

TEXT AND COMMUNICATION IN TEXTUAL LINGUISTICS, THEIR IMPORTANCE TO THE DIDACTICS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract

People are human being and as such they are communicative individuals. Given that they are born in different societies, they get socialized, work, make friends and create families in the milieu they live. The purpose of this paper is to diachronically present the basic communication concepts which an individual develops in the course of his socialization in the society, such as his behavior, his individual activity guided by the interlocutor, social interaction through practical activity, verbal and non verbal communication, his/her discourse concluding with the text as a communications tool. In the first part, the paper focuses on the history of the textual linguistics as a separate field of study, beginning from the mid 60s to the mid 70s. Further on, the definition of the text from the linguistic point of view as well as its dictionary explanation have been provided. The role of the text as a daily means of communication and the properties that make a linguistic creation be called as such, have also been treated. The last part of the study focuses on the importance of the textbooks to foreign language teaching. The main task of foreign language teaching consists in training students to understand texts and create them on their own. Texts enable a form of communication, convey information, knowledge and different cultures, transcending time and place boundaries. In foreign language teaching, a text is employed to accomplish several tasks at the same time. It is used to develop skills, enrich vocabulary, teach/learn grammar, and transmit the culture of the countries where that foreign language is spoken. Based on the multiple functions of a teaching text, it can be concluded that the success of the method in foreign language teaching depends on the type of the text it employs, and consequently, the type of the information it implies.

Keywords: *socialization, communication, text, textual linguistics, foreign language*

Introduction

The text is a crucial means of our daily life. Texts are treated in all scientific disciplines such as mathematics, medicine, law, theology, linguistics etc. In all these disciplines the text is studied according to a certain point of view and the purpose of getting the information according to the belonging field. In the textual linguistics, the text is studied in more details, because it examines the structure, stylistic, grammatical and functional features. The linguistics of the text is the linguistics that deals with texts (cf.Sowinski:9). As for the linguists, texts are not just informative providers, but also linguistic creations, established on given rules (cf.Sowinski:17).

The background of textual linguistics

The first rules and reflections about the text ranking are found in the ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric, then in the Middle Age up to nowadays. The main task of the Greek rhetoric was the training of public speakers. They were mainly focused on these main points: *inventio*- finding the idea that best fits; *dispositio*-ranking of the ideas; *elocutio*-finding the adequate expressions for the ideas as well; *memoratio*- store in memory before the presentation (*actio*) (cf. Beaugrande/Dressler:15-6). Later on during the Middle Age, the rhetoric was ranked in “Trivium”¹ that means three studies, where, along with rhetoric were included grammar and logic too. According to Dressler other precursors of textual linguistics are stylistic and the study of literary genres. The first concept of textual linguistics as a new discipline of modern is found in an early paper of H.Weil (1887)², who refers to the ranking of the words to the ranking of thoughts, overlooking grammar; in the dissertation of I.Nye 1912³ in which are analyzed signals of connection between different sentences, the features of the uncompleted and repetition as a result of textual links. Seeing the development of the American structuralism, valid paper regarding the development of textual linguistics are “Discourse Analysis” by Z.S.Harris (1952) and “Tagmemics” by K.L.Pikes (1964)⁴. According to Harris: “Language doesn’t display as a word in words and isolated sentences, but in a contemporary text.”⁵ According to him, sentences must be analysed only in respect of texts as part of inclusive discourse. While in tagmemics the base of the text is embedded in the situation unit or oriented towards pragmatics. This text is divided into paragraphs which are composed of sentences. According to Beaugrande/Dressler, the method tagmemics requires the collection and the analysis of data in form of “slots” and “fillers”, thus in open position within the text and units that can fill these positions⁶. So, Pike rejects the binominal phrase/text using the perspective text/phrase, represented by the syntax of the text.⁷ In the School of Prague in the 30s it has been found the concept of functional perspective of the sentence (cf. Beaugrande/Dressler:21). The linguist Frantisek Danes has played a significant role in this school. According to him, theme and rheme have two additional communicative functions of different syntactic complements in a sentence. However, in the functional perspective of the sequence, *the sentence remains the upper unit and the text a versification of words*⁸. In 1968 was Roland Harweg who drafted the first important study done about the organization of the text. Harweg takes for granted the idea that texts are kept connected through “substitution”. The term „textual linguistics” comes from Harald Weinrich, who in 1967 advocates the thesis that “linguistics exists only as a part of textual linguistics and each scientific linguistic research should be based on text as a descriptive framework” (cf.Sowinski:21). During these years the sentence as the highest linguistic unit is replaced by the text which represents the inclusive unit of the phrase or sentence⁹. In the beginning of 70s the starting of the second phase in the study of textual linguistics is marked by the turning point of linguistics toward pragmatics. Textual linguistics is oriented more and more ahead

