

# Discourse: Uncertainty, Exchange, Power/ Knowledge and Reflexivity

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The discourse theories or all the intellectual movements that emphasize the discourse stands on the thoughts of the linguists like Saussure and Chomsky, of the 'lingual philosophy' movement pioneers like Wittgenstein, Austin, and Quine, of the language anthropologists like Sapir, Whorf, and Strauss, and, the last but not least, of the 'language philosophers' like Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Discourse can only be considered with language and it's possible only with language. The main thought that these thinkers have taught us is that: Language is uncertain.

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##### Discourse analysis that use social theories

The most important lack that is observed in the studies of both social sciences and interdisciplinarian field, is that, analysis doesn't arise from the social theories/meta-theoretical approach. However, discourse, itself is a metatheoretical approach. So its analysis needs to be meta-analysis. For instance, will an analyst, who uses the act concept, use act as a sociological concept or as in the Wittgenstein's definition, will he use the language itself as an act? The one who makes the discourse analysis needs to accept that language is an act or a practice.

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The discourses about the discourse and the discourses are the discourses of the discourses. Each discourse that exists or is produced, is the other discourse's discourse. The discourses go on without any interruption. So they don't rely on a theory, because everything that is said: expression, statements, seems to be groundless, which are the parts of the discourses.

## INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century thinkers have discovered the discourse. This century is the century of "discourse". Now, the base - the thought emphasizing the discourse says that there are no "bases", "zero points" and refuses the basic searcher tendencies (*foundationalism*) - that is not basic or for Popper the only bog that we can stand on, rely on, think on, can build our thoughts and acts on, is the discourse. The life is in the discourses; life comes true by the discourses. Now, we don't live in the Newton's absolute time and space, but in an uncertain, a chaotic discourses universe. The aim of this study on discourse is not presenting, to the reader, a discourse universe of only certainties, but showing the discourse and the life's complexity. The life is chaotic, because the discourses universe is a chaotic one.

This age is the of discourse. After our century's exploring the "discourse" there are no final existence modes we can rely on on human sciences and maybe even on natural sciences any more, now, there are no materiality, reality, ideas world, the life's hard phenomena, experiment and observation as the final request point, reason as the final support; we have nothing but discourses. Human sciences and general sciences live their own specific discourse age. Materialism, idealism, and rationalism are either old fashioned thoughts or among other discourses of our century; and, the ones which are equal to them don't mean anything other than discourse. We have left the ages behind in which rationalism, empirism, and objectivism were privileged. Now, we are in the age of discourse. So, we to understand the discourse to understand our age, our age's thinking forms, our age's disciplines and our age's human and society in general. Another general aim of this study is taking small steps on the way of understanding discourse, finding out clues and presenting these.

After the discovery of the discourse, there is no universal reality any more, but realities. The reality is the phenomena which is constructed with the discourse in the discourse. Every discourse is a reality construction and so now, the realities which correspond to the discourses are in question. They are the social realities, which are constructed in and with the language, that determine our acts and effects and that make this worldly life meaningful or understandable. Natural reality and social reality are not exceeding or ideal realities produced by only natural sciences or disciplines like law, medicine; psychiatry, economy, etc. and their knowledge forms. It could be put forward about the realities that the medical, the psychiatry, and the natural sciences, as discourse forms, build, because, each particular reality is based on an original discourse. However, all the realities are not the realities which are constructed by the scientific disciplines or the discourses. In the society, there are discourses other than the discourses of the elite, and so there are other realities constructed by these discourses. The society is a discourse groups network. Different realities are constructed by the different language practices, that is to say by the discourses, which equal to different knowledge forms. Discourses, which are act and language practices one by one, stand on different ideologies, expressions, and statements. All these lingual acts are oral/written communications which has origins, also, in the past and/or in the present. Discourses, as a differences net, surround ideology concepts; submits to the interpretation concept. Discourses surround

