Lessons Learned from Reading a Vietnamese Text: The Importance of Pre-texts in Second Language Reading

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Until recently most linguists in the U.S. studied sentences isolated from texts and most literary critics (especially New Critics) analyzed texts without attempting to explain what properties the particular text being analyzed shared with other texts in the same genre, or with all other texts belonging to the Anglo-American tradition. The popularity of sentence-based linguistics has made it difficult for ESL reading teachers to acknowledge that, in order to read, one must know more than vocabulary and syntax; the popularity of the New Critics' model of text analysis has made it difficult for them to perceive the value of making students aware not only of a text's internal relations but also its external relations to other texts in the culture. A new model for the analysis of texts which emphasizes external as well as internal relations is briefly described. One aspect of this model, the emphasis on the relation of a text to pre-texts, is illustrated by an analysis of a Vietnamese text. The paper concludes with a discussion of the important pre-texts in American culture and with the suggestion that ESL teachers expose their students to these pre-texts so they can develop the text competence necessary for reading.

The disciplines of rhetorical, literary, and linguistic analysis are becoming more and more to look like one discipline. Though they remain, at least in America, administratively compartmentalized (or departmentalized—in Speech, English, and Linguistics), rhetoricians, literary critics, and linguists are now all engaged in the same activity: the analysis of texts. The time seems right for a multidisciplinary approach to text analysis that would draw on the work that has been done in different disciplines. Such an approach might impress researchers with the advantages of cooperation. Since Professor Alton Becker of the University of Michigan has worked out an approach to text analysis that is truly multidisciplinary and that avoids, I think, many of the problems of other more compartmentalized approaches, I would like to outline his approach very briefly and illustrate one of its four main emphases, its emphasis on pre-texts, by commenting on a Vietnamese text. The case to be argued here is that a knowledge of pre-texts is a crucial part of the text competence of a na-

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tive speaker. Without this knowledge one can not read as Frank Smith (1971) and Kenneth Goodman (1973) say a fluent reader reads, i.e., by making predictions that are later verified or modified.

But first some problems of definition. *Discourse analysis* and *text analysis* have been used more or less interchangeably to refer to attempts to identify and describe the structure of units of verbal behavior larger than the sentence. Discourse analysis has been the more common term in English speaking countries while text analysis has been used on the continent of Europe to refer to the same activity. Although recognizing that discourse analysis and text analysis have often been used interchangeably, Sandulescu points out that discourse analysis usually refers to *"data-centered"* approaches to the study of *spoken language* while text analysis commonly refers to *"model-oriented"* approaches to the study of *written language* (Sandulescu, 1976, p. 349-365). Widdowson suggests a slightly different terminological distinction (Widdowson, 1976, p. 57-58). He recommends that discourse analysis be used to refer to investigations of the communicative aspects of an instance of language and text analysis to refer to studies of the formal properties of a series of connected sentences.

Though Sandulescu's and Widdowson's distinctions may be useful, they are not utilized here because they would seem to lead to a compartmentalization of efforts, when, as mentioned above, I think a cooperative, multidisciplinary approach has more merit. I will therefore dispense with the term discourse and use text to refer to any instance of language, spoken or written, which has an internal structure and is perceived by the people of a culture to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Text analysis is the study of such an instance of language, including both its communicative and formal aspects.

An Approach to Text Analysis

Becker's multidisciplinary approach starts with the assumption that meaning is not inherent in a thing itself but rather emerges from its relations to its context (Becker, 1977, p. 1-3). What kinds of relations are important? Becker says to fully understand a text one must understand four sets of relations:

1. The relation of parts of the text to each other: *co-text* relations. These are the relations examined by Halliday and Hasan who are interested in learning how cohesion is achieved in English texts (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).
2. The relation of the text to previous texts, to *pre-texts.*
3. The relation of the text to the *intention* of the speaker/writer with intention defined as "the relations of the creator to the content of the text, the medium, and to the hearers or readers" (Becker, 1977, p. 3). These relations have been examined by rhetoricians, by speech and text act theorists, and by literary critics interested in interpretation theory.
4. The relation of the text to the world, to non-literary things and events, to its *context.* Context is often used in a more general way to refer to 1 through 4 above; Becker restricts its meaning to this fourth set of relations, the relations that are commonly called reference by linguists.

