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EXPLORANDO TEXTOS  
Y CONTEXTOS DESDE  
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## Holistic trinocular text analysis

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One of the great achievements of linguistics since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been the development of systematic text analysis as a linguistic activity, adding this linguistic activity to language description, language comparison, language typology, and of course the development of linguistic theory. The emergence of systematic text analysis covers roughly the same period as the development of applied linguistics as a field often treated as distinct from linguistics in the sense of theoretical linguistics. And systematic text analysis has been crucial to work within applied linguistics, including of course educational linguistics. Different linguistic traditions engendered approaches to systematic text analysis, including Systemic Functional Linguistics, the Prague School, Tagmemic Linguistics, and, of course, “text linguistics” as a distinct enterprise in linguistics starting in the 1960s, primarily in continental Europe.

Meanwhile, “discourse analysis” emerged, both as an alternative term to “text analysis” (or indeed “text linguistics”), initially in Zellig Harris’ work in the early 1950s, and also as a fairly distinct enterprise with contributions from disciplines other than linguistics and even as an activity with only marginal input from linguistics (sometimes as part of the celebration of “eclecticism”). For example, “Foucauldian discourse analysis” is characterized by Wikipedia as “a form of discourse analysis, focusing on power relationships in society as expressed through language and practices, and based on the theories of Michel Foucault”. Interpreted in systemic functional terms, this suggests that this approach to discourse analysis focuses on **one** aspect of **one** of the parameters within context, viz. tenor parameter, viz. power (or status) — much like other critical approaches, including “Critical Discourse Analysis” (also “Critical Discourse Studies”).

As long as we use the term “text analysis”, it would seem that the inclusion of a linguistic foundation is assured — which is one reason I have used “text analysis” rather than “discourse analysis” in the title for this workshop. But the term “discourse analysis” has, of course, tended to take over. According to Halliday (2010), text and discourse are not distinct phenomena, but rather represent different views on one and the same phenomenon, viz. the meaning potential of language being instantiated as acts of meaning in context. This is a very important point. But when we review the literature, we find that scholars have used “text” and “discourse” to refer to phenomena that seem to be treated as different by their theories or approaches, as in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) — an invitation to confusion.



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During the period of the development of linguistic and non-linguistic approaches to the analysis of text (or discourse), researchers also developed methods and tools for collecting, compiling, storing, managing and analysing increasingly large samples of text — under the heading of “corpus linguistics”, and later also the heading of “(statistical) natural language processing”, the two headings reflecting different disciplinary starting points. This has been a tremendously important development, not so much from a theoretical point of view (at least not from the point of view of SFL) but rather from a methodological point of view. But it has added further issues of terminology: there is often an assumption (perhaps unspoken) that text analysis (or discourse analysis) is manual (so probably qualitative), but corpus analysis is automated (so probably quantitative). So we come across juxtapositions along these lines of “corpus analysis” and “text analysis” or “discourse analysis”; and there area known as “corpus-assisted discourse studies” (“CADS”), and in the last decade and a bit researchers have added corpus linguistic methods to the pursuit of Critical Discourse Analysis (CLCDA).

To me, there is a danger of pervasive confusion concerning our engagement with text (or discourse) — confusion relating to basic theory, methodology and tools, purpose, scope, nature of data ... In this workshop, I propose to take a step back to locate text as a phenomenon within the holistic theory of language in context as system-&-process provided by SFL. Having done that, I will review contributions within SFL (and other fields, wherever helpful) that will enable us to undertake **holistic text analysis**, which is reflected in the title of this workshop.

Holistic text analysis is, in a sense, just the application of the holistic approach to language and other semiotic phenomena characteristic of SFL — and of other scientific frameworks approaching a wide variety of phenomena in **ecological** way, treating all phenomena as parts of vast networks of relationships. This holistic approach to phenomena contrasts with the approach that has dominated modern science, viz. Cartesian Analysis; but researcher on the margin of the modern science mainstream have kept trying develop more holistic approaches under headings such as “general systems science”, “the study of complex adaptive systems”, “network science” — all of which resonate in one way other another with the fundamentals of SFL.

Now, one key aspect of holistic text analysis is that it is **trinocular**, so I have included that in the title. That is: the phenomenon under investigation — text in context — is analysed trinocularly (“from above”, “from roundabout”, “from below”) in relation to all the relevant semiotic dimensions; for example:

in terms of the global dimensions of stratification, text is analysed “from above” — i.e. contextually, “from roundabout” — i.e. semantically, and “from below” — i.e. lexicogrammatically (and by another stratal step downwards, phonologically or graphologically);

in terms of the global dimension of instantiation, text is analysed not only from the vantage point of its own position at the instance pole of the cline of instantiation, but also “from above”, from the vantage points of positions higher up along the cline;

in terms of the local dimensions of rank and axis, text is again analysed exhaustively — covering all ranks, and both systemic (paradigmatic) and structural (syntagmatic) patterns



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In terms of metafunction, holistic text analysis also needs to achieve complete coverage — ideational (logical, experiential), interpersonal and textual. The emphasis on trinocularly in our approach to text analysis is important, particularly since we still have not really got a text book setting out trinocular text analysis in a coherent and comprehensive way: students have to piece together the different vantage points on their own.

Having outlined holistic trinocular text analysis, we are in a much better position to address issues of methodology and tools in analysis, and also issues relating to the reasons for undertaking the analysis. I will suggest that holistic trinocular text analysis is in fact a manifestation of what I have called applicable text analysis (Matthiessen, 2014) as a special case of Michael Halliday's (e.g. 2008) notion of applicable linguistics.

### **References**

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