

5 Text Linguistics

Text linguistics is the study of text as a product (text grammar) or as a process (theory of text). The text-as-a-product approach is focused on the text cohesion, coherence, topical organization, illocutionary structure and communicative functions; the text-as-a-process perspective studies the text production, reception and interpretation (cf. Dolník and Bajžíková 1998). **Text** can be understood as an instance of (spoken or written) language use (an act of parole), a relatively self-contained unit of communication. As a 'communicative occurrence' it meets seven **criteria of textuality** (the constitutive principles of textual communication): cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality, and three regulative principles of textual communication: efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness (cf. de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981, Malmjaer 1991).

5.1 Constitutive Principles of Textual Communication

5.1.1 *Cohesion* (see esp. Halliday and Hasan 1976) is the way in which linguistic items of which texts are constituted are meaningfully interconnected in sequences. Cohesion may be of four types: reference, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical organization. **Reference** (realized by nouns, determiners, personal and demonstrative pronouns or adverbs) either points out of the text to a real world item (i.e., to its denotate), hence **exophoric** reference (**deixis**: *Can you see that?*), or refers to an item within the text, hence **endophoric** reference. The two possible directions of endophoric reference are backward (**anaphoric** r.; **direct** anaphora: *I met a man. He was wearing ...*, **indirect** anaphora: *It is a solid house. The walls are thick ...*) or forward (**cataphoric** r.: ... *the house whose walls are thick*); in the case of a reference to an item of which there is (in the given situation) only one instance, we talk about **homophora** (e.g. *Place the books on the table please*). The relationship between two items in which both refer to the same person or thing and one stands as a linguistic antecedent of the other is called **coreference** (compare *He saw himself in the mirror* with *He saw him in the mirror*). **Ellipsis**, i.e., omission of something referred to earlier, is an instance of textual anaphora (e.g., *Have some more*). **Conjunction**, enhanced esp. by syntactic (adverbials – subjuncts, conjuncts, disjuncts; pronouns, metalingual connectors, etc.) and grammatical (concord, sequence of tenses) connectors, creates intricate systems of intratextual bonds. **Lexical cohesion** establishes semantic (through lexical devices, such as repetition, equivalence - synonymy, hyponymy, hyperonymy, paraphrase, collocation) and pragmatic (presupposition) connectedness; in contrast with the previous types of cohesion, it operates over larger stretches of text since it establishes chains of related references.

5.1.2 *Coherence*, the sub-surface feature of a text, 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, such as cause-consequence (*and so*), condition-consequence (*if*), instrument-achievement (*by*), contrast (*however*), compatibility (*and*), etc. Moreover, it is the general 'aboutness', i.e., the **topic** development which provides a text with necessary integrity; even in the absence of overt links, a text may be perceived as coherent (i.e., as making sense), as in various lists, charts, timetables, menus. Contrarily, other types of texts are characterized by explicit cohesive structure signalling intricate logico-semantic relationships (scientific reports, legal texts); in literary works, cohesion may be programmatically suppressed in order to enhance readers' enjoyment while discovering these links for themselves.

5.1.3 *Intentionality* relates to the intention on the part of a sender to produce a cohesive/coherent text aimed at attaining an identifiable goal (cf. teleological, i.e., goal-oriented nature of the function of language means, Čermák 2001). *Acceptability* concerns the receivers' expectation that the text should be coherent/cohesive and of some relevance to them (see also Maxim of relevance, 10.3). *Informativity* touches upon the (im)probability or (un)expectedness of a text in the given situation; in case a text is improbable (hence unexpected), a 'motivation search' is performed by a receiver (cf. the Relevance theory based on the basic feature of human cognition, viz. the expectation that a message be relevant, Sperber and Wilson 1986). *Situationality* concerns the problem of making a text relevant to a situation. *Intertextuality* is concerned with the ways in which uses of texts depend on the knowledge of other (preceding or following) texts.

5.2 *Regulative Principles of Textual Communication*

The principle of *efficiency* requires that a text should be used with a minimum effort - hence the use of plain (stereotyped and unimaginative) language which, however boring and unimpressive, is easy to produce and comprehend. In contrast, *effectiveness* presumes leaving a strong impression and the creation of favourable conditions for attaining a communicative goal; this presupposes the use of creative (original, imaginative) language which, however effective, may lead to communicative breakdown. The principle of *appropriateness* attempts to balance off the two above principles by seeking an accord between the text setting and standards of textuality.

As it is obvious from the list of the features on the text level, they provide stylistically motivated explorations with almost unconstrained possibilities of variation leaving an important imprint on the 'style' of the language output. For example, the degree of modification of the basic syntactic patterns tends to vary according to individual users (e.g., fragmentary individual style as a signal of aversion and distrust, long-windedness of a tedious politician, see Individuality, 3.2.2), momentary situation (urgency), medium, communicative goal (an emotional sermon by a preacher) and purpose/genre (essayistic and literary style where stereotypy is avoided). Generally speaking, unwelcome repetition can be prevented by making use of resources provided by the textual level of language.