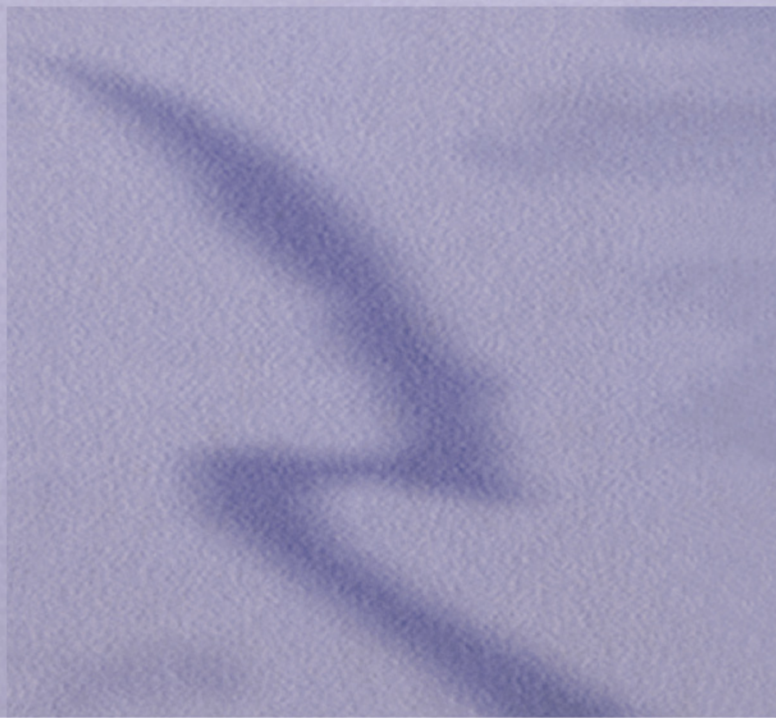
Techniques of Description

Spoken and written discourse

Edited by

John M. Sinclair, Michael Hoey and Gwyneth Fox



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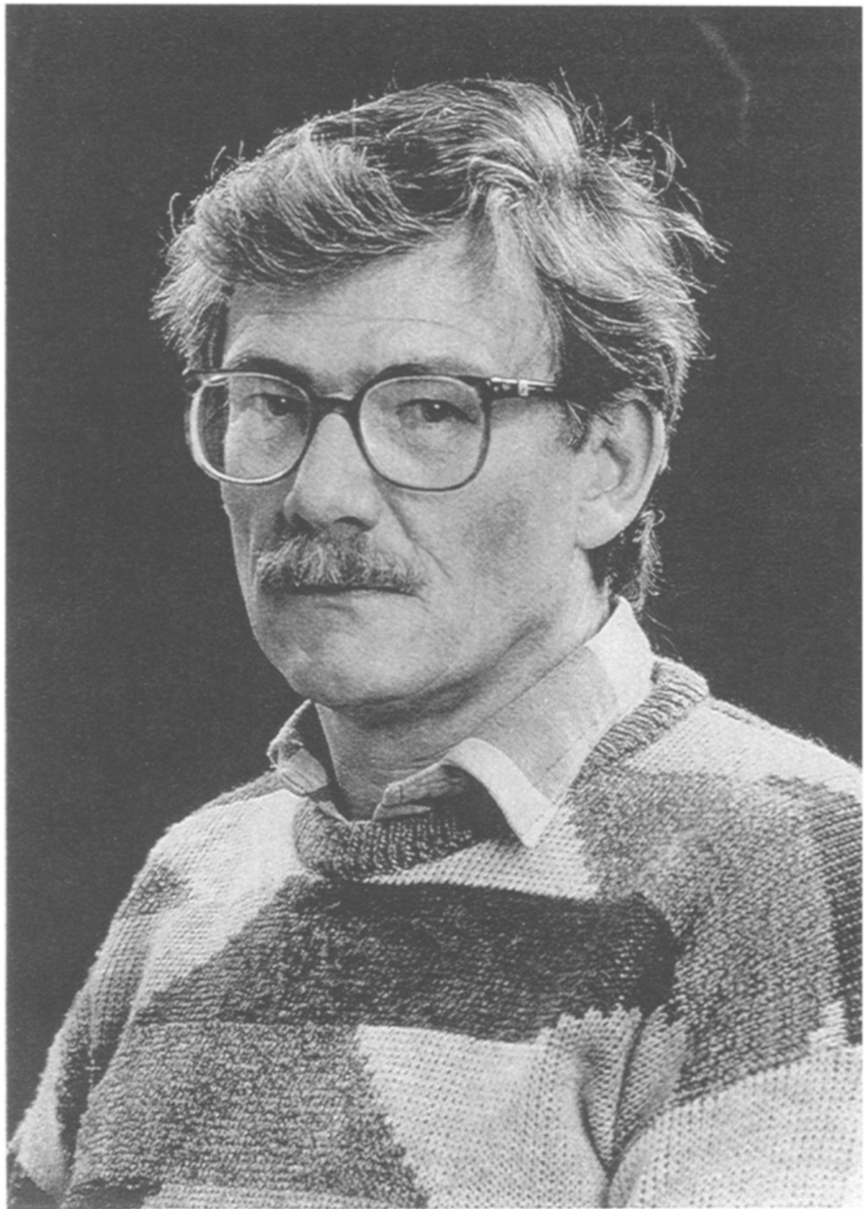

TECHNIQUES OF DESCRIPTION

Spoken and written discourse

A festschrift for Malcolm Coulthard

Edited by

John M.Sinclair, Michael Hoey and Gwyneth Fox

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To Dr Malcolm Coulthard, long-time colleague
and friend of the editors and contributors, this volume
is affectionately dedicated.

Gwyneth Fox
Michael Hoey
John M.Sinclair

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MALCOLM COULTHARD
A short appreciation

This book is presented to Dr Malcolm Coulthard on his fiftieth birthday, 14 January 1993.

His half-century includes a quarter century in Birmingham—almost exactly half his life. During that time he has helped in many ways to make and secure the reputation of Modern English Language in Birmingham.

Dr Coulthard's teaching attracts students from all over the world, and his straightforward presentations and adept summaries of arguments lead to very frequent invitations to give papers. His intellectual curiosity and insistence on clarity give him a very broad range of interests, and he is constantly opening up new lines of enquiry. Colleagues find him a powerful supporter of new developments, and an extremely constructive and expert critic of their work.

He began with a conventional English degree in Sheffield; trained as a teacher at the London Institute where Bernstein was in full flight; found Halliday at University College and took the two-year Postgraduate Diploma in General Linguistics. Then he came to Birmingham as a Faculty Research Fellow to do a Ph.D., which was and is a major evaluation of Bernstein. At that time Modern English Language in Birmingham consisted of the undersigned.

The late 1960s were years of doubt and distraction in linguistics as transformational grammar threatened to displace every other way of studying language. Educational research was strong and well funded, and Dr Coulthard's inclinations led him in that direction. Gradually, there emerged between us a joint plan to investigate the nature of classroom discourse.

This received government funding in 1970, a small team was formed, and a period of intensive research began, pulling in such scholars as Mike Stubbs and David Brazil. Dr Coulthard's early international reputation was made with this work, which continued through the 1970s, developing the descriptive apparatus and extending the range of spoken discourse to which

it was applied. He wrote a book, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis,* which went straight onto most language-oriented syllabuses and has stayed there ever since. It is a masterpiece of clarity, written at a time of rapid change.

Dr Coulthard's research interests developed into intonation, the reading process, written discourse, translation, language and gender, to name only the peaks. In the last few years he has begun to promote the new area of forensic linguistics—language and the law. Characteristically, his curiosity first led him into some problem areas, and he worked out new lines of argument. He then carefully laid the academic and professional foundations of this important field, and is building it up energetically. Meanwhile, he is acquiring hard experience in the witness box.

Intellectual courage and flexibility have marked and shaped his distinguished career. But many of his junior colleagues, advanced students and academic contacts worldwide have special cause to feel grateful to him. On behalf of the profession, he has built up and managed a range of publications of which he can be justly proud.

Over twenty titles have come out in English Language Research (ELR) Monographs and associated publications. Very few would have even been conceived without Dr Coulthard's creative dynamism, and they chart the development of Birmingham-related work over fifteen years. Budding authors have been encouraged and cajoled into their first publications, and collections that mark the state of a subject have been put together with flair and care.

Editing is a selfless task, and a considerable burden to a busy scholar. The community of students of language owes a great debt to Dr Coulthard.

He is a substantial linguist in the other sense—a skilled user of other languages. He has had periods of secondment to leading universities in France and Brazil, working happily with French and Portuguese. His latest book, *Linguagem e Sexo,* first appeared in Portuguese.

In recent years Dr Coulthard's family connections in Brazil have led to a series of projects, a growing exchange of staff and students and a range of academic collaborations stretching throughout the South American continent. Once again he has created opportunities for colleagues, this time on two continents. He has a strong sense of social order, and as an integral part of his everyday activity he moves to create an orderly arena round about him.

When I came to Birmingham I could not have wished for a better young colleague with whom to shape the early years. After we had worked closely in developing discourse analysis, the group of scholars grew and Dr Coulthard and I took up different priorities, increasing the overall range of teaching and research support. He has preferred to work modestly here rather than move to a top job somewhere else, and that has been Birmingham's gain and has contributed greatly to the stability of language work.

Since he has edited so much for us, my fellow editors and I decided todo

a bit of editing for him. We wanted to produce a book which would be an authoritative review of the ways texts are described, and which would attract papers from leading scholars all over the world. The response was most generous, and the book is a triumph for Dr Coulthard.

In adopting this policy, we were conscious that a large number of friends, colleagues and former students might be disappointed that they were not invited to participate. We could have produced a gargantuan collection, which would have been tribute indeed but could not have been properly published. We chose a small number of outstanding scholars, all of whom were delighted at the opportunity. We hope they can represent the community in offering our respect and gratitude to Dr Coulthard.

I know that Dr Coulthard will appreciate our final gesture. His publishing ventures have always been precarious financially, and unsubsidised. We have arranged with the publishers that royalties from sales of this book will fuel Dr Coulthard's future editing work.

John M.Sinclair

PUBLICATIONS OF MALCOLM COULTHARD

THESIS

1970 ‘An empirical linguistic investigation of restricted and elaborated codes’, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham.

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1972 (with J.M.Sinclair, I.J.Forsyth and M.C.Ashby) ‘The English used by teachers and pupils’, ELR mimeo, University of Birmingham.

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Rene Dirven, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

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1992 'The significance of matching relations in the analysis and translation of literary texts', in J.L.Meurer (ed.) *Text Analysis, Ilha do Desterro,* vol. 26.

1992 'Powerful evidence for the defence: an exercise in forensic discourse analysis', in J.Gibbons (ed.) *Language and the Law,* London: Longman.

1993 'Translation theory', in R.M.Coulthard (ed.) *Translation II, Ilha do Desterro,* vol. 27.

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Editor-in-chief and founder of ELR Monographs, University of Birmingham. Monographs so far published:

1975 D.C.Brazil, *Discourse Intonation.*
1978 D.C.Brazil, *Discourse Intonation II.*
1977 P.J.Roe, *Scientific Text.*
1977 R.D.Pearce, *Literary Texts.*
1979 R.M.Coulthard and D.C.Brazil, *Exchange Structure.*
1979 M.Hoey, *Signalling in Discourse.*
1981 F.Dali, *Speech in Narrative.*
1985 D.C.Brazil, *The Communicative Value of Intonation.*
1985 R.Mead, *Courtroom Discourse.*
1985 A.Tadros, *Prediction in Text.*
1986 R.M.Coulthard (ed.), *Talking about Text.*
1987 G.Francis, *Anaphoric Nouns.*
1987 R.M.Coulthard (ed.), *Discussing Discourse.*
1989 M.Phillips, *Lexical Structure of Text.*
1990 J.Sinclair, *The Structure of Teacher Talk.*
1990 M.Hewings (ed.), *Intonation in Discourse.*

INTRODUCTION

The authors represented in this book are united in their admiration of Malcolm Coulthard's contribution to language study. The range of his interests is reflected in his bibliography; the value of his contribution is discussed in a separate tribute by one of the editors. If, though, admiration had been all that united the contributors to this book, a sprawling and disparate collection would have been the likely result. Far from this being the case, this book is in the editors' view a satisfyingly homogeneous work. The reason is that all the contributors to it share certain assumptions about language study.

These assumptions are as follows. First, description has to be based on data; none of the chapters in this book relies on intuition as the sole source of evidence. Second, description has to be tested against data, which may take the form of a corpus or of a chosen text (or both). Third, description has to be based on replicable techniques; hence the title of this work. Fourth, any kind of description cannot be undertaken in splendid isolation from all other kinds; so grammatical description leads to lexical, lexical description leads to discoursal, discoursal to phonological and so on. Finally, description will often serve a purpose; descriptions are insightful tools and may result in people developing a new interpretation of a literary text, altering their way of teaching language, arguing for the innocence or guilt of a suspect or exposing discrimination in the way language reports the world. Unsurprisingly, all five assumptions also underlie Malcolm Coulthard's work.

Three chapters are concerned with ways of describing rather than with purposes of describing. In his chapter John Sinclair offers an ambitious way of talking about the structure of text which rejects many of the assumptions made about the relationship of cohesion and coherence. Redefining cohesion in such a way that it axiomatically creates coherence, he shows that it is possible to analyse an article 'dynamically', working on the premise that sentences either encapsulate the whole of the previous text or prospect the following sentence. The technique he describes is spelt out in such a way that it should be possible for readers to try it out for themselves.

It is less likely that readers will feel able to replicate the techniques reported by Michael Halliday and Zoë James in their chapter, since the research they report made full use of a corpus of 18 million words. What they are concerned with is the increasingly central question of how one tests a linguistic generalisation against the evidence of a corpus, which is by definition an accumulation of particulars. They describe all the stages involved in making the corpus serve their purpose, which was to test Michael Halliday's claim of many years' standing that grammatical systems are of two types: 'equi' systems, where either option is equally likely; and 'skew' systems, where one of the options is nine times more likely than the other. The claim is found to be supported with remarkable clarity; the chapter demonstrates both the difficulties and the rewards of statistical handling of corpora.

Although on an altogether smaller scale, the research reported in Michael Hoey's chapter also utilises corpus data in an attempt to relate data and description. What he is interested in doing is determining how and under what circumstances lexical items long associated with the signalling of discourse patterning (and, incidentally, associated with the function of 'encapsulation' in John Sinclair's terms) actually perform the function of signalling. Looking in particular at the lexical item 'reason', he finds that it only signals reason relations in certain syntactic frames.

Michael Hoey's chapter shows how difficult it is to separate lexical, syntactic and discoursal facts. Dave Willis's chapter faces this difficulty headlong and relates it to the problem of language teaching. He shows quite clearly the inadequacy of descriptions of basic grammatical patterns in language-teaching materials that do not take account of corpus evidence of the typical patterns of individual lexical items. Although the picture presented by a corpus is a complex one, he notes the possibility of developing methodologies that will allow the learner to acquire valuable knowledge of a language by looking at words in context.

While Dave Willis's chapter is designed to pose questions (and offer answers) for the teacher of English as a foreign language, Ron Carter's chapter has as its main function the raising of issues for the teacher of English in British schools. Reporting on the development of the Language in the National Curriculum materials, his chapter culminates in several pages of questions for both the teacher and the researcher, indicating the importance of linguistic description of all kinds for the language teacher and emphasising the intimate relationship that holds between description and practice.

One of the most obvious and most fruitful ways in which description impinges on practice is in the illumination that linguistic description can offer to the reading of literary texts, as Malcolm Coulthard shows in the final chapter of his *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis,* where he analyses interactions in *Othello;* conversely, the study of literary texts mayalter and improve our linguistic description. Tom Shippey's chapter offers an elegant example of this two-way traffic. Taking the apparently

unpromising data of reports of speech in Old English poetry, he shows how the application of Gricean and other principles allows a reader to make sense of certain features of speeches in Beowulf. Just as importantly, he shows that examination of the speeches of another culture and age casts a critical light on the adequacy of present descriptions. He therefore poses a new principle which he terms the Conflictive Principle to account for these and other data.

Sometimes the two-way traffic between description and practice can take a different form. Martin Montgomery's chapter is concerned with the neglected question of how character is linguistically realised. He notes the potential importance of Halliday's notion of transitivity for this purpose, since transitivity relations blend 'consideration of both role and event within a single framework of analysis'. In applying transitivity analysis to a short Hemingway story, he shows how it is possible to use it to shed light on the way that Hemingway delineates the central character of his story. He also shows how one can move from transitivity to a Greimas-style actantial framework of the narrative. In demonstrating that this is possible, he strengthens the case for having the notion of transitivity in the first place.

Henry Widdowson's chapter shows a similar awareness of the value of integrating different kinds of description. Concentrating, like Montgomery, on a relatively neglected aspect of narrative—in this case scene-setting—Widdowson talks in his chapter about the complex kinds of interaction that a text may presuppose and shows how a passage from a narrative may be the result of the intersection of several participant roles. He demonstrates the value of a dynamic syntactic analysis in clarifying why a scene may be understood in one way rather than another and makes use for this purpose of the notions of Sinclair's 'releasing' and 'arresting' syntactic ordering of phrases. Both this and the chapter by Martin Montgomery offer replicable techniques for the analysis of literary discourses.

Not all narrative can be said to be literary in intent or in the way that it is perceived by its receptors. An obvious example is spoken narrative (though Tom Shippey reminds us in his chapter of the oral origins of the complex telling of Beowulf). David Brazil's chapter is concerned with such narratives. Using a method of description of intonation in exchanges developed over many publications, several jointly with Malcolm Coulthard, he shows how an intonational analysis is not 'icing on the cake' of narrative description but an integral part of any attempt to determine how an oral narrator keeps and interacts with his/her audience. Again, readers are given enough information to enable them to apply Brazil's method to oral narratives of their own.

