

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

SILVIA OSMAN

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS



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FOREWORD

There is nothing new anymore under the sun in a time in which abundant information resides at your fingertips and entire libraries have turned virtual, ready and waiting for the anxious, inquisitive minds of the young citizens of the 21st century to explore and benefit from them.

Since Cicero's *Orator* and Aristotle's **modes of persuasion**, many pages have been written about **discourse** and its typologies, and some of the most recent titles on the topic you will find after the bibliography unit, in the addendum of this book.

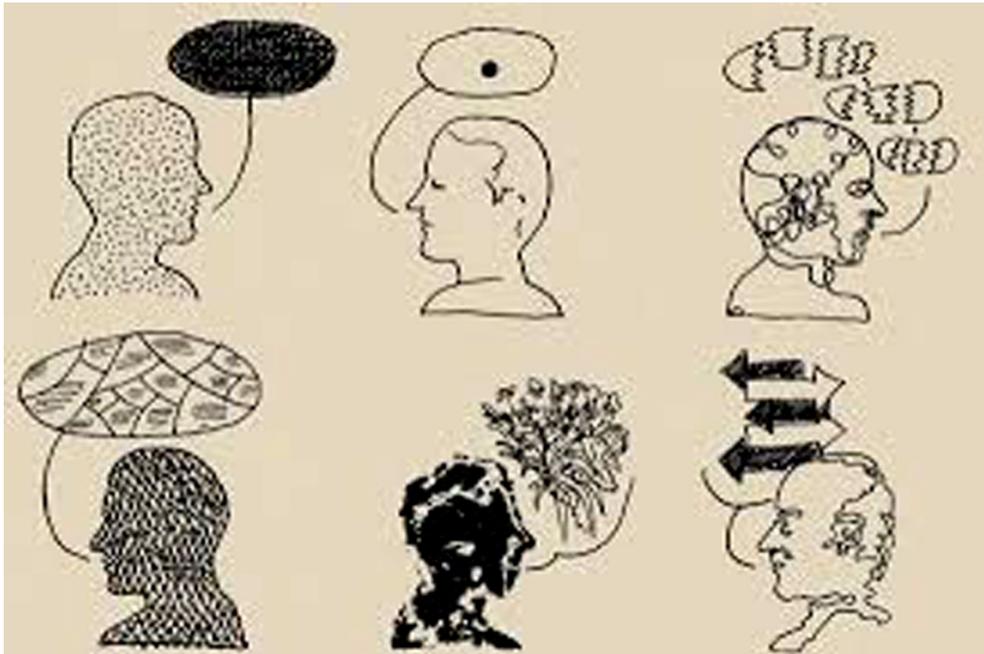
Discourse Analysis for MAL / LMA students is a course that aims to introduce future interpreters and translators to various written and oral discourse/speech environments, trying to enhance their awareness of and familiarizing them with different types of official addresses.

Discourse is a general term for examples of language use, i.e. language which has been produced as the result of an act of communication. Sometimes the study of both written and spoken discourse is known as **discourse analysis**; some researchers however use **discourse analysis** to refer to the study of spoken discourse and **text linguistics** to refer to the study of written discourse.

Seminar topics and exercises included in this textbook enforce the theoretical approaches presented during the course, evaluate and review the ways and skills absolutely necessary for accurate discourse production and delivery, revisiting information and encouraging the students to think creatively and practically apply the knowledge acquired during the course.

Hoping that using this learning tool you'll grow into the habit of wanting to know more, work harder and strive to reach higher, I wish you all the best of luck!

Associate Professor Silvia Osman
Bucharest, November 2015



UNIT 1
SETTING THE STAGE FOR
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Around the year 46 BC, Marcus Tullius **Cicero**¹ wrote the *Orator* (the continuation of a debate between Brutus and Cicero, originating in his previous book called *Brutus*), a volume on rhetoric (concerned with the crafting and delivery of speeches and prose), detailing and commenting the five so called “canons of rhetoric”, namely **Inventio**, **Dispositio**, **Elocutio**, **Memoria** and **Pronuntio**, in an attempt to describe the characteristics of the perfect orator. His text was received reluctantly by the young Roman men at the time, apparently appalled by the stylistic paradigms Cicero brought forth in his writings. Confronting a hostile audience, Cicero had to adopt a defensive stance while trying to bring forth and present his analysis to his contemporaries. Therefore, extrapolating a bit, one might very well say that the dawn of rhetoric and the discourse resides under the sign of incertitude and hostility, when facing a crowd. What would make, after all a perfect orator? Was Cicero right, after all? Would it be maybe respecting the five “canons” he mentioned in the *Orator*? Let’s review them while setting the stage for Discourse Analysis.

