

CONCEPTUAL BOUNDARIES OF TEXT, DISCOURSE AND CONTEXT

Abduganiyeva Zebuniso

PhD student, UZSWLU

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0530-4743>

E-mail: za.abduganiyeva@uzswlu.uz

Annotatsiya. Matn, diskurs va kontekst tushunchalari tilshunoslikda eng ko'p qo'llanilayotgan terminlar qatoriga kiradi. Mazkur tushunchalar diskurs tahlili, pragmatika va matn tilshunosligi uchun markaziy ahamiyatga ega bo'lishiga qaramay, ular ko'pincha bir-birining o'rnida yoki bir-biriga o'xshash ma'nolarda qo'llaniladi. Ushbu maqola mazkur uchta tushunchani tizimli ravishda terminologik jihatdan aniqlashtirish maqsadini ko'zlaydi. Maqolada ushbu uch tushuncha o'zaro bog'liq bo'lsa-da, ular tahliliy jihatdan bir-biridan farq qiladi, deb ta'kidlanadi. Ushbu tushunchalar o'rtasidagi aniq chegaralarni belgilash qat'iy lingvistik tahlil uchun va matn va diskurs tadqiqotlarida izchil nazariy asosni rivojlantirish uchun zaruriy shart hisoblanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: matn, diskurs, kontekst, diskurs tahlili, matn tilshunosligi.

Annotation. The terms text, discourse, and context are among the most widely used terms in linguistics. Despite the fact that these concepts are of central importance to discourse analysis, pragmatics, and text linguistics, they are frequently employed interchangeably or with overlapping meanings. The present article aims to undertake a systematic terminological clarification of all three concepts. The article argues that while the three terms are conceptually interdependent, they are analytically distinct. Establishing clear boundaries between these concepts is an essential condition for rigorous linguistic analysis and for the development of a coherent theoretical framework in text and discourse studies.

Keywords: text, discourse, context, discourse analysis, text linguistics.

Аннотация. Термины «текст», «дискурс» и «контекст» входят в число наиболее широко употребляемых терминов в лингвистике. Несмотря на то что данные понятия имеют центральное значение для дискурс-анализа, прагматики и лингвистики текста, они нередко используются как взаимозаменяемые или с перекрывающимися значениями. Настоящая статья ставит целью систематическое терминологическое уточнение всех трёх понятий. В статье утверждается, что, несмотря на концептуальную взаимозависимость данных терминов, они являются аналитически самостоятельными. Установление чётких границ между этими понятиями является необходимым условием для строгого лингвистического анализа и для разработки целостной теоретической базы в области лингвистики текста и дискурса.

Ключевые слова: текст, дискурс, контекст, дискурс-анализ, лингвистика текста.

Introduction. The concepts of text, discourse, and context are found in almost every area of modern linguistics, yet they are often used with overlapping or conflicting meanings. This terminological ambiguity carries practical consequences. When scholars speak of “discourse analysis” or “text analysis”, it is not always clear whether they are referring to the same or different objects of study. Similarly, “context” can refer to the words surrounding a given expression, the setting in which communication takes place, or the wider social and cultural conditions of language use. Such inconsistency makes it difficult to build knowledge systematically, especially for scholars working across different theoretical traditions.

Sh. Safarov helpfully clarifies that discourse and text are not opposing phenomena, but that discourse is a broader unit than text [9]. He further notes that the completeness of a text involves not only the author but also the addressee who perceives it, and that this completeness equally determines the integrity of the text. In this respect, these two properties of a text cannot be separated from one another: “they are two sides of the same phenomenon” [9]. Given that scholarly works across various genres are attracting increasing attention from contemporary researchers, clearly defining the boundaries of such relevant and debated concepts becomes all the more necessary. The present article aims to clarify the meaning of all three terms, arguing that while they are closely related, each refers to a distinct aspect of language and communication and should not be used interchangeably.

Main body. Among the three concepts, discourse has proven particularly difficult to define. The question of defining discourse is one of the most pressing issues in modern linguistics, and a great number of competing definitions exist, each reflecting the theoretical priorities of its author. According to some scholars, this situation is not unusual, since most new ideas are gradually refined through a series of definitions and interpretations as they enter scholarly circulation [7]. Nevertheless, the radical differences among existing definitions and typologies of discourse are affecting terminological consistency and giving rise to scholarly ambiguity across the field [10]. In T. M. Nikolaeva’s “Brief Dictionary of Text Linguistics Terms,” discourse is characterized as a polysemous term used by various authors with different meanings, the most important of which are: connected text; the oral conversational form of text; dialogue; a group of utterances related in meaning; and a speech work as a given entity, whether written or oral [8].

