Мовознавство
Linguistics

INTERRELATIONS AND DISTINCTIONS AMONGST DISCOURSE, TEXT, AND HYPERTEXT: AN ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW

Ahmadova U. M.
Baku State University
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-6153-5635
ulya.gemini777@gmail.com

This article offers a comprehensive analytical exploration of the interrelation and differentiation between the concepts of discourse, text, and hypertext, with a specific focus on their significance in the modern academic and informational landscape. The authors investigate how these concepts shape contemporary communicative practices, particularly in response to the ongoing digital transformation of communication methods. Discourse is conceptualized as a broad communicative structure that extends beyond individual texts to encompass the social, cultural, and cognitive dimensions of communication. In contrast, text is defined as the materialised, linear manifestation of discourse, providing a concrete form through which discourse is realised and made accessible for interpretation.

Hypertext, as a relatively new form of textuality emerging from the digital age, is characterised by its non-linear structure, enabling users to interact with information through interactive elements such as hyperlinks, multimedia content, and other digital tools. This allows users to navigate more freely between different segments of text, presenting new possibilities for communication and the dissemination of knowledge.

The study reveals how each of these elements interacts with one another across various communicative contexts, particularly within digital media environments that significantly influence contemporary modes of information perception and transmission. The authors analyse the shifts occurring in the communicative space as audiences are increasingly empowered to engage with content actively, rather than passively consuming it. This is

particularly relevant in the digital era, where hypertext as a form of textuality challenges the traditional notion of linear text.

A key aspect of the article is its examination of the cognitive, structural, and pragmatic dimensions of discourse, text, and hypertext. The research sheds light on how cognitive processes evolve across different media environments and how these changes influence the ways meanings are constructed and information is interpreted. The authors explore how communicative strategies adapt pragmatically depending on the media context in which discourse operates. For example, within digital environments, users not only consume content but also participate in its creation, altering the very nature of communication itself.

Furthermore, the article delves into the impact of hypertext on modern audiences. Digital media create new opportunities for interaction between users and texts, leading to the development of new forms of engagement where audiences become active participants in meaning-making. Hypertextual structures allow users to move freely between different sections of the text, challenging traditional conceptions of reading and information processing.

In the article's conclusions, the author emphasise that discourse, text, and hypertext are closely interrelated, yet each plays a distinct role in contemporary communication. Hypertext, as a new form of textuality, offers novel ways of interacting with information, made possible by digital technologies. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how these elements shape modern communication and what challenges and opportunities arise as they adapt to the digital age.

This analysis, therefore, highlights the transformative potential of hypertext in shaping the ways audiences engage with content. In traditional media, text was often seen as a static form of information delivery, while in digital environments, hypertext allows for a more dynamic interaction between the user and the content. As users navigate between various nodes of information, they contribute to the creation of meaning, shifting from passive readers to active participants in the communication process. Hypertext thus plays a crucial role in the evolution of communication practices in digital media, offering new tools for information dissemination and interaction.

Finally, the article underscores the importance of understanding these evolving communicative dynamics in the context of digital media's growing influence. As the volume of digital content expands and becomes increasingly complex, so too does the role of hypertext in structuring how we interact with, process, and interpret information. By exploring these shifts, the research provides valuable insights into the cognitive and pragmatic changes brought about by digital technologies and their implications for communication in the modern era.

In sum, this research offers a nuanced perspective on the interplay between discourse, text, and hypertext, underscoring their relevance in shaping the landscape of modern communication. Through a detailed examination of their distinct yet interconnected roles, the study contributes to ongoing discussions in linguistics and communication studies about the evolution of textuality and the profound changes introduced by the digital age. The findings provide a framework for further exploration of how these elements not only facilitate information dissemination but also influence audience engagement in a rapidly digitising world.

