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Discourse Analysis

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Students: We do not know what it contains.

Professor: There is a hand.

Students: It can mean (Hi!), or (Hello!).

Professor: Yes. It also can mean (stop).

The next sign.

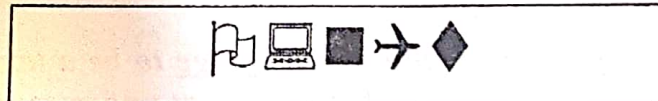
Student: It can mean (failure).

Student: It can mean (disagreement).

Professor: Good, it can be someone writing.

So, we really need to understand the signified behind the signifier. All these signs can sign according to post-structures. So, we do not know exactly what these signifiers mean.

Now, for the second line



Can we consider this as a text?

We have a flag, computer, square, plane, and something else.

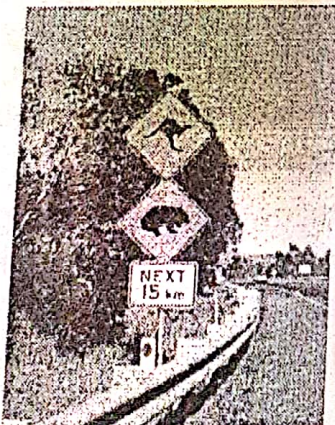
What does this mean? This line is easier to understand than the first one, it kind of communicates a message; even this message may be understandable only for some people.

Student: It can mean someone who book a ticket online.

Professor: Very good, it can mean so.

Why the second line is easier than the first? We know some of the signs or symbols.

Let us see the following pictures.



The left image indicates: Caution; animals are crossing the street after /15/ km. We here in Syria do not have Kangaroos, but the road signs are **universal**, that is why we can understand them.

So, *why it is a text and the previous one is not?*

You can see signs and symbols; some of them are understandable and others are not, *why?*

The information you get from some signs and symbols are coming from your culture and background information.

Sometimes we can understand symbols separately but we cannot connect them together or understand the message behind them.

In other cases, you can see a text in a strange language you do not know, such as ancient Egyptian (Hieroglyph), but people at that time could understand this language. It may be from the lack the conscious and sub-conscious knowledge, as it needs some skills.

The text must convey meaning and message to be a text; otherwise, it is not a text. It could be coherent, but we do not understand the words.

How do you know if a text is coherent or not if you do not understand the words?

There should be a shared or common code between the writer and the audience. You cannot just come and talk to me in Japanese; I do not know Japanese. We have to agree about the rules, structure, style, etc. and how to put these signs together to make sense to us at least as a community or society.

Write a definition of "the text".

Now I will read a definition of (the text) from "*The Language of Speech and Writing*" by Cornbleet and Carter.

"Text can be used for both written and spoken language. It usually refers to a stretch, an extract or complete piece of writing or speech. Texts generally adhere to broad conventions and rules which determine the language and structure used in particular text types."

We have text types, and each text has its own style, message, and conventional rules. These rules are not just words and sentences, they can be signs, pictures, symbols, etc.

Can you think of elements that determine the structure of a text?

Student: Face expressions and body gestures.

Professor: Yes, facial expressions and body language.

The word text derives from the Latin *texere*, which means (to weave).

- (To weave): to knit a piece of clothes: (ينسج / يخبك)

Depending on this discussion that we had.

What determines the structure of a text?

Student: The language, grammar, semantics, syntax, order of words in a sentence, phonetics, morphology, pragmatics, etc.

Professor: Ok.

What form does this structure take?

Student: Rhyme, oral, etc.

Professor: Ok.

Is this the same for all texts?

Student: No!

Texts in general:

- Self-contained.
- Well-formed.
- Hang together (cohesive).
- Make sense (coherent).
- Have a clear communicative purpose.
- Recognizable text types, such as any rhyme text.
- Appropriate to their contexts of use.

This point means that we have contextual situation; every text type have a specific context; we have formal text, informal text, etc.

What types of written texts we have?

Literary, political, scientific. Prose, history, etc.

Are all of the following texts?

1- No unauthorized photocopying.

Student: Something might be confidential, or a formal document.

