



DEVELOPING VIEWS ON DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

Khusanova Indira Akbardjanovna

Tashkent State Transport University

Assistant of the Department of Foreign Languages

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2407-0786>

ABSTRACT

This article aims to delve into the various perspectives surrounding discursive analysis, including its theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, and its significance in comprehending social phenomena. Additionally, we will examine the obstacles and critiques faced by discursive analysis, and propose potential avenues for its advancement in addressing these concerns.

KEY WORDS

Practical applications, discursive practices, social practices, methodological approaches, practical implementations, communication practices, including vocabulary, grammar, syntax, rhetorical devices.

Introduction

The foundations of discursive analysis lie in the belief that language is not a neutral means of communication, but rather a tool that molds social reality and power dynamics. This viewpoint is grounded in the contributions of philosophers and social theorists like Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Judith Butler, who contend that language is not merely a mirror of reality, but a potent force that constructs and perpetuates social norms, values, and institutions. From this perspective, language is intricately woven into wider discursive practices that shape our comprehension of the world and impact our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

From this theoretical standpoint, discursive analysis aims to reveal the concealed power dynamics and ideological biases present within language and discourse. Its objective is to dismantle how language is employed to create and sustain social inequalities, hierarchies, and injustices. By examining the underlying structures of discourse, discursive analysis illuminates how power operates within society and influences our daily interactions and social practices.

Approaches to Methodology in Discursive Analysis

There exist various methodological approaches to discursive analysis, each employing its own set of techniques and procedures. One commonly used approach is discourse analysis, which focuses on the linguistic characteristics and patterns found in texts and conversations. Discourse analysts scrutinize the use of language, including vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and rhetorical devices, to comprehend how meaning is constructed and conveyed.

Another approach is critical discourse analysis, which goes beyond the linguistic aspects of discourse to analyze its broader social and political implications. Critical discourse analysts investigate how language is employed to rationalize and perpetuate inequalities, discrimination, and oppression. They also pay attention to the production and dissemination of discourses in various contexts, such as media, politics, and everyday interactions. Through this approach, critical discourse analysis aims to uncover the power relations and ideological struggles embedded within discourse, while challenging dominant discourses that marginalize certain groups and perspectives.

Discursive analysis is a method employed in the realm of social sciences to scrutinize and decipher texts, discourses, and conversations. It entails the examination of how language is employed to construct significance and mold social reality. Throughout time, discursive analysis has evolved into a fundamental instrument for researchers and academics across diverse disciplines such as sociology, psychology, political science, anthropology, and communication studies. Consequently, acquiring a profound comprehension of discursive analysis and its practical implementations is imperative for individuals with an inclination toward social science research.

Literature Review

The relevance of discursive analysis in comprehending social phenomena cannot be overstated. It provides valuable insights into various aspects such as identity formation, social movements, political discourse, media representation, and organizational communication. Through the application of discursive analysis, researchers can delve into the intricate ways in which language molds our understanding of identity and influences social and political transformations.

For instance, discursive analysis has proven instrumental in examining the construction of gender and sexuality in media and popular culture, shedding light on the role of language in shaping public opinion and policy debates [6,7].

Moreover, discursive analysis plays a crucial role in unraveling the dynamics of organizational communication and power structures within the workplace. By scrutinizing the discourses employed in organizational settings, researchers can uncover the concealed power relations and symbolic meanings that underpin organizational practices and decision-making processes. This knowledge can assist organizations in comprehending the impact of language on employee perceptions and behavior, ultimately fostering more inclusive and equitable communication practices.

Considerable research has been dedicated to investigating discourse in both domestic and foreign linguistics, as well as in various other fields of humanitarian knowledge. Linguists, literary critics, sociologists, political scientists, cultural scientists, psychologists, ethnographers, and philosophers all engage in the study of discourse due to its numerous interpretations. Simultaneously, novel approaches are emerging, unveiling new dimensions of this complex phenomenon. Z. Harris, the pioneer in comprehending the concept of "discourse," emphasizes its dynamic nature, setting it apart from the static structure of text [1].

Numerous studies in both Russian and foreign linguistics have been dedicated to the examination of discourse. However, despite this extensive research, a universally accepted definition of the term remains elusive, leading to extensive debates on the concept. In the past, discourse was commonly regarded as synonymous with text. Nowadays, discourse is typically contrasted with various other phenomena such as text, speech, communication, style, dialogue, and thinking [2]. Furthermore, an important and intricate opposition exists between the linguistics of the text and discourse analysis.

