**Linguistics of discourse**

**Contents**

**Section 1.** The Concept of Discourse in Linguistics …………………..3

**Section 2.** Types of Discourse…………………………………………6

**Section 3.** Basic Units of discourse……………………………………9

**Section 4.** The Structure of the Speech Act……………………………12

**Section 1.**

**THE CONCEPT OF DISCOURSE IN LINGUISTICS.**

***Questions to discuss:***

1) Definition of the concept of “Discourse”. Components of the Discourse.

2) Discourse and related concepts: text, speech, language, etc.

3) Linguistics approaches to the study of discourse.

**QUESTION 1. DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT OF "DISCOURSE". COMPONENTS OF THE DISCOURSE.**

1. The concept of discourse is often defined through the concept of ***"speech"***:

a) discourse is **speech** inside life (Arutyunova N. D.);

b) discourse is **speech** that belongs to the speaker (E. Benveniste);

c) discourse is speech as a purposeful social action (M. Stubbs).

In other words, in such definitions, the concept of discourse is confined to the concept of **speech** in combination with **extralinguistic factors**.

2. At the same time, the concept of discourse is often defined through the concept of "**text**":

a) discourse is a complex communicative phenomenon that includes the **text** and extralinguistic factors (knowledge about the world, opinions, assessments, attitudes, goals of the addressee) (V. V. Petrov and Yu. N. Karaulov);

b) a discourse is a **text** taken as an event (N. D. Arutyunova);

c) a discourse is a spoken **text** (T. van Dijk);

As you can see, according to such definitions, a discourse is a **text** and **extralinguistic background** / context.

3. In some cases, the discourse is also defined through other concepts:

a) discourse is **communication** of people, considered from the standpoint of their belonging to a particular social group or in relation to a particular speech and behavioral situation (V. I. Karasik);

b) discourse is **everything that was said and understood** in some specific situation in one or another epoch in the life of this social group;

c) discourse is a **language** in its constant motion, absorbing a variety of historic periods, individual and social characteristics of both a speaker and the communicative situation in which communication occurs" (T. A. van Dijk);

d) discourse is a "**communicative event**, which consists in the interaction of the participants of communication through verbal texts and/or other sign systems in certain situations and certain socio-cultural conditions of communication" (S. I. Vinogradov);

e) discourse is **a communicative activity** which is situationally and socially predetermined and taking place in real space and time coordinates; one of the products of this communicative activity is the text (T. N. Kolokoltseva);

Thus, a discourse is a complex communicative construct that includes two components – a linguistic component (i.e. some a communicative phenomenon – speech, text, language, etc.) and some extralinguistic component (conditions and circumstances of communication).

The number and nature of the components depends on the position of the particular author.

**QUESTION 2 discourse and RELATED CONCEPTS: TEXT, SPEECH, LANGUAGE, ETC.**

As we have found out in the previous question, most often the concept of discourse is defined through the concepts of text, speech, language, and communication.

Now, we are going to consider what is traditionally meant by them in linguistics.

If we summarize the basic definitions of the concept of "**text**", we can say that the text is the result of communicative activity, its material embodiment (written or pronounced). A text is a product of the speech-making process that has completeness (that is, a text is a product of discourse).

The concept of **speech** can be defined as the process of speaking that takes place in time and has a sound form or written form (that is, speech is the process of actualization of discourse).

**Language** is not a purposefully created system of signs used for communication of people, the knowledge of reality and the storage of knowledge, the provision of the needs of the thought process (language is a means/tool for creating discourse).

And in this sense, the discourse is not confined to any of these concepts, but only includes them as its structural components.

So, the concept of discourse is very close to the concept of communication.

Communication – verbal and para-verbal interaction between people, one of the purposes of which is exchange of information.

**QUESTION 3 LINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF DISCOURSE**

The **structural** description of the discourse involves the solution of two main problems. The first question is about the segmentation of the phenomenon under consideration (that is, the division of discourse into components), the definition of its main constitutive unit, which is an utterance or speech act in monological discourse, and a single or multiple exchange of replicas – in dialogic discourse.

