Multidisciplinary Approaches to Discourse
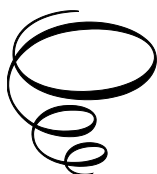
Multidisciplinary Approaches to Discourse

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

Discourse has been delineated as one of the most complex concepts that has puzzled linguists and philosophers of language. It was periodically used to designate knowledge and information that people produce or receive on a daily basis. Because it tends to mold society and construct the status quo in several ways, discourse has played a significant role in empowering certain social groups and perpetuating unequal relations amongst them. This immeasurable influence, which discourse exerts on people and society at large, can be spotted for example in the media coverage of everyday events and controversial topics such as education, race, migration, religion, politics and the like.

This edited bookdwells on a wide range of perspectives about discourse, not only as a mode of communication but also as a catalyst of social change and development. As a dedicated research team, we – the editors of the book – have worked collaboratively on many occasions by organizing several study days, symposia and conferences so as to encourage researchers and academics to discuss and encompass the slippery concept of discourse and its linkage to dialogue, society and understanding.

The chapters of the book are geared towards comprehending human interactions, expounding dialogism, challenging dominant narratives, and in the meantime, deconstructing misinformation and power structures prevalent in text and talk. The book is multidisciplinary in its very essence because it deploys a miscellany of critical approaches, rich conceptual frameworks and sound methodologies from various schools of thought and disciplines to account for the interplay between language and power, philosophy and religion, literature and cinema and the dynamics of ideology and control.

The contributors, all of whom are avid researchers in the field of discourse and cultural studies, were doubtlessly keen on elucidating the tremendous power of discourse and detailing its potential implications and ramifications in contemporary times; they were capable of disambiguating the nuances of some interrelated and subsidiary notions such as text and context, intertextuality, communication and silence, identity and culture, media and representation, humour and healing, or unity and transcendence, etc., all of

which appear to find a space in any rigorous and in-depth investigation of the problematicnature of discourse.

These researchers cherish one common vision and goal: the enhancement of intercultural dialogue and understanding. They exhibit an affinity for the exploration of language use—an experimentation with its social and political functions; they advocate for the eradication of misinformation, discriminatory practices and stereotypes from our world. Since they crave truth and objectivity, the promotion of social justice and understanding, they somehow bridge the gap between individuals operating within different social environments and academic settings. Each one of them contributes, from his/her standpoint, to unravelling one facet of discourse, and deciphering its complex levels and subtle layers, to enhance human interactions and understanding. Their primary concern is to provide insights with respect to the abuse of discourse and manipulation of language. Their contributions then aim to raise people's awareness of how discourse impacts upon perceptions and shapes human actions and behaviour.

Norman Fairclough, one of the most leading and cited scholars in discourse analysis, has argued that discourse is more important nowadays than any other time in human history since the modern society is 'knowledge-based' or 'knowledge-driven' (Young & Fitzgerald 2006).[1] In fact, the critical examination of such knowledge is prevalent in the chapters of the book, whose authors endorse social change, resilience and inclusivity. They all strive to lay the foundation for a comprehensive and well-integrated theory about discourse and society. According to Fairclough,

> Academics and intellectuals have the primary task of analyzing and theorizing highly complex, contradictory and often bewildering processes of social change in order to elucidate and explain them. But in my view their task is also moral and political (Fairclough 2007, p. 9).[2]

As editors, we believe that the target audience of this edited book is early carrier scholars and professors, as well as students who specialize in cultural studies and discourse analysis, alongside their counterparts who are engaged in the field of media, policyand rhetorical studies.

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[1] Young, L., & Fitzgerald, B. (2006). *The power of language: How discourse influences society*. Equinox.
[2] Fairclough, N. (2007). Introduction. In N. Fairclough., G. Cortese., & P. Ardizzone (eds.), *Discourse and contemporary social change* (pp. 9-24). Peter Lang.