Keywords: *text linguistics, discourse, hypertext, hyperlink, contextuality*

Ахмадова У.М. Взаємозв'язок та розмежування між дискурсом, текстом та гіпертекстом: аналітичний огляд

У статті проведено ґрунтовний аналіз взаємозв'язку та відмінностей між поняттями дискурсу, тексту та гіпертексту, з особливою увагою до їхньої ролі в сучасному науковому та інформаційному середовищі. Автори досліджують, як ці

концепти формують сучасні комунікативні практики, адаптуючись до змін у цифровій комунікації. Дискурс розглядається як широка комунікативна структура, що охоплює не лише конкретний текст, а й соціальні, культурні та когнітивні аспекти комунікації. Текст визначається як матеріалізована, лінійна реалізація дискурсу, яка надає певну форму його втіленню, роблячи його доступним для сприйняття та інтерпретації.

У свою чергу, гіпертекст розглядається як новітня форма текстуальності, що з'явилася в цифрову епоху. Він характеризується нелінійною структурою, що дозволяє користувачам взаємодіяти з інформацією через інтерактивні елементи, такі як посилання, мультимедійний контент та інші цифрові інструменти. Це дає можливість користувачам більш вільно пересуватися між різними фрагментами тексту, що відкриває нові перспективи для комунікації та поширення інформації.

Дослідження показує, як кожен із цих елементів взаємодіє між собою у різних комунікативних контекстах, особливо в умовах цифрових медіа, які впливають на сучасні способи сприйняття та передачі інформації. Автори аналізують зміни, що відбуваються у комунікативному просторі, коли аудиторія має змогу не лише читати, але й активно взаємодіяти з контентом. Це стає особливо важливим у цифрову епоху, коли гіпертекст, як форма текстуальності, переосмислює традиційне поняття лінійного тексту.

Важливим аспектом статті є вивчення когнітивних, структурних і прагматичних аспектів дискурсу, тексту та гіпертексту. Дослідження розкриває, як когнітивні процеси змінюються в умовах різних медіа і як ці зміни впливають на спосіб формування смислів та інтерпретації інформації. Автори розглядають, як прагматичні стратегії комунікації змінюються залежно від того, у якому медіаконтексті функціонує дискурс. Наприклад, у цифровому середовищі користувачі не лише споживають контент, але й активно беруть участь у його створенні, що змінює саму природу комунікації.

Крім того, стаття досліджує вплив гіпертексту на сучасну аудиторію. Цифрові медіа створюють нові можливості для взаємодії між користувачами і текстом. Це призводить до появи нових форм взаємодії, де аудиторія стає не просто пасивним споживачем, але й активним учасником процесу створення смислів. Гіпертекстова структура дозволяє користувачам вільно переміщатися між різними частинами тексту, що змінює традиційні уявлення про читання та сприйняття інформації.

У висновках статті наголошується, що дискурс, текст та гіпертекст мають тісний взаємозв'язок, але кожен з них відіграє свою унікальну роль у сучасній комунікації. Гіпертекст, як нова форма текстуальності, пропонує нові способи взаємодії з інформацією, які стають можливими завдяки цифровим технологіям. Це дослідження допомагає глибше зрозуміти, як ці елементи впливають на сучасну комунікацію та які виклики і можливості виникають у процесі адаптації до цифрової епохи.

Ключові слова: текстова лінгвістика, дискурс, гіпертекст, гіперпосилання, контекстуальність

Introduction. In today's fast-changing communication environment, the concepts of discourse, text, and hypertext have taken on new significance in academic research. As digital technologies reshape how information is created, shared, and understood, it becomes crucial to examine the distinctions and relationships amongst these key concepts. Traditionally, discourse has been viewed

as a broad framework for communication, but its meaning has expanded with the rise of digital platforms. Similarly, text, once seen as a straightforward, linear expression of discourse, has evolved with the advent of hypertext – an interactive, non-linear form of text that has become central to digital media.

