CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse Analysis has emerged as one of the most significant areas of study because of its vastness and distinctiveness. Discourse is not confined to one particular form of text. All types of literary forms fall under the category of discourse. Even the non-literary form can be analysed by dividing it into three domains: “the study of social interaction, the study of minds, selves, and sense-making, and the study of culture and social relations” (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates 2001: 5). The linguistic aspects leading to the study of Discourse Analysis are traced here in this chapter and the meaning of Discourse, its emergence, definition and its scope of study are presented.

1.1. Linguistic Approaches

The discipline of Linguistics falls broadly under two approaches.

(a) The formal or structural linguistic approach.

(b) The functional or sociolinguistic approach.

Formal linguistics focuses mainly on the structure of the sentence and its components in isolation from the context. Its cardinal focus is on the phonemes and morphemes and the relations they form to constitute sentences that are syntactically and semantically well formed. The functional or sociolinguistic approach focuses mainly on the speakers’ ability to produce not only grammatically correct sentences of their language but also their ability to use them appropriately in a socio-cultural context. Thus Sociolinguistics focuses on analyzing meaningful discourse.
In Linguistics, language is seen as performing a referential function, while in Sociolinguistics, language is seen as performing a number of socio-cultural functions along with the referential function.

(a) Structuralist Approach

The great shift in the methods adopted for research in structural linguistics started with the publication of *A Course in General Linguistics* (1916), by Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Saussure, “Language is a system of signs that expresses ideas”. Goodrich (1987:21) observes that to save the objective of Linguistics from disintegrating into the hands of a variety of disciplines, Saussure proposed the constitutive distinction between the language system (*langue*) and the speaking subject (*parole*). Saussure considered Parole as not amenable to any systematic study as it is essentially an individual activity.

Chomsky’s *Syntactic Structures* (1957) added a new dimension to the study of Saussurean *langue*. The Chomskyan mentalist paradigm considers the study of language as knowledge. For Chomsky, language is a reflexive system, a mirror of the mind – a mental phenomenon. He states that the objective of linguistic enquiry is to study the structures but not the functions of language: “If we hope to understand human language and the psychological capacities on which it rests, we must first ask what is, not how or for what purposes it is used” (1968 : 62).

In the 1950s and 1960s the Chomskyan theory carried on the legacy of looking at language in abstraction and considering language behaviour as a phenomenon governed by rules and stored in the speaker’s brains (Newmeyer 1980; Searle 1974; Robinson 1975; Mathews 1979). Owing to different research interest (independent), neither the
standard transformational theory (Chomsky 1957, 1965) nor its later developments (Chomsky 1976, 1977, 1981) have shown any interest in the generic features of texts. Transformational theory is not interested in how, in pursuing various social purposes, interactants combine utterances into such globally functional texts as newspaper articles, poems, recipes, service encounters, class room interactions, doctor-patient interviews etc.

Chomskyan linguistics can be criticized for not recognizing that language is used for doing something, for realizing activity. The other major tradition of 1960s, is the philosophy of language. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) stressed on functional orientation of language like how acts are performed in utterances (locutions, illocutions, perlocutions).

As Chomskyan linguistics advances in its competence studies and language philosophers began to consider words and sentences from a functional point of view; a more textually orientated approach is promoted by the ethnography of speaking which is anthropologically oriented and ethno-methodology which is sociologically oriented. Both the theories are close to Malinowskian and Firthian tradition, as they encourage the study of language as a means of social interaction and communication in heterogeneous speech communities.

(b) Sociolinguistic Approach

Hymes (1971), Labov (1972), Halliday (1978) and Bernstein (1970) contradicted Saussure saying that language use was shaped socially but not individually. They emphasize on the fact that any study of language structures in isolation from their proper social structures is partial and the ‘text’ and ‘context’ are inseparable. The sociolinguists
projected the importance of language variation in the socio-cultural context which is in opposition to the language autonomy of Chomskyan school and maintained that the steps to study a language must coincide with the study of the social situation that has produced it. Sociolinguists firmly believe that the nexus between language and the social context is inseparable. Thus Hymes (1971), in his seminal work on Communicative Competence, argues that mere grammatical competence, as expounded by Chomsky (1957) is partial if the speaker does not have communicative competence.

Communicative competence is the knowledge of the tacit social, psychological, cultural use of language, i.e., it is the ability to use where, when and how of an utterance. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) argue that in a social interaction, apparently communication becomes impossible without shared knowledge and assumptions between speakers and hearers, and that any study of a text within its context should make the study functional and social. A part of this social or functional approach to language study is Discourse Analysis that tries to reveal the complex networks and underpinnings of a society.

1.2. Principles of Contextual Study of Text

Malinowski’s linguistic theory (1923, Firth 1957, Hasan 1985) was developed in an anthropological and ethnographic context and the textual data collected in primitive languages was translated into English. His theory relates to three aspects. Firstly, Malinowski’s view (1923: 310) is that in the lives of members of a society, language realizes action, expresses social and emotive functions and realizes phatic communion. Secondly for Malinowski (1923:367), “a statement, spoken in real life, is never detached from the situation in which it has been uttered … the utterance has no meaning except in
the context of situation”. Thirdly, Malinowski wants Linguists to consider the context of culture while analyzing language. Without considering social behaviour in contexts of culture, one is unlikely to understand the meanings expressed in texts: “the whole world of things to be expressed changes with the level of culture, with geographical, social and economic conditions” (Malinowski 1923: 309).

Malinowski’s concept of context of situation is further developed by Firth (1957a) and Palmer (1968) into a theory where meaning is considered as complexes of statements produced both at the contextual and linguistic levels. It is very clear that Firth (1957a: 173) is interested in the study of ‘actual language text’, not in the study of language in abstraction. The first step in the study of a text is to establish its situational relations, i.e., how a text is a constituent of the context of situation. This is done by establishing what categories function in the context of situation, i.e.,

(1) Who the participants are;
(2) What the relevant objects and events are; and
(3) What effect the verbal action has.

