

The Formation of Discourse Theory: Historical and Theoretical Approaches

AKHROROVA RUZIKHON USMANOVNA
Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article extensively covers the stages of formation of discourse theory, its scientific conceptual foundations and historical development process. The article analyzes the aspects of the concept of “discourse” in linguistics that are different from the text, its communicative, cognitive and pragmatic properties. The study studies the stages of development of discourse analysis since the second half of the 20th century, the scientific views of such scientists as G. Brown, T. van Dijk, R. Wodak, J. Blommaert, V. I. Karasik, E. S. Kubryakova. Also, the inextricable connection of discourse with social, cultural and psychological factors, the ideas of interpreting language as a dynamic system of human activity are consistently analyzed. The results of the article are of great importance in understanding the theoretical foundations of modern discourse analysis, as well as in the comparative study of discourses in different languages.

Keywords: Discourse, text, communicative activity, cognitive approach, pragmatics, linguoculturology, historical development, discourse analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The term “discourse” first appeared in the philosophical sciences in the 17th-18th centuries. However, its use in linguistics has a relatively recent history. In the second half of the 20th century, as a result of intensive research in the field of linguistics, new

paradigms of scientific knowledge emerged, as well as new concepts and terms. The concept of discourse received various interpretations in linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. It was during this period that the term “discourse” left the scope of philosophy and became the object of research of other disciplines, in particular linguistics. At the same time, its interpretation and meaning change significantly in the process of transferring this term from one field to another. Therefore, there is no single and generally accepted definition of the term “discourse”, which is why it still remains an open and controversial issue in scientific circles. There are two main theories regarding the etymology of the term “discourse”: the first suggests that it comes from Latin, the second from French. At the same time, there are several different interpretations of the Latin origin itself. For example, the Encyclopedia of Epistemology and Scientific Philosophy states that the term “discourse” comes from the Latin word *discurrere*, which means “to discuss,” “to negotiate,” or even “to argue.” Some other dictionaries indicate that the term comes from the word “discere,” which in Russian means “to walk,” “to act without a member” [11]. Also, some dictionaries say that the term “discourse” comes from the Latin word “discoursus”; this word means “conversation,” “argument,” “communication” [15]. It is worth noting that several of the above interpretations can exist simultaneously in one dictionary. Naturally, there are certain differences between the above words, and they can be divided into two groups. The first group includes the Latin nouns *discurrere* and *discoursus*, which are synonymous. The difference between these two words is due to the stylistic difference: the first word has a more formal tone. The second group includes the Latin verb *discere*. This word has a semantic meaning close to the Russian word *блуждать* (to wander, to wander aimlessly). The main (direct) meaning of the word is “to walk slowly, to move,” and the figurative meaning is “to change direction, to move from one thought to another, not to concentrate, not to stop anywhere” (in relation to a thought or gaze) [4]. For example: as in the expression “thoughts are lost.” Thus, according to this point of view, the term “discourse” in the

process of its acquisition and use may have initially taken on the meaning of “change of thoughts,” and then approached the semantics of “speech activity.” According to another common point of view regarding the etymology of the term “discourse,” this term comes from the French word “discours,” which means “speech,” “conversation” [14]. Thus, according to this point of view, in the process of its acquisition and use, the term “discourse” may have initially taken on the meaning of “change of ideas,” and then approached the semantics of “speech activity.” The term “discourse” began to be actively used in linguistics from the second half of the 20th century. In its study, attention is paid to various aspects: sequence and situational relevance, individuality, as well as ethno-social and cultural characteristics. In this regard, when analyzing discourse, the social status and linguistic landscape of the speaker should be taken into account. Discourse is considered a multifaceted phenomenon and so far there is no single [6], generally [1] accepted definition [18]. In this regard, when analyzing discourse, the social status and linguistic landscape of the speaker should be taken into account. Discourse is considered a multifaceted phenomenon and so far there is no single, generally accepted definition.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The concept of discourse is relatively new in the history of linguistics, it was formed in the process of the development of text linguistics and discourse analysis. For the first time, this term was used by the American linguist Z. Harris in 1952 in the article ‘Discourse Analysis,’ in which he interpreted discourse as a linguistic unit that serves to determine the interrelationships of grammatical structures within the text [6]. During this period, discourse was used almost synonymously with text. Z.Harris defined discourse as a set of statements spoken or written in succession by one or more individuals in a given situation [6]. This article outlines two main factors of discourse analysis: 1. The coherence (connection) of the text; The interrelationship between culture and language, that is, taking into account