ideologies, however, they do not need interpretation. The reason of interpretation's existence is the discourse, and the discourse without interpretation is nothing. In spite of all these, the discourse is not a starting point, a final base, and a zero point, because, there are no zero point or zero points. The discourse is something which is created by the relations which make the discourse, discourse. The discourse, also, is not the relations of these relations, connections themselves; the discourse is something which is always more than these relations. The functions of the discourses are knowledge, power, capacity, sovereignty, authority, and control, and all these finds body (exist) in the language. The usage of the knowledge in the language, the usage of the power in the language, the usage of the ideology are all language acts, and the functionality of these are meaningful only within the discourse. Even the expressions, which seem meaningless, used in the daily language are the elements which has meaning and function within the discourse: although, not telling what you know, the act of using passing over statements on the topics that you do not know do not mean anything by themselves, they, definitely, have within a discourse. What makes the discourse meaningful are where, when, and how the expositions/expressions and statements have arisen, and the identity of the discourse actor who uses the discourse. If to give a strong clue, what make the discourse meaningful are the actors or the doers who use the discourse. The opposite of this is true, too, of course. What gives the actors their identity is the discourse they use. I can know you only during I understand your discourse; I can understand your discourse only during I know you. The think I have to understand is "you" or "the other", in fact, the discourse itself.

Discourses as language practices are related to some social conditions, in fact to social contexts, like orderliness, contradictions, challenges, struggles, oppression, reveal, independence, discussion, conformity, conflict, etc. So, discourse, exists in the going on interaction and communication environments. The existence of the language practice should not be understood only as expressions and statements. The discourse is accepted as a discourse, even at the moment when the language practice is not revealed: Although the discoveries, the cultural innovations, the new thinking forms, etc. are refused because of the time difference, go on living quietly for a long time. Thus, the quietness or the silence are also discourse. Like in the communities which are kept under oppression culturally and politically, the quietness goes on during the oppression. However, it does not mean that they do not have an existence. In the face to face communications, the quietness records the discourse, and the dialog breaks the quietness. The discourse of the quietness is constructed according to the mutual interaction. For example, in the face to face communication forms, the act of telling lie is the act of hiding the truth or the act of changing the fact. The hidden truth or the changed fact is, in fact, within the discourse, and is surrounded by lie. Lie does not mean that there is no truth. Dialog reveals the discourse. So, the knowledge arisen with the discourses: knowledge about the past, knowledge at the present are always in an exchange with common sense and experience.

The dialog is necessary to construct a discourse. The dialog is a process which allows the production of the meaning between the writer and the hearer – the reader or the speaker. However, the meaning which arises during the discourse is necessary for the discourse, but not enough. Quietness is a

dialog, too. The main point is the meanings' exchange. The meaning exchange does not only point out a world of subject or texts, but also a world of intersubjective or intertextual. The intersubjectivity or the intertextuality always has an uncertainty. The constructed world is not a transparent one, but an uncertain one and is always has to be commented in detail. So, the searches on the discourse, analysis have to be understood as a way of getting information on individual, society, and social realities.

We live in an age which science, scientific science, and institutions are dominant. The scientific knowledge understanding which leads the science tells us that the scientific science is independent from the discourse. The scientific thinking fathers like Descartes, Bacon, Locke, etc. thought that the scientific knowledge and the science are neutral and independent from the discourse, so it is an objective knowledge. According to these thinkers, the language and the discourse broke the objectivism of the knowledge, defined the scientific truth. The discourse had to be extracted from the knowledge, so that the type of the knowledge could be scientific, because the language and the discourse are the subjective elements in the knowledge. In this century, the searches on the science sociology, the science anthropology, and psychology which drew the science to the intellectual interest focus and which criticized it, suggested that there would not be knowledge independent from the language and the discourse, including the scientific knowledge. The objective knowledge claim, itself, was a discourse among the existing discourses. The classical knowledge theorists kept the language and the discourse different from the scientific knowledge. By keeping them different, they regarded that the society destroyed the knowledge and that the other discourses in the society destroyed the knowledge. The scientific knowledge was independent from the society. However, today's science examines mention that the scientific knowledge cannot be kept apart from the society at any point. If the scientific science depend on discourse like the other discourses' knowledge, the scientific science cannot demand for privilege. The discourse theories, like the other knowledge types, claim that the scientific science stands on discourse. All the knowledge types stand on discourse. For example, the scientific science explains the society with the hierarchic order; but, according to the discourse theories, the discourses are the hierarchic constructions. The whole society, including the society which is a stage for the science, is a discourses universe which consists hierarchic order. The society is a discourses hierarchy. These hierarchies are constructed by the discourses. The social hierarchies stand on the hierarchic discourses structures; and the discourse hierarchies on the sentence, speaking, and texts level hierarchies.

