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## Educational discourse in the processual-cognitive perspective\*

### KEYWORDS

discourse, educational discourse, formalized educational discourse, ideology, critical discourse analysis, rhetorical discourse analysis, *topoi*

### ABSTRACT

The paper attempts at presenting diversity in discourse research and defining educational discourse in its new cognitive-processual aspect. The analysis is concentrated on formalized educational discourse undergoing ideological influences through mass, public and government supervised education. For the detailed discussion multiperspective method including critical and rhetorical analysis has been proposed acknowledging the separateness of makro and discursive strategies together with their *topoi* in the common ideological – cognitive mean.

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### 1. Introduction

The concept of discourse is included in paradigms within various disciplines of humanities and social sciences, resulting in a continual increase of its semantic field and the increasing disruption of its meaning. Traditionally, the concept of discourse is used to describe interactions, or communication events (particular or lasting) that serve the purpose of transferring thought and influencing the recipient, using adequately selected arguments. Currently it is also an instrument of defining language, that is used in various social practices (e.g. the discourse of

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\* The article is a presentation of the discourse of education, and the method of its examination, presented in the book: A. Rypel, *Ideologiczny wymiar dyskursu edukacyjnego. Na przykładzie podręczników języka polskiego z lat 1918-2010*, Bydgoszcz 2012.

politics, sciences and education), in regard to particular groups (e.g. the discourse of lawyers, physicians, Facebook users), institutions (e.g. discourse of the EU, the discourse of the Polish church) or particular individuals (e.g. the discourse of Martin Luther King, the discourse of Marine Le Pen), as well as particular communication situations (e.g. the discourse in a classroom, the discourse of a visit at the doctor's surgery). Discourse is also defined as an assortment of values, concepts, and views (e.g. the ecology discourse, the neoliberal discourse, the right-wing discourse) (see: Lisowska-Magdziarz, 2006: 13-14). The aforementioned semantic fields may be subject to overlapping, crossing or mutual complementing, in result, forcing scholars interested in the research regarding the various aspects of discourse, to face the methodological difficulties, arising from the multiple modes of their understanding.<sup>1</sup>

What links the theories that define discourse, is the common starting point – the interactive perspective of examining speech, assumed by Emile Benveniste (Benveniste, 1966; Dessons 2006) and references to the discursive language theory, proposed by Paul Ricœur, in which discourse is considered as a linguistic event, occurring in a particular temporal order, determined by consecutive statements. A belief arises from this theory, that discourse is an individual event, in which someone speaks to someone else, referring to external conditions in which discourse occurs. According to Ricœur, only discourse, contrary to language (*parole*) which is abstract, timeless and deprived of individual sense, can possess a signifying character and transfer certain content (Ricœur, 1989: 75). Michel Foucault, the third of the great precursors of the current research concerning discourse, focuses his attention towards the context and the discursive events (statements) that occur in discourse and are regarded as modes of verbal articulation in the actually manifested form (Foucault, 1977: 143). The subject of Foucault's research is not the hermeneutic explanation of the meanings of these particular elements of discourse, but the examination of the modes of their existence; in order to explain what it means that they appeared, explain the time and place of the appearance of particular statements related to a particular reference system (Foucault, 1966: 1971). According to the scholar, the formulation of a statement is not dependent on the rules of language and logic. The discourse concept allows for a perception of those units of a language in regard of various rules, consisting of social, institutional and

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<sup>1</sup> On the sole ground of linguistics and glottodidactics, the variety of monographs and approaches is demonstrated with this brief list: Zawadowski, 1966; Kurcz, 1992; Labocha, 1996a, 1996b; Żydek-Bednarczuk, B. Zeler, 1996; Grabias 1997; Dąmbska-Prokop, 1997; Duszak, 1998; Gajda, 1999; Kawka, 1999; Witkowska, 2004; Wiśniewska, 2005; Żydek-Bednarczuk, 2005; Grzmił-Tylutki, 2007; Rittel, Rittel, 2015.

ideological factors. The factors influence the shape, object and the thematic selection of statements, as well as the position from which they are being formulated.

Among the modes of understanding discourse, apparent within linguistics and social sciences, one can list a number of major types of approach: the processual, the interactive, the cognitive and the cultural.<sup>2</sup>

The processual approach focuses on the processes that shape the communication phenomena. It relates to the theory of implication by Benveniste, according to which, the society constitutes the language, and simultaneously, the language constitutes the society:

Language comes to existence in the very same process, in which society does, in an effort of creating means of existence, transforming nature and multiplying tools. Within this collective work, and through this work, language is differentiated it amasses its productivity, just as society differentiates through its material and intellectual actions (Benveniste, 1980: 32).

The method of discourse research, proposed by Michel Foucault and the speculation regarding relations between authority, knowledge and discourse, available in the works by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 2005), are both adequate in regard of the aforementioned type of speculation. The processual approach may be therefore described by three principal premises: (1) Discourse is a practice that forms its discussed objects; (2) Discourse encapsulates meanings and social relations, constituting both the subjectivity and the relations of authority; (3) Discourses constitute the structural mechanisms, the mode of thought and subjective experience (see: Foucault, 1977), meaning that particular discourses specify each other, engaging in a mutual game, a process that enables them to shape various social phenomena.

The *i n t e r a c t i v e* *a p p r o a c h*, inspired by social sciences (mainly sociology), is dedicated to the speculation regarding discourse within the category of social activities conducted by users of language. Discourse is a kind of a “language behaviour, with their form being dependant on the speaker, the recipient, the given situation and the given aim” (Grabias, 1997: 264). This communicative action determines the type of interaction, coordinated by acts of speech, i. e. the particular language events. They are not identical with discourse; they arrange discourse, but are also, in regard of the contextual influence, subject to change or to an internal differentiation of their functions and meaning, e.g. they possess a simultaneous directive (they encourage action) and expressive (they express emotion) nature, or

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<sup>2</sup> They are named theoretical models by Anna Duszak: the processual, the strategic, the cognitive, and the interactive (Duszak, 1998: 118).

express assertions and simultaneously constitute a promise, i. e. express a certain obligation of action and responsibility (comissive speech). The pursuit of the rules of discourse cannot be limited to the semiotic level of a language, with its autonomous set of rules, but should also encompass the level of psychophysical and social phenomena.

