THE SEVEN STANDARDS OF TEXTUALITY

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- "A text will be defined as a communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality." ....

- All based on DeB/Dr

- The first standard will be called <u>cohesion</u> and concerns the way in which the components of the surface text, i.e. the actual words we hear or see, are *mutually connected within a sequence*. The surface components depend upon each other according to grammatical forms and conventions, such that cohesion rests upon grammatical dependencies. ...

☐ The second standard will be called coherence and concerns the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of concepts and relations which *underlie* the surface text are mutually *accessible* and *relevant*. … Cohesion and coherence are text-centred notions, designating operations directed at the text materials.

- ☐ Cohesion and coherence are text-centred notions.

- ☐ The other standards of textuality are user-centred notions.

☐ In addition, we shall require user-centred notions which are brought to bear on the activity of textual communication at large, both by producers and by receivers. The third standard of textuality could then be called <u>intentionality</u>, concerning the text producer's attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text instrumental in fullfilling the producer's intentions, e.g. to distribute knowledge or to attain a goal specified in a plan. ...

☐ The fourth standard of textuality would be <u>acceptability</u>, concerning the text receiver's attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text having some use or relevance for the receiver, e.g. to acquire knowledge or provide co-operation in a plan. ...

☐ Intentionality and acceptability rely on Grice's cooperative principle:

"Make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged."

Grice's conversational maxims

- **Maxims of quantity**
  - Make your contribution as informative as required.
  - Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- **Maxims of quality**
  - Do not say what your believe to be false.
  - Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- **Maxim of relation**
  - Be relevant.
- **Maxims of manner**
  - Avoid obscurity of expression.
  - Avoid ambiguity.
  - Be brief.
  - Be orderly.

Maxim of quantity

A: Where is the post office?
B: Down the road, about 50 metres past the second left.

vs.
B: Not far.

Maxim of quality

A: Should I buy my son this new sports car?
B: I don't know if that's such a good idea. His record isn't so great.

Vs

B: Oh, absolutely. He's only totaled two cars since he got his license last year. He certainly is a careful driver.

Maxim of relevance

A: How are you doing in school?
B: Not too well, actually. I'm failing two of my classes.

vs.

B: What fine weather we're having lately!

Maxim of manner

A: What did you think of that movie?
B: I liked the creative storyline. The ending was really a surprise!

vs.

B: It was interestingly done sir

- The fifth standard of textuality is called <u>informativity</u> and concerns the extent to which the occurrences of the presented text are expected vs. unexpected or known vs. unknown/certain.
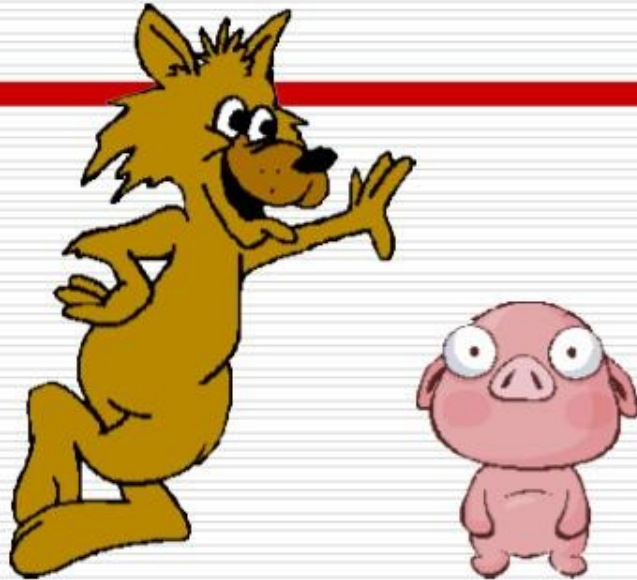
The big bad wolf said: "Little pig, little pig, let me come in!"

"Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin!" sait the first little pig.

And the big bad Wolf said "Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down!"

And so he did.

The big bad Wolf said "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down."

The little piggy said "Back off or I'll sneeze on you..."

- C. Shannon and W. Weaver's *information theory* (based on a statistic notion): the greater the number of possible *alternatives* at a given point, the higher the information value when one of them is chosen
- In language: the degree of informativity is inversely proportional to *contextual probability*

- *The sea is water*

- 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 ...*

- ☐ syntactically probable, conceptually improbable:
    - ■ *All our yesterdays have lighted fools to dusty death* (Macbeth V v 22)

  is more informative than
    - ■ *All our Western agencies have guided tours to dusty Death Valley.*

- ☐ Syntactically improbable, conceptually probable:
    - ■ *Him who disobeys, me disobeys.* (Milton *Paradise Lost* VVII.1)

  is more informative than
    - ■ *Whoever disobeys him, disobeys me.*

- ☐ Concept of *markedness*

☐ The sixth standard of textuality can be designated <u>situationality</u> and concerns the factors which make a text relevant to a situation of occurrence. ...

Situationality - contnd

connected with coherence and acceptability, e.g.

- SLOW CHILDREN AT PLAY
- Some elements in text refer to the context of situation (e.g. deictics) and cannot be decoded unless reliance on situationality is made

☐ The seventh standard is to be called <u>intertextuality</u> and concerns the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts.

Intertextuality - contnd

- e.g. "A tale of two cards"
- Headline for an article in the Daily Mail describing the Xmas cards sent by Blair and Howard – reference to Dickens's novel *A Tale of Two Cities*

- R. de Beaugrande, W. Dressler, *An Introduction to Text Linguistics*, London, Longman, 1981 (48ff)

More on coherence

- <u>coherence</u> concerns the ways in which the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of concepts and relations which *underlie* the surface text are mutually *accessible* and *relevant*. ... Cohesion and coherence are text-centred notions, designating operations directed at the text materials.

