

## HYPERTEXT, METATEXT, PARATEXT, INTERTEXT, ARCHITEXT: DEFINITION AND APPLICATION OF TERMS

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*The article reviews the notions of hypertext, intertext, paratext, metatext and architextuality applied to resources of the Internet. Alongside with the theory of text, the interpretation of these notions has evolved to comprehend the new type of texts which have invaded contemporary communication space.*

**Keywords:** *hypertext, Internet, metatext, paratext, intertext, intertextuality, architextuality.*

Alongside with inevitable change brought into human communication by technological advance of the last decades, modern linguistics has evolved from language system and text study to a complex discipline embracing a much wider field of interest. The theory of text has developed into the theory of hypertext linked both to humanitarian studies and exact sciences, which reflects the trend of interdisciplinary co-working.

Under current conditions, “production and distribution of information (or any other product) must be immediate; there can be no lag time between the two. Techno-culture has met this demand with data bases and electronic networks” [Critical issues 1995: 90]. This is accomplished via modern means of communication, which can be treated as constituent parts of a unified communication space.

It was as early as in the 1960-1980s when under the influence of structuralism and poststructuralism the whole human culture was viewed by philosophers as an enormous text of great complexity. Art and literary critics thoroughly specified explicit and implicit correlations between various written works. Considering interaction of texts, several types of relation were assumed to exist. At least five of them were described by French investigator G. Genette [Genette 1982, cited by Ilyin 2001, transl. by E.Z.]:

1. *intertextuality* as presence of two or more texts within one text, when another text is directly cited or indirectly mentioned (quoting, allusion, plagiarism);

2. *paratextuality* as the relation of the text body to its title, epigraph, reference list, etc;

3. *metatextuality* as a critical remark or commenting reference to one's own previously written text;

4. *hypertextuality* as mocking or imitating another text;

5. *architextuality* as genre correlation of texts.

Some examples of classical intertextual connections are plot borrowing, translation, literary imitation, parody, screen adaptation.

At the same time, promising computer programmer T. Nelson developed his vision of a novel system for file organization into what he called hypertext. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century these ideas were to merge into a novel approach towards information organization in the material world, in virtual reality and in human mind.

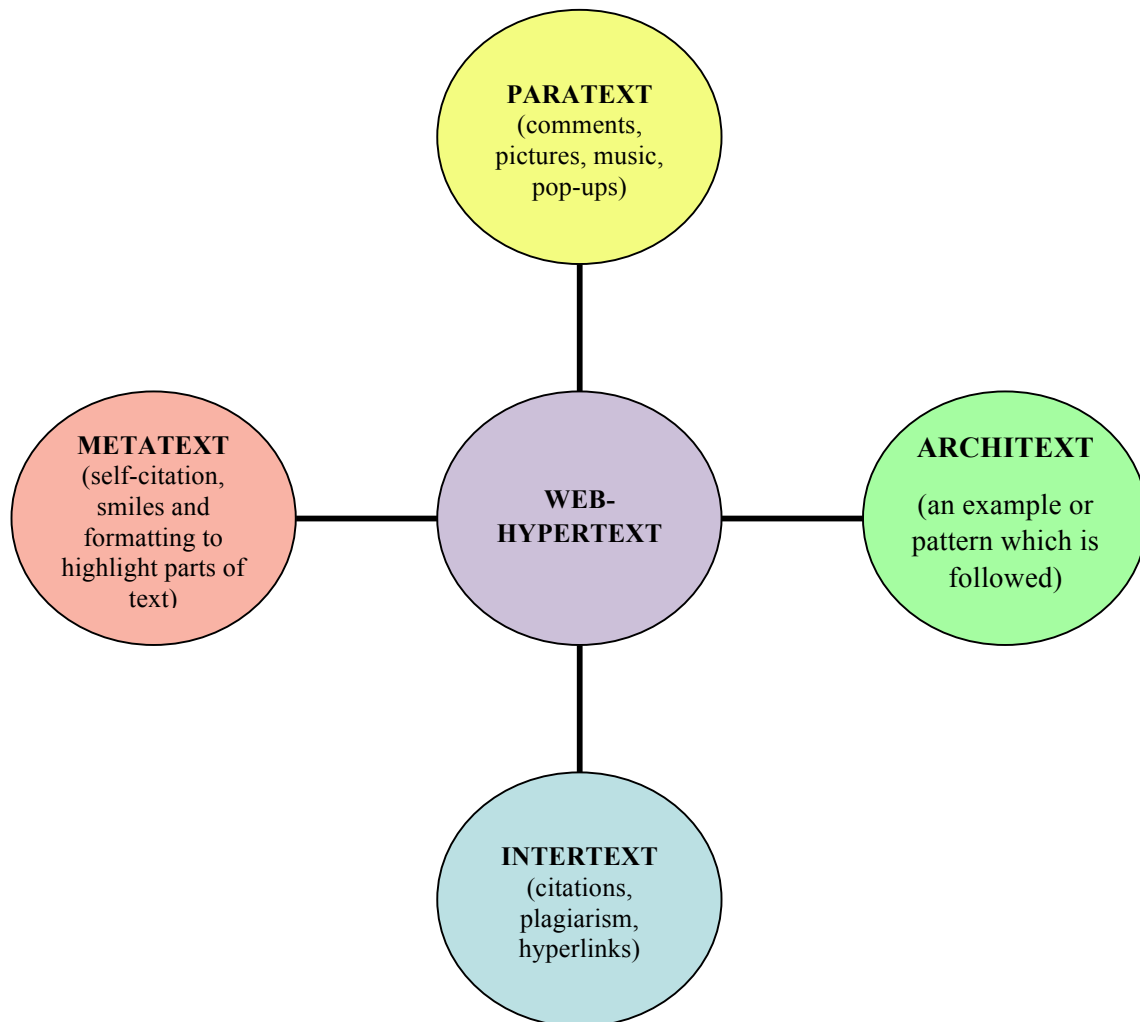
Hypertext modifies modern communication space and determines the beginning of a “post-Gutenberg epoch” – an era of non-linearity and electronic data carriers; human society turns into a society of net structures, where the individual exists and realizes oneself through dynamic and interactive hypertext. Hypertext can be considered as a synergic system with blurred margins, which is constantly developing at a cutting edge between fragile equilibrium and volatility [Butorina 2015]. Taken up as an object of linguistic study, it is considered as a polysemiotic text formation featuring unique constituent parts – *hypertextemes* – that include two text fragments and connecting links between them [Shulginov 2015].