Two general kinds of theoretical relations are recognized in Firth’s linguistic analyses, syntagmatic and paradigmatic. Syntagmatic relations specify how meanings in text are compositions of language forms as structures. Structures are generated at various levels like phonological, syntactic, etc., each kind of structure consisting of elements of its own type. Paradigmatic relations are set up between features or terms of systems which specify the values of the elements in the structures. But in Firth, what is not illustrated clearly is whether the syntagmatic and paradigmatic principles of relations also apply to context of situation or not.
Another important aspect of Firth’s theory is that he mentions the concept of renewal of connection in experience (Firth 1957b). Firth’s view is that a text is not only considered as a constituent of the context of situation, but furthermore, it “should be related to an observable and justifiable grouped set of events in the run of experience” (Firth 1957a: 175).

1.3. Contextual Characterization of Language

In the 1960’s Firth’s views faced a lot of criticism (Lyons 1966; Lamgendeon 1968; Leech 1974: 71). But now some of this criticism has been re-evaluated in the context of pragmatic studies (Leech 1974: 61; Leech 1983: 2). The worth of the theory to pragmatic studies is best shown by Mitchell’s (1957) illustration of Firthian contextualization of language. Mitchell’s (1957) work aims at representing social meaning as a combination of functions contextualized simultaneously, not only on the situational level but also on linguistic levels.

1.4. Discourse Analysis

Discourse has often been defined as serious writing or talk, rational and orderly in organization. McArthur defines the term as “a unit or piece of connected speech or writing that is no longer than a conversational sentence” (1992:316). Basically, discourse is language use understood as the verbal record of an event (utterance) and includes participants who speak, write and therefore it also connotes that there are implied listeners and readers. Thus, discourse could be a poem, an essay, a speech or a dialogue. It is the use of language above and beyond the sentence level and the study of discourse is the study of text and contexts, focusing on the actual spoken sentences. The discourse analyst investigates the spoken or written form and also the structural and functional
aspects. In discourse the literary and non-literary forms are analyzed. The literary form falls under a specific genre. The non-literary form is nothing but the functional aspect of language, used in the day-to-day life. Thus the subject matter of analysis could be either literary or non-literary. If it is literary, the study is termed as stylistics. Many analysts also choose narrative and non-narrative genres.

Whatever the approach, one common point in all the approaches is that discourse involves communication of the message above and beyond the level of a sentence and involves language put to use in live contexts. Even in the use of language there are some constraints. Goffman (1976) claims that these constraints are universal and appear in all types of communication and in all languages. According to him communication constraints are of two types – system constraints and ritual constraints. Duncan (1972), Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), among others, have investigated the system constraints like the ways we open and close conversation, turn-taking signals, repairing messages etc. System constraints also apply to more formal channels of communication. Ritual constraints are social constraints that smooth social interaction. As per Goffman (1976) there are eight system constraints that are universal in human communication. They are signals that indicate open and close, backchannel signals, turnover signals, acoustically adequate and interpretable messages, bracket signals, and nonparticipant constraints, preempt signals and Grecian norms for communication. These norms were proposed by Grice (1975) as criteria for cooperative communication. They are relevance, truthfulness, quantity and clarity. These norms are also called ‘maxims’.

While the system constraints give us the components required for all communication systems, ritual constraints reveal the system of social markers that allow
communication to flow in an appropriate way. For example when we begin a conversation, we expect that others wish to converse with us and will value what we have to say. We expect to receive our fair share of talk time and will, ourselves, allocate a fair share of turns to others. In part, we judge this willingness in terms of backchannel signals. If backchannel signals differ across cultures, we may misjudge the value placed on our participation. In all cultures greetings are given and returned. If the greeting is not returned, something has gone wrong in the social interaction. Such ritual expectations form the fabric of social life. Firth (1935) rightly argued that language is fundamentally a way of behaving and making others behave.

1.5. Origin and Development of Discourse Analysis

The word “discourse” is derived from the Medieval Latin word ‘discurrere’, which means ‘to circulate’. For Jan Renkema (2004) it means “to run to and fro” or “to run on” like a person who gives a speech and dwells at length on a topic. “A discourse is something, which runs from one person to another” (2004:48).

Zellig Harris (1952) was the first to use the term “Discourse Analysis” in the year 1952. At a time when linguistics was largely concerned with the analysis of single sentences, Zellig Harris (1952) published a paper with the title “Discourse Analysis”. His interest lies in the distribution of linguistic elements in extended texts, and the links between the text and its social situation. Zellig Harris (1952) and Michael Stubbs (1983) view discourse as anything ‘beyond the sentence’. Harris views discourse as connected speech. Harris has two main interests: the examination of language beyond the level of the sentence and the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour. Michael Stubbs (1983:1) defines discourse as “language above the sentence or above the
clause”. Both Harris and Stubbs focused on how sentences could be joined to form connected speech. And so they deal with different types of cohesive devices, the proper use of which differentiates a connected speech from a collection of random sentences.

Discourse Analysis is all about the study of relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used. It grew out of work in different disciplines in the 1960s and early 1970s. It has extended its vistas into various fields like linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Anyway ‘discourse’ can be simply stated as a language in use which is understood as the verbal record of an event and includes participants who speak, write and therefore it also connotes that there are implied listeners and readers. Discourse by nature comprises each and every aspect of language creation, use and embodiment and thereby discourse becomes a field for everybody in general and nobody in particular. Hence, each approach defines its own field and analyses data within the self-imposed limitations.

The concerns of Linguistics and the perspective of Discourse are mutually incompatible. In Discourse the focus is on the use of language. Its inalienable social and interactive nature even in the case of written communication gives it a special colour of emotions. Thus, Discourse Analysis forms basis for language use as social action, language use as situated performance, language use as tied to social relations and identities, power, inequality and social struggle, language use as essentially a matter of “practices” rather than just “structures” etc.

1.6. Speech Act Theory

John Austin (1962) concentrated on the utterances which are neither true nor false but which bring about a particular social effect by being uttered. Though Austin initially
worked on constatives and performatives, he abandoned them and replaced those by a
generalized claim that all utterances are performatives. It is the key assumption of the
Speech Act theory i.e., the theory of how to do things with words; for example, by
making an utterance, the language users perform one or more social acts. John Searle
(1969) allocates a central place to communicative intentions (this is based on the
assumption that a speaker has wants, beliefs and intentions which are indexed in the
performance of utterances). At the same time, he develops a typology of speech acts,
which for him, is rooted in the range of illocutionary verbs that occur in a given language.
Another contribution of Searle (1969) is the development of a theory of indirect speech
acts. This concept is based on the observation that by uttering, say, what appears to be a
statement (e.g. it’s hot in here”), language users indirectly perform another type of
illocutionary act (in the case of the example: voice a request to open the window).

