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ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN FOCUS.  
TEXT-LINGUISTICS

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COLECCIÓN MANUALES MAJOR

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## FOREWORD

This is the fourth of the four volumes that comprise the series *English grammar in focus*, a collection of handbooks that is aimed to familiarize university students with the essentials of English grammatical description. Although each volume can be used as a self-contained coursebook, the series as a whole is intended to serve as a comprehensive introduction to all levels of grammatical description, from the morpheme as the smallest constituent of grammar, to complex textual units.

*English grammar in focus. Text-linguistics* provides a general introduction to the textual level of the English language. The first chapter discusses various definitions of text and discourse and presents the two concepts as levels in the analysis of language as communication. A series of standards are established to explain the circumstances and features that make texts communicative in varying degrees. Chapter 2 develops a functional approach to the analysis of texts by establishing a mapping of forms, functions and meanings, focusing first on clauses as representation, exchange and information units. The mood structures of different kinds of clauses are identified and related phenomena like negation which affect the grammar and meaning of clauses are also considered. Chapter 3 examines the clause as a message comprising given and new information. The concepts of theme and focus as given and new information and their importance for structuring clauses are examined in detail and the flow of information in texts is explained in terms of thematic connection and discourse strategies. Chapter 4 explains how a text can be understood and analysed as a systematic process of choosing meanings. Texts are viewed as instances of the abstract system of the language that can be grouped in text types. Several classifications or text typologies are discussed. The last section of the chapter is devoted to registers as semantic choices associated to the situation. Finally, chapter 5 presents a detailed analysis of cohesion and coherence, presented as the distinguishing properties of texts. Both dimensions are seen as complementary since cohesion is the formal expression of the meaning relations labelled as coherence. Different cohesive devices are described and illustrated and a sample of text types are analysed in terms of these cohesive devices to show how they respond to the particular relationships between texts and situation.

The functional approach developed in this coursebook is amply illustrated with the analysis of a large number of samples from authentic texts. Like the rest of the books in the series, *English Grammar in Focus. Text-linguistics* includes sections devoted to exercises, detailed glossaries and subject indexes for ease of reference, as well as lists of select books and articles for further reading.

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analysis and pragmatics for nearly thirty years. He is the author of *The Study of Language Beyond the Sentence. From Text Grammar to Discourse Analysis* (Comares, 2010).

Juan Santana  
Serieu Editor

## LIST OF SYMBOLS AND NOTATIONAL CONVENTIONS

### Classes of units

Adj	Adjective
Adv	Adverb
AdvP	Adverb phrase
Cl	Clause
NP	Noun phrase
PP	Prepositional phrase

### Grammatical features/forms

Comp	Comparative
Ø	Zero substitute

### Others

He	Hearer
SA	Speech act
Sp	Speaker

### Syntactic functions

A	Adverbial
C	Complement
Co	Object Complement
Cs	Subject Complement
Det	Determiner
O	Object
Fin	Finite
Od	Direct Object
Oi	Indirect Object
Oprep	Prepositional Object
P	Predicator
S	Subject

### Notational conventions

**Bold** in main text for technical terms included in the Glossary or when first introduced and sometimes for later occurrences too

*Italics* for citing examples

Underlining and **bold** in examples to highlight part of an example

<sup>Superscripts</sup> to indicate class of unit (e.g. *dark*<sup>Adj</sup>) or syntactic function (e.g. *they*<sup>S</sup>)

The symbol ‘·’ to mark a morphological division within a word or a component part of word, as in ‘*walk·ed*’

\* to mark ungrammatical examples

? to mark examples of questionable acceptability

() to mark optional constituents

↗ to mark rising intonation

↘ to mark falling intonation

= to identify meaning

≈ to express equivalent meaning

# CHAPTER ONE

## TEXT AND DISCOURSE

- 1.1 The scope of text-linguistics
- 1.2 Sentence grammar, text-linguistics, and the description of discourse
- 1.3 Definitions of text and discourse
- 1.4 Norms of textual communication

Further reading

Exercises

### **Summary**

This chapter provides a general introduction to the study of texts. The chapter discusses various definitions of text and discourse and presents the two concepts as levels in the analysis of language as communication. The last section establishes a series of standards to explain the circumstances and features that make texts communicative in varying degrees.

#### 1.1 THE SCOPE OF TEXT-LINGUISTICS

The scope of **text-linguistics** can be simply described as the study of language beyond the clause. The approach to texts developed in this coursebook is functional and largely derived from M.A.K. Halliday's Functional Grammar, where the clause is the highest unit in the grammatical rankscale. Nevertheless, the use of the term 'sentence' as the largest unit of grammatical analysis and the upper limit of structural statement at the grammatical level is broadly extended in linguistic description so 'clause' and 'sentence' will be used here interchangeably.

It seems necessary to make a preliminary clarification of what ‘beyond the clause’ means. For Halliday, ‘beyond the clause’ refers to the metaphorical modes of expression, more specifically, metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche as forms of lexical variation stemming from the semantic relation of **elaboration, extension and enhancement**. Thus ‘beyond’ is understood as ‘outside the scope of’ or ‘apart from’ the clause. Here the meaning of ‘beyond’ is ‘outside’ and, in a way, ‘above’ the clause. Following the conventional representation of the levels of language description as the steps on a ladder, texts have been traditionally situated ‘above the sentence’ following the immediate constituents progression PHONEMES → MORPHEMES → PHRASES → CLAUSES → TEXT. Halliday avoids the term ‘sentence’ but uses ‘clause complex’ with a similar meaning. Consequently, in the section ‘above the clause’ he analyses the clause complex. In functional grammar, **cohesion**, the distinguishing feature of texts, is placed ‘around the clause’. Finally, intonation and rhythm are displayed simultaneously with other constituent structures, so they are presented ‘beside the clause’.