To this end, this book comprises eleven chapters. Chapter One casts some light on Foucault's conception of discourse and its manifestations during the COVID-19 pandemic. It endeavours to see how discourse shapes comprehension and meaning, and it dismantles the transformative power of humour/laughter as discourse-related instruments of agency, resistance and healing. By utilising an interdisciplinary approach based on philosophy, linguistics, and cultural studies, this chapter clarifies the transformative power of humour and laughter in promoting solidarity among people, which challenges hegemonic narratives and counters dominant discourses.

Chapter Two examines the concept of "text" through the works of Edward Said, Paul Ricoeur, and Jacques Derrida. It begins by posing a simple question, which pertains to the nature of textuality, uncovering in the process the deep-seated linguistic and philosophical issues underlying it. The emphasis Said lays on the worldly entanglement of texts is then illustrated, prompting a stark contrast with—and challenge to—the view that Ricoeur embraces. Ricoeur dissects the concept of "text" into two constituents: "discourse" and "language." This conceptual dissection posits the idea that the worldly essence resides only within discourse; whereas the underlying language system transcends the boundaries of the worldly property of the text. This chapter concludes by asserting that the lack of a firmly established definition of "text" initself frustrates the possibility of a unified theory.

Chapter Three investigateshow discourse constitutes policy in a context marked by changing governance logics. The researcher suggests that conceptualising policy as a discursive construct serves as a crucial conduit for expanding our understanding of the notion of policy. This notion, he argues, fundamentally redefines policy by shifting the emphasis from a technically-oriented, albeit inherently political, interpretation of policy as a form of regulation—policy as a mere set of concrete actions or decisions to a more comprehensive framework. As such, policy ceases to be a static or isolated entity; instead, it emerges as a product of discourse and communication among various actors and communities within the policymaking sphere.

Chapter Four probes into the fundamental role of information and its circulation in critical times such as the Al-Haouz earthquake that struck some cities in Morocco on September 8th, 2023. Timely information about emergency situations helps in risk assessment, decision-making, public relief and awareness. However, where there is information on social media, misinformation is inevitable. Al-Haouz earthquake has ignited a

variety of speculations and misinformation on social media; more specifically, it resulted in the spread of distress and confusion among some people. This chapter explores the earthquake discourse on X and Facebook through a comparative content analysis of 2000 tweets and Facebook posts. The emphasis is consequently laid on misinformation, sensationalist reporting, pseudoscientific explanations, and false predictions which incessantly thrive during crises and disasters.

Chapter Five provides a critical overview of the interplay between children's identity and Early Childhood Education (ECE). Various social psychology theorists underscored the significance of social interaction with one's surroundings and play in the formation of children's identities as they primarily contribute to their social, emotional, motor and cognitive growth. In this chapter, the researcher presents some approaches to discourse that can be applied in ECE settings and fortify children's sense of self and development. While emphasizing the impact of ECE classroom discourse on identity formation, the chapter proposes the mandate to secure a discursive environment based on the Facilitate-Listen-Engage model (FLE) to integrate children in classroom discussions and interactions with educators and peers and thus facilitate the process of identity development.

Chapter Six grapples with the representation as well as the reception of political humour in new media during the Nigerian presidential election of 2022/2023. Its thematic concentration emanates from the core slogan (a Yoruba phrase, "Emi lokan-It's my turn"), where President Ahmed Bola Tinubu emerged the victorious winner of the election. How did new media or visual media capture humour in politics? How the spectators received such humour in the parlance of politics is of great interest in this chapter, which argues that humour can be deployed as an instrument of othering, a rallying around tool, a show of dominance, or elite closure. To achieve his objective, the researcher has utilised data from YouTube within the scope of the aforementioned event.

Chapter Seven puts into question the dialectic relationship between language and silence—the incapacity of human beings to communicate effectively their messages and to stay faithful to the noble purpose of communication. It revists the perspectives of the German philosopher Josef Pieper (1904-1997), who has reflected on the way language has been abused, so that, instead of being a carrier of the truth and a transmitter of meaning and wisdom, it is being used to subdue people and manipulate them. This philosopher advanced the idea that all creation is good, loved

and lovely. When we see all things with love, we are able to see them in a
different way, and then we feel happy. That is why contemplation,
disguisedin silence, represents a way to welfare and happiness, yet it is
sometimes hard to achieve.