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It is the second set of relations, the relation of a text to pre-texts, that I would like to discuss in more detail. I would like to concentrate on this set of relations because it is a set that other text analyzers have under-emphasized. For example, because they were reacting against historical criticism, the New Critics had very little interest in this set of relations. Structuralist literary critics and modern linguists, because they are interested in synchronic not diachronic approaches, have also not paid much attention to pre-texts in their analyses. (For a counter example, see Culler, 1975, p. 131-160.) Realizing there were other relations to discover besides historical ones has been liberating for both literary critics and linguists, but since all texts speak the past as well as the present, a text's relations with former texts are part of its meaning, a part that should not be put aside in our enthusiasm for understanding synchronic relations. In this regard it is interesting to compare Labov's work much of which is a warning that structural systems of the present should not be considered apart from historical change (Labov, 1972). Jakobson's comments on the Russian Formalists are also instructive. They knew, he said, that "shifting and change [in the relations between texts] are not only historical statements (first there was A, and then A_1, arose in place of A) but that shift is also a directly experienced synchronic phenomenon, a relevant artistic value. The reader of a poem or the viewer of a painting has a vivid awareness of two orders: the traditional canon and the artistic novelty as a deviation from the canon" (Jakobson, 1935, p. 87).

Not only famous linguists but our own common sense as well affirms the importance of pre-texts. We know, as Becker points out, that any cowboy movie is in many ways much more about previous cowboy movies than about actual men who herded cattle in the West. In regard to a movie like *Blazing Saddles* the relation of text to pre-texts is purposely made obvious, but, as Shklovsky pointed out, "not only parody, but also in general any work of art is created as a parallel and a contradiction to some kind of model" (Shklovsky, 1919, p. 53).

Nor is the situation much different for non-poetic prose. To understand much of the mundane prose we hear or read we must know more than just vocabulary and syntax: we must know the scripts, the term Schank uses for more stereotypic pre-texts (Schank, 1975, p. 4). A script is "a predetermined stereotyped sequence of actions that define a well-known situation" (Schank, 1975, p. 4). Schank asks us to consider the sequence:

> John went to a restaurant. He found a table and ordered a hamburger. Later, he paid and left.

Schank says unless we know the restaurant script we can not easily connect finding tables and ordering. The whole script that involves getting a waitress' (in America it's usually a waitress not a waiter) attention, a dialogue with the waitress, the waitress bringing food, etc., has been evoked but only parts of the total script are found in the surface structure of the above passage. In under-

standing a text like the short one above that evokes a script, the script becomes part of the story even when it is not spelled out. "The answer to the question 'Who served John the hamburger?' seems obvious because our world knowledge, as embodied in scripts, answers it" (Schank, 1975, p. 10).

A Vietnamese Text

One way to be impressed with how important it is in reading to know more than vocabulary and syntax is to try to read a non-English text oneself. In trying to read a Vietnamese text recently I found all four sets of relations described above to be crucial, but I will comment here only on the role of pre-texts. The text I have been reading is a 2086 line narrative poem entitled *Lục Vân Tiên*, which was composed in 1865 by a blind Vietnamese poet named Nguyen Dinh Chieu. I started with the following lines which I later realized were a prologue:

Text in Quốc Ngữ (Romanized script)

(1) Trước đèn xem chuyện Tây-Minh,

(2) Gẫm cười hai chữ nhơn tình éo le.

(3) Hỡi ai lắng lặng mà nghe,

(4) Giữ răn việc trước, lánh dè thân sau.

(5) Trai thời trung hiếu làm đầu,

(6) Gai thời tiết hạnh là câu trau mình.

Translation

(1) Before the light I look at the story of Tay Minh

(2) And muse over the two deceiving words, human feeling!

(3) Attention everybody! Be quiet and listen,

(4) Recollect past mistakes, avoid bad consequences later:

(5) Men take loyalty/filial piety as your rule,

(6) Women take chastity as the word to improve yourselves.