Considering the text as a unit ‘beyond’ the sentence is more accurate than simply a unit ‘above’ the sentence because the relationship between clauses and texts is not one of constituency. A text should be regarded as a semantic unit, a unit of meaning rather than a formal unit. As such, texts do not consist of clauses in the way that phrases consist of morphemes; instead, they are realized by, or encoded in, clauses.

The advantage of understanding texts in this way is that this interpretation captures the differences in structural integration among the parts of a text and the parts of a clause. This is a central aspect of the sense in which text-linguistics is presented in this book. Many scholars refer to text-linguistics and discourse analysis interchangeably. A distinction is attempted here though not without problems. I contend that it is possible to speak of the grammar of a text by analogy with clause grammar, but it is only possible to speak of discourse analysis.

Distinguishing text from discourse is not easy although this distinction appears as a logical corollary to the isolation of linguistic domains which has characterized modern linguistics: from phonemes to morphemes, then to phrases, next to clauses and eventually on to texts. Modern linguistics attempted the study of ‘language by itself’ only to find increasing difficulty leading to a deadlock caused precisely by the exclusion of context. The beginnings were promising because, in phonological description, the isolation of real sound units and their matching with theoretical units was viable. Next came morphology but the ‘reality’ of visual representations of the abstractions called ‘morphemes’ was no longer transparent, as can be seen when comparing the morphemes in *unreadable* and *ineffable*. Also, the map of all the morphemes in a language was not feasible in the way a map of all the phonemes had been.

Modern linguistics was based on four principles:

- Study one domain of language at a time.
- Describe each domain as a system of theoretical units corresponding to the practical units in the data.
- Describe each unit by the features that clearly identify it from the rest.
- Investigate by carefully transcribing the native speaker's utterances, segmenting them into units, and classifying the units.

These principles guided the study of phonology and to some extent worked for morphology, but syntax presented too great demands. At this level, the links that tie constituents together (presumably, morphemes) are not observable but only inferable. This means that ties are firstly decided and constructed and then segmented and classified. In other words, the task of studying language by itself was rendered impossible because language is not found by itself.

The concern with 'language by itself' was based on the introspection and intuition of the analyst as a native speaker and focused on invented clauses disconnected from authentic discourse. So far, research in syntax following the said principles has failed to produce the whole system of underlying patterns and rules of any natural language. The problem is that 'the arrangement of words in phrases and clauses' is decided only partly by syntax, and partly by speakers' knowledge of the world and of their society. At this stage, the various approaches to discourse analysis have offered good prospects both by orienting their efforts towards the connection between language and knowledge and by working with large corpora of authentic data.

This picture is admittedly oversimplified and not all linguists tried to disconnect language from context. The analysis of the following example illustrates the possibilities and difficulties for a distinction between **text** and **discourse**.

### Example 1

"Could I have two sherries, please?"  
 "Dry?", inquired the teacher who took his order.  
 "Two!", replied the boy indignantly.

The only situational information is that of the metalinguistic comments that specify the speakers and **speech acts** so that an analysis can explore the textual meanings in potential contexts. Firstly we can consider what features make these three clauses a text. The simple answer is cohesion. **Lexical cohesion** is displayed in the **collocation** between *sherry* and *dry*, the reiteration of *two*, and the pairs of complementary opposites *inquire – reply* and *teacher – boy*. Syntax also contributes

to cohesion mostly through **ellipsis**: the question *Dry?* could be expanded as *Do you want dry sherry?* and the answer *Two* as *I want two sherries!* These features belong to the formal level of description and explain the **texture** of this piece of language. In addition, we could explore the ways in which this text resembles other dialogues and differs from monologues, or even its combination of both in the direct report and the third person point of view. It should be noticed that this analysis remains constant across situations in the same way as the propositional meaning does, i.e. *you* means the hearer and *sherry* means *fortified wine* in any context and uttered by any speaker.

Accurate though it is, this account misses most of the conversational meanings that speakers construct by means of these forms. A second and complementary analysis can focus on the **speech acts** performed by speakers by means of these utterances, in other words, what happens in this verbal exchange. Three such acts are stated explicitly: *order*, *inquire*, and *reply*. The conditions for an **utterance** to perform these acts are to be found in rules other than grammatical, but the relationship between **conversational meaning** and **propositional meaning** seems too unstable to explain systematically. In contrast with the textual analysis, discourse analysis is based on situational factors which make the different approaches highly context-dependent. This fact should not be taken to the extreme position that verbal forms can mean anything, or that meanings are undecidable. I contend that utterances can mean many things but also that speakers use principles to construct meanings in complementary ways to those of grammar, including semantics.

Let's consider the discursive dimension of Example 1 again. Even if one explains the verbal actions stated above, the picture of the situation remains incomplete. For instance, *why does the boy reply indignantly?* The most obvious reason is that he interprets the interrogative *Dry?* as some kind of challenge, either because: (a) the teacher is deliberately delaying the action of serving the drink, or (b) because he or she asks about the conditions for the order. Accordingly, in (b) we could reconstruct the clause as *Do you know that sherry is an alcoholic drink?*, which implies *Are you allowed to drink alcohol?*, hence provoking the angry repetition of the order. These informal interpretations are sound explanations consistent with the type of situation and participants. Now we can see what happens when a new factor is introduced. Let's say the boy is German and he is learning English. The teacher's challenge becomes different and its consequences unpredictable at this stage. From the boy's reaction, he must have reconstructed the question as *Do you want two or three sherries?* It is the implied meaning derived from the confusion that enrages the boy. If pronounced with a German accent, the English adjective and the German numeral become homophones /drai/. In this third interpretation, the effect of the teacher's question challenges the student's knowledge of English.