The pragmatic interest in the communication of indirect speech acts, in particular,
as well as the interest in the social relatival aspects of and situational constraints in
information exchange, more generally are at the basis of an interest in Face and
Politeness phenomena. The work of the philosopher H.P. Grice (1975) is mostly
associated with the theory of the “Co-operative Principle” and its attendant maxims
which together regulate the exchange of information between individuals involved in
interaction. Grice’s endeavour had been to establish a set of general principles, with the
aim of explaining how language users communicate indirect meanings (so-called
conversational implicatures), i.e., implicit meanings which have to be inferred from what
is being sent explicitly, on the basis of logical deduction.
1.7. Face and Politeness Phenomena

The concept of Face and Politeness enfolds indirect speech acts, social relational aspects and situational constraints, as these forms the basis of communication in information exchange. One entrance to the study of politeness phenomena can indeed be built around the observation that language users often depart from the conditions of optimal information exchange because a failure to do so would result in an amount of lost face. For instance, a white lie can be described as a linguistic strategy through which a speaker intentionally and covertly violates the maxim of quality so as to “space the feelings” of the person she addresses in order to save his/her own face (Brown & Levinson 1987:63). It is on the basis of observations like the above that some pragmatists have proposed to complement Grice’s (1975) Co-operative Principle and its four maxims of information exchange.

By far the most influential theory of Politeness Phenomena is that of P.Brown and S.Levinson (1987). Their theory is based on a particular interpretation of E.Goffman’s writings of the role of “face” in social interaction (cited in Brown & Levinson 1987:63). The number of discourse subjects in a pre-supposition pool shared by participants in a discourse, particularly participants who know each other quite well, is potentially very large. If, in a stretch of conversational discourse, the participants involved can be independently known to have potential discourse subjects such as ‘the Queen’, ‘the Pope’, or even ‘the King of Siam’, within their shared presupposition pool, but do not mention the individuals, so identified, in their conversation, it is surely unnecessary to refer to those individuals in the analysis of that particular discourse fragment. They are, in terms of discourse, not activated.
1.8. Relevance and Speaking Topically

The topic framework represents the area of overlap in the knowledge which has been activated and is shared by the participants at a particular point in a discourse. Once the elements in the topic framework and the interrelationships between them have been identified, the analyst has some basis for making judgments of ‘relevance’ with regard to conversational contributions. Making contribution relevant in terms of the existing topic framework is speaking topically. This type of ‘speaking topically’ is an obvious feature of casual conversation in which each participant contributes equally and there is no fixed direction for the conversation to go. In contrast, there is the type of conversational situation in which the participants are concentrating their talk on one particular entity, individual or issue. In such a situation, the participants may, in fact, ‘speak topically’, but they might also be said to be ‘speaking on a topic’.

An extreme example of ‘speaking on a topic’ would be in a debate where one participant ignored the previous speaker’s contribution on ‘capital punishment’, for example, and presented his talk quite independently of any connection with what went before. In practice, we should find that any conversational fragment will exhibit patterns of talk in which both ‘speaking topically’ and ‘speaking on a topic’ are present.

The contentless noises are described by Duncan (1972) as backchannels. “Back-channel behaviour includes nods and sentence completions. Sometimes speeches are not well organized. There may be false starts, hesitations and repetitions. Sometimes there may be a mismatch between speakers’ topics brought about by a misunderstanding of the intended meaning of a particular period. The analyst simply should not assume that there
is a single, static ‘topic of conversation’ in any conversational fragment” (Brown & Yule 1983:92).

While concentrating on topic, the main consideration was on ‘content’ rather than ‘form’. It has been suggested by Schank et al. (1977:424) and Maynard (1980) that instead of undertaking the difficult task of attempting to define what a topic is, one should concentrate on describing what one recognizes as topic shift.

1.9. Definitions of Discourse

When Harris used ‘discourse’ for the first time in 1952, he used it to refer not to morphemes, clauses and sentences but to talk about the next level in the hierarchy of morphemes, clauses and sentences; and the term ‘Discourse Analysis’ to refer to a formal structural methodology to fragment a text into relationships such as equivalence, substitution among its lower level constituents. The term ‘discourse’ denotes different fields for different analysts in different contexts. Sometimes it is used to refer to one unit of language use or communication in a context; it may refer to a type of discourse such as drama, short story, poem etc., that falls under the category of literary discourse. There is much flexibility of reference regarding discourse studies in general and it can also be assigned to the vastness of the field, approached from different angles. Some of the definitions are mentioned here.

“The study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use” (Fasold 1990:65).

“Discourse is for me more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice. (…)Discourse constitutes the social. Three dimensions of the social are distinguished – knowledge, social relations and social
identity – and these correspond respectively to three major functions of language. (…) discourse is shaped by relations of power, and invested with ideologies” (Fairclough 1992: 28).

“Discourse is not concerned with language alone. It also examines the context of communication: who is communicating with whom and why: in what kind of society and situation, through what medium; how different types of communication evolved, and their relationship to each other” (Cook 1992:1).

“(…)discourse is utterance. (…)Discourse arises not as a collection of decontextualised units of language structure but as a collection of inherently contextualized units of language use” (Schiffrin 1994: 39).

“Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word ‘discourse’, I believe I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (Foucault 1972: 80).

“Discourse may be viewed in terms of acts both syntagmatically and paradigmatically, i.e., both as a sequence of speech acts and in terms of classes of speech acts among which choice has been made at given points” (Hymes 1972: 57).

“Discourse is language above the sentence or above the clause” (Stubbs 1983: 1).