extralinguistic and linguistic factors. According to Z. Harris, language material should be studied not on the basis of random words or individual sentences, but within the framework of coherent discourse. Discourse can sometimes consist of a single-word expression, and sometimes several sentences or a whole text, but the main attention is paid to sequence and situationality [6]. In French linguistics, interest in discourse was enriched by philosophical and semiotic approaches in the works of such scholars as M. Foucault, E. Benveniste, P. Sartre. They saw discourse not only as a set of linguistic units, but also as a process expressing socio-cultural reality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Since the 1960s and 1970s, the concept of discourse has expanded, becoming a concept that encompasses not only grammatical aspects, but also pragmatic, sociolinguistic and cultural contexts. In the French school of linguistics, discourse is interpreted as a means of expressing the worldview, ideology, and social status of social groups through their speech [15]. The French scholar E. Benveniste, in his work *General Linguistics*, developed the theory of utterance and used the term “discours”, traditionally used in French linguistics, in a new sense as “the process of the speaker’s acquisition of language” [1] and was one of the first researchers to give importance to the word “discourse” as a scientific term. He contrasted the concepts of “discourse” (discours) and “expression” (récit) with this term, expressing the concept of “speech characteristic of the speaker.” E. Benveniste noted that “discourse is an abstract concept, which includes the necessary conditions for creating a speech product and the participants in the speech, and discourse should be considered not only in relation to the text, but also in relation to its structure, purpose of use and social processes” [15]. Unlike Z. Harris, E. Benveniste explains discourse as a determinant of the speaker’s place in speech and calls it a functional approach. While Z. Harris clearly described discourse as speech in a specific situation and cultural environment, E. Benveniste also introduced the factor of individuality into its basis. According to

E. Benveniste, “the relationship that arises between the speaker and the language is reflected in the linguistic units of expression.” Also, “expression is the act of the speaker, the use of language as a tool, which is reflected in the relationship between the speaker and the language” [6].

In the Anglo-American tradition (T. A. van Dijk, N. Fairclough, J. P. Gee), a critical perspective on discourse has emerged. According to it, discourse functions through language as a means of consolidating power, legitimizing social inequalities, or challenging them. Critical discourse analysis is particularly important in revealing manipulative strategies in social networks, the media, and political discourse.

Although the concept of discourse is currently attracting increasing attention, its content is still interpreted differently. The term “discourse” in many cases acquires polysemy, has a multifaceted and polysemantic nature. This is explained, first of all, by the fact that discourse is used not only in linguistics, but also in such disciplines as philosophy, sociology, psychology, and cultural studies. In this regard, it is necessary to pay special attention to the interpretation of the polysemy (multiple meanings) of terms. In particular, the *Anglo-Russian Dictionary of Linguistics and Semiotics* contains certain views on this issue. According to the authors of the dictionary, two main approaches to understanding discourse have been formed to date:

1. Discourse is a text used in certain conditions.
2. Discourse is a complex communicative integrity.

These approaches, while expanding the semantic scope of the concept of discourse, also allow analyzing its interaction with the text and the communicative process. For some scholars, “discourse” is considered almost synonymous with concepts such as “speech,” “connected speech,” “speech flow.” Others bring it closer to the concept of “complex syntactic whole,” “integrity in speech units” or “text.” According to another interpretation, discourse is understood as a communicatively integrated and completed speech product, that is, a linguistic phenomenon that arises in a certain communicative situation and is aimed at a