The interactive approach is founded on the ground of the theory by Jürgen Habermas, contributive to the research regarding the ethical aspect, mainly due to accepting a differentiation between the “critique” and the “discourse” (Habermas 2004). The “critique” does not assume the possibility of understanding or of an unlimited communication, the “discourse” however, is based on the belief that a rational understanding may be reached in the communication context free of internal and external limitations. Four “validity claims” (claims of comprehensibility, sincerity, legitimacy and truth<sup>3</sup>) must be included in the understanding, causing the ideal communication to be liberated from both internal and external forms of violence and coercion, ensuring an equality of possibilities in the plane of participation and the equal mutuality of the roles assumed by the discourse participants. Reaching an understanding is accomplished by raising one of the aforementioned validity claims – its critical analysis resulting in its acceptance or denial.

The *s t r a t e g i c a p p r o a c h* is based on the premise that the discursive society and the kind of a communication society (community) are built upon the ground of an ideological-cultural community in a defined world view selected regarding interests and circumstances. The constituted group is characterised by the use of certain language means: flag words or keywords, reproduced sentence constructs, e. g. the etiquette formulas (Gajda, 2001: 8-9). Discourse, as a manifestation, typical for a certain culture of the means of communication, is defined by the norms and strategies employed in the process of creating statements. Social and cultural patterns that constitute a norm, used in the formulation of a text/sense of defined generic properties, prove to be the basis of this strategy. (Labocha, 1996a: 51).

The idea of “discursive competence” (however specified differently by various scholars) proves to be essential for this approach (Charaudeau, 2001: 344). It enables the communication participant to recognise and apply different discursive methods in regard of the situational parameters. The participant is capable of cre-

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<sup>3</sup> The *c o m p r e h e n s i b i l i t y* claim assumes, that only the comprehensible acts of speech may become legitimate, the *s i n c e r i t y* relates to the compatibility of the acts of speech with the intent of the speaker; the *t r u t h* claim relates to the belief, that the statement content may be verified or falsified only in relation to the theoretical discourse; while the *l e g i t i m a c y* claim draws upon the practical discourse. (Evert, 1993: 141-142).

ating and interpreting texts, referring to a system of values, intents and the aims of the recipient, and to adjust own communication strategies to the variety and vagueness of interpersonal relations (Ibidem).

The *cognitive approach*, draws upon the belief that “it is not so much that discourse itself ‘has’ meaning, but rather that meaning is something *assigned* to a discourse” (van Dijk, 1997: 8), and that communication is an open, dynamic process subject to continuous reinterpretation. According to Gilles Fauconnier, an advocate of the approach, language is a surface manifestation of hidden, highly abstract cognitive constructs, and the construction of a discourse draws upon building a network of mutually related mental spaces (Fauconnier, 1999). Language statements possess no constant meaning, however, they possess a certain *meaning potential* “which, within the given discourse and context updates as a particular sense” (Libura, 2006: 71), consisting of a clash of individual and social mental factors.

Within the process of communication, the participants of various groups share the same values, norms, communicative and social conventions expressed in particular mental models and stereotypes, and simultaneously in particular communicative situations, they create and comprehend texts within their individual modes of cognition, therefore generating a personal diversity within discourse. The aim of the scholars who employ the cognitive paradigm regarding discourse analyses is to isolate the factors that integrate the language into a social activity (see: Chilton, 2008). For example: the social cognitive approach, proposed van Dijk draws upon the standard psychological model of memory which, combining the semantic memory with stable social constructs, treats episodic memory as a storage space for previously experienced narratives while ascribing the context processing function to working memory. An examination of these types of mechanisms, regarding the functions of the human mind, proves highly significant for discovering of the factors contributive to the opening of the discourse participants to different influences (political, cultural or social) imposed via persuasion and manipulation.

The *cultural approach* is mainly related to the examination of intra- and intercultural communication. Its sources lie in the ethnography of communication, proposed by Dell H. Hymes, who defined the theory of communication as a system of cultural behaviour. The system is not necessarily exotic, i. e. related to tribal and small ethnic community cultures, which are an object of traditionally perceived anthropological and ethnographic studies. The key aspect of the concept, is to consider the communication process within the system, regarding the structures of organising the diversity of speech forms,

specific in each culture (Hymes, 1980: 41). A similar approach is present in the definitions of discourse, found in cultural studies. Their main point of focus is not the manifestation of a particular mode or style of articulation, but the typical, the repetitive and the collective, which allows to distinguish between particular national cultures and subcultures. (Fleischer, 1994: 42).

A cultural approach towards discourse is indubitably the broadest allowing for an examination of the actual views of the participants of a particular culture or subculture. "A set of views, stored in discourses, can provide the basis for the creation of constructs of linguistic or linguistic-cultural images of the world" (Labocha, 1996b: 11).

The juxtaposition of the aforementioned approaches is to a degree arbitrary and does not exclude other possibilities of classifying of the meanings attributed to the concept of discourse, especially as the presented approaches are to a high degree, complementary (e. g. the cultural and cognitive approaches). They all fit into the definition of discourse presented by Teun A. van Dijk, as a phenomenon constituted by three main aspects: "language use, cognition, and interaction in their sociocultural context" (van Dijk, 1997: 32).

## **2. Interdisciplinary and linguistic approaches towards the concept of discourse**

A specification of the issue regarding the discourse of education, should be preceded by a presentation and a classification of the proposals regarding the definition of discourse, that have emerged on the ground of the previously presented approaches. The first group of explications, consists of *sensu stricte* definitions, regarding the linguistic interpretation, while the other, of *sensu largo* definitions, resulting from the interdisciplinary approach towards discourse.

