

LE BOTTEGHE DELL'INSEGNARE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

RESPONSABILE: Ballabio Silvia

HANDOUT 2 - TEXT

1. [A] language that is functional. [...] Language that is doing some job in some context, as opposed to isolated words or sentences [...]. So any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation, we shall call it a text.

There is a text and there is other text that accompanies it: text that is 'with', namely the con-text. This notion of what is 'with the text', however, goes beyond what is said and written: it includes other non-verbal signs-on-the total environment in which a text unfolds.

There is also a broader background against which the text has to be interpreted: its context of culture. Any actual context of situation, the particular configuration of field, tenor, and mode that has brought a text into being, is not just a random jumble of features but a totality- a package, so to speak, of things that typically go together in the culture. People do these things on these occasions and attach these meanings and values to them; this is what culture is.

Halliday and Hasan (1985)

2. 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

Cornbleet and Carter (2001)

3. A stretch of language, either in speech or in writing, that is semantically and pragmatically coherent in its real-world context. A text can range from just one word (e.g. a SLOW sign on the road) to a sequence of utterances or sentences in a speech, a letter, a novel, etc."

Ronald Carter and Michael McCarthy (2006)

4. Texts in general

- ✓ Are self-contained
- ✓ Are well-formed
- ✓ Hang together (cohesive)
- ✓ Make sense (coherent)
- ✓ Have a clear communicative purpose
- ✓ Are recognisable text types
- ✓ Are appropriate to their contexts of use

(Scott Thornbury, 2005)

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5. Texts focus on

- ✓ factual phenomena in the spatial context: **descriptive texts**
- ✓ factual/conceptual phenomena in the temporal context: **narrative texts**
- ✓ de-composition (analysis) into constituent elements, or the composition (synthesis) from constituent elements of concepts: **expository texts (definitions, explications, summaries and many types of essay)**
- ✓ the relations between concept: **argumentative texts (scholarly texts, advertising)**
- ✓ observable future behaviour: **instructive (directive) texts**

(adapted from Werlich, 1983)

6.



7.

- ✓ The seven standards of textuality: cohesion; coherence; intentionality; acceptability; informativity; situationality; intertextuality

When we move beyond the sentence boundary, we enter a domain characterized by greater freedom of selection or variation and lesser conformity with established rules.

(Beaugrande, Dressler, 1981)