

## **DISCOURSE ANALYSIS THEORY: A NEW PERSPECTIVE IN ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study focuses on the discussion of discourse analysis theories and the use of the theory in interaction. The objectives of the study are to identify the discourse analysis theory and discuss the utterances in interaction among primary school children. The samples of the study involve eight subjects from a primary school in Selangor. The subjects were given thirty minutes to discuss on the topic of discussion chosen by the them. The transcripts of interaction were analysed by using the discourse analysis theory. The results of the study showed that the subjects were able to utter meaningful words, phrases and sentences that lead to a successful communication. The result of the study also showed the discourse analysis theory that is suitable in the study which consists of three elements; content, context and assumption. It is hoped that further study will focus on small group interactions by using the same theory.

### **Keywords:**

*discourse analysis theory, critical discourse analysis theory, critical view, language*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Discourse analysis includes the analysis of utterances, interactions, texts and written text analyzed for the purpose of finding implicit and explicit meanings (Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2018). Discourse analysis also helps in the process of analyzing messages from the sender to the receiver or from the writer to the reader. It is important to understand what is being delivered. On the other hand, discourse also includes symbolic language, signals and anything else that gives meaning to all parties involved. Discourse is a language born by a speaker or author. Language spoken and written contains meaning and understood by listeners or readers (Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2014). According to Asmah Haji Omar (1986), discourse is the whole language of the speaker or author, the language system and external elements of the language system that contribute to making the speech or writing as meaningful in communicating. Normaliza Abd Rahim (2018) postulates that discourse is defined as a unit of language that has a mindfulness of intact mind and exceeds the boundary of the verse. In the language hierarchy, the discourse lies at the highest level, which is present after the verse level. Subsequently, discourse is a structured event manifested in linguistic behavior of language or ones others (Edmonson, 1981). There are one thousand and one meaning of discourse but in conclusion, discourse involves meaningful spoken, interaction, written and text. However, it can also be added that sign or body language is also considered as discourse language among the special needs or others. The sign language has helped people in communicating without the use of any words or writing. It has been successful where people are able to relay and receive messages.

## **DISCOURSE ANALYSIS THEORY**

Coulhard (1977) states that there are three approaches in discourse analysis theory and the approaches are contextual linguistic, language function and context. The first approach is contextual linguistic where it analyses the context of a certain text or interaction. Coulhard (1977) added that context refers to the words and sentences that surround any part of a discourse and that help to determine its meaning. Secondly, the language function where it represents the active use of language for a specific purpose while the language forms deal with the internal grammatical structure of words and phrases as well as the word themselves. Thirdly, the context in analysis where circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood. The approaches suggested by Coulhard's (1977) theory focused on the linguistic and language structure of the analysis. The analysis will be more focused and suitable for written and textual discourse. However, spoken and interaction can also be considered as important since it needs to be grammatically right to ensure for better understanding.

According to Brown & Yule's (1983) theory, there are four approaches in analysing discourse. The approaches are reference, presupposition, implicature and inference. Brown & Yule (1983) claim that the four approaches will help in the process of understanding of written, textual, spoken and interaction for the researcher as well as reader of the analysis. However, the analysis for presupposition and implicature will be difficult since most researches will find the same results after the analysis. Therefore, the analysis should be concise and analytic and there will be differences in both the analyses. This is because most researchers do not understand the meaning of presupposition. Presupposition is a thing tacitly assumed beforehand at the beginning of a line of argument or course of action while implicature is the action of implying a meaning beyond the literal sense of what is explicitly stated. Reference on the other hand means the use of a source of information in order to ascertain something and inference is a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning. A study by Normaliza Abd Rahim, Hazlina Abdul Halim & Noor Shahila Mansor (2017) has used Brown & Yule's (1983) theory to analyse students' interactions using e-story and the results of the study revealed that students' showed better understanding towards the e-story.