Professor: It has different meanings: If you are a professional photographer, you are not allowed to take photos, or you are not allowed to photocopy any documents

What is the purpose of the text? It is warning not to do a certain type of behavior.

So, it is a text because it has a communicative purpose.

2- So easy to use, no wonder we are the World's No. 1

Student: It is some kind of advertisement.

Professor: Very good. It is a kind of commercial, a motto for a commercial. So, they are selling a product.

What is the purpose of the text? Advertising, persuading the customers to buy the product.

So, it is a text because we understand it.

3- Brown 'treating people as fools'.

Here, someone is showing off.

Is it a text? Do we understand the meaning behind the text? What do you understand?

Student: somebody is describing Brown, and this somebody does not like Brown because Brown looks down to people.

Professor: We do not know who is speaking, and we do not understand the context. It is not coherent (does not make sense), it does not hang together as a text, there is something missing; it is not a recognizable text type.

It is a fragment from a text, or from a sentence. So, it is not a text. It cannot stand by itself, and I said it is out of context, so I would not define it as a text because it is part of speech.

4- Is it my turn?

What type of text we have? It can be a discussion or question. It can be in an audition, or a part of game (playing cards).

It is not a text, and it cannot stand by its own because we do not know who the speaker is, it could be me or someone else, and who they are speaking to. We do not know in which context, *can we guess the context?* It could be a game, or in somewhere at waiting line.

So basically, when we talk about what determines the structure of a text; we think of so many elements not only just words, sentences, signs and universal symbols, but there are also the context, and the speaker and addressee (or the writer and reader).

5- KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN.

It could be written on the box or package of a medicine/ cleaning product. So, *what is the purpose of the text?* Caution and warning because it is capitalized.

Is it a text? Is it recognizable as a text type? It is written on a certain box.

We do not know what product it is; this is what is missing. However, we know the purpose of the text; it is understandable. The target is adults,

asking adults to keep this product away from children. So, it is a text.

6- Energizer.

It is a type of batteries and an energy drink.

It is one word. *Can a word be identified as a text?*

Student: Yes, sometimes. Here it is a product.

Professor: Yes, it is a text.

Student: And other substances help us understand the meaning.

Professor: Yes, of course.

Who is the addresser? It could be a company.

Where can we find the text? As we said on batteries or an energy drink

How do we know that it can be a battery or an energy drink? Where did you get this piece of information from?

Student: it depends on the context.

Professor: Yes, it depends on the context of situation.

So, this one word can stand on its own, and it is a text, but it might mean different things for different people.

It is the signifier but we do not know what the signified is, based on our knowledge and subconscious.

7- RECHARGEABLE.

It is definitely a battery.

Is it a text? Can it stand by its own? Does it have a purpose? Yes, and the purpose is describing this kind of battery.

This word gives us information and instructions to do certain type of things with this battery. So, it is a text.

8- Advanced.

It is not clear what is *advanced*.

Why is 'RECHARGEABLE' clear and 'Advanced' is not? Because the first one has an independent meaning.

So, it is not a text because it does not convey a meaning.

9- Lasts up to 4X Longer in Digital Cameras.

It is a text; why? What is the target here? It is advertising; it gives us instructions or extra information about the digital cameras that we have, in order for the costumers to buy it.

It was generally evident whenever they met; that he *did* admire her; and to

her it was equally evident that, was yielding to the preference which she had begun to entertain for him from the first, and was in a way to be very much in love; but she considered with pleasure that it was not likely to be discovered by the world in general, since Jane united with great strength of feeling a composure of temper and a uniform cheerfulness of manner, which would guard her from the suspicions of the impertinent.

- (Composure): the steadiness mind under stress.

- (Impertinent): characterized by gaiety and ease of manner.

What type of text do we have? Written or spoken?

Student: It is a written text.

Professor: Yes. This written text can be a story? Can you guess what type of written text do we have?

Student: I think it is literary.

Professor: *Is it a literary text? How do you know?* Yes, by the choice of words (suspicious and delicate), and high register.

