

**TEXT AS AN OBJECT OF  
LINGUISTIC RESEARCH.  
TEXTUAL CATEGORIES.**

Lecture 8

# OUTLINE



- Text Linguistics.
- Text as an object of linguistic research.
- Cohesion and coherence.
- Textual categories.

# TEXT LINGUISTICS

- **Text linguistics** is a relatively new branch of language studies that deals with texts as communication systems.
- It **aims** at uncovering and describing text grammars.
- It **studies** the text and its structure, its categories and components as well as ways of constructing texts.

# TEXT

text as a product  
(text grammar)

text cohesion,  
coherence,  
topical  
organization,  
illocutionary  
structure and  
communicative  
functions

text as a process  
(theory of text)

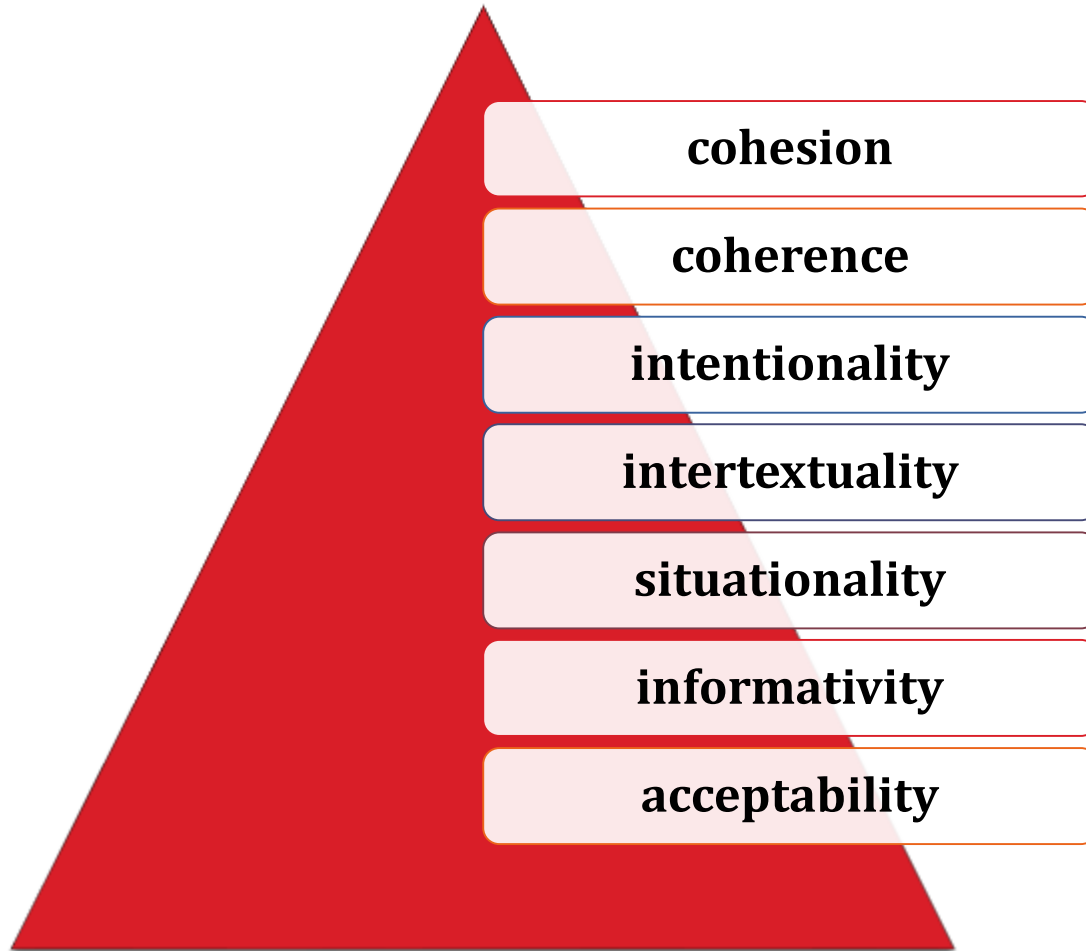
text  
production,  
reception and  
interpretation

# TEXT

- **Text** can be understood as an instance of (spoken or written) language use (an act of parole), a relatively self-contained unit of communication.
- As a communicative occurrence it has seven **criteria of textuality** (the constitutive principles of textual communication) and three regulative principles of textual communication.