According to Stubbs (1983), the term discourse analysis refers to the study of language above the sentence or above the clause. In other words, discourse analysis is to study larger linguistic units, for instance, conversational exchanges or written texts. Thus, discourse analysis is also focuses with the language use in social contexts, hence, the interaction or dialogue between speakers. Moreover, discourse analysis concentrates on the analysis beyond the sentence. To add, Stubbs (1983) states that discourse analysis concerns with the interrelationships between language and society and lately, concerns with the interactive or dialogic properties of everyday conversation. Stubbs (1983) claims that there are eleven approaches to discourse analysis. The approaches involve a linguistic approach to discourse, predictability and well-formedness, phonotactics, grammaticality, intuitions about discourse sequences, predictability, predictability and idealization, structure controls meaning, canonical discourse and idealization, analogies and conclusions. It can be clearly seen that some of the approaches seemed to be similar to one another. This might be due to the fact that, Stubbs (1983) focuses on analysing in depth. There are three predictabilities and this can be analysed as one since the analysis will have the same outcome. The other approaches can be simplified into six main approaches. As stated in Nur Maisarah Roslan (2017), the six approaches by Stubbs (1983) can be used appropriately in analysing interaction, spoken and utterances among mobility students at Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Johnstone (2002) on the hand claims that there are seven approaches in discourse analysis. The approaches are words and lines, paragraphs and episode, scenes and narrative structures, arrangement of conversation, organization of sentence, cohesion and structure and regulations. It is clear that Johnstone (2002) particularly focuses on the words, phrases and sentences at the beginning of the analysis. This is important to ensure that the data can be analysed in the right way. The rules of

grammar are also focus to ensure that there is cohesion, structure and regulations been used. It can also be seen that this theory is suitable for all types of discourse as in spoken, interaction, written and textual discourse as it can analysed in depth. Johnstone (2002) also suggests that the analysis should be done systematically form words, line, paragraphs, episodes, scenes, conversation, sentences, cohesion and lastly the structure and regulations.

Normaliza Abd Rahim (2018) discourse analysis theory consists of five elements. The elements involve are presupposition which is adapted from Brown & Yule's (1983) theory, emotions refer to the theory pioneered by Cannon (1927), values and cultures adapted from Falsafah Pendidikan Negara (Malaysia Education Philosophy) (1996), language and inference which is also adapted from Brown & Yule's (1983) theory. The theory is introduced to ensure that the values and culture are integrated in the theory so that it gives awareness to the community. Normaliza Abd Rahim, Awang Azman Awang Pawi & Nik Rafidah Nik Muhamad Affendi (2018) study has used the values and cultures from the theory and the results of the study revealed that the values and cultures are important to create awareness among learners. Normaliza Abd Rahim (2018) claims that the values and culture are important for children's' learning since good values will help them to grow up and be a better person. There are sixteen values that need to be analysed. On the other hand, the language element is important since most people nowadays acquire and learn more than two languages and it also need to analyse the linguistic element. This way, the analysis will be more in depth. As for presupposition, it consists of intuitions and context. The analysis will be more since there are also seven sub elements that need to be analysed. The sub elements are acceptance/disclaimers, requirements, referrals, anaphora, repetition, blur and confirmation. As for emotion, there are positive, negative and mix emotion. Emotions can be analysed by looking at the character, personality, mood and motivation. As for inference, there are three sub elements that need to be analysed. The sub elements are summary of the whole, formulation of discussion topics and closure. Since, Normaliza Abd Rahim (2018) theory has more to analyse, it can also be seen as critical discourse analysis theory.

Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis theory shows that there are three elements in the critical discourse analysis. The elements are textual analysis, discourse practise analysis and social practise analysis. Each element consists of sub elements which need to be analysed accordingly. For textual analysis, the sub elements are grammar which focuses on the theme of the analysis, lexical which focuses on metaphor and cohesion which focuses on repetition. Repetition is the action of repeating something that has already been said or written and conjunction is a word used to connect clauses or sentences or to coordinate words in the same clause in the analysis. As for the second element, there are two sub elements. The sub element intertextuality is the relationship between texts, especially literary one that consists of presupposition. Presupposition is a thing tacitly assumed beforehand at the beginning of a line of argument or course of action. Metadiscourse and deny to which is the state that one refuses to admit the truth or existence while the second sub element interdiscussion consists of narrative. Narrative is a spoken or written account of connected events; a story. Debate on the other hand, is a formal discussion on a particular matter in a public meeting while expository is an intended to explain or describe something and expressive is an effectively conveying thought or feeling. The third element is social practise analysis with three sub elements namely economy, education and politic. Fairclough's (1995) theory has to be analysed critically. Nur Widad Roslan (2018) study has used Fairclough's (1995) theory to analyse celebrity endorsement in television advertisement. The results of the study by Nur Widad Roslan (2018) revealed that copywriting has helped consumers in better understanding of the advertisement.