Discourse is juxtaposed with text as it encompasses the dynamic nature of speech, acquiring specific meaning within a given context. This meaning is influenced by communicative goals (intentions), circumstances, properties of communicants, and semantic features. While discourse represents a coherent text, the text itself also possesses a certain level of coherence. Consequently, sentences within the text are interconnected lexically and grammatically through conjunctions, allied words, references, ellipses, lexical means, repetitions, and intonation [8,9]. The distinctiveness of discourse lies in the fact that we perceive the text not only about external communication circumstances but also based on our own linguistic and cultural background. The perception and analysis of information take into account pragmatic components, which encompass linguistic and cultural knowledge, encyclopedic knowledge, personal experience, linguistic and cultural models (representations of the world), as well as background knowledge, and speech etiquette [10,11].

One possible approach to text analysis involves studying a text within the context of real-life linguistic communication. N.D.Arutyunova's interpretation of discourse as "a related text in combination with extralinguistic, pragmatic, socio-cultural, psychological, and other factors; a text situated within a specific event; speech immersed in real-life" takes into consideration the connection between an event and an action[3]. The term "other factors" typically encompasses age, gender, education, profession, social status, knowledge, and personal characteristics. Kibrik views discourse as a synthesis of the communication process and its outcome, the text: "Due to this duality, discourse can be examined both as a process that unfolds over time and as a structural entity. Discourse is the most comprehensive term, encompassing all forms of language use"[4]

Research Methodology

The definitions provided above illustrate discourse as a text situated within a larger framework, taking into consideration the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of communication. Discourse is often associated with the concept of context, as it is the social context that necessitates an analysis of the text, considering situational specifics, environmental conditions, historical and cultural realities at the time of creation, and the personal characteristics of the participants. van Dyke defines discourse as a phenomenon that encompasses a social context, providing insights into both the participants involved in communication and the processes of producing and perceiving the message [12,13]. The scholar emphasizes that communication always occurs within a social context. According to T.A.van Deyk, a speech act must be acceptable and appropriate to the social conditions or setting to be successful. It is not solely the social context itself that holds significance, but rather its comprehension, interpretation, and decoding by the communicants. Van Deyk identifies four primary types of general social context: personal, public, institutional (formal), and informal. The social context determines the permissible actions of communicants, which are governed by behavioral and speech etiquette, as well as conventional conventions [5].

The structural design of discourse, being a linguistic unit of utmost significance, is distinguished by a vast array of typological attributes. Areas of discourse study that hold great potential include an intricate examination of discourse taxonomy, its typological characteristics, and the various genres it encompasses.

Challenges and Criticisms of Discursive Analysis

Discursive analysis, despite its strengths, has encountered criticisms and challenges. One primary criticism is its tendency to excessively focus on language and discourse, neglecting the material and structural aspects of social phenomena. Critics argue that by prioritizing language, discursive analysis may undermine the importance of economic, political, and institutional factors that also shape social reality.

Analysis and results. Another challenge lies in the potential for subjective interpretation within discursive analysis. Given that language is inherently open to multiple interpretations, biases, and preconceptions can influence the analysis. Researchers may inadvertently project their perspectives and assumptions onto the discourse, resulting in limited or distorted interpretations. To address these challenges and criticisms, it is crucial to develop a more nuanced and integrative perspective on discursive analysis. This entails recognizing the interplay between language, structure, and agency in shaping social phenomena. Rather than viewing language as the sole determinant of social reality, it is important to consider the broader material and institutional contexts that also influence the production and interpretation of discourse.

Furthermore, enhancing the credibility and validity of discursive analysis requires the development of more rigorous and transparent methodological approaches. This involves clearly defining research questions, sampling strategies, and analytic techniques, while also being reflexive about potential biases and limitations. By incorporating multiple perspectives and diverse voices in the analysis, researchers can ensure that their interpretations are inclusive and representative of the complex nature of social reality [14,15,16].

Moreover, the exploration of discursive analysis necessitates a heightened focus on its practical implications and real-world applications. Instead of solely critiquing prevailing discourses, scholars can utilize discursive analysis to advocate for alternative narratives and empower marginalized voices. By uncovering the power dynamics and inequalities embedded within discourse, discursive analysis can actively contribute to social change and foster communication practices that are more equitable and inclusive.

Conclusion and recommendations

To summarize, the development of perspectives on discursive analysis entails acknowledging its theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, and relevance in comprehending social phenomena. By addressing the challenges and criticisms associated with discursive analysis, and by incorporating diverse viewpoints and practical applications, researchers can cultivate a more robust and comprehensive comprehension of how language shapes social reality. As discursive analysis continues to progress, it possesses immense potential for advancing social science research and facilitating a more nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics of power and meaning within society.

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