From the above explanation we can derive some provisional conclusions:

- The textual level:
  - is based primarily on formal features,
  - tends to remain constant,
  - is a limited account of language as a whole because it misses the cognitive and behavioural aspects,
  - is fairly abstract, and
  - presents stability across situations.
- The discourse level:
  - focuses on situations,
  - is concrete, and
  - is context dependent.

Although the distinction may sound artificial, I expect to have shown that, to some extent, both levels are distinguishable. This book focuses on major areas of text-linguistics, namely thematic and information structures, textual organization and classification, and cohesion and coherence. The approaches to discourse lay beyond its scope but it will be necessary to give an account of context in as much as textual choices reflect contextual factors and variables.

Chapter 1 introduces and justifies the scope and focus of text-linguistics. Complementary definitions of text and discourse are discussed and norms of textual communication explained and illustrated. Chapter 2, *Clause types and discourse functions*, deals with clauses as exchange between language users. Mood structures determine the basic functions of utterances so clause types will be explained in correlation with speech acts. Chapter 3, *Thematic and information structures*, presents the textual dimension of clauses. Structural devices to assign focus in the clause will be described and justified in terms of the flow of information across textual units. Chapter 4, *Textual organization*, focuses on the patterns of meaning found in text, textual structures, and the groupings of texts according to their constitution. Finally, chapter 5, *Cohesion and coherence*, is centred on the semantic level of texts and its systematic expression through grammatical and lexical cohesive devices.

## 1.2 CLAUSE GRAMMAR, TEXT-LINGUISTICS, AND THE DESCRIPTION OF DISCOURSE

Functional approaches to language proceed by establishing correlations between structures and functions in communication. The distinction between text and discourse is understood here as the difference between the product and the process of communication. This should not lead to the frequent but inappropriate division between ‘written text’ and ‘spoken discourse’. Any piece of language, written or spoken, can be considered from these two perspectives. An apt metaphor that presents the relationship between text and discourse is that of a battlefield. A battlefield displays traces that would enable an observer to reconstruct many actions that went on during the battle: groups of footprints indicate marching troops, craters mark the places where grenades fell, puddles of blood reveal where soldiers were wounded or killed, and the like. This account is less rich than a description of all the complex actions of the actual battle and will inevitably leave areas of indeterminacy but it is much easier to represent. In the same fashion, text-linguistics is a blurred picture of communication but it may prove very useful for students as a bridge between formal and functional paradigms of description and as a way into the complex and diverse analyses of communication.

This book is not intended as a theoretical work though the theoretical discussion will be referred to at times. That does not imply that it lacks a theory of discourse. It is appropriate at this stage to establish the goals and limits of textual description. One can make three types of observations concerning texts. Generally, grammatical observations will focus on the structural organization of clauses (e.g. clause types, verbal complementation, complex noun phrases, adjective phrases) and the distribution of lexical items. Semantic observations aim to explain meaning as a relatively stable property of forms, i.e. as propositional content, and for some scholars they will include communicative functions. Functional observations unite form, actions and setting. The setting appears specifically in **indexicals** (e.g. *this year, now*) and the possible relations between form and function.

It is necessary to select and organize the type of observations so that the analytical frame is made consistent. We can establish a very general goal for a theory of discourse that can serve as a starting point: to provide at least a partial account of the ability to construct and understand connected discourse of various kinds. Since construction is based on personal choice, this element introduces too many and too complex variables for a prediction to be cost-effective. Instead, a theory of interpretation seems more plausible and operative. On the one hand, interpretation is not a matter of free choice; on the other hand, likely interpretation by a real or hypothetical addressee also affects production so one can get insights into the latter by examining the former.

Interpreting or understanding a text entails the construction of its meaning. Four types of meaning are relevant to a distinction between grammatical and pragmatic analyses: **propositional meaning**, **linguistic meaning**, speech acts and **implicatures**. The following example will illustrate how these meanings operate along a cline that goes from a formal end to a functional or pragmatic end. Additionally, this discussion will clarify some uses of ‘grammar’ as applied to the clause and its possible extensions to texts.

### Example 1

Fine wines need to reach the proper age. And so, say some, do women who adorn their labels. For years, each new vintage of Château Mouton-Rothschild has borne a label designed by a well-known artist. The 1993 wine, released this year, featured a relatively modest drawing of a nude adolescent by French artist Balthus. But it wasn't modest enough for some American child-porn fighters, who made a complaint. The vintners insist that the sketch is art. But bottles of the \$75 rouge sold in the United States will now sport new labels that are largely blanc.

*Newsweek*

The most obvious meaning of this text is its **propositional content**, i.e. the conditions under which it is true; in other words, how language users identify what the world would be like if such a predication were true. Previously to the establishment of the propositional content of clauses it is also necessary to know something about the meaning conventions of English. These rules do not determine the referent of the pronouns *it* or *their*. This is inferred from the context although the linguistic system restricts the possibilities: a non-animated or non-human non-plural referent for *it* and a plural referent for *their*. This is the linguistic, or rather, ‘grammatical’ meaning that filled Alice’s head with images when she heard the poem *Jabberwocky*. She could not understand any of the invented lexical items as in *All mimsy were the borogoves*<sup>1</sup> and so could not establish the propositional meaning, but she could identify the existence of several creatures endowed with some vague attributes. Both propositional and grammatical meanings are independent from context. For this reason such meanings can be considered as a property of clauses and also of texts.

Incidentally, context operates differently to construct the meaning of written and spoken texts. It is as if texts which are written to be read carried much more contextual information than spoken texts. Nevertheless, this difference should not be

---

1. *'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.*

overstated. For instance, if one isolates one of the clauses in Example 1, say, *And so, say some, do women who adorn their labels*, this presents as many interpretive problems as typical conversational examples such as *Can you send me one of these and two of those?* without situational information.