Chapter Eight unearths some areas of interconnection between two
different types of discourse: literature and cinema. It deals with the
representation of multiple facets of interlacements between the novel and
movies in terms of subject matters and aesthetics. Thus, it sheds light on
the roots of experimental films in relation to literary modernism, as well as
the influence of the New Novel /*Nouveau Roman* on the French New
Wave as a postwar artistic movement. The objective is to track down and
unpuzzle some aspects of commonalities between literature and cinema as
freestanding arts. By scrutinizing the aesthetics of experimental and New
Wave films, the chapter explains how film directors have harnessed
literary methods to visualize fiction or reality imitation in eloquent ways
that go in tandem with the literary metamorphoses that took place in the
20th century.

Chapter Nine aims to challenge conventional moral frameworks by taking
another look at Dostoevsky's critique of the man-god through his portrayal
of the "extraordinary man" in contrast with Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.
Through the introduction of Spinoza's concept of "Divine Unity" and
Evola's "Dimension of Transcendence", the chapter advocates for the
importance of a superior being that is—despite its transcendent nature—
bound by a moral framework as found within natural laws. The intent is to
support the reevaluation of Dostoevsky's arguments against the *Übermensch*
and to propose the possibility of paving the way for such a class of
humans.

Chapter Ten focuses on rhetorical moves found in the introductory
paragraph of argumentative essays. It is an an analysis of rhetorical
strategies that make up each move within the 68 argumentative essays
written in L2 by Moroccan undergraduate students from the Higher School
of Education and Training of Agadir (ESEFA). The essays were analysed
using an adapted model that integrates Swales' (1990) CARS model and
Hyland's (1990) conceptual framework.

Last but not least, Chapter Eleven brings to the fore the peculiarities of
language for Gadamer and Heidegger and its centrality in their hermeneutics
through the critical reading of "Burnt Norton" that was writtenby T. S
Eliot, the leader of the modernist movement. It is believed that the poem,

which was published in 1935 and inspired by one of the poet's tragedies, is not only an examination of human consciousnessbut also an examination of human language. The chapter underscores the idea that language manifests itself beautifully in poetry, in serenity and stillness, because this is the only genre where it is used authentically andmetaphorically with much rigour and sophistication.

CHAPTER ONE

THE POWER OF HUMOUR AND LAUGHTER
IN FOUCAULT'S DISCOURSE:
UNDERSTANDING, MEANING AND INFLUENCE

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Abstract

The investigation of power relations in discourse by Michel Foucault provides a rich framework for examining how humour and laughter influence relationships and social interactions. This chapter explores Foucault's theory of discourse and its ramifications, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a critical analysis of the ways discourse shapes meaning, comprehension, and social structures, we investigate the complex ways that humour and laughter function within discursive practices. By utilising an interdisciplinary approach based on philosophy, linguistics, and cultural studies, we clarify the transformative power of humour and laughter in promoting solidarity among people, hegemonic narrative challenges, and discourse. In the end, this chapter aims to highlight the value of humour and laughter as discourse-related instruments of agency, resistance, and healing.

Keywords: Discourse; Power; Humour; Laughter; Pedagogy; Post-COVID-19 Era

1. Introduction and Background

In the broad landscape of discourse studies, Michel Foucault's ideas stand like towering pillars, showing the complicated webs of power, knowledge and meaning that pervade human communication. Discourse is central to Foucault's theory because it not only reflects but also actively affects society structures, creating a landscape where power relations are negotiated,

disputed, and reinforced (Foucault, 1980). Against this context, the interaction of humour and laughter in speech emerges as an intriguing topic of inquiry, providing insights into how people navigate and resist dominant power dynamics (Norrick, 2004). By investigating the role of humour and laughter in discursive practices, we can discover hidden power dynamics, challenge dominant narratives, and create spaces of resistance and solidarity (Billig, 2005).