One of the dangers of analyzing foreign language texts is that one mistakes the stereotypic for novelty because everything is new when one first starts to read texts in another language. This was what happened to me when I read *Lục Vân Tiên*. Since it was only the second Vietnamese narrative poem I had

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ever looked at, when I read the above lines I accepted most of the information presented in them as the original creation of Nguyen Dinh Chieu. But later in talking to Vietnamese informants and in reading other Vietnamese narrative poems, I was surprised to learn that much of the material in these six lines was stereotypic. It is stereotypic, for example, to refer to older books as the source of information for the story one is to tell, as the narrator does in the first line; it is stereotypic to muse over the meaning of characters, as the narrator muses over the meaning of the two characters for human feeling in the second line (often in fact the same characters are mused about: the characters for humanity, or feeling, or fate, or talent); it is also stereotypic to state in the opening lines a general rule of human existence that the present story is to instantiate, as the narrator does in the above prologue. If, as Frank Smith and Kenneth Goodman have suggested, "the information that passes from the brain to the eye is more important in reading than the information that passes from the eye to the brain," and if it is this behind the eyeball information that helps the fluent reader make predictions that he later verifies or modifies, then this explains why I was at a disadvantage when I read this text (Smith 1971: 9; see also Goodman 1973). I could make no predictions because I had no experience with previous texts, experiences that would have instilled in me a certain set of expectancies. A lot of learning to read foreign texts involves learning a new set of expectancies.

How can we help students acquire a good set of expectancies? One thing that should be done is to be sure they get exposed to different types of texts so they can develop different expectancies for different texts. We can encourage students to see co-occurrence relations among texts in a particular genre; we can point out, for example, that most newspaper articles place the most important information first, that term papers usually have a thesis statement at the end of the introduction, that epic poems often begin *in medias res*. Many teachers undoubtedly already point out such things but I think many of us overemphasize the uniqueness of the particular text being studied and underemphasize what it shares with other texts in its genre and with all other texts in the Anglo-American tradition. Influenced perhaps by the *explication de text* approach of the New Critics, the approach to text analysis inflicted on many of us in college literature classes, we treat each reading assignment as a completely fresh creation. We painstakingly analyze a text to reveal its internal relations but say nothing about its external relations, its relations to other texts in its genre, to other texts in the culture. In treating the work as completely unique we give the student little guidance in developing a set of expectancies, a set of "advance organizers" (Ausubel 1968: 148-9), that reading researchers believe a good reader must have (Rickards 1976).

In my own struggle to read this Vietnamese text, I soon found knowing prior texts involved more than just knowing other texts belonging to the same genre. It involved in addition knowing texts in other genres and how these texts related to the text I was analyzing. To understand *Lục Vân Tiên,* for ex-

ample, I found I had to know something about *ca dao,* or folk poetry, the pre-texts for most verbal art in Vietnam. *Ca dao* lines becomes lines in poems and lines in poems become *ca dao,* both become pre-texts for each other, in complicated ways only a native researcher could unravel. Compare, for example, the following *ca dao* with lines 5 and 6 of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's poem:

> When you enter into this reincarnation,
> Men, take loyalty/filial piety, one on each shoulder,
> and fulfill both these duties completely;
> Women, be faithful to the rule of chastity;
> Day and night be careful to avoid any imperfection.

But I found there were still other pre-texts besides other narrative poems and folk poetry that I had to know before I could understand this prologue. I found I had to know something about the ancient books of China, the *Four Books* [*Tứ thư*] and the *Five Classics* [*Ngũ kinh*]. How are these ancient Chinese texts evoked? Often by a kind of shorthand that takes some getting used to. In the above prologue, for example, the words *trung hiếu* [loyalty-filial piety], line 5, and *tiết hạnh* [purity-behavior], line 6, evoke in the minds of most Vietnamese the whole Confucian ethical system, a system that is described in the *Four Books* and *Five Classics.* In saying men should be loyal and filially pious and that women should be pure, Nguyen Dinh Chieu is not saying that men and women should have only these virtues; he is recommending a return to the entire Confucian moral system as a way of restoring order in the society.

To explain more precisely how ancient Confucian texts are evoked, however, it is necessary to discuss a special kind of pre-text, but perhaps text is not the right word for what I wish to describe. What I am referring to are certain classes and hierarchies that mediate between old and new Vietnamese texts (See Table 1). Some important classes are: the three bonds [*tam cương*], the five virtues [*ngũ thường*], the three female submissions [*tam tòng*], and the four female virtues [*tứ đức*]. Some important hierarchies are the hierarchy of four occupations and the order of activities of a superior man. The source for most of these Vietnamese classes and hierarchies are the Chinese *Four Books* and *Five Classics.* For example, the Three Submissions (III in Table 1) are described in the Classic of Rituals; the order of activities of a superior man (VI in Table 1) comes from the *Great Learning* (one of the *Four Books*).