The discourse category, as presented by the linguistic approach, served the purpose of describing a unit of language, rather than a particular sentence, one that is ordered and constitutive of a complete, intentional and integral language string, equipped with meaning (por. e. g. Numan, 1993: 154), that is often identified with text (por. e. g. Żydek-Bednarczuk, 2005: 69). A subject of speech appears, along with the complete network of relations linking him with the recipient of the sentence (por. np. Grabias, 1994: 264), however the sentence is considered as a "certain defined text, therefore, a particular word message, created by a particular person in a given act of communication equipped with the signs of an individual

use of the elements of language (Dobrzyńska, 1991: 143).<sup>4</sup> A certain mode of discourse treatment has appeared in the current linguistic studies, under the influence of conclusions made within pragmalinguistics, sociolinguistics and ethnolinguistics, that in the words of Dominique Maingueneau (Grzmil-Tylutki, 2007: 24-26), may be reduced to the following principles: (1) discourse is a suprasentential unit (the holistic aspect of the sentence as a linguistic macroact is important, rather than its breadth); (2) discourse is directed (it is of pragmatic nature, according to the intent of the speaker, and the purpose, regarding the recipient as well, however changes and modifications are available); (3) discourse is a form of activity (it is dynamic and develops accordingly to the purpose); (4) discourse is interactive (it expands in an interpersonal space); (5) discourse is contextualised (context constitutes one of the inherent elements of discourse, rather than its background); (6) discourse assumes the responsibility of subjects who creates it; (7) discourse is subject to the mutual influence linguistic and social norms. Therefore, discourse means “language in use” and relates to an intermediate plane between the abstract and formal language, and particular texts. In order to conduct the analysis, one must direct own attention to the non-linguistic contexts, as according to Anna Duszak, allows them to transgress the boundaries of text and overcome numerous obstacles of the traditional theory of text, while remaining in its proximity (Duszak, 1998: 20).

The interdisciplinary approach, being a certain “linguistic turn” that has taken place within the methodologies of the social sciences (particularly sociology, social psychology and pedagogy), over the last twenty years, perceives discourse as the framework of thought and argumentation in a particular area of social life. The area, is often determined by the common object of interest, of subjects participating in communication, the repetitiveness of the social relations and the modes of its verbalising (see: Krakowiak, 2008). Discourse imposes a certain meaning on the area perceived from a certain perspective, therefore, it cannot be treated solely as a selection of texts, but rather as a combination of text and the circumstances of its creation. Therefore, the interdisciplinary understanding of discourse assumes the existence of a mutual influence between different kinds of linguistic behaviours and particular areas of social life, where they take place. An establishment of norms and aforementioned frameworks of thought common for all the subjects, via the medium of different communication interactions is required in order for the influence to appear (zob. Habermas, 2004).

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<sup>4</sup> A similar definition of discourse is offered by Anna Duszak: “discourse encompasses the given act of communication in its entirety, including the particular verbalisation (text) as well as non-linguistic factors included, i.e. the given situation and its participants. (Duszak, 1998: 19).

The two semantic scopes of “discourse”, i. e. the linguistic and the interdisciplinary, often overlap in particular scholarly pursuits, that is why their analysis could consist of the same research procedure, proposed by van Dijk. It encompasses five continual types of activity, i.e.:

[discourse analytical studies] “various levels, units or constructs within each of these dimensions, and formulate the rules and strategies of their normative or actual uses. They functionally relate such units or levels among each other, and thereby also explain why they are being used. In the same way, they functionally connect discourse structures with social and cultural context structures, and both again to the structures and strategies of cognition.” (van Dijk, 1997: 32).

### 3. Discourse of education

A presentation of such a mode of understanding of the concept of the discourse of education, which would reflect the specifics of contextual circumstances (including the ideological), requires a description and classification of currently functioning definitions of the discourse of education as well as various other terms used to describe the linguistic communication present in education. The definition of the discourse of education depends on the definition of education.<sup>5</sup> Two types of approaches towards the phenomenon of the discourse of education emerge from the various accounts proposed in the literature: they represent a variety of scopes.

Accepting a narrow scope of understanding education<sup>6</sup> results in a premise, that the discourse of education is an “ordered verbal interaction, that is, the cooperation of the teacher and the student in expressing thought regarding a certain subject” (Kurczab, 1999: 284). The presented definition by Henryk Kurczab, corresponds with a (narrow as well) linguistic definition of discourse proposed by Renata Grzegorzycykowa:

Discourse is a greater (multisentential, mostly dialogue) text consisting of reasoning and the adequate communication unit, i.e. a broader statement, created and perceived in real time, containing the elements of a reasoning, modified in contact with the recipient (Grzegorzycykowa, 1998: 42).

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<sup>5</sup> The task of juxtaposing the means of defining the term *education* was undertaken by Barbara Guzik (Guzik, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Limited mostly to the transfer of knowledge and skills, preparing children to the challenges of adult life.



According to Kurczaba, discourse assumes a central position within teaching and is treated as one of the quintessential forms of a didactic activity, due to which its participants improve their linguistic and cognitive skills.<sup>7</sup> In the aforementioned sense, one should speak not of the discourse of education, but rather a discourse of “didactics” or even, a discourse of a “lesson”. Jolanta Nocoń, while defining the properties of didactic discourse, places a significant line between the broad understanding of education, and a much narrower scope of pedagogy, dedicated to the issues of teaching and learning in both theoretical and practical sense (Nocoń, 2009: 21). The aim of the didactic discourse is to reform knowledge regarding a particular discipline in order to make it accessible to the less educated recipient (See: Labocha, 1996b: 13)<sup>8</sup>, at the same time being an “institutionalised discourse, accomplished in organised form of education (within the teaching-learning process) and within the particular time-space framework” (Nocoń, 2009: 21). The classroom discourse is even more specific, as it relates only to the exchange of the acts of speech among the teacher and the student (also known as a pedagogic or classroom dialogue), taking place in the process of education, that is, forming of knowledge and accomplishing didactic tasks. The school communication situation, in which these verbal contacts take place, is official and public, and is characterised by a peculiar asymmetry of roles in the “teaching-taught” arrangement (Skowronek, 1999: 12-13). The “school” discourse is a broader term, and relates to the forms of communication between the teacher and the students, also outside of the classroom, in the school space, regarding the building and its

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<sup>7</sup> See: “The term “discussion” is preferably used by teachers to determine the modes of encouraging students to interact verbally. The term discourse however is preferably used by scholars, and relates to the general patterns of exchange and communication, present in class, rather than particular procedures. Discourse participants use a language, as an instrument of communication. Through discourse, they improve their intellectual and cognitive skills. Sincerity and open communication are among the factors that have a decisive influence on the shaping of a positive discourse” (Kurczaba, 1999: 284). Teodozja Rittel perceives the discourse of education in a similar way, considering it as a model of a pedagogical communication competence, aiming at acquiring a selection of the sender-recipient strategies and accordingly orders issues regarding argumentation. The discourse of education, presented in this account, is one of the speech genres, used in the process of teaching, characterised by a semantic structure *to tell someone something*, including judgements, formulated with the articulated sentences, resulting in conviction or denial. Moreover, it should possess the following properties: sincerity, intentionality, linguistic correctness and the intellectual and emotional engagement (Rittel, 1996: 99-100).