A third meaning corresponds to the speech act, i.e. the act performed in saying something. This is different from the propositional and grammatical meaning, as can be seen in the comparison between these two utterances:

- (2) a. *The vintners insist that the sketch is art.*  
 b. *The vintners argue that the sketch is art.*

For one thing, (2a) could be a **representative**. Representatives commit the speaker to something being the case (*that the sketch is art*). The psychological state expressed is belief (*vintners believe that X*) and the strength of the representative is great (cf. *the vintners suggest that the sketch is art*). Example (2b) does not fulfil these conditions (it is essentially an attempt to justify a proposition) so it is a different speech act. Nevertheless both utterances share something derived from their grammatical form: both are statements. The multiple functions of an utterance will be considered in chapter 2. As regards meaning in context, it is doubtful that this meaning can be extended to texts as wholes.

A fourth meaning of an utterance is the set of implicatures that an addressee works out as intended. If we take *The vintners insist that the sketch is art* as an answer to the question *Should the labels be changed?*, a negative answer is understood (= *They shouldn't be changed*) but not derived from the propositional meaning by itself.

There is a general agreement on the equation between discourse and meaning, and on its negative version, that discourse cannot be explained in terms of form. However, attempts have been made at explaining the linguistic form of texts, notably the analysis of cohesion. Text-linguistics looks at meaning through a formal prism while pragmatic approaches look at form through a semantic prism. By necessity, some elements will appear blurred in the picture and some others will remain out of frame, but a similar critique can be made of any pragmatic approach if one compares it with another. My position here is to provide a balanced account of advantages and drawbacks in every case so that readers learn about the existing options and make their choice. Any choice, like discourse, is a function of its context. Approaches are not intrinsically appropriate or inappropriate but suitable or unsuitable for specific goals.

A grammatical account of texts has serious limitations. The first and more important is that no rules of well- or ill-formedness of the type given for sentences are applicable to texts. Still, it is possible to identify textual patterns and structures and the abstraction of these patterns can be called 'text grammar' in a broad sense. Naturally, the possibility of recognizing recursive organizations does not entail the

‘ungrammaticality’ of deviant texts. This is due to the different nature of the organizing principles in clause grammar and text grammar. The more complex a linguistic unit is, the more numerous are its combinatory possibilities.

We can see this clearly in the combinatory potential of phonemes to realize morphemes, of morphemes to build words, of words to cluster as phrases, of phrases to form clauses, and of clauses to make texts. The difference between clausal and textual organizations can be explained using the concept of constitutive and regulative ‘rules’. Constitutive rules establish the existence of an activity while regulative rules organize an already existing activity. Let’s take soccer as an example. The number of players can be considered one of its constitutive rules. This number is eleven in either team. If the number of players is six, this will satisfy the conditions for another sport, say, indoor soccer (six-a-side football in UK) but not Association football. A different question is at issue in the rule of not touching the ball with one’s hand unless one is the goalkeeper. If any player touches the ball with their hand, it is still football, but the player will have committed a foul, usually if this action is considered intentional. The likeness to the rules of language should be clear by now. Let’s take question tags. A constitutive rule, i.e. a grammatical rule, is established for the pronominalization of the subject. If this is not done, simply it is not English. Alternatively, a regulative rule, of pragmatic nature, would assign meaningful values to the (usual) reversal or non-reversal of the polarity. A speaker may choose to reverse the polarity or not and still produce a meaningful English clause but different implications will arise. In a nutshell, other things being equal, if the speaker cannot choose, it is because of a grammatical rule, and if the speaker can choose, there is a pragmatic principle involved.

This divergence between grammatical rules and pragmatic principles is not so clear-cut as the above example may suggest, but the grammatical and pragmatic ends of the descriptive cline can be easily perceived.

For all the reasons explained above, I am inclined to keep the term ‘grammar’ for texts. For the same reasons I avoid employing ‘grammar’ for discourse and only use ‘analysis’. In apparent contradiction with this view, Longacre, whose textual typology will be discussed in chapter 4, gave his well-known book on text-linguistics the title *The Grammar of Discourse* (1983). It is worthwhile to discuss what is meant by ‘grammar’ in his approach to language in context. ‘Grammar’ is used as a counterpoint to ‘semantics’, although the subtitle of the book is “Notional structures”. Accordingly, the referential content structure of discourse is excluded from the volume. Instead, features such as plot progression in narrative, dialogue relations, ways of combining predicates or role relations are considered in detail. These notions belong to the general notional structure of spoken language and are independent of particular texts. They resemble categories usually referred to as ‘grammar’ and are displayed in the surface structure of at least some languages. Therefore, ‘grammar’ is justified in terms of the ‘formal’ properties displayed by

discourse features such as **deixis**, **anaphora**, temporal and spatial expressions, **extraposition**, **focus** phenomena and the like. A proviso is granted that these notional considerations are the deep or semantic side of grammar. ‘Formal’ markers identifying stages, peaks, beginnings and endings, not only in narrative but also in dialogue, enable us to identify a grammatical profile of discourse. A second grammatical consideration of relevance to the study of discourse is the recognition of strands of information relevance. Both discourse profile and strands of information relevance treat structures as wholes so a complementary hierarchical account is required, namely, the structuring into units: paragraphs, clauses and phrases. As to the notional structure of discourse, Longacre’s goal is to map universal notional categories onto the grammatical structure of the surface of a language. This is precisely what Halliday’s functional grammar has achieved with a high degree of consistency and, for this reason, it is the approach adopted in this volume.

