

CLASSIFICATION OF DISCOURSE ACCORDING TO DISCIPLINE

*Madazizova Dilafruz Xabibiloyevna,
Teacher of Fergana State University
Abduxalilov Me'rojiddin Sirojiddin o'gli
student of Ferghana State University*

Annotation: *This article deals with the classifications of discourse, their discipline, function and as well as purpose with examples.*

Key words: *criteria, discipline, academic discourse, political discourse, religious discourse, medical discourse, entertainment discourses, legal discourse*

In linguistics discourse can be classified using criteria such as discipline, function and the purpose it is serving. If we classify discourse according to discipline, we are able to separate them into: academic discourse, political discourse, religious discourse, medical discourse, entertainment discourses, legal discourse and so on. These discourses as their names imply will focus on themes relating to their various areas. For example, if you see a van with various posters of politicians you don't need anybody to tell you that it belongs to a particular political group. That van on its own is a discourse element. And also, if you as a student come to NOUN headquarters and you see the senate building, without being told you will know that it is the seat of power. It is discourse on its own because it provides meaning; and the building itself can be subjected to analysis (discourse analysis), this in a way shows that discourse is multimodal—being beyond just oral and written elements. You can see that the examples above constituting discourse were neither written nor spoken. The point is that, whatever class of discourse you are engaged in, the multimodal elements should tighten the ideas to form a unified whole.

Let's see the classification of discourse according to it's function. When you read a piece of work, you get some kind of ideas apart from the thematic focus of that piece of work. The ideas and feelings you get from different pieces of work differ. These feelings or emotional drive you get can be broadly be said to be the purpose or function of that piece of work. A piece of discourse no matter how long or how short, if it contains structures that appeals to the emotion of the target audience, can be classified as being persuasive. Political discourse falls under this category. When people want to get others to do something they use the language or any other persuasive tool that will appeal to their targets sense of reasoning. Persuasive discourses come in hyperbolic and flowery language. The different discourses according to disciplines outlined above can use persuasive structures too. According to Wodak (1996), persuasive discourses have the ability to make people do things which they ordinarily will not do. To Wodak,



discourse is structured by dominance and that every discourse is historically produced and interpreted; and possibly persuasive or manipulative structures of discourses can be unraveled through analytical procedures. Osborn and Osborn (2015) outline some kinds of proof employed in a persuasive discourse. According to them, pathos is proof based on motives and emotions (379). Here, the discourse is patterned in a way that it appeals primarily to the targets emotions to move them to do something. Ethos assumes that people can be persuaded by the personal influence of the source of the message (382). To get your target to do your bidding in a persuasive discourse, you must project the impression that you are sincere, trustworthy, honest and transparent. When discourse originators deploy persuasive mechanisms such as faith, feelings and values that make up the social character of a people in their discourses, they are using the persuasive tool called mythos.

Some discourses can be descriptive; such discourses will paint a vivid picture of the focus of the piece in the mind of the reader. In other words, the discourse will be what the reader can perceive through his/her senses or imagination. The reader gets a feel of the things, experience or quality of the theme of the discourse. The things described can be anything the reader can grasp through the senses. Apart from using words to describe this process, visuals or other meaning making semiotic element can be used to create this feeling too. The feeling one gets through a descriptive discourse can be palatable or unpalatable. The prefix “ex” in the term expository comes from Greek through Latin. It means “out” or “away from”. Expository discourse explains, analyzes and makes something clear for the reader. This kind of discourse also gives directions. The main intention is to inform, to make the reader or audience aware of the topic of a discussion. If and when you finish your research thesis, it is going to fall under expository discourse because you have made a discovery or supported existing discoveries which you want your reader to know.

Narrative discourse usually involves relating a series of event usually in a chronological order. The story narrated may be fictional, but when the narration is on real life event, it may be classified as an autobiography, biography, history or a newspaper report. The narration whether fictional or nonfictional, presents what happened and how it happened. Narrative discourse gives the sense of witnessing an action. Examples are literary works such as novels, dramas, stage plays and folklores.

A discourse can be classified as argumentative if its purpose is to convince through logic. Argumentative discourse is based on a belief or opinion that the writer holds as true. To make the argument acceptable, the writer must build a case to support his/her argument. To do this, the writer presents some cases and provides evidence to



support the case. Some scholarly works can be argumentative, where the writer aims to convince his/her readers about a belief or opinion.

The label transactional discourse can be used to label the kind of discourse that conveys messages in such a way that the messages are easily understandable without any ambiguity or confusion. Instructions, manuals, policies, doctors' prescription for patients all fall under this category.

Contemporary communicative methods such as What Sapp texts are discourses, the pictures you have on your histogram page can be discourse, tweets can constitute discourse. The American president Donald Trump is known for his numerous tweets. Even the Skype you engage in is discourse. I know of a lady who a company employed after skyping her; she got the job because according to the interviewers, the environment where she was at 10:15pm when she was Skyped suggested she was at home. This act is also discourse. Some years back these modes of communicating were not there. So if we define discourse solely as written and spoken elements, we would be leaving out these new forms of communication.

So, it is important to state that there is no clear cut dichotomy between discourse types, while some discourses will overtly fall into one classification, some can oscillate between two classes. Different types of discourse are usually better suited for different circumstances, and there are usually some clear distinguishable features of each. Most of the time, writers and speakers will use the discourse type they think will be most effective at getting their points across to their intended audiences.

In conclusion, we may assert that any piece whether spoken, written, visual, pictorial, aural can constitute discourse. What constitute discourse differ from one place to another. The discussion of discourse presented here shows that as the world progresses new discourse modes will continue to come up. We cannot live without engaging in different types of discourse.

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