Of late much research has gone into the spoken discourse and the use of language in everyday life. It evolved into much broader communicative perspectives on language teaching and learning.
1.10. Discourse Competence

The ability to communicate effectively involves not only knowing a language, but also knowing what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in a particular situation. That is, it includes not only knowing what is grammatically correct and what is not but also when and where to use language appropriately and with whom. It includes knowledge of rules of speaking, as well as knowing how to use and respond to different speech acts; that is how to apologize, make a request, as well as how to respond to an apology or a request, in a particular language or culture.

There are two different approaches in discourse due to two different paradigms in linguistics i.e., formalist and functionalist, which provide different assumptions about the general nature of language and the goals of linguistics. These two paradigms make different background assumptions about the goals of linguistic theory, the methods for studying language and the nature of the data and empirical evidence. The formalist paradigm views discourse as ‘language above the sentence’ while the functionalists view it as ‘language use’. If a discourse is taken to be the utterance of a sequence of sentences in some social context, then the various properties of such a discourse are assumed to be functional with respect to various aspects of the social context. That is, both surface structures and meanings are produced and understood as indications about characteristics of the speaker (e.g. confidence, intimacy, power), and the type of social situation (marriage reception, sports day, classroom teaching etc.). This will hold for surface structure style, such as lexical choices and sentence structures, and also for the possible topics or themes talked about or the speech acts that may or should be performed with the utterance of the discourse. The functionality also holds, therefore, within the discourse:
the surface structure not only expresses or indicates social structure, but also, and even primarily, is meant to express underlying meaning (Givon:1979).

Thus Discourse Analysis is a hybrid field of enquiry. Its lender disciplines are to be found within various corners of the human and social sciences, with complex historical affiliations and a lot of cross-fertilization taking place. However, this complexity and mutual influencing should not be mistaken for compatibility between the various traditions. Nor is compatibility necessarily a desirable aim, as much is to be gained from the exploration of problematical and critical edges and from making the most of theoretical tensions (Givon:1979). In Givon’s words, traditions and crossover phenomena are best understood historically – both in mutually supportive and antagonistic terms and as subject to developments internal to specific.

1.11. Discourse in Social Sciences

In social sciences, the proliferating ‘discourse about discourse’ resulted in tremendous changes to the commonsensical meanings of the word. For some, Discourse Analysis is a very narrow enterprise that concentrates on a single utterance, or at most a conversation between two people. Others see discourse as synonymous with the entire social system, in which discourses literally constitute the social and political world. For example, Jacques Derrida (1978:280) argues that “when language invaded the universal problematic…everything became discourse”, while Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1987:84) use the concept of discourse to “emphasize the fact that every social configuration is meaningful”, in which case “the discursive is coterminous with the being of objects”. In short, as the concept of discourse has been employed in the social sciences, it has acquired greater technical and theoretical sophistication, while accruing
additional meanings and connotations. The task of Discourse Analysis is to unravel “the conceptual elisions and confusions by which language enjoys its power” (Parker 1992: 28).

1.12. Ontological Dimensions of Discourse

The realists place greater emphasis on the ontological dimensions of discourse theory and analysis. The crux of this ontology is the idea that the social world consists of an independently existing set of objects with inherent properties and intrinsic causal powers. The contingent interaction of these objects with their ‘generative mechanisms’ causes events and processes in the real world (Harre and Madden 1975; Harre 1979; Stones 1996: 26-39). Thus, in this conception, discourses are regarded as particular objects with their own properties and powers, in which case it is necessary for realists “to focus on language as a structured system in its own right” (Parker 1992: 28). Moreover, in order to account for the specific causal impact of these objects, they need to be placed in relation to other social objects, such as the state economic processes, and so on.

Thus Discourse Analysis has grown into a wide-ranging and heterogeneous discipline which finds its unity in the description of language above the sentence and an interest in the contexts and cultural influences which affect language in use. Discourse Analysis encompasses linguistic and literary elements complemented by sociolinguistic and psychological interpretations. The following diagram tries to capture the ever-emerging area of Discourse Analysis.
There is a possibility of any other discipline to be added to the ones already there.

Though discourse has been defined and studied extensively, there is no single unified approach that is comprehensive and sufficient for all the different types of discourse. It is because discourse encompasses diverse fields and variegated human
activities. Discourse in the broad sense of communication embraces not only language but also other creative arts which use different mediums of expression like music, dance, photography, painting, sculpture, films etc. Again, if we take discourse as a kind of multimodal, making use of many different semiotic systems drawing from the multidimensional public repertoire, Jaworski & Coupland (1999) provide us with the example of a television commercial where spoken and written language, still and moving images, live action and animation or computer graphics, music – all commingle to create the discourse. Discourse also becomes multifaceted because both a speaker/sender and a hearer/receiver are essential elements of its existence. Both can carry their own world view into the creation and interpretation of the new discourse, which thus becomes the arena of many previous, simultaneous and future – conscious and unconscious discourses. Van Dijk (1985:41) says that in Discourse Analysis “we witness a concerted interest for the cognitive and especially the social processes, strategies, and contextualization of discourse taken as a mode of interaction in highly complex sociocultural situations.” Because of these endless possibilities, discourse remains a fascinating field for Philosophers, Linguists, Ethnographers, Psycholinguists, Neurolinguists and others.

Sociology is an empirical discipline concerned with the social organization of individual and collective human action. One of the defining features of humans is that we possess sophisticated means of communication, of which the most important is the ability to talk. Our communicative competencies facilitate the intricate and complex interrelationships which Sociologists seek to understand, whether these occur in the context of family, at work, in education; or whether they concern class, gender or ethnic
relations and so on. It would be fair to say that language has been invisible to the sociological eye. Language has often been treated as a canvas onto which are projected the effects of sociological factors, such as the participants’ relationship, class, gender and so on.

Thus from the societal point of view, Discourse Analysis is a qualitative method that has been adopted and developed by social constructionists. Although Discourse Analysis can and is used by a handful of cognitive Psychologists, it is based on a view that is largely anti-scientific, though not anti-research. Social constructionism is not easy to define in a single sentence, but it is possible to outline some basic assumptions of the approach. According to Searle (1995), Reality is socially constructed. In the scientific approach it is assumed that it is possible to categorize reality, and that constructs Psychologists use, such as personality and intelligence, are naturally occurring categories. However, this ignores the fact that language shapes the categories and constructs used. So, the focus of Discourse Analysis is any form of written or spoken language such as a conversation or a newspaper article.