On the one hand, some scholars who have rejected the notion of a grammar for texts have based their position on an essential difference between clauses and texts. For them, judgements about clauses cannot extend to groups of clauses. On the other hand, authors in favour of text-linguistics have played down the differences imposed by linguistic units. My position here is that text and clause are qualitatively different. So the theoretical assumption is not whether clausal organizations extend beyond the clause but the correlation of textual phenomena at clausal level. Cohesion is as important for texts as it is for sentences and rules such as pronominalization, deletion, or stress assignment operate according to the same principles in texts and sentences. Although I will deal with intersentential cohesion exhaustively, cohesion is also important within the sentence. However, little attention will be paid to intrasentential cohesion because structure is also a source of cohesion and at sentence level structure is so fixed that it overrides other linking devices. Cohesive ties between sentences are more effective because they are the major source of texture. Cohesion is a matter of interpretation, of meaning, but it is displayed through a varying number of linguistic devices. At least theoretically, we can establish a distinction between cohesion (linguistic devices) and coherence (meaning) so that linguistic form and interpretation are not mixed up. If cohesion is fundamentally meaning, there might be extreme cases of texts with few or even no cohesive devices. The reverse, cohesion as linguistic form independently of meaning, seems counterintuitive but this can be the case in lexical cohesion, where cohesion exists as a direct relation between the forms themselves. These two extreme cases will be discussed in chapter 5.

In its simplest form, a formal notion of texts assesses their acceptability in terms of the sequencing of sentences. This sequence is achieved through various cohesive devices, notably anaphora and conjunction, but there is another source of texture based on the distribution of information across sentences.

As an alternative to the grammatical approach to texts presented above, discourse has been related to grammar within a discourse-functional approach. This approach has two goals: the description of choices in grammar and lexis available to speakers (e.g. *when is a pronoun preferred to a full noun phrase?*), and the explanation of language resources across languages. Discourse functional linguists have attempted three kinds of explanations:

- *Cognitive explanations* of resources and processes used by speakers in producing and understanding language.
- *Social-interactional explanations* of the dynamics of situations in which language is produced and consumed, and the cultural norms of speakers.
- *Diachronic explanations* of the relationship between discourse functions and grammatical change.

This approach can be traced back to Firth and the Prague School in their interest in the management of information in discourse. Although other lines of study of language in use developed simultaneously in the US, probably the best-known and most widely used tool available to discourse grammarians is ‘information flow’, or **thematization** as will be referred to here.

The hypothesis underlying thematization is that language production and processing is conditioned by cognitive factors. From the speaker’s point of view, some information lies within the focus of attention and some outside of it. At the same time, for communication to be efficient, it should be conveyed in a manner that favours processability by the hearer. From the hearer’s point of view, predictability of information will be related to the complexity of its linguistic coding in an inverse relationship: the more predictable the information, the less complex its decoding and vice versa. It should be noticed that this ‘tuning’ of information obeys pragmatic factors and principles (e.g. **end-focus**, **clarity**, etc.) and that principles are operative both when they are followed and when they are not. Information can be propositional and non-propositional. Since we are considering pragmatic choices, alternative wordings mostly affect non-propositional meanings such as implicatures. In chapter 3, I will demonstrate that known or unknown information is not established absolutely but shaped by encoders, who may choose to follow or run against predictable patterns to achieve their communicative goal.

Discourse functional linguistics should not be mixed up with approaches to discourse analysis such as **speech act theory**. Discourse functional linguistics represents the bridge between grammar and pragmatics, so it can be viewed either as the most pragmatic end of grammatical description or the most grammatical end of pragmatic description. For example, thematization, or functional sentence perspective, is a phenomenon that takes place within the boundaries of the sentence, but it only makes sense across sentences. Like some approaches to discourse

analysis, discourse functional grammarians use natural discourse data. This is not an exclusive methodology of discourse approaches. Corpus linguistics has been exploiting the advances in computer technology to deal with amounts of data impossible to manage before.

Corpora such as the *British National Corpus (BNC)* or the *Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus (LSWEC)* store millions of words of authentic spoken and written English from books, newspapers, radio broadcasts, telephone conversations and so on. The usefulness for text and discourse analysis seems obvious, especially because together with transcriptions, tape recordings are often available to researchers.<sup>2</sup> New multimedia technologies such as digitization of sound and video are also improving research. Still, using corpora to discover statistical properties of texts is only possible in limited cases, because searches usually work by selecting key words and providing a limited context.

The aim of this book is to present and discuss the guiding principles and possible applications of text grammar. It is not a comprehensive account of all the models of text analysis and their theoretical principles. Instead, it is intended to serve as a road map. The territories have been well charted before but most often as isolated cities. Readers of this book will find a route from grammar to pragmatics with stops at the main stations. Emphasis has been laid on the descriptive continuum because categories appear as scales rather than discrete objects. Chapters divide this continuum and single out notions and particular analyses but I have attempted to provide a logic that connects them coherently from sentences to texts.

### 1.3 DEFINITIONS OF TEXT AND DISCOURSE

In any discipline, theoretical discussions require some agreement in the use of terms that correspond to fundamental concepts. Linguistics is no exception and the case of ‘text’ and ‘discourse’ is particularly striking. Both terms are used in everyday language but also have specific uses in linguistic discussion. Informally, **text** refers to any piece of written language with identifiable limits, e.g. a recipe, a poem, a novel. On the contrary, **discourse** usually designates spoken language of the type found in public speeches, e.g. ‘the discourse of Trump’, or with an ideological sense, e.g. ‘the discourse of the Left’.

More specifically, the following definitions represent the most frequent notions of both concepts in linguistics. There is considerable discrepancy among them so it is worth considering the assumptions underlying the definitions.

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2. In this book, all the numbered examples without an explicit indication of their source and the examples in the glossary have been obtained from Davies, M. 2004-. *BYU-BNC*. (Based on the British National Corpus from Oxford University Press). Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>.