¹ Robert-Alain de Beaugrande-Wolfgang Ulrich Dressler, Einführung in die Textlinguistik, Tübingen, 1981, pg.16

² cf. Bernhard Sowinski, Textlinguistik, Main: Kohlhammer, 1983, pg.20

³ ibid. pg.20

⁴ Tefe Topalli, Gjuhesi Teksti, Shkoder, 2011, pg.19

⁵ Wolfgang Heinemann-Dieter Viehweger, Textlinguistik/Eine Einführung, Tübingen, 1991, pg.24

⁶ Robert-Alain de Beaugrande-Wolfgang Ulrich Dressler, Einführung in die Textlinguistik, Tübingen, 1981, pg.19

⁷ Tefe Topalli, Gjuhesi Teksti, Shkoder, 2011, pg.19

⁸ ibid. Pg.20

Christina Gansel-Frank Jürgens, Textlinguistik und Textgrammatik, Göttingen, 2007, pg.35

⁹ Christina Gansel-Frank Jürgens, Textlinguistik und Textgrammatik, Göttingen, 2007, pg.35

communication, since texts are embedded in communicative situations. Here, the point of view of text, changes, not anymore as a ranking of words, sentence ranking grammatically correctly, but now is asked to find out the purpose of embedding a text in a communicative situation. The linguists, Petöfi, van Dijk and Melcuk are the typical representatives of the grammars of text, who in their work were inspired by transformative generative grammar. The model of Melcuk adopts the paraphrase, in order to direct the linguistic model, automatically toward the imitation of human behaviour. Petöfi displaces transformative movements from their initial use in syntactic plane allowing transformation in between various planes, while van Dijk expands transformations in order to describe cognitive processes. In the years 80 the attention is focused toward the context, the circumstances of the communication. During this time, the grammars of text are developed based on three planes: that of pragmatics, syntactic and semantic. After 1990 up to nowadays grammars of text are developed in four lines, firstly its legitimacy as a discipline, in this direction there is research done, comparison between the development of different linguistic disciplines, secondly we have authentic studies about the typology of the text and comparative features between them, thirdly we have concrete studies about the criteria of textuality and lastly we have publications on the grammar of the text. Concerning researches on textual linguistics that have been done in Albania we may say that some partial studies are made by the academic R. Ismajli in his book “The Multiplicity of the Text” as well by J. Thomai with the book “Text and Language”. There are also authentic editions about this discipline. The first edition “Linguistics of the text” is written by K.Dibra e N. Varfi (1999). In 2004 Hasan Muja in Kosovo wrote “The Linguistics of the Text”, in 2005 Arber Celiku in Macedonia publishes “Textual Coherence ” and the latest edition is published by Tefe Topalli in 2011 entitled “The linguistics of the text” (cf.Topalli:7-8).