<sup>8</sup> Basil Bernstein states, that the pedagogical discourse is deprived of its own, specific, discursive content. It remains as a principle of appropriating other discourses and building a specific relation between them, in order to conduct their selective transfer and adoption (in regard of the delocation and recollection of the elements of particular discourses (Bernstein, 1990: 172).

surroundings (Kawka, 1999: 29). Jolanta Nocoń expands this definition with the scope of student-student verbal interactions. (Nocoń, 2009: 21).<sup>9</sup>

A peculiar distortion of the discourse of education concept results with the definition being limited to classroom interactions, therefore, addressing the “classroom discourse” term, e.g. in the definition, proposed by Maria Zając, influenced by the research results by psycholinguists, which is as follows:

A stream of linguistic phenomena (spoken and written) coming from the teacher and particular students, that occur in regard of the classroom activities and their didactic premises. The stream, encompassed by a non-verbal communicative behaviour is used, according to the rules regarding the social roles of the student and the teacher in order to attain the goal, which regarding praxeological activities, during a typical classroom lesson, may be defined as completing a particular task (problem), and in the linguistic aspect, as a mutual construction of a text (Zając, 1996: 78).

In a broader context, education means the process of transferring knowledge, shaping the skills (both mental and physical), creating an own identity as well as certain personality traits, regarding the aspect of ethical and cultural values. Education may employ a formal character: in schools and other public or non-public educational institutions, but may also be conducted non-formally, drawing upon own experience of the learning and the educational influence of the family, peers, the work environment, the market, the media and entertainment. The type of education is constant, encompassing all areas of life and personality, therefore, its particular types are differentiated regarding these particular areas, e.g. health, the physical, defence, environmental, or economic education. Such a broad context in which the discourse of education is treated as a broad communication practice, as a form of transmitting knowledge from the expert to the novice perspective in the scope of a certain cognitive horizon; discourse is generated in social situations of teaching or during the education process in a broad sense, which means that it relates to each situation of including an adept into a discourse community, regardless whether the practice is institutionalised or non-formal (see: Skudrzyk, 2005: 68; Nocoń, 2009: 20).

The fact, that the broader understanding of education is related to the differentiation of educational practices into the natural (non-formal) the formalised and the institutionalised, including i.a. public school education, subject to the influence of the authorities, is important for the given discussion. None of the definitions of

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<sup>9</sup> The presentation of Polish and worldwide research regarding the school discourse (didactic and classroom) was conducted by Jolanta Nocoń (Nocoń, 2009: 18-24).

the discourse of education, presented above responds entirely to my research perspective, as none of them *explicite* assumes any ideological circumstances, which would influence the creation of meanings and the evaluation of reality. The circumstances are mainly related to the formal education, representing the “secondary educational order” (Jastrzębski, 2011: 18). Contrary to the natural education<sup>10</sup>, the formal education represents an aspect of educational services as well as institutionalised and specialised, multi-functional social practices, isolated regarding the division of labour and occupational roles. The aforementioned features constitute a government-made education system, particularly the mass public school with its processes, aims, organisation, content, principles, programmes and methods.

#### **4. The formalised discourse of education in its cognitive-processual aspect**

The mode of describing the discourse of education, as accepted here, which I will later refer to as the formalised discourse of education, is based on the premise, that it is a certain social practice occurring in school, that is, in an institutionalised and formal plane of educational activities. Simultaneously, I assume, that the redefinition of the concept of the discourse of education demands presenting education as a phenomenon involved in the social, political and cultural processes, that it shapes and is in turn shaped by them. Therefore, the specific nature of the formalised discourse of education is that, it constitutes a linguistic practice in which various social, political and cultural processes, along with their familiar linguistic practices, clash.<sup>11</sup> The processes introduce features of different types of discourse (e. g. political and scientific) to the formalised discourse of education. In consequence, texts embodied in the genres primary to the other discourses, e.g.: works

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<sup>10</sup> Natural education relates to common educational experience in which the parental and educational roles of “parent-child” or the “adult generation-adolescent generation”, are entangled in the context of everyday life. Natural education is, therefore, inextricably linked to the idea of survival as well as of the biological and cultural continuity and reproduction. At the common level, rooted in social tradition, an idea of education, not as a separate type of education, but as an organic (similar to procreation) ingredient of life processes, is accepted spontaneously and without reflection (See: Schulz, 2003: 124). Natural education regarded as such, finds no place for conscious and consequently conducted activities towards the ideologisation of discourse.

<sup>11</sup> A similar understanding of the discourse of education context is presented by Jolanta Nocoń: “the social scope of the discourse of education is broad: it is not limited to the framework of institutions dedicated to the education of the society, particularly schools, but also refers to all communication situations, in which a process of including an adept into the community of discourse takes place.” (Nocoń, 2009: 20).

of literature, scientific works, press articles and various texts of culture: sculptures, paintings, architecture, films, etc., are included in the discourse of education, establishing its interdiscursive and intersemiotic character.