Humour and laughter are powerful instruments in discourse, capable of both sustaining and disrupting power hierarchies (Attardo, 2017). Individuals can criticize prevailing beliefs and challenge the status quo using satire, irony, and parody (Morreall, 1983). On the other hand, comedy can be used to reinforce hierarchies and marginalise specific social groups (Davies, 1998). Discourse reception and production are inextricably linked to processes of meaning-making and interpretation (Gee, 2005). Individuals bring to bear their own interpretive frameworks, which are affected by personal experiences, cultural norms, and social identities (Fairclough, 2013). Humour serves as a lens through which humans make sense of their surroundings, allowing them to traverse complex social dynamics and negotiate their relationships with others (Coulson, 2001).

Discourse is especially important in the post-COVID-19 period, as societies deal with uncertainty, fear, and deception. The epidemic has exposed the harsh imbalances and vulnerabilities in our social fabric, prompting a reconsideration of how rhetoric might be used to promote inclusivity, empathy, and resilience (Jaspal &Nerlich, 2020). Furthermore, the expansion of digital media platforms has enabled the quick broadcast of information while exacerbating the propagation of misinformation and conspiracy theories (Pennycook et al., 2020).

In this case, humour and laughter emerge as critical coping mechanisms and promoters of community cohesion (Martin, 2007). Laughter has been demonstrated in medical studies to have therapeutic effects, providing psychological resilience in the face of trauma and stress (Rotton & Shats, 1996). Humour allows people to temporarily overcome their worries and find comfort in shared laughing by puncturing the severity of the situation (Masten, 2002). Furthermore, comedy can be used to bridge gaps between different populations and create mutual understanding (Duncan & Smith, 2009).

Against this backdrop, Foucault's insights into discourse offer a useful framework for comprehending the function of humour and laughter in structuring social relationships and power dynamics. By critically exploring the relationship between comedy and discourse, we can learn about how humour reflects and shapes societal systems. In the post-COVID-19 era, humour and laughter are crucial tools for negotiating uncertainty, cultivating resilience, and forging community togetherness.

2. Defining Discourse

Foucault's idea of discourse goes far beyond linguistic interchange to include a complex network of knowledge, attitudes, and practices that together construct social reality (Foucault, 1972). It communicates via a variety of modalities, including visual, gestural, and symbolic forms (Gee, 2014). Discourse is fundamentally a method for articulating and negotiating power relations, with important implications for people's perceptions, behaviours, and identities (Fairclough, 2001).Discourse takes on new importance in the post-COVID-19 age, serving as a battleground for contending narratives about the pandemic, science, and governance (Van Dijk, 2020). The extensive propagation of misinformation, along with a growing scepticism of conventional institutions, highlights the vital necessity to critically examine the discourses that pervade society (Jasanoff, 2020). Furthermore, the epidemic has exposed harsh injustices and divisions in our social fabric, prompting a rethinking of how rhetoric might be used to promote inclusivity, empathy, and resilience (Hall, 2020).

Discourse reflects and shapes society norms and power dynamics (Fairclough, 2001). It functions at both the individual and institutional levels (Heller, 2011); it reproduces and contests dominant ideologies and hegemonic frameworks, either perpetuating or challenging existing social hierarchies (Bourdieu 1991). Discourse has a significant impact on public perceptions and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (Chou et al., 2020). Narratives that form inside discursive spaces influence everything from government policies to individual behaviours, hence defining the pandemic's course (Jenkins et al., 2020). However, the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories has complicated the discursive terrain, increasing popular uncertainty and mistrust (Pennycook et al., 2020).

To effectively navigate the complexity of post-pandemic discourse, a critical perspective that interrogates the underlying power relations and entrenched interests is required (Bakhtin, 1981). Phillips and Jørgensen

(2002) suggest that deconstructing dominant discourses and amplifying marginalised perspectives can lead to more inclusive and equitable communication. By acknowledging the political nature of discourse, people and communities can create more resilient and adaptive social structures (Castells, 2009).