“The suspicion of the impertinent”, “composure of temper and a uniform cheerfulness of manner”, and “she had begun to entertain for him from the first”; all these expressions are very formal. This is a literary text.

Also, the very long sentence written here, and it be described as a paragraph, but it is one long ongoing sentence, and there are no full stops. So, this paragraph is made up of one sentence.

Does the text make sense? Are the sentences coherent? Yes.

What is the text about, since it makes sense?

Student: The feelings between Jane and her beloved.

Professor: *What do we know about the man and woman in the text, and the relationship between them?*

The man admires the women, and she begins to consider his feelings. There is something ambiguous about the woman; she is trying to hide something. So, she has some kind of *manner*, which does not show that she is in love, in a way that hides her feelings from people.

It is a long sentence, and this is common in novels and short stories; but if you write an essay, you should never write like this.

Was it easy to understand?

Student: Generally, yes.

Professor: *Is it a formal text? How do you know?* Yes, by the vocabulary, structure.

Now we will move to another idea.

"Formal vs. Informal"; "Literary vs. Non-literary":

- What makes a text formal?

It can be register, structures, and relation between text producer and recipients (we said text producer not writer because the text may be oral).

- What makes a text informal?

Slang and relation between text producer and recipients.
Informal texts may have contractions.

- Do formal texts only use formal language?

No, in most cases.

Can a formal text use contractions (A formal text such as a novel or short story)?

We can use contractions in both types; if the text is an essay or academic writing, we cannot use contractions. If it is a novel, we can.

- What makes a text literary?

Figurative language, narration, the type of sentences used, vocabulary, topic, and figures of speech.

What is a literary text?

Student: It has verses most of times (in poetry).

Professor: Right, but the text can be a novel or drama. *So what else?*

A literary text can have different text types: poetry, drama, novel, novella, etc. *What else?* It has figurative language; it explores the emotions and feelings.

- Are literary texts formal or informal?

Formal.

Text and sentences:

- Are all texts organized in sentences?

No, we can have symbols, signs, etc.

- Are sentences necessary for a stretch of language to be considered a text?

No! A word can be text, such as "stop".

- What kinds of texts are organized in sentences?

Articles, literature (novels, story, novella, but not poetry because it is written in verse), newspapers, books, etc.

**

Text (النص) or discourse (الخطاب)?

- Are they the same?

- If not what is the difference between text analysis and discourse analysis?

No, text is more specific while discourse is wider than text, and discourse analysis is wider than text analysis because in the discourse, we look at extra levels and information.

- "Knowing what a sentence means is one thing, but knowing what is meant by an utterance is another". H.G. Widdowson, *Discourse Analysis*.

What is the difference between a sentence and an utterance?

The utterance is spoken; it could be a syllable, one word, sound, or a noise we are making. While sentence is something written, and it consists of certain components (subject, verb, etc.).

Knowing what a sentence means is one thing, but knowing what is meant by utterance is something else.

"Discourse can be anything from a grunt or single expletive, through short conversations and scribbled notes right up to Tolstoy's novel, *War and Peace*, or a lengthy legal case." Guy Cook, *Discourse*.

- (Grunt): noise.

- (Single expletive): it can be a swear word.

- (Scribbled): to write or draw something carelessly; (خربشة).

Discourse can be an utterance, sound, one word, or short conversation, scribbled notes, or lengthy legal case.

These texts (*Energizer*, *RECHARGABLE*, *Advanced*) are all discourse, and the fact that we recognize them is because we have sub-conscious kind of information that leads us to the meaning.

Even the instructions that we have on a product or the instructions on a medicine, regardless of the context they are discourse because we do not know the text/ context but we can recognize them from common information and background. So, I will call this example *Discourse*.

What is discourse analysis concerned with?

Discourse analysis is concerned with "how the encoded resources available in a language are put to communicative use".

The keyword here is (*encoded*), we saw before the following symbols:



They are all encoded resources available in a language and put to communicative use, in addition to the ancient Egyptian. They need a special expert to understand it, but they have a communicative purpose.

The focus is on the language as a means to an end, an instrument at the service of communication.

End means here the purpose, communication reason.

