

Gee, Jordan, Delpit Rough Draft

Discourses are a portion of human life which can drastically affect how one spends their time living. James Gee, the founder of the idea of a "Discourse" claims that ones Discourse "is a sort of 'identity kit' which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize" (Gee 7). James Gee uses Discourses as a way to describe the overall way of life of groups of people, and how they are representative of the environment around you. Though this concept makes sense as it applies to the nurture part of nature/nurture, there are many conflicts which can come out of Gee's concept of having a dominant discourse and how ones discourses developed after the dominant interact with it. A person's dominant Discourse, also called the primary discourse, is the one which you are born into. Ones dominant primary discourse is unchosen and is assigned to them solely on the basis of when and where they are born. The initial tension which comes out of the topic of discourses is when a person begins to explore and attempt to acquire separate discourses. These new "secondary discourses" are the reason for tension which is brought out when the new discourses a person is discovering forms a conflict with the primary discourse they started off with. This tension, as Gee likes to describe it, stems from three different methods of attempting to adopt a new discourse. These three different tension causing events include using mushfake methods, resistance, and metaknowledge.

Mushfake is a prison term which mean to make do with that you have. Using a mushfake discourse would be a term used to describe a person who may use some of the information or knowledge which they have from their own discourse, to try and "make do" and function in another discourse. Someone who attempts to fit in with the an opposing discourse solely by using prior knowledge to forge their way into passing as part of the discourse. The tension that comes out of this comes from Gee's claim that a person can not just enter a discourse and be accepted. Gee states "Discourses are not mastered by overt instruction, but by enculturation into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people

Commented [1]: I don't feel like this explanation matches the quote. I don't think it's about environment around a person, from the way that Gee describes it- it is the specific behaviors aspects of an identity.

Commented [2]: Dominant Discourses are the discourses that provide the most opportunistic gain (like money or power) not necessarily the primary Discourse.

Commented [3]: I don't think it's just when and where you are born that makes up your Discourse.

Commented [4]: You may be able to make a claim out of this: I think that you agree with Gee in that tension can arise from a person with a nondominant primary Discourse engaging in a dominant Discourse.

who have already mastered the Discourse” (Gee 7). Gee explains that just entering a secondary discourse is not that simple, that one must go through a phase of social integration coupled with experience within the discourse to learn it, and even then it is not likely the discourse can be adopted. This tension was visible within June Jordan’s text when she and her class attempted to use mushfake techniques to translate a text written “black english” to “white english”. Jordan’s paper discusses her class she teaches when a group of black students interested in learning more about the dialect of english spoken by a group of black people rather than the “standard english” taught in all classrooms. This newly attempted to learn discourse was then used in the class after a member of the classes brother is killed by the police, Jordan states “The students pushed to explain their own negative first reactions to their spoken language on the printed page” (Jordan 365). This passage from Jordan’s text explains exactly what Gee meant by the tension caused by attempting to adapt through mushfake knowledge. These students, though black, were raised to write in the discourse of “standard english” and are now attempting to learn a new discourse without the apprenticeship or “social practices” Gee claims are necessary for success. This resistance to staying within your discourse is a major contributor to costs of discourse entry.

Commented [5]: I don't understand how the quote fits in here at all, maybe choose a quote that has more background, or explain the context more? The quote context comes before the murder of Willie's brother so I am a little confused. Maybe use a different quote that is relevant to the timeline of the story?

Resistance to ones primary discourse is a key concept in attempting to adapt to another discourse. This is seen in the cases where people step out of their average discourses and work through the resistance of learning a new discourse. As Gee states, “Unfortunately, many middle-class mainstream status-giving Discourses often do stress superficial features of language” (Gee 11). Here, Gee is discussing how it is unfortunate that modern society spends a large amount of effort into the specifics of “standard english” and not into the different ways of saying something with the same meaning. Lisa Delpit’s paper, discussing how she disagrees with the teachings of Gee, speaks of the complication of resistance which a woman named Marge suffered through when attempting to adjust her discourse to the college discourse. Delpit is quoted discussing Marge’s journey through adapting her already educated mannerisms into a

Commented [6]: What is your own claim?

Commented [7]: The paraphrasing of what the quote said could be better. Maybe something like: Gee is explaining how unfortunate it is that modern society spends a large amount of time and effort on the specific grammar and phrasing and not other methods that could communicate the same message. I just think that it may need some rephrasing because 'specifics' could mean a lot of different things, whereas Gee was just referring to grammar/phrasing.

new form which was socially acceptable within western education, “Susan began a program to help Marge learn how to cope with the academic setting. Susan recognized early on that Marge was very talented but that she did not know how to maneuver her way through academic writing, reading, and talking” (Delpit 547-548). This quote from Delpit explains the path of resistance against the person attempting to enter the discourse. “Marge” had to go through the resistance of adapting her knowledge to the way which was socially acceptable in a school situation. The modern system looks too specifically at what is perceived as educated that Marge has to alter her discourse to enter the accepted education discourse. Marge had to use her knowledge she already had in order to understand the new discourse. This is a term called Meta-knowledge and is another major component entering a discourse and its potential costs of entry.

