

English Phonetics and Phonology 2

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● Object of study: spoken
discourse

What is discourse and why analyse it?

- Generic term (not only spoken)
- Umbrella term
- Written/oral
- Sign language

- **Graphics and images (multimodality)**
- **People are skilled users of the language.**
- **talking: we tend to take for granted**
- **Linguists: make explicit what we tend to take for granted**

- **DISCOURSE: PRAGMATIC PROCESS OF MEANING NEGOTIACION.**
- **Text: its product.**
- **Difference between spoken and written.**
- **Spoken text:**
 - two or more parties.**
 - prepared**
 - pre-scripted in different degrees.**
 - (interviews/casual converssation/relative formality**

- **Spoken Text: directly processed online.**
- **Fugitive and partial**
- **Transcription problems. However, participants have no problem in understanding each other.**
- **Transcription. Paralinguistic elements missing.**

**Written text: only partial record
of intended meaning**

**Writer: projected reader that
may be different from real
readers.**

- ◎ **Text on the page: does not yield the writer's version of the originating discourse, but the reader's version of it.**
- ◎ **No online negotiation to enable parties to converge on a common understanding**

Who studies spoken discourse?

- ◉ **Anthropologists**
- ◉ **Philosophers**
- ◉ **Psychologists**
- ◉ **Sociolinguists**
- ◉ **Students of the media, etc.**

Analysing discourse

- **As an end in itself:**
- **Scholars want to know about talk**
 - Turns at talk
 - Misunderstandings
 - Incidence of form (grammar) on the structure of discourse
 - As a means to an end

People's talk may be a source of evidence about other aspects of their lives. (sociologists, social psychologists, researchers in education etc.)

◎ **They adopt methods that yield discourse data**

> **Interviews, ethnographic studies using participant observation (e.g. vilelas)**

> **Analysis will include:**

- **Listening to talk**
- **Transcribing it**
- **Reflecting on its meaning**
- **Significance**

Conversation, talk, discourse
How would you define these terms?

- **Conversation: usually spoken language**

BUT

Internet?

e.mail?

Chat

**Is interactivity and spontaneity
more important than medium?**

(Activity page 9)

Activity page 9

- As quickly as possible, list all the words you can think of that are used to describe different kinds of talk (in Spanish)

- COPY QUESTIONS ON BB.

Level of formality: argument, chat, discussion, gossip

Setting: interview, debate, seminar, doctor/patient

Conversation in English: informality, spontaneity, egalitarian relationship.

What is Discourse?

- ◉ Widdowson (2004)
- ◉ Stubbs (1983) Organization of language above the clause or the sentence (only extending the scope of grammar)
 - > Conversational exchanges / written texts
 - > BUT
 - > TRESSPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED
 - > HANDLE WITH CARE

OR EVEN:

- LADIES/SILENCE/ OPEN
- P Shorthand. Here is a place for parking cars.
 - > How do we understand this in the country/in thr city?

It depends on relating the text to something outside it, to **CONTEXT** and **SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE**

- I interpret something as a text not because of its linguistic size, but because I assume it is intended to key into reality.
- It may be:
 - a letter
 - a sound
 - A word
 - a sentence, a combination of sentences

I recognize text not by size, but by social intention.

- **Sacks (1972)**
- **The baby cried.**
- **The mommy picked it up**

Anaphoric reference (pronoun as cohesive device) but also knowledge of the world. Scripts.

But also: narrative structure/ causality

LANGUAGE ABOVE THE SENTENCE OR LANGUAGE IN USE?

- **Language above the sentence: structuralism. Interest in form and structure of language.**
- **Language in use: functionalism. Interest in what language is use to do.**
- **However, the distinction is not so clearcut-**

Because meaning is so dependent on context, discourse is not amenable to purely formalist analysis. And functionalists have always been concerned with form as well as function.

LANGUAGE HAS A CERTAIN KIND OF FORMAL ORGANIZATION BECAUSE OF THE PURPOSES IT IS DESIGNED TO SERVE.

**YOU NEED A GREAT DEAL OF GENERAL
KNOWLEDGE AND CONTEXTUAL
INFORMATION FOR TEXTS TO SERVE THEIR
COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE.**

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS:

**WHAT AND HOW LANGUAGE
COMMUNICATES WHEN IT IS USED
PURPOSEFULLY IN CONTEXTS**