Resensi Buku (6)

Judul : **Beyond the Sentence: Introducing discourse analysis**
Pengarang : Scott Thornbury
Tahun : 2005 (sampul tipis)
Penerbit : Oxford University Press
Halaman : ix, 356 halaman
ISBN : 1-4050-6407-2

Discourse Analysis, together with Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics, has been in vast proliferation since the 1970s. They fall together under "the study of language in context", standing in contrast with "context-free linguistics", particularly the Chomskyan school which is largely devoted to syntax (Lavandera 1988). In this respect, Discourse Analysis has been part of "pure linguistics"—perceived in a very broad sense of the term. Earlier textbooks such as *Cohesion in English* (by Halliday and Hasan 1976), *Discourse Analysis* (by Brown and Yule 1983), *Discourse Analysis: The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language* (by Stubbs 1983), *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (by Coulthard 1985), and *Text and Discourse Analysis* (by Salkie 1995) essentially present pure structural analyses of discourse or texts with no consideration of their application. In contrast, the textbook now being reviewed, *Beyond the Sentence: Introducing discourse analysis* (by Thornbury 2005), differs from the earlier textbooks in that it is intended for teachers, or more specifically teachers of English as a second or foreign language. So this book stands closer to applied linguistics than pure linguistics, as made explicit by the notice on the cover: "Macmillan Books for Teachers".

1. CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

The Book under the review consists of two parts: Part 1, *Beyond the sentence*, and Part 2, *Classroom activities*. Preceding these two parts is a separate *Introduction.* In the *Introduction*, the writer defines *discourse* as "the way that language—either spoken or written—is used for communicative effect in a real-world situation", and *text* as "the record of the language that is used in this discourse" (pp. 6-7). In other words, discourse is the verbal communicative process and text is its product. He further argues that "Language is realized, first and foremost, as text. [...] And users of language have to cope with texts" (p. 6). Going "beyond the sentence", the book aims to explore the structure and purposes of whole texts; and therefore it falls within the field of Discourse Analysis.

Part 1, *Beyond the sentence*, consists of 8 (eight) chapters. Chapter 1, *Unlocking texts*, presents an unusual text: an ancient Egyptian text written in hieroglyphs. By presenting such an example, the writer wants to show to the reader that the Egyptian text, despite its unfamiliarity, is still perceivable as a "text", for its three available clues: the signs, the patterns of signs, and the context. Other less unusual examples are English translations of two Japanese *haikus*. In unlocking these brief texts (each consisting of only three lines), the writer points out all the micro-linguistic features they contain: the phonological, morphological, and syntactic features. However, he further comments that "learning a language is more than the learning of its grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation" (p. 11). The real business is learning language as naturally occurring texts.

Chapter 2, *What makes a text?*, begins by providing examples of texts and non-texts. A continuous piece of language is called "text" **if** it is self-contained, well-formed, appropriate to its context of use, recognizable in terms of text type, hangs together

(*cohesive*), makes sense (*coherent*), and has a clear communicative purpose (p 19). The absence of some or most of these features would result in "non-text". The chapter further explores **cohesion** by identifying and characterizing its three types: lexical cohesion, grammatical cohesion, and rhetorical cohesion. One important aspect of cohesion is **reference**, which can be endophoric (inward) or exophoric (outward) reference. Endophoric reference is further subdivided into anaphoric (backward) or cataphoric (forward) reference.