Discourse analysis is also concerned with meanings, which are: "socio-cultural constructs of reality: they represent particular beliefs and values that define ways of thinking about the world".

There are two elements so far that discourse analysis is concerned with:
(1) how do we communicate using language or using an utterance;
(2) *how discourse analysis is concerned with meaning*; how meanings are socially constructed representing certain set of beliefs and values.

In other words, the focus is on how texts are socially constructed and are to a certain extent a form of social practice.

We know it is a text from society and common knowledge.

Discourse analysis is wider than text analysis, and involves: meanings, grunt, expletive, communication, etc.

- "The latter kind of language – language in use, for communication – is called discourse; and the search for what gives discourse coherence is discourse analysis." Guy Cook, Discourse.

According to Guy Cook, discourse is language in use for communication.

"What matter is not its conformity to rules, but the fact that it communicates and is recognized by its receivers as coherent."

Conformity to rules is not really a must, but the fact that it communicates something to a group of people; this is what matter for discourse analysts.

If we want to invent a new language for us, it has to be something for us; we have to understand the meanings of the codes that we are inviting.

Spoken texts:

Spoken texts in particular are governed by the social context, which determines the shape of the discourse and the language used. This is thanks not only to knowledge of language but of knowledge of social conventions, and/ or the ability to make assumptions regarding the situational context, and draw inferences.

When we hear a spoken text, *what I mean by "a spoken text"*? Speech, conversation, interview, etc., we have the ability to make assumptions, regarding the situational context and draw inferences.

What we mean by situational context?

We make certain assumptions when we are in a conversation, depending on the subject, the situation we are in, time, place, culture, the actual speaker and listener. So, it is the *immediate perceptual context and conceptual context as well as social context*.

Context:

What are the main kinds of contexts?

Political, medical, science, literal, history, religious, sport, etc.

How do they differ from each other?

Each context has its own syntax, semantics, vocabulary, style, collocations, structure, meaning, subject, register, target, etc.

What implications (effects) does the context have on the kind of language used?

We said earlier that they are different from each other in terms of vocabulary, style, structure, etc.

When you think about a certain context (the spoken or written text), you think about the target, audience you are writing to.

How would the following interlocutors (speakers) express the fact someone had died?

- Mother to toddler.

They traveled, they went to the sky/ heaven, or they are sleep.

- Student to teacher.

He passed away; he died.

- Male teenager to male friend.

(It depends on whether you hate them or you like them, and there are a lot of emotions involved in the connections of relationships).

- Female teenager to female friend.

(It is the same as the previous onw).

- Female teenager to male friend.

(Female has more emotions; she will be more polite).

- Adult woman to male colleague.

He passed away, or we lost a dear friend.

- Lawyer to judge in murder case.

Desist, victimized, or killed (It depends on the context).

- Newspaper death column.

(It is very formal, there is a template that must be followed, and it has to be short and brief, gives information and delivers the message right away); (It provides us with the location, time, the person who died, contact details, and the relatives).

Here are two samples from newspapers:

**DAVIES
ESME**

Peacefully on 12th July 2021, aged 89 years.
Esme, formerly of Belgrave Close,
Gorseinon, beloved wife of the late Delydd,
dearly loved mother of Katrina and Sara,
adored mother in law of David and John, proud
and cherished Nain of Sara, Emyr, Rhodri,
Owen, Ffion and her great grandson Miles.

Funeral service at Llanelli Crematorium on
Monday 2nd August, strictly by invitation only.

Family flowers only please, may be sent to

David Hitchings & Sons
Independent Funeral Directors,
34 Frampton Rd, Gorseinon, Swansea,
SA4 4XY. Tel 01792 897323.

Following the Funeral you are invited to
join the family at Loughor Boating Club.

PICKERING Pauline (Cloughton) sadly passed
away at home on November 16th, 2020.
Much loved mum to Kate and precious nana
to Lily and Freddie. Private cremation to
follow. All enquiries please to J G Fielder and
Son 01347 666505.

*Published in the York Press on 26th
November 2020*

- (Cremation): burning the body.

