# Theoretical Interpretations of Professional Discourse in World Linguistics

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**Abstract**. *Discourse functions as a medium through which a particular act of communication is carried out. In this process, communicative intentions are often expressed through a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic means, many of which are professionally oriented. The adequacy of the interlocutors' speech behavior serves as an indicator of whether the discourse interaction is successful or unsuccessful and, consequently, whether the communicative goal is achieved or not.*

*In this context, discursive competence plays a crucial role. It encompasses communicative competence and involves mastery of specific domains, situations, and topics of interaction, as well as familiarity with professionally oriented texts, country-specific and socio-cultural knowledge relevant to different languages. Such competence manifests itself in effective verbal communication, along with communicative and intellectual skills adapted to the professional communication environment.*

**Key words**: *discourse concept, communicative competence, professional interaction, professional discourse.*

**Introduction:** It is well known that in the history of world linguistics, a number of studies have approached language as an abstract semiotic system. The generalization of these research traditions led linguists to conclude that, up until the mid-twentieth century, language was predominantly characterized by a formal and rigid structure. The prevailing approach of that period did not allow for a comprehensive interpretation of linguistic material.

Consequently, by the 1970s and 1980s, the **strict formalism** of language and the **neglect of the human factor** began to be perceived as an inadequacy in linguistic research. This shift marked the beginning of a more human-centered perspective on language, where discourse and communicative context gained significant importance. [7. 239-320]. As a result, there emerged a pressing need to develop a new **functional-communicative paradigm** that had not yet been formally established. This shift was driven by the recognition that "analyzing linguistic phenomena outside the context of speech does not provide sufficient opportunities for their adequate understanding and description."

The emergence of the new **speech paradigm in linguistics** was closely linked to the evolution of scientific research, which required an expansion of the scope of linguistic analysis. This development led to a deeper and more comprehensive examination of language phenomena. During this period, linguists began to **differentiate between the concepts of "text" and "discourse"**, recognizing their distinct theoretical and functional dimensions. [10.327].

The term **"discourse"** originates from the French *discours* and the Latin *discursus*, meaning "conversation," "reflection," or "argument." Discourse is regarded as one of the **most complex concepts in modern linguistics, semiotics, and philosophy**, and it has become especially widespread in the cultural and intellectual traditions of English- and particularly French-speaking communities.

In these contexts, the meaning of "discourse" is generally associated with **discussion or dialogue**. Notably, in many European languages, there is no exact lexical equivalent for the term. Unlike the concept of *text*, discourse began to attract the attention of scholars as a distinct theoretical object of study.

Literature Review: The earliest interpretation of the concept of *"discourse"* dates back to the second half of the 19th century and is recorded in the work *"Problems in General Linguistics"* by the French linguist Émile Benveniste. During this period, a number of linguistic studies were conducted based on Benveniste's theoretical ideas on discourse. As these ideas evolved, scholars gradually began to conceptualize discourse as "a sequence of sentences or speech acts that are interconnected", thus distinguishing it from other linguistic units and emphasizing its communicative and functional nature. [5] M. Foucault, drawing on the way social groups perceive traditions and norms, regarded discourse as a phenomenon of significant social importance. [8] This definition later became the foundation for social constructionist approaches to discourse analysis. Collaborative research on discourse conducted by the Danish and Swedish schools of linguistics is reflected in the works of linguists M. W. Jørgensen and L. Phillips, who define discourse as *"a linguistic system structured in accordance with categories that shape individuals' statements in various spheres of social life."* [9]

By the 1950s, the term *"discourse"* began to be used in English linguistics through the works of **Z. Harris**. In his research, the scholar discussed the relationship between **discourse and text**, emphasizing their connection to *"socially grounded aspects of language."* [1, p. 30]. Subsequently, linguists such as **T. A. van Dijk**, **J. Grimes**, **T. Rivón**, **R. Langacker**, and **W. Chafe** explored how discourse is reflected in styles and how it manifests **individual characteristics**. [7, p. 153] Within stylistic studies, discourse was traditionally examined from the perspective of its **general features**, whereas **individuality** was interpreted through more modern analytical approaches. These scholars classified discourse into several types and recommended **comparative analysis** to better understand its structural and functional specificities.

Research Methodology: In Russian linguistics, discourse was initially regarded as a type of functional style. However, subsequent research distinguished it from traditional stylistic categories, identifying specific subtypes such as official-administrative, publicistic, and others.