specific goal. In some approaches, discourse is not only a set of linguistic units, but also verbalized consciousness, that is, human thinking and its form of expression through language. At the same time, discourse is also considered as a complex communicative phenomenon: in this case, it consists not only of a text, but also of external (extralinguistic) factors that create and perceive it – social, cultural, psychological, pragmatic contexts. Discourse is also interpreted as a real, natural text, that is, real speech forms that arise in everyday life or in certain communicative situations. In this approach, discourse is manifested in the form of various speech genres – political speech, mass media texts, scientific speeches, works of art, religious exhortations, etc. Thus, the concept of discourse expresses a complex interaction between a system of linguistic units, the socio-psychological factors that form them, and their communicative functions. It is this aspect that makes it one of the main categories in the analysis of the expression of the “age” factor in various speech discourses. Discourse is a concept that includes a complex interaction between language, thought, and society. Currently, such terms as “dialogical discourse” and “monological discourse” are used. Interestingly, until recently this was considered an erroneous interpretation, since in the first case there is a tautology (dialogue = discourse), and in the second case there is a clear contradiction (discourse \neq dialogue). The analysis of the evolution of the concept of “discourse” within its historical and semantic variation has a full scientific basis, since in the last decade this term has become particularly relevant in semiotics and linguistics. First of all, we considered it appropriate to dwell on the origin, period of its emergence and the meanings it conveys. The term “discourse” comes from the Latin word *discurrere* (“to go around, discuss”), and in the early periods it meant thinking, arguing or exchanging information. Later, this word entered French (*discours*), English (discourse) and other languages, and began to be actively used in linguistics and social sciences. The first semantic meaning of the term *discours* was its French form, and in the 18th century this term was used in the meaning of “dialogical speech.” In the last decade, the term “discourse” in linguistics has been used to

denote all types of speech formed by pragmatic factors and, in turn, differentiated according to different communicative purposes. One of the differential features of this abstract concept is manifested in its application in various fields of the humanities. Yu. A. Levitsky wrote in detail about the roots of discourse and its methods of analysis in the scientific works of P. Hartmann, P. Wunderlich and other researchers (German linguistic school), in the research of E. Shcheglov and G. Zags (American linguistic school) in the sociolinguistic analysis of communication, in the logical-semiotic classification of various text genres by A. Greimas and E. Landovsky (French poststructuralism), as well as in the development of models of speech generation, ethnography of communication and anthropological research [8]. As mentioned above, the term “discourse analysis” was first put forward by Z. Harris, who tried to improve the methodology of distributive analysis and replace it with connected text analysis, and also emphasized the need to study it in a socio-cultural context. Later, this concept began to be equated with the German concept of “textlinguistics” (text linguistics) and entered scientific circulation in the 1950s. Therefore, “discourse” and “text linguistics” have long been used as close, and sometimes synonymous, terms.[8] Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, a scientific differentiation of the concepts of “text” and “discourse” has begun to be observed. In modern linguistic research, “text” is interpreted as an abstract and formal structure, while “discourse” is considered as its various forms of use and is analyzed from the point of view of mental processes. Later, in French linguistics, the abstract term “discourse” meant the meanings of “speech,” “text.” Also, the concept of discourse was interpreted as a communicative process that is formed in a specific social and cultural context and is carried out through language. In linguistics, discourse is studied not only as a text or speech, but also as its context, interaction between the speaker and the listener, communicative strategies and social factors. Therefore, discourse analysis encompasses not only linguistic, but also cognitive, pragmatic and social approaches. There are several original definitions of the concepts of “text” and “discourse” in linguistics. According to V. Z. Demyankov,