vanDijk (1977) critical discourse analysis theory shows that there are three structure in the analysis. The macro structure which shows the large-scale or overall focuses on the global meaning of a text that can be observed and from the topic/ theme of a text. The superstructure focuses on the analysis of framework of a text, such as the introductory section, content, cover and conclusions. The micro structure which is extremely small focuses on the local meaning of a text that can be observed and from the choice of words, sentences and styles used by a text. It can be clearly seen that vanDijk

(1977) critical discourse analysis theory mainly focuses on the text written. Also, the theory suggests that the three structures help in the process of analysing critically. However, vanDijk (1977) theory was developed within the discourse analysis theory existed.

This study proposes a discourse analysis approach that is suitable for the study. The discourse analysis approach consists of three elements. The elements are content, context and assumption. The first element of the content which is something that is to be expressed through some medium, as speech, writing or any of various arts is analyzed through themes, samples / materials and types focus on the themes and types of texts, books, novels and others or utterances / interactions which focus on conversations / interviews and others. Meanwhile, the context that is the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood consists of three parts. The first part is grammar which is the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology which include inflections and sometimes also phonology and semantics. Grammar covers the entire use of vocabulary, words, phrases and sentences. Secondly, the setting that is the place or type of surroundings where something is positioned or where an event takes place and is analyzed according to all the details related to the time, background, character and atmosphere of an event in the text, writing, spoken and interaction. Setting is divided into three that is, place background, time background and community background. Thirdly, the sub element emotion to which is instinctive or intuitive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge. Emotions are also analyzed by taking into account the feelings or fluctuations of the soul that arise within a person as a result of the stimulation, both from within and from the outside. The third element of the discourse analysis theory is assumption which is a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof and is divided into three parts namely; opinions which refer to a view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge, references refer to the use of a source of information in order to ascertain something and questions which is a sentence worded or expressed so as to elicit information. Opinions can be analyzed with whatever opinions that are given through textual, written, spoken and interaction. Positive or negative opinions are also taken into account. The second part is reference to which the verse or statement refers to material, matter or person. It is easy to see when each object or statement refers to a previous statement. The last part is question that every text, written, spoken and interaction contains questions that require an answer. Based on the elements above, emotions refer to the theory pioneered by Cannon (1927). Grammar refers to the theory by Stubbs (1983) and reference refers to the theory proposed by Brown & Yule (1983).

The objectives of the study are to identify and discuss the discourse analysis theory and discuss the utterances in interaction among primary school students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The samples of the study consist of eight focus group students from year 6 class at a primary school in Selangor. The subjects were given 30 minutes to talk about any topic of interest. Their interactions were recorded and analysed by using the discourse analysis theory.

The discourse analysis theory in this study consists of three elements (see table 1 below). The elements are content, context and assumption. The element content consists of the theme of the interaction. The context consists of three sub elements; grammar, setting and emotion. Assumption consists of three sub element; opinion, reference and question. The first element of the content is analyzed through themes, samples / materials and types or utterances / interactions. Meanwhile, the context has three parts, namely grammar (the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics), setting (the place or type of surroundings where something is positioned or where an event takes place) and emotion (instinctive or intuitive feeling as

distinguished from reasoning or knowledge). Grammar covers the entire use of vocabulary, words, phrases and sentences. While the setting is analyzed according to all the details related to the time, background, character and atmosphere of an event in the text, writing, spoken and interaction. Setting is divided into three that is, place background, time background and community background. Emotions are also analyzed by taking into account the feelings or fluctuations of the soul that arise within a person as a result of the stimulation, both from within and from the outside. The third element of the assumption (a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof) is divided into three parts namely; opinions (a view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge), references (the use of a source of information in order to ascertain something) and questions (a sentence worded or expressed so as to elicit information). Opinions can be analyzed with whatever opinions that are given through textual, written, spoken and interaction. Positive or negative opinions are also taken into account. The second part is reference to which the verse or statement refers to material, matter or person. It is easy to see when each object or statement refers to a previous statement. The last part is question that every text, written, spoken and interaction contains questions that require an answer.

