

INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis is an innovating theory within the area of linguistic studies which bases its theoretical framework on the use of language in relation to its social and cultural context. In this sense, discourse analysis is a matter of practices involved in language use as social action and language use joined to social relations and identities, power, inequality and social struggle. Its hybrid field of enquiry justifies why discourse analysis has combined work within a broad range of disciplines to contemplate discourse from the different fields of linguistics proper to multiple viewpoints: philosophical, cognitive, social, anthropological, literary, historical, political and ideological. Accordingly, the field covered by the discipline of discourse analysis is a wide and a varied one due to the diversity of issues under consideration and to the diverse hypotheses which have emerged in different countries in relation to their own scientific and cultural traditions: sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology of language and studies on talk and verbal interactions, studies on argumentation and utterance, and discourse analysis on the language of politics, advertising and the media.

The rising pressure to assume that language and meaning are in some way social constructs accounts for the amazing interest in discourse analysis, a field that from its very beginnings has postulated as unrealistic abstracting language away from real data in authentic discourse reflecting, in turn, that the source of data should be examined in the cultural and social contexts in which it appears. In order to explore this point, this issue of *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* brings together a body of work in the discipline of discourse analysis by pointing, within the space limitations of a monograph such as this, to a number of questions worth discussing from a theoretical and methodological point of view. It includes different fields that represent key trends in discourse analysis practice and research, with the development of different variations in the model of analysis in relation to the type of discourse analysed, the discourse constituents object of analysis, the theoretical proposal considered by the analyst as a methodological tool, etc. This leads to a fruitful insight on the links which connect the diverse tendencies, on their peculiarities as well as on the definition of the framework in which all these contributions to the volume fit.

The volume brings into focus two main research lines. One of them serves to establish the place of discourse analysis within the different fields of linguistics proper. From another point of view, the second research line explores discourse from the perspective of discourse and communication, covering contributions on discourse and the media, political discourse, and discourses of the Self (e.g., self-identity) and discourses of Other (which label or describe the out-group, discourses representing resistance against or oppression of the other, etc.) among cultural mi-



norities and dominant groups. The studies included in this monograph are divided into ten contributions, each of which develops relevant features of discourse structure and the functioning of discourse. At the same time, the interest of the different models of analysis resides definitely in the intricacy of the types of discourse examined. In this sense, the papers in this volume contribute to the development of the theory in different ways.

The monograph is opened with the article by Angela Downing, one of the outstanding theoretical researchers on functional grammar and discourse. Analysing a lengthy stretch of dialogue which constitutes one conversational episode of a semi-transactional nature, she takes as point of departure Schegloff's statement that "talk-that-does" and "talk about" cannot be analysed independently but must be seen to interact. Downing makes it plain that both of these aspects of topicality are grounded in a cognitive basis and both are, ideally, collaborative and contributing to coherence. Her study suggests how the actional sequences of the "talk in action" may interact with the "aboutness" role of topicality in the mutual construction of coherence and the achievement of conflicting goals.

The following two contributions to the volume inquire into the area of specialization of discourse analysis and its applications to second language teaching. Isabel Alonso and Anne McCabe's paper explores English language teaching materials in terms of development of written discourse competence. Firstly, looking at how discourse studies have influenced the literature on language teaching in recent decades, and secondly comparing the extent to which findings from these studies might be present in mainstream English language teaching materials, they provide suggestions for language teaching professionals facing challenges in their daily practice. Arnulfo G. Ramírez also provides accounts in the area of second language acquisition, addressing the development of conversational discourse across five different Spanish proficiency levels in the context of a conversational situation. He analyses examples to illustrate the potential of the methodology proposed, defending the view that the process involved in the development of conversational discourse in L2 Spanish entails the management of both transactional and interactive language functions within a sociocultural context.