While Chapter 2 mainly deals with cohesion, Chapter 3, *What makes a text make sense?*, is primarily concerned with **coherence**. Cohesion is a surface feature of texts, independent of the reader; but coherence results from the interaction between the reader and the text (p. 36). That is, in the act of reading, "the readers are in the constant look-out for clues that will support their assumption that texts are, first and foremost, coherent—that they make sense" (p. 45). There are two levels of coherence: micro-level (sentence-by-sentence) coherence, and macro-level (topical) coherence. At the micro level, the logical relationships between sentences in a text can be additive, adversative, causal, or temporal. Moreover, a sentence may be divided in terms of **theme** (given information) and **rheme** (new information). Very often the NP subject serves as theme or topic, and the (VP) predicate as rheme or comment. At the macro level, "texts achieve coherence because they are obviously *about* something, that is, there is an identifiable topic" (p.51) in them. Among the well-known parameters of the macro-level coherence are the following moves: from general to particular, from whole to part, from large to small, from nearer to farther, and from now to then (p. 56).

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 discuss cohesion and coherence in written texts. Moving ahead, Chapter 4, *Spoken texts*, explores cohesion and coherence in spoken language. The writer first identifies three specific features characterizing spoken texts, particularly conversations: spontaneity, interactivity, and interpersonality. He further points out the difference between coherence in written texts and coherence in spoken texts. In the former, coherence is usually achieved individually by the writer, whereas in the latter it is achieved collaboratively by conversation participants. Underlying the latter is Grice's maxim of *Relevance*, by which the speakers' utterances go along with the "accepted purpose or direction of the talk-exchange" (p. 70). As for the organizational structure of conversation, it begins with an opening, proceeds through story sequences, and ends with a closing. The story sequences are commonly comprised of a temporal location, specification of participants, a sequence of events, and evaluation.

Chapter 5, *Texts in context*, points out that language as text does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, "[texts] are written and read, spoken and listened to, by particular people in particular situations and for particular purposes" (p. 84). These linguistic facts of "who is speaking to whom about what, where, when, how and for what reason" are in line with Halliday's functional grammar, which specifies five major functions of text: referring, expressing feelings, regulating, interacting, and playing. "Expressing feelings" and "playing with language" are linguistic functions commonly found in literary texts. Still following Halliday, the writer argues that context also determines **register**. The term "register" refers to choices at the level of grammar and vocabulary, which in turn create textual effects appropriate with the demand of a specific language use. "Through repeated use, certain register combinations become institutionalized and are called genres." The term **genre** in linguistics means "any frequently occurring, culturally-embedded, social process which involves language".

Since the book is intended for teachers, Chapter 6, *Classroom texts*, brings part of discourse analysis into the classroom. Generally speaking, classroom texts constitute genres of their own, characterized by two important features. First, classroom texts are often simplified in terms of vocabulary and syntax so that they become intelligible even to beginners. Second, they are not designed for informative but for pedagogic purposes; and so their major function is to display for the learners aspects or components of the target language in context. Therefore, classroom texts are often criticized for their lack of authenticity. Authentic texts in real life are used for communicative purposes. A best possible solution offered by the writer is that authentic texts can be simplified to some degree to make them intelligible to the learners while keeping their original communicative function.

Chapter 7, *Literary texts and loaded texts*, deals with these two genres. Literary texts stand distinctly referring specifically to the language which is used expressively, playfully, iconically, imaginatively, and metaphorically. In English, literary texts fall into three broad categories: prose, poetry, and drama. As part of great literature, literary texts are often highly valued by their speech community. Moreover, their meaning may sometimes be fully revealed through intertextuality. For example, D. H. Lawrence's poem, "The Rainbow", is made fully comprehensible by referring to his other poem "The Body of God" and his novel—also entitled *The Rainbow*. In contrast with literary texts, the so called *loaded texts* are texts with "hidden agenda". For instance, to avoid responsibility, a bureaucrat would produce texts by manipulating particular syntactic devices such as passive voice, intransitive verbs, and nominalization.

The last chapter is Chapter 8, *Learners' texts*. While classroom texts are simplified texts to display language components, learners' texts are texts produced by the learners. Learners' texts, as the teacher might expect, may contain errors at the sentence or discourse level. However, they may also serve as useful data for diagnosis and evaluation as well as for language awareness raising. In addition, they may also be regarded as texts in their own right. Through guided collaborative editing, learners' texts—as displayed on a wall magazine or a class website—may eventually obtain significant value among their readers. This is one way of motivating students to do creative writing. Learners are encouraged to do text analysis and create texts of their own. As a facilitator, the teacher should help the learners in correcting, fine-tuning, elaborating, reformulating, and personalizing their texts.