The distinction between spoken and written narratives is not, however,as clear as our previous comments might imply. Michael McCarthy's chapter draws attention to the presence in certain kinds of

written narrative of discourse markers characteristically associated with speech. These markers tell the listener or reader 'where the discourse is, where it is going, etc.'. Such markers highlight the interactivity of the text, a point made in different ways by several other of the authors of this book. Some kinds of text, McCarthy points out, show regularities of pattern in their use of these markers; he cites certain kinds of advertisement as examples. In common with a number of other contributors, McCarthy makes use of information derived from corpora; uniquely, though, he shows how such information can be supplemented by the use of informant testing. The techniques he describes could be extended into other kinds of genre study.

There is one kind of discourse where the line between the spoken and the written is particularly blurred, namely the statement as evidence, a kind of discourse in which Malcolm Coulthard has become increasingly interested in recent years. Apparently spoken, these discourses may nevertheless display evidence of having been written. In her chapter Gwyneth Fox shows that certain lexical and grammatical choices in statements purportedly dictated by suspects are associated with 'policespeak', a distinctive language used by policemen for reporting to courts. She shows how this little-studied variety of English is characterised amongst other things by distinctive collocations of familiar words, and notes that some words in 'policespeak' have quite different meanings from those recorded in recent dictionaries. Without underlining the point, she observes that the presence of characteristic features of this variety of English in the transcribed statements of witnesses gives rise to the suspicion that these statements are not pure transcriptions of the witnesses' speech.

Gwyneth Fox's chapter shows a conviction that linguistic analysis may change the world as well as describe it, a conviction also shared by Carmen Caldas-Coulthard. In her chapter Carmen Caldas-Coulthard provides compelling evidence for believing that the world of news reporting is male-dominated both in audience and authorship. The speech of women is shown to be marginalised and their role in news making trivialised. Carmen is another contributor who makes use of a corpus, in her case a specialised corpus comprising 2 million words of *The Times*. Her chapter shows the value of using on occasion a corpus of a more specific kind; it also points to the importance of moving on occasion beyond description, beyond practice even, to challenge.

Malcolm Coulthard's own career has been characterised by a desire to develop replicable descriptions of language and a desire to utilise those descriptions in a variety of practical ways, so it is not surprising, therefore, that these two priorities are reflected in the chapters of this book. Nor is it surprising that linguists who have admired the high standards that Malcolm Coulthard has set himself should themselves have produced chapters of anadmirably high standard. This introduction has done no

more than point to a few of the connections that can be made between the contributions of this volume, readers will find that they will make connections of their own. Read separately or together, they will be found to make a useful contribution to our understanding of modern techniques of linguistic description.

1

WRITTEN DISCOURSE STRUCTURE

John M.Sinclair

1 INTRODUCTION

This is a preliminary exploration of a new position on the structure of written text. It analyses a newspaper article by Randolph Quirk.

As a convenient starting point, let us assume that the text at any moment is seen as the sentence currently being interpreted. A reader is attending to one short stretch of the text at any time (and so, no doubt, is the writer when writing—at least the writer is responsible for making the text interpretable sentence by sentence).[1]

To Winter (1986)[2] structure is necessary because we cannot say everything at once. In any 'state of the text', then, we can expect guidance in the text to both what has gone before and what is yet to come. The sentence is regarded as the likeliest unit to carry the status of 'text of the moment'.

The relation between the state of the text and previous text is derived from an appreciation of the *interactive* quality of language. Language in use, whether written or spoken, is involved in the process of creating and sharing meaning between two participants. It therefore consists in part of features which organise the sharing of meaning, as well as features which create the meaning.

These features are usually inseparable. Each word, each intonation participates in both aspects of the organisation of an utterance. As an example, here is a sentence from a recent letter to me:

> We begin our fourth programme on 9 July.

As printed, out of context, it seems to be a simple piece of information. But on placing the sentence in context it can be seen as an integral component of a strategy of persuasion. The next sentence, the only other one in a brief paragraph, reads:

> Can we have an official response from you regarding these suggestions?

The implication is that my response should be quick and definite, and since their commitments increase heavily on 9 July, I should, if possible, complete our business before that date.

The juxtaposition of these two sentences in a paragraph, without an overt connection, invites us to relate them by postulating a meaning of the same nature as '*so*' though not identical to it. The absence of an explicit connection does not mean that the sentences are not connected in interpretation. We deduce, however, that provision for such a connection in the structure of each successive sentence is so important that, if it is not expressed, it is inferred.

The words and phrases which express connections between sentences are such as *so, therefore, on the contrary*. They are often called 'logical operators'. I would argue that they are part of the interactive apparatus of the language, progressively determining the status of a previous sentence in relation to the current one. In spoken English there are words and phrases which are clearly specialised towards expressing the interactive side of discourse meaning. These are the 'interactive signals' such as *well, ah, anyway, you see, after all, I mean*. The central tenet of the present argument—that a text is represented at any moment of interpretation by a single sentence—allows us to see that the logical operators and the interactive signals have essentially the same discourse function. One is associated with the speaker, but they both give coherence to the text and independence to the sentence. The similarity between them has been obscured by the strong physical presence of a written text, which is misleading since a text is actually interpreted bit by bit in a dynamic process.

1.1 Encapsulation

There is support in the details of text organisation for the view that each new sentence takes over the status of 'state of the text', and therefore that the previous sentence relinquishes that role. The support takes the form of a default hypothesis and the associated arguments.

The default hypothesis is that each new sentence encapsulates the previous one by an act of reference. By referring to the whole of the previous sentence, a new sentence uses it as part of the subject matter. This removes its discourse function, leaving only the meaning which it has created.

As a default hypothesis, this should be generally true and applicable and the analysis replicable. All cases where it is not true should be covered by explicit arguments. In a small proportion of cases we may accept that the encapsulation can be implied by the writer and reasonably inferred by the reader. If no such inference suggests itself, the text is interpreted as not coherent at this point. Texts are not expected to be totally explicitly coherent,

and individual judgements on doubtful instances are expected todiffer. The writing and reading of text is a human and not a mechanical activity.

Our hypothesis is that there is an underlying structure to discourse where each new sentence makes reference to the previous one, and encapsulates the previous sentence in an act of reference. It is a common discourse strategy for the discourse to refer to itself; where it is prominent and unexpected it is called *plane change* (Sinclair, 1981). This chapter argues that a less marked kind of self-reference is the basic coherence of text. If encapsulation were an absolute rule, and not just a default hypothesis, then the nature of text structure would be obvious. The current sentence would encapsulate the previous one, which in its turn had encapsulated its predecessor, and so on back to the beginning of the text. The current sentence would then be encapsulated in an act of reference in the next to come, and so on until the end of the text.

Any sentence, then, would be a precise manifestation of the whole text up to that point. Detail expressed in earlier states of the text would be recoverable through the encapsulations. The last sentence of a text would thus be a manifestation of the entire text, presented in an appropriate form for the discourse function which it was performing.

As a model of text structure, this is very attractive. It explains how texts can be organised and how their dynamism may be created and fuelled. It provides the basis for a powerful definition of coherence, and reduces cohesion to the identification of the act of reference only.

Other kinds of cohesion, referring to less than a sentence, are not regarded as textual in nature. We may clarify this point—for it is an important one—by suggesting that there are two quite different processes going under the name of cohesion. Failure to appreciate the distinction between them has hampered the development of models of text structure.

The first I would call ‘point-to-point’ cohesion, where, for example, a pronoun can be related back to a noun phrase earlier in the text, and can be said to ‘refer’ to it. This kind of pattern is clearly of frequent occurrence, and is the basis of most accounts of cohesion. It includes the rich field of lexical cohesion, where the recurrence of a word or phrase, or the occurrence of something reminiscent of a previous item, is noted. Each constituent of these patterns is less than one sentence long; normally a word or phrase, or at most a clause.

In contrast, the second process deals only with sentences or, occasionally, clause complexes, and it does much more than effect a tenuous connection between isolated constituents of sentences. It is the process of encapsulation, and it reclassifies a previous sentence by ‘demoting’ it into an element of the structure of the new sentence.

This kind of cohesion is clearly structural; the other is not so clearly structural. The model of text that I am putting forward has no place for retention of the actual words and phrases of a text so that such

connectionscould be established (though see Section 2.3 on Verbal echo below).

The question remains as to where in a model 'point-to-point' cohesion should be located. An argument which I shall develop elsewhere is that when the discourse function of a sentence is superseded by the next one, its linguistic properties are discarded, and only what it expresses is retained. It is no longer a linguistic entity, but a part of shared knowledge. If it contains words and phrases of 'point-to-point' reference, these are interpreted with reference to shared knowledge, not to previous text.

If, by a process of progressive encapsulation of one sentence by the next, each sentence in turn encapsulates all previous sentences, then there is no need to search for actual stretches of text as referents, antecedents and the like. Nor is it necessary to identify precisely what stretches of text are referred to in cases of vague or general backward reference. It is sufficient that at least the immediately preceding sentence is encapsulated, thus transferring to shared knowledge all the meaning it has created. Cohesive devices will aid the work of inferencing so that the latest sentence will be understood in relation to the growing meaning of the whole communication.

This kind of model applies with little adaptation to both spoken and written language, and so offers the basis of an integrated description (Sinclair, 1992a).

It is thus important to examine the relevance of this hypothesis, and consider the instances which falsify it.

I should like to refer in detail to a feature article by Randolph Quirk in *The European* of 1–3 June 1990 (see pp. 23–9). The sentences are printed in numbered sequences in Appendix 1.2, and Appendix 1.3 is a copy of the article so that the reader of this chapter can appreciate the layout and presentation of the text.[3]

At this point I wish to say that I had no strong reasons for choosing this passage. It is always difficult to explain why a particular text is chosen, and one feels like a conjuror at a children's party, claiming innocence before pulling rabbits out of hats. Suffice it to say that of the various texts that I had easy access to, this one was of a suitable length, in a genre that is not regarded as specialised, and very competently written. It seems suitable as a first test of this hypothesis: if the hypothesis fails, it is unlikely to be worth trying on other texts; if it holds, success will encourage further study.

2 CLASSIFICATION OF SENTENCES

There follows an analysis of the relationships between each sentence in the passage, the sentence before it and occasionally the sentence after it. First of all, the sentences which clearly and explicitly encapsulate their predecessors are listed in two groups according to the mechanism. 'Logical acts' show the

use of the logical connectors and associated mechanismssuch as ellipsis. The second group, 'deictic acts', is self-explanatory.

The next major category of coherence is prospection, and after that there is consideration given to verbal echoes and overlays of one sentence on another. Then I must turn to some problems, acts of selective reference, and doubtful or qualified assignments. A complete analysis is given in Appendix 1.1.

2.1 Internal acts of reference

It was noted above and in note 1 that the sentence is only provisionally taken as the likeliest unit of test patterning; in some cases a substantial portion of a sentence, such as a clause complex, may be interpreted as acting fairly independently in the text. There are five instances of such internal patterns of reference, which are noted as they arise, in sentences 3.2, 7.1, 10, 15.2 and 16.2.

Logical acts

These encapsulate the whole of the previous sentence, or the previous half of the same sentence. Numbering is by paragraph and sentence.

3.2b *and* is a logical act which refers to and encapsulates the first half of the sentence and combines with a deictic act—see Section 2.8.

4.1 *they should*. This is an example of ellipsis. The two words can be related to the whole of 3.2. In 3.2 *Those already…UK firms* names the referent of *they* and *must be prepared…self-study courses* names the referent of *should*.

5.2 *however* means 'notwithstanding a previously stated position'. The previously stated position (PSP for short) is 5.1.

5.3 *And yet,* we interpret as 'despite some PSP' which is last expressed in 5.2.

6.1 *by contrast*. A contrast has to be *with* something, and we interpret the two contrasting positions to be those at 5.3 and 6.1.

7.1 *rather* is a logical act which encapsulates the first half of the sentence; it is thus an internal act of reference. There is another act of reference in this half sentence; see Section 2.8.

8.2 *And* is a logical act with a meaning here like 'as a confirmatory particular' to a PSP, which is 8.1.

9.1 *The implications*. The meaning of this noun indicates ellipsis—the implications must be *of* something, that is, of a PSP, which is 8.3.

9.3 *also*. We interpret *also* as 'in addition to some PSP' which is last expressed in 9.2.

10 *therefore*. We interpret *therefore* as a conclusion from a PSP, which we find is 9.3.

10b *and* is an internal logical act which encapsulates the first half of the sentence. There is a deictic act in this structure as well—see Section 2.8.

11 *None the less,* we interpret *none the less* as 'in spite of a PSP' which we find is 10.

12.1 *So*. We interpret *so* as 'because of a PSP', which we find is 11.

12.1 *too*. We interpret *too* as 'in addition to some PSP' which we find is 11. Each of *so* and *too* can encapsulate independently (see Section 2.8).

12.2 *also*. We interpret *also* as 'in addition to a PSP', which is 12.1. Note that there is another encapsulation in this sentence; see Section 2.8.

12.4 *in fact,* we Interpret *in fact* as 'consistent with a PSP but reinforcing some aspect of it'. The PSP is 12.3.

13.3 *But,* we interpret *but* as 'notwithstanding a PSP', which is 13.2.

13.4 *And,* we interpret *and* as 'in addition to a PSP', which is 13.3. Note, however, that there is another encapsulation in this sentence; see Section 2.8.

14.1 *As a result,* we interpret this phrase as 'as the result of a PSP', which is 13.4.

14.2 *Yet,* we interpret this as 'in spite of a PSP', which is 14.2.

15.2 *To*. See the note at the end of this list.

16.3 *too*. We interpret *too* as 'to add urgency to a PSP', which is 16.2.

There is an interesting case in 15.2 *To quote*…I did not immediately see this as a logical act of reference, but it is certainly initial, and depends for its interpretation on the previous text. The quotation it introduces would have to be germane to the previous text. It might be glossed as meaning 'In order to support a PSP, I quote…', which shows that in this text it encapsulates 15.1. This usage is noted in Sinclair *et al.* (1987), *to* para. 19.6.

Deictic acts

These also encapsulate the whole of the previous sentence.

3.1 *things*. Deictic acts include lexical reference and repetition. Here the lexically weak word *things* is interpreted as referring to a PSP, namely the whole of 2.2.

3.2b *that* is an internal deictic acts which encapsulates the

previous half of the sentence. There is also a logical act here—see Section 2.8.

7.1 *This very obvious ethos*. This deictic act refers to the PSP which is the whole of 6.2. It is a complex act, which names the PSP as a 'very obvious ethos', and encapsulates it by reference.

10b *this* is a deictic act which encapsulates the first half of the sentence. It is internal, and is coupled with a logical act (see Section 2.8).

12.2 *This* is a deictic act which refers to the PSP of 12.1. Note that there is a logical act also in this sentence (see Section 2.8).

13.4 *this* is a deictic act which refers to the whole of 13.3. Note that it is combined with a logical act (see Section 2.8).

16.1 *this subject* is a deictic act which refers to a PSP which is the whole of 15.2, or at least the quoted part of it. It will be discussed further in Section 2.6.

2.2 First variation: prospection

So far we have shown that two-thirds (24 out of 36) of the non-initial sentences encapsulate the previous one wholly.

Of the remainder, a number show an alternative structure to that of retrospective encapsulation; this is *prospection*. Prospection occurs where the phrasing of a sentence leads the addressee to expect something specific in the next sentence.

Prospection is a major feature of text and discourse structure. Below the sentence it is found in a wide range of prefaces (see, for example, Tognini-Bonelli, 1992). It is the central organising principle of exchange structure in conversation (Sinclair, 1992b) and it is already identified as a structural element in written texts (Tadros, 1985).

Prospection takes precedence over retrospection quite naturally, because the precedence is built into the sequence of events. The prospective acts relevant to a sentence are made in the previous sentence, while its retrospective features are not apparent until the sentence itself has occurred.

The act of prospection means that the interactive force of a sentence extends to the end of the sentence following. Indeed, it has been pointed out for many years that in one of the most obvious prospections in the spoken language, the question, the next utterance is interpreted in advance. The question sets the parameters with which the next utterance is evaluated; its relevance is measured against the presumption of a perfectly fitting answer.

In these circumstances, a sentence cannot simultaneously fulfil a prospection and encapsulate the utterance that makes the prospection. The former requires maintenance of the discourse function of the previous

utterance, and the latter requires the cancellation of that discourse function.

In the spoken language this is fairly obvious operationally. The interactive quality of the prospecting sentence is of necessity retained throughout the next sentence. Otherwise it is not easy to see how a participant can become aware that a prospection has been adequately dealt with.

One kind of prospection is the introduction of quoted speech, usually through an *attribution*.

4.2 *his message* is a prospective deictic act which is satisfied by 5.1.

If a quote is more than a sentence long, as in this case, the attribution is maintained as a basis of interpretation, but textually we return to the same rules as before after the first sentence, each new sentence relating to at least one of its neighbours.

4.2 is the only prospective attribution in this passage that involves more than one sentence. Towards the end there are two candidates for consideration as internal prospection:

15.2 *To quote The Prince of Wales again:* prospects the quotation that follows, within the sentence.
16.2 *the statement;* also *the exhortation:* each prospects a following quotation.

Another kind of prospection is approximately what Tadros (1985) calls *advance labelling*. It rests on the addressee interpreting a word or phrase as something to be elucidated in the following sentence.

9.1 gives a fairly clear example. *The implications* are about to be stated, and indeed they are, beginning with 9.2.
12.2 *flexible response* is elucidated in the whole of 12.3.
13.1 *The notion of perceived disadvantage* is elucidated in the whole of 13.2.

There must be a margin of variation in interpretation here, and for the analyst a risk of arguing from hindsight. In addition to the above, I assume that in a normal reading of a passage such prospections as the following would occur. With *monoglot* in 2.1, it seems to me that the writer is now committed to developing the notion 'monoglot' in the next sentence, as he does. The word appears prominently in 1, and 2.1 disentangles it from cuisine and myths, leaving nothing else to talk about.

