Dramatic Discourse –
Handout 1. Drama as Interaction. Turn Taking System.

Introduction. Page vs Stage

A. Play as text
- Static
- Unchanging
- Presupposition of the context and the performance
  - The place
  - The set
  - Characters

B. Play as performance
- Transient
- Context dependent

Dramatic Interaction vs Conventional Dialogue

Dialogues in plays: We shall be considering them as forms of dramatic interaction.

Reception of drama implies following the rhythms of its own (Rhetorical patterns)

General principle
Taking into account that the major mode used is conversation, we can understand through the study of interaction the way the play is built.

Discourse Analysis and Drama

- Why discourse analysis is useful as a tool of analysis to study drama as a form of dramatic interaction:
  - It helps to understand the text
  - It helps to understand how conversation works

- Dramatic dialogue as an expository text
  - Exposition & Openings
    (what the audience might expect during the performance).
  - Activity (activity in groups from Sanger (2001), pp.8, 10, 13)
    - Activity 1: set descriptions, What does language convey?
    - Activity 2: characters, What does language convey?
TURN-TAKING SYSTEM

1. Speaker changes always happen.
2. Overlapping will produce one dropping out.
3. Speaking flow can belong to one person at a time.
4. Transition is generally smooth.
5. Overlapping different social meanings.
6. There is a turn order: everyone has a turn to speak.
7. Turn length: Negotiation implicit (‘You know what happened to me?)
8. More than two speakers: Even if there is one speaker at a time, turn passes are required.

TURN ALLOCATIONAL COMPONENT
How change of Speakers is organised

1. The current speaker may select the next one.
2. The next speaker may self-select him/herself.
3. The turn may lapse.
4. If three happens, the current speaker can retake it after a pause OR if the lapse becomes the end of the conversation, we call it a GAP.

TURN CONSTRUCTION COMPONENT
Internal form of each turn
This type of approach may provide some reliable data about:

1. Co-operative versus conflictive interaction.
2. Cultural differences may generate different results from the application of the rules.

Practial work:

Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf

A.
- Albee (Profile)
- Topic. What is happening between George, Martha, Nick and Honey?
- What is the relationship between them?

B.
- Who has most turns?
- Who has the least?
- Who has the longest turns?
- Who has the shortest?
- Who initiates conversational exchanges?
- Who responds?
- Who interrupts?
- Who is interrupted?
- Who allocates turns to others?
Handout D1_12_13_Introduction_Turn taking system

- C. Finally... (at home):
  - Write a brief profile of George and Honey, taking into account the way they manage their turns in conversation.

Readings:
- Further reading. Short (1995), ch.6 (168-188)
- Jeffries (2010), ch.4

Post-session ACTIVITIES:
- Night: Man and Women (profile) SWAD_Changing perspectives (From interaction to narration)
- Susan Langer’s exercise on stage directions, characterization, openings (Example .4)
- Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf_ Turn allocational component_Nick, Honey; Martha and George