What is a text in linguistics, definitions of the text in dictionary

Text, according to the linguists Beaugrande/Dressler is: communicative occurrence which meets the seven criteria of the textuality¹⁰. According to them, if a text doesn't meet one of these criteria, it is not anymore a communicative text and as a result their idea continuous considering the non/communicative texts as no no/texts. For the word text in Current Albanian Dictionary¹¹ we find these explanations:

- TEXT, ~I m.pl. ~E, ~ET 1. Word or sentence of a work, document, etc, written or typed; the written or typed content of a work, a document, an act etc; a saying, written or typed; a book, a letter etc. Where are written or typed these words sentences or content; the text of drama (tale or story); the text of ordinance (oath); According to text; Out of the text; Change (write, dictate, repeat, and learn the text). Approved the text of letter (telegram).
2. Written or typed materials for the study of something, teaching subject, written or typed in a book; extracts taken from a work or some literary works typed or written together for teaching purposes; a book, review etc. that contains these materials. Teaching subject. The bookstore of text books. Elaborate (improve, compile) the text. Bought the text.
 3. The extract of a written or typed material without explanatory notes, extract of a book without the preface with no titles or chapters etc. The text and photos (illustrations, sketches). Text with notes (explanations). The words of a musical work song etc. The lyrics of a song. The lyric of opera. Text is written by.....

In Duden dictionary Universalwörterbuch 2001 we find this definition for the word “text”:

¹⁰ Klaus Brinker, Linguistische Textanalyse, Berlin, 2001, pg. 11-12

¹¹ Akademia e Shkencave: Fjalor i Gjuhës së Sotme Shqipe. Tirane: 1980. Pg.1977

Text, der; -[e]s, -e [spätmhd. text < spätlat. textus= Inhalt, Text, eigtl = Gewebe der Rede < lat. textus= Gewebe, zu: textum, 2. Part. von: texere= weben, flechten; kunstvoll zusammenfügen]: **1. a)** [schriftlich fixierte] im Wortlaut festgelegte, inhaltlich zusammenhängende Folge von Aussagen **b)** Stück Text (1a), Auszug aus einem Buch **2.** zu einem Musikstück gehörende Worte **3.** (als Grundlage einer Predigt dienende) Bibelstelle: über einen T. predigen. **4.** Unterschrift zu einer Illustration, Abbildung.¹²

In the Macmillan English Dictionary¹³, we find this definition of the text:

Text /tekst/ noun. 1. The part of a book, magazine, or computer document that consists of writing and does not include pictures or notes 1a. A written record of the words of a speech, lecture, programme, or play 1b. A piece of writing such as a book or play that you study for an examination or for research 1c. A short piece of writing that you discuss or answer questions about 1d. A short section from the Bible... 2. Text: to send a written message to someone using mobile phone.

All these definitions about the word “text” indicate that the daily use of text is not consequent. From all these definitions we can draw the basic meaning of this term. The text is a unit of language, which as a rule includes more than one sentence.

The role of the text in the daily life as a mean of communication and features that needs a linguistic creation to become a text.

In the beginning of the 70-s, another branch of text linguistics started, called the linguistics of the text oriented toward communication. This is another indication of the importance of the text which is not seen just as a static or isolated object. According to this new trend in linguistics, texts are embedded in a communicative situation, which, speakers and listeners, author and readers present the most important factors through their social conditions. (cf. Brinker:15). So, textual linguistics oriented toward communication, as understood from the concept, is interested in purposes for which texts are embedded in communicative situations, so it deals with the communicative functions of texts. However, in linguistic understanding, the text is characterized as a chain of linguistic signs¹⁴ the meaning of which is related with the concept of Saussure, the link between signifié (labelling, meaning, the content) and the signifiant (meaning, form, expression). People are social being, and as a result, they are communicative too. They develop within the framework defined by a society. There, they make friends, create a family, integrate in work. Almost, in all these life situations people need company. The relations of the individual with a society does not exclude the individual freedom of behaviour and action, for example, if someone smokes a cigarette, this happens because someone has produced and traded it, or if someone sits in a chair to relax, this happens because someone has manufactured it for that purpose. Taking in consideration these examples we may say that behaviour can be understood as an adoption in the given situations. But, if we have a behaviour oriented toward purpose, we can call it action. More often, this action is done by the individual itself, such as the opening of a window, within the social defined frame, he can go toward a partner, so there is a social interaction, for example, a group work . But, on the other hand there is also an interaction through the system of verbal