In [Zaharchuk 2016] we touched upon the phenomenon of intertextuality in modern web hypertext. However, a great number of similar terms to describe cross-textual connections may lead to confusion. We propose a slightly different point of view on how intertextual correlations are revealed in electronic hypertext of the Internet compared to the classification given by G. Genette which was mentioned above. Unlike Genette, we assume hypertextuality to be the central notion in the set, the key feature of electronic text. Paratextuality, metatextuality, intertextuality and architextuality are viewed as specific characteristics or representations of hypertextuality in electronic text (as shown in the Figure below).

**Paratext** is traditionally defined as complimentary parts of the text such as its title (or headline), reference list, epigraph, accompanying illustrations. In classical text theory there is an opinion that paratext marks the margins, or borders of the text – its beginning (title, author's name, dedication, introduction, critical reviews) and its end (references, contents, post scriptum) [Borbotko 2011]. When it comes to web-communication, paratext gets a unique implementation: besides the possibility to use colourful pictures (often in .gif format, so that the image moves), multimedia such as music or even embedded videos, there can be comments left by the readers which are constantly updated and some pop-up content (advertisement, notifications, etc.). It is essential to emphasize that in this case hardly any distinctive margins can be traced to mark

the “beginning” or the “end” of the text, as there is no linearity in perceiving web-resources.

Allusive to E.A. Poe’s “A Dream within a Dream”, **metatext** is frequently referred to as “a text within a text”. In its narrow interpretation associated with the name of Anna Vezhbitska, this is text material which doesn’t add anything new into the narration, but is meant to help the addressee to comprehend it, systematize the information, and understand the author’s attitude and mood [Akhmetbekova 2014]. Conventional metatextual parts of the text body are introductory phrases like *for example, in our opinion, as we believe*. In a broader interpretation, metatext can be viewed as a secondary text which appears as a reaction to the proto-text and is meant to help interpret it, make the message clear; this text can contain verbal and non-verbal elements [Ostapenko 2014].



### 1 Specific Features of Electronic Hypertext

Applied to text space of the Internet, the notion of metatext can include specific elements such as self-citation (to remind the reader the subject of the message or some important details). It also makes sense to consider formatting

features like bold type, italic font, etc. as ways to draw the addressee's attention to the core of the message, and smiles as markers of the author's attitude towards the described events or objects.

**Intertext** is the occurrence of another text (which is cited directly or implicitly) within a given text. That can be citation, allusion or plagiarism. It is worth remarking that the Worldwide Web with its easy access to information gave a start to an incredible expansion of plagiarism. However, the hierarchy of data presentation provided by the Internet gives us an infinite field for implementing intertextual connections by means of a mere hyperlink, which became a legal way of using data from another texts.

**Architextuality** can be described as genre correlation or resemblance of texts which appears as a result of following a pattern, a tradition [Olizko 2013]. The author chooses a genre of discourse and (consciously or subconsciously) follows it. On the Internet this feature is represented not only through the language usage (slang, following or ignoring spelling rules, etc.), but by means of particular formats and patterns which users have to follow. For example, each personal page on a social network contains an avatar (picture of the user) in a specified area, a standard set of personal information, a toolbar. These basic components can't be changed.

As a conclusion, we'd like to emphasize the value of terminology borrowed from arts and literature research and critical works for widening and deepening the understanding of electronic hypertext phenomenon as an object of linguistic study. The terms reviewed in this paper provide a fertile field for a thorough and multifaceted investigation. The described features of hypertext (paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality and intertextuality) illustrate its multidimensional structure and complex hierarchy.

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