DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 336 060   FL 019 767

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TITLE   The Major Concerns of Textlinguistics and Their
                Relevance to the Teaching of Writing.
PUB DATE   91
NOTE   14p.
PUB TYPE   Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   *Discourse Analysis; Second Language Learning; Theory
                Practice Relationship; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS   *Textlinguistics

ABSTRACT
                Text linguistics, a recent development in the study
of language, moves the focus of inquiry from the sentence to the text
and examines texts as acts of communication rather than individual,
static sentences. It investigates textuality rather than
grammaticality, the relationships between sentences and between text
and context that make text coherent rather than the relationships
within a sentence that make it grammatical. A distinctive feature of
text linguistics is its procedural approach to language study,
treating texts as outcomes of an array of interactive operations
between producer, receiver, text, and context. Another important
feature is the integrative treatment of the standards of textuality.
Texts are studied as part of a dynamic process of interaction between
text and context. On this point, text linguistics and contemporary
composition theory are moving closer to each other. Text linguists
have used findings of composition research to enrich their
understanding of the text, and composition teachers would benefit
from the work of text linguists in the teaching of writing. A 14-item
bibliography is included. (MSE)

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THE MAJOR CONCERNS OF TEXTLINGUISTICS AND THEIR RELEVANCE

TO THE TEACHING OF WRITING

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Text linguistics, a recent development in the study of
language, moves the focus of study from the sentence to the text,
assuming a procedural approach to the object of study. It
examines texts as acts of communication rather than individual,
static sentences. It investigates textuality rather than
grammaticality, the relationships obtaining between sentences and
between text and context that make the text coherent rather than
the relationships within a sentence that make the sentence
grammatical. Although a single sentence might conceivably
constitute a text, text linguistics approaches a single-sentence
text, not as a self-contained unit with its internal structure
and elements for scrutiny and analysis, but as an outcome of an
interactive process with its external context, physical and
linguistic: the physical circumstances under which it occurs and
the relationships it has with other texts (Beaugrande, "Text
Linguistics"; van Dijk, Text; van Dijk, Macrostructure).

In other words, text linguistics studies the properties of
whole texts and their uses in communicative interaction, "to find
out what standards texts must fulfill, how they might be produced
or received, what people are using them for in a given setting of

occurrence . . . how the texts function in human interaction"
(Beaugrande and Dressler 3). Quite clearly, text linguistics
concerns itself with issues that engage most composition
instructors' interest, and more importantly, its procedural and
interactive approach to the study of text would be
thought-provoking for composition teachers. This paper discusses
the procedural and interactive approach to the major concerns of
text linguistics and their relevance to the teaching of writing.

The Procedural Approach

A distinctive feature of text linguistics is its procedural
approach to the study of language, a feature that sets it apart
from structural linguistics and even transformational grammar,
not only in that it deals with texts rather than individual
sentences, but also in that it treats texts as outcomes of a
whole array of interactive operations between the text producer,
the text receiver, the text, and the context. It incorporates
pragmatics and semantics in its domain of inquiry to explore the
use of language in producing texts: the goals of the writer, the
attitude of the reader, and the situation where the text operates
(Beaugrande, Text Production; Beaugrande, Text, Discourse,
Process; Beaugrande and Dressler).

Using the procedural approach, text linguists examine the
phases of interactive operations leading to the production of
texts and view the text as a system resulting from selection and
decision-making in a sustaining process. Textual properties,

such as cohesion and coherence, are interpreted in the complexity of language use in the social context of communication. The dynamic nature of the procedural approach parallels that of the process approach to writing. A few points have emerged in the way text linguists explain the procedural phases in text production that are directly useful to a better understanding of students' difficulties in their composing processes.

