects by examining actual examples closely from real life and by paying attention not only to their content but also to their form. CDA thrives on the insights derived from structure-oriented linguistics and social linguistics. It explores why speakers and writers make use of some lexical choices and grammatical structures and not the other range of possibilities available. Is it done consciously to achieve certain hidden agenda or communicate certain perspectives in implicit ways? CDA pays close attention to the ideological significance of the choices speakers and writers make, and for significant patterns in the distribution of their choices.

The term critical in CDA is critically important. It reflects the neutrality and objectivity of the approach and the analyst. We are so deeply rooted in our indigenous cultures that it becomes difficult for us to distance ourselves to accurately observe and take record of our customary social practices including our linguistic behaviour, social interaction and discourse practices. However, in the case of a foreign culture, we may not face the challenge of making accurate findings as we are removed from its social structure. In our own indigenous culture, we are deeply grounded. Therefore, language and discourse must be examined from a critical perspective as projected by the works of critical discourse analysts Norman Fairclough, Tuen van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Deborah Cameron who examine language as a form of social and cultural practice. As discussed earlier, Critical discourse analysis focuses particularly on the relationship between power and discourse, studying the way in which 'social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (van Dijk 2001: 352). Another important aspect investigated by the discourse analysts is 'naturalized discourse' constructed about certain social

reality which appears to be an indispensable feature of our social fabric, an unavoidable element of our survival:

The critical approach aims to challenge social orders and practices that we accept as 'natural', but which are, in fact, 'naturalized'; in other words, when one way of seeing and interpreting the world becomes so common (and so frequently constructed in discourses) that it is accepted as the only way. In casting light on this process, critical discourse analysts seek to make visible the 'common-sense' social and cultural assumptions (or ideologies) which, below the level of conscious awareness, are embedded in all forms of language that people use (Fairclough 2001).

Discourse influences our perception of the world through the cultural assumptions it presents. We may not be even fully conscious of such workings of discourse. It is a two-way process, just as we construct ourselves and our world through the social practice of language, similarly discourse presented to us constructs us in particular ways which suit the vested interests of producers of discourse. CDA unmasks so-called 'common sensical' and 'natural' ideologies and cultural assumptions embedded in the use of language and makes them explicitly visible and as constructions of discourse. CDA challenges the practices which establish the words of powerful members of society as 'self-evident truths', while the words of others are dismissed as irrelevant or without substance (Woods, 2006:50).

CDA practitioners examine influential discourses of varied kinds in particular media discourses and discourses of politics, by taking an explicit political position, and highlighting the workings of social practices and political structures responsible for creating inequality and injustice. They seek to challenge such dominant practices and accepted patterns of oppression.

6.2 Methodological Strengths of CDA

As discussed in detail in the previous section, CDA is an influential approach within the broader field of discourse analysis owing to a number of its unique theoretical perspectives and methodological features. Its suitability lies in the fact that it can be employed to both text and talk equally to investigate the interrelationship of language, power and ideology in discourse.

As it draws insights from various interdisciplinary fields and analyses discourse in its socio-political context, its potential for investigating complex social issues is magnified. Furthermore, its emphasis on power and ideology in discourse is instrumental in highlighting social inequality and power abuse enacted through the use of language which legitimizes certain perspectives and marginalizes others.

CDA advocates a critical perspective towards discourse to unmask hidden agendas, biases and injustices reflected in societal discourses to bring social change. Its emancipatory agenda can contribute to bringing social change and transformation by challenging social and political discriminatory practices reflected in and through discourse. Furthermore, CDA provides a well-structured framework for detailed linguistic analysis within broader socio-political contexts of the discourses to gain invaluable insights. CDA encourages researchers to consider the ethical implications of their research as well as the potential impact of their findings on marginalized communities. These aspects lend methodological rigour to CDA which other approaches to the study of text and talk may lack.

6.3 Criticism of CDA

Despite its theoretical soundness and methodological rigour, CDA has been subjected to intense critique. The foremost important limitation lies in its subjective approach and interpretation bias. CDA practitioners, often, cherry-pick cases which suit their objectives. Their ideologies and preconceived notions may impact the reliability of research findings. Furthermore, CDA does not offer any standardized or replicable methodological framework. Practitioners and researchers bring innovations in the methodologies selected to meet their research specific needs. This variability can make it difficult to replicate studies or compare findings across different contexts. This may impact validity of research findings.

Furthermore, CDA emphasizes language as a sole determinant of social reality and overlooks other relevant and important factors like political and economic conditions which may result in oversimplification of complex social issues by reducing them to discursive practices only. CDA's explicit political agenda is another potential drawback which undermines objectivity and credibility of research findings. Furthermore, CDA only highlights power asymmetries enacted through discourse and fails to acknowledge language's role in social cohesion and unity. Addressing these challenges can contribute to enhancing the strength and applicability of CDA in understanding and transforming complex social realities.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is neither a monolithic theory nor a unified methodological practice, but rather a diverse field of critical inquiry which offers a variety of approaches, used to analyze complex relationships between language, power and ideology in written or spoken discourse.
- ii. van Dijk (2015), a key theorist and founding member of the field, describes CDA thus, 'Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (p.466).
- iii. According to Wodak (2006), one of the leading practitioners of the field, 'CDA [is] fundamentally interested in analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control when these are manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, and legitimized by language use' (p. 53).
- iv. In CDA all methods of discourse studies are cross disciplinary in nature, as well as other relevant methods in the humanities and social sciences, may be used (van Dijk, 2015; Wodak and Meyer, 2008; Titscher et al. 2000).
- v. CDA stands for analytical activism with an explicit political agenda of bringing the dominated, silenced and marginalised voices on the surface to question and challenge social inequality and power abuse.
- vi. CDA is an interdisciplinary approach grounded in structural linguistics and critical theory. It has borrowed its conceptual perspective and analytical framework from both fields.
- vii. Critical theory is not an established academic discipline as linguistics or anthropology but has influenced various disciplines like literary studies, philosophy, psychology and sociology.
- viii. CDA unmasks the so-called 'common sensical' and 'natural' ideologies and cultural assumptions embedded in the use of language and makes them explicitly visible and to be constructions of language.

- ix. CDA challenges the practices which establish the words of powerful members of society as 'self-evident truths', while the words of others are dismissed as irrelevant or without substance (Woods, 2006:50).
- x. The term critical in CDA is critically important. It reflects the neutrality and objectivity of the approach and the analyst.
- xi. The critical approach aims to challenge social orders and practices that we accept as 'natural', but which are, in fact, 'naturalized'; in other words, when one way of seeing and interpreting the world becomes so common (and so frequently constructed in discourses) that it is accepted as the only way.
- xii. CDA practitioners examine influential discourses of varied kinds in particular media discourses and discourses of politics, by taking an explicit political position, and highlighting the workings of social practices and political structures responsible for creating inequality and injustice.
- xiii. Language and discourse must be examined from a critical perspective as projected by the works of critical discourse analysts Norman Fairclough, Tuen van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Deborah Cameron who examine language as a form of social and cultural practice.
- xiv. Critical discourse analysis focuses particularly on the relationship between power and discourse, studying the way in which 'social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (van Dijk 2001: 352).
- xv. Discourse is not only socially constitutive but it is also socially conditioned. It constitutes various ideologies, reproduces and sustains them but at the same time, it transforms them.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- i. What are the main objectives and goals of CDA, and how does this approach enable researchers to examine language use as a site of power, ideology, and social change?
- ii. Explain the key steps and techniques involved in conducting CDA, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, and discuss how this methodology differs from traditional linguistic analysis.
- iii. How does CDA reveal the ways in which language and discourse are used to promote and perpetuate dominant ideologies, and how do these ideologies influence the shaping of societal norms and attitudes?
- iv. What are the major strengths and advantages of employing CDA as a research approach, particularly in understanding how language is implicated in reinforcing or challenging power structures?
- v. Discuss some of the common criticisms or limitations of CDA and explore how researchers address these challenges to maintain rigour and credibility in their analytical frameworks.

Unit–7

**FEMINIST CRITICAL
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

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OVERVIEW

This unit deals with theoretical perspectives and methodological designs of one of the most influential research approaches, dealing with language, gender and power in discourse, namely Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Feminist CDA's theorization of discourse has been extensively discussed with its central focus. Methodological strengths and limitations of feminist CDA have also been established in concrete terms. Furthermore, the idea of gender performativity is, also, discussed in greater length.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to: -

- i. give a background to the development of feminist CDA
- ii. appreciate the critical value of feminist CDA
- iii. critically appreciate the multiplicity and diversity of feminist CDA tools of inquiry
- iv. discuss the major theoretical perspectives of feminist CDA
- v. analyze feminist CDA's methodology
- vi. highlight strengths of feminist CDA's methodology
- vii. understand the bonding of feminism with CDA
- viii. identify certain limitations of feminist CDA's methodology

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, henceforth feminist CDA is a theoretical and methodological approach within the broader field of discourse analysis. Grounded within the philosophical assumptions of the qualitative research paradigm, feminist CDA focuses on the relationship between gender, power and ideology in discourse. Feminist CDA is theorized and developed by Lazar (2005), being the bonding of feminism with CDA, it is informed by valuable insights from both fields of critical inquiry. To develop a holistic understanding of the theoretical perspective and methodological design of feminist CDA, it is desirable to discuss feminism and CDA briefly.