Once I knew about these classes and hierarchies I found I had a very important set of handles that I could use to grasp many Vietnamese texts. But it wasn't enough to know only that these classes and hierarchies existed; I also had to know what their members were, something about the collection of meanings associated with each member, and the shorthand used in texts to evoke them.

Learning the members was no problem. They are known by most Vietnamese who will tell you, for example, what the Five Virtues and the Three Female submissions are if you ask them. These classes and hierarchies are

I. Tam cương	
Sino-Vietnamese	
phụ/tử	
quân/thần	
phu/phụ	
II. Ngũ thường	
nhân	
nghĩa	
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III. Tam tòng	
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TABLE 1

Sino-Vietnamese Classes and Hierarchies

I. Tam cương	The Three Bonds	
Sino-Vietnamese	*Vietnamese*	
phụ/tử	cha/con	father/son
quân/thần	vua/tôi	king/subject
phu/phụ	chồng/vợ	husband/wife
II. Ngũ thường	The Five Cardinal Virtues	
nhân	humanity	
nghĩa	righteousness	
lễ	propriety	
trí	knowledge	
tín	sincerity	
III. Tam tòng	The Three Submissions (for women)	
tòng phụ	first to her father	
tòng phụ	second to her husband	
tòng tử	third to her son	
IV. Tứ đức	The Four Virtues (for women)	
công	work	
dung	physical appearance	
ngôn	correct speech	
hạnh	proper behavior	
V. Hierarchy of the Four Occupations		
first	sĩ	scholar
second	nông	farmer
third	công	craftsman
fourth	thương	merchant
VI. The Order of Activities of a Superior Man (quân tử)		
first	tu thân	improve oneself
second	tề gia	improve one's family
third	trị quốc	make the country prosperous
fourth	bình thiên hạ	make the world peaceful

brought up often in informal conversations as well as formal debate in Vietnam, not as descriptions of present behavior and beliefs so much but rather as devices for measuring how far present behavior and beliefs deviate from earlier standards. As pre-texts they continue to exert an influence on present lives. David Marr has explained how twentieth century books on the proper behavior of Vietnamese women all begin with a discussion of the Three Submissions and the Four Virtues (Marr 1976). What the writers of these books tried to specify was how much a modern Vietnamese woman could deviate in behavior from the traditional code summed up by the words *Tam tòng tứ đức* [Three Submissions Four Virtues].

More recently Ho Chi Minh attempted to re-contextualize some of these Confucian classes and hierarchies. In doing so he evoked the prologue to *Lục Vân Tiên* and the Confucian Three Bonds. In the prologue to *Lục Vân Tiên* quoted above the words[2] *trung hiếu* [loyalty-filial piety] evoke, as I've said, the whole Confucian moral system, but more specifically they evoke two of the Three Bonds: *vua-tôi* [king-subject] and *cha-con* [father-son]. In the Confucian system one was loyal [*trung*] to the king and pious [*hiếu*] toward one's father. In fact loyalty to king was viewed as an extension of the piety extended toward one's father. From the point of view of a Marxist revolutionary then, two of the Three Bonds, king-subject and father-son, are "feudalistic" and need either to be repudiated, as they were at least for a while in China, or somehow re-contextualized, which appears to be what is being attempted in Vietnam. Using the same words (*trung-hiếu*) as the Confucian scholar Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ho Chi Minh used to tell cadres: "We must be loyal [*trung*] to the Party and pious [*hiếu*] toward the people" [*Phải trung với đảng, hiếu với dân*].

