

Interpretation of the Concept of Discourse in English and Uzbek Linguistics

A'ZAMOVA DILFUZA SHAFUYEVNA
Termez State University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

The concept of discourse occupies an important position in modern linguistics and has been extensively studied from linguistic, pragmatic, cognitive, sociolinguistic, and communicative perspectives. Despite its widespread use, discourse does not have a single universally accepted definition. In English linguistics, the concept has traditionally been associated with language use beyond the sentence level, while contemporary approaches emphasize the social, cultural, contextual, and communicative dimensions of discourse. In Uzbek linguistics, discourse has also become an increasingly important object of research, particularly in connection with speech activity, communicative situations, text, pragmatics, and national-cultural features of language use. This article examines the interpretation of the concept of discourse in English and Uzbek linguistics, identifies similarities and differences between the two approaches, and highlights the role of context, communicative intention, participants, and social factors in discourse formation. The study demonstrates that discourse should be understood not merely as a sequence of linguistic units but as a complex communicative phenomenon realized in a particular social and cultural context.

Keywords: Discourse, discourse analysis, English linguistics, Uzbek linguistics, communication, context, pragmatics, text, speech activity, communicative situation

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important means of human communication, and its functioning cannot be fully understood by analyzing isolated words or sentences. In real communication, linguistic units are used within particular social, cultural, historical, and situational contexts. Therefore, modern linguistics increasingly focuses on discourse as a complex phenomenon that combines language, communication, context, and human activity.

The term “discourse” has a long history and has been interpreted differently by scholars representing various linguistic traditions. In the broadest sense, discourse refers to language in use. However, this definition does not fully reveal the complexity of the phenomenon. Discourse involves speakers and listeners, their communicative intentions, background knowledge, social relationships, cultural values, and the specific situation in which communication occurs.

The development of discourse studies is closely connected with the emergence of text linguistics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and communication studies. Scholars such as Z. Harris, M. Foucault, T. van Dijk, N. Fairclough, D. Schiffrin, and J. Gee have contributed significantly to the development of modern discourse theory.

In Uzbek linguistics, discourse studies have developed particularly actively in recent decades. Uzbek researchers have examined discourse in relation to text, speech activity, pragmatics, communicative intention, linguistic personality, and national-cultural characteristics. Consequently, comparing English and Uzbek approaches to discourse is important for understanding both universal and culture-specific aspects of communication.

1. *The concept of discourse in English linguistics*

The term “discourse” originates from Latin *discursus*, meaning “running to and fro” or “conversation.” In linguistic research, the concept has gradually developed from the understanding of discourse as connected speech toward a much broader interpretation.

One of the early systematic approaches to discourse was associated with Zellig Harris, who used the term “discourse analysis” to refer to the analysis of language beyond the sentence level. Harris viewed discourse as a sequence of linguistic units that could be analyzed systematically.

Later, discourse became associated not only with grammatical organization but also with social interaction and meaning construction. According to Schiffrin, discourse can be approached as language use in context, and discourse analysis investigates how linguistic structures function in communication.

A particularly influential interpretation was proposed by Teun A. van Dijk. He considers discourse a multidimensional phenomenon involving linguistic structures, cognitive processes, and social interaction. From this perspective, discourse is connected with the knowledge and beliefs of communicators as well as with the social environment in which communication takes place.

Norman Fairclough emphasizes the social dimension of discourse. His critical discourse analysis demonstrates that discourse can reproduce or challenge social relations, ideologies, and power structures. Therefore, discourse is not simply a linguistic product but also a form of social practice.

Michel Foucault introduced another influential perspective by connecting discourse with knowledge, power, institutions, and social practices. From this point of view, discourse contributes to the construction of social reality and determines, to some extent, what can be said, by whom, and under what conditions.

Thus, contemporary English-language scholarship generally treats discourse as a complex phenomenon that includes:

- language in actual use;
- communication between participants;
- contextual information;
- communicative intentions;
- social and cultural factors;
- cognitive processes;
- relations between language and society.

2. *Discourse and text: Similarities and differences*

One of the most important theoretical questions in discourse studies concerns the relationship between discourse and text. These concepts are closely connected but should not always be regarded as identical.

Text can generally be understood as a relatively complete linguistic product, either written or spoken. Discourse, on the other hand, emphasizes the process of communication and the contextual conditions in which the text is produced and interpreted.

For example, a newspaper article may be considered a text as a linguistic product. However, when it is analyzed in relation to its author, audience, political context, communicative purpose, cultural background, and social consequences, it becomes an object of discourse analysis.

Therefore, text may be viewed primarily as a linguistic structure, whereas discourse incorporates linguistic structure together with context, participants, intentions, and social interaction.

This distinction is especially significant in pragmatic and sociolinguistic studies because the same linguistic expression can acquire different meanings in different communicative situations.

3. *Interpretation of discourse in Uzbek linguistics*

The study of discourse in Uzbek linguistics has developed under the influence of general linguistic theories as well as the specific characteristics of the Uzbek language and culture.

Uzbek researchers increasingly use the concept of discourse to analyze speech communication, communicative strategies, pragmatic meanings, linguistic personality, and culturally determined patterns of interaction.

In Uzbek linguistic research, discourse is often understood as a form of speech activity realized in a particular communicative situation. Such an approach emphasizes the relationship between language and the participants of communication.

The Uzbek communicative environment has a number of culturally specific characteristics. Respect for elders, forms of address, politeness strategies, indirect expressions, social status,

family relationships, and traditional cultural values may influence the organization and interpretation of discourse.

For instance, the Uzbek forms of address *aka*, *opa*, *ustoz*, *domla*, *ota*, and *ona* may communicate not only a literal relationship but also respect, social distance, affection, or politeness. Their interpretation depends heavily on the communicative context.