- Another definition (T. A. van Dijk 1979: 93):

- coherence is a semantic property of discourse formed through the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences, with "interpretation" implying interaction between the text and the reader. One method for evaluating a text's coherence is topical structure analysis.

- *Coherence*: sub-surface feature

- concerns the ways in which the meanings within a text (concepts, relations among them and their relations to the external world) are established and developed.

- Some of the major relations of coherence are logical sequences, e.g. cause-consequence *(and so)*, condition-consequence *(if)*, instrument-achievement *(by)*, contrast *(however)*, compatibility *(and)*, etc.

- Includes: topic development providing a text with necessary integrity; even in the absence of overt links (as in various lists, charts, timetables, menus).

COHESION: A TEXT-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

□ the way in which the components of the surface text, i.e. the actual words we hear or see, are *mutually connected within a sequence*. The surface components depend upon each other according to grammatical forms and conventions, such that cohesion rests upon grammatical dependencies. ...

- Inside the sentence, grammatical dependencies (dB-D 50)

- In the text, according to H-H cohesion is realized through the following: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, lexical cohesion.

Much ado about multipliers

Sep 24th 2009
From The Economist print edition

Why do economists disagree so much on whether fiscal stimulus works?

IT IS the biggest peacetime fiscal expansion in history. Across the globe countries have countered the recession by cutting taxes and by boosting government spending. The G20 group of economies, whose leaders meet this week in Pittsburgh, have introduced stimulus packages worth an average of 2% of GDP this year and 1.6% of GDP in 2010. Co-ordinated action on this scale might suggest a consensus about the effects of fiscal stimulus. But economists are in fact deeply divided about how well, or indeed whether, such stimulus works.

The debate hinges on the scale of the "fiscal multiplier". This measure, first formalised in 1931 by Richard Kahn, a student of John Maynard Keynes, captures how effectively tax cuts or increases in government spending stimulate output. A multiplier of one means that a $1 billion increase in government spending will increase a country's GDP by $1 billion.

Recurrence, partial recurrence

[…] When our founders boldly declared America's independence to the world and our purposes to the Almighty, they knew that America, to endure, would have to change.

Not change for change's sake, but change to preserve America's ideals — life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. Though we march to the music of our time, our mission is timeless.

Each generation of Americans must define what it means to be an American. […]

(B. Clinton's First Inaugural Address, 21.1.1993)

Recurrence, parallelism

In the real world, if you say you're going to do something, you do it. And if you screw up, you can lose your job.

It's called accountability. Remember that word - accountability.

But politicians seem to live in a different world.

A world where promises are dropped just as casually as they're made.

A world where the figures are fiddled.

A world where there are no penalties for failure.

What people want from their politicians is: Accountability. Responsibility. And a little humility.

(Michael Howard, *Speech to Conservative Party Conference 2004*, *Bournemouth,* October 5, 2004)

Paraphrase

A SUSCEPTIBILITY gene for Crohn's disease has been identified for the first time by separate teams of American and European scientists, it was disclosed yesterday.

The debilitating inflammatory bowel condition is caused by the body's own immune system attacking the gut lining. (Researchers find Crohn's disease gene; *The DailyTelegraph, 22/05/2001*)

Ellipsis

The younger child was very outgoing, the older much more reserved.

A: Where are you going?

B: To town.

A: Why are you going away?

B: Because it's late

Substitution: nominal

A: Which ice-cream would you like?

B: I would like the pink one.

Watch out: substitution is not the same as reference!!!!

Compare:

I dropped the ice-cream because **it** was dirty.

I dropped the green ice-cream. It was the only **one** I had'.

Substitution & classifiers

- ❑ Usually the substitution is not possible if the Head is preceded by a classifier (e.g. a noun or adjective indicating a particular subclass of the thing in question)
- ❑ classifier vs. epithet

Compare:
- ❑ a chemistry set
- ❑ a very professional looking chemistry set

I got a chemistry set for my birthday. It's a very professional looking one.

A: I got a chemistry set for Christmas. What did you get?
B: * I got a toy one.

Nominal substitution - ctd

☐ *some / any /much / many/ the same*

- Do you like mushrooms? I tried *some* a few years back, but was not so keen on them.

- Winter is often so damp. *The same* is true for the summer

Verbal substitution

- do/do not, auxiliaries
  - Have they moved?
  - They have.

  - I like coffee
  - I don't.

Clausal substitutes

☐ So, not

A: Do you think he'll come tomorrow?
B: Yes, I think so.

- *Bibliographical references:*
- Werlich E. (1979), *A Text Grammar of English,* Heidelberg, Quelle & Meyer: 17-26.
- De Beaugrande R.A., Dressler W.U. (1981), *An Introduction to Text Linguistics*, London & New York, Longman: 1-13 (una sintesi disponibile all'indirizzo: http://www.beaugrande.bizland.com/introduction_to_text_linguistics.htm).
- Van Dijk T.A. (1977), *Text and Context. Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*, London & New York, Longman: 1-15; 93-129.
- Halliday M.A.K., Hasan R. (1976), *Cohesion in English*, London & New York, Longman: 1-30.(M.A.K. Halliday , R. Hasan, *Cohesion in* English, London, Longman, 1976;
- M.A.K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, *Second Edition*, London, Edward Arnold, 1994)