What do people do with the language or how do they use it? What the people say is important; but how they say it is more important. Who are the speakers and how do they speak? These kind of questions are the ones which the discourse analysis try to find answer. The interest to this kind of question is not new. The discourse analysis can be taken back historically till the rhetoric's golden age of the antique period and can be connected with the today's rhetoric studies. Also, this century's sociolinguistic studies and phenomenological sociology and knowledge sociology are the disciplines which try to find answers to these kind of questions. The result of all these study activities, briefly, is this: the discourse analysis is the meta-analysis, in another words, analysis's analysis and today, advances by the critical discourse analysis. The discourse analysis, as a meta-analysis, contains contextual explanations related to the act's

act, the state's state. On the other hand, critical discourse analysis has become perfect by the efforts of the critical linguists, because they interpret Foucault's discourse theories again. They mention the interpretation dimension that Foucault didn't consider much and they use the interpretation in the discourse analysis. They evaluate the discourses as the political existing types and discuss the analysis's interpretation dimension – its characteristics of explaining changes / struggles.

I don't want my readers, who read the introduction and the following chapters, to think that discourse is the everything. However, we want to express this kind of question: Is everything really discourse or is discourse everything? According to the discourse theories' inner logic – which is explained in the following chapters – the answer to this kind of question must be "no". The "everything logic" isn't the logic of discourse thinking. Seeing the discourse everything means absolutizing the discourse, exceeding it like the thing what the modernity made to "mind". This study prefers to write the discourse not with the capital letters as "DISCOURSE", but with the small letters as "discourse". Absolutizing the discourse, at the end, is absolutizing the actors and the doers of the discourse. An absolute discourse's user and the discourse's actor are, at the very most, the dictators.

The discourse theories or all the intellectual movements that emphasize the discourse stands on the thoughts of the linguists like Saussure and Chomsky, of the "lingual philosophy" movement pioneers like Wittgenstein, Austin, and Quine, of the language anthropologists like Sapir, Whorf, and Strauss, and, the last but not least, of the "language philosophers" like Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Discourse can only be considered with language and it's possible only with language. The main thought that these thinkers have thought us is that: Language is uncertain. Language is uncertain means language cannot be absolutized. So, the discourse cannot be absolutized, too. This doesn't lesson the importance of the discourse. The discourse is the most important discovery of the intellectuals of this century and in the human sciences, today, without taking into consideration the discourse thought, it doesn't seem possible to write on people and society.

At this point, we have to explain a point. There are no more valid, more neutral, more objective or universal discourses. However, there are more powerful discourses. The demand for objectivity or universality is the demand for the power or the capacity. At this point, the thinker that we have to consult is Foucault who made a mini reform in our thinking in this century and that is the Foucault discourse which sees the knowledge/power in the discourse. This study, must be express frankly that, owes Foucault a lot. There are no more valid, more objective, and universal discourses. The absolute capacity is the capacity of the absolute discourses and the universal discourse means the universal capacity.

The aim of this study isn't adding a new discourse theory to the existing ones. Its target is more modest. If this study can present the thinks on discourse produced in the west, it will reach at its target. I think this study will be useful for the human and the society, studies made in Türkiye. Any study is perfect, any book is finished. There are no books which use up all the handled questions. Every book is a start, and this, of course, is the same for this book, too.