**Lecture 2: Discourse and Grammar**

Traditionally, grammar refers to the set of rules that govern the way sentences are formed using different patterns and structures. Emphasis is put on the well-formdeness of the resultant constructed items i.e. sentences which express a complete idea. There are certain rules to be followed so that the speaker or writer produces correct sentences or utterances. For example, in English a sentence begins with a subject which must have a finite verb then an object or complement. In the interrogative form, however, we make subject-verb inversion. A good example of this:

* He is ready for the exam.
* Is he ready for the exam?
* In discourse analysis, ‘you are ready for the exam?’ can be regarded as a question that needs an answer even if the structure of the sentence is not that of a question.

When we try to account for discourse grammar, we need to bear in mind that a good mastery of English grammar is very essential for communication on the part of the learner. In this lecture, some common terms will be used such as **clause, pronoun, adverbial, conjunction** in addition to other **new terms: *theme, rheme, reference, anaphoric.*** The learner will get familiar with these new terms through relating them to the earlier, more common ones. This, on part, will help make the connection between **grammar** and ***discourse.*** “We shall be looking at “what discourse analysts can tell us about contextualised uses of structures and grammatical

items, and considering whether grammar teaching needs to broaden or shift its orientations to cover significant areas at present under-represented in grammar teaching.” McCarthy (1991:34). In fact, any learner of a foreign language should develop a good command grammar through producing well-formed clauses and sentences. Additionally, he/she should move to a higher level of competency which is structuring larger units of discourse.

**Grammatical cohesion and Textuality:**

When speakers and writers communicate their ideas, they tend to establish **grammatical links** between the sentences or utterances they produce. These links are done through: reference, ellipsis/substitution, and conjunction.

* 1. **Reference**

In fact, there are two different views regarding reference. According to Lyons words refer to things. This traditional linguistic view excludes the role of the speaker or writer. Consider the following example:

John is a teacher. He is thirty five. He lives in France.

The pronoun he refers to John.

More recently, however, Lyons indicated that people refer to things through words because words cannot refer to things by themselves. It is this view that a research analyst should have. This can be supported by Strawson’s (1950) claiming that “referring” is something an expression does. It is something that someone can use an expression to do’. Therefore, from a discourse analyst viewpoint it is the speaker or the writer who refers to entities in the world by means of words. Brown and Yule (1983)

Now, reconsider the previous example: John is a teacher. He is thirty five.

 From a discourse analyst stance, it is the **writer** who used “**John** and **he**” to **refer** to the same person.

In English, the pronouns (he, she, it, him, his, they, etc) in addition to demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, those) and the article “the” are all reference items.