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THE LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION OF TEXT AND DISCOURSE: BOUNDARIES, FUNCTIONS AND APPROACHES

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Annotation: In modern linguistics, the notions of text and discourse are interpreted as interrelated yet fundamentally distinct phenomena within language theory. While text is commonly associated with an organized and cohesive linguistic structure possessing semantic integrity, discourse is characterized by its interactive, situational and socially conditioned nature. This article explores the theoretical foundations of both concepts through linguistic, pragmatic, functional and cognitive approaches. Particular attention is devoted to identifying the criteria that differentiate textual formation from discursive interaction. The findings reveal that text constitutes a fixed verbal product, whereas discourse represents the process of meaning construction shaped by communicative intentions, contextual factors, and participant interaction. The study emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive linguistic framework in which discourse serves as the communicative environment generating textual outcomes.

Keywords: discourse theory, textual structure, communicative interaction, pragmatics, cognitive approach, contextual meaning, language functions.

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Annotatsiya. Zamonaviy tilshunoslikda matn va diskurs tushunchalari o'zaro bog'liq, biroq mohiyatan farqlanuvchi til hodisalari sifatida talqin etiladi. Matn odatda semantik yaxlitlikka ega bo'lgan tartibli va bog'langan lisoniy tuzilma sifatida izohlansa, diskurs interaktiv, situativ hamda ijtimoiy shartlangan kommunikativ hodisa sifatida tavsiflanadi. Mazkur maqolada ushbu ikki tushunchaning nazariy asoslari lingvistik, pragmatik, funksional va kognitiv yondashuvlar asosida tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda matn shakllanishi bilan diskursiv

jarayon o‘rtasidagi farqlovchi mezonlarni aniqlashga alohida e‘tibor qaratilgan. Tahlil natijalari matnni barqaror verbal mahsul sifatida, diskursni esa kommunikativ niyat, kontekstual omillar va muloqot ishtirokchilari o‘rtasidagi o‘zaro ta’sir asosida mazmun hosil qiluvchi jarayon sifatida namoyon etadi. Tadqiqotda diskurs matnni yuzaga keltiruvchi kommunikativ muhit sifatida qaraladigan kompleks lingvistik yondashuvning ahamiyati ta’kidlanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: diskurs nazariyasi, matn tuzilishi, kommunikativ o‘zaro ta’sir, pragmatika, kognitiv yondashuv, kontekstual ma’no, til funksiyalari.

Introduction. Contemporary linguistic research has increasingly moved beyond the traditional focus on isolated sentences and formal grammatical structures, shifting instead toward the analysis of larger communicative units that better reflect authentic language use in real-life contexts. Within this broader paradigm, the notions of text and discourse have emerged as central yet theoretically complex categories, attracting sustained scholarly attention across different linguistic traditions. Although these two concepts are often used interchangeably in everyday academic practice, modern linguistic theory clearly distinguishes between them as representing different levels of language realization.

In general linguistic interpretation, text is defined as a coherent and cohesive sequence of linguistic units organized into a semantically complete and structurally stable whole. It is typically viewed as a finished verbal product that can be examined independently of the immediate communicative environment in which it was produced. Such an approach allows researchers to focus on internal structural relations, cohesion mechanisms, and textual organization as relatively autonomous linguistic features.

By contrast, discourse is understood as a broader and more dynamic phenomenon that extends beyond the boundaries of a static linguistic product. It encompasses language in use, where meaning is continuously constructed and reconstructed through interaction among communicative participants, contextual parameters, and cognitive processes. Unlike text, discourse is inseparable from the situational context in which it occurs, as it reflects not only linguistic forms but also intentions, social relations, and pragmatic strategies.

Against this theoretical background, the present article aims to critically reconsider and refine the conceptual boundaries between text and discourse. It focuses on their structural organization, functional roles, and pragmatic characteristics within contemporary linguistic theory, with the purpose of clarifying how these two categories operate at different yet interconnected levels of language representation and communication.

Literature review. The problem of differentiating between text and discourse has been interpreted in various ways across different linguistic schools, each of which has contributed to shaping the modern understanding of these categories. Early structuralist linguistics, strongly influenced by Saussurean ideas, established a fundamental distinction between language as an abstract system and speech as its concrete realization [9, p. 48]. Within this theoretical paradigm, text was generally regarded as a relatively stable linguistic product, whereas discourse was associated primarily with spoken and situationally bound communicative activity.

In the framework of Russian linguistic scholarship, Galperin [8, p. 137] defined text as a fully completed speech product characterized by structural wholeness, semantic unity, and informational completeness. His approach placed particular emphasis on written language as the principal object of textual analysis, highlighting features such as stability, reproducibility, and analytical accessibility as essential properties of text.

Expanding this line of thought, Moskalskaya [13, p. 186] elevated text to the highest level of syntactic organization, proposing an integrated model in which grammatical structure and communicative function are considered inseparable components of textual formation.