This research is especially relevant given the increasing overlap between traditional and digital forms of communication. With the growing influence of digital tools on how we interact with information, it's essential to revisit the established linguistic theories and explore how they adapt to these new realities. As the boundaries between text and hypertext blur and discourse takes on new, interactive dimensions, a fresh perspective on their interplay is necessary.

While scholars such as M.A.K. Halliday, R. Hasan, and N.E. Enkvist have laid foundational groundwork on discourse and text, the concept of hypertext has received less attention, especially in terms of its interaction with traditional text forms. This study aims to fill that gap by offering an analytical overview of how these three elements – discourse, text, and hypertext – interrelate and differ, with a focus on their role in contemporary communication, particularly in digital spaces.

The primary objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these concepts interact and influence modern communication. The research will also examine the cognitive and structural aspects of each and assess their implications for digital media and communication practices. Ultimately, the goal is to shed light on how these linguistic tools shape the way information is presented, received, and understood in both traditional and digital contexts.

Research material and methods. This study relies on a comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework to explore the interrelation and differentiation between the concepts of discourse, text, and hypertext. The research employs a multi-layered analytical approach, integrating both qualitative and comparative methods to examine how these concepts are defined, understood, and applied in contemporary scholarly and informational contexts.

Theoretical Background. The core research material consists of an extensive body of literature, including academic articles, and primary texts from fields such as linguistics, communication studies, and digital media theory. Key texts from prominent scholars such as M.A.K. Halliday, R. Hasan, and T.A. van Dijk, as well as works by theorists of hypertext like T.H. Nelson, form the foundation for this analysis. Furthermore, selected hypertextual examples from

digital platforms are analysed to demonstrate the practical application of these theoretical concepts.

Methods. Theoretical Analysis: The study begins with a detailed theoretical review of the concepts of discourse, text, and hypertext. This includes examining the etymological roots, historical development, and evolving definitions of these terms within various academic disciplines. The work draws upon critical discourse analysis (CDA) to explore the communicative functions of these concepts across different media formats.

Comparative Method: A comparative analysis is conducted to differentiate between discourse, text, and hypertext, focusing on how each functions within different communicative environments. The comparative approach allows the study to pinpoint both the overlapping and divergent aspects of these terms, offering a clearer understanding of their roles within traditional and digital communication.

Cognitive and Pragmatic Evaluation: The study further incorporates cognitive and pragmatic analysis to assess how readers and users engage with discourse, text, and hypertext. This includes evaluating how these elements influence comprehension, interaction, and meaning-making, particularly in digital settings where non-linear structures prevail.

By combining these methodological approaches, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how these fundamental linguistic and communicative concepts interact, particularly within the evolving landscape of digital media. The methods employed ensure that the analysis is theoretically grounded, offering insights into the academic discourseof information dissemination in the digital age.

As is known, since the latter half of the 20th century, concerted efforts have been undertaken to differentiate such concepts as 'text' and 'discourse', which some scholars used interchangeably, while others considered them as contiguous. This issue remains a subject of ongoing debate. Nevertheless, the work of the Finnish scholar N.E. Enkvist furnishes a luciddistinctionbetween the aforementioned concepts. In his definition, discourse is characterised as text in conjunction with a definite context, which, in turn, encompasses therein the pertinent situational element (Enkvist, 1989, p.372). E. Benveniste described discourse as the speech activity of the speaker (in this instance, the patient's speech is foregrounded, having due regard to his experiences and narratives), thereby contrasting it with objective narration (Benveniste, 1974, p.115).

