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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

First Semester Examination  
Academic Session 2006/2007

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**HET 312 - DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Duration: 3 hours

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Please check that this examination paper consists of FIVE pages of printed material before you begin the examination.

Answer FOUR of the questions.

1. Discuss five of the principles of discourse analysis that one has to keep in mind when carrying out research on discourse. [100 marks]

2. Answer [a] and [b].

[a] J.L. Austin (1962) suggests that an utterance can be used to perform action or speech act and can be analysed on three different levels. Using appropriate examples, explain what these three levels are.

[b] J.R. Searle (1976) further develops Austin's theory and suggests that speech acts can be classified into five categories. Identify and discuss three of these categories.

[100 marks]

3. Discuss, in detail, the roles of situational context and background knowledge in the interpretation of the following excerpt:

Young Stillman stepped outside, held the light to the ground, turned leftward, and moved three steps, closely examining; then said, "I've got the direction -- come along; take the lantern, somebody."

He strode off swiftly southward, the files following, swaying and bending in and out with the deep curves of the gorge. Thus a mile, and the mouth of the gorge was reached; before them stretched the sagebrush plain, dim, vast, and vague. Stillman called a halt, saying, "We mustn't start wrong, now; we must take the direction again."

He took a lantern and examined the ground for a matter of twenty yards; then said, "Come on; it's all right," and gave up the lantern. In and out among the sage-bushes he marched, a quarter of a mile, bearing gradually to the right; then took a new direction and made another great semicircle; then changed again and moved due west nearly half a mile -- and stopped.

"She gave it up, here, poor little chap. Hold the lantern. You can see where she sat."

But this was in a slick alkali flat which was surfaced like steel, and no person in the party was quite hardy enough to claim an eyesight that could detect the track of a cushion on a veneer like that. The bereaved mother fell upon her knees and kissed the spot, lamenting.

"But where is she, then?" some one said. "She didn't stay here. We can see that much, anyway."

Stillman moved about in a circle around the place, with the lantern, pretending to hunt for tracks.

"Well!" he said presently, in an annoyed tone, "I don't understand it." He examined again. "No use. She was here -- that's certain; she never walked away from here -- and that's certain. It's a puzzle; I can't make it out."

The mother lost heart then.

"Oh, my God! oh, blessed Virgin! some flying beast has got her. I'll never see her again!"

"Ah, don't give up," said Archy. "We'll find her -- don't give up."

"God bless you for the words, Archy Stillman!" and she seized his hand and kissed it fervently.

Peterson, the new-comer, whispered satirically in Ferguson's ear:

"Wonderful performance to find this place, wasn't it? Hardly worth while to come so far, though; any other supposititious place would have answered just as well -- hey?"

Ferguson was not pleased with the innuendo. He said, with some warmth:

"Do you mean to insinuate that the child hasn't been here? I tell you the child has been here! Now if you want to get yourself into as tidy a little fuss as -- "

"All right!" sang out Stillman. "Come, everybody, and look at this! It was right under our noses all the time, and we didn't see it."

(Twain, Mark, 1835-1910. Excerpt from *A Double-Barreled Detective Story*)

[100 marks]

4. Answer [a] and [b].

[a] Grice suggests that people interact with one another by observing four sets of maxim or general rules which govern rational, cooperative behavior in conversations. Identify and explain the function of each of these maxims.

[b] Below is the opening of a telephone conversation between two friends who know each other well.

[i] Analyse and discuss the text in terms of whether the maxims are observed or flouted.

[ii] Using the examples taken from the excerpt, explain how the maxim of quantity might vary according to how well the speakers know each other.

S1: hello  
S2: hello  
S1: I've died and gone to heaven.  
S2: What?  
S1: I've died and I don't mind.  
S2: Yeah.. yeah.. what's up?  
S1: Well, I went to check out this nice new restaurant in town last night. And guess what? I was their lucky 500<sup>th</sup> customer – and as a surprise, they gave me two tickets to Disneyland in Hong Kong. I was so lucky, I left my wallet in the car and had to go back to get it. Several customers arrived after me and I let them in...  
S2: You're kidding me!  
S1: No.... And not only that... I'll be going to watch Nicholas Tse live in concert.  
S2: Get out of here! For real?  
S1: Yes.. here, I've the tickets with me.  
S2: So, who are you taking then?  
S1: Er... did you get the books I left on your desk yesterday?  
S2: hello...?  
S1: yeah..  
S2: who are you taking with you..?  
S1: Well..., my mother was with me last night and you know how much she loves Tse....  
S2: Oh no.., now I'm dying. When is it exactly, this visit?  
S1: Hmm.. sometime in June.  
S2: This year?  
S1: yup..

[100 marks]

5. Answer [a] and [b].

- [a] Using appropriate examples, discuss the notion of cohesion and the various types of cohesive markers in English.
- [b] Read the text below. Identify three types of cohesive markers employed in the text and discuss how they link the various parts of the text together.

### **Street Crime**

Functionalists point out that industrialized societies have no trouble socializing the poor into wanting to own things. Like others, they are bombarded with messages urging them to buy everything from designer jeans to DVD players and new cars. By their vivid images of the middle class enjoying luxurious lives, television and movies reinforce the myth that all full-fledged Americans can afford society's many goods and services. This bombardment of messages also instills the idea that they have a right to these items.

The school system, however, the most common route to success, fails the poor. It is run by the middle class, and there the children of the poor confront a bewildering world, one at odds with their background. Their grammar and nonstandard language may be liberally sprinkled with what the middle class considers obscene words and phrases. Their ideas of punctuality and neatness, as well as their lack of preparation in paper-and-pencil skills, are a mismatch with their new environment. Facing such barriers, the poor are more likely to drop out of school than their more privileged counterparts. Educational failure, in turn, closes the door on many legitimate avenues to financial success.

(J.M. Henslin 2001, *Sociology: A Down To Earth Approach*)

[100 marks]