


Text and Discourse in Linguistics: Concepts, Distinctions, And Theoretical Perspectives

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Abstract: This article examines the interrelated concepts of text and discourse in linguistics, highlighting their distinctive features, theoretical foundations, and methodological approaches. Drawing on definitions from leading scholars—T. A. van Dijk, V. E. Chernyavskaya, A. A. Kibrik, V. Maas, and N. D. Arutyunova—it delineates discourse as a dynamic, context-bound communicative event encompassing extra-linguistic factors (intonation, gestures, cultural knowledge) that extend beyond the static product that is text. The discussion outlines key parameters of discourse—coherence, extra-linguistic context, and communicative purpose—and contrasts two principal research orientations: text analysis (structural units) and discourse analysis (participants, goals, context). It surveys major analytical frameworks including systemic-functional grammar, pragmatic macro- and micro-structures, conversation analysis, cognitive models, and critical discourse analysis. The article also reviews contributions from Uzbek linguistics, illustrating how scholars integrate these global theories within local research on dialogic interaction, corpus methods, and socio-pragmatic dimensions. By synthesizing diverse perspectives, the study underscores discourse as a multifaceted phenomenon essential for understanding language as both process and product, and for exploring how linguistic activity reflects and shapes cognition, society, and culture.

Keywords: Discourse; Text; Discourse Analysis; Pragmatics; Systemic-Functional Grammar; Extralinguistic Context; Uzbek Linguistics.

Introduction: Over the past several decades, the field of global linguistics has witnessed a proliferation of empirical and theoretical investigations into both text and discourse that collectively illuminate the inherently cognitive underpinnings of language use as well as its deeply embedded social functions. Scholars have traced how mental processes—such as conceptualization, memory, and schema activation—shape the way speakers structure and interpret extended stretches of language, while at the same time uncovering the myriad ways in which texts and discourses both reflect and reproduce cultural norms, power relations, and communal practices. This dual focus on cognition and society has spurred the development of a rich array of analytical frameworks—from systemic-functional approaches and pragmatic macro-structure theories to conversation analysis and critical discourse studies—each bringing its own

assumptions and methodological tools to bear on the same fundamental questions. As a result, research on text and discourse now encompasses a remarkable diversity of perspectives, ranging from fine-grained analyses of lexico-syntactic patterns in written genres to ethnographically grounded studies of spoken interaction in multilingual communities, thereby underscoring the field's commitment to understanding language as at once a product of human thought and a dynamic medium of social engagement.

Literature Review

Professor T. A. van Dijk defines discourse in a broad sense as the complex phenomenon of oral communication. He describes it as a communicative event that takes place at a specific time and place between speaker and listener, which can be spoken, written, or even nonverbal. He emphasizes that the interactions within discourse are the products of

communication, interpreted by the recipients.

There are various approaches to the nature of discourse. V. E. Chernyavskaya regards discourse as inherently linked to the concept of text, asserting that it should be understood as a “text(s) inseparably connected with a situational context.” Other researchers describe discourse as a speech genre, highlighting its structural particularities, typical use of linguistic means, its audience orientation, and alignment with communicative purposes.

Linguist A. A. Kibrik and colleagues state: “Discourse is a broader concept than text, existing simultaneously as a linguistic activity process and its product, which results in the formation of text.” They argue that humans enter social and communicative relations driven by spiritual and material needs, which vary according to time and place, making discourse a dynamic phenomenon evolving over time. V.

Maas interprets discourse as a linguistic model of speech and treats it as a significant category within text linguistics. N. D. Arutyunova defines discourse as a “coherent text that integrates extra-linguistic—pragmatic, socio-cultural, psychological, and other—factors.”

Linguists, in analyzing discourse, regard it as a crucial element composed of larger linguistic units—such as lexemes, syntax, and context. The term “discourse” inherently encompasses an understanding of all the cognitive—communicative functions of speech. H. Haberland treats the text as an entity that can appear in various places and at different times, whereas discourse is conceived as an event taking place in a specific time and space. He observes that “text can be used in unlimited quantity and can be recreated from one location to another; text is the linguistic product without discourse.” Linguist Yu. Prokhorov integrates these perspectives by explaining the relationship between text and discourse as follows: “All propositions concerning text and discourse are legitimate; text and discourse are real, inseparable concepts that cannot be relinquished; moreover, discourse is understood as the product of communication, endowed with both form and content”.

With his perspective, Chan Kim Bao draws attention not only to modern European (and to some extent American) linguistics but also to Eastern philosophical methodologies, writing: “Every work oriented toward a point is necessarily accessed through human speech, and that is the text. In turn, the text has its counterpart called ‘discourse.’ Discourse is the text in motion. If we describe text as the “ín” then discourse is expressed as the “yán.” Just as elements of discourse exist within the text, so too do elements of the text exist within discourse.”

In pragmatics-oriented studies of language, the term “discourse” has been used in various senses: 1. As a synonym for “speech”; 2. As a unit larger than a clause; 3. As a form of conversation or interaction; 4. As the speaker’s stance or position within the speech act; 5. As the method of employing linguistic units; 6. As a mode of thought constrained by social or ideological factors; 7. As a theoretical model aimed at examining the conditions under which a text is formed.

