The Analysis of Speaking Discourse: A Review Paper from 1973 to 2014

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Abstract: *Discourse, written or spoken communication or debate, is important in speakers' speech. Therefore, shedding light on discourse and better understanding of the speaking discourse and its characteristics may lead to new empirical techniques for identifying discourse structure from speech as well as new algorithms for enhancing the naturalness of synthetic speech. Accordingly, the current review paper summarized the results of many approaches, distinctions, and studies as to speaking discourse conducted from 1973 to 2014 and from different scholars' perspectives. The analysis and justification of all of the reviewed studies implied that spoken discourse has covered many other elements inside; in other words, the gist of the matter is that speech is the first draft status which has some distinctive features like intonation, loudness/quietness, gestures and body language, stress, markers, gender difference. Furthermore, there are some specific differences between speaking and written discourse. Thus, every element of speaking discourse should be considered important. To sum, the results suggested that finding the crucial relations among discourse styles can help scholars understand how languages work for different people.*

Keyword*s: Speaking Discourse, Written Discourse, Discourse Markers*

1. Introduction

Spoken discourse consists of at least two people taking turns who interact in an initiation and response structure (Coulthard, 1992). Some of the most typical features of spoken discourse are personal involvement and real-time constraints. Involvement is generally marked by using first and second personal pronouns; by monitoring the communication channel through rising intonation, pauses, requests for back-channel responses; by giving emphasis to people and their relationship; by reporting speakers' mental processes and by using emphatic particles (really, just, etc.). Real-time constraints, on the other hand, are highlighted by place and time adverbs, or by verb tense and aspect (Biber, 1986). What is more, spoken language is situated in discourse. Word order produced in spoken discourse is affected by a complex interaction of such pragmatic factors as the speaker's assumptions about the interlocutor and about their engagement in

discourse, the speaker's subjective judgments and viewpoints, the deictic character of utterance elements, and the role of anaphora. One result of this context dependency is the prevalence in spoken data of elliptical constructions. What sounds like a complete utterance may contain only one or two words, even when the corresponding 'well-formed' sentence in a written or a formal register would have several. In analyzing the order in the spoken utterance, it hardly seems justified to speak of the 'would-be place' of a constituent missing in the spoken structure on the basis of a written version. This factor creates problems for both syntactic analysis and generalizations. Coulthard (1992) use the term discourse to talk about face to face conversations. Therefore, the terms discourse and text may be used interchangeably. Accordingly, discourse is related to a stream of any language not just individual sentences out of their contexts. All in all, the current study is to review speaking discourse from 1973 to 2014.

2. Chronological Review of Speaking Discourse Analysis (1973-2014)

Donnell (1973) analyzed some syntactic characteristics of oral and written discourse to determine whether written style is more complex syntactically than spoken form. He collected his spoken discourse data from a television program where the speaker answered the questions of three journalists. Also, he collected the written data from four newspaper columns the speaker had written. He classified the discourses into syntactic units and counted the words in each corpus. The results indicated that syntactic units in the written corpus were significantly greater. The ratio of syntactic units which contained one or more dependent clauses was considerably greater in the written sample as well. Moreover, the spoken data samples did not show high frequency of passive constructions, gerunds, attributive adjectives, participles and modal or perfective auxiliaries. Finally, there were considerably higher amounts of noun clauses, progressive auxiliaries and infinitives in the spoken research corpus.

Yabuuchi (1988) approached the scheme of examining the most relevant distinctions between spoken and written language. He compared the structures of information flow in spoken language and its well revised counterpart in written language. He suggested that the most innate difference between the two languages is laid in spontaneity of language production. Also, the most fundamental feature of these discourses is the information coherence and cohesion across the discourse sentences. So, he stated that information is linearly presented in spoken form whereas in order to convey the writer`s intention, information is well-organized in written discourse.

Hughes (1996) talked about the properties of spoken and written language in English and analyzed sample discourses (such as boxing commentaries, detective novels, film scripts, etc.) from the two disciplines. She invited her readers to investigate the differences between spoken and written language in English for themselves and did not directly provide information about the two modes of communication. Doing so, she guided her readers in finding the best methods

for this kind of analysis and helped them promote their awareness about those differences. So, the readers can distinguish Standard English from Non-standard one and can formulate their own ideas about a wide range of varieties in spoken and written English.

Jahandarie (1999) provided an excellent place for beginning communication education. He presented a systematic critical viewpoint towards the previous studies concerning the difference between written and oral traditions especially those literatures which are related to the cultural and cognitive dimensions of these differences. Thereby, he has conducted a unique multidisciplinary work with lots of theories and evidences from different disciplines.

Grant and Ginther (2000) investigated the level of lexical specificity use (i.e., type/token ratios, word length), conjuncts, hedges, amplifiers, emphatics, demonstratives, downtoners. Finding: As proficiency increased, lexical specificity increased (i.e., longer and more varied words were used).Uses of conjuncts, amplifiers, emphatics, demonstratives, and downtoners increased.