According to Beaugrande, text linguistics identifies goal setting, ideation, conceptual development, and phrase linearization (transforming a simultaneous array of ideas and imagery into a linear linguistic sequence) as operational phases in the procedure which are parallel rather than serial, that is, any two or more of them may occur at the same time rather than follow each other in any rigid order. Among the phases occurring simultaneously, one phase is usually dominant, but dominance may shift from one phase to another very quickly depending on the need the writer perceives in view of the unfolding text. This unrestrained shifting of dominance confirms the recursiveness of composing processes composition researchers have emphasized (Emig; Perl; Sommers).

Furthermore, the notion of one operation, e.g., conceptual development, dominating at a particular moment while another operation, e.g., goal-setting or ideation, could take over the dominance the next moment belies the rigid rules students have imbibed from traditional composition instruction. Many students

have been led to believe that the only correct route for writing a composition is phrasing a topic, making a thesis statement, writing an outline, and then fleshing out the outline. Piously believing writing is an orderly business, they are scared of any deviation from the "correct route." In this connection, the notion of variable dominance by different operations could be used to allay students' fear of chaos in the process of writing and as a result reduce their writing apprehension. An instructor could help her students by demonstrating how she moves easily between a moment when phrase linearization dominates and a moment when conceptual development dominates and further how the operation of goal setting could be concurrent with any other operations. Consequently, students could be encouraged to take a more flexible attitude toward their composing processes.

In connection with the notion of one operation dominating at a particular moment, text linguists study the allocation of resources at various points during the composing processes. Resources, including memory, attention, and motor control, are used differently by experienced and novice writers. It may happen that a novice writer keeps an operation inappropriately in dominance for an extended period of time, allocating to it more resources at that particular moment than is beneficial to the advance of the writing process. For example, before he has allowed ideation and conceptual development to progress far enough, he may place phrase linearization in dominance, giving it excessive amounts of attention and motor control. That could

result in a bottleneck, even a block, in the process because, without resources being re-allocated to ideation or conceptual development, phrase linearization would become an inane endeavor in mechanical inscription, which would not lead to substantive, meaningful writing.

On the other hand, an experienced writer, when finding herself in such a dilemma, would not hesitate to back off a step or two from the current dominant operation and devote her resources to evaluating the overall situation, in order to decide which operation would be the most efficient if moved into dominance at this moment. Then, she would readjust her outlay of resources accordingly. If she found the readjustment unsatisfactory, she would re-evaluate the situation, possibly going all the way back to square one to determine whether planning and goal-setting should move to the dominant position in the foreground, receiving more of her resources. Therefore, she is much less likely to be hampered by a writer's block than a novice writer. It should not be surprising that composition instructors could obtain some insights into the writer's block and make some headway toward helping students overcome it, by virtue of the text linguistic view of allocating and re-allocating resources according to which operation best qualifies for the dominant position at a certain moment in the composing process.

Another noteworthy concept in the procedural approach to the study of text is thresholds of initiation and termination

(Beaugrande and Dressler).   The threshold of initiation
indicates the standards the writer sets for starting the process
of composing and the threshold of termination refers to the level
of satisfaction a writer feels before he or she deems the worked
to be completed.   Both these standards have important
implications for the teaching of writing.   Student writers may
have a tendency to set too high a threshold of initiation and too
low a threshold of termination.   Many student writers harbor a
misconception about writing, believing that good writers have
everything ready in their mind, and ideas, well developed and
organized, simply flow from their pens into neat lines on paper.
Therefore, they tend to use that belief as their threshold of
initiation.   When they find that their writing could not start
off as easily and methodically, they are frustrated, blaming the
failure on their own inaptitude.   If they could, however, be
encouraged to adjust the threshold of initiation to accept false
starts, messy try-outs, and expendable first pages, they would
more readily start the composing process, exploring, discovering,
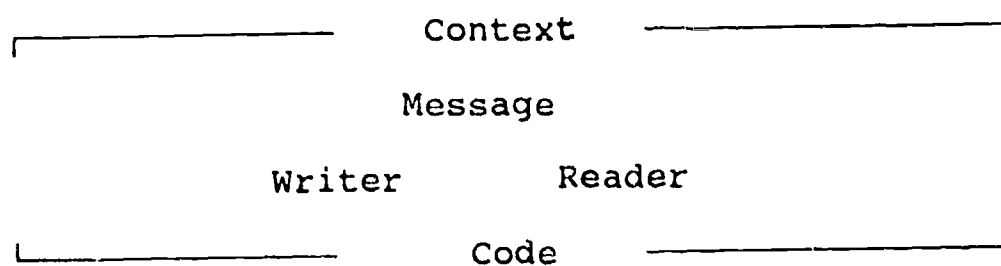and shaping their ideas while moving ahead with the creation of
text.