7.1 Feminism

Feminism is a movement dedicated to bringing social revolution to create a society which is grounded in the golden principles of equality and justice. The primary objective of the movement is to strive for a social order which does not discriminate on the basis of gender. The movement, in particular, stresses equality between both sexes without subjecting women to a 'disadvantaged position' in any public domain. The basic objective of this movement is not only to highlight but also to end the use of institutionalized exploitative practices against women. The movement is, also, motivated by an emancipatory agenda of liberating women from oppression in all of its latent and manifest forms, leading to female empowerment. Lindsey (2011) claims that the feminist movement uses women's perceptions and experiences to create awareness about their issues and devise policies and strategies to achieve the political agenda of reformation.

Bowen and Wyatt (1993) argue that feminism or feminist inquiry has no specific definition because by nature these critical concepts resist definitive statements about their distinctive features, however, hooks (2000) defines feminism in the simplest terms as, 'feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression' (p. viii). This definition is both holistic and precise because it does not depict men as the perpetrators of sexism and women as the subject of sexist policies only. This definition, further, highlights that both sexes can be the victims of sexist practices in varied cultural contexts based on other intersecting social categories of race, ethnicity and social class, etc. In its general perception, the notion refers to any theory or theorist who opines that the social world is structured on unequal power relations between the sexes which lead to subjugation, subordination and oppression of women as an underprivileged and marginalized segment of the society. Therefore, this problem critically needs to be addressed by political theory and practice. Feminism, thus, is a complex and fluid notion, yielding multiple attributive meanings for the people of varied socio-political, economic, geographical and ethnic backgrounds and evolving with a change in people's

perceptions about the world. Showalter (1997) argues about the role of feminism as, 'the task of feminist critics is to find a new language, a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our experience, our reason and our suffering, our skepticism and our vision....' (p. 216). Feminism, thus, focuses on establishing an anti-sexist society both in its spirit as well as in institutional policies and practices. Feminist theory has attracted scholars from various interdisciplinary fields to contribute to feminist discourses, for instance, in writing about feminism and linguistic theory, Cameron (1992) claims that one of her main objectives of research was to 'question the whole scholarly objective bias of linguistics and to show how assumptions and practices of linguistics are implicated in patriarchal ideology and oppression' (1992, p. 16).

Furthermore, for feminist theorists, the thought of manmade discourses is as problematic as is the idea that all the institutions of discourse production and dissemination are in the control of men who are constructing androcentric ideologies. Their canon of traditional knowledge produces and legitimizes such discourses which further strengthen patriarchal ideologies of male supremacy. Jansen (2002) elaborates this point further:

Feminist claims are "unthinkable" within the domain assumptions of established social science not only because they forthrightly assert that the discourses of science are manmade, but also because they ascribe to the far more radical claims that the epistemologies and the theories of knowledge that produced these discourses are systematically skewed by both Eurocentric and masculinist interpretative and textual practices (p. 30).

It is, therefore, emphasized by feminist scholars that females should start creating discourses about females as the literary space has been colonized by men. Therefore, to claim literary space, females have to construct oppositional discourses to challenge malpractices employed by oppressive androcentric ideological structures. This would be the most significant strategy adopted by feminist scholars and writers to contribute to the movement through their ideological discourses and rhetorical skills adding to the feminist critique leading resistance to an oppressive androcentric regime. The central hypothesis of feminist literary criticism is that cultural productions, of varied nature, represent the masculine unconscious:

... feminism focuses on the ways that cultural productions (novels, drama, art, opera, music, movies) reflect and represent the masculine unconscious... Since women don't have phallus to lose and are not different from their mothers, they can't participate in the creation of the culture... men's repressed sexual desire for their mother and fear of the father's castration are sublimated into cultural creations... No matter what role women play in cultural productions, the *male gaze* sees them as desired or despised sexualized objects. (Lorber, 1997: 20-21)

However, hooks (2000) opines that sexism is not the only form of oppression but is intertwined with other social identities reflected through racism and the class system. Therefore, she asserts that these aspects should also be integrated into the feminist theory to develop a more holistic approach to the issues of feminist concern across various cultural contexts. Similarly, the heterogeneity of women's situation should also be considered.

7.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as discussed in the previous unit, is one of the most influential approaches within the field of discourse studies with an explicit agenda of social emancipation and transformation. CDA takes a keen interest in social problems and shows open solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized segments of society and highlights the perspective of silenced voices. For further details, you may consult the previous unit which is exclusively focused on CDA.

7.3 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Feminist CDA)

Feminist CDA, originating from the works of Lazar (2007), is specifically interested in investigating complex interrelationships and workings of power and ideology in discourses of varied nature which sustain 'gendered social arrangements' privileging men as a social group and discriminating against women. Feminist CDA, therefore, is concerned, primarily, with social transformation and emancipation of gender. With its explicit agenda of critiquing gender discriminatory discourses, Lazar (2007) terms it as a form of 'analytic activism'.

Within the context of the broader field of discourse analysis, the sub-field of feminist CDA (Lazar, 2005) offers a compelling theoretical and methodological framework for detailed analysis of representations of gender, power and ideology in discourses produced by various societal institutions. Feminist CDA, as a critical theory and practice, is established and developed as a key approach to analyzing and critiquing oppressive and hegemonic gendered power relations manifested in overt and covert forms in discourse from a feminist perspective (Lazar, 2005).

Feminist CDA, therefore, with its primary focus on the social emancipation of gender, is a critically important contribution to the growing field of critical discourse studies, specifically regarding gender and language where critical discourse analysis from a feminist perspective occupies a marginal position as CDA is mostly interested in 'serious' discourses of political nature. Therefore, to shift the focus on gender from the periphery to the centre of established practices, Lazar (2005) theorized it to establish its distinct position in centralized approaches to the study of text and talk. Since its inception in 2005, the field of feminist CDA is

constantly growing due to acclaimed scholarly work. There is a growing tendency to use Feminist CDA in critical, interpretative and explanatory research studies from the feminist perspective.

Feminist CDA, as a union of feminism with critical discourse analysis aims to 'advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse in sustaining (hierarchically) gendered social arrangements' (Lazar, 2007: 141). The critical insights drawn from both the fields of feminism and CDA provide foundations for understanding the complex interrelationship between gender, ideology and power. For feminist CDA, 'the focus is on how gender ideology and gendered relations of power are (re)produced, negotiated and contested in representations of social practices, in social relationships between people, and people's social and personal identities in texts and talk' (Lazar, 2005:11).

Feminist CDA, not only focuses on what is said in gendered discourse but also explores language as it constitutes and embodies a social, cultural and historical context tied to power and domination. Therefore, analysis of discourse necessarily involves the notion of 'critical' data explorations and investigations. Furthermore, a feminist CDA perspective is, primarily, interdisciplinary in nature as Lazar (2007) argues, 'on the one hand, it contributes to (critical) language and discourse studies a perspective informed by feminist studies, and on the other hand, it suggests the usefulness of language and discourse studies for the investigation of feminist issues in gender and women's studies' (p.142). Feminist CDA derives its purposefulness and theoretical and methodological strength partly from the fact that it presents a political perspective on gender, which is concerned with deconstructing the interrelationships of gender, power, and ideology in discourse, and partly from its potential applicability to the study of texts and talk equally, which offers a corrective substitute to approaches that favour one linguistic mode over another. The aim of feminist CDA, as described by Lazar (2007), is therefore:

...to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities. Such an interest is not merely an academic deconstruction of texts and talk for its own sake but comes from an acknowledgement that the issues dealt with (in view of affecting social change) have material and phenomenological consequences for groups of women and men in specific communities. (p. 142)

The primary objective and central concern of the discourse analysts working within the field of feminist CDA lies with critiquing gendered discourses which perpetuate and reinforce a patriarchal social order which prescribes relations of power that

systematically privilege men as a social group, and disadvantage, exclude, marginalize, undermine and disempower women as a social group. Feminist CDA, therefore, focuses on critiquing gender- based patriarchal ideologies which position women in the periphery and men in the centre of the power hierarchy (Lazar, 2005). Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1995, p.5) observe that there is really ‘no necessary coincidence between the interests of feminists and discourse analysts’, however, feminism and critical discourse analysis share a common ground and there is much overlap in terms of goals of social transformation and emancipation. Thus, this powerful synthesis can be instrumental for discourse analysts interested in critical data explorations from a predominantly feminist perspective.