Thus, the analysis of discourse and text allows us to explore the broader linguistic dimensions of speech and to reveal the complex aspects of human interaction in communication. Such analysis is especially illuminating in literary texts or everyday conversations, showing how ideas and thoughts are shaped within their specific cultural contexts. Summarizing these perspectives, discourse can be defined as a complex speech-communication phenomenon. It is not limited to the text alone but also encompasses the extra-linguistic factors (intonation, gestures, body language) necessary for proper text comprehension. Discourse primarily functions as the form-defining phenomenon of communication; hence, it is considered a unit larger than a clause. Taking into account the speech situation, the speaker conveys their idea to the listener and shapes their response. The extent to which linguistic units are employed in speech determines both the form and content of the communication. Although speech and text are often treated as similar concepts, they have distinctive features:

- Text is viewed as a static object, the result of linguistic activity.

- Speech (discourse) is understood as a dynamic process developing over time and linked to social, cultural, and psychological factors.

Speech possesses the following parameters:

1. Coherence and cohesion: The content of discourse must form a unified whole.

2. Extra-linguistic factors: Includes world knowledge, sociocultural context, and communicative goals.

3. Communicative purpose: Speech is directed by the speaker’s intent to influence the listener.

In linguistic research, speech is investigated in two main directions:

1. Text analysis: Studying the text as a structural unit.

2. Discourse analysis: Focusing on speech as a communicative process, considering participants, their goals, and the context.

Speech is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a complex communicative process enriched by

sociocultural and psychological factors. At the same time, the principles of dynamism and statics play a key role in distinguishing between text and speech. Speech serves as a bridging medium between human cognition and society, providing vital links between linguistics and other disciplines. Some views attempt to distinguish text and discourse by modality—text as written form, discourse as spoken. In linguistic theory, discourse is seen as any conversational or written segment beyond a single sentence, whose particularities depend on the context, text, and topic. Simply put, discourse is one of the forms of conversation. Originally, the term “discourse” referred to coherent written text; later it came to denote the spoken form of text, dialogue, or semantically linked groups of sentences. Where “text” was used for written communication, “discourse” came to denote oral communication. Modern linguistic research classifies discourse in relation to various social domains. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars such as O. Q. Yusupov, B. R. Mengliev, N. Mahmudov, and L. Raupova have contributed significant studies. In particular, B. R. Mengliev explains the essence of discourse with the formula “text + nonverbal factors = discourse,” defining it as a three-dimensional phenomenon, unlike two-dimensional text. L. Raupova approaches discourse as a distinct phenomenon situated between text and speech, viewing it as a process integrating linguistic and extra-linguistic factors, with context, speech situation, and communicative purpose playing crucial roles. The logical cohesion of discourse, the social relations among participants during communication, and cultural factors lead its formation. From this viewpoint, discourse is a broader concept than text. It encompasses not only written and spoken language units but all factors arising in the communicative process.

Linguist Sh. Safarov emphasizes the difficulty of distinguishing text and discourse solely by written versus oral form. The primary feature of discourse is the harmony between its communicative and informative contents. One cannot conceptualize one as material and the other as immaterial; both are products and processes of activity, with results manifesting materially. Text is a stable, ready-made product, while discourse is the unfolding speech communication process, accounting for their sharp distinctions. Thus, discourse is the speech process formed depending on the communicative situation, whereas text is the linguistically prepared material for communication. Discourse can vary with the speech situation; text remains a stable linguistic unit.

CONCLUSION

This comprehensive overview has demonstrated that

text and discourse, while closely intertwined, represent distinct yet complementary lenses through which language can be examined. Text, as a static linguistic artifact, offers a snapshot of the lexical-syntactic structures that constitute meaningful written or spoken segments. Discourse, by contrast, encompasses the dynamic, context-bound processes by which language is produced, interpreted, and socially enacted. Together, these concepts reveal how cognitive mechanisms—such as conceptualization, memory activation, and schema application—interact with extralinguistic factors, including situational context, cultural norms, and speaker intentions, to shape communicative events. Theoretical frameworks from systemic-functional grammar to critical discourse analysis each contribute unique methodological tools for exploring the multifaceted nature of discourse. Pragmatic approaches highlight the roles of macro- and microstructures in guiding thematic coherence and referential cohesion, while conversation analysis uncovers the turn-taking and sequential organization of spoken interaction. Cognitive and socio-cultural perspectives further enrich our understanding by situating discourse within the broader matrix of mental representations and power relations. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars have adeptly adapted these global theories to local contexts, illustrating how dialogic interaction, corpus-based methods, and socio-pragmatic investigations can illuminate the particularities of language use in multilingual and multicultural settings. Ultimately, the dual focus on text and discourse underscores the imperative of viewing language not simply as a vehicle for transmitting information but as a dynamic medium through which human cognition and social life are both reflected and constructed. Continued interdisciplinary research—bridging linguistic form, mental process, and social practice—will be essential for deepening our insights into the ever-evolving phenomenon of discourse.

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