Another is *competitive* in 7.2, which to me prospects 8.1 fairly clearly. 'Competitive' has been in the air since *cannot afford to* in 3.1, and now has final position in the sentence and paragraph.

In some cases a sentence introduces a new topic and is thus clearly a

preliminary to the next. That is to say, if a reader stops at the prospecting sentence he/she can predict with fair confidence that the following sentence will pick up the new topic and develop it.

There are two places in the text where the subject matter abruptly changes, and the lack of preparation for the new subject indicates that there is a textual device at work. If we can distinguish between the overall topic and the immediate subject matter, then this device changes only the subject matter. The approach to the topic does not change.[4] For example, 4.1 introduces *The Prince of Wales* as the subject of the new sentence, and there has been no hint (beyond the editor's introduction) that Prince Charles might be referred to. The sentence stands out as a considerable reorientation of the text, and moves from a general group, *those who think* ..., to an individual. The sentence is equative and performs the function of selecting the Prince of Wales as a new topic, and relating him to the preceding text. It is almost certain that the following sentence will feature the Prince of Wales. 4.1 is thus classified as prospective.

This pattern occurs again more clearly in paragraph 16. In 16.1, *a large advertisement*...is now a new topic, and so the pronoun *it* in 16.2 is prospected by 16.1.

There is a very difficult case in 7.1, in which *the precept* can be interpreted as a prospection of 7.2. However, this interpretation may not be generally agreed, and the case will be discussed in Section 2.7.

There is a point of some potential importance arising from the analysis of the two clear cases, those of 4.1, 4.2 and 16.1, 16.2. We identify the first sentence in each case as performing the function of introducing a new topic. This is done without reference to the second sentence or any subsequent one; it is done by interpreting the first sentence with reference to the state of the text. 4.1 and 16.1 thus each contain a prospective act.

The second sentence in each case is interpreted as developing the new topic, and so fulfils the prospection. This forward-facing analysis contrasts with the direction of pronominal reference, where traditionally it would be said that the pronouns *he* in 4.2 and *it* in 16.2 refer to *The Prince of Wales* (4.1) and *a large advertisement* (16.1) respectively—a backward-facing analysis.

The claim in this chapter is that the forward-facing, or prospective, analysis is more relevant to the explication of discourse. It is hierarchical, explaining the sentence connection with reference to a higher-order structure of topic introduction and development (see Hazadiah 1991). The retrospective analysis is less powerful because it concerns merely subsentences (and often subclause elements). It is also of doubtful relevance because of our assumption that in the normal reading process the actual language of earlier sentences is not available for acts of reference.

There are two points of clarification to be made about prospection, before we leave it.

1 It was stated above that a prospection refers forward to the next sentence. The possibility arises that one or more sentences may intervene, without any overt indication of their intervention.

When a substantial amount of text from different sources has been described in the terms of this chapter, it will be possible to check how contiguous must be the sentences involved in a prospection. Certainly, in the spoken language, if a prospection is interrupted it must normally be reactivated by a specific signal, as we find in side sequences (Jefferson, 1972) and insertion sequences (Schegloff, 1972). Perhaps a similar mechanism is to be found in written discourse.

It would be consistent with the overall description of discourse to expect that a prospection must be attended to in the very next sentence. Prospections are not retained indefinitely, until attended to, and if their fulfilment is to be postponed, this will probably have an effect on the structure.

2 One difference between spoken and written language is that it is mandatory in coherent written discourse that prospections are fulfilled. In conversation it is fairly common for the discourse to move its focus in such a way that a prospection is just ignored, because neither participant ensures its fulfilment.

This major difference may well affect point 1 above, because if the fulfilment *must* occur in the written language, then no doubt it can be tactically delayed.

2.3 First exception: verbal echo

In order to make the case against the textual relevance of 'point-to-point' cohesion, I may well have slightly overstated it. It is hardly likely that a reader specifically erases each successive sentence (unless it prospects) before beginning to read the next one. More likely, the process of reading is much more untidy. What is more, there is plenty of evidence in poetry, advertising, oratory and verbal humour to refute the idea of complete textual erasure. There are different kinds of memories, some of which seem to operate independently of the necessities of the reading process. All sorts of stylistic features like rhyme and antithesis depend on comparing the present state of the actual text with a previous one.

This point is not a total reversal of my original position. I believe that, when reviewed in the light of this chapter, a great deal more prospection will be acknowledged than hitherto. We have not been encouraged to stress the directional element in text, and so the prospective quality of, for example, poetic form, has not been emphasised. Also the dual nature of poetry reading, made clear by Fish (1970), suggests that not all genres conform to a standard set of reading conventions.

However, to accommodate any doubts about the availability of previous text, it is perhaps more accurate to suggest that the reader's attention shifts

to the textual reality of the new sentence and relates that to the state of shared knowledge which has been created by the text so far. Awareness of previous words and phrases will die away sharply, though the traces, especially of something striking and memorable, may be retained with sufficient clarity to be re-activated.

There is some evidence in spoken language that speakers indicate co-operation and convergence by re-using each others's actual words. In the example below, each country named is repeated by the next speaker. No new information is provided but the participants indicate their co-operative intent.

M: …North America, that's right.
P: North America, we were right. Holland, you were right about that.
M: Holland, right. Thailand, oh good.
P: Thailand, good. Oh we know something then. Greece, yes.
M: Greece…

(data from COBUILD)

In the next example, the patient keeps using the word *heart,* which the doctor replaces by *chest,* to indicate that he does not share the patient's view of the topic, although he does not challenge the veracity of the patient's story.

D: And what's been the matter recently.
P: Well I've er pains around the heart.
D: Pains in your chest then.
P: Yeah round the heart.
D: Whereabouts in your chest.
P: On the heart side, yeah.

There is one candidate for verbal echo in our text: 13.1, where *perceived disadvantage* seems inescapably to recall *perceiving…disadvantage* in the previous two lines, ending 12.4. It cannot be considered an encapsulation because it only refers to one small part of the sentence, and indeed, it shifts the topic by picking up what appears to be unimportant in 12.4.

The effect of this verbal echo on the coherence of the text is to change the topic while maintaining superficial cohesion. Paragraph 11 is about the differing status of languages, and paragraph 12 is about the problems this inequality may create.

2.4 Second exception: overlay

Sometimes there is no obvious act of reference in a sentence with respect to the one before it, and yet the two appear to be closely connected—in fact, they are often almost paraphrases of each other. In such cases the new sentence takes the place of the old. In terms of the structure of the text, the new sentence can be

seen as similar to encapsulation, in that it replaces its predecessor. To see two sentences as virtual paraphrases of each other is a complex act of interpretation, and not something that can always be reliably assessed. Perhaps there is an underlying default structure, so that we expect from experience that a simple juxtaposition of sentences is most likely to signal an overlay. The new sentence has a new orientation, which can be discovered by noting the way it varies from the old. For example, 2.1 closely follows the phrasing of paragraph 1. Anthony Burgess and his novel disappear, and also the complex of myths. The word *insular* is qualified by *less, cuisine* is demoted to parentheses, *monoglot,* is heavily emphasised by *disastrously* and by its final position in the sentence.

The new sentence performs the function of focussing on *monoglot,* whereas the original sentence was more diffuse. (Hence the interpretation that *monoglot* is a prospection for 2.2.)

6.2 is a rephrasing of 6.1. The meaning is couched as a generalisation in 6.1, and as two generalised instances in 6.2. It should be noted that 6.2 is hardly less general than 6.1; the instances do not signal a movement from general to particular; it is just another way of expressing the generality.

8.3 is an interesting case. It rephrases 8.2 quite carefully but focusses on the Japanese. Consider the parallels

The Japanese	
use western languages	language skills
not merely	not just
to market their goods	for the sales force
but	but
to improve their products	research and development
	new ideas and processes
by studying	so that they can learn
those of their rivals	to keep in touch with
	trends in other countries

Here our interpretation of the new focus depends on understanding the significance of ‘The Japanese’, perhaps by associating *The Japanese* with *powerful rivals* in 8.1. This inference turns an otherwise innocuous piece of information into a menace, and strengthens the argument of 8.2.

It is inaccurate and simplistic to see 8.3 as a particular case of 8.2 or 8.1. ‘The Japanese’ are not identified with *businesses* in 8.1 nor with *sales force, middle management, personnel…*in 8.2, but specifically with *powerful rivals*. The parallels shown in comparing 8.3 and 8.2 above concern the similarity of the propositions, not the identity of referents.

There is one other case, of doubtful clarity: 15.1 and both 14.1 and 14.2. 14.2 is included because its expression of complacency is reflected in *At long last* (15.1).

15.1	14.1, 14.2
although English is the language most widely used in international trade	it is precisely the native speakers...English
it should not be automatically assumed by native English speakers	These are the very people... complacent
to be the most satisfactory choice for negotiation with clients	Who have to be...most sensitive about the choice of language in negotiation

The Germans drop out, and so does assiduity in foreign-language training, though the early phrases of 15.1—UK *businesses are waking up to the realisation*—offer a dim comparison.

I think we may say that 15.1 covers largely the same ground as paragraph 14, and may be classified as overlay.

It should be noted that in suggesting a similarity of meaning between adjacent sentences, there is little or no role played by the actual words and phrases, or their position and ordering. This overlaying is thus not claimed to be textual. The comparative layout above is intended to show only the correspondence of meaning. Instead, I suggest that the first of each pair has been 'detextualised', in that its meaning has been transferred to an area of shared knowledge of the participants, and as the new sentence is understood and interpreted, the repetition of meaning becomes obvious, though not textually dependent.

In this way overlaying can be distinguished from verbal echoing, which is specifically textual. No doubt we shall come across mixed and doubtful cases—and I have returned many times to consider the first two sentences in our text, because of the extent of verbal repetition. But in the present state of the model I would like to keep them distinct.

2.5 Coherence

At this point, we have assigned each sentence in the specimen text except 3.2 to a category which concerns its relation with the sentence that has occurred before it. It makes an act of reference, or it fulfils a prospection, or it echoes or overlays the previous sentence.

Most of the assignments have been fairly straightforward, involving the whole of the previous sentence. Contentious cases centre on the following:

1 acts of selective reference, where less than a sentence is encapsulated;
2 qualified links, which are not clear for one reason or another.

There are two other matters to be cleared up.

3 Some sentences participate in more than one act of reference. Some of these are closely linked, some apparently independent of each other.
4 In particular, we have identified a number of internal acts of reference, which may suggest that we revise the original assumption that the orthographic sentence is the best minimal unit for text structure. In the text-order analysis, the sentences we choose to divide are those whose two parts behave as two separate sentences in terms of this analysis. This is a circular argument, but a satisfying one nevertheless. That is, we do not make arbitrary or intuitive divisions of sentences.

Let us now explore the notion of *coherence*. A text can be said to be coherent when each successive sentence can be assigned wholly and without difficulty to one of the relationships that have been illustrated in this chapter so far. It may not be necessary, however, for a text to show coherence consistently, and a reader's impression of our specimen text might well be of perfectly acceptable coherence although there are doubtful points in the analysis. We assume that all addressees expect texts to be coherent, and actively search for coherence in difficult text. But if a given text were found to consist of a string of sentences which did not show these relationships, we may predict that the coherence would be difficult to appreciate.

This line of argument also suggests that there is little difference between cohesion and coherence. Our initial hypothesis picks out those cohesive patterns which concern a whole sentence, and rejects all the others (which will be dealt with on another occasion, but which are held to be non-significant in text structure). The sentence-size cohesive patterns turn out to be the elements of coherence.

It would be rash to claim that the sentence connections described in this chapter are all and only the matter of coherence, and that a text is guaranteed to be coherent if it follows the rules. But it is certainly claimed that an understanding of the nature of text as presented here, and operational skills developed from it, will be of advantage in comprehension and composition.

2.6 Third exception: acts of selective reference

In the previous discussion, two sentences were noted as containing reference to only part of the preceding sentence; and there was no prospection in the preceding sentence to warrant such selection (as there is in 4.1 in relation to 4.2 and 16.1 in relation to 16.2). These are 13.1 and 16.1 (in relation to 15.2).

In 13.1, a nominalisation clearly picks up the phrasing of 12.4. What seems to be almost an afterthought in 12.4 becomes the 'topic sentence' for the next four paragraphs (though note that *disadvantage* in 15.2 is another view of the matter). This is the clearest case in the passage of a change of topic brought about by a cohesive reference to a minor part of the preceding sentence.

In 16.1 the deictic phrase *on this subject* refers to 15.2, but only to the second part of it. However, it was suggested above that 15.1 is merely an introductory preface to 15.2, and in such a case the sentence (paragraph 15 in this case) may safely be divided into two linear units. With this reallocation, the act of selective reference disappears.

There is one other case which deserves comment in this section. 8.2 repeats in inverted commas *'every aspect',* which is a phrase from the preceding sentence. The encapsulation is already achieved, if weakly, with the first word in the sentence, *And*. The change of topic, then, has a similar effect to 13.1, in that it picks out what was a minor element of 8.1. The verbal echo here is at its most explicit, being an actual quotation, in inverted commas.

2.7 Qualified assignments

Many of the assignments that have been made depend on my personal interpretation of the text. I am more confident of some than of others, and in a few cases I feel it is necessary to express doubt about the clarity of the relationship I perceive.

This is not a critical comment on the author, his text or the analyst, but a recognition that creation and perception of text structure is not exact or fully determined, but is subject to the process of interpretation.

Clearly, there is a broad band of variation possible in texts between demonstrable incoherence and overexplicitness. There is also variation across a single text, where the quality of the coherence may not be even. Peaks and troughs may alternate in various patterns, still to be described.

Linguistic description at this point comes into contact with prescription and critical opinion. Standards of coherence may be expected in a society for various types of text, and the most seemingly objective description may have inescapable prescriptive implications.

All that is offered here is a review of those assignments about which there may be reservations. There are five of them, out of thirty-six non-initial sentences, which does not seem to be a proportion that is likely to disturb the overall coherence of the article.

The coherence is less than clear in structural terms at 3.2. The message of 3.2 is relevant at that point, and there are indications of an urgent call to change. But 3.2 is not clearly prospected, nor does it encapsulate its predecessor, nor is there a plausible case for stylistic rephrasing.

As a general rule in interpretation, in the absence of a clear indication we reverse the argument and ask 'what is the kind of relationship that, using all the powers of inference available, you would assume in this case?' My answer to this question is that 3.2 poses the contrary to 3.1—a logical act like 'on the contrary' or 'instead' would fit with my interpretation.

Hence I propose to reassign 3.1 to logical acts, but with a caution that the act is inferred and not expressed.

We turn to 7.2, which is involved in two qualified assignments. The problem lies in identifying what is meant by *the precept* in 7.1. If it means, approximately, the message of 7.2 then this sentence is a fulfilment of the advance labelling of 7.1. If it means something else—like the message of 6.1 or earlier exhortations like 3.2—then the recovery of coherence will have to be through some acts of inference. And the word *rather* in 7.1 suggests a contrast with 6. The doubt about the meaning of *the precept* makes the text slightly incoherent at this point. My preference is for the advance-labelling interpretation because 8.1 remains more general rather than specifically about language learning.

Doubts about the coherence of the text around this point continue with the prospective quality of *competitive* in 7.2, introducing 8.1, and having to survive a paragraph break.

There may be disagreement about how far 15.1 is a rephrasing of 14, but the case has been put and analytic readers must judge for themselves.

At present there are no standards for comparison about the levels of tolerance that are acceptable in cases of doubt. The best an analyst can do is to have clear criteria and make firm assignments and be precise about areas of uncertainty. It is not anticipated that this kind of analysis will lead to exactly repeatable results, since human beings must retain a margin of individuality, even at their most conformist. To differ about the coherence of a text is entirely justified, and the role of the analytical framework is to enable people to understand the nature of the difference.

2.8 Double acts of reference

In the following sentences, two acts of reference were noted:

12.1 *So* (logical act)...*too* (logical act)
12.2 *This* (deictic act)...*also* (logical act)
13.4 *And* (logical act) *this* (deictic act)

In the cases of 12.1 and 12.2 the two acts seem to be independent. The word *also* in 12.2 indicates that *flexible response* has to be retrieved from 10; as a logical act it is not strictly necessary in the syntax, but locally supportive. In the case of 13.4 the two acts seem to be closely coupled, although they contribute separate meanings: the *And* gives the meaning of concluding a section of the text.

A double act of reference is also to be found internally in 3.2 and 10.

3.2 *and* (logical act) *that* (deictic act)
10 *and* (logical act) *this* (deictic act)

These are similar in most respects to 13.4, except that the meaning of the *and* is different. A concluding *And* needs to start a sentence or at least follow a colon or semi-colon; in 3.2 and 10 it has the status of introducing an appendage, following a dash or comma.[5]

3 CONCLUSION

The hypothesis about coherence stands up fairly well to detailed examination. The sentence is usually adequate as a surface indicator of a coherence unit; in the cases where it is not so, there are explicit acts of either (a) encapsulation of the first part of the sentence by the second or (b) prospection of the second by the first.

The principal type of coherence is through encapsulation. It is so well established that in cases where there is no explicit link between sentences the default interpretation is encapsulation. The regularity of this mechanism lends support to the view that each successive sentence has a kind of communicative autonomy. It does not need to have elaborate connections with components of sentences before and after; these so-called 'cohesive' links are only relevant in the occasional instances of verbal echo. A text does not consist of a string of sentences which are intricately interconnected, but of a series of sentence-length texts, each of which is a total update of the one before. In addition to encapsulating the preceding text, a sentence can make a prospection about the next sentence, thus establishing a need for the next sentence to fulfil the prospection if coherence is to be maintained. The sentence fulfilling the prospection does not encapsulate the prospecting sentence.