# CRITERIA OF TEXTUALITY

(by Beaugrande and Dressler 1981, Malmjaer 1991)



# REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES OF TEXTUAL COMMUNICATION



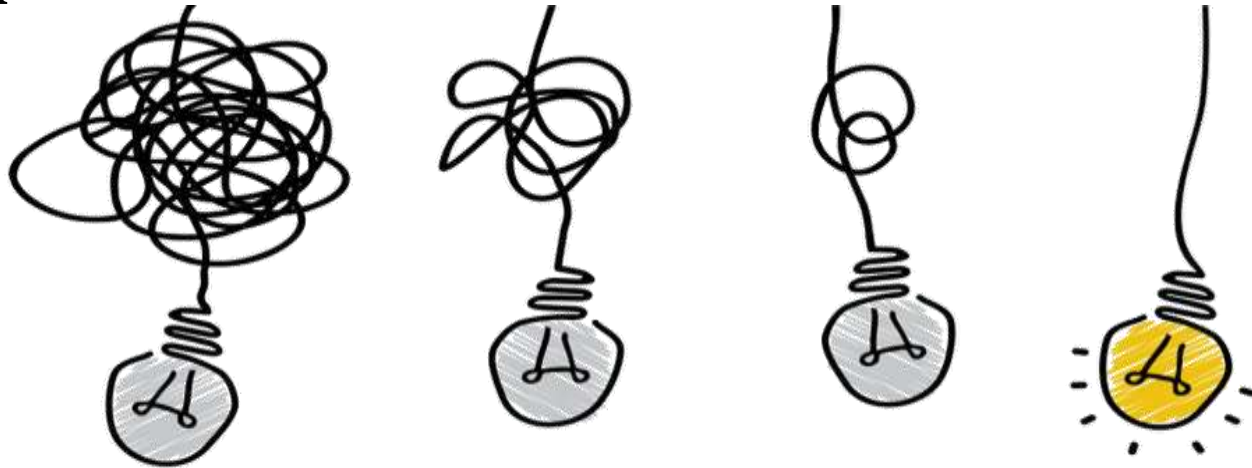
**efficiency**

**effectiveness**

**appropriateness**

# EFFICIENCY

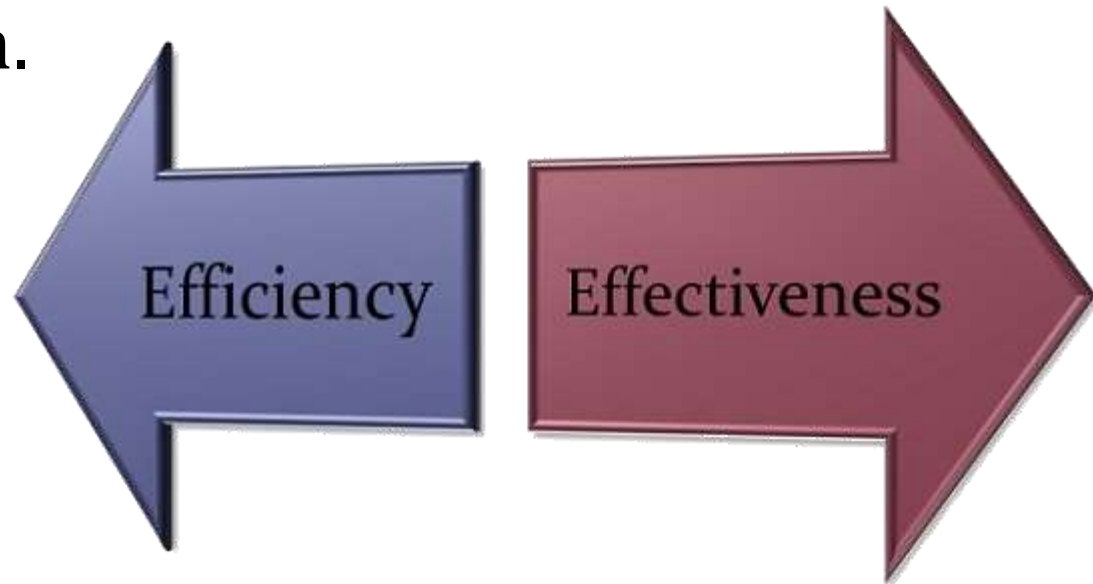
- a text should be used with a minimum effort - hence the use of plain (stereotyped and unimaginative) language which, however boring and unimpressive, is easy to produce and comprehend.





# EFFECTIVENESS

- leaving a strong impression and the creation of favourable conditions for attaining a communicative goal; it presupposes the use of creative (original, imaginative) language which, however effective, may lead to communicative breakdown.



# APPROPRIATENESS

- attempts to balance off the two above principles by seeking an accord between the text setting and standards of textuality



# COHESION

- The term **cohesion** was introduced by *Halliday* and *Hasan* in 1976 to denote the way in which linguistic items of which texts are constituted are meaningfully interconnected in sequences.

