

## The Didactics of the Literary Text in Light of the Textual Approach

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### Abstract:

This study aims to highlight the importance of teaching literary texts in developing the learner's linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic competencies, with a focus on the transformations that this teaching has undergone due to the evolution of modern linguistic and critical theories. It particularly examines the shift from traditional explanation methods to more open approaches, foremost among them the textual approach. The results showed that teaching literary texts according to the textual approach effectively contributes to enhancing the learner's linguistic and critical abilities by engaging with the text as an integrated unit connected to its cultural, social, and artistic contexts. The study also demonstrated that adopting the textual approach helps learners acquire skills in comprehension, analysis, and language production, making it an effective educational tool for achieving contemporary educational and linguistic goals.

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### Introduction

Teaching literary texts is considered one of the most important topics that has engaged researchers in the fields of education and language sciences, due to its vital role in developing the learner's linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic competencies. The teaching of literary texts has undergone profound transformations with the evolution of modern linguistic and critical theories, moving away from traditional conceptions based on literal explanation and interpretation toward more open approaches concerned with understanding the text within its cultural, social, and artistic contexts. Among these approaches, the textual approach emerged, aiming to frame the literary text in light of its accompanying thresholds and the external references to which it is linked.

Teaching literary texts is one of the most important topics that has attracted the attention of researchers in the fields of education and linguistic studies, as it plays a fundamental role in developing learners' linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic competencies. The teaching of literary texts has undergone a radical transformation under the influence of modern linguistic and critical theories, evolving from traditional models of explanation and literal interpretation to more modern theories concerned with understanding the text as a cultural, social, and artistic reality. Among these theories are:

It is well known that educational studies have occupied a significant place in the fields of education and language teaching, with culture and literary texts receiving considerable attention. Curriculum and program designers have sought to draw on the results of these studies and apply them in education. Through the teaching of literary texts, educational programs and curricula have aimed to achieve several objectives, the most important of which are elevating the learner's cognitive and aesthetic level, providing a high-level cultural education, and developing a critical sense that enables the learner to engage openly with both ancient and modern literary and intellectual productions.

Given that the texts included in school textbooks differ in their historical periods and their literary and artistic orientations, contemporary educational thought approaches the teaching of texts based on the intersection between the culture representing the learner's horizon and the text as the bearer of that culture. This stems from the understanding that texts belong to specific eras governed by multiple factors that influence the writer, making it impossible for them to break free from the culture of their time. A literary text can only develop its own semantic system within the general semantic system of the culture to which it belongs.

Based on this premise, the discussion in this research paper seeks to raise several key questions: To what extent does the didactics of the literary text take into account the differences between one literary genre and another? Does it consider the artistic, aesthetic, and cultural specificities to which the text belongs? And finally, to what extent are modern educational approaches—particularly the textual approach—effective in the teaching of literary texts?

### 1- The Text in Linguistic Studies:

Linguistic studies have offered numerous definitions of the text, characterized by diversity, multiplicity, and even overlap. Some definitions focus on its sentence structures and their sequence, while others add the element of cohesion between these sentences. A third group emphasizes textual communication and context, a fourth highlights literary productivity or the act of writing, and a fifth centers on the sentence itself, considering the various approaches and characteristics that render the text an articulated utterance (Ahmad, 2001, p. 2) The variation in defining the text among different approaches highlights that a text is a multi-dimensional system, and it does not fulfill the condition of textuality until it forms a complete unit based on grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic foundations.

The Didactics of the Literary Text: The text is a unit of knowledge where linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge interact. It serves as a means of transmitting knowledge and culture and represents a fundamental element among the foundations and mechanisms that aid in cognitive acquisition, as it is the primary support for reading. Through reading, the didactic transfer of knowledge occurs, transforming it from its original philosophical and scientific form into a form that is accessible to learners according to their intellectual and inferential levels.

Thus, educational texts possess different and diverse characteristics in both their structure and content. The educational text is subject to special study to uncover the information it contains and is then subjected to processes of selection and reorganization in order to build cognitive and emotional structures.

Hence, the importance of texts in the educational process becomes evident, along with the numerous benefits they provide to learners—from stimulating their interest in studying literature, to cultivating their literary taste, familiarizing them with the features and characteristics of language, and enriching their literary and linguistic culture. All of this embodies a comprehensive process known as didactics.

The definition of the literary text, according to Roland Barthes, emerged through the notion of an open and expansive concept, encompassing various fields of representation and communication that go beyond the linguistic and the written. Barthes stated that in its modern sense, a text is not necessarily a literary text in the traditional sense; rather, musical rhythm is a text, an oil painting is a text, and a theatrical scene is a text. This means that the concept of text is not limited to writing and literature but extends to other communicative systems.

However, in actual research, the term "text" is reserved only for the written form that realizes its structure through the interaction of lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic components within a specific time and place. A written form that does not achieve these relationships is not considered a text but rather a "non-text" or "quasi-text," such as cultural practices, paintings, theatrical performances, and musical rhythms.

