

Intertextuality in EFL Classrooms

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Received: 30/10/2019

Accepted: 09/06/2020

Abstract:

The present paper aims at clarifying the concept of intertextuality as a literary theory and as an approach in EFL contexts. It casts light on the meaning of this phenomenon which creates a network of texts and discourses. In addition, the paper tend to explain intertextuality as one of De Beaugrandee and Dressler main standard of textuality by which any text can function as a communicative piece of discourse. Then, it attempts to discuss the nature of this approach and its origin in order to comprehend the development of this theory . Also, it determines the main strategies by which intertextuality can be represented in any discourse. Moreover, since intertextuality based on texts' relationship, it is very important for EFL learners in terms of perception others' discourse and production their own texts. In this respect, the paper try to found out a relation between intrtextuality approach and the development of EFL learners' perception and production.

Keywords: intertextuality - EFL learners - text - discourse.

مبدأ التناس في فصول تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى توضيح مفهوم التناس نظرية أدبية ومهاجا لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية حيث يلقي الضوء على معنى هذه الظاهرة التي تخلق شبكة من النصوص والخطابات. تنزع الورقة الحالية إلى تفسير التناس باعتباره أحد معايير دو بوقراندي وديسلر الرئيسية للنصية التي يمكن أن يعمل بها أي نص بوصفه خطابا تواصليا، كما حاول مناقشة طبيعة هذا النهج وأصله لفهم تطور هذه النظرية، وتحديد الاستراتيجيات التي يمكن من خلالها تطبيق النظرية المدروسة في أي خطاب. ونظراً لأن التناس يعتمد على العلاقة بين النصوص، فإنه يعد جد مهم لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية من حيث إدراك خطاب الآخرين وكتابة نصوصهم الخاصة. تحاول الورقة اكتشاف علاقة بين منهج التناس وتطوير فهم وإدراك متعلمي الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية وإنتاجهم. الكلمات المفتاحية: التناس - اللغة الإنجليزية - لغة أجنبية - النص - الخطاب - معيار النصية.

Introduction

In EFL context, it is obvious that the main focus of learners is developing their language skills. Reading multiple texts seem to be a difficult task in the EFL classroom. Intertextual reading or intertextuality is one of the significant approach in academic contexts since it is not only a way to different genre's awareness but also a strategy of developing learners' other skills. Intertextuality is a word that is made of two parts "inter" and "text". This means the relation between texts. Intertextuality, then, assumed that the perception or the production of any text is a result of the knowledge of other texts and discourses.

This term, although had appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century, it formed an old phenomenon. Intertextuality, therefore, can be found wherever a discourse about texts production or perception. It can be traced back from classics such as Aristotle and Plato to De Saussure, Bakhtin, Kristava and other twentieth century theorists like Derrida, De Beaugrandee and Dressler. They rejected the idea that a text is a self contained system since it is shaped by textual structures of other discourses (Martinez Alfaro,1996). Therefore, intertextuality looks to a text as a communicative tool that is the consequence of other discourse. This approach has its significance in academic contexts since it aids in grasping different texts in order to produce a hybrid new discourse.

1. Defining Text

A text is a segment of spoken or written language that has different characteristics such as: consisting of several sentences hung together to establish a structure or unit, having distinctive structural discourse characteristics, possessing communicative purposes and interpreting in relation to the context in which is occurred (Richard & Shmidt, 2002). It is an actual use of language that is distinguished from a sentence which is an abstract unit of linguistic analysis. We describe a piece of language as a text if it has been produced for a communicative purpose such as public notices, food labels, menus, newspaper articles, interviews, speeches, reports and so on. Those kinds of texts serve a range of different social purposes: to provide information, to express a point of view, to shape opinions, and to offer entertainment. All texts, whether simple or complex, are regarded as language uses which are created to refer to something for some purposes (Widdowson, 2007).