# COHESION

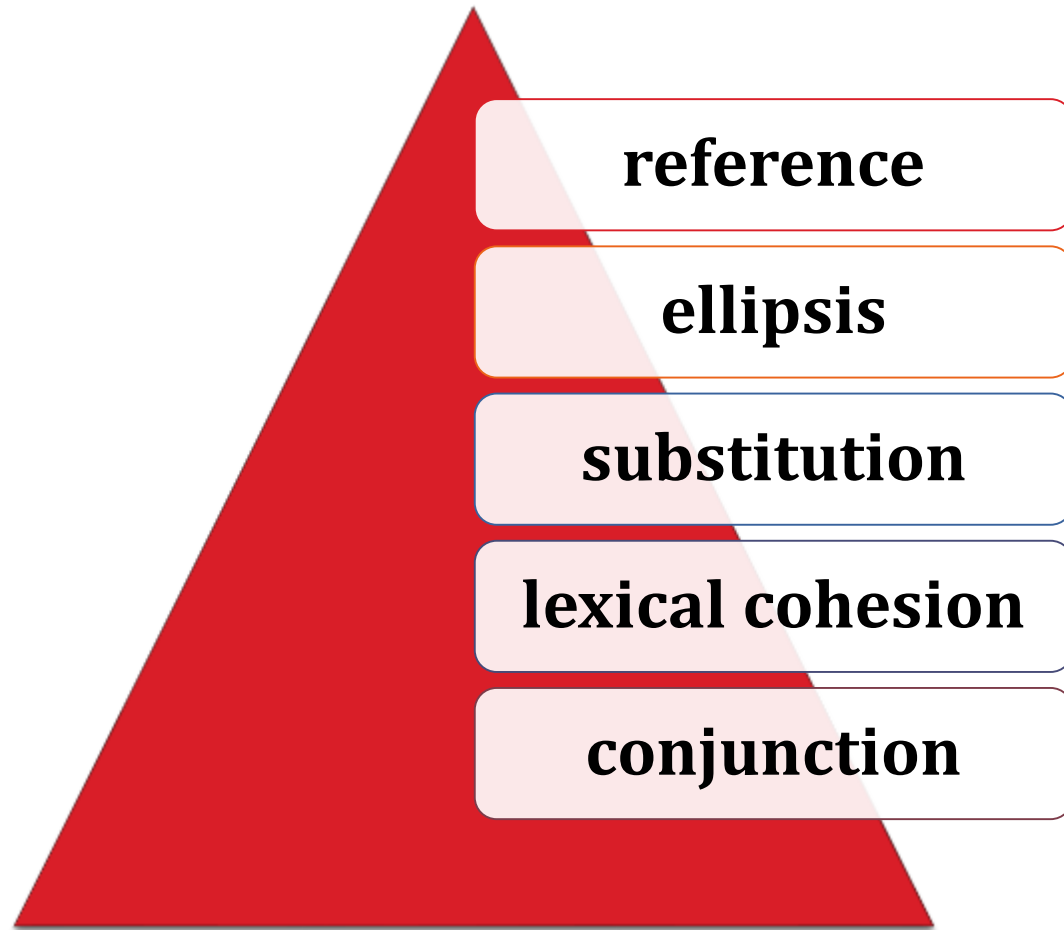
grammatical

referring to  
the structural  
content

lexical

referring to  
the language  
content

# 5 GENERAL CATEGORIES OF COHESIVE DEVICES



# REFERENCE

- **Reference** (realized by nouns, determiners, personal and demonstrative pronouns or adverbs) either points out of the text to a real world item (its denotata), hence **exophoric (situational) reference** or refers to an item within the text, hence **endophoric (textual) reference**.

# REFERENCE

## personal

- lexical items replaced with personal pronouns, possessive adjectives, possessive pronouns
- *John has moved to a new house. He had it built last year.*

## demonstrative

- realised by deictic terms: demonstrative adverbs (here, now ...), nominal demonstratives (this, these ...), definite article (the)
- *I like the push-ups and the sit-ups. These are my favourites.*

## comparative

- on the basis of identity (same), similarity (such), difference (other, else), numerative (more, less), epithets (better)
- *Mary was a lady in mid-20s. Such people can't change a flat tyre.*

# ELLIPSIS

- **Ellipsis** is viewed as an omission of something referred to earlier, is an instance of textual anaphora.