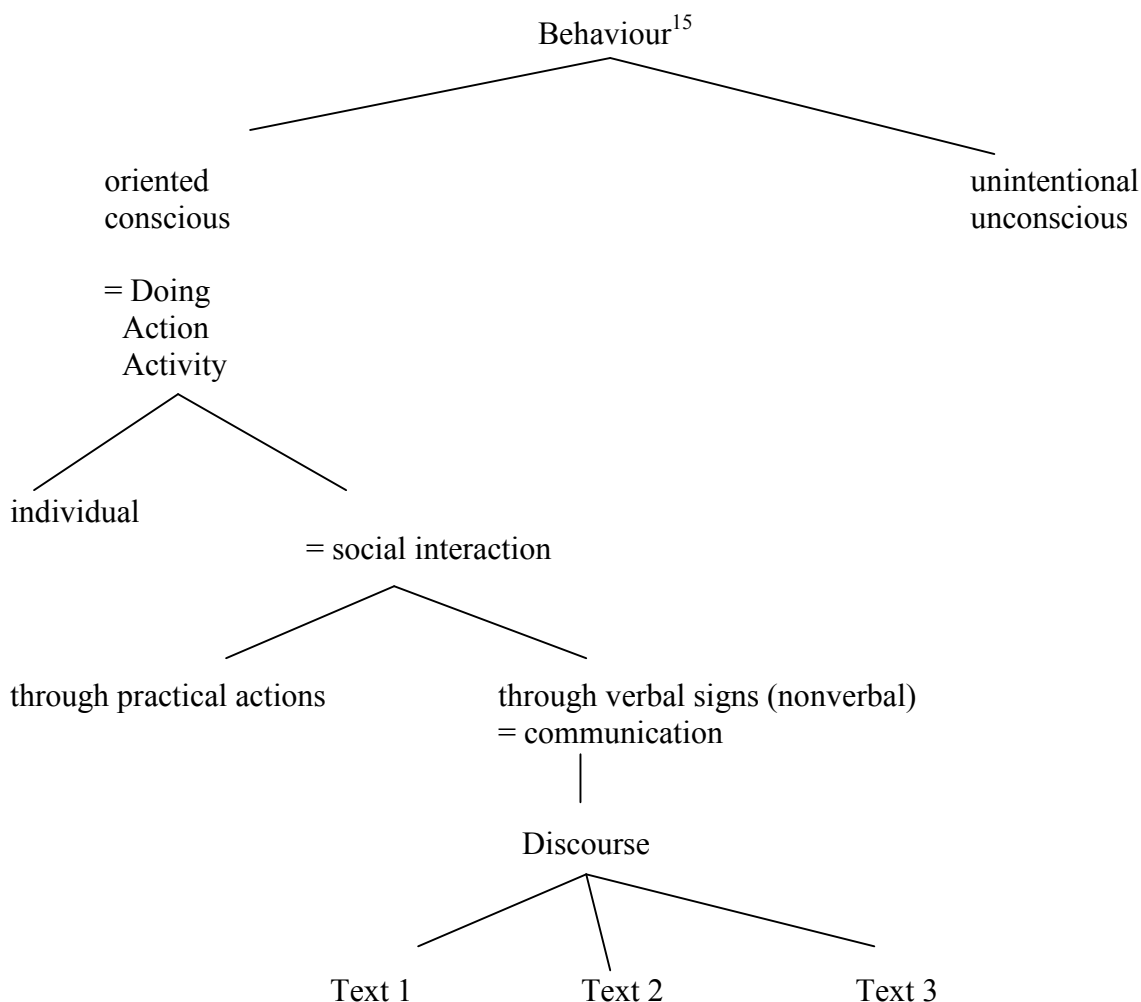
¹² textus- from the old Latin means content, text; text indeed means weaving, knitting speech; from the participle we have: weaving, knitting, artistic fusion; 1.a. fixed in writing, a coherent chain from the content of expressions b) part of the text, extract from a book 2. Words belonging to a piece of music 3. As the basis of a biblical text (preach on the part of the Bible) 4. as signature for an illustration or drawing

¹³ Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, 2002: pg.1483

¹⁴ Klaus Brinker, Linguistische Textanalyse, Berlin, 2001, pg.17

and nonverbal signs. This specific form is called communication by Heinemann (cf. M.Heinemann- W.Heinemann:1-2). The understanding between participants is conveyed through texts. So, texts are the basis of linguistic communication.