In comparison to other feminist approaches to discourse analysis, Feminist CDA presents dynamic theoretical and methodological possibilities for discourse analysts since its philosophical foundation is rooted in politically invested grand narrative of critical discourse analysis. A feminist political perspective on gendered social identities, relations and ideologies is particularly motivated by an emancipatory agenda of social transformation. Feminist discourse analysts critically scrutinize and contest structural and functional elements of a hegemonic patriarchal social order to achieve both feminist and humanist ideals of a just society, in which gender does not predetermine social spaces, identities and roles assigned to men and women (Grant, 1993; Hill-Collins, 1990). Therefore, Lazar (2007) rightly claims that the work undertaken by critical feminists can be termed academic activism, raising critical awareness through research and teaching, of which feminist CDA constitutes a form of analytical activism through its theorization and analysis of discourse reflecting gender discriminatory practices. Though the field of Feminist CDA is constantly growing and expanding, its methodology is not rigidly regulated to lose its highly reflexive nature, such an approach may appear confusing for the practitioners on the one hand, but on the other hand, it allows for constant refinement, innovation and improvement, as Philips & Hardy (2002) claim:

As methods become formalized, they run the risk of being reified into a sort of research machine where researchers are reduced to technicians who simply turn a methodological handle and produce ‘truth’. A major advantage of working in a new area is the constant pressure to think about your own role in the research process and to be aware of how you have ‘made it all up’. We have found that the benefits of such regular reflection on the nature of research and the role of the researcher have far outweighed the difficulties of using a relatively underdeveloped methodology. (2002: v)

The scope of analyzing discourse produced by various societal institutions within the theoretical and methodological paradigm of feminist CDA is quite extensive. Based on close empirical analysis, it focuses on contextualized instances of spoken

and written language along with other forms of semiotics such as gestures, signs, symbols and actions in texts and talk. Thus:

The levels and foci of analysis in feminist CDA are also wide-ranging, including choices in lexis, clauses/sentences/utterances, conversational turns, structures of argument, and interactions among discourses. The latter, also known as 'interdiscursive analysis' (Fairclough, 1992), is primarily influenced by Bakhtin's (1981) ideas of heteroglossia and the dialogicality of texts and is concerned with the identification of and, more importantly, the interaction among different discourses within particular texts and talk. (Lazar, 2005, p. 13)

Data analysis not only includes and focuses on the meanings expressed overtly and explicitly but as Lazar (2005) argues, 'it is especially attentive to the less obvious, nuanced and implicit meanings for the subtle and complex renderings of ideological assumptions and power relations in contemporary societies' (p. 13).

Feminist CDA, principally, focuses on the socio-cultural context of specific communities to scrutinize their cultural products like television plays, documentaries and fictional narratives to develop a holistic understanding of ways of being and doing gender. Thus, feminist CDA focuses on the context of the texts to derive meanings in their entirety and to unmask gendered ideologies by exploring social situations, cultural representations, historical periods or assumptions implicit in their discourses and narratives.

Thus, a close and systematic analysis of the socio-cultural context in feminist CDA not only explores the meaning and relevance of the texts but also illuminates the ways discourses become instrumental in the construction, deconstruction, perpetuation and reinforcement of gendered ideologies. To conclude, feminist CDA analyzes the discourses of varied nature by contextualizing them in cultural practices, social values and political philosophies of their production and consumption for both critical engagement and reflections on hegemonic gender ideologies.

Textual or graphic representations of socio-cultural assumptions and practices of a particular society, dominant discourses of its societal, as well as gendered ideologies embedded in collective societal consciousness, overtly and covertly revealed in the discourse, lead to the investigations of the positioning of women in the society and to explore their psyche and consciousness. Therefore, contextual sensibility is required not only to develop a compelling and convincing narrative but also to decode its explicit and implicit ideologies embedded in presuppositions made and inferences drawn from its discourse.

Feminist CDA provides invaluable insight into the workings of gender power dynamics within the context of patriarchal societies. Unequal power relations between men and power are not produced and sustained by gender only because it is only one aspect of an individual's identity though it is the most important factor in determining an individual's social reality. There are some other intersecting social categories such as race, ethnicity, social class and sexuality which interact with gender to produce and sustain asymmetrical power relations and shape discursive practices. For instance, within the context of colonized India, an English woman was rendered powerful as compared to a native Indian man. It is evident from this instance that gender is not a determining factor but rather race. Similarly, a native Indian man enjoyed more power as compared to one of his subordinates and in this case, gender is similar but professional rank is different. Furthermore, a woman who belongs to the elite class is more powerful as compared to one of her domestic help, in this case, social class is the factor responsible for differential power status. Therefore, gender studied as a discrete category may not yield fruitful findings so intersecting categories must also be taken into consideration for objective analysis.

Feminist CDA, as a form of analytic activism, investigates how women and other marginalized groups are represented in a diverse range of discourses, especially in media discourses. It seeks to explore whether representations of masculinity or femininity are objective or biased. Furthermore, feminist CDA critiques sexist and stereotyped portrayals of women. Advertising discourse is also extensively scrutinized and objectification of women is challenged. Similarly, textbooks are also analyzed and it is observed that women are mostly underrepresented and stereotyped. It is argued that by critiquing gendered discourses and highlighting biased representations, space is created to contest and challenge such representations for the transformation and emancipation of gender. Feminist CDA also reveals how gender ideologies are embedded in discourses overtly and covertly and seeks to unravel hidden ideologies. The central premise of feminist CDA is that gender power relations are enacted through language use and can be contested or resisted by marginalized groups by constructing competing discourses. Feminist CDA is suitable for the analysis of text and talk across discourse genres including but not limited to media discourse, political discourses, textbooks, cultural products and discourses produced by various key epistemological sites. Feminist CDA is not only concerned with deconstructing oppressive discourses but its primary objective is to contribute to social change and empowerment of the suppressed and silenced voices. By exploring and highlighting discriminatory and oppressive language practices, discourse analysts seek to raise awareness to inculcate inclusive and just language practices.

7.4 Limitations of Feminist CDA

Feminist CDA is a valuable approach to understanding how language and discourse shape and reflect gender inequalities. However, like any other research methodology, it is not free of criticism. The nature of scholarly critique of the approach and its methodology is as under:

Feminist CDA has an explicit emancipatory agenda like CDA of highlighting the perspective of silenced voices. This political perspective combined with the element of subjectivity and preconceived notions of the analyst may lead to the manipulation of research findings. Furthermore, two different analysts may draw altogether different inferences from the research findings based on their political perspective on gendered discourses as well as their own lived experiences. Thus, the findings may not be reliable. Similarly, feminist CDA is, further, criticized because it ignores the diversity of women's survival conditions around the globe. Women never make a homogenous group; the heterogeneity of their lived experiences must be taken into consideration before transferring research findings to another cultural context. The feminist movement was also challenged on the same grounds by the women of colour that the movement has been hijacked by the white women who do not represent the diversity of females' reality of existence and their experiences in the developing world communities. Similarly, a feminist CDA practitioner may overlook the intersecting social categories of race, ethnicity, social class and sexuality interacting with gender. The theory proposes that these intersecting categories must be taken into consideration while analyzing gendered discourses. However, bringing these intersectional categories into analysis might be challenging so analysts may conduct mixed-method research. Furthermore, it might be challenging for an analyst to establish whether discourses simply reflect gendered stereotypes or also contribute to sustaining and perpetuating them, because feminist CDA like other approaches to discourse analysis focuses on the discourses but do not explore their impact on readers and or viewers. Data triangulation may serve this purpose.

Furthermore, the approach focuses on the use of sexist or gender-biased language and highlights the need for using gender-neutral terms but language is like a living organism, it constantly changes and evolves with time and if there are no longitudinal studies and only cross-sectional ones, the analysts may not capture historical shifts in their essence. Feminist CDA focuses on power dynamics and acknowledges the fact that power is a fluid entity but the complexities of power relations in society may not always be fully captured by discourse analysis alone. Power operates at multiple levels, and discourse is just one aspect of its manifestation. These limitations are few in comparison to the productivity of the approach and these too can be resolved through constant reflection and refinement.

The field of feminist CDA is constantly expanding and evolving. It is extensively used for analyzing the role of language in reproducing or challenging gender inequalities. Researchers working within the field must be aware of the challenges and address them to produce more nuanced and reliable findings. Integrating feminist CDA with other approaches and frameworks can enhance the understanding of gendered discourses and their far-reaching consequences.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, henceforth feminist CDA is a theoretical and methodological approach within the broader field of discourse analysis.
- ii. Grounded within the philosophical assumptions of the qualitative research paradigm, feminist CDA focuses on the relationship between gender, power and ideology in discourse.
- iii. Feminist CDA is theorized and developed by Lazar (2005), being the union of feminism with CDA, it is informed by valuable insights from both fields of critical inquiry.
- iv. Lindsey (2011) argues that the feminist movement uses women's perceptions and experiences to devise strategies to attain the political goal of gender equality in all spheres of life.
- v. Bowen and Wyatt (1993) claim that there is no precise definition of feminism or feminist inquiry because by nature these concepts resist definitive statements about their characteristic features.
- vi. hooks (2000), a black feminist, is of the opinion that sexism is not the only form of oppression but it intertwines with racism and the class system. Therefore, she asserts that these factors should also be integrated into the feminist theory to develop a more holistic approach to the issues of feminist concern.
- vii. Feminist CDA is specifically concerned with complex workings of power and ideology in discourse which sustains 'gendered social arrangements' that privilege men as a social group and are discriminatory to women.
- viii. Feminist CDA, therefore, is concerned with social transformation and emancipation of gender. Hence, Lazar (2007) terms it as a form of 'analytic activism'.

