

Tuleshova Karlygash

M.Ed., a Ph.D. student; senior teacher

Suleimanova Aigul

Master of pedagogical science

Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages

"How to prepare students for written discourse: Preliminary English Test. Writing exam: Part 1 and 2"

Abstract: This article reviews the importance of developing of discourse-based teaching. Three types of discourse were thoroughly discussed. There were also given four different assessment scales which help to identify the level of the student's language ability. Authors offer the best ways of teaching written discourse. Preliminary English Test was taken as an example in this article. It is reviewed how the first and second part of PET writing exam should be taught. A lot of examples and important functional languages were illustrated in this article.

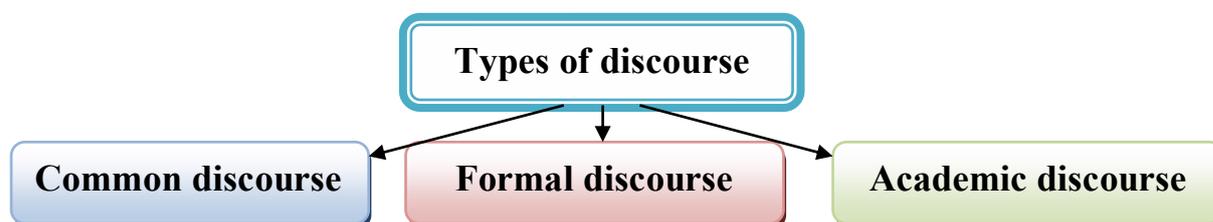
Key words: discourse, common discourse, formal discourse, academic discourse, written discourse, Preliminary English Test

Introduction

Have you ever found yourself among people who you know best and entered into a conversation, but had absolutely no idea what they were talking about? You shouldn't worry about it because it happens to everyone. People will talk about the show or events and you won't know the characters, the setting, and some of the terminology they use. They will be engaged in a discourse and you'll be left out. So what is discourse? Discourse is the most complicated notion to define because discourse is an object of research in many disciplines. At its broadest and formal sense, discourse is putting words and sentences together to clearly communicate complex ideas. It contains several elements: structure and organization, manner of speaking, complexity, intelligibility, and audience. But at its simplest sense, discourse is communication in speech or writing (Cambridge dictionary).

Types of Discourse

In this article we will review the following types of discourse which were given by Andrew Diamond (See Figure1).



Common discourse is a term given to generic interpersonal communication. If we were to chat about the weather, that would be a common discourse. The rules regarding this type of communication are fairly broad and grasped by most adults.

Formal discourse is communication that has greater rules surrounding it, such as when discussing business matters at work. This level of communication has more specialized terminology (business words like profits, margin, and water cooler) and greater rules with regards to communication. For example, you shouldn't speak to the president of the company you work for the same way you would speak to your friends.

Academic discourse is the specific style of communication used in the academic world. Academic discourse involves how we alter our communication when engaged in academic discussions. Some examples of academic communication are textbooks, presentations, dissertations, research articles, and lectures. If you've had experience with these, you'll understand how they can be different (Andrew, D).