The 36 non-initial sentences and the four internal acts of reference total 40 occasions on which a coherence choice is made in this passage. Clear cases of encapsulation join 34 of the 41 coherence units; there are two verbal echoes, one of which, in the absence of any other signal, directs the discourse. There are four overlays. One encapsulation, in addition, is allocated by default, and there are three other doubtful cases, as Section 2.6 on selective references shows. Five encapsulations are doubly marked. There are ten cases of prospection.

There is a basis here for further study of different styles of writing, and for the study of similar phenomena in the spoken language; it is not unlikely that coherence is a common property of both modes of language, realised with some superficial differences. The main difference of the spoken language is that texts are constructed by more than one individual. Both encapsulations and prospection were first seen to be important in the study of the spoken

language. It is natural that a new speaker constructs each contribution as an independent reaction to the state of the discourse, unless something specific is prospected.

It was not so clear, however, given the preoccupation of analysts with point-to-point cohesion, that similar priorities might be worth establishing for the written language, but for this sample text the analysis is simplifying, revealing and could be intuitively satisfying to many users.

APPENDIX 1.1

Sentence		*Schedule of coherence*	
number	*Type*	*Relates to*	*Subtypes*
1			
2.1	overlay	1	
	prospection	2.2	topic selection
2.2	prospected	2.1	
3.1	encapsulation	2.2	deictic: lexical
3.2a	encapsulation	3.1	inferred qualified
3.2b	encapsulation	3.2a	logical and deictic, double internal
4.1	encapsulation	3.2	logical: ellipsis
	prospection	4.2	topic selection
4.2	prospected	4.1	
	prospection	5.1	attribution
5.1	prospected	4.2	
5.2	encapsulation	5.1	logical
5.3	encapsulation	5.2	logical
6.1	encapsulation	5.3	logical
6.2	overlay	6.1	
7.1a	encapsulation	6.2	deictic: including naming
7.1b	encapsulation	7.1a	logical internal
	prospection	7.2	topic selection
7.2	prospected	7.1b	qualified
	prospection	8.1	topic selection qualified
8.1	prospected	7.2	
8.2	verbal echo	8.1	selective
	encapsulation	8.1	logical
8.3	overlay	8.2	
9.1	encapsulation	8.3	logical: ellipsis
	prospection	9.2	advance labelling
9.2	prospected	9.1	
9.3	encapsulation	9.2	logical
10a	encapsulation	9.3	logical
10b	encapsulation	10a	logical deictic, double internal
11	encapsulation	10	logical
12.1	encapsulation	11	logical
12.2	encapsulation	12.1	logical deictic, double
	prospection	12.2	advance labelling

Sentence number	*Type*	*Schedule of coherence* *Relates to*	*Subtypes*
12.3	prospected	12.2	
12.4	encapsulation	12.3	logical
13.1	verbal echo	12.4	selective
	prospection	13.2	advance labelling
13.2	prospected	13.1	
13.3	encapsulation	13.2	logical
13.4	encapsulation	13.3	logical deictic, double
14.1	encapsulation	13.4	logical
14.2	encapsulation	14.1	logical
15.1	overlay	14	qualified
15.2a	encapsulation	15.1	logical
	prospection	15.2b	attribution material
15.2b	prospected	15.2a	
16.1	encapsulation	15.2	deictic: selective
16.2a	prospected	16.1	
	prospection	16.2b	attribution
16.2b	prospected	16.2a	internal
16.3	encapsulation	16.2	logical

APPENDIX 1.2

British must get their tongues around 1992

1 THERE is a character in an Anthony Burgess novel who reflects sadly on the typical “monoglot Englishman” as being “tied to one tongue as to one cuisine, and one insular complex of myths”.

2.1 The British have become less insular in some respects (cuisine is one of them) but they are still disas-
2.2 trously monoglot. This is the first generation in history to delude itself into thinking that because one particular language, English, seems to be very widely understood, no other language need be learned.

3.1 The foreign language requirement in the UK’s National Curriculum will help to change things, but the

British cannot afford to tread water until its products have fed through
3.2 the system. Those already employed in UK firms must be prepared to learn languages—and that means in-service training and the energetic use of self-study courses.

4.1 The Prince of Wales is among those who think it is high time they
4.2 should. Last week he addressed British industrialists, and his message was typically forthright:

5.1 "In two years' time, the United Kingdom will find itself part of a single market and, in effect, a single population of 320 million people, 82 per cent of whom do not have
5.2 English as their mother tongue. To all of these people, however, British firms will wish to sell their goods; with all of them, British people will wish—and need—to communicate.
5.3 And yet, how often do we see British commercial representatives at trade fairs abroad hard put to communicate with their potential customers because they speak no language other than English?"

6.1 Successful businesses, by contrast, have always been sensitive to the need to respect the language capabilities and preferences of their
6.2 customers. A Finnish manufacturer would not dream of using Finnish to market a product in Germany or France, nor would a Spanish firm rely on Spanish to attract customers in Italy or Sweden.

7.1 This very obvious ethos is not going to change with 1992: rather, the importance of the precept will
7.2 be sharply enhanced. The single market will make trading conditions even more competitive.

8.1 As the rewards for enterprise increase, so businesses will have to refine every aspect of their work to match the high professionalism of 8.2 powerful rivals. And “every aspect” most certainly includes language skills—not just for the sales force, but for middle management to keep in touch with trends in other countries, and for personnel involved in research and development so that they can learn as rapidly and accurately as possible of new ideas and 8.3 processes. The Japanese use Western languages not merely to market their goods, but to improve their products by studying those of their rivals.

9.1 The implications are daunting. 9.2 Not merely must a business have personnel with skills in several different languages, but the particular languages and the degree of skill may vary from person to person according to his or her job within the busi- 9.3 ness. They may also vary from decade to decade as new markets open up in different countries.

10 Clearly, therefore, businesses need to develop a strategy of “flexible response” to language requirements, and this means a workforce that includes an adequate proportion with language-learning aptitude, and the willingness, as well as the ability, to embark on in-service language training.

11 None the less, even the largest and most enterprising firms must recognise that there are far too many languages in the world (a couple of dozen in Europe alone) for every language to receive equal treatment.

12.1 So we must recognise, too, that—
to paraphrase the English author,
George Orwell—some languages are
12.2 more equal than others. This is
where flexible response also comes
12.3 in. It is natural for two parties, a
Finnish business person and one
from Portugal, say, to explore what
language they have in common and
then use it (Spanish, perhaps, or
French, or English) in their negotia-
12.4 tions. Within Europe, in fact, pro-
vided a firm has good facility in
three or four languages, it is usually
easy to agree on a common lan-
guage for a given discussion with
neither party perceiving itself to be
at a disadvantage.

13.1 The notion of perceived disadvan-
13.2 tage is very important. The use of
German in negotiation between a
Stuttgart firm and a Copenhagen
firm, may be efficient and perfectly
logical where the Danes concerned
13.3 are fluent in German. But, perhaps
without the Germans noticing, the
Danes may well feel that they are on
less than a comfortable equal foot-
ing and may harbour some silent
13.4 resentment. And this, of course, can
hardly make for the most satis-
factory outcome on either side!

14.1 As a result, it is precisely the
native speakers of the "major" lan-
guages, such as German and
English, who have to be most assid-
uous in foreign language training
and most sensitive about the choice
14.2 of language in negotiation. Yet these
are the very people who are most
liable to be complacent.

15.1 At long last, UK businesses are
waking up to the realisation that,
although English is the language

most widely used in international trade, it should not be automatically assumed by native English speakers to be the most satisfactory choice
15.2 for negotiation with clients. To quote the Prince of Wales again: "I see a real danger that, by putting itself at a competitive disadvantage in linguistic skills, British business will find itself left on the touchline as others challenge for Europe's industrial supremacy."

16.1 National newspapers in the UK carried a large advertisement from the British Department of Trade and
16.2 Industry on this subject in March. It included the statement *"En el mercado unico todo el mundo habla varios idiomas"* with the exhortation "to make language training a vital part of your Single Market busi-
16.3 ness plan." About time too!

APPENDIX 1.3

THE EUROPEAN-Weekend June 1–3, 1990

British must get their tongues around 1992

Professor Sir Randolph Quirk of the Department of English Language and Literature at University College, London

Prince Charles' warnings to his monoglot countrymen are taken up by **Professor Sir Randolph Quirk**

THERE is a character in an Anthony Burgess novel who reflects sadly on the typical "monoglot Englishman" as being "tied to one tongue as to one cuisine, and one insular complex of myths".

The British have become less insular in some respects (cuisine is one of them) but they are still disastrously monoglot. This is the first generation in history to delude itself into thinking that because one particular language, English, seems to be very widely understood, no other language need be learned.

The foreign language requirement in the UK's National Curriculum will help to change things, but the British cannot afford to tread water until its products have fed through the system. Those already employed in UK firms must be prepared to learn languages – and that means in-service training and the energetic use of self-study courses.

The Prince of Wales is among those who think it is high time they should. Last week he addressed British industrialists, and his message was typically forthright:

"In two years' time, the United Kingdom will find itself part of a single market and, in effect, a single population of 320 million people, 82 per cent of whom do not have English as their mother tongue. To all of these people, however, British firms will wish to sell their goods; with all of them, British people will wish – and need – to communicate. And yet, how often do we see British commercial representatives at trade fairs abroad hard put to communicate with their potential customers because they speak no language other than English?"

Successful businesses, by contrast, have always been sensitive to the need to respect the language capabilities and preferences of their customers. A Finnish manufacturer would not dream of using Finnish to market a product in Germany or France, nor would a Spanish firm rely on Spanish to attract customers in Italy or Sweden.

This very obvious ethos is not going to change with 1992: rather, the importance of the precept will be sharply enhanced. The single market will make trading conditions even more competitive.

As the rewards for enterprise increase, so businesses will have to refine every aspect of their work to match the high professionalism of powerful rivals. And "every aspect" most certainly includes language skills – not just for the sales force, but for middle management to keep in touch with trends in other countries, and for personnel involved in research and development so that they can learn as rapidly and accurately as possible of new ideas and processes. The Japanese use Western languages not merely to market their goods, but to improve their products by studying those of their rivals.

The implications are daunting. Not merely must a business have personnel with skills in several different languages, but the particular languages and the degree of skill may vary from person to person according to his or her job within the business. They may also vary from decade to decade as new markets open up in different countries.

Clearly, therefore, businesses need to develop a strategy of "flexible response" to language requirements, and this means a workforce that includes an adequate proportion with language-learning aptitude, and the willingness, as well as the ability, to embark on in-service language training.

None the less, even the largest and most enterprising firms must recognise that there are far too many languages in the world (a couple of dozen in Europe alone) for every language to receive equal treatment.

So we must recognise, too, that – to paraphrase the English author, George Orwell – some languages are more equal than others. This is where flexible response also comes in. It is natural for two parties, a Finnish business person and one from Portugal, say, to explore what language they have in common and then use it (Spanish, perhaps, or French, or English) in their negotiations. Within Europe, in fact, provided a firm has good facility in three or four languages, it is usually easy to agree on a common language for a given discussion with neither party perceiving itself to be at a disadvantage.

The notion of perceived disadvantage is very important. The use of German in negotiation between a Stuttgart firm and a Copenhagen firm may be efficient and perfectly logical where the Danes concerned are fluent in German. But, perhaps without the Germans noticing, the Danes may well feel that they are on less than a comfortably equal footing and may harbour some silent resentment. And this, of course, can hardly make for the most satisfactory outcome on either side!

As a result, it is precisely the native speakers of the "major" languages, such as German and English, who have to be most assiduous in foreign language training and most sensitive about the choice of language in negotiation. Yet these are the very people who are most liable to be complacent.

At long last, UK businesses are waking up to the realisation that, although English is the language most widely used in international trade, it should not be automatically assumed by native English speakers to be the most satisfactory choice for negotiation with clients. To quote the Prince of Wales again: "I see a real danger that, by putting itself at a competitive disadvantage in linguistic skills, British business will find itself left on the touchline as others challenge for Europe's industrial supremacy."

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NOTES

1 In this initial reliance on the sentence, no claim is made about the physical or psychological facts of language processing. The actual behaviour of a writer when writing and a reader when reading will no doubt be in some steady relationship with the recurrent patterns of written text, such as punctuation, paragraphing and layout in general. It would certainly be strange if we discovered that the process of interpretation concerned units of a different character and dimension from those with which we are familiar.

However, not enough is known about such matters to give clear support for or against our starting point of the sentence. It is the unit on the surface of written language which provides at least an initial procedure for dividing a text into interpretable segments. Also, it has the advantage of being very close to the surface, so that computers can locate the sentence boundaries without much trouble, thus giving us access to extensive surveying of long texts.

If we find evidence that more than the current sentence or less than the current sentence is occasionally processed instead of just the current sentence, this does not threaten our position. Only if evidence were forthcoming, perhaps from eye-movement studies, that the reader's attention jumped back and forth over the text and never seemed to dwell on a specific word string for any length of time, would some of the assumptions in this chapter need to be more cautiously framed.

It is instructive to compare this description of a sentence with those collected and discussed in, say, Fries (1957). They are all unsatisfactory because there is always at least one imponderable in them, such as 'a complete thought'; however, the best of them can be appreciated as moving in the direction of the present position, while fettered by unreliable assumptions about grammar.

Later in this chapter it is suggested that some sentences—those containing colons and semi-colons—may be divided at the punctuation mark using the same criteria as are established for sentence coherence. Following previous studies (Tadros, 1985; Sinclair, 1992c), it is conceded that the sentence may ultimately prove to be a unit of interpretation rather than of structure, and may show no more allegiance to the coherence conventions proposed here than it does to grammar.

2 'We noted that using the clause to settle for saying less than everything was systematic in the sense that we, as communicators with one another, had a linguistic consensus about the form it should take. Example 9 demonstrated one of its common forms. We noted that the clause was affected closely by the relevance of choices for the immediately preceding clause(s) of its clause relations' (Winter, 1986:107).

3 I am grateful to Professor Quirk for permission to use his article in this way.

4 This structure has affinity with Hazadiah's (1991) *focus exchange* in conversation.

5 There are many meanings of *and* in text structure, because it is the neutral mark of a logical act. No doubt the shades of meaning that are attributed to it are derived in some measure—perhaps a large measure—from inferences about the relationship between the new sentence and the one it encapsulates. Until we have studied a large number of cases it will not be easy to distinguish between the contribution made by its position in the text structure and that made by inference. The notes in this analysis about shades of meaning and the paraphrases of the introductory words and phrases are intended to be quite informal, based on an individual reading of the text.

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2

A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF POLARITY AND PRIMARY TENSE IN THE ENGLISH FINITE CLAUSE

M.A.K.Halliday and Z.L.James

1 PRELIMINARIES

1.1 The corpus used

The aim of this study was to undertake some basic quantitative research in the grammar of Modern English.[1] To do this, we required a corpus which was:

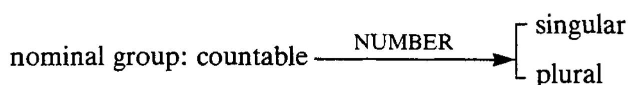
1. made up of naturally occurring language;
2. readily available and easy to access;
3. large enough to provide a significant sample of the least common structures we were interested in;
4. drawn from specified genres.

We used the 18 million words of written text that formed the major part of the original COBUILD corpus, which appeared to meet these criteria. In particular, the texts making up the corpus had been chosen with learners in mind; texts in which language was used in untypical ways were excluded, so that the publications derived from the corpus would be maximally useful to students of English. Full details of the texts used are listed in the 'Corpus Acknowledgements' section of the COBUILD dictionary (Sinclair *et al.*, 1987).

The new COBUILD corpus, known as the 'Bank of English', which is currently being collected, will contain a similar quantity (approximately 20 million words) of spoken material which will be accessible independently, and this spoken subcorpus would be an obvious choice for a complementary study.

1.2 Theoretical framework

The relevant theoretical concept in grammar is that of the *system,* as used by Firth (1957) and subsequently developed in 'systemic' grammar (Halliday, 1976; Halliday and Martin, 1981; Matthiessen, 1988). A systemic grammar is a paradigmatic grammar in which the fundamental organising concept is that of the system: that is, a set of options with a condition of entry, such that exactly one option must be chosen whenever the entry condition is satisfied. A system is thus a kind of 'deep paradigm' (Halliday, 1966). A simple example would be: system of *number,* options (or 'terms', in Firth's terminology) *singular/plural,* entry condition *nominal group: countable.* Traditionally in systemic theory, this has been represented schematically as



Such a representation is, however, incomplete, because it does not yet show how the options singular and plural are realised. Each term in the system carries with it a *realisation statement* specifying what is to be done to construct the chosen form. To continue with the same example, we would write

This would indicate that, if you choose singular, you take no action at this point, while if you choose plural you add *-(e)s* at the end of the word functioning as Thing in the nominal group. This functional element itself has been inserted in an earlier realisation statement.

Quantitative work in grammar depends on some such concept of a system, such that one can ask: given (say) 100,000 instances of a nominal group that *could* be either singular or plural, but not both, and *must* be one or the other, how many were, in fact, singular and how many were plural? (See Halliday, 1959; Svartvik, 1966; Hasan and Cloran, 1990.)

Note that if such a question can be asked, then set theory or other formal logic can be used as models, as the boundaries between sets are clearly defined. There is no cline between singular and plural; that is to say, if we represent the grammar with these as discrete categories we shall not be distorting the picture. In a quantitative study we are assuming that the categories to be counted (for example, classes of the clause, or of the group) form clearly defined sets of this kind. This does not mean, of course, that there is some simple criterion for recognising each instance; but it does mean that we can assign instances to one class or the other with a reasonably close degree of approximation.