- ix. Feminist CDA, with its focus on the social emancipation of gender, is a fundamentally important contribution to the growing field of critical discourse studies, with special reference to gender and language where critical discourse analysis from a feminist perspective occupies a marginal position.
- x. Feminist CDA, not only focuses on what is said but also takes it as its basic premise to explore language as it constitutes and embodies a socio-historic context tied to power and domination.
- xi. The political perspective combined with the element of subjectivity and preconceived notions of the analyst may lead to the manipulation of research findings.
- xii. Furthermore, two different analysts may draw altogether different inferences from the research findings based on their political perspective on gendered discourses as well as their own lived experiences.
- xiii. Similarly, feminist CDA is, further, criticized because it ignores the diversity of women's survival conditions around the globe.
- xiv. Furthermore, a feminist CDA practitioner may overlook the intersecting social categories of race, ethnicity, social class and sexuality interacting with gender. The theory proposes that these intersecting categories must be taken into consideration while analyzing gendered discourses.
- xv. Researchers working within the field must be aware of the challenges and address them to produce more nuanced and reliable findings. Integrating feminist CDA with other approaches and frameworks can enhance the understanding of gendered discourses and their far-reaching consequences.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How does Feminist CDA specifically focus on gender-related issues and power dynamics in discourse, and how does it contribute to our understanding of gendered representations and inequalities?
2. What are the key theoretical foundations and feminist frameworks that inform Feminist CDA, and how do these perspectives shape the analysis of language and discourse from a gender-sensitive lens?
3. Explain the specific research methods and analytical tools employed in Feminist CDA to explore the role of language in perpetuating or challenging gender norms, stereotypes, and patriarchy.
4. What are the major strengths of Feminist CDA as an approach to uncovering gender-related issues in discourse, and how does it contribute to advancing gender equality and social justice?
5. Discuss some of the potential limitations or critiques of Feminist CDA, including challenges related to subjectivity, data selection, and the potential risk of treating gender identities independently without considering intersecting categories.

Unit–8

DISCOURSE GENRES

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OVERVIEW

This unit analyses some key genres of discourse including the discourse of advertising, the discourse of politics, the discourse of law and literary discourse. Structuralist, formalist, stylistic and discursive features of these prominent discourse genres have also been highlighted. Furthermore, their comparative and contrastive features have been discussed in detail to develop a holistic understanding.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to: -

- i. describe the term discourse genre
- ii. critically review the idea of discourse community
- iii. discuss stylistic features of advertising discourse
- iv. highlight the structure of discourse of law
- v. explain asymmetrical power relations in institutionalized discourses
- vi. analyze how ideologies are embedded in the discourse of politics
- vii. discuss major challenges involved in analyzing literary discourse genre

Description of discourse essentially entails detailed analysis of language ‘beyond the sentence level’ and is equally applicable to the investigation of ‘language in use’. However, this analysis is not restricted to a mere description of structuralist and stylistic features of the language but it also takes into consideration the relationship between the linguistic form(s) and their corresponding function(s) as language does not exist in a social void. Thus, the relationship between a linguistic form and its function is materialized during the process of social interaction and within the specific context of an utterance. These relationships are not naturally inscribed to the language but rather we ‘construct’ them during the process of our social interaction. Since this relationship is constructed, hence lies the possibility of negotiating or deconstructing form-function correlates which implies that the relationship between the forms and functions of our language is not absolute but rather fluid. Any diachronic investigation of language may reveal substantial findings to support this hypothesis. Therefore, no linguistic form can be simply associated with one particular function or meaning and rather this relationship is essentially dependent on the context of an utterance as the intended meaning of an utterance or communicative intention of a speaker may altogether change in varying contexts. This implies that the syntactic structure of a linguistic form may remain fixed, however, its function may vary according to the change in contextual background. This realization leads us to the understanding that the description of discourse is not merely limited to the linguistic elements but also their functions or intended meanings.

Discourse has a constitutive property as it constructs our reality through explicit and implicit social and cultural assumptions it presents. It influences and shapes our perceptions of the social world and seeks to construct us in particular ways to perform various social roles which suit the vested interests of the producer(s) of discourse (s). Discourse production, dissemination and consumption are critically important in achieving this end. Discourse not only reflects but also transforms our social reality. Viewed in this sense, discourse performs a dualistic function of social constitution and transformation.

8.1 Discourse Genres

Discourses can be classified into various genres based on their unique structuralist, formalist and stylistic features as well as their functions. Every discourse genre has its own particular ways of using language in both speech and writing. We can instantly identify the genre of a certain stretch of ‘language beyond the sentence level’ or ‘language in use’ based on its style, register and jargon. These variations in the use of language are carefully tailored to perform certain functions and are prevalent at various levels of language structure including but not restricted to phonological, morphological

and syntactical levels. The unique features of different discourse genres used in various professional domains serve to draw boundaries between the ‘insiders’ and the ‘outsiders’. The producers of these discourses pay close attention to the targeted audience to avoid any potential linguistic and communicative ambiguity keeping in view differential and asymmetrical levels of knowledge and experiences shared by the discourse producers and discourse consumers. Through these discourses, producers tend to establish their power and authority by causing favourable psychological impact on discourse consumers.

Furthermore, the term ‘power’ as used in the scholarly literature on discourse(s) is neither a static entity nor unidirectional in nature. Rather, it is a fluid entity which can be contested and negotiated. Thus, the agents who may be rendered powerless at a certain point during interaction may be treated as powerful as a product of contestation and negotiation. This remains valid even in the cases where inherent asymmetry in power relations exists between the participants. However, in the case of institutionalized discourses, inherently asymmetrical power relations are difficult to negotiate and contested as is the case with courtroom proceedings, police investigations and classroom exchanges. However, highly articulate participants may negotiate and create some space for themselves on the power hierarchy irrespective of their comparatively powerless status. Different discourse genres exhibit different levels of power symmetry or asymmetry based on the context of their production and consumption as well as the targeted audience.

A genre, generally speaking, is considered to be a socially recognized way of using language (Hyland, 2002). Language use is specific to the discourse community associated with a genre. To investigate a particular discourse genre, not only the texts but also their social contexts are considered. Furthermore, what functions these texts perform in their discourse communities are also taken into consideration but the primary focus of the analysts is always on the description of the texts or the ways these texts are rhetorically created to construct and reflect their specific communities who are conceptualized as ‘the parent of genre’ by Swales (1990). He, further, argues that the notion of a discourse community is attributed to the works of social constructionist theorists like Herzberg (1986) who claimed:

Use of the term “discourse community” testifies to the increasingly common assumption that discourse operates within conventions defined by communities, be they academic disciplines or social groups. The pedagogies associated with writing across the curriculum and academic English now use the notion of “discourse community” to signify a cluster of ideas: that language use in a group is a form of social behaviour, that discourse is a means of maintaining and extending the group’s knowledge and of initiating new members into the group, and that discourse is epistemic or constitutive of the group’s knowledge (Herzberg, 1986: 1, as cited in Swales, 1990:21).

The interrelatedness of discourse communities and discourse genres is extensively acknowledged, for instance, Hyland (2002: 121) argues, 'by focusing on the distinctive rhetorical practices of different communities, we can more clearly see how language is used and how the social, cultural, and epistemological characteristics of different disciplines are made real'. Thus, genres are conventionalized communicative events grounded in various disciplines and professional practices and due to their unique linguistic and stylistic features one genre may stand in sharp contrast as compared to another. However, we may come across certain genres where the unique features are not very distinct, hence boundaries are quite blurred. Resultantly one genre may incorporate discursive features of another in the form of intertextuality. This point will be further highlighted in our discussion on the discourse of politics, and we will observe how various features of advertising discourse are incorporated into the discourse of politics to develop powerful and persuasive arguments to win the support of the masses.

Discourse genres exhibit marked preferences for different lexical choices and varying patterns of syntactic arrangements based on their unique functions. Furthermore, discourse genres are typical of the professional fields they belong to. We will discuss some of the chief representative discourse genres in the following section.