discourse is a text that is formed in the mind of the speaker. Discourse consists of statements and concepts related to a certain concept [3]. P. Ricoeur stated that a text is “a form of discourse consolidated, unified, or structured in written form” [16]. Based on this definition, the text can be considered as a priority over discourse, in which discourse is the object of “text linguistics,” and discursive analysis is considered one of its methods. This approach was widespread during the formation of “text linguistics”, and it is clearly reflected in the *Brief Dictionary of Terms in Text Linguistics* compiled by T. M. Nikolaeva. This dictionary emphasizes that “discourse” is used as a polysemic term in the following meanings: a connected and coherent text; an oral-conversational form of the text; dialogic speech; a system of statements related in meaning; a product of speech creativity existing in written or oral form [13]. Thus, the study of the relationship between “discourse” and “text” is one of the important methodological directions in linguistic analysis, and its interpretation can change in different contexts of speech activity. Later, the concept of “discourse” as one of the terms of text linguistics became a broad category that was not limited to the scope of “text” and “text segment”, but also included the conditions of its actualization. In this regard, it is appropriate to mention the definition of discourse proposed by V. V. Petrov and N. Karaulov. According to their definition, discourse is a complex communicative phenomenon that relies not only on the text itself, but also on extralinguistic factors necessary for understanding the text. Such factors include knowledge about the world, views, approaches, and the goals of the addressee [9]. This definition summarizes the views of T. van Dijk, one of the recognized experts in this field, on discourse theory. It is worth noting that T. van Dijk's approach to discourse is accepted as one of the methodological foundations of modern text research and has been used as an important theoretical basis in many studies in this area. He sees discourse as a set of interactions between text, context, speaker and social structure and proposes to study discourse not only from a linguistic point of view, but also at the cognitive and sociocognitive levels. This approach is of great importance in the analysis of language stereotypes related to the

age factor, since stereotypes are cognitive constructs that are entrenched in the consciousness of society. V. I. Karasik interprets discourse as “the communicative activity of a person who is a carrier of culture” and emphasizes the typological classification of discourse in sociocultural terms. According to him, each type of discourse (for example, political, artistic, scientific, religious) is distinguished by its communicative purpose, language means and structural features [9]. Therefore, in modern linguistics, approaches to discourse are divided into the following main areas:

- **Structuralist approach:** analyzes discourse on the basis of text units;
- **Pragmatic approach:** focuses on the exchange of meaning between the speaker and the listener;
- **Cognitive approach:** studies how human thinking and consciousness are expressed through language;
- **Sociocognitive approach:** analyzes stereotypes and values in society through the combination of social consciousness and language;
- **Communicative approach:** interprets discourse as a social movement.

Based on T. van Dijk's approach, discourse can be viewed as a flow of speech, a state of constant movement of language. It embodies all the diversity of a particular historical period, as well as the individual and social characteristics of the communicator, and the communicative situation in which communication takes place. According to T. van Dijk, discourse reflects mentality and culture at the national and general, as well as personal and private levels [19]. This interpretation significantly expanded the semantic scope of the concept of discourse. In sociology, ethnolinguistics and semiotics, the term “discourse” began to be used to mean discursive practice. The concept of discourse was also widely used in the research of the German philosopher J. Habermas. According to his approach, discourse is a type of verbal communication based on a critical analysis of the values

and norms of social life. One of the famous works of J. Habermas, entitled *Comments on the Ethics of Discourse*, made a great contribution to the development of communication theory, proposing such concepts as practical discourse, critical discourse, and ethical discourse for the analysis of social practices [11]. During the time of Aristotle and Plato, the concept of “discourse” was used in connection with speech and rhetoric. This concept was used to analyze the structure and content of speech. In his work *Discours de la méthode*, the French philosopher R. Descartes, who lived in the 17th-19th centuries, used this concept in the context of methods of thinking and scientific research. Discourse is a goal-oriented social action and speech, as well as a complex unity of language practice and experimental factors interpreted by researchers. Scientists such as N. Verklau, T. van Dijk and R. Wodak have made a great contribution to the development of methods of discourse analysis. F. de Saussure distinguished language (*langue*) and speech practice (*parole*) in 1916 [17].