In a systemic grammar the entire grammar is represented as a network of systems, each of which is potentially a candidate for quantitative analysis; large systemic grammars have some 700–1,000 systems (Matthiessen, 1989; Fawcett and Tucker, 1990). Some of these, of course, are rather 'delicate' systems, such as the contrast between straight and transferred negative in clausal modalities, for example between *I think not* and *I don't think so;* it will have to be a very large corpus before we find enough instances of this contrast in different environments to enable us to make any revealing generalisations about it. But we naturally want to establish quantitative profiles of the less delicate, more general systems first.

The main problem that arises is that of parsing. Hardly any of the major grammatical systems of English (or probably those of any language) have simple, consistent patterns of realisation such that instances can be easily recognised by computer (computational analysis being necessary in practice to perform large-scale counting). One might almost formulate it as a general principle of language that the easier a thing is to recognise, the more trivial it is and hence the less worthwhile it is to recognise it. Some systems are thoroughly cryptotypic, and appear only in the form of complex reactances and differences in potential agnation; almost all the systems in the domain of transitivity in English are of this kind (see Davidse, 1991), as well as being further complicated by the pervasive presence of metaphor in the grammar (Halliday, 1985; Martin, 1991; Halliday and Matthiessen, forthcoming). For example, there is no obvious way of writing a program to count the number of clauses which select material, mental or relational types of process. It is not that such systems have no realisation statements attached to them; they have—but these involve complex chains of realisation, and it is a slow and lengthy job to parse them out.

1.3 Setting up a hypothesis

We decided to try to access the corpus directly, using existing programs that had already been developed for COBUILD'S lexicographical, and more recently grammatical, research (Sinclair, 1987). This meant that we had to identify grammatical systems whose instances we could recognise to a sufficient degree of approximation by reference to lexemes, and combinations of lexemes, represented orthographically—with original spelling and punctuation, as in the computerised corpus. At the same time, they had to be systems of a high level of generality (not too 'delicate', in systemic terminology); and they had to be interesting. In fact, once something has been shown to be a grammatical system, it is interesting *ipso facto*; but we wanted to go for systems that construe the main dimensions of experiential and interpersonal meaning, like mood and transitivity; and this meant

working with systems of the clause, since it is largely in the grammar of the clause that such meanings are construed.

Our aim, however, was not simply to count things, but in doing so to test a hypothesis. Halliday had formulated the hypothesis that grammatical systems fell largely into two types: those where the options were equally probable—there being no 'unmarked term', in the quantitative sense; and those where the options were skew, one term being unmarked. This was based on figures he had arrived at in the 1960s, by counting manually 2,000 instances each of a number of sets of systemic options across texts of different genres in modern English. If we assume a binary system (and it should be emphasised explicitly that *not* all systems are binary), this means that in an 'equi' system, each term would occur with roughly the same frequency, while in a 'skew' system one term would be significantly more frequent that the other. In his small-scale manual counting Halliday had found that the difference in frequency of the options in a skew system tended to be approximately one order of magnitude. In order to formulate a hypothesis in terms of probabilities he expressed this as

equi systems: 0.5:0.5
skew systems: 0.9:0.1

In other words, the prediction was that general grammatical systems would not be distributed evenly across the probability scale, with all values from 0.5:0.5 to 0.99:0.01, but that they would be distributed bimodally into these two probability profiles—with some approximation to these two values. A similar pattern would be predicted for ternary systems, except that it should be possible to find more than one type within the skew. We expect this overall picture to be generally true, although the exact distribution of probabilities may vary among different genres. Possible insights into why this pattern should exist have been discussed in a previous paper (Halliday, 1992).

1.4 Choosing the systems

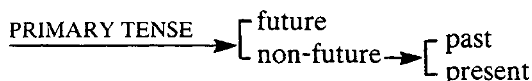
We decided to identify, for investigation, systems that would allow us to make a start towards testing this hypothesis. We could not, of course, start from the clause; that is, we could not take as given in the text any neatly bounded and recognisable unit corresponding to this abstraction. While punctuation originally evolved as a way of marking off linguistic units, no unit in the orthography (such as 'string of words between any two punctuation marks') corresponds exactly to a clause in the grammar. This is partly because punctuation is a mixture of the grammatical and the phonological; but partly also because, even in its grammatical guise, it has evolved to the point where it is used to set up an independent hierarchy of units in counterpoint to the 'original' constituent hierarchy, thus opening up

for written language new systems of meaning analogous to the systems realised by intonation in the spoken language. We therefore had to work with systems whose realisation did not depend on our being able either to count clauses or to identify locations within them (for example, 'clause-final'). The situation was rather the other way round: we hoped that we would be able to derive from the study of particular clause systems some estimate of the total number of clauses in the corpus, and perhaps also some pointers towards the mechanical construction of clause boundaries.

As our first task we took two systems: polarity and primary tense. Polarity has the two options 'positive/negative', as in *It is./It isn't.,* or *Is it?/Isn't it?,* or *Do!/Don't!* It is a system that is entered by all 'major' clauses (clauses other than the 'minor' ones of calls, greetings and exclamations), both finite and non-finite. Primary tense has the three options 'past/present/future', as in *said/say(s)/will say,* or *didn't say/do(es)n't say/won't say*. Primary tense is the deictic component in the tense system, and hence is entered only by finite clauses—and not all of these, because in some clauses deixis is achieved by modality (for example, *should say/shouldn't say*); so that clauses where the Finite operator is a modal have no primary tense either. We restricted the investigation to finite clauses, partly because non-finites are outside the domain of primary tense and partly also because it is harder to recognise their polarity (for every *-ing* form you have to decide whether it is functioning as Predicator or not).

Fairly obviously, in the terms of the starting hypothesis, polarity was a skew system, with positive as the unmarked term; the relative frequency predicted by the hypothesis was therefore nine positive to one negative.

Primary tense was more complicated; it was a three-term system for which the prediction was that two terms (past, present) would be equally probable, the third term (future) much less so. But for the sake of simplicity we wanted to set it up as a binary system, and test just the 'equi' part of the hypothesis for past and present. We therefore postulated a two-step system of primary tense as follows:



This leaves 'past/present' as a binary system, with the two terms predicted to be equal in frequency. (An alternative hypothesis would have been 'past/non-past'; the reason for preferring the first one was that futures are difficult to recognise, since every occurrence of *will* and *'ll* (and even of *would, should* and *'d,* because of 'sequence of tenses') could be either future tense or modality. One could even justify postulating 'present/non-present' as a first cut; but that would still be subject to the same practical objection. See 4.3.3 below.)

2 METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

2.1 Defining the sets we wished to identify

Ideally, the strategy for investigating polarity would be something like the following:

1 Identify and count all finite clauses.
2 Within this set, identify and count all those that are negative.
3 Subtract the negative from the finite and label the remaining set positive.
4 Calculate the percentage of negative and positive within the total set of finite clauses.

If a diagrammatic representation of this is helpful, refer to Figure 2.1.

Similarly, an ideal strategy for investigating tense would be as follows:

1 Identify and count all finite clauses having modal deixis.
2 Within the set of finite clauses remaining (which therefore have temporal deixis, that is, primary tense) identify and count those whose primary tense is future.
3 Subtract future from temporal deixis and label the remaining set non-future.
4 Within non-future, identify and count those whose primary tense is past.
5 Subtract past from non-future and label the remaining set present.
6 Calculate the percentage of present and past, within the total set of non-future primary tense clauses.

The sets relating to the primary-tense system are indicated in Figure 2.2. In setting out the Venn diagrams we have assumed a particular order of procedure. Figure 2.1 suggests negative as the 'marked' set (that which is to be identified as a subset of the total set of clauses), and this is consistent with treating it as the marked term in the system. In Figure 2.2, 'primary tense: present' is suggested as the unmarked set, with the other primary tenses, and modality, as marked subsets; this corresponds to our idealised order of procedure (not one that could be closely followed in practice), but should not be interpreted as suggesting that 'primary tense: present' is an unmarked option in the system.

2.2 Problems with identifying sets

We considered various way to identify the relevant sets of clauses most accurately. No parser can yet identify instances of 'finite clause' or 'primary tense: past' with sufficient reliability; to attempt to adapt any existing parser

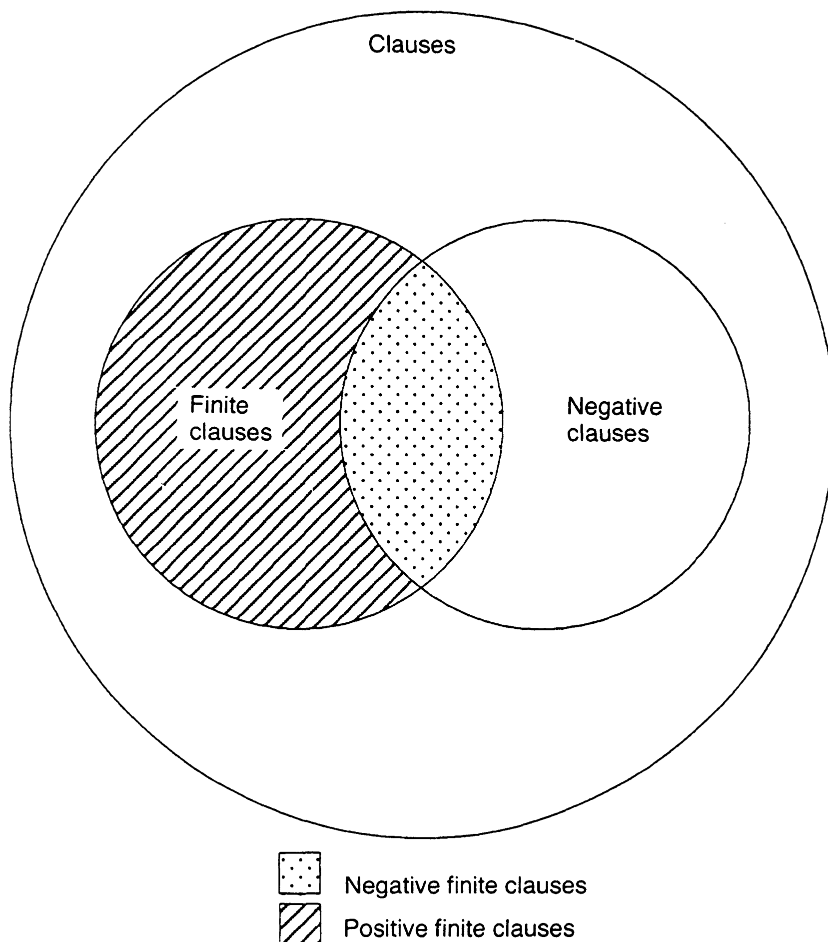


Figure 2.1 Diagrammatic representation of the sets involved in quantifying polarity

to carry out this operation would be a major research project in itself, so we had to approximate the figures as best we could. We also considered using one or other of the available COBUILD taggers, especially in order to separate instances of finite verbs from their homographs (for example, *work* as finite verb from *work* as noun, *changed* as finite verb from *changed* as adjective and so on). However, as this particular task was one of their least successful operations, we decided against it.

What we had to do was to devise means of identifying the categories we were interested in to a reasonable degree of accuracy and in such a way as to minimise possible distortions (that is, distortions of the figures for polarity and primary tense). Thus if a number of non-finite clauses were going to slip

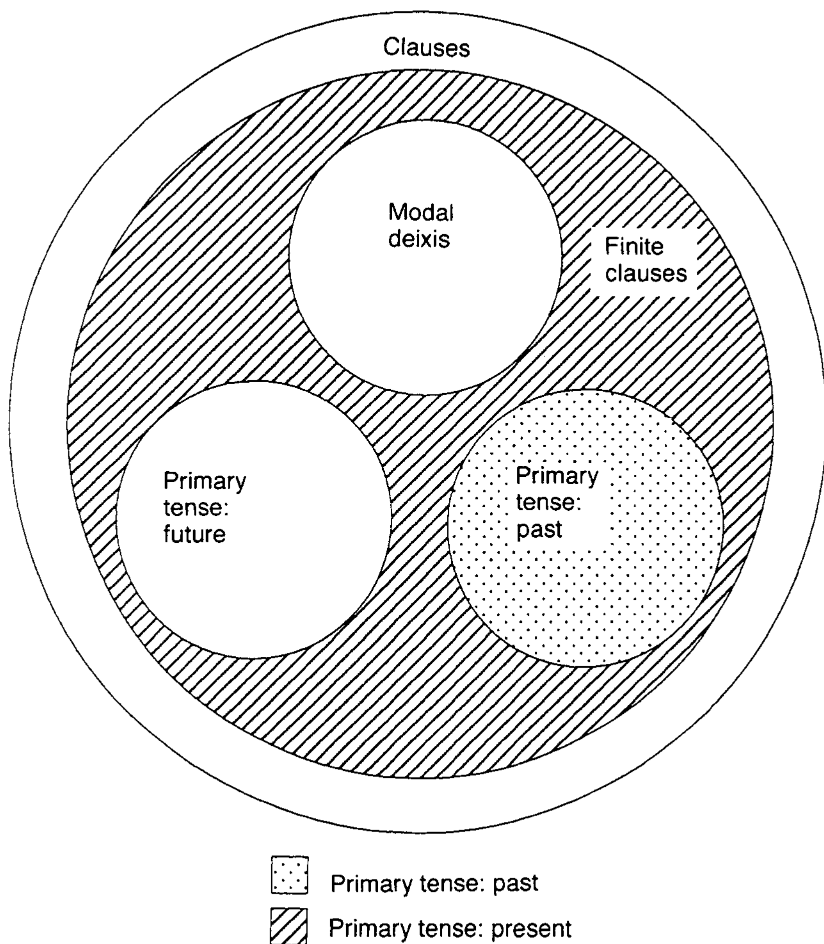


Figure 2.2 Diagrammatic representation of the sets involved in quantifying primary tense

under the net and be counted among the finite, then there should be some means whereby these also should be recognised to be either positive or negative.

2.3 Finite operators used to classify clauses

A clause is finite if its Predicator is deictic: that is, if its verbal group embodies a choice of deixis. Verbal deixis is either (a) modality or (b) primary tense. Semantically, deixis means having a reference point in the 'you and me, here, now' of the speech situation—that is, it means that the proposition is deemed

as valid relative to that situation. In deixis by modality (modal deixis), the validity is made relative to the speaker's judgement, or the speaker's request for the listener's judgement; and this is a judgement in terms of probability or obligation, high, median or low, for example, *it could be dangerous* ('I think'), *could it be dangerous?* ('do you think?'). In deixis by primary tense (temporal deixis), the validity is made relative to the time of speaking, and this is in terms of orientation, past, present or future, for example *it was dangerous, it is dangerous, it will be dangerous*. In both cases, the deictic choice is associated with a choice of polarity, positive or negative. So to all the above examples correspond negative agnates: *it couldn't be dangerous, couldn't it be dangerous?; it wasn 't dangerous, it isn't dangerous, it won't be dangerous.*

In many instances, the deixis is expressed by a Finite operator. Counting instances of these operators could therefore be helpful in classifying clauses. The Finite operators can be listed, and divided into two general categories as follows:

Modal operators

can can't	cannot	could couldn't	may mayn't	might mightn't	will won't
would wouldn't	should shouldn't	must mustn't	ought (+ to) oughtn't (+ to)	need needn't	dare daren't

Temporal operators[2]

am ain't	is isn't	are aren't	was wasn't	were weren't	have haven't	has hasn't	had hadn't
will won't	would wouldn't	shall shan't	should shouldn't	do don't	does doesn't	did didn't	

In a more detailed consideration of these operators, there are some additional points to be taken into account:

1 *Do, does, did* and their negatives are strictly 'tense/polarity' operators, realising negative and marked positive options in simple past and simple present tense, for example, *took—didn't take—did take, takes—doesn 't take—does take.*
2 *Am, is, are, was, were* are strictly 'tense or voice' operators, realising tense in combination with v-ng, voice in combination with v-n, for example, *is taking, was taking, is taken, was taken*. (For v-ng and v-n notation see page 45).
3 Temporal operators also occur in non-finite form (apart from *do, does, did*). These forms are *be, being, been, have, having and.* (the non-finite agnate of *will, shall*) *be, being, been+going to/about to*. They occur in the

secondary tenses, for example *will be taking, has been taking, will have taken, might have been going to take,* and in passive voice, for example *is being taken, had been taken.*

A few of these operators also occur as other lexemes, for example *can*= 'tin container', *will*='desire' or 'testament'. Inspecting 200 instances of each of these words, we found the following number of non-operator occurrences:

can 0 may 7 might 1 will 10 must 0 am 3 do 0

(*am* occurs here because it also figured as 'a.m.' in reference to the time of day). In counting occurrences of the Finite operators, we extrapolated from these figures and disqualified a proportionate number from the total. Also, we eliminated from the list the forms *need and dare,* because these occur as full (lexical) verbs and it was impossible to separate the two conditions; *needn't* and *daren't* were left in, because they occur only as Finite operators. (Occurrences of *need* are counted elsewhere; see Section 4.2 below. *Daren't* is comparatively rare.)

The number of occurrences of each of the Finite operators in the 18 million word corpus are given in Table 2.1.

2.4 Limitations of counting operators

Counting operators was the first step towards counting the number of finite clauses, resolving all of them into positive and negative, identifying those with non-future primary tense and resolving these into past and present. It left the following problems untackled:

1 It omitted instances of the two most frequent tense forms in the language, namely 'simple past' and 'simple present' in positive polarity and active voice: past *took,* present *take(s)*. In order to count finite clauses which do not contain one of the listed operators, the actual verb forms had to be counted. The simple past and simple present forms of the three most frequent verbs in the language, namely *be, have, do,* also function as finite temporal operators *(was, were; had; did; am, is, are; have, has; do, does),* and so did not need to be recounted.

This might not greatly affect the figures for primary tense, since the proportion of past: present may remain the same with other verbs. But it seriously distorts the figures for polarity, since those omitted are, subject to 2 below, all positive.