8.2 Discourse of Advertising

The most prevalent discourses in contemporary societies are advertisements. We are exposed to electronic and print media advertisements of various kinds. This incessant exposure to advertisements has a deep impact on our psychology and it transforms our social reality. It leads us to perform the role of potential consumers. It is the most carefully planned form of discourse which is aimed at modifying consumer behaviour. Rhetorical features of advertising discourses are creatively fashioned thereby making it the most pervasive of all forms of discourses. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that advertising discourses not only promote consumerism but also inculcate desirability among their targeted audiences. It is carefully planned and uniquely constructed to make it one of the most powerful, potent and persuasive discourses for promoting and strengthening consumer culture. Though, the producers and/or consumers of advertising discourses are segregated by temporal and spatial boundaries, these discourses are powerful enough to develop a positive relationship between the two and cause a favourable psychological impact on the viewers. Though it appears to be a form of one-way communication, producers manage to make it reciprocal by using the technique of personalization and rhetorical questions to evoke a positive response from the

potential consumers of the products and services advertised. Creating a relationship with the consumers is challenging but crafty use of language enables the advertisers to manage it efficiently:

The language of advertising is widely characterized as persuasive and seductive, and its discourse exploits linguistic devices that are cleverly designed to attract us to a lifestyle of aspirational consumerism; so successfully, indeed, that it both reflects cultural and social values and also contrives to create new attitudes and needs (Woods, 2006: xvi).

Advertising discourse is the chief representative of carefully planned and designed linguistic craft to meet its primary objective of attracting viewers to advertised products and services. Language, certainly, plays a key role in achieving this end besides other semiotic features of advertisements. Some advertisers sell products through hard sell techniques by explicitly inviting potential consumers to use their products whereas some employ soft sell techniques to persuade and convince potential buyers to use their products. Whatever techniques are employed, the basic objective is to maximize their market share by promoting consumerism which is, also evident from Leacock's (1924) famous definition of advertising as 'the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it'. Creative and innovative use of language is highly instrumental in achieving this end. Discourse analysts, analyzing advertisements, often investigate how consumer ideology is embedded in their discourse. They also highlight some interesting findings regarding structuralist and stylistic features which make advertising discourse highly powerful, persuasive and potent. As described earlier, advertising language is marked by the use of carefully chosen word terminology, syntactic structures of varying length, as well as rich use of stylistic devices employed together in the construction and manipulation of meaning. Advertising discourse also heavily relies on semiotic features besides the interplay of linguistic codes. Extensive use of icons, signs and symbols enhances the impact of intended meaning. Rhetorical strategies are used to appeal to both the logic and emotions of the targeted audience. The aspect of personalization is carefully employed to address us directly to create an impression that the product advertised is uniquely customized for us. This is often achieved by using the second person pronoun 'you', this technique creates the impression that the message is communicated to us.

Advertising discourse is highly dependent on the context and is essentially grounded in the social and cultural values of a society. It not only reflects but also constructs new social values by either reproducing or challenging stereotyped behaviour and norms. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that advertising discourses mirror the society of their production, dissemination and consumption. Every advertisement has a primary and secondary discourse, its primary discourse is informative as it provides us with relevant information about the product

advertised, however, its secondary discourse is evaluative as it describes social and cultural perceptions and practices of the society. For instance, an advertisement for a beauty product may be partly informative highlighting chemical composition and its effects but it would also provide us valuable insights into our society which is preoccupied with the ideal feminine beauty image. Similarly, an advertisement of a household appliance would not only inculcate desirability by highlighting its unique features but would also reveal gendered norms, values and behaviour regarding who is responsible for managing the household affairs, etc. The discourses of advertisements are extensively scrutinized not only to understand how language and semiotic features are used to promote and sustain consumer culture but also to analyze their role in promoting unrealistic beauty image which is inherently discriminatory in nature.

Furthermore, linguistic analysis of the advertising discourse reveals that advertisers make use of rhetorical questions to grab the attention of the viewers. Rhetorical questions evoke curiosity among potential consumers which eventually leads to creating desirability. Product desirability is further reinforced through open-ended comparisons. For instance, an advertisement may claim that the product advertised works better but better than which product is never revealed. However, it causes a favourable psychological impact and a viewer assumes that it works better than all other products intended to serve the same purpose. Furthermore, advertising language is marked by extensive use of descriptive words to create vivid images and positive impact. Similarly, abundant use of figurative language like simile, metaphor, personification and hyperbole is also instrumental in creating the desired impact. Moreover, advertising discourse includes factual statements but their function is evaluative in nature. Similarly, advertisers use catchy phrases, presuppositions and various other linguistic features to reach the targeted audience. On the surface level, advertising discourse is meant for information exchange, however, on a deeper level it is intended for activity exchange.

8.3 Discourse of Politics

The genre of political discourse has been profoundly affected by the rapid expansion of traditional and social media platforms. As a genre, it includes speeches, talk shows, interviews, debates and focus group discussions dealing with political issues. The discourse of politics is the chief representative of the discourses which influence and shape people's perceptions. Politicians employ various linguistic strategies to construct 'reality' not only for themselves but for their political opponents. They not only construct political ideologies but also present persuasive arguments to convince people that they are the real solution to all of their problems. They also propagate that they possess the right credentials to rescue

them from the evil clutches of social, economic and political adversaries. On the patterns of imperial powers, politicians construct the discourses of being the 'saviour of the nation' and pursue their vested interests in the guise of a liberating agenda. We can draw interesting analogies between the discourse of politics and the discourse of advertising. Advertising discourse offers solutions, in the form of products and services advertised, to health, hygiene and household problems but their hidden motive is to maximize their revenue and promote consumer culture. The discourse of politics, similarly, offers solutions to people's problems but politicians meet their own vested interests once they are in power. Advertising discourse inculcates desirability for products and services whereas political discourse inculcates desirability for certain political parties and their respective ideologies. Thus, the discourse of politics incorporates various essential elements of advertising discourse on linguistic and ideological levels. Furthermore, the discourse of politics is marked by the feature of intertextuality and relies on discourses produced by various state and non-state institutions to develop their arguments more persuasively and convincingly. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that due to the recent boom of social media besides other traditional electronic and print media, political discourses are incessantly constructed, disseminated and consumed providing fertile ground for evoking opposing and competing political ideologies. Various catchphrases and slogans are frequently used to cause a favourable psychological impact on the viewers/readers to influence and shape their perception of reality. Political speeches are often grounded in politically and emotionally charged ideas and rely heavily on religious and media discourses to support and strengthen their arguments. The discourse of advertising and politics is often embedded in collective societal consciousness and controls the psyche of the people in such a way that they behave like programmed or conditioned subjects.

Political discourse is designed to have impressive and persuasive impact but it is often regarded as lacking in meaningful content or sincerity. Similar to advertising discourse, political discourse reflects the art and science of persuasion which is the finest representation of the ancient theory of rhetoric presented by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle. Political arguments are grounded in three rhetorical appeals including ethos, pathos and logos for their effective impact on the audience. Ethos, a Greek word for character, refers to the authority and expertise of a speaker or writer. For instance, a politician who is well versed in the economic state of affairs of the country quotes statistics accurately and aptly creating a better impact on the audience as compared to the one who has no grounding in the economic conditions of the country. On similar patterns, advertising discourse makes use of celebrity endorsements and testimonials for beauty products to cause favourable psychological effects. Similarly, a toothpaste recommended by a dentist has a strong ethos as compared to a recommendation given by a non-professional. This

is not merely because they are professionals in the fields but because they demonstrate ideal results or benefits of the product. Their recommendations are treated like testimonials.

The discourse of politics incorporates the aspect of pathos and appeals to people's emotions both positive and negative. Political discourse is centred on emotionally charged ideas especially during the election campaign. Politicians elicit people's emotions to affect their judgments and to counter the narratives presented by other political parties. Politicians are aware of the ground realities and know what kind of discourses may be constructed to evoke an emotional state in the audience. This essentially provides them with a basis to effectively present their arguments, develop evidence and identify counterarguments. Within the context of Pakistani political discourse, we can easily identify emotionally charged ideas embedded in our religious and national ideology, of independence, self-reliance and dignity. Thus, the appeal of pathos can be overwhelming because a heightened emotional state can overpower logic and reasoning.

The discourse of politics is also grounded in the third element of rhetoric which is logos which appeals to logical reasoning and the audience's sense and sensibility. Great politicians tend to consider this aspect of persuasive speech and make reasonable claims which can be supported with evidence. They would not make a claim which can be either nullified or falsified. However, they are exceptional cases too as many political arguments are mere sweeping statements without taking into consideration the contextual reality. Nevertheless, the audience believes in their false promises because of their powerful oratory.

On the superficial level, much of the political discourse appears to be spontaneous but the case might be the opposite. Political statements, slogans and catchphrases are skillfully crafted and rehearsed. Professional political speech writers are hired to impact the audience's sensibilities. Therefore, it is commonplace to find persuasive linguistic techniques which are customary in advertising discourse.