It is also pertinent to concur with the statement made by the eminent professor A.Y. Mammadov regarding the demarcation of the aforementioned concepts. In his work, discourse implies the presence of text (in some cases, even text in the form of semiotic elements), whereas not every text may be considered discourse (for instance, ancient scripts, formal documents, isolated words and phrases, tables lacking contextual cues for analyzing the situation or communicative act, and not representing direct communication between addresser and addressee, etc.) (Mammadov, 2017, p.3). Another perspective on the definition of text is maintained by M.A.K. Halliday and R. Hasan, who consider text as any excerpt presented in both oral and written forms (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.56). In our view, text should be regarded not only in a narrow linguistic sense but also considering its extralinguistic characteristics, thus approaching the study of this matter systematically. For instance, Academician K.M. Abdulayev has proposed a framework doctrine in the study of text, in which he described the necessity of considering grammar not at the level of individual words and sentences but by taking into account the entire paradigmatics of the text as a whole (Abdullayev, 1998, p.202).

However, in this instance, undertaking a systematic examination of the text alongside its extralinguistic characteristics without discerning the overt presence of discourse appears imprudent. Regarding the most appropriate definition of discourse, we find T.A. Van Dijk's characterisation notable, wherein discourse is theorized as a communicative act unfolding between the communicator and the communicant, marked by its contextuality and situationality. Upon amalgamation with lexical expressions, the ideational content, governed by the semantic module and subject to the pragmatic module, becomes manifest in written or oral discourse pursuant to the established conventional phonological rules, such as intonation, or typographical norms for the respective textual genre (Van Dijk, 1998, p.239). It is aptlyobservedas well that discourse extracts content from event models, being associated with specific events and experiences (Ibid, p.240).

The integration of information and communication technologies has indeed facilitated the emergence of a novel form of textual expressiontermed'hypertext', which primarily resideswithin virtual domains. This terminology was initially introduced by T.H. Nelson as early as 1965, delineating documents characterized by a non-linear and non-sequential characteristics(Nelson, 1972, p.439). Hypertext enables users to navigate freely through interconnected points of information, thereby transforming the reading process into an interactive process.

However, it is crucial to recognise that the hypertextuality is not solely a product of the digital age. As G.Genette notes, the concept of intertextuality, namely the case of 'text referring to other texts' has long existed in literature, mentioning the rational groundwork for what would later evolve into hypertext. Undoubtedly, it is important to underscore the identification given byG.Genette for above-mentioned phenomenon, which he identifies as 'paratexts', which are considered as key mechanisms that guide the reader through various layers of meaning, which resonates with Nelson's concept of non-linear navigation(Genette, 1997, p.5). U.Eco compares the cross-referencing structure of printed materials to the concept of hypertext, noting that such forms of organisation enable readers to build personalised pathways through the text, much like they would in a digital hypertext environment (Eco, 1984, p.83).In our opinion, books with footnotes and references (such as encyclopedias, textbooks, educational aids, methodological materials), scientific treatises, multivolume editions, legal documents (codes and statutes), reference manuals, guides, and tourist maps, amongst others, serve as striking examples of how hypertextual connections can be manifested in printed form. These connections enable recipients to 'navigate' through the related material, thereby constructing an individualised framework for the efficient reading and retrieval of specific information.

The characteristic peculiarities of the nature of hypertext is further explored by G.Landow, who affirm that hypertext fundamentally alters the relationship between reader and author, having due regard to the fact that it allows readers to actively engage with the text by making choices about what to read and when (Landow, 1992, p.91). G.Landow's assertion aligns with the works of R.Barthes, who suggests that in a hypertextual world, the reader takes on an active role in constructing the meaning of a text (Barthes, 1977, p.148).

It is also evident that the concept of hypertext is not confined to the digital realm; rather, it is inherently intertwined with the ways people organise and disseminate knowledge. The ability to cross-reference, annotate, and link disparate pieces of information has been a foundational practice in scholarly work long before the rise of digital platforms. G.P.Landow fairly emphasizes that in the analysis of hypertext theory, the associative nature of hypertext reflects the cognitive processes of the human brain, which naturally links and categorizes information (Landow, 2006, p.45). Having due regard to the statement, hypertext serves not only a tool for navigating knowledge but also as a reflection of the human mind's cognitive architecture.