CONCLUSIONS

This approach later became one of the main principles in understanding discourse. Outside linguistics, this idea was later taken up by the French philosopher and cultural critic M. Foucault, who considered the creation of the speaker’s position as a priority task, but interpreted it not in relation to the utterance produced, but as a discourse and ideology expressed in the broad sense of the word in relation to other interchangeable subjects. In his work “Archaeology of Knowledge,” he emphasizes that discourse is at the same time a carrier of certain information “already said” and something new “unsaid.” In addition, in his book *Words and Things*, M. Foucault developed a broad and generalized doctrine of discursive formation as a condition for the functioning of specific discursive practices with their own rules, concepts and strategies. According to M. Foucault, any scientific discipline has its own discourse [4]. M. Foucault studied discourse within the social and political context and defined it as a “system of power and knowledge.” In his opinion,

in each society, a certain discourse dominates and forms a certain ideology. Thus, the scientist identifies the following types of discourse: medical, clinical, economic, political, grammatical, psychopathological, etc [4]. From the point of view of modern approaches, discourse is a complex communicative phenomenon that, in addition to the text, includes linguistic factors (ideas, knowledge about the world, the recipient's goals, attitudes) necessary for understanding the text.

REFERENCES

1. Benveniste, É. 1974. *General Linguistics*. Ed. Yu. S. Stepanov. Moscow: Progress.
2. Demyankov, V. Z. 2002. Political discourse as a subject of political philology. *Political Science. Political Discourse: History and Contemporary Studies*, 3, 32-43.
3. Evgeneva, A. P. 1985-1988. *Dictionary of the Russian Language*. 4 Vols. Ed. A. P. Evgeneva. Moscow: Russian Language Publishing.
4. Foucault, M. 1994. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Trans. V. P. Vizgin, N. S. Avtonomova. N. S. Avtonomova. Saint Petersburg.
5. Harris, Z. S. 1952. Discourse analysis. *Language*, 28/1, 1-30.
6. *History and Philosophy of Science: Encyclopedic Dictionary*. 2010. Nizhnevartovsk: Nizhnevartovsk Humanities Publishing.
7. Levitsky, Yu. A. 1978. *The Structure of Free Text*. Perm: Perm University Press.
8. Karaulov, Yu. & Petrov, V. V. 1989. Grammatical text and cognitive theory of discourse. *Language, Cognition, Communication*. Moscow.
9. Karasik, V. I. 2000. On types of discourse. In *Linguistic Personality: Institutional and Personal Discourse*. Volgograd: Peremena.
10. Kasavin, I. T. (ed.) 1977. *Encyclopedia of Epistemology and Philosophy of Science. de Saussure, F. Works on Linguistics*. Moscow: Progress.
11. Mironova, N. N. 1997. Evaluative discourse: Problems of semantic analysis. *Proceedings of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Series: Literature and Language*, 56/4, 52-59.
12. Nikolaeva, T. M. 1978. Text linguistics and problems of general linguistics. *Proceedings of the USSR Academy of Sciences*, 4, 46.

13. Stepin, V. S. 2000-2001. *New Philosophical Encyclopedia*. Moscow: Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences.
14. A. A. Gritsanov & Mozheiko, M. A. 2001. *Postmodernism. Encyclopedia*. Minsk: Interpressservice.
15. Ricoeur, P. 1995. *Interpretation Theory: Essay on Hermeneutics*. Moscow.
16. Kasavin, I. T. Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy. Moscow: Kanon.
17. F. de Saussure. 1977. *Works on Linguistics*. Moscow: Progress.
18. Vladimirova T. E. 2018. *Russian Discourse and Multicultural Communication: An Existential-Ontological Approach*. 3rd ed. Moscow: Lenand.
19. Van Dijk, T. A. 1989. *Language. Cognition. Communication. Comp.* V. V. Petrova. Trans V. I. Gerasimov. Moscow: Progress.
20. Charaudeau, P. 2009. *Grammar of Meaning and Expression*. Paris: Hachette.

AKHROROVA RUZIKHON USMANOVNA
DOCTORAL STUDENT,
ANDJAN STATE INSTITUTE
OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES,
UZBEKISTAN.

E-MAIL: <AXROROVA.PROF@GMAIL.COM>