As with the language of advertising, political discourse is also multifunctional: it may be used, for example, to perform a variety of speech acts: to protest, to legitimize, to intimidate, as well as to persuade, of course. Indeed, in much the same way as the discourse of advertising seeks to persuade us to purchase a product or service, the language used by politicians is designed to lead us to a particular view of political reality, and to act in a way that is consistent with this view – by voting for a particular party, for example. (Woods, 2006: 50)

To achieve the objective of causing a desirable impact on the public, politicians employ various stylistic devices like metaphor and hyperbole which are incorporated at the phrase or sentence level. We can very easily recall such catchphrases from Pakistani political discourse, 'The country is going through the toughest phase.', 'We are going bankrupt.', 'No power on the earth can destroy Pakistan.', 'Muslim Ummah', 'strategic depth', 'cascade of change' and 'true freedom', etc. The close association between politics and language is not a new phenomenon and it was practiced in ancient times too which led Aristotle to hypothesize that human beings are naturally political animals who use language for persuasion to achieve political ends.

8.4 Discourse of Law

The discourse of law is a specialized discourse which is highly pervasive in the contemporary world. Structuralist, formalist and stylistic conventions of legal discourse stand in sharp contrast with advertising discourse. The former gives a lengthy and detailed description of legalese whereas the latter is more oriented to the brevity of expression owing to expenses involved in publishing print media advertisements or broadcasting electronic ones. Within the field of legal discourse, discourse analysts, often, focus on differential features of written and spoken discourses. The language of written legalese often makes use of archaic terminology reflected in legal contracts and deeds; however, it is not frequently used in spoken legal discourse like courtroom proceedings and criminals' investigations in police custody which is often perceived as manipulative and coercive. Legal discourse is the finest representation of asymmetrical power relations. Courtroom proceedings and police investigations not only reflect but also maintain such relations between the participants which is evident in the way language is used.

Legal discourse is chiefly characterized by its use of formal language and terminology which is both precise and technical. We, often, find the use of archaic Greek and Latin phrases in legal documents, deeds, contracts and affidavits. Furthermore, the use of specific legal jargon ensures clarity in legal communication enabling uniformity and accuracy in interpretation. The word terminology used is precise and specific and exact meanings of words and phrases are given followed by detailed descriptions, if required. Legal terms, often, have defined meanings to eliminate misinterpretation. Legal discourse is characterized by formality in style and structure and does not allow the use of colloquial terms, slang and emotional language to enhance subjectivity and neutrality. This formal approach to legalese lends seriousness and authority to legal documents and proceedings. Legal discourse is marked by complex syntactic structures and lengthy paragraphs. This style of writing is aimed at capturing detailed legal conditions and exceptions

comprehensively within a single sentence or paragraph as it is tailored for a specific audience.

Legal arguments are presented in a structured way by following logical progression: issues are stated in a simplified and straightforward manner along with supportive and relevant facts, and pertinent laws or precedents are also shared to draw inferences and conclusions. This systematic pattern helps professionals in the field to build persuasive arguments.

Legal discourse is heavily context- dependent like other discourse genres and it requires a thorough understanding of legal rules, regulations and principles. Awareness of historical background and the intent behind the legal provision is also a prerequisite to interpret legal statutes in their specific contexts. To conclude, the discourse of law is a highly structured and systematic form of communication which is critically important in the development, interpretation and application of legal principles and practices. The legalese is aimed at fostering clarity, consistency and accuracy to minimize any potential risk of ambiguity and misunderstanding. The discourse of law encompasses a diverse range of activities from courtroom proceedings to scholarly debates.

8.5 Literary Discourse

Literary discourse is marked by unique complexities of its kind based on its adherence to literary traditions and conventions. Owing to its stylistic features, the literary discourse genre does not exhibit a linear relationship between the linguistic forms and their corresponding functions. Thus, it reflects a certain level of structural and functional complexity which we hardly find in any other discourse genres discussed in this unit. This idea is often highlighted by various scholars in the field, for instance, Sunderland (2004) points out various challenges involved in analyzing the discourse of fiction which include blurred boundaries between fantasy and reality, the dialogic nature of its discourse leading to a range of parallel and competing perspectives, intertextuality, relationship between the author and narrator's point of view as well as focalized perspectives of various other characters who populate the narrative. Thus, it can be asserted that 'narrative discourse is a specific type of discourse and may, in part, be defined in terms of the conventional categories, rules and other constraints which distinguish it from other discourse types' (van Dijk, 1980: 6).

Besides these constraining elements, there is another significant challenge faced by a discourse analyst in the quest for 'meaning', the problem of interpretation which is more prevalent in the literary genre of discourse as compared to other genres.

Literary meanings cannot be produced in isolation, rather, a variety of viewpoints, diverse perspectives, multiple voices and intersecting discourses are mobilized together in the process of production of meaning, this is a fundamental insight which is commonly associated with Bakhtin (1981), his most famous ideas of polyphony and dialogism, for the characteristic presence of many voices in any discourse; this is the most significant defining feature of literary discourse.

As described earlier, the literary discourse genre has several unique features which are not commonly found in non-literary genres. It exhibits a marked preference for creative and artistic use of language which enhances its aesthetic appeal. There is abundant use of imagery and symbolism which adds to the richness of its meanings. Literary discourse often makes use of flowery expressions and poetic diction based on the literary talent of the creative artist. Literary texts often employ the use of stylistic devices like simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole and alliteration, etc. The objective is to create a vivid image in the minds of readers. The literary discourse is not only rich in linguistic expression but also evocative aimed at creating emotional responses and sensory experiences in the readers as it tends to explore complex themes dealing with philosophical, psychological, political and socio-cultural issues. The discourse of literary genre may not follow linear flow of thought or logical progression of ideas owing to its unique structural complexity. Literary discourse, often, relies on connotative or associative meanings of the linguistic expressions as compared to the discourse of law which depends on denotative or literal meanings for the clarity of expression. Similarly, the discourse of law does not create space for multiple interpretations of the legal texts but the literary genre shows marked preference for multiple layers of interpretations owing to the prevalence of intertextuality. Literary discourse is often set in a broader socio-cultural context so contextual sensibility is required for the successful interpretation of its meanings. Within the domain of literary discourse, different genres like prose, poetry, fiction and drama exhibit distinctive stylistic features and conventions, influencing the form and function of the text. Thus, unique features of literary discourse contribute to its richness, complexity and enduring appeal the aesthetic sense of the readers.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. Description of discourse essentially entails detailed analysis of language ‘beyond the sentence level’ and is equally applicable to the investigation of ‘language in use’.
- ii. Discourse analysis is not restricted to a mere description of structuralist and stylistic features of the language but it also takes into consideration the relationship between the linguistic form(s) and their corresponding function(s) as language does not exist in a social void.
- iii. The relationship between a linguistic form and its function is materialized during the process of social interaction and within the specific context of an utterance.
- iv. Discourse has a constitutive property as it constructs our reality through explicit and implicit social and cultural assumptions it presents.
- v. It influences and shapes our perceptions of the social world and seeks to construct us in particular ways to perform various social roles which suit the vested interests of the producer (s) of discourse (s).
- vi. A genre, generally speaking, is considered to be a socially recognized way of using language (Hyland, 2002).
- vii. Language use is specific to the discourse community associated with a genre. In order to investigate a particular discourse genre, not only the texts but also their social contexts are considered.
- viii. Interrelatedness of discourse communities and discourse genres is extensively acknowledged, for instance, Hyland (2002: 121) argues, ‘by focusing on the distinctive rhetorical practices of different communities, we can more clearly see how language is used and how the social, cultural, and epistemological characteristics of different disciplines are made real’.
- ix. Rhetorical features of advertising discourses are creatively fashioned thereby making it the most pervasive of all forms of discourses.
- x. Advertising discourse is powerful, potent and persuasive.
- xi. Discourse of politics is the chief representative of the discourses which influence and shape people’s perceptions.

- xii. Politicians employ various linguistic strategies to construct ‘reality’ not only for themselves but for their political opponents.
- xiii. The legalese is aimed at fostering clarity, consistency and accuracy to minimize any potential risk of ambiguity and misunderstanding.
- xiv. Literary discourse is marked by unique complexities of its kind based on its adherence to literary traditions and conventions.
- xv. Literary meanings cannot be produced in isolation, rather, a variety of viewpoints, diverse perspectives, multiple voices and intersecting discourses are mobilized together in the process of production of meaning.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What are the defining characteristics of a discourse community, and how do these characteristics influence the way individuals communicate, share knowledge, and establish a sense of belonging within the community?
2. How does discourse genre influence the structure, language, and communication strategies used in different types of texts, and what role does it play in shaping the expectations and understanding of the audience?
3. How do advertisers use linguistic and visual strategies to construct persuasive messages and appeal to the emotions, desires, and aspirations of their target audience?
4. How does political discourse influence public opinion, and what role does language play in constructing and reinforcing political ideologies and narratives?
5. What are the key features of legal language and discourse, and how does its specialized use shape the interpretation and application of laws and regulations within the legal system?
6. In what ways do literary devices and figurative language contribute to the creation of meaning, emotion, and aesthetic appeal in literary texts, and how do authors use discourse to convey their artistic vision and themes?