Dooley and Levinsohn (2001) mentioned that we cannot limit the discourse we hear as only a linguistic structure. It is also a representation of how contents are gathered and stored in the mind. Psychological research studies have shown that there`s not a strict one to one correspondence between the way hearers understand, store, and remember a discourse and what was actually said. We also need to recognize how people perceive, store, and access information. These processes may not be directly observable; they are reflected in how discourse is put together (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2001). That is why discourse analyzers continue to say that intralinguistic factors (e.g. reference, ellipsis, substitution, etc.) and exralinguistic factors (discourse context, world knowledge, the speakers and listeners` common mental knowledge, etc.) work hand in hand to create coherent texts. Coffin (2004) investigated Argument structure in speaking discourse. Lower-level learners tend to use arguments composed using exposition structures rather than a discussion-based argument.

Cumming et al. (2005) investigated the Lexical sophistication (word length, type/token ratios).All proficiency levels tended to use longer words in integrated tasks. Higher proficiency learners had higher type/token ratios.

Paltridge (2008) provided a general survey of discourse analysis which ranged from more textually oriented views to more socially related ones, i.e. from focusing on language features of texts to what the texts do in social and cultural situations. Then, he examined the differences between speech and writing by the use of some examples and relying on Biber (1988) classified them into eight groups as grammatical intricacy, lexical density, nominalization, explicitness, contextualization, spontaneity, repetition-hesitation and redundancy, and continuum view.

Povolná (2009) conducted a research paper on contrastive relations in academic spoken Discourse Markers (DMs). Drawing on results as presented and discussed within the scope of aforementioned studies, it can now be concluded that contrastive relations between discourse segments are frequently expressed overtly in academic spoken discourse, in particular by some paratactic DMs; their use enables the natural ordering of discourse segments, i.e. before segments which provide new and/or unexpected information. Hypotactic DMs are not so common; however, if hypotactic contrastive relations occur, they are, as a rule, marked by a DM. The position of the discourse segment comprising a guiding signal depends on which marker is used, since there are some differences between individual hypotactic markers. However, the type of contrast a particular DM signals is always dependent not only on the meaning of a given marker, but above all on the entire context. Finally, it must be stated that both paratactic and hypotactic DMs expressing contrastive relations clearly enhance faster and coherent interpretation and understanding of the message, thus contributing to the expression of coherence relations and establishing discourse coherence. On the other hand, Biber & Conrad (2009) it is worth noting that (almost) all lexico-grammatical characteristics of English are useful indicators of register and communicative task differences.

Wang (2010) investigated Critical Discourse Analysis theory and Systematic Functional Linguistics, analyzes Barack Obama's presidential speeches mainly from the point of transitivity and modality, in which we can learn the language how to serve the ideology and power. According to Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar the result of this study can be summarized the features of Barack Obama's speeches as follow. First, he used more simple words and short sentences instead of difficult ones. His language is easy and colloquial. Thus, it can easily shorten the distance between him and the audience. Second, from transitivity analysis, we can see material process, a process of doing, has been used most in his speeches. Third, modality refers to a speaker's attitudes towards or opinion about the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence. Through the analysis of modality, we can find that Obama made his audience more easily to understand and accept his political speeches by means of modal verbs, tense and first person pronouns. He used simple present tense to present the domestic and worldwide situations ranging from political, economic and cultural fields at present. And then depending on simple future tense, he laid out his following reforms and steps taken in his term. In this way, the government's objectives are shown and at the same time, the audience's confidence is built. Moreover, by using first person pronouns and religious belief, he successfully shortened the distance between him and the audience. So it can help him persuade the public to accept and support his policies.

Silvia (2012) investigated the speaking discourse markers which are used in political speech to connect sentences to what comes before or after and indicate a speaker's attitude to what he is saying. According to the finding of this study, it was proved that among *textual* markers, the

most frequently used marker is "*and*". It is used 237 times in his study. The using of the marker "*and*" is very important because it has both cohesive and structural roles; it is structural in the sense of linking two (or more) syntactic units such as clauses, phrases or verbs, and cohesive because the interpretation of the whole conjunctive utterance depends on the combination of both conjuncts. In addition, the marker "*and*" can precede support units of talk (explanation, evidence and clarification to previous units). Also, it can have a pragmatic effect in the sense that it indicates a speaker's continuation. However, "*and*" does not provide information about what is being continued. It is used to indicate the speaker's continuation. Among the *interpersonal* markers, the most frequently used marker is "*we*". The marker "*we*" is used 111 times. The importance behind using this pronoun lies in shortening the distance between the speaker and the audience, regardless of their disparity in age, social status and professions and it may include both the speaker and the listener into the same arena, and thus make the audience feel close to the speaker and his points.