Finally, the concept of discourse, as articulated by Foucault and other researchers, provides a compelling framework for comprehending the complicated interplay of power, knowledge, and communication in society. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, discourse becomes increasingly important as a site of contestation and negotiation, impacting both individual perceptions and collective reactions to the catastrophe. Critically probing societal discourses and amplifying marginalised perspectives allow for more inclusive and resilient forms of communication that promote social justice and equity.

3. Empowerment and Alienation

Humour and laughter are powerful elements in discourse that may both empower individuals and perpetuate oppressive regimes. According to current research, humour functions as a location of conflict where power dynamics are negotiated and disputed (Miller, 2020). On the one hand, humour can serve as a subversive tool, allowing marginalised people to challenge dominant ideologies and demonstrate their agency (Davis, 2019). Individuals can destabilise entrenched power structures and create critical consciousness by using satire, irony, and parody (Smith, 2021). Humour serves as a kind of resistance by mocking current conventions and social hierarchies, giving people who are marginalised by mainstream discourse a voice.

It is important to recognize, however, that humour may also be used to exclude and marginalise people. Recent research has shown that jokes based on racial, gender, or other kinds of bias reinforce existing disparities and alienate targeted populations (Garcia, 2020). Such humour entrenches existing hierarchies while also silencing opposing viewpoints and experiences by reinforcing stereotypes and power differentials (Brown, 2018). In addition, prioritising particular types of humour over others exacerbates power disparities, marginalising voices outside the mainstream (Wilson, 2019).

The power dynamics inherent in humour and the act of laughting can be seen in a variety of settings, including popular culture and social media.

Research has looked at how comic television shows and online memes challenge and reinforce dominant views (Lee, 2021). Scholars have investigated how racialized humour in media promotes stereotypes and maintains white supremacy using the lens of critical race theory (Johnson, 2023). Similarly, studies on gender and sexuality have demonstrated how humour may be used to police and regulate non-normative identities (Chang, 2022).

Besides, the intersectionality of humour and power is visible in everyday interactions and relationships. A recent study has looked into how humour influences workplace dynamics, shaping organisational culture and reinforcing gendered and racialized norms (Thompson 2020). Furthermore, research into online discourse has showed how humour may be used to harass and intimidate marginalised people, contributing to the maintenance of online harassment and cyberbullying (Martinez, 2021).

To summarize, humour and laughter have considerable power in discourse, serving as both weapons of empowerment and processes of estrangement. Humour has the capacity to challenge dominant views and give marginalised people a voice, but it may also perpetuate stereotypes and strengthen existing power disparities. Recent scholarship highlights the varied ways in which comedy occurs in many social situations, emphasising the importance of critical interaction and analysis. Moving forward, it is critical to examine the power dynamics inherent in comedy and work towards more inclusive and egalitarian environments where all views may be heard and respected.

4. Reception and Production of Discourse

The reception and production of discourse are dynamic processes that are inextricably linked to meaning-making and interpretation, with humour and laughter emerging as important elements. When people engage in conversation, they bring to the forefront their own interpretive frameworks, which are affected by a variety of elements such as personal experiences, cultural norms, and social identities (Brown, 2015). In this environment, humour acts as a prism through which people make sense of the intricacies of their surroundings, making it easier to navigate intricate social dynamics and negotiate interpersonal interactions (Smith, 2018).

Moreover, the formation of discourse is a place of contestation, with many actors competing for control over the narratives that shape collective understanding (Jones, 2019). Individuals and groups use humour and

laughter strategically to express their power, influence public opinion, and advance their interests (Davis, 2021). Political satire, for example, has long been used to criticize authority officials and challenge dominant beliefs. As a result, it may be fair to say that such form of discourse influences public discourse and it simultaneously encourages civic engagement (Roberts, 2020).