2 It omits all instances where negative is realised by a separate word: most typically *not,* but also *never, nothing, no-one/nobody,* as well as rarer forms such as *seldom* and *hardly*. This again distorts the figure for polarity, since those instances that are omitted are all negative.

Table 2.1 Finite operators

Positive	*Number of instances*	*Spurious instances out of 200*	*Corrected count*	*Negative*		
can	33,002	0	33,002	can't, cannot	9,568	
could	32,164		32,164	couldn't	4,102	
may	17,716	7	17,096	mayn't	3	
might	12,509	1	12,446	mightn't	85	
will	34,817	10	33,076	won't	2,818	modal, and future temporal
would	48,882		48,882	wouldn't	3,094	
shall	3,787		3,787	shan't	137	
should	16,053		16,053	shouldn't	700	
must	15,520	0	15,520	mustn't	296	
ought	1,547		1,547	oughtn't	40	
			213,573		20,843	
am	6,599	3	6,401	ain't	476	
is	149,514		149,514	isn't	3,037	
are	70,925		70,925	aren't	1,160	
have	76,207		76,207	haven't	1,533	present temporal
has	33,749		33,749	hasn't	501	
do	32,011	0	32,011	don't	16,737	
does	7,387		7,387	doesn't	3,069	Total present:
			376,194		26,513	402,707
was	186,839		186,839	wasn't	4,144	
were	60,276		60,276	weren't	839	
had	109,835	8	105,442	hadn't	2,415	past temporal
did	19,322		19,322	didn't	9,637	Total past:
			371,879		17,035	388,914
		Total positive	961,646	Total negative	64,391	

Results: For *polarity,* 961,646 clauses were found to be positive and 64,391 negative out of a total of 1,026,037. For *primary tense,* 402,707 clauses were found to have present primary tense and 388,914 were found to have past primary tense out of a total of 791,621.

Note: The 'corrected count' is arrived at by deducting from the 'number of instances' a number extrapolated from the figure of disqualified occurrences in a sample of 200. For example, out of the 200 instances of may, 7 were found to be other than Finite operator (the month of May, in some context or other). The raw count of 17,716 was therefore reduced by 7/200 (that is, 3.5 per cent) to 17,096. If no disqualified occurrences were found, the figure is shown as 0. Where there is no entry in the column, the test was not applied. For negative realised as 'Finite operator+*not*', see Table 2.2.

3 It omits all abbreviated forms of the finite operators, namely:

(a) 'll (=will, shall)
(b) 'd (=would, should; had)
(c) 'm (=am)
(d) 's (=is; has)
(e) 're (=are)
(f) 've (=have)

These are a mixture of temporals and modals: *'ll* and *'d* may be either, the remainder are temporal only. Of the temporals, *'ll* is future, *'d* may either be future *(would, should)* or past *(had);* the remainder are present. All are positive, but they may occur in a negative clause where negative is realised by a separate word as in 2 above; for example *they're not playing, I've never asked.* Note that's occurs also as a possessive and that all abbreviated forms occur not only with pronouns as Subject but also with nouns (the corpus includes such instances as *martini'd* and *whorehouse'll*—typically found where the Subject nominal group contains a prepositional phrase or relative clause as Qualifier).

It also fails to separate temporal from modal instances of those operators which occur as both, namely *will, 'll;* and also *would, should, 'd,* which occur as 'sequenced' variants of temporal *will, shall: he'll (will) do it: he said he'd (would) do if, shall I do it?: I asked if I should do it.* This is irrelevant when we are counting the total number of finite clauses, but it matters if we want to separate modality from primary tense as a whole (that is, with future included in primary tense).

Note, however, that *am, is, are, was, were+to,* and *have, has, had+to,* although they express modality, have *temporal, not modal deixis: I had to/have to/will have to tell them; that was/is/will be to throw away,* in other words they are like *be able to, be supposed to* and suchlike forms, where the modality is non-finite. These therefore are adequately accounted for.

4 It counts the mood tag (tag questions) as a separate finite clause; thus, *Mary would know, wouldn't she?* would count as two occurrences, one positive and one negative. But the mood tag is not a separate clause; and while it might be argued that, since some are negative and some positive and all retain the finite feature (modality or primary tense) of their parent clause, this does not matter, in fact it does distort the picture, because the *choice* of polarity in the mood tag is not independent of that in the parent clause. In the tag, you do not choose 'positive/negative'; you choose 'polarity reversed/polarity constant', with 'polarity reversed' as the unmarked option. Hence tagged positives are overwhelmingly likely to be negative, and vice versa; so if tags are counted separately, they exaggerate the figure for negative instances.

2.5 Filling the gaps

The above problems are listed in order of importance; but as they get less important they also get easier to deal with. So we dealt with them in reverse order, taking the following steps:

1 In response to (4) above, we estimated the number of positive and negative mood tags, by counting occurrences of the sequence 'comma+ finite operator+personal pronoun+question mark', for example, *won't they?* The figure for positive tags was deducted from the total for positive, that for negative tags was deducted from negative. (We only remembered afterwards that we should have included *there* in the set of personal pronouns.) In the event, there were very few instances of mood tags at all, no doubt reflecting the fact that the corpus being used consisted of written English only.

In fact, many tags are not netted by this procedure; for example the following, all taken from the corpus:

He's an odd bird, isn't he.
She's really kissing it now, isn't she!
That's the whole point of it, isn't it, darling?
It's much worse, isn't it, like you, to have stayed?

Probably a more effective tactic would be to count 'comma+Finite operator+personal pronoun+(any) punctuation mark'.

2 Second, in response to (3) above, we counted all occurrences of the abbreviated forms *'ll, 'd, 'm, 's, 're, 've,* and labelled these 'positive'. We estimated the number of *'s* occurrences that were possessive, and deducted this total from the count for *'s*. (Of a total of 104,301 *'s,* 71,606 were estimated to be possessive, leaving 32,695 as Finite operator, either 'is' or 'has'.) Where an abbreviated form corresponds to more than one operator, as *'ll* to both *will* and *shall,* or *'s* to both is and *has,* the figures were assigned proportionately: thus, the 10,050 occurrences of *'ll* were assigned to *will* and *shall* according to the ratio in which these two forms themselves occurred (34,817:3787). This is not necessary for calculating the overall figures involved but it makes them easier to tabulate.

3 In response to (2) on page 40, we estimated the number of negative clauses where the negative polarity was realised by *not* or another negative word. The problem here was that not all occurrences of *not* were to be treated as negative clauses. On the one hand, non-finite clauses are typically negated with *not* (for example, *so as not to be disturbed, with Jim not getting that job*); and we were not including non-finites in the count. On the other hand, *not* frequently occurs as part of a nominal group; and although in many such instances there is a case for considering as negative the clause in which

that nominal group is functioning—the fact that such clauses tend to take a positive tag, as in *Not all your friends agree with that, do they?*—there are also many where this is not appropriate, including a common type where *not* is part of a Submodifier, for example *A not inconsiderable number of voters stayed away* (tag *didn't they?*). We decided, therefore, to count just those having the form 'Finite operator+ *not*', allowing up to one word to come in between: thus *will not, 'll not, will you not, will have not, 're certainly not* and so on.

As the software we used is set up, we could only easily retrieve word combinations up to a maximum of 4,000 occurrences of the *first* word; thus, for example, out of 4,000 occurrences of *will,* the figure for *will*+ (...+) *not* was 241. We therefore extrapolated from this figure: there were altogether 34,817 occurrences of *will*—note that this had to be the original figure, not that adjusted for disqualified instances; then, multiplying 241 by 34,817/4,000, we reached an estimate of 2,098 for *will*+ (...+) *not*. Out of a total of 84,898 occurrences of *not,* 58,830 were netted by this procedure.

As far as other negative clauses were concerned, we inspected 200 instances of each word that can realise the clause feature 'negative': *no, never, nothing, little, without* and so on, down to the least frequent *no-one* (318 occurrences). Using the 'tag test', we established how many of the 200 should be counted as negative finite clauses; for example, the unmarked tag for *there was no chance* would be *was there?,* that for *very few people know about it* would be *do they?* The figure was then extrapolated as a proportion of the total number of occurrences of the word, and the combined figure was then deducted from the positive count and added to that for negative.

The results of the investigation up to this point are given in Table 2.2.

4 This left the question raised under 1 on page 40, that of lexical verbs in simple past and simple present tense: *took, take(s),* all of which are to be added to the 'positive' score. This is a major topic and needs a section to itself.

3 COUNTING SIMPLE PAST AND PRESENT TENSE OF COMMON VERBS

3.1 Deciding which verbs to consider

We decided to proceed by counting the simple past and simple present tense occurrences of the most frequently occurring verbs (after *be, have* and *do* as already discussed), taking in about fifty verbs in all. Of course, to carry out a complete count we would have had to consider all verbs. We therefore decided to cut the sample into two parts, beginning with the most frequent set of about twenty-five and then proceeding to the next most frequent set.

Table 2.2(a) Tags, abbreviations, negatives with *not*

	Mood tags					*Abbreviation (Finite operator)*		*Negatives with* not				
	Positive	*No. of tag questions in 10,000 citations*	*Extrapolated total no. of tag questions*	*Negative*	*Total no. of tags*	*Positive (total)*	*Distribution*	*Full*	*No. with* not *in 4,000*	*Extrapolated (total)*	*Abbreviation (total)*	*Distribution*
	can	26	86	can't	17							
	could	9	29	couldn't	20			could	462	3,715		
	may	1	2	mayn't	0			may	227	1,005		
	might	0	0	mightn't	4			might	166	519		
Modal and future temporal	will	50	174	won't	76	'll (10,050)	•9,055	will	241	2,098	'll (42)	•30
	would	25	122	wouldn't	56	'd (10,886)	•4,099	would	246	3,006	'd (94)	•35
	shall		28	shan't	3	'll	•995	shall		185	'll	•12
	should	3	5	shouldn't	3	'd	•1,344	should	264	1,059	'd	•12
	must	3	5	mustn't	11			must	146	566		
	ought		0	oughtn't	3			ought		92		
	am		6	ain't	24	'm	9,812	am	432	713	'm	1,630
	is		75	isn't	420	's (32,695)	27,464	is	233	8,709	's (2,005)	•1,684
	are		64	aren't	169	're	9,358	are	185	3,280	're	946
Present temporal	have	4	30	haven't	55	've	9,028	have	42	800	've	62
	has	8	27	has'nt	20	's	•5,231	has	92	802	's	•321
							Total present: 60,893					
	do	93	298	don't	172			do	561	4,490		
	does		43	doesn't	73			does	1,597	2,949		
					Total present: 1,476							

Past temporal	was		36	wasn't	87					was		7,665		
	were		6	weren't	25				Total past:	were	163	2,456		
	had		0	hadn't	16	Total past:	'd	*5,443	5,443	had	119	3,268	'd	*47
	did	43	83	didn't	154	407				did	1,370	6,618		
		Total pos.	1,119	Total neg.	1,408			81,829				53,995		4,779

Results:

1 *Polarity*—add/deduct as follows:
   (a) add to 'positive' the total of abbreviations for Finite operators (81,829);
   (b) deduct from 'positive' positive tags, Finite operators+*not*, and abbreviations for Finite operators+*not*, (1,119+53,995+4,779=59,893);
   (c) add to 'negetive' Finite operators+*not*, and abbreviations for Finite operators+*not* (53,995+4,779=58,774);
   (d) deduct from 'negetive' the negetive tags (1,408).

2 *Primary Tense*—add/deduct as follows:
   (a) add to 'present' the abbreviations for Finite operators (60,893);
   (b) deduct from 'present' the present tag questions (1,476);
   (c) add to 'past' the abbreviations for Finite operators (5,443);
   (d) deduct from 'past' the tag questions (407).

Note: Figures with * were obtained by proportional distribution. For example, there were 10,050 instances of *'ll*. In Table 2.1, the proportion of occurrences of *will* to *shall* was 33,076:3,787. The figure of 10,050 was therefore distributed between 'will' and 'shall' in this same proportion, that is 9055:995. Likewise with *'d* and *'s*; and with all three abbreviations+*not*.

This would enable us to see whether the overall proportions of past and present remained constant as more verbs were included.

3.2 Functions of verb forms

Prototypically the English verb has five forms: the base form, for example, *take;* the third person singular present form *takes;* the past-tense form *took;* the 'present/active participle' *taking;* and the 'past/passive participle' *taken*. We shall refer to these by the usual symbols v-0, v-s, v-d, v-ng and v-n. Most verbs in the language distinguish only four forms, because v-d and v-n are the same; this applies to all 'weak' verbs (those that add *-d/-ed* for the past) and to some others as well; for example, *ask,* v-d and v-n both *asked; sit,* v-d and v-n both *sat*. Some distinguish only three forms, for example *put, set, cut* (and in writing also *read,* where v-0 and v-d are in fact different but are spelt alike). In some verbs, *(come, become),* v-n is identical with v-0 but not with v-d. The one maverick verb is *be* which has eight forms: *be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been.*

The problems with identifying simple past and simple present forms are the following:

The v-0, or base, form of the verb:

1 It functions as simple present tense, for example *say*.
2 It occurs as the 'infinitive' form of the verb, which has four functions:

(a) as Head (Event) of the verbal group following a modal operator, and following the tense/polarity operator 'do' (*do, does, did* and their negatives), for example *can't say, did say;*
(b) as verb alone (that is, as Head of a verbal group with no other elements present) in a non-finite clause, typically following *to,* for example *to say the truth;*
(c) as verb alone in a 'phased' verbal-group complex, also typically following *to,* for example *started to say;*
(d) as verb alone in imperative clause, for example *say what you mean!* (Only the verb *be* distinguishes between functions (1) and (2), with *am, is, are* in (1) but *be* in (2).

Only the occurrences in function (1) are relevant in the present context; those in (2) have to be disqualified. (Except that (2d) remains in the polarity count, since imperative clauses are finite and were included in the count for negative. They are excluded, however, from primary tense. Note that *the v-s form* occurs only as simple present tense, so all occurrences of it are to be counted.)

The v-d, or past tense, form of the verb:

The v-d form of the verb functions only as simple past tense, for example *I*

Table 2.2(b) Clauses with other negative words

	Number of instances	*Spurious instances out of 200*	*Corrected count*	
not	84,898		–	*1
no	41,563	59	29,302	
never	15,336	4	15,029	
nothing	8,757	19	7,925	
little	16,426	170	2,546	
nor	3,038	51	2,263	
hardly	2,130	14	1,981	
unless	2,006	11	1,896	
none	2,080	29	1,778	
nobody	1,570	10	1,492	
neither	1,881	43	1,477	
few	9,956	180	996	
rarely	707	20	636	
seldom	580	20	522	
scarcely	557	14	518	
barely	518	14	482	
nowhere	521	67	346	
no(-)one	318	–	318	
without	9,980	200	0	*2
Total			69,507	

Results:
Polarity: all 69,507 to be added to 'negative' and deducted from 'positive'.
Primary tense: no effect.

Notes:
*1 All instance of *not* in the proximity of a Finite operator had already been counted (Table 2.2(a)). No further estimate was made of other possible negative clauses with *not*.
*2 Predictably, all negative clauses with *without* found to be non-finite (for example, *without telling anybody*). There were no instances in the 200 sample of the raver type such as *without you knew* ('if you didn't know').

said. However, for most verbs the v-d and v-n forms are identical; and the v-n form, the 'past/passive participle', functions as:

1 Head (Event) of the verbal group following the temporal operator 'have' *(have, has, had)*, for example *hasn't said;*
2 Head (Event) of the verbal group following the voice operator 'be' (*am, is,* etc), for example *was said, hadn't been said;*
3 verb alone in a non-finite clause, for example *that said, said in good faith*.

Only the occurrences of the v-d form are relevant in the present context.
To summarise our treatment of verb forms up to this point:

v-0 some instances to be counted (positive; present); all others to be disqualified (subject to the note on imperative above);
v-s all instances to be counted (positive; present);

v-d all instances to be counted (positive; past) (but see v-n below);
v-ng no instances to be counted;
v-n no instances to be counted (but is usually identical with v-d, sometimes with v-0, sometimes with both).

All three relevant forms of the verb pose the additional problem that they may occur also in some nominal function. The picture is very varied; here are some typical examples:

Lexeme	*Finite verb form*	*Other potential word class*	*Other potential use: function in nominal group*	*Example*
work	v-0	noun	Head (Thing)	out of work
			Premodifier (Classifier)	work station
looks	v-s	noun	Head (Thing)	encouraging looks
thought	v-d	noun	Head (Thing)	the thought of packing
			Premodifier (Classifier)	thought processes
used	v-d	adjective	Premodifier (Classifier)	used cars
		verb (v-n)	(part of) Premodifier (Epithet)	an often used excuse
set	v-0/v-d	adjective	Premodifier (Classifier)	set lunch
		noun	Head (Thing)	television set
left	v-d	verb (v-n)	(part of) Postmodifier (Qualifier)	the only one left
called	v-d	verb (v-n)	(part of) Postmodifier (Qualifier)	a character called Hugo

These examples are all cases of polysemy (different meanings of the same lexeme); if we also take account of homonymy, or rather homography (as we have to do here), the examples will be extended to include unwanted instances of items like *means (unfair means, by all means)*, *left (left wing)*, *leaves (tea leaves)* and so forth. Such instances obviously have to be disqualified from the count of finite verb forms. Interestingly, there were far more ambiguous forms of this kind in the second swath of verbs than in the first. We return to this below.

3.3 Steps taken to count the most common verbs

The first swath of 25 verbs was as follows:

say	make	take	find	feel	keep	use
know	go	want	ask	become	turn	
get	come	look	give	begin	call	
see	think	tell	seem	leave	put	

These were the ones of which (after we had deducted the estimated number of disqualified instances) there were at least 4,900 occurrences of *either* the v-0 form *or* the v-d form. (The cut-off point of 4,900 was adopted simply in order to end up with a set of 25 verbs.)