**Pragmatic approach**. Discourse is considered as a tool for communicative interaction and solving specific problems in a given communicative situation. Researchers are interested in extralinguistic dimensions: the speaker's intentions; the communicants ' beliefs, values, and attitudes; the goals of communicative actions; the speakers’ communicative positions; and the sociocultural context of communication. The functions of discourse and the semantics of communication units are studied within the pragmatic approach.

**The cognitive approach** interprets discourse as a phenomenon that is directly related to the transfer of knowledge, its operation and creation of new connections.

**Conclusions:**

1) there is no generally accepted definition of the concept being studied,

2) discourse is a complex communicative phenomenon that includes a number of linguistic and extralinguistic components.

**Section 2. types of discourse.**

***Questions to discuss:***

1) classification criteria

2) institutional discourse vs. personal discourse

**Question 1. classification criteria.**

When studying any phenomenon, particularly discourse, here inevitably appears the problem of its classification, of defining its types and subtypes.

Linguistics usually proposes the following criteria to qualify (classify) the phenomenon of discourse:

**1) the number of participants:**

- personal discourse – discourse of one person,

- discourse in pairs – discourse of two people,

- group discourse – discourse involving quite a number of people,

- mass discourse – discourse involving hundreds or even thousands of people,

**2) the form of interaction:**

- symmetrical discourse (homogeneous), e.g. discourse between friends, spouses or colleagues, etc.

- asymmetrical (heterogeneous) discourse, e.g. between a child and a parent, a boss and an employee, etc.

**3) the purpose:**

- informative discourse – discourse aiming at providing the necessary information (message, announcement, memo, confirmation, resume, etc.),

- problematic discourse – discourse formulating a problem which is to be solved (e.g., an article in a scientific journal, in a newspaper, etc.),

- directive discourse (advice, recommendation, order, instruction, etc.)

- axiological discourse – discourse expressing positive or negative attitude to something/someone (*That’s nice. I don’t like it*),

- etiquette discourse (congratulations, greetings, farewells, expressing gratitude, etc.), etc.

**4)  the form of representation (information channel):**

- oral discourse,

- written discourse,

- electronic discourse,

- internal discourse,

- sign language discourse.

**5) degree of formality:**

- institutional (see Question 2 below),

- non-institutional/personal (see Question 2 below).

**question 2. institutional discourse vs. personal discourse.**

***Institutional discourse*** is communication between the participants of a certain social group, community or organization, between representatives of some social institute, "special stereotyped communication between people who may not know each other personally, but have to communicate in accordance with the norms of a particular social group" (V. I. Karasik).

*Types of institutional discourse (by sphere of life):* academic discourse, scientific discourse, political discourse, advertizing discourse, religious discourse, discourse of law, discourse of fashion, etc.

**The main features of institutional discourse:** ritualized character, scripted character, stereotyped character, official character, formal character, status-role relations, limited nature (focus on serving a certain social sphere).

***Non-institutional discourse (personal, personally-oriented)*** – communication between people acting as individuals in all the complexity of their inner qualities.

Traditionally, two different types of non-institutional discourse are differentiated: everyday discourse and artistic discourse (fiction discourse).

*Everyday discourse* is communication between people who know each other well, its aim is to maintain contact and solve everyday problems.

**Markers of everyday discourse:** different topics for discussion, the present moment, volubility, privacy, emotional character, a big number of hyperboles, a great number of interjections.

 **Genres of everyday discourse:** dispute, quarrel, conversation, story, reasoning, suggestion, diary, request, advice, confession, apology, personal letter, apology, compliment, etc.

*Artistic discourse* (fiction literature discourse) is discourse of characters of fiction literature.

Markers of artistic discourse: expanded character, thought-provoking character, large information capacity, stylistic diversity.

**Conclusion.**

The fact is that we seldom deal with “pure” types of discourse: some personal component may be found in institutional communication; at the same time, the features of institutional discourse can be found in everyday communication.

**Section 3.**

**BASIC UNITS OF DISCOURSE**

**Questions to discuss**

1. The smallest unit of discourse (a speech act)

2. Types of speech act.

**QUESTION 1. The smallest unit of discourse (a speech act).**

A discourse is a communicative phenomenon. So, its basic unit should also be a communicative phenomenon, it should have a communicative purpose/function.

Is it a word? No! The word is just a structural phenomenon of the language and discourse. Is it a sound (phoneme)? No! A sound (phoneme) is also a structural phenomenon of the language and discourse. Is it a phrase (a combination of words like *the roof of the house* or *my father’s car*). Definitely not!