Four main classes of usage of “discourse” can be identified: first, the strictly linguistic usage, where discourse is understood as speech embedded in a communicative situation, captured in N. D. Arutyunova’s well-known formulation that “discourse is speech immersed in life” [5], as a type of speech communication and a unit of interaction. Second, the philosophical-poststructuralist interpretation deriving from French structuralists, above all from Foucault (1972), who conceived of discourse not as a linguistic object but as a historically constituted system of knowledge and power that determines what can be said, by whom, and under what conditions [1]. Third, the critical-social usage associated with Fairclough (1992) and Van Dijk (1989), who define discourse as a form of social practice simultaneously shaped by and constitutive of social structures [6]. This view combines linguistic analysis with the study of ideology, power, and inequality. Fourth, the cognitive-pragmatic usage, developed within formal semantics and pragmatics, where discourse is understood as a process of information exchange that updates a shared common ground between participants, as elaborated in the work of scholars such as Reinhart and Kamp.

Discourse is often associated with the term context, since it is precisely the social context that requires textual analysis conditioned by situational specifics, historical and cultural realities, and the personal characteristics of the participants. Van Dijk argues that all discourse takes place in a situation and includes its specific participants, their purposes, backgrounds, and influences, emphasising that what matters is not so much the social context as such, but its understanding and interpretation by the participants [4]. He identifies four main types of general social context: personal, public, institutional, and informal [6]. Social context determines the possible communicative actions of participants according to behavioural and speech etiquette, and its successful decoding depends on the speaker's self-analysis: their feelings, attitudes, values, knowledge, and experience [7].

The most systematic framework for thinking about situational context in relation to text is provided by Halliday and Hasan's (1985) (see Figure 1). The context of situation is specified by three variables: **field of discourse** (what is happening, the nature of the social activity); **tenor of discourse** (who is participating, the nature, status, and roles of the participants); and **mode of discourse** (what role language is playing, the channel and rhetorical function of communication) [2]. Together, these three variables constitute the register of a text, that is, the particular configuration of meaning that characterizes texts produced in a given situational context. The context of situation is in turn embedded within a broader context of culture, which provides the system of values and conventions that makes the situational context intelligible.

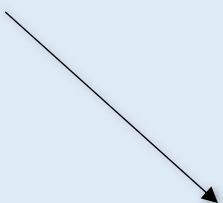
Situation: Feature of the context	(realized by)	Text: Functional component of semantic system
Field of discourse (what is going on)		Experiential meanings (transitivity, naming, etc.)
Tenor of discourse (who are taking part)		Interpersonal meanings (mood, modality, person, etc.)
Mode of discourse (role assigned to language)		Textual meanings (theme, information, cohesive relations)

Figure 1. Relation of the text to the context of situation

Different linguistic schools and researchers interpret text and discourse from different positions, and these approaches are usually distinguished on the basis of a typological principle: either text is viewed as an element of discourse — treating discourse as the broader phenomenon — or the reverse. One of these approaches is neatly captured in the formula: “text is discourse minus the speech situation, while discourse is text plus the speech situation” [3].

Text is best understood as a structured, cohesive, and coherent linguistic product that constitutes the material record of communication, analyzable at phonological, lexicogrammatical, semantic, and rhetorical levels. Whether written or spoken, a text is what is produced in and through communicative activity, and while it emerges in a local sociocultural situation, it may be reworked across different contexts and cultures, sometimes acquiring the capacity to serve as an archetype. Discourse, by contrast, expresses the orientation of a text toward its communicative context and future use: it is in discourse that the outline of a future text is first sketched and its contextual coordinates, linguistic, situational, and cultural, are established [2]. The particular difficulty of conceptually fixing discursive elements arises from the fact that at this stage the text is still fused with the conditions of its formation. As Foucault (1969) notes, discourse constitutes a historically bounded system in which the conditions of what can be said are always already determined [1]. Grounded in past linguistic experience, discourse represents the projection of future communicative possibilities onto the material of immediately lived language use.

Conclusion. The present article has argued that text, discourse, and context, though deeply interrelated, are analytically distinct concepts that should not be used interchangeably. Text is the structured linguistic product of communicative activity; discourse is the dynamic social process through which that product is generated and consumed; and context is the situational, cultural, and cognitive environment that shapes and constrains both. As Halliday

and Hasan (1985) demonstrate through the concepts of field, tenor, and mode, and as Van Dijk (1989) shows through his analysis of social context, meaning in language cannot be understood outside the conditions of its production and reception.

Establishing clear boundaries between these three concepts is not merely a theoretical exercise. It is a practical necessity for rigorous linguistic analysis and for the development of a coherent research framework in text and discourse studies. Obviously, discourse and text are not opposing phenomena but complementary dimensions of the same communicative reality. Recognizing this complementarity, while maintaining analytical precision, is the foundation upon which productive scholarship in this field must be built.

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