In order to establish figures of occurrence for past and present primary tense forms of these verbs, we proceeded as follows.

1 We counted the instances of all v-0, v-s and v-d forms of these verbs.

2 We inspected 200 instances of each of the forms which we knew also occurred in other guises (as Head or Modifier in a nominal group). We counted the number of verbal and nominal occurrences, and in this way estimated what proportion of the total should be disqualified in each case. For example, out of 200 occurrences of *looks,* 40 were found to be nouns; so 20 per cent of the total figure of 1,863 occurrences was subtracted.

Table 2.3(a) on page 53 shows the total number of occurrences for these verbs. These are assigned as follows:

(a) polarity: all v-0, v-s and v-d are positive;
(b) primary tense: v-0, v-s are present; v-d are past.

3 We counted the number of occurrences of all the v-0 forms which were preceded by a Finite operator, either immediately or at a distance of one word: 'Finite operator+(…+) v-0'; for example *might say, didn't you say.* All such instances had been counted already, in the count of Finite operators, and were therefore disqualified.

4 Likewise, we counted the occurrences of v-d forms, when these were identical with v-n, preceded by a Finite operator, again either immediately or with one word in between: 'Finite operator+(…+) v-n'; for example, *hasn't said, could have said, was never said*. Such instances, again, had already been counted, and therefore were disqualifiable. This was an approximation; it would not net instances with more than one word in between, such as *had never been said,* which would therefore get counted twice over, once as *had* and once as *said;* on the other hand, it would net, and therefore exclude, some instances which should have been left in, such as *whoever that was just said*…However,

concordance lines showed that the error incurred was negligible. (Note that the *structured* sequence 'Finite operator+v-d' cannot occur, so in those verbs where v-n was not identical with v-d this figure was not calculated. As a check, we conjured up 'op+ (…+) *became*'; out of 1,723 instances of *became,* only one displayed this sequence.)

5 We counted all occurrences of *to*+v-0, for example to *say.* These were disqualifiable because non-finite, for reasons given above. But all those of the form 'op.+*to*+v-0' had already been netted by the previous procedure in (3); so those were counted separately and the figure deducted from the total of *to*+v-0. The resulting total was the number of instances to be disqualified under the present heading.

6 We estimated the number of instances of v-0 which were imperative, for example *say what you mean, don't say it.* In order to do this, we first inspected all the occurrences of *let's,* the only word in English which is always imperative. (One could, of course, construct counter-examples such as *to put the house up to let's the best idea;* but in fact there were none.) The word *let's* occurred 1,281 times, including 61 *let's not* and 19 *don't lets.* (Note that *let us, let us not* and *do not let us* are excluded from this count; these are not necessarily imperative.)

Of this total, 840 instances, or just under two-thirds, either had a capital letter, *Let's* (779), or, if lower case, followed directly after one of four punctuation marks: inverted commas, dash, suspension or opening parenthesis, *"let's,—let's,…let's,* or (*let's* (61). A further 142 directly followed either a capitalised paratactic conjunction, *And, But, So, Then* (64), or a capitalised continuative, *Now, Oh, Well, No, Yes* (78); and another 12, a capitalized *Do* (4) or *Don't* (8). In other words, 994 instances, or 77.6 per cent of *let's* were shown orthographically to be either initial in the clause or following only a one-word marker of textual cohesion.

Our purpose was to establish what environments could be used to identify occurrences of the v-0 forms that were likely to be imperative. After inspecting 200 instances each of 10 of the 25 most frequent verbs, we decided to count, with every verb, those where

(a) v-0 itself was capitalised, for example *Say,*
(b) v-0 followed capitalised *Do* or *Don't,* for example *Do say,*
(c) v-0 followed a capitalised conjunction, *But say;*
(d) v-0 followed a capitalised continuative, for example *Well(,) say.*

These figures were taken as an estimate of the number of v-0 instances that were imperative, and hence to be disqualified from the count for primary tense.

7 We then added together the figures of all those instances rejected as disqualifiable, and subtracted the totals from the figures under (1) above, as follows:

Table 2.3(a) Verbs other than *be, have* and *do:* first swath, v-0, v-s and v-d forms

v-0	*Number of instances*	*Spurious instances out of 200*	*Corrected count*	*v-s*	*Number of instances*	*Spurious instances out of 200*	*Corrected count*	*v-d*	*Number of instances*	*Spurious instances out of 200*	*Corrected count*
say	12,668	1	12,605	says	6,725		6,725	said	47,153		47,153
know	19,245		19,245	knows	2,121		2,121	knew	8,016		8,016
get	18,127		18,127	gets	1,554		1,554	got	11,939		11,939
see	17,968		17,968	sees	690		690	saw	6,705	2	6,638
make	14,424	0	14,424	makes	2,986	1	2,971	made	17,093		17,093
go	16,401	3	16,155	goes	2,377	0	2,377	went	11,677		11,677
come	14,266		14,266	comes	2,909		2,909	came	11,928		11,928
think	13,541		13,541	thinks	865		865	thought	11,875	27	10,272
take	12,517		12,517	takes	1,946		1,946	took	8,207		8,207
want	10,287	3	10,133	wants	1,751	2	1,733	wanted	5,734		5,734
look	9,433	30	8,018	looks	1,863	40	1,490	looked	9,083		9,083
tell	7,661		7,661	tells	680		680	told	8,589		8,589
find	8,181	1	8,140	finds	595	9	568	found	8,212		8,212
ask	3,745		3,745	asks	747		747	asked	8,090		8,090
give	7,876		7,876	gives	1,434		1,434	gave	4,969		4,969
seem	3,582		3,582	seems	3,791		3,791	seemed	7,415		7,415
feel	6,052		6,052	feels	838		838	felt	7,111	2	7,040
become	6,539		6,539	becomes	1,723		1,723	become	4,735		4,735
begin	2,025		2,025	begins	860		860	began	6,489		6,489
leave	4,069	12	3,825	leaves	1,554	143	443	left	9,493	64	6,455
keep	5,897	2	5,838	keeps	536		536	kept	3,660		3,660
turn	3,952	61	2,747	turns	801	36	657	turned	5,741		5,741
call	3,817	51	2,844	calls	849	79	514	called	7,012	39	5,645
put	11,057		*5,432	puts	587		587	put			*5,625
use	7,821	100	3,911	uses	598	70	389	used	8,481	84	4,921
		Total	227,216			Total	39,148			Total	235,326

Results: For *polarity,* all are to be added to 'positive' (227,216+39,148+235,326=501,690). For *primary tense,* v-0 and v-s are to be added to 'present' (227,216 +39,148=266,364), and v-d are to be added to 'past' (235,326).
'Corrected' scores were derived from 'number of instances' scores by the same procedure as in Table 2.1.

**Note:* *put* is both v-0 and v-d. The totals without *put* were: 221,784 for v-0 and 229,701 for v-d, totalling 451,485. This is a ratio of 0.491:0.509. The 11,057 occurrences of *put* were therefore distributed into v-0 and v-d in this same proportion, that is, 5,432:5,625.

(a) polarity: total of (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6) subtracted from positive;
(b) primary tense:

  (i) figures for (2), (3), (5) and (6) subtracted from present;
  (ii) figure for (4) subtracted from past.

The resulting totals are presented in Table 2.3(b).

Table 2.3(b) Verbs other than *be, have* and *do:* first swath, v-0, v-d(=v-n) following finite operator, v-0='imperative'

v-0	*Finite operator + v-0*	*To + v-0 (other than preceding)*	*v-0 = 'imperative'*	*v-d*	*Finite operator + (v-d = v-n)*
say	3,963	3,292	223	said	3,065
know	7,756	2,577	41		
get	4,932	6,419	487	got	1,985
see	5,128	6,032	332		
make	4,024	6,008	357	made	6,131
go	4,849	4,497	732		
come	6,534	2,290	864		
think	3,999	1,808	206	thought	1,748
take	3,776	3,980	716		
want	4,027	202	88	wanted	502
look	1,893	1,974	1,226	looked	685
tell	2,278	1,834	824	told	2,193
find	2,629	2,760	90	found	2,493
ask	1,106	1,073	309	asked	1,195
give	2,436	2,608	475		
seem	1,637	124	9	seemed	514
feel	1,773	917	62	felt	865
become	3,755	1,057	10		
begin	660	468	103		
leave	1,073	1,167	268	left	1,424
keep	1,164	2,603	492	kept	1,019
turn	983	699	108	turned	1,037
call	839	619	115	called	2,048
put	1,333*	1,653	399	put	1,381*
use	1,408	1,532	281	used	2,926
Totals	73,955	58,193	8,817		31,211

Results: For *polarity,* all are to be deducted from 'positive' except for the 'imperative' counts (73,955+58,193+31,211=163,359). For *primary tense,* all are to be deducted from 'present' except for Finite operator+(v-d=v-n), which are to be deducted from past (from present: 73,955+58,193+8,817=140,965; from past: 31,211)

* *Note:* The instances of put were distributed between v-0 and v-d in the same proportion as in Table 2.2(a).

4 SUMMARY

4.1 Omissions

In the way outlined in the previous sections we arrived at a quantitative profile of the two systems under investigation, polarity and primary tense, based on an assessment of the population of finite clauses in an 18 million word corpus. Those clauses included in the survey are:

1 for both systems

  (a) clauses with temporal Finite operators,
  (b) clauses in simple past and present tense having the verbs *be, have, do* or one of the 25 most frequent verbs next to these three;

2 for polarity only, clauses with modal finite operators (such clauses do not select for primary tense).

The results are presented in summary form in Tables 2.4 and 2.5. These tables show total figures and percentages for each of the two systems, as follows:

polarity:	positive	1,252,406(86.75%)	negative	191,264(13.25%)
primary tense:	past	598,065(50.02%)	present	597,645(49.98%)

There are two sources of inaccuracy in these figures. One is the inaccuracy in the counting that has been done: some of the figures are extra-polations from samples (for example, the proportion of occurrences disqualified as 'nominal' being based on the inspection of 200 instances; the estimate for numbers of word sequences being based on the number turning up in 4,000 occurrences of the first word in the string); and there are inaccuracies on a minor scale arising from the way the texts were entered and indexed in the first place (as well as from errors in the transcription). The other, more serious source of inaccuracy is in the counting that has not been done.

Clauses which are elliptical, with ellipsis of the Subject and Finite operator (called 'Mood ellipsis' in Halliday and Hasan, 1976), will not have been netted wherever the verb was in v-ng form, or in v-n form when this was not identical with v-d; for example, *[was] waiting, [will be] given,* in:

> I was watching everything with extreme care and waiting for something to happen.
>
> The recovered animals will be released or given to zoos.

This will distort the figure for the total number of finite clauses. It will probably not significantly affect the proportions either for polarity or for primary tense, because such elliptical clauses maintain the primary tense of the clause to which

Table 2.4 Polarity

Positive				*Negative*			
Finite ops:	modal, and			Finite ops:	modal/future	20,843	
	future temporal	213,573			present	26,513	
	present temporal	376,194			past	17,035	
	past temporal	371,879				64,391	64,391
		961,646	961,646				
Abbr. Finite ops:	modal/future	15,493		Finite op. + *not*:		53,995	
	present	60,893		Abbr. Finite op. + *not*:		4,779	
	past	5,443				58,774	58,774
		81,829	81,829				
Verbs, swath 1				Other negative			
(first 25):	v-0	227,216		clauses:		69,507	69,507
	v-s	39,148					
	v-d	235,326					
		501,690	501,690				192,672
			1,545,165				
Subtract:				Subtract:			
Positive tag:	1,119			Negative tag:	1,408		
Finite op. + *not*:	53,995						
Abbr. Finite op. + *not*:	4,779						
	59,893	59,893					

Other negative clauses:	69,507	69,507			
Verbs:					
Finite op. + v-0	73,955				
other *to* + v-0	58,193				
Finite op + v-d	31,211				
	163,359	163,359			
		292,759			
			1,545,165		192,672
			−292,759		−1,408
	Total positive		1,252,406	**Total negative**	191,264

Results: Out of a total of 1,443,670 clauses, 1,252,406 were counted as positive and 191,264 were counted as negative. The ratio of positive: negative is therefore 86.75:13.25 per cent.

they are 'phorically' related—the only way a clause can select independently for primary tense is by *not* ellipting the Finite operator; and they almost always maintain the polarity (for the same reason—that it typically requires a Finite operator to switch it, although here there are other strategies, for example *they weren't watching the game but simply taking a day off work*). We have not done anything more to bring elliptical clauses into the picture.

4.2 The second group of verbs considered

A more important omission is that *all* clauses having a verb other than *be, have* or *do* or one of the first swath of 25 verbs have been omitted altogether if they are in positive, active, simple past or simple present tense. So we took the next 25 verbs, which are those where one of the two forms v-0 or v-d occurs at least 2,400 times in the corpus (again with the figure corrected to exclude occurrences disqualified because nominal instead of verbal in function). These verbs are:

need	believe	bring	hold	let	lose	read
hear	work	try	live	understand	move	
mean	sit	stand	talk	run	show	
help	remember	change	start	happen	set	

The verbs in the second swath differ from those of the first in that nearly all of them occur significantly often in nominal function as well: in v-0 form, this includes all except *sit, remember, lose, understand* and *happen*. All the remaining v-0 forms also occur as nouns (that is, noun substantive or noun adjective), in differing proportions ranging from *try* (under 5 per cent as noun) to *work* (67.5 per cent as noun). (There were, of course, words of this type having a still higher percentage of nominal occurrences, for example, *act, love, mind, control, miss, close, rest* and *view;* but these disappeared from this swath altogether when only their verbal occurrences were taken into account.) In most cases these nouns also occur frequently in the plural, and so coincide with the v-s forms. The ones that did not were *helps, holds, starts* and *pays:* not that these never occur in the plural (for example *no holds barred, by fits and starts*), but their frequency is less than 0.5 per cent of the total.

(It should be stressed here, perhaps, to avoid misunderstanding, that there is no sense in which 'being a noun or being a verb' could ever represent a systemic choice: there is no environment in which you *choose* between *work* as noun and *work* as verb (and hence no such system anywhere in the grammar). We cannot expect to find any general pattern in the proportion of nominal and verbal occurrences: each form enters into different paradigmatic contexts. The relative frequency of, say, *set* noun and *set* verb is obviously affected by the fact that *set* verb is both

Table 2.5 Primary tense

Present				*Past*			
Finite ops:	positive	376,194		Finite ops:	positive	371,879	
	negative	26,513		Finite ops:	negative	17,035	
		402,707	402,707			388,914	388,914
Abbr. Finite ops:		60,893	60,893	Abbr. Finite ops:		5,443	5,443
Verbs, swath 1:	v-0	227,216		Verbs, swath 1:	v-d	235,326	235,326
	v-s	39,148					
		266,364	266,364				
			729,964				629,683
Subtract:				Subtract:			
Tag:	1,476	1,476		Tag:	407	407	
Finite op. + v-0:	73,955			Finite op. + v-d:	31,211	31,211	
other *to* + v-0:	58,193						
imperative:	8,817						
	140,965	140,965					
		142,441				31,618	
			729,964				629,683
			−142,441				−31,618
	Total present		587,523		Total past		598,065

Results: Out of a total of 1,195,710 clauses, 587,523 were counted as present and 598,065 were counted as past. The ratio of present: past is therefore 49.55:50.45 per cent.

v-0 and v-d/v-n; that of *pay* noun and *pay* verb by the fact that *pay* is a mass noun; the noun *show* has a very different collocational spread from the verb *show,* whereas the collocations of noun *help* and verb *help* are much more alike; and so on. If nouns were written with an initial capital letter, as was the practice for a time in the early modern period (and is today in German), the idea of noun and verb being 'the same word' would seem very different.)

The strategy used in investigating the verbs in the second swath was the same as that adopted for the first swath, as outlined in Section 3, (1)-(7) on pages 45–54. The results are shown in Table 2.6.

4.3 Conclusions

The final figures in both counts are shown in Table 2.7.

4.3.1 Polarity

Adding the second swath of 25 verbs increases the total number of 'polarity' occurrences by 97,941. The count of negative is unaffected, at 191,264; that for positive is increased from 1,252,411 to 1,350,352. The proportion of positive to negative is now 87.6:12.4 per cent.

In considering the 50 most frequent verbs, we had included all the verbs occurring in the first part of the frequency list—that which accounts for half the tokens in the corpus. Within that set, the 25 verbs in the second swath covered a part of the frequency list that represents one-tenth of the tokens in the corpus. The difference in the polarity count that is introduced by including this second swath is less than 1 per cent.

We would have liked to be able to give a reasonable estimate of the number that would be added to the 'positive' count if we could take in the v-0, v-s and v-d forms of all the other verbs occurring in the corpus—those with fewer than 2,400 occurrences of their most frequent form. But having worked out the steps that we should have to take in order to do this, we decided it was not worth trying: we faced the familiar pattern of massively diminishing returns. A best guess would be somewhere between 100,000 and 150,000. If 100,000 were added to the positive score, the proportion would become 88.35:11.65 per cent; if 150,000, then 88.69:11.31 per cent; hardly more than 1 per cent difference, even at this higher level.