Nunan (1993) uses the term "text" to refer to any written record of a communicative event (a piece of oral or written interaction which contains a complete message). This event can include oral language such as casual conversation or written language like a newspaper

article or a wall poster. He asserts that a text or piece of discourse is made up of the combination of more than one sentence to form a meaningful whole or convey a coherent message.

However, there are supplemental features of texts which may communicate meaning, even if without using language. For instance, advertisements are designed by written words and images, and their meanings can only be understood by taking into account the relationship between these different parts (Baker & Ellge, 2011). In this sense, the concept of text can be extended to include the domain of film, visual arts, and music to describe any creative work that can be read for meaning (Hodges, 2015).

2. Textuality Standards

De Beaugrandee & Dressler (1981) state that a text will be defined as a communicative event which involves seven standards of textuality. The text is regarded as non communicative if those standards have not been satisfied, and it is treated as non- text. Those standards are cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality.

Cohesion is a significant standard that concerns the ways in which surface text's elements, the actual words we hear or read, are mutually connected within a sequence. Those elements depend upon each other according to grammatical devices and conventions (De Beaugrandee & Dressler, 1981). In other words, cohesion is sequences of utterances which hung together contain what is called text-forming devices. The latter are represented by words and phrases which enable the writer or speaker to build relationships over the utterance boundaries, and to connect sentences together in the text. Linguists tend to categorize cohesion in four different types: reference, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion (Nunan, 1993).

Reference refers to the process whereby terms such as personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, adverbs and articles link parts of a text that have the same referent (Meyer, 2009). Ellipsis is those constructions for removing a clause or a part of the clause in context when the content can be assumed. Conjunction, also, is another cohesive device. It includes linkers that connect sentences to each other. Furthermore, lexical cohesion is considered as a complement of grammatical cohesion (reference, ellipsis, conjunction) which comprises synonyms and collocations (Martin, 2015). These cohesive ties are very important since

they determine the structure of the writer's ideas and their number reveals if the text is well-written or not (Yule, 2010).

Meanwhile, In spite of their significance in creating texts' unity, cohesive devices are not sufficient. According to Cook (1989), formal links reinforce the unity of a text or discourse but they cannot, on their own, create its meaning. In other words, establishing the meaning of a coherent text requires the involvement of other factors beyond the text boundaries. A stretch of language or text is regarded as coherent discourse if it can be related to extra-linguistic contexts, social realities and interpersonal schemata that readers or listeners are familiar with in their socio-cultural world (Widdowson, 2007). Yule (2010) states that the core of coherence is not existing in words or linguistic constructions, but it is something that is found in people. The process of making sense of written or spoken discourse is the work of people. They attempt to interpret a text in relation with their experience of the world. In fact, this ability is a small part of that general faculty they have to make sense of what they perceive or experience in the world. Through the knowledge of the world, people would have to establish meaningful connections that are hidden between words and sentences and give an interpretation of all discourse.

Furthermore, In order to produce a cohesive and coherent text, one follows Grice's maxims and develops the notion of speech acts to reach the aimed intention. Intentionality subsumes the intentions of text's producer, i.e. a text should be intended by the author as a text and accepted by the reader as such to achieve a communicative interaction. On the other hand, acceptability is related to the receiver's attitude in communication, i.e. receivers should accept a stretch of language as a coherent text capable of utilization. Texts, also, consist of information, and the main characteristic of a text is informativity. It indicates the extent to which a text receivers look to the presentation as new or unexpected. (De Beaugrandee & Dressler, 1981). In addition, Blackmore (2001) states that texts are provided with a degree of relevance or situationality in so far as they hold a certain communicative purpose and connect discourse to the situation. This is based on the receiver's recognition that a text is an act of direct communication, i.e. an act of deliberate communication in which the producer not only intends to convey a particular message, but also helps the receiver in recognizing this.