The only language unit that is used for communication is ***a sentence***. It is sentences that we use for communication.

The meaning (the function) of the sentence depends on a particular speech situation.

For example, let’s take the sentence "*Why did you do this?”*. This sentence can be interpreted in different ways, it can be used for different communicative purposes (depending on a speech situation):

*Why did you do this?* (can be used just to ask a question)

*Why did you do this?* (can be used to threaten somebody and can mean “if you do it again, you can forget that we’ve been friends”)

*Why did you do this?* (can be used for expressing anger and can mean “I’m furious about what you did”)

*Why did you do this?* (can be used as a recommendation/advice and can mean “you shouldn’t do it again”)

*Why did you do this?* (can be used to show your regret and can mean “What a pity!”)

*Why did you do this?* (to show your surprise or even bewilderment and can mean “are you serious you did it?”)

*Why did you do this?* (can mean “please, repeat your question because I can’t hear what you say”).

Etc, etc, etc, etc,etc.

We can find even more meanings (functions) of this sentence, which means that the meaning of any sentence depends on a particular context (if we want to interpret a sentence in a proper way, we should take into account the participants of the communication, their intentions, the time and place of the communication and other factors).

So, a sentence is a minimal communicative unit of the sentence because it is used for communication and aims at reaching some communicative goal.

But linguistics of discourse doesn’t use the term “a sentence”. It uses a more “fashionable” (modern) term which is a ***“speech act”***. In fact, a speech act is a sentence but a sentence considered as a communicative unit (not a structural one). So, we use the term “a sentence” to show that it is a structural phenomenon (used for building larger units of the language and speech like a text), while we use the term “a speech act” to show that it is used as a communicative phenomenon (for communication).

Thus, the official definition of “a speech act” can be as follows: ***a speech act*** (an utterance, a message) *is an intentional communicative action that takes the form of a sentence (examples of speech acts: request, order, apology, statement, question, invitation, exclamation, etc.)*.

**Question 2. types of speech act.**

Let’s classify (define types of) speech acts on the basis of the following parameters/criteria:

1) their communicative goal (illocutionary force/function, intentions of the speaker),

2) the way the communicative goal/function is expressed (represented).

1. ***The criterion “the illocutionary force/communicative goal”*** helps us differentiate between the following ***types of speech acts*** (John Searle and Daniel Vanderveken, 1986):

**- assertives/representatives** – statement (memo, confirmation, agreement, disagreement, etc.): *It's going to rain tomorrow. She came back late yesterday.*

- **directives** – speech acts expressing inducement, acts that make us do something, imperative speech acts (request, order, advice, recommendation, demand, command etc.): *Please, don’t forget to buy some milk on your way home.* *Could you do it for me? The passengers are welcome to proceed to the boarding gate. I’m cold. You should eat more.*

***-* interrogatives/questions** – requests for information: *When are you leaving? I'd like to know when you'll be back.* (the last sentence contains no formal markers of a question. Nevertheless it should be interpreted as a question because it’s a request for information)

**- commissives/promissives** – promises, guarantees, vows, oaths, etc*.: I will be on time. I'll fix it this weekend. I will definitely do it!*

- **menacives** – threat: *You’ll pay for it. I’ll give away all your secrets.*

**- declaratives** – announcements, notes, notifications, reports about changes in circumstances): *The lecture will take place at 7.20 p.m. (instead of 5.25). On Monday, June 06, 2019, hot water supply in your house will be turned off.*

**- expressives –** etiquette speech acts (congratulations, apologies, thanks, expressions of sympathy, greetings, farewells) or exclamations *(Haven’t seen you for ages! Time flies!),* indignation *(How dare you!?),* surprise *(When did you get married?!).*

This classification of speech acts isn’t perfect, because discourse is full of cases of double-nature. Besides, communication is a very complicated phenomenon that is difficult to classify.