Adding to the volume a set of proposals to study the cognitive processes that shape the linguistic construction of discourse T.A. van Dijk's contribution provides a solid theoretical framework for exploring issues of the relations between knowledge and news in the press, showing a range of links to many of the following papers presented. After a brief survey of the study of knowledge in the cognitive psychology of discourse processing, van Dijk suggests that the vague notion "knowledge of the world" needs to be defined and differentiated. The author indicates how (news) discourse presupposes a "common ground" of shared knowledge of different types that need not be asserted, usually abstract, general knowledge and knowledge about historical-political events, whereas the news as such largely expresses knowledge about specific events, that is, mental models constructed and expressed by journalists, as well as reconstructed and updated by the readers. Finally, he shows how these various kinds of knowledge are associated with different kinds of structures in the news.



The next paper, Laura Hidalgo's account of the role played by negation in the construction of discourse coherence in extracts from press and advertising discourse, takes up some of the issues addressed by van Dijk. One particularly interesting is her discussion of negation from a discourse-pragmatic perspective as a way to explore its cognitive dimension and the motivations for its use in discourse, namely, the relation between the negative proposition or expression and the activation of relevant knowledge frames.

The following articles add to the volume a set of proposals to adopt a social perspective in the cross-cultural study of media texts. In this sense, society and criticism become key words in the approaches to language study and its application to the analysis of newspaper excerpts as discourse.

Kuriakose Mundadan and Norberto González Gaitano tackle the press coverage of recent political developments that have caused constant religious violence in India as the result of the hateful propaganda towards the minorities by certain fundamentalists groups. Their findings report how dominant groups use discourse to define their own identities and to redefine those of minorities, and how discourses are used as tools of oppression and reinforcement of stereotypes.

Jeremy Munday investigates the realization of the language of appraisal or evaluation examining reports written in Spanish and English from the 2002 football World Cup. He adopts an approach which brings together systemic functional linguistics, corpus linguistics and contrastive analyses of English and Spanish. Through a description of carefully chosen examples, Munday specifies features common to both set of reports as well as more subtle or different evaluative methods in the two languages.

The study I present in my paper is concerned with the discourse structure of news in the press. Revising the theory of structures (van Dijk, "Schemata") and analysing concrete examples of news writing taken from two British national newspapers, I examine the organization of news as a starting point to explain what differentiates stories in quality and tabloid newspapers, with special emphasis on the tabloid press strategy to frame news reports following a narrative schema. I point out that although the generic structural pattern of a news article may stay constant in the quality and popular press, the degree of interaction between narrative and non-narrative depends on its overall contexts of occurrence, being culturally variable.

Ruth Wodak and Rick Iedema's article combines the perspective of critical discourse analysis and a systemic functional point of view to explore the political discourse used by Austria's ultra-right winger, Jörg Haider, revealing a number of facets of Haider's discursive self-presentation and persuasive rhetoric. They stress the importance of the application of diverse theoretical and methodological concepts for analysing the force of Haider's discourse, while attempting to expose inequality and injustice. Their article concludes by emphasising that discourse in the political arena is a dynamic field of interests, engagements, tensions, conflicts and contradictions, and that this field in turn reflects the organization of society and its institutions and the roles and power structures inherent therein.

I have chosen to close the monographic section with James R. Martin's article. His comprehensive account of the faces of critical discourse analysis offers a



driving force to further work, addressing many of the questions that have arisen throughout this issue and enriching the perspective on linguistic analysis and contextual factors. Martin's discussion suggests that the main focus of critical discourse analysis work has been on hegemony, concerned with exposing language and attendant semiosis in the service of power. And he argues the need for a complementary perspective bringing into focus language and semiosis which functions to make the world a better place, and which he refers to as Positive Discourse Analysis. He exemplifies this kind of positive discourse analysis introducing three examples for analysis. These include the emergence of new genres as agents of social change, evaluative language and narrative in discourses in the context of post-colonial relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The ten models of analysis selected for this volume show how to integrate linguistic analysis and the study of the use of language for communication in context in the exploration of discourse analysis, a field which is characterised by continuously proliferating a variety of analytical methods and renewed tools. These analyses, presented by researchers from several countries, provide an overview of key concepts in the analysis of discourse from various languages and cultures. I would like to end by expressing my most sincere gratitude to all the authors for accepting my invitation to contribute in this issue and for providing us with a high quality sample of very recent research in the area of discourse analysis.



WORKS CITED

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