While they tend to set an unrealistically high threshold of
initiation, student writers, somewhat ironically, often set a
very low threshold of termination.   They are more likely to exit
the composing process when they feel they have transcribed
everything in their mind concerning the topic on to paper.   As
Donald Murray recently pointed out, "The best students fall in

love with their first drafts, and when they make them
superficially correct they think they are finished; the poorest
students also look to the mysteries of presentation . . . and see
nothing beyond" (viii). They may be satisfied with what they
have produced because they do not have experience in critical
reading to raise their expectations over and beyond what is
already on paper. Equally possible, they are n(really
satisfied with the product; rather, they do not know what to do
other than correct spelling and grammar errors. In both cases,
the students fail to see writing as an open-ended task that needs
working and reworking to reach a high standard of completion.
They should be encouraged to set a higher threshold of
termination when they have the first draft down on paper, that
is, they should be encouraged to view the draft as a basis for
extensive revision involving a combination of the operations they
have gone through in drafting--planning, ideation, conceptual
development, phrase linearization, etc. Of course, the
establishment of the threshold termination has to be realistic,
taking into account the student's current level of proficiency.
If it is too much beyond his or her reach, the student may be
discouraged. Learning to write, which is an on-going process,
takes more than one or two pieces of writing to bear noticeable
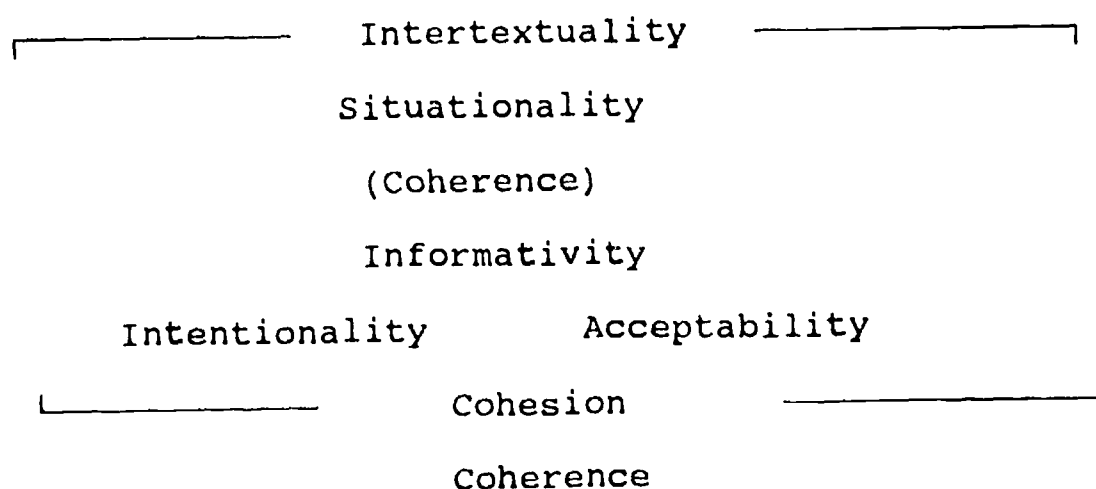fruits.