Commented [8]: I'm don't think the quote completely illustrates that point. The quote is about Marge overcoming a struggle, but the resistance that Gee talks about is more about the resistance cause by internal conflict. That may be your goal with the quote, if so maybe lead into it that way. The explanation after the quote does a better job of getting to that point.

Metaknowledge is a word which defines the use of a your own knowledge to understand and comprehend another from of knowledge. Metaknowledge is helpful in the entry of discourses because the entree has an easier time coming to terms with the new knowledge since they can already relate it to prior understanding. As Gee explains this form of knowledge, “It can happen that exposure to another language, having translate it into and otherwise relate it to your own language, can cause you to become consciously aware of how your first language works” (Gee 12). What Gee is discussing is as you learn more in depth about something which you can somewhat relate to, you may be able to look deeper into subjects you already know which have similarities to what you are trying to learn. Metaknowledge is an important advantage in acquiring a discourse as it allows for the person to be able to relate all the new things they learn to what they already understand. Potential costs do also form with this new found knowledge as it allows you to view flaws within your own life. This was seen in June Jordan’s paper about translating a paper written in “black english” to “white english”. Jordan’s students realize the segregation of english dialects in modern education while reading a book written in the way which they themselves speak, not how they were taught to write: “None of the

Commented [9]: I think you could add in a more direct claim here, something like: Metaknowledge is another aspect to the entry into a dominant Discourse that inhibits those of nondominant Discourses from entering. Again, I'm just assuming that you agree with Gee based on your other comments.

students had ever learned how to read and write their own verbal system of communication: Black English. Alternatively, this fact began to baffle or else bemuse and then infuriate my students" (Jordan 365). Jordan's students gained the metaknowledge about the modern school system by reading how "black english" is written. They realized that it was unfair that it was ill represented in modern literature education. These two quotes relate because the students experienced exactly what Gee claimed happens once one looks into another language, the flaws come out. This is a potential cost of entry, though not a bad thing, into a new discourse, a new discourse comes with a new perspective, which is usually coupled with a new train of thought which can alter the primary learnings of a person.

One's primary discourse is an important part of their life as it sets them up for how they will lead the beginning of their lives. But along with life comes new experiences and new opportunities which in turn, comes with new discourses which are adopted. Using Gee's combination of "Mushfake", resistance, and metaknowledge allows for better access to learning new discourses, but though it helps, it also comes with the potential costs of what being in the new discourse entails.

Coordinating

- Using a mushfake discourse would be a term used to describe a person who may use some of the information or knowledge which they have from their own discourse, to try and "make do" and function in another discourse.

- Using a mushfake discourse would be a term used to describe a person who may use some of the information or knowledge which they have from their own discourse, but try to "make do" and function in another discourse.

- Using Gee's combination of "Mushfake", resistance, and metaknowledge allows for better access to learning new discourses, but though it helps, it also comes with the potential costs of what being in the new discourse entails.

Commented [10]: The introduction to this quote is good, but the transition from your own interpretation into the quote may need a little help. Maybe just something like:
"...Not how they were taught to write. It was strange, but most of the students had never before seen a written facsimile of the way they talk. None of the students had ever learned how to read and write their own verbal system of communication: Black English. Alternatively, this fact began to baffle or else bemuse and then infuriate [the] students" (Jordan 365)."

- Using Gee's combination of "Mushfake", resistance, and metaknowledge allows for better access to learning new discourses, but it also comes with the potential costs of what being in the new discourse entails.

-These students, though black, were raised to write in the discourse of "standard english" and are now attempting to learn a new discourse without the apprenticeship or "social practices" Gee claims are necessary for success.

- These students, though black, were raised to write in the discourse of "standard english", but these students are now attempting to learn a new discourse without the apprenticeship or "social practices" Gee claims are necessary for success.

Subordinating

-Ones dominant primary discourse is unchosen and is assigned to them solely on the basis of when and where they are born. The initial tension which comes out of the topic of discourses is when a person begins to explore and attempt to acquire separate discourses

- Although ones dominant primary discourse is unchosen and is assigned to them solely on the basis of when and where they are born, the initial tension which comes out of the topic of discourses is when a person begins to explore and attempt to acquire separate discourses

-

-These students, though black, were raised to write in the discourse of "standard english" and are now attempting to learn a new discourse without the apprenticeship or "social practices" Gee claims are necessary for success.

- Although black, these students were raised to write in the discourse of "standard english" and are now attempting to learn a new discourse without the apprenticeship or "social practices" Gee claims are necessary for success.

Commented [11]: I don't think it's just when and where you are born that makes up your Discourse.

Commented [12]: I don't think it's just when and where you are born that makes up your Discourse.