The main topic of interest in Discourse Analysis is the underlying social structures, which may be assumed or played out within the conversation or text. It concerns the sorts of tools and strategies people use when engaged in communication, such as slowing one’s speech for emphasis, use of metaphors, and choice of particular words to display affect, and so on. The analysis of the events helps in understanding the usage of language by the people as it is the language which is used to maintain or construct their own version of an event. As language is a social and cultural thing, the sense of reality is thus socially and culturally constructed. The fact is that people are the
products of social interaction. In the scientific approach it is assumed that many of the constructs used are ‘inner essences’. That is to say that personality, anxiety, drives and so on exist somewhere within our heads and our bodies, as pointed out by Gilbert and Mulkay (1984). However, it may be the case that many of these so-called essences are actually the products of social interaction. Personality consists of a number of traits such as generosity, shyness, charm and so on. What makes people different is that they can be high on some traits and low on others. A further assumption is that, by and large, personality influences our behaviour.

A major development in Discourse Analysis has been the study of the organization of persuasive, authoritative or factual language. Actually Discourse Analysis grew from the sociological study of scientific knowledge. This approach adopted a radical position in that it did not accept the orthodox scientific consensus that some knowledge claims were simply true, and others were simply false. Instead, it sought to expose and investigate the social processes which informed the way in which the scientific community came to regard some knowledge claims as objective representations of the physical world and others as errors, or false claims. This was reflected in Gilbert and Mulkay’s (1984) analysis of scientists’ discourse.

Gilbert and Mulkay’s (1984) study supported a more general finding from sociological studies of science: facts do not speak for themselves in resolving a scientific dispute because ‘the facts are’ subject to argument and interpretation. This in turn reflects the position that social factors inextricably underpin the processes through which knowledge claims come to be accepted as accurate accounts of the properties of an objective universe.
Edwards and Potter (1990) also adopted a constructionist perspective in their study of how journalists reported a dispute about what had really been said at a meeting between a government minister and political journalists. They observed that articles about this dispute invoked consensus information to support the claims of the journalists: as they all reported the same story, their version must be factual. However, the minister drew upon the uniformity of the journalists’ accounts to suggest collusion in the production of a sensationalized and thereby false account. Thus the unanimity of the journalists’ versions was employed either as a resource to support the factual status of their claims or to undermine them.

Thus Discourse Analysis examines how people use language to construct versions of their experiences, and is based on the assumption that people draw on cultural and linguistic resources in order to construct their talk in certain ways to have certain effects.

1.13. Scope of Discourse Analysis

The scope of Discourse Analysis is so vast that it does not exist by itself. It has interconnectivity with several other disciplines like Text Linguistics or Text Analysis, Genre Analysis, Semantics, Pragmatics and Stylistics. The following diagram shows the scope of Discourse Analysis which intertwines with other disciplines of study.
Fig. 1.2. Scope of Discourse Analysis

(Modified diagram from Deepshika Mahanta, 2003:17)
(a) **Genre Analysis:** Another related field of Discourse Analysis is Genre Analysis. Fairclough defines ‘genre’ as a “socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity” (1995:14). Martin (1997) defines ‘genre’ as a “staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture.” Swale’s (1990) definition of a genre as a “socially recognized communicative event” stresses the social and cultural implications in the shaping of a genre. Genre is a language activity that is institutionalized and has evolved over time to have a particular texture. This is what in fact Martin’s definition acknowledges. There are several steps involved in the final culmination of a genre as it is the realization of a social purpose. To understand and define genre one needs to understand the internal or generic structure of a text. Hasan claims the same and says that texts of the same genre would realize the same obligatory and optional stages of a genre and then analyses the semantic and lexico-grammatical features for each stage (Halliday & Hasan 1985). Discourse Analysis and Genre Analysis are intertwined as the concept of discourse is exploited at a substantial length in Genre analysis and vice versa.

(b) **Semantics and Pragmatics:** Semantics is derived from the Greek word ‘Semantika’ which means the study of meaning. In Linguistics, Semantics is the study of interpretation of signs or symbols as used by agents or communities within particular circumstances and contexts. Within this view, sounds, facial expressions, body language and proxemics have semantic content, and each has several branches of study. Thus the main focus of Semantics is on the relation between ‘signifiers’. Signifiers encompass words, phrases, sentences, larger units of discourse, signs and symbols and what they stand for and their denotata. Thus the key concern of semantics is how meaning attaches
to larger chunks of text, possibly as a result of the composition from smaller units of meaning. Charles Morris (1946) proposed Semantics and Pragmatics as branches of Semiotics, which he defined as a general study of symbolic behaviour. Since Pragmatics and Semantics are very closely related, Leech (1983:6) distinguishes three possible ways of structuring this relationship: Semanticism, Pragmaticism and Complementarism. To draw a distinction between Semantics, Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis is very difficult as all these in their extended sense include one another.

Pragmatics deals with the interpretation of the language and its interconnectivity with the pre-existing knowledge. It is interested in the contextual usage of language, rather than what words in their most literal sense might mean by themselves. Norick’s (2000) study in Discourse Semantics shows that semantic relations such as anaphora, presupposition, entailment, indexicality, figurative meanings like personification, metaphor, etc., are closely bound to the discourse context in which they occur. Stylistics is the linguistic analysis of literary works and that way it also comes within Discourse Analysis as a sub-discipline. However, stylistics remains a limited field as it explores only one type of discourse.