So, you can see that depending on these examples, the way and the means of telling somebody that they lost someone is very different depending on the context you are in. Talking to your teacher is very different from talking to a toddler or teenager friend. Talking about death in a legal or murder case at court between a lawyer and judge is very different from death column in a newspaper.

So, all of this has to do with the **situational context**.

How would the following interlocutors express their need to urinate (go to bathroom)?

- Toddler to mother.

(Maybe crying, uttering certain sounds, like "bi bi").

- Student to teacher.

I need to go to bathroom.

- Male teenager to male friend.

Having the call of nature.

- Female teenager to female friend.

(It is the same as the previous one).

- Female teenager to male colleague.

I want to fix my makeup, or wash my hands.

- Adult woman to male colleague.

Excuse me for a moment.

- Lawyer to judge regarding the defendant.

(It is a very formal context) Timeout or break.

So, based on our discussion, *what are the factors/ characteristics that define a context?*

Situation, setting (time and place), speaker and listener, participants, formal and informal, public and private, subject, expectations, level of personal reference (colleagues, friends, etc.), medium (the means of communication), repertoire of scripts (our knowledge of previous texts, common knowledge), and ritualized language (specific terminology).

In addition, we have the style, which is different (from euphemism to dysphemism), dysphemism is the opposite of euphemism. (Euphemism: when you change something rude and not polite into something polite; the best example here is 'passed away' instead of 'died'. Dysphemism: it is the opposite; it is when you change something polite into something not polite).

Also, loaded language (words with hidden meanings, it is chosen because the speaker-writer believes it to be more persuasive than alternate neutral word).

Examples: Bony vs. slim, slim is nicer.

Agony vs. discomfort, agony is the loaded word.

Dreadful vs. bad, dreadful is stronger.

Eliminate vs. remove, eliminate is stronger.

Exploit vs. take advantages of, exploit is stronger.

Loaded words are a persuasive technique that has also been called "Emotive language", "High-inference language", or "Loaded terms". They are often used to:

- 1- Gain support.
- 2- Sway opinions.

- 3- Degrade others (especially in a political campaign).
- 4- Gain a political foothold.
- 5- Push an agenda.

So, mainly they are used in the political context.

While loaded language may have a tendency toward brainwashing (or persuasion), it is not always intended to sway the audience. Sometimes, the speaker or writer is merely trying to inform or motivate an audience. This is known as “**Rhetoric**”.

What is the Purpose of a context?

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1- Persuade. | 2- Instructor advice. | 3- Entertain. |
| 4- Inform. | 5- Threaten. | 6- Request or invite. |
| 7- Social function. | 8- Promise. | 9- Mixed purposes. |
| 10- Warn. | 11- Describe. | |

I will give you texts, and you should give me their purpose.

- Bus ticket.

Someone is requesting your bus ticket.

- List of jobs to do around the house.

Reminder, asking for help.

- An employment contract.

It is agreements between two teams. It is legal and to inform.

- "c_u_l8r@gmail.com".

It is contact details to stay in touch.

- Birthday card.

Invitation or greetings.

- "Nokia – Connecting people".

Persuading or advertisement.

- "My other car's a Porsche". (Sticker in the back of an old banger)

It is showing off.

- Cat needs feeding. (Note left on kitchen table)

It is a reminder, or request.

Planning:

Which kinds of text involve most planning?

Schedule, process, lecture, etc.

Are spoken texts ever planned?

Yes, such as speech, interview, etc.

What things are taken into account when planning a text?

Ideas, the listener and receiver, subject, words, style, audience, body language, body gesture, etc.

There are Features involved in planning:

1- Target. (also multiple)

2- Setting or, Register.

3- Time spent.

4- Medium used.

5- Longevity (is to be aware of the length/ space).

6- Conformity (to conform).

7- Pre-existing "scripts". For example, the references, when I write an article to be published, I should mention the previous studies; even if I am writing a novel or poetry. (Conscious: such as common knowledge and our awareness of history, politics, economics, culture; and subconscious planning)

8- Use of lexical phrases/ set phrases.

9- Complexity of syntax; if I am writing a short story for children, it is totally different from writing it of adults.

10- Style.

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Thank you

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Page:

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