Thus, the text is a verbal unit, whether spoken or written, with a definite beginning and end, integrated with its producer and its language in an organic and stable relationship, and directed toward a

specific or assumed recipient. This verbal unit may also be accompanied by some non-verbal semiotic signs that can influence it. Accordingly, the dimensions of the literary text can be summarized as follows: its relationship with language, its external framework, and the properties of its internal structure. (Jamaan, 2009, p. 32).

Roland Barthes compares the literary text, in relation to its creator, to the sperm that is ejaculated into the womb, leading to biological existence. However, the newborn, despite its biological and hereditary legitimacy, does not necessarily carry all the psychological and physical characteristics. It is a vast and intricate world, a creative message, which ends when it reaches the completion of its composition. It only accompanies the creator during the labor process or the moment of zero, this moment that coincides with the birth of the artistic word. This space contributes to the birth of the artistic sentence, which leads to the birth of the artistic text. Language and style are nothing but a natural result of the biological time outcomes. (Omar, 2004, p. 33)

In addition, the literary text is a linguistic structure with distinctive features that set it apart from the usual, common, and familiar. It is a concise literary piece, whether poetry or prose, drawn from the treasures of literature to achieve certain objectives, such as teaching languages, exploring aspects of semantics, lexicon, and phonetics, as well as examining the relationship between the text and language, its internal and external structure, and enhancing the literary taste of the reader or listener. (Bashir, 2007, p. 129)

## 2-The Importance of the Textual Approach in Language Teaching

The textual approach: The approach is viewed as a vision and the construction of a work plan that is achievable based on a strategy that takes into account all the factors involved in achieving effective performance and appropriate outcomes. It is a method for solving a problem or achieving a specific goal, starting from a mapped plan that considers everything that contributes to achieving the outlined objectives, including methods, tools, and theories.

The textual approach, within this framework, is a scientific plan aimed at activating learners' knowledge, starting from the text as a major structure that displays various linguistic, intellectual, literary, and cultural levels. Therefore, this approach is based on the study of the text, understanding it, recognizing its type and characteristics, and then working with its tools. From this point, we can mention a number of characteristics that distinguish the textual approach: (Farid, 2005, p. 2)

- The textual approach, insofar as it is a didactic approach (Approche Didactique), is the method that involves analyzing linguistic phenomena in the text and its characteristics. This is followed by the deduction of rules from them, within which grammar is taught in the context of the language. (Shaheta, p. 222)

- The textual approach relies on studying textual phenomena through the functions of words within the structure, analyzing words and sentences, critiquing linguistic styles, studying the syntactical structures of certain passages, understanding meaning, interpreting context and situation, discovering the expressive potentials of the text, the deep structures of the language, and its various uses. All of this aims to equip the learner with the ability to produce a text in a similar style or to master the use of some of its

characteristics after understanding the relationships between the components of the text. Therefore, the text is a unit of communication and exchange, and it is essential to focus on the texture of the text and its levels. (Shaheta, p. 224)

The textual approach focuses on studying language in its internal aspects, that is, in its levels and systems (phonetic, syntactic, semantic) and in its connection to the context of communication and production, meaning the blending of language elements with context elements related to the speaker and the listener in all circumstances to produce the communicative process. In this way, language becomes dynamic and non-rigid. Linguistic methods have shown that the textual approach forms a practical framework that analyzes the text from within. The textual approach is based on the philosophy of teaching and learning language through the use of language. The goal is to learn communication and negotiation, facing a targeted language rather than a descriptive one, a language that does not focus on linguistic issues. The distinction between language issues and language skills (understanding, expressing, reading, writing) and language competencies (narration, argumentation, dialogue, description), as well as their levels (phonetic, morphological, syntactic, semantic), and their interconnection, is essential for the success of the didactic process. The textual approach enables learners to acquire linguistic practice in its actual oral and written forms. (Hassan, p. 225)

- The textual approach, within the framework of what is called teaching through competencies, relies on the text as a pedagogical tool for achieving competence. This pedagogy is summarized in the idea that the text serves as the starting point for carrying out all planned activities and the general framework for equipping learners with various linguistic skills. This is done by viewing the text as comprising different interconnected levels that enable the learner to produce language according to the situations and educational activities. These activities should serve the linguistic task. For this reason, modern curricula emphasize language teaching, allowing the learner to observe linguistic and rhetorical phenomena through their interaction with the text. (Hassan, p. 225)

Thus, the textual approach in teaching and teaching texts represents a comprehensive vision of linguistic activities that enable the learner to achieve basic competencies while ensuring coherence between activities, allowing them to understand that language is an integrated whole.