Learning the collection of meanings associated with each of the members of these classes and hierarchies is a formidable task precisely because these sets and their members have been re-contextualized so many times both in China and in Vietnam. A somewhat less formidable but still challenging task that faced me when I tried to read the poem *Lục Vân Tiên* was to learn the shorthand the author used to evoke these classes and hierarchies. Sometimes they are referred to very explicitly as the *Tam cường* [Three Bonds] or *Ngũ thường* [Five Virtues] much as we would refer to the Ten Commandments or the Seven Deadly Sins. I had no difficulty in understanding what was meant when these classes or hierarchies were referred to in this straightforward manner. But to become alert to other ways they could be evoked I found I had to accustom myself to the devices of reduction, parallelism, and binary opposition in Vietnamese. When writers wish to evoke both the *Tam cường* [Three Bonds] and *Ngũ thường* [Five Virtues], instead of saying *Tam cường Ngũ thường*, they may reduce this four word expression and directly oppose the Bonds to the Virtues in the compound word *Cường-thường* [Bonds-Virtues]. This compound word then stands for all the moral obligations, including the bonds and virtues,

[2] For a discussion of the difficulties of defining a word in Vietnamese, see Thompson, Lawrence 1963. "The Problem of the Word in Vietnamese." *Word*, 19, pp. 39-52.

stressed by Confucian doctrine. When writers wish to speak of the entire ethical system as it applies to both men and women, they pair the virtue of loyalty [*trung*], which was the virtue especially but not exclusively for males, with the virtue of chastity [*trinh*], the virtue reserved for females, in the compound word *trung-trinh* [loyalty-chastity].

Reduction, parallelism, and binary opposition in Vietnamese do not operate just among the Confucian bonds and virtues. There are countless examples in *Lục Vân Tiên* and in the Vietnamese vernacular of pairings being used to refer to non-Confucian categories or qualities. (Table-chair [*bàn-ghế*] is furniture; end-beginning [*chung-thủy*] means faithful in marriage; mountain-water [*non-nước*] refers to the country of Vietnam.) Nor are the operations of parallelism and binary opposition restricted only to the level of the compound word; they are important features of the Vietnamese language at all grammatical levels—at the level of the compound word as we have seen above, at the level of the four syllable idiomatic expression, and at the level of the sentence (Nguyen Dinh Hoa 1965). One gets a suggestion of both parallelism and binary opposition in lines 5 and 6 of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's prologue:

(5) Men take loyalty/filial piety as your rule,
(6) Women take chastity as the word to improve yourselves.

Binary opposition and parallelism are also very important devices at higher levels of Vietnamese text organization. In the story that follows this prologue the hero Lục Vân Tiên exemplifies loyalty and filial piety and the heroine Kiều Nguyệt Nga exemplifies chastity. Lục Vân Tiên interrupts his improving himself (first in the order of activities of a superior man), which he is attempting to do by studying for the mandarin exams, to attend to his mother who is dying; thus he demonstrates filial piety. Later he serves his king by helping him put down an uprising; by doing so, he demonstrates loyalty to his king. At the same time Kiều Nguyệt Nga, the accounts of whose adventures are paralleled to and interspersed with those of Lục Vân Tiên, demonstrates the virtue of chastity. Thinking that her lover Lục Vân Tiên is dead, she takes a vow of chastity, deciding to remain pure forever to the memory of the man she had promised to marry.

Sinologists have commented on the harmonious relationship between parallelism as the most important feature of the Chinese verbal style and the Chinese conception of the world as divided between the principles of *yin* and *yang*, *yin* being the female principle and *yang* the male principle, the combination and interaction of which is supposed to account for all things. But this speculation concerns China not Vietnam. In any event one does not need to turn to China for sources of Vietnamese parallelism and binary opposition. According to the Vietnamese myth of creation, the Vietnamese people are descendants of the dragon king Lạc Long and the fairy princess Âu Cơ, King Lạc Long's mother's home was the realm of water; Princess Âu Cơ was born and raised on a high mountain. From their union, the union of the opposites of water and

mountain, came the land and people of Vietnam. This story is perhaps the pre-text par excellence of Vietnam and might be compared to the story of creation, and of Adam and Eve, in Genesis.

In summary, in order to understand this prologue to the Vietnamese poem *Lục Vân Tiên* I found I had to know, among other things, how this text related to other texts—to other verse novels such as *Nhị Độ Mai* and *Kim Vân Kiều*, to *ca dao* folk poetry texts, to the *Four Books* and *Five Classics* of China, and to certain classes and hierarchies such as the Three Bonds and the order of activities of a superior man.