Table 1: Discourse Analysis Theory

<b>Discourse Analysis Theory</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Assumption</b>
1. Theme	1. Grammar 2. Setting 3. Emotion	1. Opinion 2. Reference 3. Questions

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Content in Interaction*

- S1: *The story is about family. About love.*
- S2: *Yup. I agree with you. Alim’s family. The really care for each other.*
- S3: *Alim is actually the main character in the story.*
- S4: *I totally agree with you. But he only says a few words. Maybe because he is special.*
- S5: *So the story in more on special son? What do you think?*
- S6: *Special person, maybe!*

The interaction above showed the utterances among S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 and S6. The content of interactions was found in the utterances. S1 uttered “The story is about family. About love.” It can be seen that S1 had focused on the theme of the story. S1 claimed that the theme of the story is “Family” and “Love”. On the other hand, S2 uttered “Yup. I agree with you. Alim’s family. The really care for each other.” S2 agreed with S1 on the theme of the story and she said that most of the content in the story focused on Alim’s family. Other than that, S3 uttered “Alim is actually the main character in the story.” S3 seemed to agree with S2 where the story is focused on Alim. S3 also claimed that Alim is the main character in the story. S4 uttered that “I totally agree with you. But he only says a few words. Maybe because he is special.” It can be seen that S4 agreed with S3 and she mostly talked about Alim as the main character in the story. S4 also stated that Alim did not chat with the siblings because Alim is special. It seemed that S4 knew about Alim who is a special needs child. On the other hand, S5 uttered “So the story in more on special son? What do you think?” S5 agreed with S3 and S4 where she claimed that the story is about Alim as a special son. S4 felt that a special son can be related to Alim being abnormal as compared with the other siblings. S6 was having doubts with S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5. S6 uttered “Special person, maybe!” It can be seen that S6 was unsure of the

statement given by the other subjects. In fact, S6 mentioned the word “maybe” when the other subjects stated about Alim being special. Overall, it is obvious that the theme ‘Family’ uttered by the subjects is focused in the interaction. Although S3, S4, S5 and S6 did not mention the word “Family” but the interaction that they had were focused on the family.

#### *Context in Interaction*

*S2: I am not sure of the story. Something wrong with Alim?*

*S4: No. He not wrong. He special.*

*S5: I feel sad about Alim. Is he okay?*

*S6: He special. Don't be sad. You should be happy because everyone loves him.*

*S7: The whole family loves him. Really amazing when Alim helps in the house. I don't do it at home. Hahah.*

The interaction above showed the context among S2, S4, S5, S6 and S7. It can be seen that S1 did not have any utterance that is related to context. As for grammar in context, S4 uttered “No. He not wrong. He special.”. This can be clearly seen that S4 has not used the correct grammatical rule. It seemed that the other subjects understood S4’s utterance. Although S4 should have said “No. He is not wrong. He is special”. S4 did not mention the word “is” for both sentences. S6 seemed to have uttered the wrong grammar as well. S6 uttered “He special” where she should have uttered “He is special”. The use of “is” is not important for both S4 and S6.

As for setting in context, it can clearly discussed among the subjects that the story is mostly at Alim’s house, as uttered by S7 “The whole family loves him. Really amazing when Alim helps in the house. I don’t do it at home. Hahah.” Although, the othe subjects S1, S, S3, S4 , S5 and S6 did not mention the word “home” or “house” but it can be clearly understood that the setting of the story is in the house where the siblings help each other to clean the house.

As for emotion in context, S5 uttered “I feel sad about Alim. Is he okay?” S5 seemed to be empathy towards Alim and she felt sad for Alim being special. In fact, S6 has tried to tell S5 that she should not be sad and instead be happy with Alim. S6 uttered “He special. Don’t be sad. You should be happy because everyone loves him” and she said that everyone in the family loves Alim and therefore she should be happy with Alim. S7 agreed with S6 and uttered “The whole family loves him. Really amazing when Alim helps in the house. I don’t do it at home. Hahah”. S7 claimed that the family loves Alim and tries to help Alim to cope with the house chores. In fact, S7 stated that Alim is an amazing child since he was able to help with the chores in the house. Overall, it can be seen that all the subjects have sad, happy and empathy feelings about the story. This can also be said that the story helps the subjects to understand about being empathy towards someone who is a special needs.