Unit–9

RESEARCH IN DISCOURSE

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OVERVIEW

This unit highlights the nature of research in the broader field of discourse analysis. It also focuses on documenting some past research studies conducted in the field to explore potential possibilities of future research. Owing to the constraining element of the unique diversity of the field, the unit exclusively focuses on the critical investigation of gender and highlights how the diversity of research can be conducted in a single domain from a variety of theoretical perspectives and methodological frameworks.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to: -

- i. assess the nature of research in the broader field of discourse analysis
- ii. explore past research studies conducted in the field
- iii. evaluate the usefulness of integrating research perspectives from interrelated fields
- iv. examine representations of gender in literary discourse
- v. analyze gendered ideologies embedded in media discourse

Research in the field of discourse analysis has been as diverse and dynamic in nature as the field itself. It has become more advanced, specialized and innovative with the development of the field. Research studies have been consistently drawing on a diverse range of theoretical perspectives and methodological frameworks. Researchers have been particularly interested in examining dominant themes of power, ideology and gender in a wide range of discourses and often integrating them productively in the form of their invaluable scholarly contributions to the fluid field of discourse studies (Holmes & Marra, 2010).

9.1 Nature of Research in Discourse

The field of discourse analysis is capable of examining a diverse range of spoken and written discourses produced by various societal institutions and key epistemological sites. Critical studies are not restricted to the analysis of spoken or written discourses only but also their semiotic features, for instance, print and electronic media products. Contemporary research focuses on social media products too as it is gradually gaining momentum besides traditional media. Therefore, research trends in this field are not only a manifestation of the constantly growing and expanding nature of the field but also highlight its significance in developing our understanding of the complex workings of language from a variety of perspectives. Therefore, the investigations include a diverse range of data collected from a range of key epistemological sites of significant importance as well as various key genres of discourse.

The researchers, for instance, are particularly interested in media, legal, religious, educational, political and literary discourses as well as cultural productions, etc. and examine them from various perspectives. Many of these fields are 'epistemologically key sites' for analyzing language and its interrelatedness with power and ideology in discourse. Discourse analysts may describe structuralist, formalist, stylistic and functional aspects of various discourse genres and examine how asymmetrical power relations, social and political inequalities and gendered ideologies are embedded in their discursive practices and narrative structures. As discussed previously, discourse analysts draw on a variety of theoretical perspectives and discourse genres to investigate the issues of social, cultural and political relevance. However, for the sake of in-depth discussion, only gendered discourses are taken into consideration to reveal how a variety of approaches, theories and methodologies can be integrated to unmask hidden androcentric ideologies of a patriarchal social order.

9.2 Gender in Literary Discourse

Discourse analysis, primarily, focuses on gendered discourses to examine how gender identities, roles and relations are constructed and manifested through the use of language. Gendered ideologies are, exclusively, explored. For example, Sunderland (2004) investigated the nature of gendered discourses presented in children's fiction. The data included a principled selection of award-winning books published for children in the USA. She employed critical discourse analysis from the feminist perspective on selected books of fiction as well as nonfiction which were a total of eight in number, four books were winners of Newbery and four were winners of Caldecott awards from 1999 to 2002. She made an exhaustive discussion on the challenges faced by the analysts while working with the literary discourse genre of fiction. Working from a critical feminist perspective, she found evidence of gendered discourses and interpretively identified four sets of gendered discourses in the selected book. The selected books included evidence of different variations of such discourses. For instance, she highlighted traditional and stereotypical gender discourses with clear segregation of men's and women's ideological positioning within and outside of the household as well as their power relations. Secondly, she identified feminist discourses as the evidence of resistance to patriarchal perceptions and practices, and/or that those perceptions or practices were critically represented, and/or a female character was presented progressively. Thirdly, she mentioned non-androcentric discourses which showed deviations from masculinity and its associative values as the norm. Fourthly, she highlighted subversive discourses which challenged and resisted the traditional and stereotypical patriarchal gender ideology. Thus, she concluded that there were parallel as well as competing gender discourses corresponding to larger societal structures.

Another important critical investigation dealing with the notion of gender differences and their impact on the language used was conducted by Talbot (1995) who examined verbs used in James Herbert's novel 'Liar' on science fiction. She used CDA in examining the text of the novel. She was principally concerned with the differences in the nature, frequency and kinds of verbs used for describing actions performed by male and female characters of the novel. She studied these differences in terms of transitivity and intransitivity of verbs. She purposively selected a scene from the novel as analyzing a complete novel was not manageable without using some sort of computer software. She highlighted how the distribution and use of transitive as well as intransitive verbs conveyed subtle messages aimed at establishing how one person is principally responsible for 'making things happen' and it was done in a gendered way. It is not surprising to predict that the hero's acts were most frequently represented through transitive verbs (e.g. reach, take, grab, shield, etc.) while those of female characters were reflected by using intransitive verbs (e.g. stand, watch, lean back, etc.). Thus, she concluded that the

discourse of the novel established and reinforced the status of men as performers by involving them in the main actions whereas women were depicted as just spectators and passive recipients of the actions performed by men.

In a significant study, Taylor and Stephens (1989) examined two picture book versions of the Arcadian seal wife legend to explore their ideological positioning either implied or aimed to inculcate besides the critical components of the narrative structures. Each version preserves the ending where the seal wife leaves her husband and children to return to the sea. These books were read to one hundred and seventy-four children studying at three Sydney schools to assess their responses to the values and attitudes depicted in the text. The children were primarily from class sixth to eighth.

Some reading sessions were arranged to promote discussion about the important focal points in the story. The children were finally instructed to produce some written responses by rewriting the story. Changes made in the endings of the story revealed a noticeable difference between boys and girls. The responses of girls involved a reconstruction of the story strengthening mother-child bonding so that they could live permanently underwater world. This reworking of the story established the female desire for self-assertion and agency.

However, male participants rewrote the story by concluding it with the death of the mother, 'The inherent irony in this response, of course, is that rather than allow the mother freedom and self-determination at the expense of her bond to the child, the writer is prepared to kill the mother and lose her anyway' (p. 62). The data collected from readers reading the Seal Wife stories highlighted some valuable insights about the relationship between ideology, subject position and reader, 'Readers not only arrived at the same 'story' from each book but also inferred a common 'significance', that is, that the narrative was not just a sad story about a man and the seal wife but about marital separation and power relationships. Eleven-year-olds were as capable of inferring this as were thirteen- year- olds' (p. 64). The study concluded that there were gender differences in the rewriting of the story's ending and all the participants whether male or female correctly inferred the significance of the story.

9.3 Gender in Media Discourse

Garnsey and Rees (1996) explored discourse about women's participation and opportunities in employment. They employed methods and techniques of linguistic studies. They analyzed four documents connected to Opportunity 2000, a famous business-led drive launched in the UK in 1991. They highlighted how a diverse

variety of linguistic strategies were employed to present inequality in employment opportunities as an essential outcome of women's lack of education and training. Their approach can be categorized as critical linguistics since they examined the use of various rhetorical strategies employed by actors to justify inequality. Those strategies led to the reflection of the social reality of gender-discriminatory employment opportunities and had significant political implications. The frequent and repeated use of passive constructions in the documents represented women as the 'passive recipients' of the campaign who had no active role to play in national progress and development. They concluded that not only the discourse but the linguistic strategies which supported it had very strong inferences for the readers that women could not achieve the top positions in the hierarchy of organizations 'largely as an outcome of their own shortcomings' (p.1066).

Another important study which also focused on the constitutive property of discourse in the construction and reflection of our 'selves' was of Marshall (1991) who examined the depiction of parenthood in written texts. She employed a 'discourse analytic approach' to recognize 'recurrent themes and constructions of motherhood' in a selective range of parent craft texts from 1979–88 which were published in the UK. She identified themes and constructions, related to the idea of motherhood, as 'accounts', which can be viewed as discourses. However, she did not explicitly use the term 'discourse' for 'accounts', but she did refer to 'missing discourse'. From a critical perspective, Marshall (1991) argued, 'Given that the same phenomenon could be described in a number of ways, discourse analysis examines social texts, both spoken and written to see which linguistic constructions are selected and which are omitted (1991: 67). From her study, we derive a perspective that a discourse analyst has to consider not only what is stated but also what is not stated because it also plays a key role in the construction of ideologies (Fairclough, 2003). The reference here is to traces of discourses, but it is logical to extend this idea to missing discourses. Marshall identified various accounts which included 'motherhood as ultimate fulfilment', 'mother's love as natural' and 'sharing the caring'. She also identified some missing discourse by which she meant:

The 'missing' discourse is one that gives consideration to depression associated with the social environment and changes in women's lives as a consequence of having children, including their financial situation, dissatisfaction with medical intervention or giving up employment outside the home (1991: 82).

Marshall (1991) concluded her study by arguing that motherhood was constructed by depicting its positive attributes at the expense of ignoring its negative impacts on women's health as well as psychological and emotional well-being. Thus, discourse is capable of constituting whatever reality it depicts.