Part 2, *Classroom activities*, consists of 12 (twelve) photocopiable tasks for classroom use, all directly related to the major topics discussed in Part 1. The 12 tasks are the following: (1) Unlocking texts, (2) Lexical cohesion, (3) Reference, (4) Cohesion, (5) Coherence, (6) Textualising, (7) Spoken texts, (8) Spoken texts, (9) Genre analysis, (10) Classroom texts, (11) Point of view, and (12) Learner texts. Note that tasks (7) and (8) have the same title, "Spoken texts", probably because the writer wants to give sufficient practice on oral discourse. All the tasks are given as models; and teachers are free to develop their own tasks following these models. Following the 12 tasks is the *Commentary*, provided as "keys to exercises".

2. CRITICAL COMMENTS

As a critical reader, I would say that Thornbury's book has been a remarkable success in achieving its aims, i.e., to offer teachers insights from research into language and language learning and to suggest ways of using these insights in their classroom (p. 5). While textbooks on Discourse Analysis intended for language students are mostly hard to read, *Beyond the Sentence* introduces Discourse Analysis as an easy reading. The

language is simple, the selected examples are readily comprehensible, and the way of explaining each topic is easy to follow. At the end of every chapter, except Chapter 1, is the *Conclusion*, which helps the reader to tie together the main points presented in this chapter. Since the book is written within the domain of applied linguistics, each chapter contains one or two sections of *Classroom applications*, from which teachers may learn how to directly apply Discourse Analysis principles in their instructional activities. This application is further justified and clearly exemplified by Part 2 of the Book, *Classroom activities*, consisting of 12 photocopiable tasks for classroom use

The direct application of Discourse Analysis principles in classroom context tells us two important things. On the surface, the book follows the Audiolingual Method; but in spirit, the book follows the Widdowsonian tradition. Thornbury's *Beyond the Sentence* is very much like Fries' *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (1945) and Lado's *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach* (1964). These two books are prominent works in the Audiolingual Method—the method which derives linguistic principles from the Bloomfieldian school and applies them directly in the field of foreign language teaching. The only difference is that Fries' and Lado's books apply the principles at the micro-linguistic (within the sentence) level, whereas Thornbury's book applies the principles at the macro-linguistic (beyond the sentence) level. In this respect, *Beyond the Sentence* is fully in accord with Widdowson's applied linguistics. Widdowson (1984: 7-20) believes that, for teaching purposes, reliance on Syntax alone is inadequate without recourse to Pragmatics or Discourse Analysis. The movement from the "lamentable" Audiolingual Method to the "commendable" Communicative Approach may well be regarded as the progressive movement from **sentence grammar** to **discourse grammar**. While this movement has been advocated since the early 1980s, no textbook as yet shows how to do discourse grammar in the classroom. Now *Beyond the Sentence* has come out to fill up this gap in foreign language teaching.

On the whole, *Beyond the Sentence* is a very good introductory textbook on Discourse Analysis. In terms of contents, the book covers all the relevant topics in Discourse Analysis, although some of them are discussed rather superficially. In fact, since it employs the humanistic approach (p. 5), the book extends the coverange by including genres in general and literary genres in particular. For language teachers, the book serves as a practical guide to doing discourse grammar for pedagogical purposes. For beginning students of linguistics, it serves as an easy way to understanding Discourse Analysis. For linguistics scholars, it helps them to do a quick review of the basics in Discourse Analysis. Having such academic qualities, *Beyond the Sentence* is most suitable as a classroom textbook for S1 students, and highly recommended as an additional reference for S2 and S3 students.

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