In contrast, **Anglo-Saxon linguistic traditions** did not contain equivalent notions corresponding to functional styles. Instead, Anglo-Saxon linguists interpreted these stylistic distinctions as **textual features**. At the early stage, these scholars **equated discourse with text**, considering both as interchangeable concepts.

Yet, with the development of more advanced theoretical perspectives, they began to recognize a crucial distinction: discourse is not merely a static text, but a **speech event embedded in a communicative process**. Consequently, discourse came to be understood as a **spoken text**, carrying informational, social, and pragmatic functions that go beyond the textual level.

Theoretical reflections on discourse can also be traced in the research of **F. de Saussure**. In describing the relationship between a word's **conceptual image** and its **acoustic form**, Saussure emphasized that each spoken word inevitably evokes its image in human consciousness. He argued that everything in reality has a name, and these names differ in pronunciation and in the mental images they evoke.

According to Saussure, **discourse represents the chain of concepts and reflections formed in the mind**, and this conceptual chain is grounded in the **social context of the situation** and its specific characteristics. [9]

Although many definitions of the concept of *discourse* have been proposed by scholars, **É. Benveniste's** interpretation is particularly relevant: *"Discourse is a sentence through which the speaker, by whatever means the language provides, conveys their intention to the listener, shaped by the mutual interaction of their thoughts."* [5]

Indeed, discourse comes into existence **only when the communicative intention is realized in speech**. It is the product of interactional meaning-making, where linguistic form and communicative purpose intersect.

According to **T. van Dijk**, discourse may, in some cases, consist of a **single sentence made up of several words**, while in other cases it may be formed by **just a single word**. [2, pp. 103–136] For example: *"stop"*, *"no smoking"*, and similar expressions.

In general, **discourse functions as a medium of verbal communication**, serving as a **means of information exchange**. In this sense, it is considered the **product of a speech process**, reflecting both the structural and pragmatic aspects of communication.

Analysis and Results: Interdisciplinary approaches developed for the study of speech have become an integral part of a new branch of linguistics — discourse analysis and discourse studies. From the perspective of traditional philosophy, the term *discourse* refers to a mode of thinking articulated through concepts and judgments, as opposed to intuitive perception of discrete stages or parts and their relation to the whole.

In modern French postmodernist philosophy, discourse is understood as **a text possessing coherence and integrity**, examined within broader **socio-cultural, socio-psychological**, and other contexts.

**Professional discourse** is interpreted more broadly than the language of a specific profession: it is viewed as a **form of activity characteristic of people within a particular field of knowledge** and manifests itself through both spoken and written communication. Its formation is based on the improvement of **speech activity**, and its structure depends on the **communicative situation**. The ultimate result of this process is not merely a text but a **discourse**.

According to **F. Batsevich**, discourse represents *"the shared discursive-cognitive actions of communicators, which are related to the speaker's knowledge, understanding, and presentation of the world, as well as to the listener's interpretation of the linguistic worldview of the addresser."* [4, p. 138] The scholar regards discourse as both a **living process of real-time communication** and a **general category of interpersonal integration**.

**Conclusions:** In conclusion, it can be stated that during the discourse process, facial expressions, gestures, and emotional-expressive influence may accompany speech, which is why discourse can be identified in specific forms of language activity such as interviews, oral examinations, and professional communication. Discourse represents speech that is embedded in extralinguistic, socio-cultural, psychological, professional, and other contextual factors.

The **situational context** of discourse reflects the knowledge rooted in the personal experience of the communicative participants. Since the use of speech units in discourse depends on the conversational situation, their selection is governed by **situational-thematic principles**. On this basis, the study of **professional discourse** makes it possible to identify the peculiarities of speech material in professional activity and to ensure the use of appropriate conceptual tools in the formation of **monologic speech**.

Discourse, in this regard, serves as a **means of professional communication**. At the same time, discourse does not have strictly defined boundaries within communicative processes; it can interact with other types of professional discourse and be adapted from one communicative domain to another. **Professional discourses** are distinguished from each other mainly on a **theoretical level**.

Unlike text, **discourse is a relative concept**, as it emerges directly within the process of communication. Professional discourse is closely connected to **professional activity** and is characterized by **specialization**, **individuality**, **subjectivity**, and **continuity**.

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