In contrast to structural approaches, functional and pragmatic paradigms shifted scholarly attention toward language in use and communicative activity. Van Dijk conceptualized discourse as real language use embedded in social interaction, emphasizing its cognitive, contextual, and pragmatic dimensions [1, p. 356]. Similarly, Stubbs [3, p. 272] argued that discourse cannot be confined within formal structural boundaries, since its meaning is dynamically constructed within communicative environments and participant interaction.

Karasik [11, p. 119] further developed this perspective by defining discourse as “text immersed in a communicative situation,” thereby reinforcing the idea that discourse is inherently dependent on context, participants, and communicative intent.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, discourse is interpreted as a complex mental and social construct shaped by shared knowledge systems, communicative intentions, and interpretative mechanisms. Kubryakova [12, p. 83] proposes a multidimensional model that integrates linguistic, cognitive, and extralinguistic parameters, arguing that discourse analysis must extend beyond formal linguistic structures to include social, psychological, and cultural dimensions of communication.

In addition to structural and cognitive approaches, contemporary discourse studies have been significantly influenced by critical and socio-cultural frameworks. Fairclough [1, p. 28] views discourse as a form of social practice, arguing that language not only reflects social reality but also actively constructs and reproduces power relations within society. From this perspective, discourse analysis extends beyond linguistic structure to include ideological, institutional, and sociopolitical dimensions of communication.

Similarly, Wodak’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis emphasizes the importance of historical context and intertextual relations in understanding how meaning is produced and interpreted in institutional communication. This line of research demonstrates that discourse is inherently multidimensional, involving not only linguistic but also socio-historical and pragmatic layers of interpretation.

A broader philosophical interpretation of discourse is found in Foucault’s theory, where discourse is conceptualized as a system of knowledge formation governed by specific rules of inclusion and exclusion. In this sense, discourse determines what can be said, by whom, and under what conditions, thereby linking language to power and epistemology.

Despite the diversity of existing approaches, a significant theoretical gap remains in contemporary linguistics regarding the precise delimitation between text and discourse. Many studies either conflate the two concepts or treat them as overlapping categories without establishing clear functional and cognitive boundaries. This lack of consensus highlights the need for an integrative model that accounts for structural, pragmatic, cognitive, and socio-cultural dimensions simultaneously.

Methodology. This study is grounded in a qualitative, theory-driven research design that focuses on the interpretative synthesis of existing linguistic scholarship rather than empirical data collection. The primary aim is to systematically reconstruct and critically evaluate the theoretical relationship between text and discourse as conceptualized in contemporary linguistics. In this sense, the study adopts a meta-analytical perspective, where previously established theoretical positions are re-examined, compared, and integrated into a coherent analytical framework.

The methodological framework is primarily based on comparative and conceptual analysis. Comparative analysis is employed to identify similarities and differences in the

interpretation of text and discourse across various linguistic traditions, including structural, functional, pragmatic, and cognitive schools of thought. Conceptual analysis, in turn, enables the clarification of key theoretical constructs, allowing for a more precise delimitation of their semantic and functional boundaries.

In addition, the study incorporates structural interpretation as a method for examining the internal organization of textual units, including cohesion, coherence, and hierarchical linguistic structuring. Pragmatic analysis is applied to explore discourse functions in relation to communicative intent, contextual dependency, and speaker–listener interaction. Cognitive-contextual evaluation further contributes to understanding how meaning is constructed through mental processes, shared knowledge, and situational factors influencing interpretation.

A comparative examination of major linguistic theories across different scholarly traditions (including European, Russian and Anglo-American schools) provides an additional layer of methodological depth. This enables the identification of convergences and divergences in how text and discourse are defined, categorized, and functionally interpreted.

Overall, the integration of these methodological perspectives facilitates a multi-dimensional and layered understanding of language, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of text and discourse as interconnected yet distinct phenomena within the linguistic system.

Analysis and discussion. Text may be defined as a linguistically organized and relatively stable structure consisting of interconnected sentences that collectively form a coherent, cohesive, and semantically unified whole. From a structural-linguistic perspective, its essential characteristics include cohesion, coherence, informational completeness, and syntactic and semantic closure. These properties enable text to function as an autonomous linguistic unit that can be analyzed independently of immediate communicative circumstances.

Cohesion operates at the surface level of textual organization and is realized through a range of grammatical and lexical mechanisms. These include reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical repetition, all of which contribute to establishing formal links between sentences and ensuring internal connectivity within the text. Such cohesive devices play a crucial role in maintaining structural continuity and preventing fragmentation of meaning.

Coherence, in contrast, functions at a deeper semantic and conceptual level. It ensures the logical and thematic unity of the text, allowing the overall message to be interpreted as meaningful and consistent. Unlike cohesion, coherence is not solely encoded in linguistic form; rather, it involves cognitive participation on the part of the reader, who actively constructs meaning by integrating textual information with prior knowledge, contextual assumptions, and inferential reasoning. Therefore, coherence should be regarded not only as a textual property but also as a cognitive and interpretative phenomenon.