Biber (2013) conducted a lexico-Grammatical analysis of discourse characteristics of writing and Speaking Task Types on the TOEFL iBT test. We undertook comprehensive linguistic investigations of the discourse produced by TOEFL iBT test takers, categorized according to the mode of production (speech or writing), task type (independent or integrated), and score level. Biber mentioned that our linguistic analyses included features at multiple levels, including vocabulary distributions, collocational associations of individual verbs, extended lexical bundles, word class features, simple grammatical devices, and more complex phrasal and clausal structures. Biber investigated this main inquiriy.

Do test takers systematically vary the linguistic characteristics of discourse produced in the spoken versus written modes across different task types In TOEFL iBT? If so, how?
According to the result of this study, the answer to this question is clearly yes. In fact, this is by far the strongest general finding from our investigation: TOEFL iBT test takers—at all proficiency levels—demonstrate the ability to vary their linguistic styles across the spoken and written modes and across independent/integrated task types. We found evidence of this ability in all linguistic analyses, including lexical patterns, grammatical variation, and the overall multidimensional patterns of variation. By comparing these specific patterns of linguistic variation to more general patterns identified in previous research, we can conclude that TOEFL iBT test takers vary their linguistic expression in appropriate ways. For example, test takers are more likely to use colloquial features (e.g., pronouns, modal verbs, stance features) in speech than in writing, and they are more likely to use literate grammatical devices (e.g., long words, passive voice verbs, nominalizations) in written responses. Further, test takers employ many of these same linguistic devices to distinguish between independent and integrated tasks: Independent tasks are more personal and involved, and therefore test takers generally use more colloquial features; integrated tasks are more informational, and therefore test takers use more literate features in those tasks. In terms of the TOEFL validity argument, the findings here

provide strong evidence in support of the first two propositions listed in Enright and Tyson (2008).

Rezaee and Aghagolzadeh (2014) have investigated speaking discourse markers and lecturers' gender on the basis of the findings of different research studies. The result of this article discussion revealed a lot of discrepancies among the findings by different researchers and also no consensus among them as to the role of gender in DMs use. Some have deemed that gender plays an important role in the type of DMs used, while others believe that gender has no role on the use of DMs. In the meantime, some researchers believe that if there is any difference between different of gender on discourse marker use, this different is more qualitative rather than quantitative, whereas other researchers consider this difference more quantitative rather than qualitative. Still others deem the role of gender on DM use as preferential rather than exclusive. To put it in a nutshell, there are a lot of discrepancies among scholars with no consensus as to the effect of gender difference on the use of DMs.

Zand-Moghadam and Bikineh (2014) in a paper brought into view DM as a linguistic strategy which plays a significant role in organizing the political discourse. Adopting qualitative text-based contrastive analysis, this paper examined the use of DMs by English and Iranian politicians whose political interviews were published in Persian, English, and Iranian English newspapers. As with the overall findings of the study, the use of interpersonal markers by English language politicians supported the idea put forward by Fairclough (1992) and Sandova (2010) that the political discourse has undergone a change in style and it has become more informal. In addition, the results of the analysis of the interview transcripts showed that there are some similarities in the choice of DMs between Iranian politicians interviewed in English and English–speaking politicians. It can be concluded that Iranians tend to follow the English norms in their use of DMs. The findings of the study also unveiled that along with similarities, some differences are also present in the choice of DMs among the three groups of interviewees. Such differences can be attributed to the cross-cultural differences, indicating that each culture has the specific shared knowledge about the system of pragmatic principles and social practices.

Sadeghi and Yarandi (2014) went through the analytical study on the relationship between discourse markers and speaking fluency of Iranian EFL students. In their study, two groups of EFL students were selected and in the first group; types of discourse markers were presented in five sessions through a month. Five conversation texts were administered in both groups and they were asked to prepare for retelling these conversations by own wording on the next session for the next week. Results indicated that applying discourse markers intrinsically takes more time and whereas our definition about the fluency is based on the amount of time required to deliver one correct information unit, applying discourse markers cannot be effective.

3. Conclusion

Roughly speaking, the majority of languages in the world are used for the purpose of communication to transfer ideas or information from a person to another. The current paper went through the distinctions between spoken and written discourse and characteristics of spoken discourse in English. These distinctions are discussed in terms of some studies from1973 to2014 and from different scholars' perspectives. To sum, the results of this study suggested that finding the crucial relations between these two styles can help scholars understand how languages work for different people. Written style is often planned, more complex, well-structured and transactional. It has a denser content, richer vocabulary and grammatical structures and uses punctuation to help readers understand the writer`s intention. However, spoken form is less planned and less structured, uses more simple vocabulary. The sentences in oral style are usually simple and shorter using non-standard grammar. Additionally, it benefits from body language, gestures, intonation, repetition, pausing to convey information. Interestingly enough, gender is very important as well.

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