Pre-texts in American Culture

What are the important pre-texts for texts in American English? Could they be discovered and classified and taught systematically to ESL students? I don't see why not. I've been working on a list that so far includes: the Bible —especially the story of creation, the story of Adam and Eve, the life of Christ; some Mother Goose rhymes; some fairy tales—maybe Cinderella, Snow White, and the Frog Prince; selections from the writings of Sigmund Freud; something on Puritanism—perhaps a biography of Cotton Mather; the Constitution and the Bill of Rights; an Horatio Alger story; Owen Wister's *The Virginian*; a baseball rule book; a first aid handbook and popular book of remedies for colds and other common ailments; Emily Post's *Etiquette*; sayings from *Poor Richard's Almanac*; and assorted idioms, clichés, and other frozen forms.

As for scripts, the more pedestrian everyday texts, many are already taught as dialogues or situation drills in ESL speaking classes. Scripts such as "At the Restaurant," "At the Doctor," and "Student Meets Faculty Advisor" are part of an ESL teacher's stock and trade. To make these dialogues or situation drills interesting (perhaps interesting for ourselves) we often introduce deviations and turn them into what Schank calls stories (Schank, 1975, p. 4). Students may have trouble, however, distinguishing between expected and unexpected behavior. There may be some advantage in teaching students first the scripts, to give them a feel for what is stereotypic, before introducing stories that contain deviations from the scripts. There may be some advantage in making explicit the distinction between a *script* situation drill and a *story* situation drill, especially for students studying English abroad who aren't getting exposed to stereotypic American situations outside the classroom.

Though one shouldn't expect to find the same type of pre-texts in different cultures (or in different epochs of the same cultural tradition) one still keeps looking for them. After becoming impressed with the importance of classes and hierarchies in the Sino-Vietnamese tradition, I began to wonder if there were similar pre-texts in the Anglo-American tradition. I came up with the Ten Commandments, the Four Humours, the Four Freedoms, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Great Chain of Being. While I knew from previous experience as an English major that a knowledge of these classes and hierarchies was crucial in

piecing together an understanding of the works of English literature, they didn't seem to be essential pre-texts for much modern writing. Undoubtedly this is because the role *a priori* categories play as pre-texts in our society is rather small. Science has deplenished our supply of eternal verities. New Classes such as Freud's Id, Ego, and Superego come along but soon they suffer the same fate as the Four Humours. Ethical categories sanctioned by religion last longer but even the Ten Commandments seem to be evoked less and less these days. Perhaps the pre-texts comparable to the classes and hierarchies of China and Vietnam, and of an earlier England and America, are not *a priori* categories but heuristic procedures, problem solving techniques, the scientific method: research the problem, develop an hypothesis, test it, announce your result—which won't be a law but might become a useful way of making sense of things until something better comes along.

Conclusion

One may ask: Does one really have to know all these things, all four of Becker's sets of relations, all of these pre-texts and scripts, to read a text in a foreign language? Can't one read a text if one knows the writing system, a fair amount of vocabulary, and sentence syntax? I think one does need to know all these things. Vocabulary and syntax aren't enough. And I think people in ESL have known for some time they weren't enough but the popularity of the theories of linguists who separated form from function and synchronic from diachronic relations, who took isolated sentences as their corpus for study, who had a very narrow definition of competence, has, until recently, kept teachers from saying so forcefully.

Of course there are different levels of mastery; people have spoken of a cline of bi-lingualism. Undoubtedly there are different degrees of understanding of a text. As teachers of reading, however, I think it may be dangerous to underestimate the number of things one needs to know to read texts in a foreign language. If we minimize the amount of knowledge necessary for reading we may move our students to a pre-mature closure. They may be encouraged to think they know enough when they've only scratched the surface. An analogy could be drawn to the ESL speaking teacher who encourages students to think they have mastered a sentence when, given a cue from the teacher, they can mouth it correctly in class. Instead of allowing students to reach closure at a low level of mastery, we reading teachers should encourage students to develop their "behind the eyeball" knowledge (Smith, 1971, p. 68-79), to begin to explore some of these other areas of knowledge that Becker describes. The hopeful thing about the coalescing of the disciplines of rhetoric, literary criticism, and linguistics around an interest in texts, as I see it, is that it may lead to an increase in multidisciplinary approaches to text analysis, approaches that should help make us aware of the competence we as native speakers possess that enables us to take meaning from English texts. This competence, which might be called text competence, is certainly broader than Chomsky's grammatical com-

petence and broader also than what many people have in mind when they use the phrase communicative competence. With our consciousness raised regarding this text competence, we may be able to introduce to students, in more systematic fashion, what they need to know to read.

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