Consequently, Uzbek discourse cannot be adequately analyzed without taking into account national-cultural factors. The pragmatic meaning of an utterance may depend on the speaker's social status, relationship with the listener, age, communicative purpose, and cultural expectations.

4. *Comparative Analysis of English and Uzbek Approaches*

English and Uzbek linguistics demonstrate a number of common tendencies in the interpretation of discourse. In both traditions, discourse is increasingly viewed as language functioning in context rather than as an isolated linguistic structure.

The first important similarity is the recognition of the communicative nature of discourse. Discourse is produced by a speaker for a particular audience and with a particular purpose.

The second similarity is the importance of context. Both English and Uzbek approaches recognize that linguistic meaning cannot always be determined exclusively by grammatical or lexical structure.

The third similarity concerns the role of social factors. Discourse reflects social relationships, identities, roles, and cultural norms.

At the same time, there are certain differences in research emphasis. English-language discourse studies have developed a broad range of approaches, including critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, cognitive discourse studies, multimodal discourse analysis, and corpus-based discourse analysis.

Uzbek discourse studies have paid considerable attention to pragmatic, communicative, linguistic-cultural, and text-related aspects. Researchers frequently investigate how national culture and social relations influence linguistic behavior.

The comparison can be summarized as follows:

Aspect	English linguistics	Uzbek linguistics
Main focus	Language in use and social practice	Language use, communication and national-cultural context
Context	Social, political, cultural and cognitive	Social, cultural and communicative
Pragmatics	Communicative intention and interaction	Intention, politeness, social relations
Culture	Cultural and ideological dimensions	National-cultural values and traditions
Discourse analysis	Numerous established approaches	Rapidly developing interdisciplinary field
Text-discourse relationship	Often theoretically differentiated	Frequently studied in close connection

5. *The role of context in discourse*

Context is one of the fundamental elements of discourse. A linguistic expression cannot always be interpreted correctly without information about the situation in which it occurs.

Consider the expression "It is cold here." Grammatically, it is a simple statement. However, depending on the situation, it may function as a complaint, a request to close a window, or an invitation to turn on the heating.

This example demonstrates that discourse meaning is constructed through interaction between linguistic form and contextual information.

Context can include:

- **Linguistic context:** surrounding words and sentences.
- **Situational context:** the physical and communicative situation.
- **Social context:** relationships and social roles of participants.
- **Cultural context:** shared values, traditions, and norms.
- **Cognitive context:** participants' knowledge, beliefs, and expectations.

In Uzbek communication, cultural context can be particularly significant because indirectness, politeness, respect, and interpersonal relationships frequently influence the interpretation of utterances.

6. *Discourse as a communicative and social phenomenon*

Modern discourse theory emphasizes that communication is not merely the transmission of information. Speakers use discourse to express attitudes, establish relationships, influence others, demonstrate identity, and achieve particular social goals.

Van Dijk argues that discourse operates simultaneously at several levels: linguistic, cognitive, and social. This multidimensional character makes discourse a suitable object of interdisciplinary research.

Similarly, Fairclough emphasizes the relationship between discourse and social practice. Political speeches, media discourse, academic discourse, educational discourse, and everyday conversation can all reflect particular ideologies and social relationships.

In Uzbek society, discourse may also reflect traditional cultural concepts such as respect, hospitality, family relationships, social hierarchy, and collective values. Consequently, discourse analysis provides an opportunity to investigate not only linguistic structures but also cultural models and social behavior.

7. *Pragmatic dimension of discourse*

Pragmatics plays a central role in discourse analysis because it investigates how meaning is created and interpreted in context.

A speaker may express an idea directly or indirectly. For example, instead of saying "Close the door," a speaker may say, "Could you close the door?" or "It is rather cold in here." Although these expressions have different grammatical forms, they may perform a similar communicative function.

The interpretation depends on the relationship between participants, their intentions, and the communicative situation.

In Uzbek discourse, indirectness and politeness may be particularly important. Speakers may use softened forms,

respectful expressions, or culturally established formulas to maintain harmonious interpersonal relations.

Therefore, discourse analysis should consider not only what is explicitly said but also what is implied.

CONCLUSION

The analysis demonstrates that the concept of discourse has undergone considerable development in both English and Uzbek linguistics. Initially associated mainly with connected speech and language beyond the sentence level, discourse is now widely understood as a complex communicative, cognitive, social, and cultural phenomenon.

In English linguistics, discourse studies encompass a wide range of approaches, from structural and pragmatic analysis to cognitive, sociolinguistic, critical, and multimodal perspectives. Scholars emphasize the relationship between discourse, context, social practice, ideology, cognition, and power.

In Uzbek linguistics, discourse is increasingly investigated as a form of speech activity realized within a specific communicative and cultural environment. Particular attention is given to pragmatic meaning, communicative intention, national-cultural characteristics, politeness, social relations, and the relationship between text and discourse.

The comparative analysis shows that English and Uzbek discourse theories share fundamental principles: the importance of context, communication, participants, intention, and social factors. At the same time, Uzbek discourse demonstrates culturally specific characteristics associated with national values, forms of address, interpersonal relationships, and traditional communicative norms.

Thus, discourse should be understood as more than a collection of linguistic units. It is a dynamic process in which language, cognition, society, culture, and communication interact. Further comparative research into English and Uzbek discourse can contribute to the development of contrastive linguistics, intercultural communication, translation studies, pragmatics, and discourse analysis.

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A'ZAMOVA DILFUZA SHAFUYEVNA

SENIOR LECTURER,

TERMEZ STATE UNIVERSITY, UZBEKISTAN

EMAIL: <AZAMOVA@TERSU.UZ>