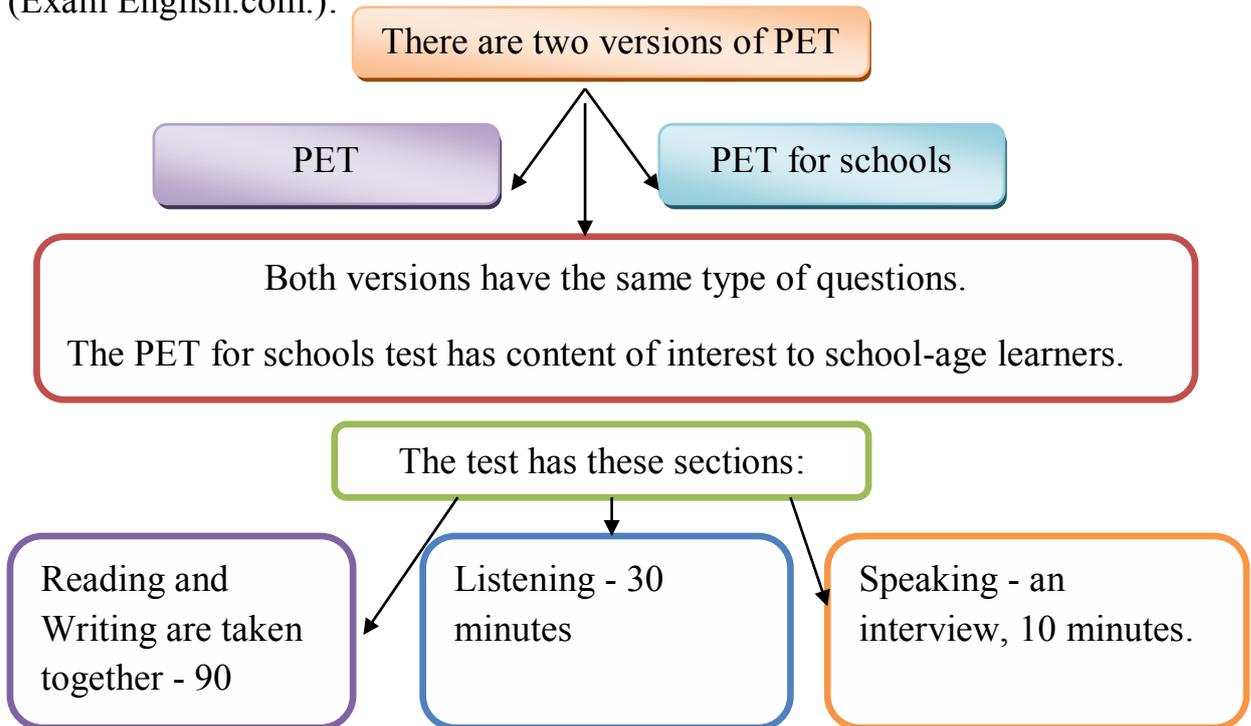
Written discourse

As we have mentioned before in learning English our students should be able to communicate both in oral and written form. We should teach them for oral discourse and written discourse. In this article we would like to focus exactly on written discourse. *Written discourse* is the transfer of information and it involves the written word. Written discourse is often tied with genre, or the type and/or structure of language used to imply purpose and context within a specific subject matter, especially when looking at literature. Examples of written communication

include letters, memos, research papers, reports, etc (Kristen, G). It is very important to teach students for it, especially when they take an exam and they are asked to write. Let's take one of the Cambridge English exams Preliminary English Test (PET).

Preliminary English Test

The Preliminary English Test is one of the Cambridge English exams. See Figure 2 (Exam English.com.):



The exam is targeted at Level B1 of the CEFR. But there is also universal national standard which was given by Kunanbayeva S. (2010) for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a five-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. According to Universal National Standard Level B1 is equal to Level II (UNS) (See Figure 3):

CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference)		Cambridge scale	Cambridge English Qualifications	Universal National Standard (UNS) (Kunanbayeva, 2010)
proficient	C 2	230 220 210	C 2 Proficiency	V level (Universal National Standard)

	C 1	200 190	C 1 CAE	IV level (Universal National Standard)
independent	B 2	180 170	B 2 FCE	III level (Universal National Standard)
	B 1	160 150	B 1 PET	II level (Universal National Standard)
basic	A 2	140 130	A 2 KET	I level (Universal National Standard)
	A 1	120 110 100		
	Pre A 1	90 80		

Writing Exam (PET)

There are three parts in writing exam.

Part 1: Sentence transformation

Part 2: Short message (35 – 45 words)

Part 3: Email/Letter or story (about 100 words)

How to write part 1

The first part is mostly about grammar. It is extremely important that you revise the grammar from a B1 intermediate syllabus to do part well. This part is composed of five sentences (or questions). Of course, there are some grammar topics that will come up more than others, but you need to be prepared for whatever appears. In this part you are asked to transform the sentences so each one has the same meaning as the original. Generally, the topic of the sentences will always be the same, so that should make it a bit easier. Remember, you cannot use more than three words.

E.g.: 1) This red dress is more beautiful than green dress.

Answer: The green dress isn't as **beautiful as** red dress.

2) I asked my friend where he had worked before.

Answer: I asked my friend: "Where did **you work** before?"

What changes have taken place?

In 1, both sentences are comparing the dresses of different colour, but the second is a negative so we need to use ...as adjective as....

In 2, we change the sentence from an indirect speech statement in the past perfect to its original direct speech question which uses the past simple.

How to write part 2

In this part of the test you will have to write a short communicative message of about 35-45 words. For this you will be tested on your use of functional language.

You will also nearly always have to use informal language.

