University Mohammed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Second Year Classes

Groups: 1-12

Chapter One: Textuality, Orality and Iconicity

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Lesson Two: Textuality

Introduction

In addition to describing different text types as well as their common and distinct features, text analysis aims to identify standards that must be met by texts in order to be communicative.

3.1. What is a Text?

Anything from which information can be extracted is regarded as a text. This includes oral, written and visual materials present in society:

- Single and multiple images with or without text,
- Literary and non-literary written texts and extracts,
- Media texts (for example, films),
- Radio and television programmes and their scripts,
- Electronic texts that share aspects of a number of these areas (for example, video-sharing websites, web pages, SMS messages, blogs, wikis and tweets)
- Readings, speeches, broadcasts and transcriptions of recorded conversation.

3.2. Standards of Textuality

As a communicative occurrence, a text should meet seven standards of textuality, called **constitutive principles**. These are cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality.

Standards	Examples	
1. Cohesion Cohesion concerns the ways in which the words we hear or see are *mutually connected within a sequence*. It signals relations among surface elements.	(a) SLOW CHILDREN AT PLAY • Road Sign	(b) CHILDREN PLAY SLOW AT • The series is so disjointed that drivers could hardly tell what goes with what
2. Coherence coherence refers to how concepts and relations in a text are *mutually accessible* and *relevant*. The relations include cause, enablement, reason, purpose and arrangement in time	"Jack fell down and broke his crown." The event of 'falling down' is the cause of the event of 'breaking': cause The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts, All on a summer's day. The Knave of Hearts, he	"Jack shall have but a penny a day because he can't work any faster" * The low pay is, a reasonable and predictable outcome: reason "(a) Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard to get her poor dog a bone." * The later event or situation is the purpose for the earlier one:

	stole those tarts, And took them quite away. The Queen's action made the Knave's action possible: enablement.	purpose "(b) When she got there, the cupboard was bare." *The 'getting there' action was later than that of going to the cupboard', but happened at the same time as the situation of the 'cupboard being bare': Time relation
Coherence illustrates that a text does not make sense by itself, but rather by the interaction of text-presented knowledge with people's stored knowledge of the world. The adding of one's own knowledge to make sense of a text is called inferencing	The King was in the counting house, counting all his money; The Queen was in the parlour, eating bread and honey; The Maid was in the garden, hanging out the clothes; • There is a set of actions ('counting', 'eating', 'hanging out'); the only relations presented are the location, the agent, and the affected entity of each action. A text receiver, however, is likely to assume (infer) that each action is the purpose of being at that location, a near location and proximate time. One might also infer that the king is avaricious, the queen gluttonous and the maid laborious.	
3. Intentionality Intentionality concerns the text **producer**'s attitude that a sequence fulfils the his/her intentions, e.g. to distribute knowledge or to attain a goal specified in a plan.	"Well where do which part of town do you live?" • The goal or intention of the speaker to find out someone's address is successfully communicated though cohesion is not maintained	
4. Acceptability Acceptability concerns the text **receiver**'s attitude that an utterance should constitute text that is relevant for the receiver, e.g. to acquire knowledge or provide co-operation in a plan. Text producers often require important contributions from receivers in order to make sense (inferences).	The Bell Telephone Company warns people: [a] Call us before you dig. You may not be able to afterwards. • People are left to infer that digging without asking might lead to cutting off a ground cable and hence to losing the wiring needed in order to call; or even, to sustaining bodily injury and being incapacitated. The version of the text above is more **effective** and **more informative** than a version would be that made everything clearer (more explicit): [b] Call us before 0you dig. There might be an underground cable. If you break the cable, you won't have phone service, and you may get a severe electric shock. Then you won't be able to call us.	
5. Informativity Informativity concerns the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs. unexpected or known vs. unknown/certain. Every text is at least somewhat informative. Low informativity is likely to be disturbing, causing boredom or even rejection of the text	The processing of the more informative text above [a] is more demanding and more interesting than the processing of [b]	The sea is water * The fact is so well known to everyone that there seems to be no point in saying it here, though the stretch of text is cohesive and coherent, and intended to be acceptable as such, but it is nonetheless a marginal text. The sea is water only in the sense that water is the dominant substance present. Actually, it is a solution of gases and salts in

	addition to vast numbers of living organisms ... * The correction of a common view is less expected, so that the informativity of the whole passage is upgraded through supplying accurate information.
6. Situationality Situationality concerns the factors which make a text relevant to a situation of occurrence i.e making sense of a text via the situation	*The road sign above is placed in a location where a certain class of receivers (motorists) are likely to be asked for a particular action. People would assume that 'slow' is a request to reduce speed rather than an announcement of the children's mental or physical deficiencies. Pedestrians can tell that the text is not relevant for themselves because their speeds would not endanger anyone.
7. Intertextuality Intertextuality concerns the factors which make one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts.	A driver who has seen road sign above is likely to see a second sign further down the road, such as: RESUME SPEED * One cannot 'resume' something unless one was doing it at an earlier time and then stopped it for some reason. The 'speed' at stake here can only be the one maintained before the first sign.

Conclusion

- The **constitutive principles** define textual communicating, and if they are disobeyed, communication will break down. However, as can be seen in some texts above, *acceptability* and *appropriateness* are more crucial standards for texts than *grammaticality* and *well-formedness*.

- There must also exist **regulative principles** that control textual communication. These principles should ensure **efficiency** (e.g. 1.a, 4.b, 5), **effectiveness** (e.g. 4.a) **and appropriateness** (e.g.1.a) of a text.