Besides to the precedent standards, intertextuality is a significant part in creating texts. It refers to the process of incorporating words from one text in another text in a great variety

of different ways. It can be a direct or an indirect quotation, or just alluding what hearers or readers in the knowledge will realize are words from other sources (Gee, 2005). In other words, intertextuality embodies the ways in which the production and reception of a certain text depends upon the participants' knowledge of other texts (De Beaugrandee & Dressler, 1981). This concept argues the idea of all writings, speeches and signs emerge from a single network or as Vigotsky called a "web of meaning". Examining a text intertextually means looking for traces of other texts which the writer or the speaker imitates and sews together to create new discourse (Porter, 1986).

3. Intertextuality Approach

Texts, as a communicative event, are considered by modern theorists as lacking of independent meaning. They create what scholars call "intertextual". In the reading process, readers are thrust into a network of textual relations. Those relations help in interpreting a text or discovering its meaning or meanings. A text's meaning is built by all other texts to which it refers or connects, and they become the outcome of intertextual process (Allen, 2000). Bazerman (2004) defines intertextuality as "the explicit and implicit relations that a text or an utterance has to prior, contemporary and potential texts" (p, 86). He states that through those kinds of relations a text stimulates representation of the discourse situation, the textual resources that sustain the situation, and how the present text locates itself and draws on other text. In this sense, intertextuality is a crucial aspect in every text. It is about the interaction of various texts keeping a dialogic relationship between them in which one text dwells and echoes within another text creating a new effect (Mulatsih & Rifki, 2012).

The idea of intertextuality was originated in the twentieth century in the seminal work of Ferdinand de Saussure. His focus on the systematic features of language established the relational nature of meaning and thus text (Allen, 2000). Later, this notion was discussed by the poststructuralist, Kristava, who described the concept of intertextuality as the relationship between text, writer and reader (Armstrong & Newman, 2011). Kristava assumed that intertextuality existed as a universal phenomenon that clarifies the communicative interconnections between a text and context (ibid, 2000). The notion of intertextuality is said to have crossed from cultural literary studies to applied linguistics by means of De Beaugrandee and Dessler's "standards of textuality" in which they focus on the factors that make the production of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts (Peter, 2015).

The concept of intertextuality generally discusses how sociocultural context is significant and connected to any specific text and how the rules of a particular genre affect the perception and production of a text. In other words, intertextuality helps learners to focus on the text's ideas and views rather than its wording and linguistic features. It aims to display a context-specific comprehension of a text, while explaining the existence of other possible meanings in the background knowledge (Mansooji & Mohseni, 2016).

Intertextuality has a great effect on many facets of learners' composition pedagogy. It enhances writing across the curriculum as a method for introducing students to different discourse regularities. It asserts the value of critical reading as the basis of classroom's composition. Intertextuality, also, requires rethinking about the idea of imitatio and consider it as an important stage in the linguistic development of learners' writing (Porter, 1986).

4. Techniques of Intertextual Representation

According to Bazerman (2004), since intertextuality is an aspect of using different texts, it can be recognized through certain techniques by which the new text's writer uses the others' utterances in order to construct his/her text's identity. The birth of a new discourse is a result of the combination of different intertextual strategies such as direct and indirect quotation, paraphrasing, summarizing, commenting and evaluating.

Direct quotation, on one hand, is the most explicit technique of intertextual representation. It is labeled by quotation marks, italics, or other forms apart from the present text utterances and words. It holds the original texts' words without any modification by the second writer. The latter should identify which utterances will be quoted, where they are snipped and in which context will be used (Bazerman, 2004). On the other hand, indirect quotation is not merely a repetition of what the original text's utterances said, but it is a process of rewording and reproducing the meaning of the writer's words from the second writer's perspective (Fairclough, 2003).