Thus Discourse Analysis intertwines with various disciplines and extends to newer dimensions, newer areas, and embracing variegated disciplines like Psychology, Philosophy, Medicine, Literature, Politics, Sociolinguistics and Media. Discourse is part of all these subjects of study as it encompasses all aspects of language use. Moreover whenever there is a need to examine language and language use closely, there is a need to look at discourse and its features.
(c) **Text Linguistics**: Any linguistic enquiry that is related with texts is Text Linguistics. Beaugrande defines Text Linguistics as “the relation between a language and a text as one between a virtual system and an actual system” (Beaugrande 2000:159). To view it in a narrower sense, Text Linguistics is a higher level constituent composed of sentences just as a sentence is composed of phrases and clauses. Both written and spoken texts are examined within the structure of Text Linguistics. Two strands of Text Linguistics were developed by two different groups of people. One was developed in Germany in the 1960s by Peter Hartmann and his disciples, another in the United Kingdom by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Halliday complemented the structural notion of a text mentioned above, by different functions like ‘field’, ‘tenor’ and ‘mode’. “Field” mentions what is happening; ‘tenor’ talks about the participants i.e., who are taking part and ‘mode’ is about the role of language in a given situation. These functions Halliday broadly states as experiential, interpersonal and textual. The study of Text Linguistics and discourse by Halliday and Hasan (1976:27) characterizes the study of external cohesive markers like references, substitutions and conjunctions and implicit semantic macrostructures and other typical features of texts in a new, integrated perspective.

Discourse analysts are also interested in studying the sequence of the language or words used in a conversation or in a piece of writing. Mitchell (1957) was one of the first researchers to examine the discourse structure of texts. He looked at the ways in which people order what they say in buying and selling interactions. He looked at the overall structure of these kinds of texts, introducing the notion of stages into Discourse Analysis, that is, the steps that language users go through as they carry out particular interactions. His interest was more in the ways in which interactions are organized at an overall
structure of these kinds of texts, introducing the notion of stages into Discourse Analysis that is the steps that language users go through as they carry our particular interactions. His interest was more in the ways in which interactions are organized at an overall textual level than the ways in which language is used in each of the stages of a text. Mitchell discusses how language is used to perform ‘co-operative action’ and how the meaning lies in the situational context in which it is used and in the context of the text as a whole.

(d) Stylistics: The analysis of language in literary works is called Stylistics. According to Khader, “Stylistics is an intensive study of literary text on an advanced level, by making out the particular effect of the particular choice of language in literary communication....” The pattern of linguistic features that distinguishes one genre of writing from another is style. It includes the writer’s way of thinking, his way of presenting and his purpose in writing that piece of literary work.

1.14. Discourse Analysis and Grammar

Grammar and Discourse are interrelated. Words like clause, pronoun, adverbial, conjunction and so on are common in language teaching. These terms are related to the less familiar set of terms like theme, rheme, anaphora and so on to create a link between grammar and discourse. The foundation for sophisticated discourse is grammar. Structuring the individual utterance, clause and sentence, structuring the larger units of discourse and creating textual coherence are ultimately inseparable.

1.15. Context

In any communicative event or situation at least two persons are involved. One person is an actual agent and the other one a possible agent i.e., the speaker and the hearer. This communicative situation will be successful only when both the agents
belong to the same speech community, i.e., these two should speak the same language and follow related conventions for interaction. According to Van Dijk, “During a certain period of time the activities of two (or more) members of the community are coordinated in the sense that a speaker produces an utterance with certain consequences for the hearer, after which the hearer may become agent-speaker and produce an utterance or he may merely become agent and accomplish a certain number of actions” (1977:192).

Context is a sequence of world-states with varied situations. The situations never remain the same. No two situations will be identical. They keep changing. The property of context is dynamic, as a context is a course of events. There will be infinite set of possible contexts. But the actual context is defined by the period of time and the place where the common activities of speaker and hearer are realized. This has to satisfy the properties of ‘here’ and ‘now’ logically, physically and cognitively. Thus a context changes from moment to moment.

A Discourse Analyst takes into consideration the account of the context in which a piece of discourse takes place. A few of the linguistic elements that require contextual information for their interpretation are the deictic forms such as here, now, I, you, this and that. For the interpretation and better understanding of these elements in a piece of discourse, the prerequisite is to know who the speaker and the hearer are, and the time and place of the production of the discourse.

There is a difference in the approach to linguistic data between the Discourse Analyst and the formal Linguist. The Discourse Analyst investigates the use of language in context by a speaker or writer. The attention of the analyst is more on the relationship between the speaker and the utterance than with the relationship between one sentence
and another. Thus the analyst uses the terms ‘reference, presupposition, implicature and inference’.

1.16. Situation Context

The importance of context in the interpretation of sentences started from the beginning of 1970s. The implications of taking context into account are well expressed by Sadock (1978: 281):

There is then, a serious methodological problem that confronts the advocate of linguistic pragmatics. Given some aspects of what a sentence conveys in a particular context, is that aspect part of what the sentence conveys in virtue of its meaning… or should it be ‘worked out’ on the basis of Gricean (1975) principles from the rest of the meaning of the sentence and relevant facts of the context of utterance?

Talking about the context of situation, J.R.Firth (1935) says that a context of situation for linguistics brings into relation various categories like

A. The relevant features of participants: Persons, personalities.
   (i) The verbal action of the participants.
   (ii) The non-verbal action of the participants

B. The relevant objects.

C. The effect of the verbal action.

Hymes (1971) in a series of articles, views the role of context in interpretation as, on the one hand, limiting the range of possible interpretations and, on the other, as supporting the intended interpretation. Like Firth (1935), Hymes generalizes speech events and abstracts the roles of ‘addressor’ and ‘addressee’. Hymes at large discusses ‘topic’, ‘setting’, ‘channel’, ‘code’, ‘message-form’, ‘event’, ‘key’ and ‘purpose’. Lewis (1972), like Hymes, assumes that the channel is speech, the code English, the message-form conversation and the event one where one individual is informing the other. These he considers as general features of the communicative event; he is more interested in the
particular co-ordinates which constitute ‘a package of relevant factors, and index’ (1972:173). The co-ordinates of the index are Possible-World co-ordinate, Time co-ordinate, Place co-ordinate, Speaker co-ordinate, Audience co-ordinate, Indicated object co-ordinate, Previous discourse co-ordinate, Assignment co-ordinate.

In contrast to the above mentioned view that a communicative event is context based, Sacks et al. (1979), while talking about ‘turn taking’ in Speech Acts, say that it is context independent as it does not rely on particulars of the circumstance to operate. People manage turn-taking in the street or at work as well as in their homes; it occurs between friends, colleagues and strangers; and it works in periods of economic boom as well as during recessions.