Lazar (2002) assessed the representations of motherhood as well as fatherhood in an advertising campaign in Singapore by the government. It is generally argued that advertisements in electronic and print media are persuasive in nature. The government-led campaign also aimed at persuading educated Singaporeans, in particular women, to marry and start families of more than one child to enhance the population growth rate. Through the analysis, she identified not only the presence but also negotiations between two competing discourses of gender relations which were based on traditionalism and modernism. The presence of these discourses reflected social and cultural changes prevalent in contemporary Singapore. By using a critical Hallidayan framework, Lazar analyzed that in one of the advertisements:

...the gendered nature of the mundane caregiving tasks the mother performs is emphasized in contrast to what the father is shown doing at the same time...whilst the mother [above] is represented as watching over the safety of her young son at the beach by holding onto his float, the father, although also represented as an actor, is engaged in an activity entirely different in nature from the basic caregiving function performed by the mother. The father performs a popular entertainer role whereby he plays with and makes funny faces at the child... (2002: 122)

Lazar (2002), further, explored that the mother was concerned about the safety and well-being of the child but was rarely the focus of the child's attention. The child, on the other hand, focused on the entertaining father. The advertisement through its linguistic and semiotic features reflected that the mother's activity was taken for granted and an essential feature of her maternal nature which is deeply ingrained in her psyche. Lazar claimed that the advertisement genre as well as the 'discourse of conservative gender relations' constitutes the primary subject position offered to women here as 'consumers of all-consuming personal relationships' (2002: 124). Another important study by Lazar (2007) focused on the idea of post-feminism. She examined the advertisements of body and beauty products collected from English-language newspapers and magazines in her Singaporean context. She was interested in examining the emergence of the discourse of popular post-feminism interdiscursively constituted through the incorporation of elements of other discourse genres. She used a multimodal approach to analyze discourse to develop a holistic understanding of meaning-making practices. One of the scenes, depicted in advertisements, involved the reclaiming of women's physical desires and the celebration of physical agency. Gill (2003) termed it as the re-sexualization of women in contemporary popular culture as well as media, from a transformation of the position of physical objectification to physical subjectification. Popular post-feminism is both a media-friendly and consumer-oriented discourse indexing the institutional reflexivity as well as reflective practices of popular culture and media industries. In this particular case, the advertisements depict socially progressive

ideas of women's empowerment, the assertion of their agency, and self-determination deflecting second-wave feminist critique of the advertising industry for causing oppression of women by establishing unrealistic standards of beauty and social acceptability. The second-wave feminists, further, criticized the advertising industry for sustaining and reinforcing exploitative and stereotypical images of women. She asserted that such depictions of the female body were in clash with the feminist cause and were quite damaging to it.

9.4 Gender and Constitutive Property of Discourse

With relevance to the constitutive property of discourse, Coates (1997) examined a conversation between two friends and both were females. Her study focused on the argument that the varied range of discourses we access 'enable us to perform different "selves"; which can be marked as 'self-positioning (p. 291)'. Her claim was linked to the fundamental property of discourse as both constructor and reflector of our 'self' and our social reality. Coates, in her research, identified two competing but simultaneous discourses of maternity. The first was the 'dominant' discourse, 'which communicates that children are "marvellous", and as part of this all mothers take pride in their children's achievements'. The second, 'alternative' discourse 'asserts that not all children are likeable and...it is not compulsory for adults to like all children' (1997: 294). Coates argued that this 'alternative discourse' was an example of a subversive discourse, contrary to the common expectations as both friends were mothers and were contesting and negotiating the idea of women and in particular mothers as 'loving, caring, nurturing beings for whom having children is the ultimate experience of their lives' (p. 294). Both friends were actively engaged in producing this competing discourse of maternity and did not behave like the 'conditioned' subjects of the dominant discourse celebrating the notion of motherhood as ultimate fulfilment. Thus, she concluded her study by arguing that discourse constitutes our 'selves' and also reflects our social reality which is both constructed and reflected in discourse.

Gender differences manifested in the use of language have been a focus of scholarly attention in the field of discourse and gender studies for a significant period. Many researchers investigated this critical notion from various perspectives, for example, Mills (2002) conducted a critically acclaimed work on language and gender by integrating theoretical work on the aspect of gender from a feminist perspective with a new theorization of linguistic politeness. Her fundamental argument was to employ a more realistic model for investigating the interrelationship of gender and politeness. Her study is based on an anecdotal incident which occurred at her university's departmental party involving Mills, her supervisee and a new male colleague who was a poet. Mills argued that using anecdotal evidence could be

problematic owing to its subjectivity, but Cameron (1998) proposed that anecdotes may “condense a great deal of taken-for-granted cultural wisdom into a very small amount of surface production” (Cameron 1998:447). Mills examined a single turn-taking from her conversation with the male colleague. After formal greetings and opening remarks, she asked him about the nature of his poetry. To her surprise, instead of talking about his poetic subject, he asked Mills to name six poets.

Mills was astonished to witness his response which was highly offensive since it entailed that she was not familiar with poetry as a literary genre. However, Mills, despite his rude response to her genuine query, tried to repair the damage caused to the talk. But the male colleague, on the other hand, started making offensive remarks. Consequently, the conversation ended abruptly as was expected because of his rude behaviour. It turned out to be a subject of heated discussion in the department but he never realized his mistake of insulting a female colleague who was his senior in the departmental hierarchy. Mills, further, exposed that not only she but also, the male colleague misperceived her communicative intention. He held himself in high regard and assumed his fame as a poet, but Mills’ query challenged his claim and hurt his self-esteem since her question indicated that she did not know anything about him. Mills concluded that the analysis of politeness requires various modifications: firstly, we need to examine politeness over longer stretches of talk instead of a single turn-taking. Secondly, it should be examined within the perspective of a ‘Community of Practice’, rather than simply a product of individual speakers. Finally, she concluded, that there might be socio-cultural variations in the treatment of politeness so such variations may also be accounted for in the analysis.

SUMMARY POINTS

- i. Research in the field of discourse analysis has been as diverse and dynamic in nature as the field itself.
- ii. It has become more advanced, specialized and innovative with the development of the field. Research studies have been consistently drawing on a diverse range of theoretical perspectives and methodological frameworks.
- iii. Researchers have been particularly interested in examining dominant themes of power, ideology and gender in a wide range of discourses and often integrating them productively in the form of their invaluable scholarly contributions to the fluid field of discourse studies (Holmes & Marra, 2010).
- iv. The field of discourse analysis is capable of examining a diverse range of spoken and written discourses produced by various societal institutions and key epistemological sites.
- v. The researchers, for instance, are particularly interested in media, legal, religious, educational, political and literary discourses as well as cultural productions, etc. and examine them from various perspectives.
- vi. Sunderland (2004) investigated the nature of gendered discourses presented in children's fiction. The data included a principled selection of award-winning books published for children in the USA.
- vii. Another important critical investigation dealing with the notion of gender differences and their impact on the language used was conducted by Talbot (1995) who examined verbs used in James Herbert's novel 'Liar' on science fiction.
- viii. She used CDA in examining the text of the novel. She was principally concerned with the differences in the nature, frequency and kinds of verbs used for describing actions performed by male and female characters of the novel.
- ix. Garnsey and Rees (1996) explored discourse about women's participation and opportunities in employment. They employed methods and techniques of linguistic studies.
- x. They analyzed four documents connected to Opportunity 2000, a famous business-led drive launched in the UK in 1991. They highlighted how a diverse variety of linguistic strategies were employed to present inequality in

employment opportunities as an essential outcome of women's lack of education and training.

- xi. Their approach can be categorized as critical linguistics since they examined the use of various rhetorical strategies employed by actors to justify inequality.
- xii. Another important study which also focused on the constitutive property of discourse in the construction and reflection of our 'selves' was of Marshall (1991) who examined the depiction of parenthood in written texts.
- xiii. With relevance to the constitutive property of discourse, Coates (1997) examined a conversation between two friends and both were females.
- xiv. Her study focused on the argument that the varied range of discourses we access 'enable us to perform different "selves"; which can be marked as 'self-positioning (p. 291)'.
- xv. Mills (2002) conducted a critically acclaimed work on language and gender by integrating theoretical work on the aspect of gender from a feminist perspective with a new theorization of linguistic politeness.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1. How does the choice of discourse analysis methodology influence the interpretation and findings of research in social sciences?
- 2. Provide examples to illustrate the impact of different analytical approaches on understanding gendered societal norms and power dynamics.
- 3. Analyze the portrayal of gender roles and identities in a specific literary text or genre. How does discourse analysis reveal underlying ideologies and power dynamics regarding masculinity and femininity?
- 4. Examine the language and visual representations of gender in a specific media genre, like advertisements and comment on how do discursive practices reinforce or challenge traditional gender stereotypes?
- 5. Compare the representation of gender in classic versus contemporary literary texts of your choice using discourse analysis. How have discursive strategies evolved over time and what do these changes reveal about shifting cultural norms and perceptions of gender roles in literary works?

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