# ELLIPSIS

## nominal

- a word functioning as deictic, numerative, epithet or classifier is upgraded from the status of modifier to the status of head
- *Did you get a first prize? – No, I got a third.*

## verbal

- the structure does not fully express its systemic features
- *Have you been swimming? Yes, I have.* (lexical ellipsis)

## clausal

- clauses have a two-part structure: MODAL + PROPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS
- *Who taught you to spell? Grandfather did.*

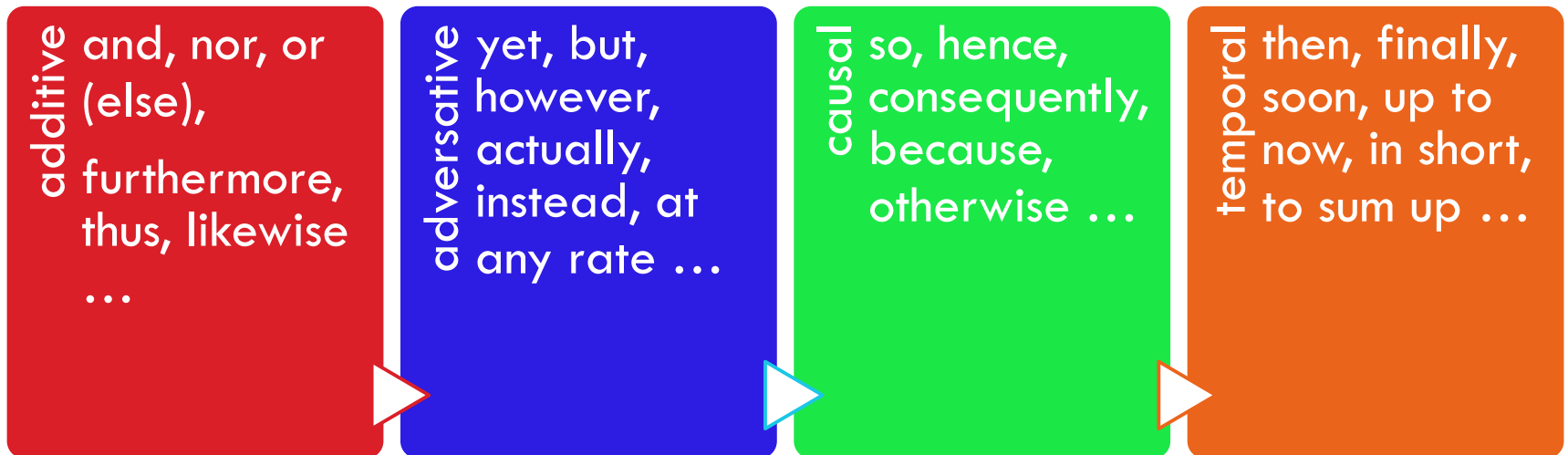
# SUBSTITUTION

- **Substitution** occurs when instead of leaving a word or phrase out, it is substituted for another, more general word.
- e.g. *Which ice-cream would you like? - I would like the pink one.*

"one" is used instead of repeating "ice-cream"

# CONJUNCTION

**Conjunction** relates sentences and paragraphs to each other by using words from the class of conjunctions or numerals.



# LEXICAL COHESION

- **Lexical cohesion** establishes semantic (through lexical devices, such as repetition, equivalence e.g. synonymy, hyponymy, hyperonymy, paraphrase, collocation) and pragmatic (presupposition) connectedness; it operates over larger stretches of text since it establishes chains of related references.

# COHERENCE

- **Coherence** is what makes a text semantically meaningful.
- **Coherence**, as a sub-surface feature of a text, concerns the ways in which the meanings within a text (concepts, relations among them and their relations to the external world) are established and developed.

# COHERENCE



# TEXTUAL CATEGORIES

## **divisibility**

- the text can be divided into parts, chapters and paragraphs dealing with specific topics

## **cohesion**

- formal connectedness

## **coherence**

- internal connectedness

## **prospection**

- anticipation of future events

## **retrospection**

- return to events in the past

## **anthropocentricity**

- the Man is the central figure of any text independent of its specific theme, message and plot

## **conceptuality**

- any text has a message

# TEXTUAL CATEGORIES

## informativity

- **content-factual information**
  - information about facts, events and processes taking place in the surrounding world; always explicit and verbalized
- **content-conceptual information**
  - conveys to the reader the author's understanding of relations between the phenomena described by means of content-factual information, understanding of their cause-effect relations, importance in social, economic, political and cultural life of people including relations between individuals
- **content-implicative information**
  - hidden information that can be deduced from content-factual information due to the ability of linguistic units to generate associative and connotative meanings and also due to the ability of sentences conveying factual information to acquire new meanings

## completeness

- the text must be a complete whole

## modality

- the attitude of the author towards what is being communicated

## the author's image

- way the author's personality is expressed in the text