The particular realisation of texts, the model of genres in which they were embodied in the discourse of education, is influenced by both the specialist discourses of scientific disciplines, which provide the terminology to the traditional school subjects and discourses of disciplines that contribute to the teaching theories, e.g. pedagogy and developmental psychology, as well as various types of public discourses including the aforementioned political discourse. The premise allows to simultaneously analyse the primary genre, unequivocally ascribed to the discourse of education (that is, the textbook), but also e.g. the core curriculum, the particular curricula and the legal acts regarding education. Their particular instances (except the textbook) are not the direct subject of the classroom discourse, but influence (or: should influence) its shape. Simultaneously, the genres (including the textbook) must be approved by a body of experts who represent different fields, but also by the Ministry of National Education, which is a government body, and are also subject to public debate e.g. in the parliament or the media.

A defined interpretative community is formed through education, articulating certain meanings both through language: in texts, as well as through a broader context. Regarding the aforementioned plane, discourse should be treated as a field of mutual negotiation of meanings among participants of certain practices. Discourse, defined in such way, does not refer to the individual plane, but constitutes a specific aspect of the world of culture, functions in regard of certain environments, institutions and processes, contributing to them and determining their character. Structured by language and context, discourse simultaneously structures reality.

The accepted understanding of the term “discourse of education”, contains a significantly highlighted processual approach, which emphasises on the relations between negotiating of meanings and the character of social relations; as well as the cognitive approach, which ascribed additional meaning, not only to the mental processes of an entity, but also the socially culturally shaped representations such as: knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values, accepted by the language users, as members of particular groups.

The contextual circumstances that influence the discourse of education may be analysed in a local or a global aspect (van Dijk, 2001: 29). While defining and, afterwards, analysing the formalised discourse of education, one should consider both these aspects, i. e.: the local context referring to the place, the circumstances, the participants, their communication roles (e.g. student – teacher, student – stu-

dent), intents and aims as well as the global context encompassing the communication practices, which may be regarded as the activity constitutive, in an organisational and institutional aspect, of the educational proceedings and procedures, and whose participants are representatives of various social groups or institutions (e.g. government agendas, opinion leaders, educational supervisors, etc.). The local context is of a personified, individual character, while global refers to the institutional aspects of educational procedures.

In the cognitive-processual terms, the discourse of education is not an arbitrary collection of texts, but the discourse is made of linguistic forms related to a particular, sociologically and politically determined social practice. As discourse is rooted in history, and simultaneously influences the current, and shapes the future, its analysis demands the inclusion of all possible information regarding the context, including the cognitive context, essential to education. The discourse of education shapes not only the individual statements regarding reality, but creates the collective identity of the youth generation, encompassing patterns of culture, a set of norms and values as well as the principles of arranging knowledge, selected accordingly. Additionally, discourse is a “place where language and ideology meet” (Pêcheux, 1988: 635). The research regarding the ideological realms of language use in school, particularly the changes that, along with the ideological changes relating the realms of politics, culture and social life, occur in meanings crucial for education, e.g. “homeland”, “mother tongue”, “nature” or “civilisation”. The meanings, generated in its scope and transferred to the youth generation, regarding the different reality phenomena, are negotiated in terms of context. The context reflects the relation of power and various ideologies.

The discourse of education participants are frequently unaware of the modes in which they are positioned by the school as an institution, and in result, unable to accept particular social roles. Their awareness may be increased by revealing the mechanisms of persuasion and linguistic manipulation, inscribed in the official education documents and texts included in textbooks. The issues regarding the abuse of power and the perpetuation of inequalities using ideology, can be subject to research in a similar way.

## **5. The areas of social activity in the discourse of education**

Without the context analysis, it is difficult to determine the scope and character of the ideological impact inscribed in the activities of the school involved in the social-political processes. The established education of the adolescent generation

is placed in a plane of influence controlled by the government, in result rendering it subject to administrative control or political influence. The institutional interference regarding educational processes may not be regarded solely as unintentional side-effects. The interference is an inherent property of a complex system of compulsory education under government control. School as an institution, ensures not only the continuity of education, but additionally it establishes premises for an intentional and orchestrated ideological pressure enforced on the adolescent generation (Tillmann, 1996: 155). The influence is not limited to *stricte* political ideologies, as it is difficult to unequivocally distinguish between fields of influence of different ideologies, as they are often complementary and mutually reinforcing, e.g.: in Polish schools the positivist social modernism ideology, promoting the cult of civilisation progress, supported the state ideology in the 1930s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was further exploited by the communist ideology during time of the PRL, to legitimise the new state model, and currently it has been confronted by the so-called “deep ecology”.

The aims, the intensity and the scope of the ideological impact, regardless of whether it regards the current state politics, the culture or particular aspects of social life, are always dependent on the positions assumed in the hierarchy of authority, by individuals who spread the ideology. The scope of influence of a particular ideology increases accordingly to the strength of their standing, to a degree of encompassing a major part of society.

The formalised education is an efficient instrument of influencing different aspects of social conscience and it is also subject to change by pressure coming from different centres of opinion. To explain the specifics, regarding the social-political context relevant to the discourse of education, one could employ the “area of social activity” category, used in critical discourse analysis. The area of social activity is a particular part of reality, providing a point of reference for a given discourse. The diversity of different areas of social activity is reflected by the diversity of functions and the social institutionalisation of discursive activities (Wodak, 2008: 190). Accordingly, the functions accomplished in the discourse of education may be related to particular functions of formalised education.

I acknowledge, that the formalised discourse of education can be related to the following, fundamental areas of social activity: socialisation, selection, the intergenerational transmission of patterns of culture (enculturation), the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, state educational policy and the educational supervision. The aforementioned areas are the ground on which the fundamental functions of formalised education are accomplished, that can be reduced to: (1) a selection and transmission of the patterns of culture, attitudes,

knowledge and skills considered essential for the survival of a society, to the young generation; (2) a social stratification and (3) a preparation for entering the world of career.