2. ***The criterion “the way the communicative goal is expressed”*** helps us differentiate between the following ***types of speech acts***:

***- direct speech acts*** are statements in which the speaker means literally what he says, i.e. it is a speech act, the semantics of which is presented explicitly (in which the communicative purpose of the message corresponds to its linguistic form): *What time is it? Please fasten your seat belts. Pandas don't hibernate. I pronounce you wife and husband. I congratulate you on …;*

***One of the types of direct speech acts is a performative utterance*** which*is the doing of a certain kind of action. For example:*

*I now* ***pronounce*** *you married"*

*"I* ***order*** *you to go“*

*"I* ***accept*** *your apology"*

*"I* ***sentence*** *you to death"*

*"I* ***divorce*** *you”*

*"I* ***swear*** *to do that",*

*"I* ***promise*** *to be there"*

*"I* ***apologize****"*

 *“I* ***declare*** *war"*

*"I* ***resign****"*

***- an indirect speech act*** is a statement that expresses not only what it directly means, but something else. For example, an indirect speech act is an act that is formally a statement (*It’s a bit stuffy hear*), but semantically/functionally it is a directive (*It’s a bit stuffy hear = Open the window*) or formally it’s a directive (e.g. advice: *You shouldn’t have done it*) but semantically/functionally it’s a menacive (*You shouldn’t have done it = we’ll never be friends again*). We can also say, that an indirect speech act takes place in the case "when one illocutionary act is carried out by the implementation of another speech act" (*John Searle*). In other words, a direct speech act is a speech act the illocutionary purpose of which is not directly reflected in the linguistic structure of the utterance: *We have no milk (request/directives that looks like a statement/assertion).* *It would be interesting to listen to the speaker about the approaches of methodological analysis* (a question that takes the form of a constative/assertive).

***Indirect speech acts can be of two types:***

***- conventional*** speech acts – indirect speech acts that can be easily interpreted because their meaning is supported by convention *(Are you crazy? You don't have...? Could you...?", Would you be so kind...?)*

***- unconventional speech acts*** are indirect speech acts whose communicative function is sometimes misinterpreted:

А. *Tomorrow is a pay-day.*

Б. *Do you mean that you want to organize a party?*

А. *No, I simply want to say that I can give you back the money that you lent me last month.*

Misinterpretation (complete or partial) of the illocutionary force (communicative goal) of a speech act is known as ***a communicative (conversational) failure.***

**Conclusion (summing up).**

1. The basic communicative unit of discourse is a speech act.

2. The main types of speech acts are:

* an assertive;
* a directive;
* an interrogative;
* a promissive;
* a declaration;
* an expressive.

3. Speech acts can be direct (performative and non-performative speech acts) and indirect (conventional and unconventional).

**Section 4.**

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE SPEECH ACT**

***Questions to discuss:***

1) What is locution?

2) What is illocution?

3) What is perlocution?

***QUESTION 1. Locution.***

Each speech act consists of three components (John Austin):

1) locution (locutionary act),

2) illocution (illocutionary act),

3) perlocution (perlocutionary act).

***Locution (locutionary act)*** is the objective content of the statement, its literal meaning:

*My telephone is broken* (we simply state that I have a telephone and I can’t use it any more).

***QUESTION 2. ILLocution.***

***Illocution (illocutionary act, illocutionary force, communicative goal)*** is a true communicative intention of the speaker (directive, regret, surprise, simple statement, etc.)

One locution can represent different illocutions (illocutionary acts).

For example, the locution “My telephone’s broken” can mean:

1) a statement “I need a new one”;

2) a statement “I won’t be able to call you in the evening”

3) a request “Please, help me to fix it”;

4) a request “Can I use your phone?”

etc.

*The intensity of the illocutionary force*: the oath "I swear to you that it was Bob who did it" sounds more intensive and will be more effective than the supposition "I think that it was Bob who did it". One more example: You can persuade your parents to buy a new smartphone with a mere request, or you can beg them.

***QUESTION 3. PERLocution.***

***Perlocution (perlocutionary act)*** is the reaction of the speaker to a particular speech act. So, a person who has heard a message about the telephone that is broken can react to it in different ways: to believe or not to believe, to buy or to refuse to buy a new telephone for the speaker, to recommend a new telephone, etc.

The main component of a speech act is an illocutionary act. Actually, a speech act is (equals) an illocutionary act:

*a speech act = an illocutionary act*.

***Summary:***

1. The main component of the communicative structure of the speech act is an illocution.

2. The main component of the illocution is a communicative goal (illocutionary force).