The teaching of literary texts from the perspective of the textual approach: The textual approach emerged in the West with a group of poetics theorists and a number of semioticians, especially with Gérard Genette, Leo Hoek, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Charles Grivel, and others. (Jamil, 2014, p. 44)

The teaching of literary texts in educational institutions has undergone a progression from traditional curricula, which combine historical reading and artistic approach, relying on a set of critical foundations such as taste, history, reality, beauty, the author, the text, and the reader, to modern curricula based on a new vision rooted in the textual approach. A number of researchers and scholars have proposed a didactic vision for teaching literary texts, offering an alternative to all prevailing critical approaches. This new approach is characterized by openness and its ability to absorb emerging concepts and theories. It is holistic and integrative, teaching the literary text in all its aspects, including its upper and surrounding thresholds, its external references, and its implied, realistic, and actual reader. It follows

a comprehensive methodological strategy that opens up to all other critical approaches and absorbs them with flexibility and selectivity. (Jamil, 2014, p. 5)

The textual approach is distinguished by offering a new perspective for understanding the literary text, as it reexamines the relationship between the text and the reader, highlighting the narrative structure and stylistic techniques that influence the process of comprehension and interpretation. In addition, this approach contributes to enhancing critical awareness among students and developing analytical reading skills, making it an effective tool for advancing literary and critical thinking in modern educational contexts.

The procedural mechanisms of the textual approach: The textual approach is based on concepts and procedural mechanisms that, in turn, rely on a central axis—the parallel text. This consists of thresholds and supplements surrounding the literary text both internally and externally, such as the study of the author, the genre designation, the iconographic representation, photographic images, visual arts, the publication details, introductions, indexes, footnotes, the external title, main internal titles, sectional titles, and cluster titles. It also includes the study of the cover, book size, multiple editions, and readers, as well as examining quotations, dedications, words on the outer cover, the creator's bibliography, and all promotional signs, whether consciously or unconsciously used by the author or publisher. All signs in the literary text indicate and carry semantic, artistic, and referential allusions. The literary text is also framed by external thresholds that complement the illumination of the text, such as dialogues, testimonies, readings, intertextuality, textual derivation, and the structural architecture of the literary work. All these thresholds and supplements are studied in relation to the literary text and its external reference. (Jamil, 2014, p. 43)

A number of methodological tools on which the textual approach is based can be defined through the following elements:

a-Reading the parallel text internally and externally by respecting the following methodological stages:

- Structure: phonetic, morphological, syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, and visual.
- Signification: linking the thresholds with textual meaning and extracting types of relationships: dialectical relationship, reflective relationship, analogical relationship, semiotic relationship, symbolic relationship, and metonymic relationship.
- Function: (Searching for the intentionality and purpose behind the use of thresholds and the functional and discursive aims intended by the author or poet).
- Textual Context: (Reading the thresholds in their textual context, both horizontally and vertically, from bottom to top, and from top to bottom).

b-Reading the primary literary text: Through the formalization of content, meaning extracting themes and significations by deconstructing the artistic structures and examining the aesthetic phrasing, expressive writing, poetic imagery, and rhetorical styles.

c-Reading the external textual reference: Socially, psychologically, historically, economically, politically, culturally, and artistically, by opening up to the concept of reading, reproduction, interpretation of the text, and analyzing it through deconstruction and reconstruction. (Jamil, 2014, p. 44)

From here, it is clear that the textual approach extends to cover a broader scope of the text, both internally and externally, as well as in terms of form and content. Additionally, the textual approach must adopt a comprehensive methodology based on analyzing the effects of the text on the reader and society, including how the text is received and interacts with different cultural and social contexts. It is also necessary to open up to the historical dimensions that may contribute to a deeper understanding of the text's dimensions and its production, in addition to focusing on the interaction between literary texts and parallel texts that may help reshape meaning. Therefore, the textual approach serves as a flexible and expansive critical tool, aiming to grasp all the dimensions that the text opens up to its readers, through its interaction with the various factors that contribute to shaping the literary and historical identity of texts.

### Conclusion

It is clear from this presentation that the teaching of literary texts in light of the textual approach forms a renewed and comprehensive vision aimed at making the learner an active participant in the process of constructing meaning, through openness to the various textual thresholds and contextual references surrounding the literary text. The textual approach no longer relies solely on reading the text from within but goes beyond that to explore its external relationships and its cultural, social, and psychological contexts, offering the learner a broader opportunity for critical and aesthetic interaction with the text. Therefore, adopting this approach in educational practices contributes effectively to the development of linguistic and literary competencies of learners, enhancing their ability to engage in conscious reading and deep analysis of literary texts in their multiple dimensions. Thus, institutionalizing this vision in teaching literary texts opens promising horizons for the development of educational curricula in accordance with the demands of the times and the learner's cognitive and cultural needs.

Therefore, we can conclude that the literary text is a fundamental source and an important support for enhancing the process of educational achievement and communication, as it forms the cornerstone in developing reading and expressive skills among learners. Moreover, textual approaches, from a textual perspective, rely on the centrality of the literary text in achieving multiple educational goals, extending beyond mere superficial understanding to critical interaction and deep analysis. In this context, the textual approach, both didactically and pedagogically, is based on utilizing the parallel text and its internal supplements and external thresholds, as they serve as essential entry points for a deeper understanding of the literary text and its cultural and social extensions. However, the textual approach still requires further theoretical and practical assimilation within educational institutions, ensuring its effective integration and activation to serve the development of literary and linguistic competencies of learners.

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