**DEFINITIONS OF ‘TEXT’**

“A piece of naturally occurring spoken, written, or signed discourse identified for purposes of analysis. It is often a language unit with a definable communicative function, such as a conversation, a poster.” (Crystal 1992:72)

“a stretch of language interpreted formally, without context.” (Cook 1989:158)

“unit of communication seen as a coherent syntactic and semantic structure which can be spoken or written down.” (Fowler 1986:85)

“A text can be defined as an actual use of language, as distinct from a sentence which is an abstract unit of linguistic analysis” (Widdowson 2007:4)

**DEFINITIONS OF ‘DISCOURSE’**

“A continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than the sentence, often constituting a coherent unit, such as a sermon, argument, joke or narrative.” (Crystal 1992:25)

“stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive.” (Cook 1989:156)

“whole complicated process of linguistic interaction between people uttering and comprehending texts.” (Fowler 1986:86)

“the term discourse is taken here to refer both to what a text producer meant by a text and what a text means to the receiver.” (Widdowson 2007:7)

Crystal’s definitions appear in an introduction to linguistics. Text and discourse are presented as asymmetrical concepts and, contrary to the usual tendency, text is assigned any mode, written or spoken, while there is room left for written discourse. On the one hand, text is considered naturally occurring language, but the emphasis on the analytical purpose and its unity hints at some degree of abstraction. On the other hand, the idea of ‘functions’ pulls in the opposite direction and pays attention to context. The examples do not help much to distinguish the concepts. Indeed, ‘conversation’ as text and ‘argument’ as discourse sound rather confusing. On the whole, these definitions display little consistency, if not contradictions.

Cook and Widdowson include their definitions in books on discourse. Cook’s is fairly clear and symmetrical. Text is understood as a formal and abstract entity while discourse is based on meaning and context. Widdowson attempts a synthesis by viewing the text as language with a communicative purpose and discourse as the intended/interpreted meaning. Nevertheless the text seems to retain some formal (i.e. abstract) properties that place it between the sentence and the discourse.

Fowler’s work is an application of functional linguistics to the analysis of language. This author emphasizes the product/process distinction: text as an abstract unit of communication and discourse as the process of social interaction.

Table 1 summarizes the features of text and discourse discussed in this chapter. Properties are understood in a scalar sense. For instance, *abstract – concrete* represent the ends of a scale of concreteness. In this scale, text and discourse are placed at either extreme, which means that these notions vary in their degree of abstraction, with ‘text’ at the most abstract end and ‘discourse’ at the least abstract end.

*Table 1. Summary of features of text and discourse*

<b>Features</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Discourse</b>
Degree of abstraction	Abstract	Concrete
Role in communication	Product	Process
Linguistic status	Formal	Functional
Type of Meaning	Propositional	Non-propositional
Relationship to context	De-contextualised	Contextualised
Linguistic unit	Any	Any
Mode	Written/spoken	Written/spoken

#### 1.4 NORMS OF TEXTUAL COMMUNICATION

A central problem of textual study is the balance between the formal and functional sides of textual interaction. Text-linguistics should combine the productive and receptive aspects of texts as communicative events. Given that rules of well-formedness are hardly viable in the case of texts, it is more valuable to establish a series of standards to explain the circumstances and features that make texts communicative or non-communicative. These norms are cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality. The first two regulate the material and semantic aspects of texts. Intentionality and acceptability focus on the roles of senders and receivers respectively. Informativity responds to both communicants, encoders and decoders, in terms of their shared knowledge. Situationality explains the connection between text and context. Finally, intertextuality relates a text to other previous texts. All the relevant aspects of the three basic elements of verbal communication, participants, texts and situation, and their relationships are established by these seven norms. Example 1 will serve as illustration of the ways in which these norms operate in the production and processing of texts.

**Example 1****Dressed to kilt**

Even highlanders follow fashion (1). Geoffrey Taylor Kiltmakers, based in Scotland, now produces “21st century kilts,” with pockets for modern necessities like mobile phones (2). Designer Howie Nicholsby sees the evolution as a means of tapping into the youth market (3). “The kilt is free and fun.” (4) His pleated skirts come in various materials –from the traditional tartan to PVC (5). And for male buyers too shy to purchase in person, the kilts are also available online (6). Robert the Bruce never had it this easy (7).

*Newsweek*

**Cohesion** establishes the connections among the elements of the textual surface following the necessary linear sequence and at the same time overriding this sequence. Cohesion is based on morphosyntactic dependencies and lexical dependencies. The order of the sequence cannot be reshuffled without changing or losing the meaning of the text. Linerarity is reinforced by morphosyntactic patterns. For this reason, functional sequences resist change more strongly than topical sequences. In example 1, it would be hard to identify *Howie Nicholsby* (3) as the referent of *His pleated skirts* (5), if the order of sentences 5 and 3 were reversed: *Geoffrey Taylor Kiltmakers, based in Scotland, now produces “21st century kilts,” [...] His pleated skirts come in various materials. Designer Howie Nicholsby sees the evolution as a means of tapping into the youth market.* In this alternative sequence, *Geoffrey Taylor* would be a more plausible referent because it is available in the previous sentence and because grammatical links usually refer backwards. However, the referent *GT Kiltmakers* would require a singular non-personal co-referring pronoun (*its skirts*). Lexical chains are not so strong and the near synonyms *kilt-skirt* can be exchanged in sentence 6 with little change of meaning. The reversal of the order of sentences 1 and 7 is more complex. The sequence of tenses allows beginning with the only simple past (*had*) and continuing with all the present tenses. A different issue is the decoding effort required in both cases and, consequently, the effect on the reader. If the text began with sentence 7 and ended with sentence 1, *Robert the Bruce never had it this easy* would be much more difficult to interpret. This is so because the referent of *this easy* is not readily available in this position, and because the text has not provided any clues as to the identity of the historical Scottish chieftain (and popular film character). The pun in the title *Dressed to kilt* (cf. *Dressed to kill*) would remain cryptic with this order until sentence 3 confirmed the discourse theme ‘fashion’. The alternative text is not meaningless, but its order requires the reader to remember this material until the rest of the text allows disambiguation (i.e. *Is it a text about history or fashion? What did Robert the Bruce have this easy? How easy did he have it?*). As it is, the conclusion comes after the

clues to identify Robert the Bruce (highlander, Scotland, wearing kilt, traditional tartan), and the implied referents of it (getting his kilt) and this easy (by clicking with the mouse) have been given.

