

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

First Semester Examination  
Academic Session 2004/2005

October 2004

**HET 312 - Discourse Analysis**

Duration : 3 hours

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

Answer **FOUR** questions.

1. Discuss in detail the contextual information that the participants in the following conversation share in order to communicate effectively.

- (1) Kendall: They can search it without a warrant?
- (2) Eugene: Don't worry about them. They are the least of your concerns right now. Worry about me. Now why're you selling drugs? (Kendall doesn't answer) Answer me!
- (3) Sharon: Eugene.
- (4) Eugene: He's dealing. I can't believe you'd be so stupid –
- (5) Sharon: If you would stop yelling at him –
- (6) Eugene: And you stop protecting him. (walking around the table and right up to her)
- (7) Sharon: I'm not protecting him. I want to hear what the boy has to say. (Eugene swallows and turns back to Kendall)
- (8) Kendall: I'm sorry, but –
- (9) Sharon: But what?
- (10) Kendall: It's just marijuana. It's like selling beer.

[TV Series "The Practice: episode entitled *Settling*"]

[25 marks]

2. Explain why cohesion is important in discourse. Then identify and describe the different types of lexical cohesion devices used in the text below.

TV-addict kids run greater risk of obesity: study

PARIS (AFP) - Spending hours glued to your television screen during childhood causes an increased risk of obesity and other health problems during later life, according to research to be published in the *Lancet* medical journal on Saturday.

Researchers from New Zealand concluded after a decades-long study that high levels of exposure at a young age to television, with its aggressive barrage of advertising for unhealthy food products, was correlated with increased body mass later in life, the article said.

Robert Hancox from the University of Otago and his colleagues studied around 1,000 children born in New Zealand town of Dunedin in 1972-3, who were tested over numerous intervals up until the age of 26.

"A clear association was found between extensive television viewing (more than two hours a day) among children and adolescents and increased BMI (body mass index), raised cholesterol, greater proportion of smoking, and poor cardiovascular fitness at age 26 years," the *Lancet* said.

The study comes amid increasing concern about the global obesity epidemic, with the UN's World Health Organisation estimating that one billion adults worldwide are overweight, and at least 300 million of them are clinically obese.

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According to the US Centers for Disease Control, the worst hit country is the United States, where a total of 30.6 percent of the adult population is obese, and the tally is 16.5 percent among the six- to 19-year-old group.

And a British parliamentary report said that Britain had the fastest-growing fat problem in Europe, with cases of obesity growing by almost 400 percent in 25 years and three-quarters of adults either overweight or obese.

In a commentary with the Lancet article, David Ludwig of the Harvard Medical School said that the research of Hancox and his team has strengthened the case for a ban on food advertisements aimed at children.

"In an era when childhood obesity has reached crisis proportions, the commercial food industry has no business telling toddlers to consume fast food, soft drinks, and high-calorie low-quality snacks, all products linked to excessive weight gain

"The multifactorial nature of the problem should not be an excuse for inaction. Measures to limit television viewing in childhood and ban food advertisements aimed at children are warranted, before another generation is programmed to become obese," he wrote.

Hancox said that children's television viewing should be limited to less than one hour a day.

(Yahoo!News Fri Jul 16, 1:07 PM)

[25 marks]

3. Read the following extract. Then discuss one of the following approaches to conversation analysis. Illustrate your discussion using examples from the extract below.

[i] The 4 conversational maxims

[ii] Searle's speech acts.

[25 marks]

'How are you getting on?' said the Cat, as soon as there was mouth enough for it to speak with.

Alice waited till the eyes appeared, and then nodded. 'It's no use speaking to it,' she thought, 'till its ears have come, or at least one of them.' In another minute the whole head appeared, and then Alice put down her flamingo, and began an account of the game, feeling very glad she had someone to listen to her. The Cat seemed to think that there was enough of it now in sight, and no more of it appeared.

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'I don't think they play at all fairly,' Alice began, in rather a complaining tone, 'and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear oneself speak--and they don't seem to have any rules in particular; at least, if there are, nobody attends to them--and you've no idea how confusing it is all the things being alive; for instance, there's the arch I've got to go through next walking about at the other end of the ground--and I should have croqueted the Queen's hedgehog just now, only it ran away when it saw mine coming!'

'How do you like the Queen?' said the Cat in a low voice.

'Not at all,' said Alice: 'she's so extremely--' Just then she noticed that the Queen was close behind her, listening: so she went on, '--likely to win, that it's hardly worth while finishing the game.'

The Queen smiled and passed on.

'Who ARE you talking to?' said the King, going up to Alice, and looking at the Cat's head with great curiosity.

'It's a friend of mine--a Cheshire Cat,' said Alice: 'allow me to introduce it.'

'I don't like the look of it at all,' said the King: 'however, it may kiss my hand if it likes.'

'I'd rather not,' the Cat remarked.

'Don't be impertinent,' said the King, 'and don't look at me like that!' He got behind Alice as he spoke.

'A cat may look at a king,' said Alice. 'I've read that in some book, but I don't remember where.'

'Well, it must be removed,' said the King very decidedly, and he called the Queen, who was passing at the moment, 'My dear! I wish you would have this cat removed!'

The Queen had only one way of settling all difficulties, great or small. 'Off with his head!' she said, without even looking round.

'I'll fetch the executioner myself,' said the King eagerly, and he hurried off.

(Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll)

4. Analyse in detail the BPSE pattern of the following text:

(1) Despite continuing controversy over standardized tests, most schools in the United States use them as the basis for tracking, the assignment of students to different types of educational programs. (2) Tracking is also a common practice in many other industrial societies, including Great Britain, France and Japan.

(3) Official justification for tracking is to give students the kind of learning that fits their abilities and motivation. Young people have different interests, with some drawn to, say, the study of languages and others to art or physical education. (4) Given disparate talents and goals, no single program for all students would serve any of them well.

(5) Critics counter that by tracking students, our schools sort out children as either winners or losers, based as much on their social background as their personal aptitude. (6) Most students from affluent families do well on standardized tests, so schools place them in college-bound tracks; students from modest backgrounds typically do less well on tests and end up in tracks that teach only technical trades. (7) Tracking, therefore, effectively segregates students – academically and socially – into different worlds.

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(8) Furthermore, most schools reserve their best teachers for students in the top tracks. (9) These teachers put more effort into teaching, show more respect to students, and expect more from them. (10) By contrast, teachers in low tracks employ more memorization, classroom drill, and other unstimulating techniques. (11) They also emphasise regimentation, punctuality, and respect for authority figures.

(12) In light of these criticisms, schools across the United States are now cautious making tracking assignments and allow more mobility between the tracks. (13) Some schools have even moved away from the practice entirely.

(14) While limited tracking seems to be necessary to match instruction with student abilities, rigid tracking has a powerful impact on students' learning and self-concept. (15) Young people who spend years in higher tracks tend to see themselves as bright and able, whereas students in lower tracks have less ambition and low self-esteem.

(taken from 'Sociology' John J. Macionis 2001 pp. 522-523)

[25 marks]