Humour plays a broad and nuanced role in the reception and creation of discourse. On the one side, humour can promote camaraderie and solidarity among discourse communities, building social links and enabling communication (Clark, 2017). On the other side, comedy can be used as a tool of exclusion and marginalisation, propagating stereotypes and maintaining power disparities (Lee, 2016). The reception of humour in discourse is influenced by a variety of elements, including cultural context, social conventions, and individual views.

Humour can be strategically used in production to affect public opinion and alter the path of discourse. Satirical comedy programmes, for example, frequently use humour to provide social and political commentary, questioning dominant narratives and prompting critical thinking (Miller, 2019). By using the power of humour, these media channels can effectively engage viewers and persuade them to reconsider their positions on important subjects (Wang, 2020). However, the creation of comedy within speech is not without problems. Humour is essentially subjective. This is to say that what one person or group finds amusing or entertaining may be insulting or unsuitable to another (Taylor, 2018). Furthermore, using comedy in conversation can occasionally backfire, resulting in unforeseen repercussions such as alienation or backlash (Harris, 2017).

In brief, the role of humour and laughing has a significant impact on discourse reception and creation. Individuals engage in speech using their own interpretive frameworks, which are moulded by personal experiences, cultural norms, and social identities. Humour helps people manage complex social processes and negotiate connections with others. What is more, the formation of discourse is a location of conflict, with many parties competing for control over narratives. Individuals and groups can use humour and laughter strategically to express their authority, influence public opinion, and redefine public discourse. However, the use of humour in discourse is not as easy as one thinks, for its reception is determined by a variety of factors and circumstances. Arguably, humour continues to be a powerful influence on how discourse is received and produced in modern culture.

5. Fear, Anxiety, and Healing in Crisis Discourse

In times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, discourse is critical in shaping individual and collective feelings of fear and anxiety. The spread of misinformation and sensationalism in media discourse can exacerbate feelings of panic and uncertainty, increasing public anxiety and eroding trust in institutions. The constant barrage of alarming headlines and conflicting information can leave people feeling overwhelmed and powerless, adding to their sense of existential dread (Garfin et al., 2020).

In contrast, humour and laughter emerge as effective coping mechanisms for navigating the psychological toll of crisis situations. Humour punctures the seriousness of the situation, providing moments of levity and relief amidst the chaos, allowing people to temporarily transcend their fears and find solace in shared laughter (Sweeny et al., 2021). This cathartic release acts as a psychological coping mechanism, allowing people to temporarily escape the overwhelming reality of the crisis (Kuiper & Martin, 2016).

Moreover, humour has been shown to have therapeutic properties, providing psychological resilience in the face of adversity (Ruch &Proyer, 2009). Medical clowning, for example, uses the power of humour to relieve pain and promote healing in patients, demonstrating the profound impact of laughter on physical and emotional well-being (Koller et al. 2012). Medical clowns foster feelings of hope and optimism by engaging patients in playful interactions and comedic interventions (McGhee, 2010).

Humour can be an effective tool for reframing perceptions and fostering resilience in crisis discourse (Doyle-Portillo, 2011). Humour allows people to reclaim agency and control over their emotional responses by changing the narrative from one of fear and uncertainty to one of hope and solidarity (Mar, 2011). This sense of empowerment is critical for reducing the psychological burden of crisis situations and encouraging adaptive coping strategies (Sliter et al., 2014).

Additionally, humour has the unique ability to cross linguistic and cultural barriers, acting as a universal language of connection and comprehension (Chen & Martin, 2007). In times of crisis, humour serves as a unifying force, bringing people together and instilling a sense of community and mutual support (Hemenover et al. 2018). Shared laughter reminds us of our common humanity, providing a glimmer of hope in the midst of uncertainty (Lefcourt& Martin, 1986).