In order to explain the interpretation of the alternative sequences in example (1) I have referred to an organization of the contents that goes beyond cohesion and shades into the next group of norms, coherence. Chapter 5 argues that cohesion and coherence are the linguistic counterparts of the cognitive strategies of integration and inference. Both sets of strategies converge upon the text but follow opposed directions: from bottom to top in cohesion and from top to bottom in coherence.

**Coherence** is defined as the accessibility and relevance of the components of the textual world, i.e. the configuration of underlying concepts and relations. A concept is a set of structured knowledge or cognitive content that communicants can activate in their minds in a congruent and unified manner. Relations are ties that link concepts. In example (1), the relation between the concepts ‘Highlanders’ and ‘follow’ is one of ‘agency’. This relation is explicit but coherence is also achieved implicitly. For instance, the text implies that “buying online is easy” though no such statement is produced. The stronger sets of relations in texts are causal and temporal but these are by no means unified. There are many degrees in the connection between causes and effects. In the example *Shy men can buy these kilts because they are available online*, the availability of the product online is not the immediate cause of the action but a condition that favours it. Temporal relationships may also represent complex orders of actions.

While cohesion and coherence organize the textual material, intentionality and acceptability are focused on the users.

**Intentionality** refers to the encoder’s intention that the text achieves a goal within a plan. Plans and goals are patterns of knowledge. Plans are patterns of events leading to an intended goal. The simplest way for the encoder to attain a goal is the successful performance of a speech act by being informative, clear, relevant and truthful. However, it is sometimes the case that the encoder’s intentions are made deliberately unclear, as in the answer given by the official in the following real life example:

### Example 2

Interviewer: *Did the United States Government play any part in the Duvaliers’ departure? Did they, for example, actively encourage him to leave?*

Official: *I would not try to steer you away from that conclusion.*

**Acceptability** represents the set of norms based on the receiver. Ultimately, the receiver is responsible for the relevance of texts in terms of knowledge and

communicative goals. The receiver collaborates in the achievement of cohesion since the degree of explicitness of texts always leaves areas of indeterminacy. One can observe these variations in explicitness by comparing a legal document such as the judgement in Example 3, with a high degree of explicitness, with a literary text of the type quoted in Example 4.

### Example 3

#### Final Judgement of Dissolution of Marriage

##### ORDERED AND ADJUDGED

1. That this Court finds that it has jurisdiction of the subject matter hereof and the parties hereto.
2. That the petitioner, Dawn MARTIN is a bona fide resident of the state of New York for more than the required statutory period of time.
3. That a dissolution of marriage, a vinculo, be and the same is hereby granted to the Petitioner Dawn MARTIN, and to the Respondent, John MARTIN, forever dissolving the bonds of matrimony heretofore and now existing between the parties hereto, and restoring unto each of the said parties all of the rights and privileges of a single person, because the marriage is irretrievably broken.
4. That the Petitioner, Dawn Martin, is the proper person to have permanent custody and control of the minor children of the parties, to wit: Helen MARTIN and Eileen MARTIN, with reasonable rights of visitation to the Respondent, provided that the Respondent gives the Petitioner twenty-four hours prior notice of said visitation.

### Example 4

Laughing and delightful, she had crossed Oxford Street and Great Portland Street and turned down one of the little streets, and now, and now, the great moment was approaching, for now she slackened, opened her bag, and with one look in his direction, but not at him, one look that bade farewell, summed up the whole situation and dismissed it triumphantly, for ever, had fitted her key, opened the door, and gone! Clarissa's voice saying, Remember my party, Remember my party, sang in his ears. The house was one of those flat red houses with hanging flower-baskets of vague impropriety. It was over.

V. Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*

The passage in Example 3 displays almost no personal pronouns (only *it* to refer to *The Court*), no ellipsis, and multiple lexical **reiteration** by repetition (*Petitioner*, *Respondent*) and by **superordinate items** (*the parties*). There are continuous **deictics** to connect the text to the situation (*hereof*, *hereto*, *hereby*, *heretofore*). On the contrary, the excerpt from *Mrs Dalloway* shows many cases of reference and

ellipsis. There are two frames of reference: the narrative past and the present of the consciousness of characters. This produces a special use of deictics (*now the great moment was approaching*) that combines a near temporal deictic with a past tense. The deictic no longer relates language to its immediate context of production but is filtered through the narrative frame while maintaining marks of direct speech such as near deictics or the expressive features of conversation (*and now, and now... and gone!.. Remember my party...*). All these characteristics detach the text from its original source and situation. Legal and literary texts represent the extremes of dependence and independence from context. Likewise, other types and genres (e.g. instructions, advertisements) can display a strong or weak dependence from context. More broadly, we can conjecture that language users would hardly accept a textual form that ignored the connections between language and situation, e.g. a conversation that made no use of reference, as the legal text in Example 3.

**Informativity** refers to the predictability of the text material, i.e. the amount of known and new information packed into the text. In order to achieve their communicative goals, texts have to be informative but not at the expense of excessive effort on the part of the receiver. In other words, encoders have to adjust informativity and processing effort so that the receiver finds the task worthwhile. We will deal with the two aspects involved here in separate chapters. On the one hand, the organization of information along textual units will be studied in chapter 3 as part of the so-called thematic structure. A very simple illustration taken from Example 1 is the choice of the different Determiners and Modifiers in noun phrases with *kilt* as Head: *21st century kilts* → *the kilt* → *his pleated skirts* → *the kilts*. When the entity ‘kilt’ is introduced in the text, it is new information. Accordingly, it appears with indefinite reference and some modification (*21st century*). Since it is the central discourse topic it is also marked with **focus**. After the first mention, the rest of its occurrences are definite and non-focal, as corresponds to the low informativity of the noun phrases, whose information is textually evoked and very near its source.