Discourse, by contrast, is inherently dynamic and process-oriented. It unfolds within real communicative environments where meaning is not pre-given but continuously constructed, negotiated, and modified through interaction between participants. In this sense, discourse cannot be confined within fixed structural boundaries, as it is shaped by a wide range of contextual variables, including speaker intention, communicative goals, social roles, institutional settings, and cultural norms.

Within this framework, Van Dijk’s model conceptualizes discourse as language in use, emphasizing that meaning arises through interactional processes rather than being solely encoded in linguistic structures. Similarly, Stubbs argues that discourse is fundamentally open-ended and context-dependent, which makes it resistant to strict formal delimitation and structural reduction.

A comparative analysis of text and discourse reveals a clear functional and ontological

distinction between the two phenomena. Text represents a completed linguistic product characterized by stability, formal organization, and structural integrity. Discourse, on the other hand, represents an ongoing communicative process characterized by variability, situational dependency, and interactional dynamics.

In this dichotomy, text is primarily form-oriented and structurally bounded, whereas discourse is context-oriented and functionally emergent. Accordingly, text may exist independently of its original communicative situation, while discourse is inseparable from the context in which it is produced and interpreted.

However, despite these differences, text and discourse should not be viewed as entirely separate or mutually exclusive categories. Instead, they are deeply interrelated phenomena within the broader framework of language use. Every discourse ultimately results in some form of textual realization, while every text is generated through a preceding or underlying discursive process. This interdependence suggests that text can be interpreted as the materialized outcome of discourse, whereas discourse functions as the generative and dynamic mechanism through which textual structures are produced and interpreted.

An additional analytical dimension concerns the relationship between cohesion and coherence. While cohesion is primarily associated with observable linguistic markers and surface-level structural connections, coherence is rooted in deeper cognitive processes involved in meaning construction. Contemporary cognitive linguistic approaches emphasize that coherence is not entirely inherent in textual structure; rather, it emerges through interpretative activity, where readers or listeners integrate linguistic input with contextual knowledge, experiential background, and inferential reasoning.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, discourse is also deeply embedded in social structures and reflects broader patterns of communication within society. It is shaped by institutional frameworks, communicative roles, power relations, and culturally determined expectations. Therefore, discourse should be understood not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a form of social practice in which language functions as a tool for constructing identity, negotiating meaning, and expressing ideological positions.

Conclusion. The present analysis has demonstrated that *text* and *discourse* constitute two distinct yet intrinsically interconnected categories within contemporary linguistic theory. On the one hand, text is defined by structural stability, grammatical organization, semantic completeness, and internal coherence, which together enable it to function as a relatively autonomous and finalized linguistic product. It is characterized by a fixed form and identifiable boundaries, allowing for systematic structural and semantic analysis independent of immediate communicative circumstances.

On the other hand, discourse represents a fundamentally dynamic and process-oriented phenomenon. It is inherently context-sensitive and interactionally constructed, emerging through ongoing communicative activity. Discourse is shaped by a complex interplay of extralinguistic and intralinguistic factors, including speaker intention, pragmatic orientation, social relations, institutional frameworks, and cognitive interpretation.

Unlike text, discourse is not confined to a static structure but unfolds in real time as meaning is continuously negotiated among communicative participants.

The findings of this study suggest that the relationship between text and discourse should not be understood in terms of opposition or mutual exclusion, but rather as one of complementarity and functional interdependence. Text can be viewed as the materialized and structurally organized outcome of discursive processes, whereas discourse itself becomes empirically accessible and analytically observable through its textual realizations. In this sense,

discourse provides the generative framework for meaning construction, while text represents its stabilized and documented linguistic form.

Furthermore, the study highlights a significant shift in contemporary linguistic paradigms from purely structural descriptions of language toward more integrative and interdisciplinary models. Modern linguistic theory increasingly combines structural, functional, pragmatic, cognitive, and sociolinguistic perspectives in order to capture the multidimensional nature of language. This shift reflects a broader understanding of language as not merely a formal system of rules, but as a dynamic and socially embedded phenomenon shaped by human cognition, interaction, and communicative practice.

A particularly important aspect of discourse analysis is the role of extralinguistic factors in shaping meaning production and interpretation. Elements such as social hierarchy, cultural norms, institutional settings, communicative goals, and psychological states of participants significantly influence how discourse is produced, structured, and understood. These factors extend the scope of traditional text linguistics by incorporating contextual and situational dimensions that are essential for a full interpretation of meaning.

In addition, the theoretical distinction between text and discourse has important implications for applied linguistic research. It provides a conceptual basis for analyzing various specialized forms of communication, including media discourse, political rhetoric, academic writing, legal communication, and military discourse. In these domains, understanding the functional boundaries between text and discourse enables a more precise examination of communicative strategies, pragmatic intentions, and socio-cultural mechanisms embedded in language use.

In conclusion, contemporary linguistic research increasingly supports the necessity of studying text and discourse within a unified yet multidimensional theoretical framework. Such an integrative approach makes it possible to understand language both as a structured system of linguistic forms and as a dynamic communicative practice grounded in cognition, interaction, and social reality. This perspective not only deepens theoretical understanding but also enhances the analytical potential of linguistics in applied and interdisciplinary research contexts.

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