## 6. The cognitive (ideological) aspect of the discourse of education

While examining the discourse of education, one may consider its various aspects: the linguistic, the communicative, the interactive and the cognitive. The linguistic aspect encompasses structured graphemes and sounds, abstract syntactic forms, the complex structures of local and global meanings as well as schematic forms of composition. The following two aspects relate to the social activities accomplished by language users, who communicate among each other in various situations, in particular societies and cultures (van Dijk, 2001). The last aspect listed, seems most interesting for the issues discussed in this article: the factor in question, implicates how particular words, sentences, narrative schemes, modes of creating and maintaining text coherence will be used and comprehended as well as how various communication strategies, employed by the participants of discourse, will be used and read. According to Teun van Dijk:

To understand a sentence, to establish coherence between sentences or to interpret the topic of a text presupposes that language users share a vast repertoire of sociocultural *beliefs*. The choice of lexical items, the variation of style or the use of rhetorical devices similarly presupposes that language users express opinions or ideologies and thus contribute to the construction of new ones or the modification of existing ones with their recipients (van Dijk, 2001: 17).

The cognitive aspect of discourse refers to certain socially accepted axiological systems, that enable the members of a given society to arrange their world overview as well as determine the starting point for value-judgements regarding various phenomena of reality – both the existing one and the potential, remaining in the plane of desire. The organisation of world view communities, functioning in particular social groups draws upon various ideologies, therefore the cognitive aspect of discourse could also be regarded as an ideological aspect.

I am using the term “ideology”, aware of the definition difficulties resulting from its use, as it is being used to describe the fields of beliefs regarding different planes of social life, an is result is employed in varying context.<sup>12</sup> In terms of ana-

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<sup>12</sup> See: the discussion regarding the ambiguity of the concept of ideology: Szacki, 1991; Bauman, 1998; Puzynina, 2008.



lysing the texts in my scope of interest, included in the discourse of education, the aforementioned ambiguity does not implicate limitations, but allows for a more complex description of their ideological aspect. Such approach, allows to include the messages of various ideologies of politics, of the society, of culture and of education. It is a significant property, as distinguishing between fields of influence in education is particularly difficult, e.g.: an authoritarian ideology of education, including an inscribed ideology emphasising on the universal high culture, can support the dominant position of a social group following a conservative political ideology.<sup>13</sup>

Due to the aforementioned variety, while using the term “ideology”, I do not refer to narrow projecting definitions, typical for discourses of disciplines such as: sociology and political sciences. I draw inspiration from the general, descriptive definition proposed by Jadwiga Puzyninna, who defines ideology as:

an assortment of views, methods of proceeding and slogans, distinctive for a certain social group, based on particular values and regarding the holistic concept of the human and/or of social life, or its elements. Ideologies are often related to certain trends in thought regarding political, economic, aesthetic or other aspects. The ideologies are to a degree dependent on the social relations and the entirety of culture in which they are formed. They vary amongst themselves, regarding the level of rationality and a more or less influential element of the emotional factors [...]. Totalitarian ideologies, in various ways imposed on the members of a society, are definitely perceived negatively (Puzynina, 2008: 20).

The presented definition allows to consider ideology not only as an instrument of defending political and economic interest of a certain social group, but also as an arrangement of specific cognitive-social representations, that manifest in language. A collection of beliefs that constitute an ideology must be homogeneous, arranged and integral; it may assimilate elements that are internally and mutually inconsistent, value-judgements and descriptive observations drawn upon various systems of knowledge (both common and scientific) as well as various areas of experience, coming from different levels and fields of culture. These beliefs constitute a specific kind of reality interpretation. Discourse can be examined in three aspects: lexical, grammatical-textual and textual. I choose the third option, as it allows me to relate to the experience of linguistic, cogni-

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<sup>13</sup> According to Roland Miegħan “ideologies of education operate at various levels, having several layers of meaning: nationally in the Education Acts, regionally in local education authority policies, locally in a particular school and internally between rival groups in a school. Furthermore, ideologies of education are linked with other ideologies: ideologies of politics, of the economy, of social classes” (Meighan, 1993: 197).



tive concepts, particularly the textological school of Lublin, founded by Jerzy Bartmiński and Ryszard Tokarski.

According to Bartmiński, the above-mentioned interpretation of reality may be considered as a result of:

subjective perception and the conceptualisation of reality, by the users of a particular language, therefore, maintaining a clearly subjective and anthropocentric character, while being intersubjective in the sense that it is subject to socialisation and becomes something that connects people in a particular social group, making them a community of thought, feelings and values; something that secondarily influences (the matter of its force is debatable) on the perceiving and understanding of the social situation, as perceived by the members of the community (Bartmiński, 2010).

The above observation, draws upon the definition of the linguistic world view, as formulated by Jerzy Bartmiński, turns attention to the cognitively oriented ethnolinguistics, its instruments and research categories, that may be useful for the examination of the field of these intersubjective and socialised interpretations, that constitute particular ideologies.

One such instrument, used in the analysis of values hidden in a linguistically constituted world view, is the “viewpoint” category. This aspect of semantic research is linked to the term “profiling” which, regardless of its numerous definitions and interpretations<sup>14</sup>, is (in the most general sense) oriented towards the textual interpretation of words. Therefore, profiles may be regarded as variants of envisioning of a particular lemma, rather than variants of meaning; a particular unit of language may possess alternative profiles, but they do not constitute alternative meanings.

Various speaking entities, representing similar or differing interests and viewpoints and in result, particular value systems, participate in a particular (e.g. educational) discourse, as a form of social debate. Discourse is the particular place where viewpoints polarise, which in effect influences the process of the subjective profiling of reality. The process manifests in different forms of discursive verbalisation as well as in competing discursive strategies (Czachur, 2011: 82). In result, profiling may be regarded as a process of valuation based on the values accepted by the speakers as well as the viewpoints, that in turn result from the activation,

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<sup>14</sup> Mostly regarding the different modes of redefining the primary concept by Ronald Langacker (1995), according to which, profiling is a mental operation conducted by the human mind, and consisting of lighting a certain element within the basis, so that the element becomes significantly highlighted.

typical for the cultural paradigm of a certain society, encompassing patterns of thought and beliefs.

Mass, institutionalised education constitutes one of the most common, and homogeneous elements of the shaping of individual judgements regarding reality. Such homogeneity of the message distinguishes education and media, with the media having a similar (if not prevalent) influence, but lacking homogeneity. Media includes (although in varying terms) different opinion centres; from political elites to niche subcultures, that spread their ideology via e.g. the Internet. In result, the same phenomenon may be valued and interpreted in many, often dramatically different ways. Contrarily, education allows no additional viewpoints that would compete and in result, profile the world view differently. Education introduces the adolescent generation, that does not yet have own experience and polarised beliefs, to a pre-prepared construct of envisioning of reality and, therefore, influences the shaping of their collective identity. The collective conscience encompasses both the accordingly selected patterns of culture, as well as a set of norms and values, including the principles of arranging knowledge.