#### *Assumption in Interaction*

*S1: I can do what Alim did in the house. I can clean the house.*

*S3: Are you sure you can help? I don't like to take the rubbish out everyday.*

*S5: Same. I don't like it too. Sometimes, it's too heavy. I wonder how Alim did it?*

*S5: So the story in more on special son? What do you think?*

*S6: The siblings help him too. That is why he can do everything.*

*S7: Are you sure? I think Alim did it on his own. He did not ask help from the siblings. Remember, he is special. He doesn't talk a lot.*

The interaction above showed assumption among subjects S1, S3, S5, S6 and S7. Opinion in assumption showed that all the subjects have given their views and opinion. S1 uttered “I can do what Alim did in the house. I can clean the house” and S1 managed to give her opinion and stated that she

can be like Alim as in cleaning the house. S1 opinion showed that everyone can be like Alim and helped around the house. However, S3 uttered “Are you sure you can help? I don’t like to take the rubbish out everyday” and gave her opinion that she did not like to take the rubbish out everyday. S3 seemed to prefer other chores other than throwing the rubbish. In fact, S3 was unsure that S1 helped in the house. S3 might be thinking that S1 preferred not to help and let her siblings do the job. S3 might know S1’s family and that was the reason that she gave her opinion.

As for reference in assumption, S5 uttered “Same. I don’t like it too. Sometimes, it’s too heavy. I wonder how Alim did it?”. S5 was referring to the throwing of rubbish and she did not like it. S5 was also referring to S3 utterance on their dislikes towards the house chore. On the other hand, S6 uttered “The siblings help him too. That is why he can do everything”. S6 uttered the word siblings in the story which referred to Alim’s eldest brother, elder sister and younger sister. Therefore, S6 claimed that there were three siblings that helped Alim in the house. S6 also uttered “That is why he can do everything” whereby based on the story, the word “everything” referred to sweep the floor, take the rubbish out, wash the dishes and clean up the toys on the floor.

As for question in assumption, S5 uttered “Same. I don’t like it too. Sometimes, it’s too heavy. I wonder how Alim did it?”. It seemed that S5 has asked the question “I wonder how Alim did it?”. S5 was unsure whether Alim did it on his own and S5 wanted answer from the other subjects. On the other hand, S5 uttered “So the story is more on special son? What do you think?”. S5 has asked two questions since she was unsure that of the story. S5 wanted to know about the special son story and she also asked the other subject about their opinion based on it. Other than that, S7 uttered “Are you sure? I think Alim did it on his own. He did not ask help from the siblings. Remember, he is special. He doesn’t talk a lot”. It can be seen that S7 has asked the question “Are you sure” since she knew that Alim did the chores on his own. In fact, S7 has given assurance that Alim did not ask help for the other siblings. It can be seen that S7 has asked the question and gave assurance to the other subjects about Alim did the chores alone.

## **SUMMARY**

The results of the study above revealed that the subjects’ interaction consists of the discourse elements content, context and assumption. The discourse analysis element suggested in this paper has shown the analysis from the interaction has helped in the process of better understanding of the utterances between the subjects. The result also revealed that the elements of discourse managed to show positive impact towards good and meaningful interaction. The result of the study is parallel to the study of Normaliza Abd Rahim (2018), Noraien Mansor & Normaliza Abd Rahim (2017), Normaliza Abd Rahim, Hazlina Abdul Halim & Noor Shahila Mansor (2017) and Nur Maisarah Roslan (2017) where utterances in interaction are important when it is meaningful for both listener and speaker. Also, the message by the speaker will be delivered successfully when the listener managed to give feedback on the same subject matter.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study implicates the Ministry of Education in planning curriculum focusing on communication, school in carrying out speaking activities in the classroom, teachers in preparing activities for teaching and learning and learners in giving meaningful interaction in the classroom. It is hoped that further studies will focus on the use of discourse analysis theory in small group interactions.

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