

## 英語に於ける話法分析の長所と 欠点についての研究ノート

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### SOME ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN ENGLISH

To begin with, I must discuss the meaning of “Discourse Analysis” and “Description of English”. Crystal states that ‘Discourse’ is a term used in linguistics to refer to a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence. At this most general, a discourse is a behavioural unit which has a pretheoretical state in linguistics: it is a set of utterances which constitutes any recognizable speech event, e.g. a conversation, a joke, a sermon, an interview.

A classification of discourse functions, with particular reference to the type of subject-matter, the situation, and the behaviour of the speaker, is often carried out in sociolinguistic studies, e.g. distinguishing dialogues v.s. monologues, oratory, ritual, insults, narrative and so on.

Discourse analysis, then, consists of studies to discover linguistic regularities in discourses, using grammatical, phonological and semantic criteria.

Criper and Widdowson also point out that many linguists use the term to denote a sequence of sentences and consequently discourse analysis is taken to be the investigation into the formal devices used to connect sentences together. In this sense discourse is to be regarded as a product of the language code and discourse analysis as an extension of the scope of grammatical description.

By this system, the relations between sentences and social meanings and actions are called “discourse”, and the study of these discourse analysis.

Secondly, the general sense of the term “description” is found in linguistics, identifying one of the main aims of the subject—to give a comprehensive, systematic, objective and precise account of the patterns and use of a specific language or dialect, at a particular point in time.

This definition suggests several respects in which ‘descriptive’ contrasts with other conceptions of linguistic enquiry. The aim of descriptive linguistics is to describe the facts of linguistic usage as they are, and not how they ought to be, with reference to some real or imagined ideal state.

The study of discourse is related to the study of utterance types, or communicative acts, in isolation. It specifies the conditions whereby a certain linguistic form counts as a certain type of utterance: the circumstances under which a declarative sentence, for example, fulfils the act of ordering or requesting. The ultimate aim of this aspect of discourse analysis concerns the way in which individual communicative acts are linked together to develop larger units of communication. This aspect focuses on the communicative coherence of utterances occurring in sequence. This coherence is closely associated with the conditions which operate on individual utterances.

It is often pointed out that the structure of the language code necessarily reflects the functions which it is required to fulfil as an instrument of social interaction. It is natural, therefore, that elements of the code should correspond with the different factors in the speech event.

Several advantages of incorporating discourse analysis into a description of English may be shown in foreign language teaching. There is a tendency to assure an equation and to teach language use purely in terms of the code.

For example, Japanese learners tend to believe that questions are uniquely associated with interrogative sentences by raising intonation.

The danger of such a grammar-oriented approach to language teaching is that the learner can come to believe that rules of use are not distinct from rules of grammar and that messages will always match the code forms which most directly reflect the function which the messages fulfil.

When learners encounter language in use outside the classroom and the textbook, they often find, to their distress, that they cannot interpret it simply by reference to their knowledge of the grammar. So the Japanese students of English often have great difficulty in trying to communicate verbally with the native speaker of English. Therefore, discourse analysis is useful for teaching rules of use in addition to, and in association with, grammatical rules. In other words, one should pay as much attention to the operation of language as to its structure as a means of communication. Discourse analysis provides a tool for teaching the operation of a language.

Discourse analysis can thus give students an all round communicative competence. On the other hand, there are disadvantages of incorporating discourse analysis into a description of English.

The terms 'this', 'that', 'here', 'there', for example, have to do with the setting in which language is used, therefore, reflecting a contextual function. Contextual dependence is difficult to include in the description of a language.

The way in which a linguistic form is to be understood as a message depends on factors in the speech event other than the grammar itself.

Allen and Widdowson (1974) argue that the difficulties which students encounter arise, not so much from a defective knowledge of the system of English, but unfamiliarity with English use and consequently their needs must be met by a course which "develops a knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of different communicative acts."

A major problem for anyone wanting to write a language course based on communicative or functional principles is that, whereas there

are many detailed grammatical descriptions of English, not many adequate functional or discourse descriptions have been widely published.

There would be an endless number of sentences to learn and no way of grouping them into functional sets since the sentences themselves would be multi-functional and such a procedure would have no explanatory validity and would provide the learner with no strategy for interpreting any new sentence as having a similar communicative value.

### *Conclusion*

The grammatical properties of language as a system have been subjected to pedagogic treatment, and there seems to be reason why a similar treatment should not be given to the kind of communicative properties of language in use.

A knowledge of how written discourse develops is clearly of crucial importance to the learning of reading strategies and the writing of coherent essays.

### **Bibliography**

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