The shift from material to digital hypertext can be seen as an evolution rather than a radical break from traditional methods of information organization. Digital platforms have massively improved how we access, navigate, and interact with hypertext, making it faster and more flexible. As J.D.Bolter points out, digital hypertext adds a new layer of dynamic and multimodal interaction, giving users the opportunity not just to consume content but to actively engage with it, sometimes even reshaping the hypertextual environment (Bolter, 2001, p.120). He also highlights that hypertext disrupts the linear structure of traditional texts, which can lead to a more fragmented reading experience, and such sort of fragmentation reflects a broader postmodern shift in how knowledge is structured and consumed (Ibid, p.45). This evolving relationship between readers and text turns users into participants who co-create the narrative, rather than just passively receiving information.

Moreover, digital hypertext merges various modes of communication – text, visuals, and audio – enhancing how users engage with content and deepening their understanding. As E.Aarseth explains, the structure of digital hypertext encourages a more interactive reading experience, where users' choices directly impact how deeply they explore and engage with the content (Aarseth, 1997, p.62). This also mirrors contemporary cognitive theories, which suggest that active, multisensory, and self-directed learning is more effective.

Conclusion. Considering these advancements, in digital media, hypertext has become an indispensable tool, especially in fields like online journalism and contemporary media, where hyperlinks allow users to seamlessly move between related articles, multimedia, and interactive elements. This approach enriches the user experience by providing multiple layers of context and facilitating deeper engagement with the material. The incorporation of hypertext in news platforms is a prime example of how digital tools are adapting and expanding traditional methods of communication to meet the needs of modern audiences.

The comprehensive analysis of discourse, text, and hypertext reveals that these concepts are not isolated but interconnected elements of the broader communication ecosystem. Discourse is complex and layered form of communication, incorporating extralinguistic elements that influence the recipient on multiple levels, and provides the contextual and cultural backdrop, as well as, on other hand, text offers a structured means of conveying ideas and reflects a linear and logically organised thought, and, finally, hypertext represents a non-linear, dynamic form of communication within cyberspace, where information is

presented through interconnected fragments, allowing users to navigate between different pieces of content through hyperlinks, and it introduces flexibility and interactivity, especially in digital contexts. This structure makes hypertext an especially powerful tool in digital communication, as it combines flexibility with pragmatic effectiveness. As technology continues to evolve, understanding the roles of these concepts will be crucial for navigating and making sense of the complex landscape of modern communication.

REFERENCES

1. Aarseth, E. (1997). *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature.* The Johns Hopkins University Press.
2. Abdullayev, K. M. (1998). *Theoretical Problems of Azerbaijani Syntax.* Maarif.
3. Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, Music, Text*. Hill and Wang.
4. Benveniste, E. (1971). Subjectivity in Language. In: M. E. Meek (Ed.). *Problems in General Linguistics* (pp. 223-230). University of Miami Press.
5. Bolter, J. D. (2001). *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print.* 2nd Edition. Routledge.
6. Eco, U. (1979). *The Role of the Reader. Bloomington and London*. Indiana University Press.
7. Enkvist, N. E. (1989). Connexity and coherence: analysis of text and discourse. Wolfgang Heydrich et al. (Ed.). *From Text to Interpretability: A Contribution to the Discussion of Basic Terms in Text Linguistics* (pp. 369-383). Walter de Gruyter.
8. Genette, G. (1997). *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press.
9. Halliday, M. A. K. & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English.* Longman Group Limited.
10. Landow, G. P. (1992). *The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology.* Johns Hopkins University Press.
11. Landow, G. P. (2006). *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization.* 3rd Edition. The Johns Hopkins University Press.
12. Mammadov, A. Y. (2017). *Studies in Text and Discourse.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne.
13. Nelson, T. H. (1972). *As We Will Think. Online Conference Proceedings*, Uxbridge.
14. Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. SAGE Publications LTD.