1.17. Cultural Ways of Speaking and Writing

One useful way of looking at the ways in which language is used by particular cultural groups is through the notion of the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1964). Hymes started this work in reaction to the neglect, at the time, of speech in linguistic analysis and anthropological descriptions of cultures. His was also a reaction to views of language which took little or no account of the social and cultural contexts in which language occurs. In particular, he considered aspects of speech events such as who is speaking to whom about what, for what purpose, where and when, and how these impact on how we say and do things in culture-specific settings.

1.18. Discourse and Language

Brian Paltridge (2000) states that the way in which language is used in casual conversations, like all spoken interactions, is influenced by the relationship between the people speaking, the frequency with which they come into contact with each other, the
degree of involvement they have with each other and their sense of affiliation for each other. Speakers often have a repertoire of social identities and discourse community memberships. They may also have a linguistic repertoire that they draw on for their linguistic interactions. That is, they may have a number of languages or language varieties they use to interact in their particular communities. Speakers may use different languages or dialects to interact with others. The usage of language varies based on the kind of relation that one has with the person spoken to. A formal situation demands one type of language and an informal talk has a different choice of words. Several factors like the aim of interaction, the speaker’s status, his designation etc., play a significant role in determining the choice of language the speaker uses.

1.19. Discursive Competence

Discursive competence comprises the aspects of textual competence, generic competence and social competence. Textual competence is the ability to generate and interpret contextually appropriate texts. The content of a particular text, its organization and interpretation depend on one’s linguistic, textual, contextual and pragmatic knowledge. Brian Paltridge (2000) gives an example of this as how people use the internet to communicate with each other. Someone using MSN messenger learns sets of abbreviations that are commonly used in this sort of communication as well as how they are interpreted, such as OIC to mean ‘oh I see’ and ‘bb’ means ‘bye bye’. Generic competence describes how we are able to respond to both recurring and new communicative situations by constructing, interpreting, using and exploiting conventions associated with the use of particular kinds of texts or genres. Social competence describes how we use language to take part in social and institutional interactions in a
way that enables us to express our social identity, within the constraints of the particular social situation and communicative interaction.

1.20. The Place of Cohesion in the Linguistic System

Halliday (1976) identifies three major functional-semantic components in the linguistic system. These are (1) the Ideational Component (2) the Interpersonal Component and (3) the Textual Component.

(a) **The Ideational Component:** It is a part of the linguistic system which plays a significant role in the expression of content with the function that language has. It is of two parts – the experiential and the logical. The experiential is concerned with the representation of the experience. To put it in the words of Malinowski, experiential is the experiences of the ‘context of culture’ while the logical expresses the abstract logical relations that are derived indirectly from experience.

(b) **Interpersonal Component:** This component embraces the social, expressive and conative functions of language especially from the speaker’s ‘angle’ such as his observations, judgements, his participation in various roles, maintenance of relations and his motive in saying or reacting to a situation etc. To put it in a nutshell, the “ideational component represents the speaker in his role as observer, while the interpersonal component represents the speaker in his role as intruder” (Halliday and Hasan 1976:27).

(c) **Textual:** In the linguistic system there is a text-forming component which has similar function like the above two. This contains the “resources that language has for creating text, in the same sense in which we have been using the term all along: for being operationally relevant, and cohering within itself and with the context of situation” (Halliday & Hasan 1976:27).
Table 1.1. Halliday and Hasan’s Table of Ideational, Interpersonal & Textual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideational</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Textual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>(structural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By rank:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause: transitivity</td>
<td>All ranks: Paratactic and hypotactic relations (condition, addition, report)</td>
<td>By rank: Clause: mood, modality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal group: tense</td>
<td>Verbal group: Person</td>
<td>Verbal group: voice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Nominal group: Epithesis Adverbial group: circumstance | Nominal group: attitude Adverbial group: Comment | Nominal group: deixis Adverbial group: conjunction | **Cohesion**  
Reference  
Substitution  
Ellipsis  
Conjunction  
Lexical cohesion |

(Halliday and Hasan, 1976:29)

Of the three components the textual component is the one which includes cohesion as one of its sub-components. The textual component subsumes the structural component and the non-structural component. The structural sub-component includes the theme systems and the information systems while the non-structural sub-component is concerned with cohesion.

The theme systems “are those concerned with the organization of the clause as a message: its structure in terms of a THEME and a remainder (known as the RHEME),
and a wide range of thematic variation is associated with this structure in one way and another” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:325).

Eg: John’s aunt / left him this duckpress
   Theme   Rheme

b) John / was left this duckpress by his aunt
   Theme   Rheme

c) What John’s aunt left him / was this duckpress
   Theme: identified   Rheme: identifier

d) Bequeathing this duckpress / was what John’s aunt did for him
   Theme: identifier   Rheme: identified

(Halliday and Hasan, 1976:325)

According to Fasold (1990:65), “the study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use”. Brown and Yule (1983:1) also support this view when they say: “The analysis of discourse, is necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs.”

Brown and Yule (1983) categorized the functions of language into two types – transactional and interactional. The function which language serves in the expression of ‘content’ is described as ‘transactional’ and that function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes is described as ‘interactional’.

The distinction which Brown & Yule (1983) maintains between transactional and interactional, stands in general correspondence to the functional dichotomies found in the Buhler (1934), Jacobson (1960), Halliday (1970) and Lyons like representative /expressive, referential/emotive, ideational/interpersonal and descriptive/social
expressive’ respectively. The language which is used to convey ‘factual’ or propositional information is referred to as transactional language and the use of language to establish and maintain social relationships as interactional language.

1.21. Discourse Frames

Reading or listening is an activity that demands concentration. Without focus comprehension of the text becomes tough, and analysis cannot be made. Frame Analysis is a type of Discourse Analysis that probes or reinterprets the meaning of the text in a particular context. It tries to find out the real intention behind the text. Hence it is necessary to have clarity of the content that we are reading or listening to. Thus in a newspaper, we find clear demarcation of news items as sports news, national news, international news etc., so that we can make sense of it. Years ago, when Orson Welles’ radio play *The War of the Worlds* was broadcast, some listeners who tuned in late panicked, thinking they were hearing the actual end of the world. They mistook the frame for news instead of drama.