## **7. The methods of analysis of the formalised discourse of education**

The aforementioned research method, allowing to reflect upon the discourse of education, is the critical discourse analysis. It has not established a particular, single research paradigm. Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak consider the following approaches, to be the most contributive regarding the CDA: the French school of discourse analysis, critical linguistics, social semiotics, the social-cognitive research, the discursive-historical, lecture analysis, the Duisburg school method and the research regarding the mutual influences between the social-cultural changes and the changes in discourse (Fairclough, Wodak, 2006: 1051-1056).<sup>15</sup> Few of the aforementioned approaches have been employed to examine the particular phenomena of the discourse of education. The French school of discourse analysis representatives were attempting to examine school textbooks, including the genealogic aspect (see: Grzmil-Tylutki, 2007). The critical linguistics representatives, examined certain education texts in order to study the ideological potential within the categorisation systems implemented into particular lexicalisation modes of expe-

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<sup>15</sup> Also see: the mode of isolating particular critical accounts regarding discourse, based on different criteria and presented by Paul Chilton (Chilton, 2008: 62-64).

riences, included in that type of texts (Kress 1985). The discursive-historical method was employed to analyse the barriers of institutional communication in school (Wodak, Koller 2008). Research regarding the relation between the social-cultural change and the discursive change, resulted in the proposals of a pedagogical employment of the “critical language awareness” as a central ingredient of language education in schools and different educational institutions (see: Fairclough, 1992).

Particular CDA projects draw upon various theories, and research accomplishments, according to the examined issues and the object construed. The mode of understanding, that I assumed, of the discourse of education, as a practice of social communication characterised by interdiscursivity and constituting a field of the clash of different tendencies for domination and emancipation, serving both change and stabilisation, allows for a selection of elements appropriate for varying critical approach. Their employment decreases the risk of a biased approach towards the object of research. This multi-trajectory nature of the research is ensured i.a. by the multi-aspect method, that combines various analytic procedures and includes varying empirical data and contextual information. Its roots trace back to the school of Vienna, in which the historical discourse analysis (HDA) is being conducted, as one of the variants of the critical discourse analysis (*krytycznej analizy dyskursu*). Ruth Wodak, the leading scholar within the group, expanded the field of analysis, including references to sociological theories, and the historical aspect of discursive activities via the examination of diachronic metamorphoses, that influence particular genres of discourse.<sup>16</sup>

“Context” is the key term regarding the multi-aspect method, significant regarding my definition of the discourse of education. Ruth Wodak enumerates the following levels of context: the direct linguistic and contextual context; (2) intertextual and interdiscursive relations between statements, texts, speech genres and discourses; (3) non-language varying social and institutional framework of particular situational contexts; (4) a broad social, political and historical context of discursive activities (Wodak, 2008: 193).

The selection of particular categories and research instruments is determined by the type and character of the discussed issue. The main issue is to achieve maximum efficiency in the theoretical analysis of social and language phenomena, as the final aim is to establish practical applications of the research results, that should be shared among specialists of various disciplines and in result employed in order to change certain social practices (Wodak, 2008: 194). In order to achieve

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<sup>16</sup> More on the subject regarding the historical analysis of discourse, see: Wodak, 2008 i Wodak, M. Krzyżanowski, 2011.

that goal, the multi-aspect method of discourse analysis should encompass the determination of contents/themes of a particular sentence and the examination of discursive strategies (including modes of argumentation) used in the sentence, as well as linguistic means and speech genres as well as their particular applications dependent on the context (specimen)/(okazów) (Wodak, 2008: 195).

R. Wodak considers the term “strategy” as a more or less precise, or consciously approved activity program (including discursive activities) aiming at achieving particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goals” (Wodak, 2008: 195). The discursive strategies are a “systematically repetitive modes of language use, that are characterised by various levels of complexity and different levels of language system organisation” (Wodak, 2008: 196). If such a premise were to be accepted, the instruments of rhetorical analysis could be employed in the research regarding discourse. It allows for highlighting of not only strategies of persuasion, but also its goals and means of accomplishment.

A number of reasons encourage the turn towards the inspiration provided by rhetorical tradition. First, the great rebirth of rhetoric, which for a long period of time had seemed to be a closed discipline, limited to the petrified patterns of classical pronunciation. However, the impressive of textual grammar and the linguistic theory of prose, caused the rhetoric to be perceived not only in the categories of knowledge regarding the modes of verified techniques of argumentation, but also, if not mainly, as a generative technique which, possessing certain argumentation mechanisms, allows for a generation of persuasive arguments, adjusted to current needs (Ziomek, 1986: 94).

## **8. Examining argumentation as a means for the analysis of the ideological message in the discourse of education**

The universal character of rhetoric lies in the fact, that it describes certain regularities of the construction and usage of all texts. Language in action, or the language used by people in order to shape attitudes or evoke actions of other people becomes the main subject of the research. The currently conducted research, regarding the rhetorical structure of texts, serves to explain the dynamic influences between a persuasive statement and its context.<sup>17</sup> The aforementioned means, that

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<sup>17</sup> Currently, the most popular methods of rhetorical analysis, were introduced by Jakub Z. Li-chański (2007: 20-26). The methods are as follows: 1) the method formed by the American school of *rhetorical criticism*; 2) the method postulated by Roland Barthes (see: Barthes 1997); 3) the method of the analysis of argumentation by Chaim Perelman (see: Perelman 1995); 4) the five-step method.

the mode of how discourse responds to the needs of recipients, how it supports and changes their beliefs and affects the social structure of the group is the central point of scholarly interest (Gill, Whedbee, 2001: 185). Therefore, according to Teun van Dijk, rhetoric may be regarded as a predecessor to what we now call the analysis of discourse (van Dijk 2001, 21).