Finally, discourse serves a dual purpose in shaping experiences of fear, anxiety, and healing during times of crisis. While the spread of misinformation and sensationalism can exacerbate feelings of panic and uncertainty, humour and laughter emerge as potent antidotes, providing moments of levity and relief amidst the chaos. Humour and laughter, with their therapeutic effects and ability to foster resilience, are invaluable resources for navigating the psychological challenges of crisis situations. In the face of adversity, individuals can find solace, strength, and solidarity by harnessing the power of humour.

6. Pedagogy and Translation

Pedagogy, the art and science of teaching, is inextricably linked to discourse, which refers to the language, symbols, and practices that shape meaning in a community (Biesta, 2020). Understanding this link is critical to understanding how knowledge is conveyed and internalised in educational environments. Education, as a discursive practice, not only transmits information but also influences people's perceptions, ideas, and values, shaping society norms and power dynamics (Giroux, 2021). Furthermore, humour and laughter, two frequently disregarded characteristics of pedagogy, play an important role in enhancing learning and retention. Humour works as a mnemonic technique, improving memory and engagement (Bryant, 2023). Educators can build dynamic learning environments that promote critical thinking and deeper comprehension by appealing to students' emotions and imaginations (Martinez, 2022).

Translation, on the other hand, acts as a link between various discourses, allowing communication and exchange across linguistic and cultural divides (Baker, 2021). The problems of translation are highlighted when dealing with humour, which is heavily ingrained in cultural context and language intricacies (Hatim & Mason, 2020). Translating humour presents particular issues because jokes and humorous aspects frequently rely on wordplay, cultural references, and idiomatic terms that do not have exact parallels in other languages (Kelly, 2023). Despite these limitations, translation is essential for promoting mutual understanding and empathy among diverse cultures (Venuti, 2024). Individuals can transcend linguistic and cultural gaps by translating well enriching discourse with varied ideas and experiences (Cronin, 2022).

In educational environments, the interaction between teaching and translation is very important. To effectively engage with children from varied backgrounds, educators must overcome language and cultural

hurdles (Freire, 2020). Also, adding translated materials and texts into the curriculum facilitates the spread of knowledge across linguistic boundaries, extending students' horizons and building intercultural competency (Hedge, 2021). However, translation in pedagogy must be approached with caution because mistranslations or misinterpretations can cause misconceptions and reinforce prejudices (Venuti, 2023).

Despite these limitations, humour may be an effective strategy for breaking down linguistic and cultural boundaries in educational contexts. Educators can develop inclusive learning environments that appeal to students from various backgrounds by infusing humour into instructional materials and activities (Malmkjaer, 2024). Furthermore, humour can be utilised deliberately to address sensitive issues and engage students in tough discussions (Ladson-Billings, 2020). However, educators must be aware of cultural differences and use humour in a polite and inclusive manner (Billig, 2022).

Indeed, the relationship between discourse and pedagogy is complicated and multidimensional, with humour and translation playing critical roles in creating educational practices. Educators may build inclusive learning environments that promote critical thinking and empathy by understanding how language, culture, and power interact. Translation is an important instrument for overcoming linguistic and cultural gaps, allowing for the exchange of ideas and opinions across borders. Despite the difficulties associated with interpreting humour, it can be an effective technique of connecting and creating mutual understanding across disparate populations. Finally, by incorporating humour and translation into instruction, educators may enhance discourse with varied viewpoints and experiences, allowing students to engage with the world in meaningful ways.

7. Concluding Remarks

Foucault's analysis of discourse provides profound insights into the complex power dynamics at work in social interactions, particularly humour and laughter. By investigating how discourse shapes meaning and societal structures, we gain a better understanding of humour's potential as a tool for resistance, agency, and healing. As Foucault famously stated, "Discourse is power," emphasising the profound impact language and communication have on social relations (Foucault, 1972). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of discourse since competing narratives and ideologies vie for attention. As Smith (2021) rightly points out, discourse is critical in shaping public perceptions and

responses during crises. In this context, humour and laughter can be effective mechanisms for promoting inclusivity, empathy, and resilience. According to Foucault (1979), laughter has the potential to disrupt established power structures while also encouraging moments of subversion and resistance.