Sample Task

Your friend, Jane, has invited you to a birthday party she is organizing for her little sister. Write an email to Jane. In your email, you should

- accept invitation
- suggest how you could help Jane prepare for the party
- ask Jane for some ideas for a present for her sister

Write 35-45 words on your answer sheet

As you can see in the task above, you are given:

- a situation: *Your friend, Jane, has invited you to a birthday party ...*
- a task: *Write an email to Jane*
- prompts or subtasks: *accept the invitation, suggest how..., ask Jane...*
- number of words: *Write 35-45 words.* And all of the above are essential when writing your answer.

A sample answer to the task

Dear Jane,

Thanks a lot for inviting me to the birthday party, I'll be there. I can give you a hand with decorating the room with balloons. By the way, is it all right if I buy for your little sister a teddy bear as a present?

Love,

Kate

As you can see in the sample answer, we:

- greet your friend: *Dear Jane,*
- thank her: *Thanks a lot for...*
- suggest how to help her: *I can give you a hand with...*
- ask her for ideas: ... is it all right if I buy for your little sister a teddy bear as a present?
- say goodbye: *Love, ...*

And all of the above is what you have to do in virtually any short message you may have to write for Cambridge English: Preliminary (PET), except that the writing prompts will change.

Here is a list of possible functional language that may appear: *suggesting or recommending; giving advice; requesting; apologizing; offering; warning.*

- Language to suggest, give advice and recommend: *Why don't you; You really should; If I were you, I would; How about; Have you thought about; Maybe, you could ; You had better;*
- Language to request: *Would it be alright if; Could I; Would you mind if; Do you mind if;*
- Language to apologize: *I'm really sorry but; I hope you can forgive me but; I'd like to apologize for;*
- Language to offer: *Shall I; Would you like me to; Would you like another; Can I;*
- Language to warn: *Take care on; Mind how you go; Look out for; Watch out for; Be careful with...; Be careful not to...; Remember (not) to...; It's not a good idea to...; I wouldn't... if I were you.*
- Language to arrange meetings: *Let's meet at; I'll see you ... at ... okay? Is it okay if we meet at...?*
- Language to accept an offer: *Of course I'll go (to...); I'm more than happy to...; I'm glad to...; Great! I'd really like to...;*

- Language to refuse an offer: *I'm sorry, but I can't...; (Thanks, but) I'm afraid I can't...; Sorry, but it's impossible for me to...; I'd like to, but I can't...;*
- Language to say what you liked/disliked: *What I really enjoyed/liked/loved/hated was...; I really enjoyed/liked/loved/hated...; What I liked/enjoyed/... most was...; My favourite (part of the...) was...; The best thing (about...) was...*
- Language to say goodbye: *Bye! Bye for now! All the best, Best wishes, Regards, See you soon!*
- Language to wish good things: *Good luck (with...)! All the best (with...)! Hope you enjoy ...! Enjoy yourself! Have fun (at/in...)! Have a good time (at/in...)! You'll have no problems with...! You can do it! Good luck (with...)! All the best (with...)! Hope you enjoy ...! Enjoy yourself! Have fun (at/in...)! Have a good time (at/in...)! You'll have no problems with...! You can do it!*

Conclusion

To sum up, we hope that we could answer the question of importance of discourse, especially written one. Using authentic written and spoken discourse can be a perfect resource for teachers to teach the different language skills. For instance, through a writing (PET), we can teach a grammar rule. Students can learn the rule, how it is used in context as well as learn new vocabulary and benefit from reading the article. Then through using the same piece of discourse, students can practice speaking through retelling the information in the article to a partner/to the class, with an emphasis on using the taught grammar point correctly. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare students for written discourse.

References

1. Andrew, D. *Academic Discourse: Definition & Examples*. Study com. Retrieved from: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/academic-discourse-definition-examples.html>

2. Discourse [Def. 1]. *Cambridge dictionary*. Retrieved March 11, 2018, from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ru>
3. Kunanbayeva, S. (2010). Theory and practice of modern foreign language education. pp.174,180
4. Kristen, G. (1993). *Oral & Written Discourse: Definitions & Characteristics*. Retrieved from: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/oral-written-discourse-definitions-characteristics>
5. Luis, P. (2017). *Writing the Perfect Email for Cambridge English: Preliminary (PET)*. Retrieved from: <http://keepsmilenglish.com/2016/01/cambridge-english-preliminary-pet-writing-part-2/>
6. Phil, W (2017). *Top Tips for Preparing for the Cambridge PET Writing*. Retrieved from: <http://blog.atlaslanguageschool.com/blog/top-tips-for-preparing-for-the-cambridge-preliminary-pet-writing-questions-parts-1-3>