1.22. Turn –Taking

Turn – taking is a tacit understanding between the speakers in a conversation to take the floor when one speaker ends speaking. No specific rule exists in a conversation for taking a turn. It is implicit and understood by the speakers in a conversation. Some may start the conversation when others pause and some may interrupt. Discourse Analysts try to find out the systems that determine when one person’s turn starts and when one person’s turn ends. But etiquette demands, proper time to take a turn in a conversation. However, it is essential to know how to ‘repair’ a conversation in case of undesired overlap or a misunderstood comment.
Listenership too may be signaled in different ways. Some people expect frequent nodding as well as listener feedback such as ‘mhm’, ‘uhuh’, and ‘yeah’. Less of this than one expects can create the impression that the other person is not listening; more than one expects can give the impression that one is being rushed along. For some, eye contact is expected nearly continually; for others, it should only be intermittent.

1.23. Discourse Markers

“Discourse Markers” is the term linguists give to the little words like ‘well’, ‘oh’, ‘but’, and ‘and’ which break up speech into parts and show the relation between parts. ‘Oh’ prepares the hearer for a surprising or just-remembered item, and ‘but’ indicates that the sentence to follow is in opposition to the one before. However, these markers do not necessarily mean what the dictionary says they mean. Some people use ‘and’ just to start a new thought, and some people put ‘but’ at the end of their sentences, as a way of trailing off gently. Realizing that these words can function as discourse markers is important to prevent the frustration that can be experienced if one expects every word to have its dictionary meaning every time it is used.

1.24. The Impact of Words

Discourse analysis challenges us to move from seeing language as abstract to seeing our words as having meaning in a particular historical, social and political condition. Even more significant, our words (written or oral) are used to convey a broad sense of meanings and the meaning we convey with those words is identified by our immediate social, political and historical conditions. “Our words are never neutral”, says Fiuske (1994). This is a powerful insight for home economists and family and consumer scientists. We should never again speak, or read/hear others’ words, without being
conscious of the underlying meaning of the words. Our words are politicized, even if we are not aware of it, because they carry the power that reflects the interests of those who speak. Opinion leaders, courts, government, editors, even family and consumer scientists, play a crucial role in shaping issues and in setting the boundaries of legitimate discourse (what is talked about and how) (Henry & Tator 2002). The words of those in power are taken as “self-evident truths” and the words of those not in power are dismissed as irrelevant, inappropriate or without substance (Van Dijk 2000).

1.25. Discourse Organization

Discourse is a higher level of language organization and refers to any self-sufficient sequence of sentences. The structure of discourse can be analysed in terms of two features, namely, cohesion and coherence. Cohesion is related to the way in which different textual units are linked together to form a higher unit. Coherence on the other hand, is concerned with the linking of communicative acts. According to Widdowson (1973:72), cohesion is a textual property while coherence is a discourse property. In short, cohesion is the study of discourse on the formal level while coherence is on the functional level. Any text whether spoken or written, contains both cohesion and coherence. Obviously, these two lie outside the scope of sentence grammars and transformational generative grammar. They are covered only in discourse studies.

Of the two discourse properties, cohesion can be taught in a classroom easily since it is a formal device expressed through the lexico-grammatical system of language. Coherence on the other hand, is an extralinguistic factor and depends on several sociolinguistic and other variables and hence is difficult to be taught in a classroom. It
depends on the communicative competence of the users of a language and has very little
to do with the formal system of the language.

1.26. Cohesion

While dealing with discourse it is essential to know how large chunks of language
are being interpreted as texts. A text may be spoken or written. The verbal record of a
communicative event is Text. Similarly a series of connected sentences that make
meaning in written format is also considered a text. Van Dijk (1972), Gutwinski (1976),
have given a more formal account of identifying a text.

The relationships that can be schematically established in a text have been
outlined by Halliday and Hasan (1976) as a taxonomy of types of cohesive elements.
These elements provide cohesive ties which bind a text together. There are some formal
markers like ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘so’ and ‘then’ which relate what is about to be said to what has
been said before. These conjunctive types are categorized as different types of markers
like additive, adversative, causal and temporal basing on their function.

a. Additive: and, or, furthermore, similarly, in addition
b. Adversative: but, however, on the other hand, nevertheless
c. Causal: so, consequently, for this reason, it follows from this
d. Temporal: then, after that, an hour later, finally, at last.

The cohesive relationship which particularly interests them is that which they
discuss under the headings reference, substitution, ellipsis and lexical relationships.
Within the reference there is co-reference. Halliday and Hasan in their interpretation of
these co-reference forms say that co-referential forms are forms which “instead of being interpreted semantically in their own right…make reference to something else for their interpretation” (1976:31). Thus these forms direct the hearer or reader to look elsewhere for their interpretation. Where their interpretation lies outside the text, in the context of situation, their relationship is said to be an ‘exophoric’ relationship and this does not contribute to the cohesion of the text. If the interpretation of the forms lies within the text, it is called ‘endophoric’. Endophoric relations are subdivided into two types – ‘anaphoric’ and ‘cataphoric’. Anaphoric relations look back in the text for their interpretation, and those which look forward in the text for their interpretation are called cataphoric relations.

1.27. Conclusion

Discourse Analysis focuses on knowledge about language and the world beyond the word, clause, phrase and sentence that is needed for successful communication. It considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used and looks at patterns of organization across texts. It considers what people mean by what they say, how they work out what people mean, and the way language presents different views of the world and different understandings. This includes examination of how discourse is shaped by relationships between participants, and the effects discourse has upon social identities and relations. The analysts investigate the spoken or written form of discourse with their structural and functional aspects. Any discourse is complete in toto only when it is meaningful and makes sense. The analysis of sentences, the linguistic elements, the relationship between linguistic and non-
linguistic behaviour enveloping the fields like linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology, sociology etc., is the crux of Discourse Analysis.

Discourse Analysis takes us into the social and cultural settings of language use to help us understand particular language choices. The present study mainly follows the model of cohesion presented by Halliday and Hasan (1976), since it is the most comprehensive work done so far. The next chapter gives the theoretical background of cohesion and its types in detail.