

English Language and Translation II

2nd Language - 2024-25

Lesson 2

Text Types

TEXTS -Types

Texts can be divided into particular types:

- Narrative
- Descriptive
- Directive/Instructive
- Expository
- Argumentative

Werlich, E. (1976), A Text Grammar of English, Heidelberg, Quelle & Mayer

TEXTS -Narrative

- Real-world context
- Fictional or Non-fictional (novels, newspaper report)
- Events and actions

TEXTS - Descriptive

- Location/position of people and things
- Personal/emotional/subjective (fictional) or technical/rational/objective (non-fictional)
- Provides context and background

TEXTS - Directive

- Specific actions and events to be realised
- Instructions — commands - requirements

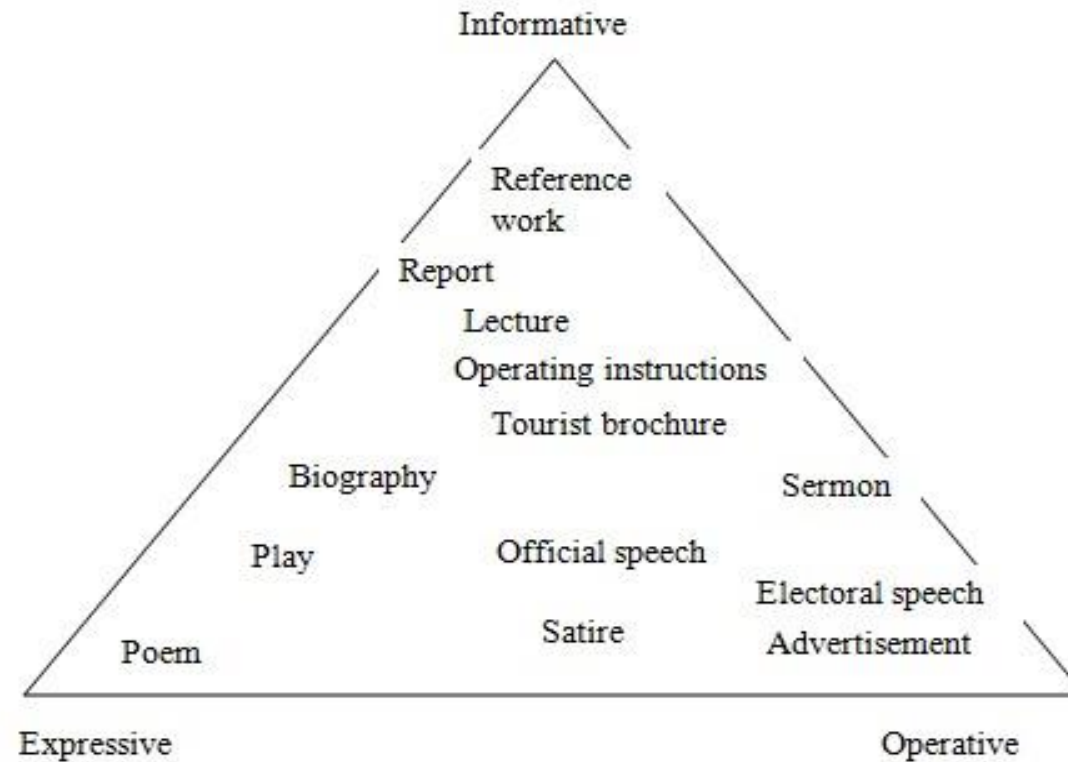
TEXTS - Expository

- Identify and characterise phenomena
- Definitions, explanations, summaries
- Subjective or objective
- Analytical (from concept to part), e.g. definitions
- Synthetic (from features to concept), e.g. summaries

TEXTS- Argumentative

- Aimed at persuading, convincing or changing opinion
- Contrasting positions
- Advantages/disadvantages
- Pro/Contra,
- Alternative hypotheses
- Stating and promoting a preference

Text Types



Katharina Reiss, Text types and varieties, adapted from: Chesterman, A. (ed.) (1989)
Readings in Translation Theory, Helsinki

Text Types

Functional characteristics of text types and links to translation methods (adapted from Reiss 1971)

Text type	Informative	Expressive	Operative
Language function	Informative (representing objects and facts)	Expressive (expressing sender's attitude)	Appellative (making an appeal to text receiver)
Language dimension	Logical	Aesthetic	Dialogic
Text focus	Content-focused	Form-focused	Appellative- focused
TT should	Transmit referential content	Transmit aesthetic form	Elicit desired response
Translation method	'Plain prose', explicitation as required	'Identifying' method, adopt perspective of ST author	'Adaptive', equivalent effect

TEXTS

Most authentic texts are not pure examples of a single type, but a mixture of types depending on function and objective.

TEXTS—Lexical and Grammatical characteristics

What are some of the typical characteristics of lexis and grammar in examples of the various text types?

TEXTS—Narrative: characteristics

Lexis

- Specific semantic groups (word families) depending on subject matter
- Complexity of lexis also dependent on subject
- Shorter sentences

Grammar

- Temporal adverbs and connectives
- Mainly active voice
- Sequencing: dynamic verbs in simple form, past times

TEXTS—Descriptive: characteristics

Lexis

- Importance of adjectives and adverbs to differentiate semantic fields
- Complexity of language choices determined by complexity of subject
- Varied sentence length
- Figurative language (collocations, etc.)

Grammar

- Uses state and positional verbs in progressive/perfect forms, spatial adverbs
- Simple and progressive forms to balance events and context
- Thinking/feeling verbs expressing writer's view

TEXTS— Directive/instructive: characteristics

Lexis

- Simple, standardized rather than 'creative' vocabulary
- Limited variety in sentence structure
- Some 'technical' vocabulary

Grammar

- Imperative verbs or equivalents
- Action verbs
- Most information carried in verbs
- Recognisable format

TEXTS—Expository: characteristics

Lexis

- Abstract nouns
- Technical jargon
- Specific terminology

Grammar

- Identifying statements with state verbs
- Perception verbs
- Use of modality
- Clear sequencing with connectives

TEXTS – Argumentative characteristics

Lexis

- Semantic fields
- Clear division of for and against in organisation of text
- Evaluative and persuasive language
- Some 'contentious' vocabulary

Grammar

- Comparative structures
- Conditional forms
- Hedging expressions
- Thinking/feeling verb structures
- Present tenses