

Features of Written Discourse

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Abstract:- Broadly speaking, the study of written discourse is the study of written language and language use consisting of more than a single sentence, but connected by some system of related topics. The written discourse is often times narrowly construed as a form of corrected sequence of sentences, phrases, this paper attempts to highlight on the features of written discourse as a topic in the linguistic subfield of pragmatics.

Keywords: Written discourse, Language, single sentence

I. INTRODUCTION

Written discourse a topic in a relatively new branch of linguistics called pragmatics. Research on pragmatics can be dated back to ancient Greece and Rome where the term “Pragmatics” was found in late Latin.

Moreover, according to the Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English defines discourse as speech or lecture of a length. Discourse can be anything, a sound or a short conversation, a note or a novel.

While written discourse could be defined as an art of communication which requires the acquisition of some basic skills so as to attain excellence and this come in form of essay, letter, memoranda, minutes, report, bulletin and magazine.

II. HINTS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITTEN DISCOURSE

- Plan the information or message ready.
- Arrange in proper order the information to be sent. (in paragraphs or sub-topics).
- Write the requires message in clear terms and do not withhold information.
- Use punctuations correctly and observe the rules of grammar.
- By logical by presenting your points in sequence.
- In every written discourse, there must be heading or topic followed by the body of what you intend to write, followed by conclusions as well.
- Written discourse may be classified into public written discourse and private written discourse.

III. THE FEATURES OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE

1. Written texts shift the expectation of truth in both public and private discourse so that more truth is expected of each. However, there is still a large gap between the levels of truth expected from these two types of linguistics acts, although the written word is expected to be always closely connected with truth. This is true even in its public form: There is a much greater expectation of truth from written-public discourse than from oral-public discourse. As with oral-private discourse, there is often tension involved in this type of linguistic act. Unlike the tension felt by characters situated between conflicting sets of social expectations, however, this tension is a dramatic tension created in the perceptions of the viewers. This is exhibited in the way that characters treat newspaper articles, which are the primary example of written-public communication in the works under consideration. Written-public texts, such as newspaper articles, are always expected to be “true”; a written piece of language is a linguistic act that has the potential to be strong supporting proof for a claim.
2. Written-private language, finally, is expected to have a fundamental relationship to truth. The social supposition of this type of linguistic acts is that these acts are expected to be fundamentally revelatory. Characters treat written-private texts in a way that shows that these types of linguistics acts are expected to have a basic relationship to truth that is lacking in other types of discourse. This type of text is often considered to be useful as absolute proof of a claim.
3. It seems natural to look at the analysis of written language after spoken language. After all, spoken language emerged before written language. But written language is much more than spoken language ‘written down’. Written language emerged to satisfy new communicative needs – in particular the need for permanent records which could be referred to again and again. The contexts, therefore for using written language are very different from those in which spoken language is used. The reader is, in most cases, removed in both time and space i.e. she/he reads the text at a different time from when it was written, and in a different place. As a result the language of the written text will have to make greater allowances for the reader in order to facilitate understanding.
4. Written language does, in fact, perform many of the same functions as spoken language- to get things done (e.g. public signs, product labels), to inform (i.e. newspapers, advertisement), to entertain (e.g. fiction books, comic strips). These various functions of the written language will be reflected in the characteristics of the text themselves, observable within the sentences at the level of grammar, and beyond the sentence at the level of text structure. This creates the idea of ‘style’, which will include such areas as choice of vocabulary, layout, etc.
5. The characteristics associated with written text can sometimes occur in spoken language and vice versa.

In other words, some spoken texts will be more like written texts than others, and some written texts will be more like spoken texts than others, depending on the purpose and the context. Look at following two written texts. The first is a written note for a neighbour, the second is from an EPL book review:

Conchita,
Please tell Mari not to come to clean the house on Thursday.
Can she come next week?
I'll leave the money on the table.
Thanks

With so much emphasis on pair and group work in EPL classrooms today, trust, openness, and relationships between members of the group have become of vital importance. Many classroom activities require students to reveal information about themselves, their work, their private lives, their friends and family, and for many this may be a new and somewhat alarming experience.

6. It is obvious that Text 2 is less like spoken discourse than Text 1. But in what way? What are the features that make written discourse different from spoken language? Linguistically, written text tends to be more complex, with longer sentences, more complex clauses, and greater information load, with higher lexical density (the number of lexical or context words per clause). What are the reasons for this? As we said before, unlike spoken interaction, with written discourse, there is no common situation: the situation has to be inferred from the text. The words

themselves must carry all the shades of meaning, which is spoken discourse, could be conveyed by non-verbal behavior. The writer must make assumptions about the reader's state of knowledge. If incorrect assumptions are made, then communication may be hindered. By analyzing written discourse, we are able to see the decisions that the writer has made, with regard to how sentences are formed internally and combined with each other externally, and how assumptions regarding the reader's knowledge of the subject and ability to interpret the text will play an important part in this process.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper highlighted that written discourse as a topic in pragmatics deals with the written form of language as a means of communicating by bringing together units of language and language use consisting of more than a single sentence but, connected by some system of related topics.

It is important to note that this topic has distinctive feature that makes it what it is, i.e. written discourse has a fundamental relation with the truth as a source of information that satisfies the communicative needs. It functions as spoken language and serves as a medium for entertainment.

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