Looking into the future, interdisciplinary collaboration is critical to leveraging discourse for social change. By scrutinising the role of humour in discourse, we may contribute towards creating fairer, more equitable, and compassionate societies. Davis et al. (2023) argue that understanding the complexities of social phenomena requires interdisciplinary approaches. We can develop strategies to harness humour and laughter as agents of positive social transformation by working collaboratively across various schools of thought and disciplines. Hence, Foucault's conceptual framework provides useful insights into the relationship between discourse, humour, and power dynamics. By critically engaging with discourse, we can use humour to challenge dominant narratives and build more inclusive and resilient communities.

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CHAPTER TWO

WORLDLINESS UNDER-ERASURE: RECONSIDERING TEXTUAL NATURE

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Abstract

This chapter examines the concept of "text" through the works of Edward Said, Paul Ricoeur, and Jacques Derrida. It begins by posing a simple question which pertains to the nature of textuality, uncovering in the process the deep-seated linguistic and philosophical issues underlying it. The emphasis Said lays on the worldly entanglement of texts is then illustrated, prompting a stark contrast with—and challenge to—the view that Ricoeur embraces. Ricoeur dissects the concept of "text" into two constituents: "discourse" and "language." This conceptual dissection posits the idea that the worldly essence resides only within discourse; whereas, the underlying language system transcends the boundaries of the worldly property of the text. Finally, there comes Derrida's neographism of "*différance*", which he proposes to argue, quite wittily, that the act of writing estranges the text from the world through a process of symbolic substitution, rendering it thus "unworldly".The chapter concludes by asserting that the lack of a firmly established definition of "text" in itself frustrates the possibility of a unified theory.

Keywords: Worldliness; Text; Différance; Substitution; Discourse and Language

1. Introduction

That reading or writing a text is a feasible task for every educated individual is revealed to be unequivocally true by a quite elementary evaluation of these experiences. Yet, can it be the same, as easy as reading

or writing, to indicate, by way of probability, the nature with which a text is likely to be identified? Or the locus to which it attributes its belonging?

The aforementioned feasibility will certainly be neutralized under the weight of this question, for it is an existential one, a question that blurs the already established boundaries between the material and ideal, between the external and internal—between the worldly and unworldly; therefore, any person who attempts to solve this problem ends up being lost within its labyrinthine folds. Text, this mere concept that forcibly protuberates its familiarity upon our perceptions, has thereby escaped undergoing earnest examination except for some few, yet remarkable analyses that happen to hit on critical facets concerning the essence of a text, the quintessential property that makes it what it is. One would have to assume, then, that "what is a text?", such a simple question, shall be the main axis of this chapter.

Asking that question spurs the need for rethinking the acts of writing as well as reading, on whose floor explanation and interpretation run across each other. For some, a text is, and should always be, a sheer reflection of what is real, of what is worldly, for it originates from this world, and thus it is worldly in itself. But for others, envisioning the text from a non-dualistic stand amounts to stripping it of its meaning—of its subsistence which comes into shape by track of difference. Having asserted itself among the centric structuralist concepts, the idea of difference draws a symmetric contingency with the notion of undecidability which promotes, par excellence, Jacques Derrida's deconstructive legacy, by shaking the stagnant meaning of logos, of text, and of everything that ceased to flow, or that which was made, from its nativity, to resist any current unleashed by a re-observational survey. As such, undecidability inclines to set the text, methodically, in a neutral locus between the dialectical opposition of the "possible - impossible" duality.

Given these considerations, my chapter unfolds in two major sections: the first one is set to reframe the concept of worldliness proposed by Edward Said within the analytical study that runs through two articles by Paul Ricoeur: "What is a Text?" and "The Model of the Text". Whereas the second section deals directly with Derrida's methodic reasoning about the nature of the text or the written word. In amounting to that end, I chose to work on his article of "Différance", which constitutes an important section in his book entitled *The Margins of Philosophy*.