The word *Inventio* means *discovery* or *invention* in Latin, and it is the term used by Cicero to name and describe the first of the central “canons” of rhetoric mentioned in his *Orator*. He considered **Inventio** indispensable and emphasizes it as being a consistent and continuous search for arguments. This method seems to be used by speakers in the thought formation process while preparing to construct effective, solid, convincing and compelling arguments and it is the first stage of an endeavor to generate ideas, implying creativity and wit. All the five canons of rhetoric seem to intertwine and interrelate, having invention at the core of the construct.

The topics of invention are namely **definition**, **division** and **comparison**, seen as topics of **amplification** as well. Amplification is a term used in

¹ **Marcus Tullius Cicero**, English byname **Tully** (born 106 BC, Arpinum, Latium [now Arpino, Italy]—died Dec. 7, 43BC, Formiae, Latium [now Formia]), Roman statesman, lawyer, scholar, and writer who vainly tried to uphold republican principles in the final civil wars that destroyed the Roman Republic. His writings include books of rhetoric, orations, philosophical and political treatises, and letters. He is remembered in modern times as the greatest Roman orator and the innovator of what became known as Ciceronian rhetoric. Read more on the topic on: <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Cicero>.

For example, *Quintilian*², in his *Institutio Oratoria*, supported that the plain style was appropriate for instruction (*docere*), the middle for moving oration / motivational speeches (*movere*) and the high style for charming discourse (*delectare*). Nowadays, we think about and consider elocution and rhetoric as being part only of a high academic discourse. All ancient authors, as one, agreed upon the statement that the four main, instrumental ingredients indispensable to good style, in oration and in writing alike, are **correctness, clearness, appropriateness and ornament**.

- **Correctness**

Sometimes translated as “purity”, correctness meant that rhetors should use words that were current and should adhere to the grammatical rules of whatever language they wrote. Correctness rules are standards of grammar and usage drawn from traditional grammar.

- **Clarity**

In regard to clarity, most ancient teachers felt that clarity meant that rhetors should use words in their ordinary or everyday senses. The object of clarity was to allow meaning to “shine through”, like light through a window.

- **Appropriateness**

Appropriateness probably derives from the Greek rhetorical notion to *prepon*, meaning to say or do whatever is fitting in a given situation. Ancient teachers taught that close attention to *kairos*³ will help to determine the appropriate style.

- **Ornament**

The last and most important of the excellences of style is ornament, which is defined as extraordinary or unusual use of language. Ornamentation was divided into three broad categories: figures of speech, figures of thought,

² **Quintilian**, Latin in full **Marcus Fabius Quintilianus** (born AD35, Calagurris Nassica, Hispania Tarraconensis – died after 96, Rome), Latin teacher and writer whose work on rhetoric, *Institutio oratoria*, is a major contribution to educational theory and literary criticism. Read more on the topic on: <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Quintilian>.

³ **Kairos** is an ancient Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment (the supreme moment). For more on the topic read: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kairos>.

and tropes⁴. Figures of speech are any artful patterning or arrangement of language. Figures of thought are artful presentations of ideas, feelings, concepts; figures of thought that depart from the ordinary patterns of argument.

The proper use of grammar and grammatical structures are also part of the ornament cannon. Unlike English, many languages are not as dependent on word order to establish relationships between words, and so choices of word order may revolve more around form than function. Use of connectors, link words, prepositions and conjunctions, adequate use of punctuation, and even the length of sentences concern **ornament** as well and are subject to strict rules.

Memoria

The art of rhetoric grew out of oratory, which was the central medium for intellectual and political life in ancient Greece. Legal proceedings, political debates, philosophical inquiry were all conducted through spoken discourse. Many of the great texts from that age were not written texts penned by the authors we associate them with, but were instead orations written down by followers and students. In Roman times, while there was a much greater body of written work, oration was still the medium for critical debate. Unlike public speakers of today, who use notes or who read their speeches, good orators were expected to deliver their speeches without such aids.

