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THE NOTION OF "DISCOURSE" IN LINGUISTICS

Annotation

The concept of discourse has gained remarkable prominence in linguistics over the past two decades, extending its influence across nearly all branches of the discipline. Originally introduced into linguistic theory by E. Benveniste as a term denoting general or individual speech, discourse has since evolved into a complex, interdisciplinary construct. This paper explores the multiplicity of definitions and interpretations of discourse proposed by scholars from linguistics, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and other fields.

Key words: Discourse, communicative situation, sociocultural context, speech act, linguopragmatics, coherence.

ПОНЯТИЕ «ДИСКУРСА» В ЛИНГВИСТИКЕ

Аннотация

Понятие дискурса за последние два десятилетия приобрело значительное распространение в лингвистике, охватив практически все направления этой науки. Впервые термин был введен в лингвистическую теорию Э. Бенвенистом в значении общего или индивидуального высказывания. С тех пор дискурс развился в сложную междисциплинарную категорию. В данной статье рассматривается множество определений и интерпретаций дискурса, предложенных учеными в области лингвистики, социологии, психологии, философии и других наук.

Ключевые слова: дискурс, коммуникативная ситуация, социокультурный контекст, речевой акт, лингвопрагматика, когерентность.

TILSHUNOSLIKDA "DISKURS" TUSHUNCHASI

Annotatsiya

So'nggi yigirma yil ichida diskurs tushunchasi tilshunoslikda sezilarli darajada ommalashib, fan sohasining deyarli barcha yo'nalishlariga kirib bordi. Dastlab bu tushuncha tilshunoslik nazariyasiga E. Benvenist tomonidan umumiy yoki individual nutqni anglatadigan termin sifatida kiritilgan. Vaqt o'tishi bilan diskurs murakkab va tarmoqli (interdisiplinar) hodisaga aylandi. Ushbu maqolada tilshunoslik, sotsiologiya, psixologiya, falsafa va boshqa fanlar vakillari tomonidan berilgan diskursga oid turli ta'rif va talqinlar tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Diskurs, kommunikativ vaziyat, sotsiomadaniy kontekst, nutqiy akt, lingvopragmatika, izchillik.

Introduction. During historical period, the concept of "discourse" has become widespread in linguistics and has managed to enter all of its branches. The French word "discourse" was first introduced into linguistics by E. Benveniste, who used it in the sense of general speech or the speech of an individual speaker[1]. Over the years, various scholars have provided different definitions and descriptions of "discourse," which has led to a number of contradictions and debates in the field.

Literature review. N. Fairclough notes: "Discourse is a difficult concept, largely because there are so many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints." [2]. According to him, discourse is a complex notion that has been interpreted in contradictory and overlapping ways across different theories. Moreover, as M. Dykstra points out in his dissertation, the concept of discourse is not limited to linguistics; philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists have also given their own definitions of it:

Knights and Morgan (sociologists): Discourse is shorthand for a whole set of power/knowledge relations that

are written, spoken, and communicated and embedded in social practices.

Potter and Wetherell (sociologists): Discourses do not just describe things; they do things.

Parker (psychologist): Discourse is a system of statements that constructs an object. It makes sense of meaningless reality not just by describing the social world but by constituting it, bringing certain phenomena into being.

Fairclough (linguist): Discourse is a structured set of texts and textual practices that are produced, transmitted, and consumed. Discourse is also a practice: discourse practices are social practices.

Fairclough and Wodak (linguists): Discourse brings in situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities and relations between people and groups.

Hall (sociologist): Discourse governs particular ways of talking about a topic, defining acceptable and intelligible ways to speak, write, or behave, while limiting and excluding other ways of speaking or constructing knowledge about the topic.

Foucault (philosopher): Discourse is a collection of interrelated texts and practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.

Koeberle (financier): Discourse is a way of representing an aspect of the world, that is, a particular point of view on that aspect.

Phillips and Oswick (financiers): Discourse is language in use and an interrelated set of texts – how these ideas were constructed and how they affect the context in which they occur[3].

If we summarize the definitions of discourse given by representatives of various fields, Knights and Morgan view discourse as a social phenomenon – a concise form of power and knowledge relations that are spoken or written. Sociologists Potter and Wetherell emphasize that discourse does not merely describe reality but performs actions. Similarly, not only sociologists but also the linguist Fairclough considers discourse a social practice – both a collection of texts that are produced, transmitted, and consumed, and the process of using them in practice. Furthermore, discourse serves as an important factor in understanding the world and environment. According to psychologist Parker, discourse is a system of situations that constructs an object and not only represents the social world but constitutes it by bringing phenomena into existence. Linguists Fairclough and Wodak also stress that discourse shapes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities and relationships between individuals and groups. Thus, discourse has a wide range of possibilities: it can regulate the accepted ways of speaking about a certain topic. As Hall emphasizes, discourse defines an intelligible way of speaking, writing, or behaving. Philosopher Foucault views discourse as a set of interrelated texts and practices that systematically construct the objects of which they speak. Likewise, Phillips and Oswick describe discourse as a set of interrelated texts that show how ideas are formed and how they influence the context in which they occur. Examining the definitions offered by Western scholars from various fields, we can conclude that discourse is not only a linguistic but also a philosophical, social, and psychological phenomenon. It may consist of both spoken and written texts, and it serves as both a descriptive process and a linguistic means of representing the worldview.