Paraphrasing is a process of reformulating the others' original ideas and opinions via using the writer's own words. It is a legitimate way to include the original texts' utterances in the new text, introduced in new forms (Karapetyan, 2006). In this sense, paraphrasing is a sort of modification in the original text form without changing its meaning (Baily, 2003). This technique proves the involvement of cognitive processes which help writers in grasping the source text meaning. Unlike the direct quotation, paraphrasing can be represented by

different ways such as changing vocabulary and using synonyms, and changing words class and order (Baily, 2011). In EFL classes, learners use paraphrasing when they present the information from the original text or source without using its exact words. It is a useful tool when learners tend to simplify a difficult text and make it more understandable while still keeping the same meaning of the original text. In this case, learners should not use the same language and syntax of the source, and they should avoid including their own analysis or opinions since they can distort the whole text' meaning. Therefore, the idea of paraphrasing is to convey thoughts and emphasis the source but not to reproduce its exact words or sentence structure (Kriszner & Mandell, 2011).

A summary is one feature of intertextual representation in any written work. It includes the original texts' main ideas and supporting points of a long text in a short form (Fawcett, 2011). Summarizing, in academic contexts, is considered as a vital skill since it helps learners and researchers in understanding the core of different perspectives and ideas, and condense them in one short text (Baily, 2011). Meanwhile, evaluating others' works or texts seem to be a difficult task. Unlike paraphrasing and summarizing which reformulate others' utterances, evaluating creates opinions and comments critically on others' texts. It is based on making a judgment about what writers said or wrote. The reader, in this case, should analyze and evaluate different perspectives or points of view relying on certain reasons which consolidate his/her judgment. This technique may involve the description of different opinions and attitudes and balancing one view against the other, i.e. the reader has to build a critical reflection and a systematic analysis (Crème & Lea, 2008).

5. Intertextuality Approach in EFL

Since the text is a permutation of other texts, intertextuality is a fundamental feature in every text. In this sense, a text creates its identity from the past citation referring to further elements within the cultural contexts in which it is created (Mulatsih & Rifki, 2012). Intertextuality uses, as Lenski (1998) states, "both prior mental models constructed during past reading events and expectations of future mental models to shape current processing texts" (p.72). According to this opinion, intertextuality can be considered as an instructional approach in EFL classrooms in which teachers provide learners with multiple texts from multiple genres connected by single threads, or intertextual instruction (Finley, 2015). This process gives learners the opportunity to enhance their background knowledge, make

connections across texts, and develop multiple perspectives and their critical thinking skills (Armstrong & Newman, 2011).

Using different kinds of texts in EFL classrooms means exposing students to multiple perspectives on a topic rather than being limited to a single view presented in one text. This characteristic is essential for ensuring good instruction (Robb, 2002). Intertextuality, then, allows learners to establish connections or relationships between what has been read and what has previously been known about a topic or an issue. It includes the analogical of one's background knowledge on a certain subject and the new experience, and enables learners to compose information among multiple texts on the same topic (Armstrong & Newman, 2011).

The knowledge of multiple opinions and views has a great effect on learners' perception and production. In EFL classrooms, critical thinking, reading, and writing have to be taught as significant skills that learners need to acquire in order to learn how to reason, argue, and solve problems logically from different perspectives. These entire skills make learners use the evidence they have collected for their arguments, think openly, and express their opinions about issues in their writing (Ahangari & Sephran, 2013). In negotiating the meaning of a particular text, students are involved in complex cognitive processes in which they retrieve related meanings they have gathered from other texts as well as their daily life experiences. After that, learners compare, predict, and evaluate this information critically. In this case, intertextuality establishes a bridge and a channel between learners critical thinking and their language skills whether they are receptive or productive (Bhak & Massari, 2009).

Conclusion

The birth of a new discourse is a result of a harmony between different texts and genre. In this sense, intertextuality approach reveals clearly that the comprehension or the production of any piece of discourse are not autonomous. However, it is a network of variations and transformations that occurred in other texts which creates a new communicative event. The trace of others' work in the new text can sustain and fortify the author's point of view and broaden his/her horizon. For that reason, intertextuality can give EFL learners, in classrooms' context, the opportunity to understand different perspectives about a topic, make a logical relation between them, and create their own texts in relation to their reading and comprehending of others' discourses.

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