Assuming that the aim of the formalised research regarding formalised discourse is to examine how an ideologically characterised collective identity of the young generation is shaped, the particular sequences of the argumentation will not be the main subject of the analyses, but the common places (*loci communes; topoi*), that are the source pool for arguments. The analysis of the process of argumentation would require a careful examination of the rhetorical composition of particular texts, appropriate for this type of discourse. A meticulous recreation of semantic structures, constructed in particular texts (e.g. textbooks, core curriculum and education Acts) would complicate the process of grasping the essential points of reference, that constitute the terminological background of the participants of the formalised discourse of education. The identification of the topoi allows for an isolation of certain circulating judgements, schemes and images referred to, while shaping the conscience of the subsequent generations of students. The topoi have no informative value, they provide nothing, that the recipient wouldn't have previously realised and expected in particular circumstances, and simultaneously they serve to change the social reality and to accept a particular interpretation of the world, by the recipient. Therefore, the topoi serve the purpose of creating social roles and relations linking these roles, they determine the system of socially significant values and maintain the version of reality, accepted by the sender. Their function is to establish and maintain the meanings preferred by the sender, among members of a given group. The rhetorical "common places" are employed in the process of persuasion, which disregards the aim of pursuing impersonal and objective truth, but rather, gaining an intellectual as well as emotional acceptance of the assertions formulated by the sender. In result, topoi contribute to the establishment of a specific framework or terminological models common for all school graduates.

In the aspect of propagating ideology, the topoi mostly serve the conative function of language: they serve to affect, stimulate action or influence the

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The conduct of the rhetorical analysis, based on the account of the American rhetorical criticism along with an example of its practical application, was presented by Ann M. Gill and Karen Whedbee (2001). One should mention, that the rhetorical criticism (similar to CDA) is often applied to research regarding groups of socially excluded individuals (i.e. "Others"), including the feminist discourse.

mental state of the participants of discourse. Depending on whether they were applied in order to directly influence the conscience of the recipients or were introduced subliminally; they are means of either persuasion or manipulation. Regarding the aforementioned processes, the topoi are included in broader semantic structures, that create a specific equivalent of holistic framework or terminology models.

Regarding the ideological aspect, the models encompass knowledge related both to rational cognition and a type of cognition, that could be considered as mythical, characterised by a high degree of expression and significant stereotyping. The mythical thinking serves to model the reality (and to a degree, enchant it) and to fill it with indisputable senses. It is selective, brief and unidimensional. The mythical thinking often focuses on irrelevant episodes, defining them as grand events and specific symbols. In a mythical perception of reality, a single fact often becomes the basis for the belief regarding the causal relations, and the distinctions between imagination and object or item and its image are non-existent. Hence, it is often applied to ideological (especially politically) persuasion (see: i.a. Jaźwiński, 2008; Jeziński, 2008). Political myths (e.g. the myth of genesis or the myth of a hero, that legitimise the coming of a nation, a state or a political system) or social myths (e.g. education myths such as the myth of equal education opportunities or the myth of the versatile student development) are created for the purpose of ideological persuasion. Discourse subjects, veiled with mythicisation, are rendered relative regarding the time of their appearance; however the myth always creates a system of references, that enables the senders to impart an appropriate meaning to the topoi used in ideological argumentation.

According to the premises and rhetorical instruments used within CDA, the analysis of particular texts of a formalised discourse of education in the presented model, may be conducted within a procedure that consists of determining a macrostrategy, that, in an discourse of education (in accordance with the acknowledged premise), may be regarded as ideological affecting, in the cultural, social and political aspect, the ascending generation by the generation equipped with means of power and coercion. Afterwards, a number of discursive strategies should be isolated, as instruments of employing that particular macrostrategy.

In the critical discourse analysis, the discursive strategies are considered as “specific schemes, that highlight the modes of the forming of the acts of language, in order to achieve certain strategic goals” (Krzyżanowski, 2008: 282), and so Ruth Wodak listed i.a. the constructive strategy that helps construct and establish certain identities, the toning (strengthening) theory, that changes the epistemic status

of articulated statements<sup>18</sup> (see: Wodak, 2008: 197) as well as the legitimisation strategy (Krzyżanowski, 2008: 283), that legitimising the political authority and validating the legitimacy of various institutions by reference to tradition, history and the value system shared by a given social group.

Constructing a collective identity of the young generation requires the presence of a series of mutual relations between the constructive and other strategies. Construction of an identity enhances the process of the legitimation of authority and authorises actions of other social entities, while the representatives of the group that holds control over the process of compulsory education profile the meanings presented in a formalised discourse of education, and establish one cultural paradigm for the whole generation, which encompasses patterns of thought, an assortment of beliefs as well as a hierarchy of values. The resulting collective judgement of reality is meant to work in favour of approving the decisions of authorities, regarding the entire society. Elites of power select particular variants of meaning and arrange the semantic content regarding the selected traditions and systems of value. Simultaneously, they tone that, which in a given sense is undesirable, strengthening the mode of defining reality found useful.

## 9. Conclusion

The concept of perceiving and examining the discourse of education, presented in the above article, is one of many possible approaches, particularly, as it focuses solely on a particular aspect of education: formalised and placed in the frameworks of compulsory education. Such approach does not mean, that the school is subject to nothing but the influence of political ideology. School is *bona fide* introduced to a series of cultural and social ideology (including pedagogical), that are not regarded as political, although pursuing the construction of an *a priori* identity model; even if its aim is to educate towards self-determination and liberty. The methods assumed in order to examine the discourse of education may prove helpful in determining macrostrategies, strategies and their effective structures of argumentation, that (often involuntarily) are used to profile judgements regarding the reality of broadly defined education. Even

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<sup>18</sup> Meaning, that toning of certain values or belief e.g. omitting their selected aspects, simultaneously, leads to the highlighting and reinforcing of certain values of beliefs. Similarly – the intentional reinforcement of ideas, that are important for the sender of an idea, leads to the toning of certain views regarded as inconvenient.



if one assumes, that it is a type of education, in which coercion was reduced or even abolished, its influence is based on the cognitive (ideological) aspect, which is an inherent ingredient of every type of discourse appropriate for various social practices.

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