**THE SEVEN STANDARDS OF TEXTUALITY**

**Acceptability in de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981)**

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**Acceptability is the text receiver’s attitude in communication; acceptability in the sense that text receivers accept a language configuration as a cohesive and coherent text capable of utilization ( i.e., the “ability to extract operating instructions from the utterance”.**

**The importance of acceptability gradually emerged during research on how to verify a ‘grammar’ as an account of all sentences allowed in a language, i.e., sentences to be judged either ‘grammatical’ or ‘ungrammatical’. This leads to the distinction between ‘grammaticality’ (what is stipulated by an abstract grammar) and ‘acceptability’ (what is actually accepted in communication).This can seen as the distinction between virtual systems and actualization procedures.**

**One simple and frequent practice for correlating acceptability and grammaticality has been for linguists to invent and judge their own sentences, i.e., to become the informants themselves. This orientation is rejected since their judgements and reactions will be inevitably prejudiced. The second correlation is suggested by Labov when he argues that the divergencies of usage in various social groups can be accounted for by the variable rules rather than strict, infallible ones .Text producers would be able to choose among alternative rules or sets of rules. The third correlation is more promising, namely to view the production and reception of texts as probabilistic operations. Well-formedness of sentences would be located on a graded scale; sentences are regularly judged ‘grammatical’ by an informant when it is easy to imagine possible contexts for them. In effect, grammaticality becomes a partial determiner of acceptability in interaction with other factors. This is the *narrow* sense of acceptability.**

**The correspondences between intentionality and acceptability are exceedingly intricate:**

* **Under stress or time pressure, people often accept utterances from others which they would be more reluctant to produce.**
* **people may shift among styles of text production in order to project desired social roles in different settings.**
* **People often ‘repair’ their utterances when deemed unsatisfactory, even though their knowledge of the language has not changed at that moment.**

**Therefore, language can scarcely be described or explained except in terms of texts in real settings.**

**In its *wider* sense, the term acceptability would subsume *acceptance* as the active willingness to participate in a discourse and share a goal. Acceptance, thus, entails entering into discourse interaction, with all attendant consequences. Refusing acceptance is conventionally accomplished by explicit signals:**

1. **I’m too busy for talking just now.**
2. **I don’t care to talk about it.**

**The acceptance of other people goals may arise from many diverse motivations; successful communication clearly demands the ability to detect or infer other participants’ goals on the basis of what they say. Text producers must be able to anticipate the receiver’s responses as supportive of or contrary to a plan, for example, by building an internal model of the receivers and their beliefs and knowledge.**

**Any conversation, though somewhat fantastic, is a good illustration of how a discourse participant draws up a plan and predicts the contributions of others. If the others deny acceptance of the plan, thus violating the principle of cooperation, textuality can be impaired. It follows that an unwilling participant could block a discourse by refusing acceptance, e.g., by not recovering or upholding coherence.**

**It is evident now how great a role is played by the context of communication with respect to intentionality and acceptability. We must also consider factors like these:**

* **(a) how much knowledge is shared or conveyed among participants (informativity);**
* **(b) how the participants are trying to monitor or manage the situation (situationality); and**
* **(c) how the texts composing the discourse are related to each other (intertextuality).**