Here we can see the chart in which Heinemann presents the main concepts of linguistic communication.



So, let's go back to the unit text. As mentioned above, a text can be called so according to Beaugrande/Dressler (cf. pg.5-14) after it has met the seven criteria: 1.cohesion - it is related with the way the component of a superficial text, so words that we hear or see are linked with one another. The components of the surface depends on each other through grammatical and conventional forms, in that way that cohesion is based on and depends on grammar. As cohesive means we can mention: recurrence (partial), paraphrase, parallelism, substitution, pro-forms, ellipsis, time and aspect, intonation, junction (cf.Vater:32-41). 2. The second criterion- Coherence - has to do with functions through which the components of the text -the constellation of concepts and relations which are in the core of the superficial text, are relevant and accessible to each other, so that the cohesion is the interior semantic relation of concepts based on relation of the world of the text and the knowledge of the world as well the continuity of the meaning. The main driving points during the creation of representation can be divided into primary concepts such as –objective, situation, event and action. Within these

¹⁵ Margot Heinemann/Wolfgang Heinemann: Grundlagen der Textlinguistik. Interaktion, Text, Diskurs. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002, pg.3

concepts, there are related even secondary concepts. The third criterion is Intentionality. This criterion is related with the attitude of the producer of the text, who wants to create a cohesive and coherent text, to reach the producer goal, to display knowledge or reach a certain goal. The fourth criterion of the textuality is Acceptability. This criterion deals with the attitude of text-recipient to expect for a cohesive and coherent text, which is necessary, for example can take knowledge from it. The fifth criterion is called Informativity. For this term, Beaugrande/Dressler (pg.10-11) think of the expectation or non expectation degree to the known or unknown, sure/unsure of the textual represented. The sixth criterion is called Situationality. In this criterion can be introduced those factors which make a text relevant for a communicative situation. Text in itself functions related only to interactive contests with participants in action, who produce and accept texts. The seventh and last criterion is called Intertextuality which is the relation of a text with other texts. But, along with constitutive principles, there are also regulative principles which control text-communication. These principles are 1. The efficiency of a text depends on participants in a small degree in communication during the use of the text. 2. The efficiency depends on the strong effect it might leave and if it creates favourable conditions to achieve the purposes. 3. Appropriateness of a text is the adoption of a text with the contest and the way the textuality criteria are accurately kept.

The importance of the text in teaching a foreign language.

The main task of teaching a foreign language consists on enabling students understanding texts and create texts by their own. Texts provide communicative form, transmit information, knowledge and various cultural issues going beyond time and place boundaries. A text in teaching a foreign language accomplishes simultaneously various tasks such as expanding skills and vocabulary, interacting grammar and transmitting the cultural knowledge of places in which that language is spoken. In a foreign language class texts are present in the form of conversation, poetry, narrative, advertisement, letter or report. But what are the main functions of a specific text? Klaus Brinker¹⁶ proposes this ranking of textual functions, beginning with the information function. As it is mentioned above, all types of texts transmit information; the appeal function- the emitter wants that the recipient reacts toward a case. Under the obligatory function of a text we understand that the emitter makes the recipient clear, that he is obliged to fulfil a certain action for e.g. a contract. The contact function implicates that the emitter wants to stay in contact with the recipient, such a text is for e.g. a congratulation letter. And lastly, the declaration function. Here, the emitter makes clear that his text is creating a new reality by bringing new facts, for e.g. the Testament. Based on the multiple functions of a teaching text, it can be concluded that the success of the method in foreign language teaching depends on the type of the text it employs, and consequently, the type of the information it implies.

¹⁶ cf. Klaus Brinker: Linguistische Textanalyse: Eine Einführung in Grundbegriffe und Methoden. 5.durchges.Aufl. Berlin: 2001. Pg. 102-127

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