Research methodology. Discourse is one of the key concepts of linguopragmatics. It is a broad and multifaceted notion, and numerous definitions have been provided by linguists. The first scholar to study discourse analysis in detail was Z. Harris, who investigated the interrelation of sentences and called his research “discourse analysis.”[4] He regarded it as a methodology derived from structural methods of linguistic analysis.

M. Stubbs proposed that discourse should have the following three features:

Discourse must consist of more than one sentence;

From a semantic point of view, discourse analysis should focus on the socio-cultural context;

Discourse must have an interactive and dialogic structure[5].

A Russian scholar defined discourse as “a polysemantic term of text linguistics used by different authors almost as homonyms. The main meanings include:

- (1) coherent text;
- (2) spoken form of text;
- (3) dialogue;
- (4) a group of semantically related sentences;
- (5) the product of written or spoken speech.”[6]

Thus, the concepts of text and discourse are very closely related. Uzbek linguist N. Abdullayeva explains discourse in her research as “a broad concept that encompasses various explanations – it is an extended part of

language, whether written or spoken; in short, discourse can be as brief as a phrase or as extensive as a full essay.”[7].

Russian and Uzbek linguists have also contributed theoretical views on discourse and its types. For example, Y. Karaulov defines discourses as: “a complex communicative phenomenon that includes, in addition to the text, extralinguistic factors (knowledge about the world, opinions, attitudes, and goals of the speaker) necessary for understanding the text.”[8] That is, discourse is understood as a complex phenomenon comprising both the text and the external factors—such as the speaker’s worldview and intention—required for comprehension.

Y.Stepanov describes discourse as a reflection of linguistic and sociocultural reality, while V.Krasnykh writes: “Discourse is verbalized speech-thinking activity, understood as the unity of process and result, possessing both linguistic and extralinguistic dimensions.”[9] In other words, Krasnykh views discourse as the verbalization of speech activity—a combination of thought process and outcome that has both linguistic and extralinguistic foundations.

V.Demyankov states: “Discourse is any arbitrary text fragment consisting of more than one sentence or an independent part of a sentence,”

meaning discourse may consist of any text segment exceeding one sentence[10].

According to linguists D.Ashurova and M.Galiyeva, discourse is analyzed on the basis of both linguistic and extralinguistic factors, including:

communication situation (place, time, circumstances of communication);

participants in communication (addresser and addressee);

sociocultural context;

background encyclopedic knowledge;

mode of discourse (oral/written, style, genre, register);

communicative aims and pragmatic intentions[11].

Thus, the essential components of discourse structure include communication as a process; the participants involved; prior encyclopedic knowledge; the mode of discourse (oral or written); and the communicative goals and pragmatic intentions.

Additionally, S.Syasyao in her dissertation cites M.Halliday and R.Hasan’s theoretical framework on the parameters of discourse: “In the theory of text formation by Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, inaugural and nominative discourse can be considered in terms of what is happening (field), who is taking part (tenor), what role language plays (mode), and what goals are being pursued.”[12]

Analysis and results. In addition, when theoretically approaching the forms of discourse and the types of artistic discourse, a number of sources identify four main types of discourse: description, narration, exposition, and argumentation. These types of discourse can be understood more clearly through examples:

Narration (report) – as the name suggests, this type involves telling a story to the listener or reader. In this form, events are presented in chronological order and narrated. A fictional story is usually referred to as narration, while an account of real events is called a report. The following excerpt from a work by W. Collins is an example of the narration type:

“Pesca, inspired by our national grog, which appeared to get into his head, in the most marvellous manner, five minutes after it had gone down his throat, asserted his claims to be considered a complete Englishman by making a series of speeches in rapid succession, proposing my mother’s health, my sister’s health, my health, and the healths, in mass, of Mr. Fairlie and the two young Misses, pathetically returning

thanks himself, immediately afterwards, for the whole party.” (W. Collins, “Woman in White,” p.14)

This passage is written in the narrative style; here the author recounts the Italian professor Pesca’s behavior, actions, and speech during a conversation.

Description – this type primarily involves depicting a situation, event, or character through the use of nouns and adjectives. For example:

“The evening, I remember, was still and cloudy; the London air was at its heaviest; the distant hum of the street-traffic was at its faintest; the small pulse of the life within me, and the great heart of the city around me, seemed to be sinking in unison, languidly and more languidly, with the sinking sun.” (W. Collins, “Woman in White,” p.3). In this excerpt, the adjectives serve to portray the appearance of the city of London and the author’s state of mind.

Exposition – this type of discourse is used to explain or inform the reader about an event or phenomenon. The following example illustrates the expository type:

“Scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory led the study, published in Nature, which showed that Greenland’s ice cap is

losing an average of 33 million tons of ice per hour, including from glaciers that are already below sea level.”[13]. In this passage, the international organization NASA reports that Greenland’s ice sheet is losing about 33 million tons of ice per hour.

4. Argument (argumentation) – the purpose of this type of discourse is persuasion, that is, convincing the reader or urging them to take a certain action. The argument is based on the writer’s reasoning, which they present as valid. For example:

“However, it would be a serious mistake to replace libraries with tablets. First, digital books and resources are associated with less learning and more problems than print resources.” In this context, the author presents an argument claiming that it would be wrong to replace libraries with electronic books and devices.

Conclusion. To sum up, according to these scholars, discourse must include the field – the situation or setting where it occurs; the tenor – the participants involved; the mode – the function of language in the situation; and the goals it aims to achieve.

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