

Ways to Look at the Biblical Text

Deixis

Devices that give contextual clues about . . .

People—who is speaking, who is present?

Social Status—who is honored or shamed?

Time—what time is it? . . . day, season, year?

Location—where is the story taking place?

Transitions—what devices signal changes in the logical development?

Plot Analysis

Stage—begins with a conflict or problem

Peak—resolution of problem; recognized by concentration of characters, change of location or grammatical underlining

Closure—conclusion

Narrative Techniques

Character development

Setting

Point of View

Patterning

Selectivity

A-chronological sequence

Ambiguity

Allusion

Diversion

Discontinuities

Gaps

An Interpersonal Act

Communication between "We . . . Thou"

Personal—has a desired relational effect in mind

Performative—the text is doing something (warning, promising, etc.)

Felicity Conditions

Looking at the text from the standpoint of the Church

Authority—the text and those who teach it have authority which comes from God.

Sincerity—the text and those who teach it have a coherent message from God.

Love—the text and those who teach it communicate love from God.

Seven Standards of Textuality

1. Cohesion

Texts adhere to the rules of grammar and syntax.

2. Coherence

Themes are related so as to produce a thematic net.

3. Intention

The author of a text purposes communication.

4. Acceptability

The text offers the possibility of genuine communication of the author's intended goal.

5. Informativity

A text has a lack of redundancy—it must build.

6. Situationality

The text arises from a situation—the world behind the text.

7. Intertextuality

A text has similarity to other analogous texts.

Inspired by Peter Cotterell's essay, "Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics, and Discourse Analysis," in NIDOTTE, Vol. 1 (ed. Willem A. VanGemeren; Zondervan, 1997), 134-160.