The Standards of Textuality

In text linguistics, the procedural approach is applied to the study of textuality, which has seven standards: cohesion, coherence, intentioanality, acceptability, situationality, intertextuality, and informativity (Beaugrande and Dressler). If these standards are laid out along with the rhetorical triangle, it becomes apparent that they fall into a pattern very similar to the triangle.

The rhetorical triangle:

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┌─────────────────  Context  ──────────────────┐
                    Message
          Writer            Reader
└─────────────────          Code   ───────────────┘
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(Hartwell and Bentley 38).

The standards of textuality:

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┌─────────────── Intertextuality  ───────────────┐
                 Situationality
                 (Coherence)
                 Informativity
     Intentionality        Acceptability
└───────────          Cohesion      ────────────┘
                 Coherence
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The close parallels between the standards of textuality and the elements of the rhetorical triangle encourage the application of findings in the study of textuality to the study and teaching of writing. In the study of textuality, the seven standards are not addressed separately, each in isolation. Rather, each of them is placed at the interface of all the factors and examined in the dynamics of interaction. For example, cohesion is not only a group of surface textual features that tie sentences together, but also the result of interactions between several standards. Intentionality may have an impact on the realization of cohesion, and so does situationality. Walker Gibson shows how the author's intention could affect the use of cohesive devices in his analysis of the introductory paragraph of <u>A Farewell to Arms</u>. Hemingway wrote: "There was fighting in the mountains and at night we could see flashes from the artillery." He did not choose to give a direct logical relation between the two clauses by writing "We knew there was fighting in the mountains, for at night we coul see flashes from the artillery." According to Gibson, Hemingway wanted to show "[t]he awareness of the fighting and the seeing of the flashes are all part of a huge complex of personal feeling, and the connection between the various sensations are left (deliberately of course) ambiguous" (37). That is, cohesion is conditioned in the operations to actualize the author's intention.

So also is coherence, which involves not only the intentionality but also the acceptability--the roles both writer

and reader play in the context of composing and comprehending.
Coherence is a pattern of meaning (Hartwell and Bentley),
analogous to semantics in the underlying structures of texts, "a
theoretical construct in text structure [referring] to the
underlying relations that hold between assertions (or
propositions) and how they contribute to the overall discourse
theme" (Grabe 110). But this pattern of meaning becomes
actually meaningful only when it is the result of a "successful
interaction between the reader and the discourse to be processed"
(Johns 250). Moreover, it operates under the constraints of
truth value and real-world reference, involving another standard
of textuality--situationality. Therefore, coherence is
contingent upon factors that reside not only in the text but
also beyond the text.

After the above very cursory look at the text linguistic
treatment of cohesion and coherence as text features interacting
with other standards of textuality, we could at least point to
the importance of stopping teaching cohesive ties and coherence
devices as purely textual matters. Students should be encouraged
to achieve cohesion and coherence in the process of realizing the
purpose of writing, accommodating the needs of audience, and
making the writing appropriate to the situation. Conversely, the
concepts of purpose, audience, and situation could be made more
tangible in a writing class when they are related to textual
features conducive to cohesion and coherence. A writer cannot
satisfy the requirements of textuality by only meeting one or two

of its standards. The standards, parts of a whole complex,
obtain their significance in interactions with each other and
dissolve as viable entities when isolated. We should treat them
as such.

The relevance of text linguistics to the teaching of writing
derives from its procedural approach to the study of text and its
integrative treatment of the standards of textuality. Texts are
studied as part of a dynamic process characterized by
interactions between text and context. On this crucial point,
text linguistics and contemporary composition theory are moving
closer to each other. Since text linguists have not been
hesitant to use findings in composition research to enrich their
understanding of the text--its production and reception
(Beaugrande, Text Production; Beaugrande and Dressler),
composition teachers have good reasons to pay due attention to
the work of text linguists and make use of their findings in
writing classes.

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