Memoria was the discipline of remembering the arguments of a discourse. It is important to know that the necessity of knowing a speech by heart has influenced to a certain extent the form and structure of a discourse. For example, as part of *dispositio*, a lot of focus was created around developing structures (such as the *divisio*, an outline of the major arguments of a discourse) that would also assist memory and recall. Some writers also discussed the use of various mnemonic devices to assist speakers. The classics viewed *memoria* not only as pure memorization of the words of a speech and of its argument lines. A good orator had to be able to answer questions, be ready to improvise on a variety of subject matters in order to support his arguments, to have command of a large body of knowledge to be able to deconstruct opposing arguments etc. Nowadays, speeches tend to be rather staged engagements, a one way type of communication, while in former times, discourses were part of debates, dialogues, and other similar settings, in which orators interacted and

⁴Any literary or rhetorical device, as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, that consists in the use of words in other than their literal sense. For more on tropes read on: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/trope>

exchanged thoughts and retorts. The credibility of a speaker resided, for example, not only in the strength of their voiced arguments, but also on the public's perception of the speaker.

Pronuntiatio

Pronuntiatio is the fifth canon of rhetoric, the discipline of delivering speeches. In literature, the counterpart of ***pronuntiatio*** would be, for example, the recitation of epics.

Once the written word became the focus of rhetoric, *pronuntiatio*'s importance declined in time and, as with *memoria*, was not extensively mentioned in rhetoric treatises. Its importance became more relevant nowadays, while public speaking starts to be today's focus, at times even being a bit overemphasized. Guidelines have been set for the proper use of the voice and gestures (*actio*) in the delivery of speeches, instructions set in reference to voice modulation (volume and pitch), phrasing, pace, emphasis of speech etc.

Issues such as physical aspects of oration were covered as well. Gestures, stance, posture and facial expressions were treated as instrumental for the delivery of a discourse. There was also the concept of ***exercitatio*** (or practice exercises) that enabled speakers to both memorize their speeches and to practice their delivery.

While the content, structure and style of oration were (and still are) the most important elements of oratory, there is no doubt that skillful delivery improves its persuasive power, and that modest delivery detracts significantly from its intended effect.

Delivery of the speeches is based and dependent on the technology of the times.

During Cicero's time, delivery was predominantly speaking. Written delivery developed because of the written language, and now delivery is both spoken and written. Technology has majorly taken away the once upon a time clear distinctions between written and oral delivery.

The written discourse did not become important until reading became more common. Because the ancients did not use punctuation, their writing consisted of one long stream of words called *scriptio continua*.

During the editing process, modern rhetors must go through **three stages: correctness rule, formatting, and presentation.**

Nowadays, writers face more problems than speakers because they must be very conscious and thorough with the issues of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. **Punctuation** is useful in written discourse because it marks the end of a thought and allows the reader to pause and process the information.

It is generally acknowledged that “*A picture’s worth a thousand words*”... **Visual rhetoric** focuses on images and how words function as images. The delivery of ocular demonstration is the use of words to produce mental images in the audience. This type of delivery is proved to be effective and it is said that people remember only about 20% of what you are telling them, but 80% of what you are showing them.

Textual presentation enables the writer to catch the reader’s attention before actually reading the text based on the appearance of the text. The invention of word processors has allowed writers to enhance the appearance of their text and use effects to put emphasis on certain words or thoughts.

Delivery refers not only to written or spoken language, but also refers to photographs, paintings, or movies⁵.

According to contemporary rhetorical scholar **Thomas O. Sloane**⁶, Cicero described rhetoric as the *devising of true or seemingly true arguments for the sake of making one’s case appear probable*. Therefore, a speaker must debate both sides of an argument to invent an effective argument. Sloane goes on to say that it is important for a speaker to criticize every aspect of his or her argument. Ciceronian invention is simply an analytical process of argument. However, as a theorist of law, Cicero put forward a specific procedure commonly referred to as **stasis theory**.

Stasis is a procedure by which a speaker asks relevant questions in order to clarify the main issues and persuasive points of a speech or debate.

This procedure allows the speaker to critically question each point, assessing the relative worth of each point as appropriate to the substance of the case and to its capacity to persuade an audience.

Using **stasis theory** gives the speaker numerous advantages that will help them **excel in persuading**.

According to **Crowley and Hawhee**⁷, the following advantages may accrue in the use of stasis theory.

- Allows the speaker to clarify his or her thinking about the point in dispute.

⁵ From *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students* by Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, 3rd edition, Pearson Longman, 2004. See Bibliography in the Addendum for details.

⁶ Professor Emeritus at Barkley University, author of *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* - <http://rhetoric.berkeley.edu/faculty-profile/thomas-sloane>.

⁷ From *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students* by Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, 3rd edition, Pearson Longman, 2004. See Bibliography in the Addendum for details.