**Situationality** relates texts to their situation. Textual relevance is understood in terms of appropriateness. The headline *Dressed to kilt* in Example 1 responds to the particular communicative situation of this text. Its elliptical Head and the pun produce an informal effect that would make it unsuitable for a history book but appropriate for a weekly magazine. Situationality also affects cohesion and the differences detected between Examples 3 and 4 correlate with the varying relationships created between texts and their contexts.

**Intertextuality** refers to the way in which the use of texts depends on previous texts. The degree of dependency varies, but rarely prevents understanding the new text. In general, intertextuality is responsible for the recognition of text types and genres. Example 5 is clear in respect of its generic features and also adds a special blend of humour.

**Example 5**

In the great debate about whether the economy is recovering or about to slide back into recession, A.A. Milne's characters provide a useful way of setting the optimists apart from the pessimists.

'Tiggers' have spotted the upturn and think it will gain in strength. 'Eeyores' believe the economy has experienced an artificial bounce and will soon sink back into the mire.

*The Sunday Times*

This example displays a number of features that characterize business articles as genre: the technical lexis (*recession, upturn*), orientation towards the readers (readers of *The Times*), certain degree of formality, use of metaphors and idioms (*gain in strength*). Specifically, this text compares the opinions and attitudes of economic experts with two well-known characters in A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* stories: Eeyore, the old grey stuffed donkey, and Tigger, the black striped tiger with the springy tail. The newspaper article draws on the contrast between the depressive attitude of Eeyore, who lives in a gloomy place, 'rather boggy and sad', and Tigger's cheerful and confident personality manifested in his love of bouncing. This provides a background to the expressions 'artificial bounce' and 'sinking into the mire', which apply literally to the fictional characters and metaphorically to the economy.

These seven norms of textual communication which define and establish the communicative process are regulated by three principles: **efficiency**, **effectiveness** and **appropriateness**. Efficiency is a function of the effort made in processing texts. Effectiveness depends on the text's contribution to achieve the speaker's communicative goal. Appropriateness is related to the balance between the use of a text in a situation and the fulfilment of text norms.

It should be highlighted that the above scheme does not assume a code model of communication in which the role of the encoder is mirrored by that of the decoder to reach the encoder's thought. Instead, both users are seen to perform similar tasks. Addressees try to anticipate the addresser's actions to increase the efficiency of the reception and this makes it follow the same steps of production. Naturally, the receiver begins with only a vague idea of the producer's knowledge and goals so she has to keep on formulating and checking hypotheses as to the direction of communication; if all possible directions had to be considered at every stage of communication, it would hardly be feasible to decode in time so the hypothesis are regulated by a principle of **relevance**.

### Further reading

- Beaugrande, R. de & W.U. Dressler. 1981. *Introduction to Text Linguistics*. London: Longman. Chapter 1.
- Esser, J. 2009. *Introduction to English Text-linguistics*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. Chapter 1.
- Widdowson, H.G. 2007. *Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### Exercises

1. *Text and discourse*. Read the following exchange and answer the questions below. Consider:

- Possible types of speaker and situation.
- What speakers say.
- What speakers do.

Man: *Where did we stay in Paris?*  
 Woman: *At the Crillon. You know that.*  
 Man: *Why do I know that?*  
 Woman: *That's where we always stayed.*  
 Man: *No. Not always.*  
 Woman: *There and at the Pavillion Henri-Quatre in St. Germain. You said you loved it there.*  
 Man: *Love is a dunghill, and I'm the cock that gets on it to crow.*  
 Woman: *If you have to go away, is it absolutely necessary to kill off everything you leave behind? I mean do you have to take away everything? Do you have to kill your horse, and your wife and burn your saddle and your armour?*  
 Man: *Yes, your damned money was my armour. My Sword and my Armour.*  
 Woman: *Don't.*  
 Man: *All right. I'll stop that. I don't want to hurt you.*  
 Woman: *It's a little bit late now.*

E. Hemingway, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (adapted)

- a. What is it that makes these sentences a text?
- b. What are the differences between this text and others?
- c. How can its constituents be defined?
- d. What is happening in the conversational exchange?
- e. Would it make any difference if the man suffered from Alzheimer's disease?
- f. Explain the textual and the discursive dimensions of the passage.

2. *Norms of textual communication.* Explain briefly the ways in which the text below fulfills the seven norms of textual communication studied in section 1.4.

### **Is Molas, Sardinia**

Since it opened this year, the Is Molas Golf resort has been turning heads with its otherworldly villas, 18-hole Gary Player golf course, five-star hotel, private beach club and luxury restaurants and boutiques (1). Designed by the Italian architect Massimiliano Fuksas, the unorthodox villas were conceived as “inhabited sculptures”, but their bold forms are both traditional (they were inspired by *nuraghi*, local megalithic stone towers) and sustainable (2). They were built in natural, locally sourced materials such as tadelakt plaster and *cocciopesto* –fragments of earthenware used in ancient Roman architecture (3). It’s deemed “bio-architecture”, and the buildings are designed to be cool in summer and warm in winter (4).

The architecture is immersed in the landscape: the gardens use only native species such as myrtle, mastic, arbutus trees and cork oaks (5). Every villa is positioned to capture the best possible views, which include the turquoise Sardinian sea, the golf course and the mountains (6).

BUY IN Prices range from €1.8m for a two bedroom villa to €4.4m for one with five bedrooms (7).

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