One problematic feature is that of negative clauses (Table 2.3b). We took the view that a significant number of clauses containing negative words, such as *never, nobody, hardly,* should be interpreted as negative clauses—that is, those where the most plausible form of the tag was the positive one, for example *he hardly ever takes his hat off, does he*? (compare the northern English pattern with postposed Subject, where the repeated Finite operator is negative: *he hardly ever takes his hat off doesn't that inspector*). There

Table 2.6(a) Verbs other than *be, have* and *do:* second swath, v-0, v-s and v-d forms

v-0	*Count*	*Spurious instances out of 200*	*Corrected count*	*v-s*	*Count*	*Spurious instances out of 200*	*Corrected count*	*v-d*	*Count*	*Spurious instances out of 200*	*Corrected count*
need	7,690	74	4,845	needs	2,726	95	1,431	needed	2,667	24	2,347
hear	3,118		3,118	hears	164		164	heard	4,823		4,823
mean	4,968	7	4,794	means	4,279	97	2,204	meant	2,448		2,448
help	6,396	60	4,477	helps	545		545	helped	1,349		1,349
believe	4,444		4,444	believes	429		429	believed	1,646		1,646
work	13,630	135	4,430	works	1,498	101	742	worked	2,448		2,448
sit	1,991		1,991	sits	297		297	sat	4,094		4,094
remember	4,088		4,088	remembers	188		188	remembered	1,417		1,417
bring	3,049		3,049	brings	530		530	brought	4,266	5	4,053
try	4,222	9	4,032	tries	385	17	352	tried	3,615	3	3,561
stand	2,401	30	2,041	stands	700	24	616	stood	3,837		3,837
change	4,428	122	1,727	changes	1,863	163	345	changed	3,792	2	3,754
hold	2,616	40	2,093	holds	508		508	held	3,692		3,692
live	3,892	13	3,639	lives	2,189	149	558	lived	2,396		2,396
talk	4,168	37	3,397	talks	444	120	178	talked	1,537		1,537
start	3,334	51	2,484	starts	456		456	started	3,396	3	3,345
let	6,628	15	3,257	lets	161		161	let			*2,874
understand	3,193		3,193	understands	135		135	understood	1,247		1,247
run	3,795	33	3,169	runs	779	46	600	ran	1,957		1,957
happen	1,768		1,768	happens	1,131		1,131	happened	3,153		3,153
lose	1,361		1,361	loses	182		182	lost	3,610	30	3,069
move	3,011	56	2,168	moves	513	82	303	moved	3,032	4	2,971
show	3,847	57	2,751	shows	1,114	21	997	showed	1,784		1,784
set	6,246	40	*2,655	sets	620	114	267	set			*2,342
read	4,750	5	*2,460	reads	231		231	read			*2,171
		Total v-0	77,431			Total v-s	13,550			Total v-d	68,315

Results: For *polarity,* all are to be added to 'positive' (77,431+13,550+68,315=159,296). For *primary tense,* v-0 and v-s are to be added to 'present' (77,431+13,550=90,981), and v-d are to be added to 'past' (68,315).

'Corrected' scores were derived from 'number of instances' scores by the same procedure as in Table 2.1.

**Note: let, set* and *read* are all both v-0 and v-d. The totals without these three verbs were: v-0, 69,059; v-d, 60,928, which is a ratio of 0.531:0.469. The occurrences of *let, set and read were* therefore distributed into v-0 and v-d in the same proportion, that is, *(let)* 6,131?3,257, 2,874; *(set)* 4,997?2,655, 2,342; (read) 4,631?2,460, 2,171.

Table 2.6(b) Verbs other than *be, have and do:* second swath, v-0, v-d(=v-n) following Finite operator; v-0='imperative'

v-0	*Finite operator + v-0*	to + *v-0 (other than preceding)*	*v-0 = imperative*	*v-d*	*Finite operator + (v-d = v-n)*
need	778	123	38	needed	778
hear	1,145	1,039	29	heard	1,639
mean	1,969	99	15	meant	606
help	1,910	1,634	157	helped	454
believe	1,190	853	93	believed	414
work	1,831	1,826	204	worked	717
sit	443	605	162	sat	72
remember	1,057	508	526	remembered	152
bring	923	1,099	183	brought	1,645
try	1,092	974	468	tried	716
stand	616	523	89	stood	211
change	654	750	103	changed	890
hold	534	743	168	held	937
live	787	1,269	46	lived	565
talk	776	1,376	154	talked	350
start	658	733	112	started	642
let	*707	833	1,378	let	*624
understand	1,197	901	23	understood	342
run	1,055	768	78		
happen	955	358	11	happened	1,248
lose	419	474	11	lost	1,495
move	588	890	79	moved	708
show	704	1,264	171		
set	*837	552	152	set	*738
read	*650	*1,170	169	read	*573
Totals	23,475	21,364	4,619	Total	16,516

Results: For *polarity,* all except imperative are to be deducted from 'positive' (23,475+21,364+16,516=61,355). For *primary tense,* the first three columns are to be deducted from 'present' (23,475+21,364+4,619=49,458), and the fourth column is to be deducted from 'past' (16,516).

**Note: let, set* and read were distributed into v-0 and v-d by the same procedure as in Table 2.6(a).

were 69,507 of these according to our estimate. An alternative interpretation would be to regard these clauses as being on the borderline of positive and negative and assign them to a special category of 'mixed' clauses, each scoring half negative and half positive. We would then take 34,753 away from the negative score and add that figure to positive. The percentages would then be as follows:

Table 2.7 Final totals and percentages

Polarity			*Primary tense*		
	Positive	*Negative*		*Present*	*Past*
Table 2.4	1,252,406	191,264	Table 2.5	587,523	598,065
Table 2.6(a)	159,296		Table 2.6(a)	90,981	68,315
Table 2.6(b)	−61,355		Table 2.6(b)	−49,458	−16,516
Totals:	1,350,347	191,264		629,046	649,864
Results:					
Positive	1,350,347	= 87.6%	Present	629,046	= 49.18%
Negative	191,264	= 12.4%	Past	649,864	= 50.82%
Total	1,541,611		Total	1,278,910	

(using original figures)	(+ 100,000)	(+ 150,000)
89.85 : 10.15	90.47 : 9.53	90.75 : 9.25

This makes slightly more difference to the proportions because it affects the smaller negative count as well as the positive.

4.3.2 Primary tense

Adding the second swath of 25 verbs increases the total 'primary tense' (past/present) count by 93,322 (97,941 minus the 4,619 imperatives). The count for present has increased proportionately rather less than that for past—present from 597,645 to 639,168, past from 598,065 to 649,864. But the overall proportion has changed only 0.4 per cent; it is now (past) 50.41: (present) 49.59.

Intuitively, it seems likely that the proportion of positive: negative does not vary greatly from one genre, or functional variety of the language, to another. Whether spoken or written, formal or informal, monologue or dialogue, on whatever topic, it might remain roughly the same. This could be proved wrong, of course; there might be fewer negatives in narrative texts, for example, than was typical of other varieties. But for past: present there seems more room for variation, and it might well be that the figures here are affected by the relatively high proportion of narrative fiction in the present corpus. It would be desirable to investigate a different corpus, perhaps one consisting entirely of spoken text, to match the figures against those we have presented here.

4.3.3 A note on modality and future tense

We are not pursuing the question of modality and future tense any further in this study; but a few observations may be of interest. The number of instances of Finite operators other than past and present temporal (that is, modal and future temporal taken together) was close to 250,000 (249,909 minus 644 identified as tags=249,265). Of these, about half were accounted for by *can, could, may, might, must, ought* (125,692), half by *will, would, shall, should* (123,573)—including their negatives and abbreviated forms, where applicable.

The first group are modals only. The second group, *will, would, shall, should,* are sometimes modal and sometimes future temporal; but in very different proportions. Inspecting 200 instances of each (positive and negative forms), we found the figures shown in Table 2.8.

If we round off these figures to the nearest 5,000, then out of 125,000 occurrences of *will would, shall, should* (with their negatives), 45,000 were modal and 80,000 future tense. Combining the former figure with that for *can, could, may, might, must, ought* (with their negatives), we get a total for modal operators of 170,000.

We could then represent the system of verbal deixis, using the precise figures obtained and converting them into percentages shown as probabilities:

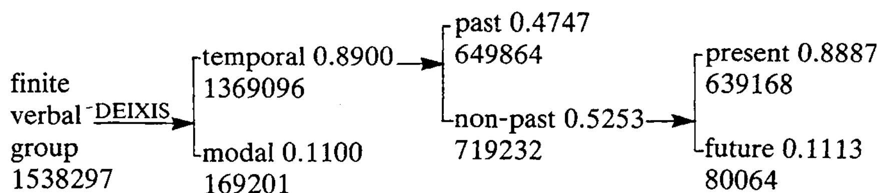


Table 2.8 Modality and future tense

Operator	*Total instances*	*Future: n/200*	*Extrapolated*	*Modal: n/200*	*Extrapolated*
will	41,957	160	33,566	40	8,391
won't	2,742	132	1,810	68	932
would	52,859	140	37,001	60	15,858
wouldn't	3,038	153	2,324	47	714
shall	4,724	134	3,185	66	1,569
shan't	134	—	105	—	29
should	17,392	23	2,000	177	15,392
shouldn't	697	21	73	179	624
Total	123,543		80,064		43,509

This postulates the following:

1 a system of verbal deixis, for the finite verbal group, whose terms are temporal (primary tense) and modal, with temporal unmarked;
2 within primary tense, a system whose terms are past and non-past, with neither being unmarked;
3 within non-past, a system whose terms are present and future, with present as the unmarked term.

We include this note to illustrate what it means to suggest that the probability profiles are not simply appendages to an existing network, but may play a part in the construction of the network as a theory of how the grammar works. But we have not incorporated it into the present investigation, because the distinction between modal and future temporal needs to be made much more precise and explicit.

Up to this point, however, the hypothesis of 'equi' and 'skew' systems may be retained, with the values lying within the limits predicted. We should acknowledge, in saying this, that it is not at all obvious how to define such 'limits' in the case of a semiotic system (such as a language). Semiotic systems are different in crucial respects from systems of other kinds, whether physical, biological or social; and while we can measure standard deviations in general statistical terms, we would not know how to interpret the difference between, say, a frequency distribution of 50:50 and one of 60:40. But we will only come to understand these issues by learning a great deal more about the probability profiles of the most general systems in the grammars of different languages—something that with the advent of corpus linguistics we can at last hope to achieve.

NOTES

1 This investigation forms part of the COBUILD (Collins-Birmingham University) project for Modern English Language Research. M.A.K.Halliday's contribution was made possible by a grant from HarperCollins, whose support is gratefully acknowledged.
2 We are aware that *ain't* is not usually the negative of *am*. But there is a convenient hole for it in the table at that location.

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3

A COMMON SIGNAL IN DISCOURSE: HOW THE WORD *REASON* IS USED IN TEXTS

Michael Hoey

1 REASON AS A DISCOURSE SIGNAL

In 1979 I published a short monograph on signalling in discourse, in which I sought to synthesise some of Eugene Winter's (1977) work on lexical signals with his unpublished ideas (1976) on problem-solution patterning in texts. The editor of the series in which it was published was Malcolm Coulthard, and without his initial commission and subsequent encouragement and support it would never have been written. That monograph was my first real publication and it came at an important time in my career, reviving my flagging morale and bringing me into contact with a number of like-minded linguists. It seems appropriate, therefore, in this festschrift to return to the topic of that early publication, albeit from a very different perspective.

The starting-point of that work and this chapter is the notion that there exists in the vocabulary of English a large number of lexical items whose prime function is to make explicit the semantic relations that may exist between two clauses, sentences or groups of sentences. Examples of this vocabulary are words such as *reason, lead to, different* and *generally*. These items have the grammatical properties of open-class lexis; they can be modified and may fill any of the functional slots of the clause. But their meanings overlap heavily with the meanings of items that are recognisably drawn from closed sets. Winter (1977) notes that this vocabulary, which he terms vocabulary 3, broadly parallels in function the subordinators (vocabulary 1) and conjuncts (vocabulary 2). Thus a text may reflect the relationship between two clauses in any of the following three ways:

(1) Mrs Thatcher was warned in 1981 that rates could only be replaced by a combination of a poll tax, local income tax and local sales tax. She is in such trouble now *because* she chose to ignore Mr Heseltine's advice.

(2) Mrs Thatcher was warned in 1981 that rates could only be replaced by a combination of a poll tax, local income tax and local sales tax. She chose to ignore Mr Heseltine's advice and *so* she is in trouble now.

(3) Mrs Thatcher was warned in 1981 that rates could only be replaced by a combination of a poll tax, local income tax and local sales tax. The *reason* why she is in such trouble now is that she chose to ignore Mr Heseltine's advice, (the original version)

In this instance the lexical signal *reason,* is used to connect two clauses within the same sentence. The structure '*the reason why* x *is* y' unites the two clauses even more closely than the structure 'x *because* y', in that the first structure places clause x as postmodifier to *reason* and clause y in complement position. It is one of the paradoxical features of signals such as *reason* that they can be used to tie two clauses into an intimate grammatical structure or to connect large chunks of text. An example of a whole text organised with the help of the signal *reason* is the advertisement in Figure 3.1. In this advertisement, the word *reasons* in the headline anticipates, and controls our interpretation of, the ten paragraphs that follow headed in bold-face print. We are further reminded of the 'reason' status of these paragraphs by the sentence that comes after them:

(4) There is, however, one other reason to choose an Alfa Romeo.

where not only does the word *reason* retrospectively confirm the earlier characterisation of the preceding paragraphs as reasons but also points to a subsequent indirectly represented reason.

Such lexical signals are therefore flexible and pervasive. As noted above, they may compress into a single clause information that might have been spread over several clauses or they may organise large stretches of text. It is in the latter function particularly that they have been studied by Winter (1977), Hoey (1979, 1983), Jordan (1984) and, under a rather different guise and with a difference of emphasis, by Tadros (1985) and Francis (1986) (both also published in Malcolm Coulthard's monograph series). In the description of written discourses they have proved an essential tool.

But, useful as they are, it has become increasingly apparent that their description and use are not straightforward. In particular, the discourse analyst has to learn when to treat the use of one of these lexical items as a discourse signal and when to disregard its message. Even in the advertisement quoted above, the use of *reason* quoted as example (4) is not unproblematic in that no reason is subsequently stated explicitly, and it is not difficult to find examples of this and other potential signals where no signalling function is being performed.

The question then arises: how does the analyst, and more importantly the ordinary language user, distinguish between the various uses of a potential

NOW THERE ARE
TEN SENSIBLE REASONS
FOR BUYING
AN ALFA ROMEO 33.
(But don't let that put you off.)

Many words have been used to describe the Alfa Romeo 33. Thrilling, elegant, exhilarating.

But now Alfa Romeo have put together a package which also makes the 33 the most sensible (yes, sensible) car you can buy.

The Service Package.

Scheduled service costs paid for the first 3 years, or 36,000 miles.

The Guarantee.

3 year unlimited mileage mechanical warranty.

The Other Guarantee.

The Alfa Romeo 6 year anti-corrosion warranty.

The Failsafe.

Rapide Service. If you breakdown, anywhere in the UK, in the first year we will get you home 24 hours a day.

The No-Hidden Extras Package.

6 months' road tax, number plates, a full tank of petrol and delivery all included in the price. (Other manufacturers charge as much as £500 for these.)

The Accommodation.

5 seats, 5 door hatchback, split-folding rear seats and, in the Sportwagon, 48 cu.ft. luggage capacity.

The Features.

Electric front windows, adjustable steering wheel, central locking and stereo radio/cassette come as standard.

The Preferential Insurance.

Important. The 33 is Group 6, as befits a performance car. Your local dealer can give you more details, and a personal quotation.

The Deal.

Genuine value for money, with a no-nonsense part exchange on your existing car.

The Price.

The 33 range starts at £9,100 for 115 mph 33 1.5Ti; £10,250 for 122 mph 1.7; £10,990 for 120 mph 1.7 Sportwagon Estate.

There is, however, one other reason to choose an Alfa Romeo. It is a reason which cannot easily be put into words. And which cannot be added up in numbers. But settle yourself behind the wheel of a 33 and start the engine.

Then you will understand.

For more information, complete the coupon and send it to Alfa Romeo Information Service, FREEPOST 952, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 9BR, or telephone (0304) 617788 (24 hours).

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Mr.Mrs.Miss.etc Initial Surname

Address

Town.City

County
Postal Code Tel.No.

Year of reg. Present Car

Tick for test drive 1.5 1.7 Sportwagon

Prices correct at time of going to press and include Car Tax, VAT and all the benefits listed above. Preferential Insurance does not apply in Northern Ireland. Warranties and service plan are offered subject to their conditions. All Alfa Romeos run on unleaded petrol.

Figure 3.1
Alfa Romeo advertisement

lexical signal? The answer to this question can only realistically come from one source—the study of a large number of instances of the signalling word drawn from a general corpus on a random basis.

2 TWO USES OF REASON

Sinclair (1991) shows how sophisticated and unexpected insights into the operation of our vocabulary can be attained by careful inspection of computer-generated concordances. In particular, he notes how particular collocations and grammatical patterns may be associated with particular functions of a word. Since such an approach would seem likely to shed light upon the question of when a signal performs a signalling function, and when it does not, and how a user of the language knows the difference, I have chosen in this chapter to investigate the properties of the lexical item *reason* with a view to determining under what circumstances it signals a relation between clauses or within clauses and under what circumstances it serves other kinds of function. To this end, I examined 493 instances of *reason* in concordance format, drawn from the written part of the Birmingham Corpus of English. Of these, 35 were uses of *reason* alluding to the rational faculty, as in the following improbable but authentic contemporary instances from the Birmingham Corpus.

(5) Teach thy necessity to reason thus.
(6) The Parent says, 'Come, let us reason together.'
(7) It is not reason that is arguing here.
(8) But cool reason says there is no continuity.

Apart from the immediate sense of the contexts in which these uses appear, the 'rational faculty' instances of *reason* are distinguished in three ways from their homonymous counterparts. First, there are no instances of this use of *reason* premodified by *a, the* or any cardinal/ordinal. Second, almost a third (12) are instances of verbs rather than nouns; none of the 'cause' instances of *reason* are verbal. Third, the distribution of the two types of *reason* in the clause and sentence is quite distinctive, as Table 3.1 shows.

Table 3.1 Distribution of *reason*

	1st clause position	*Pronoun + BE position*	*Other positions*
Reason (= cause)	160 (35%)	110 (24%)	188 (41%)
Reason (= rationality)	3 (9%)	3 (9%)	29 (83%)

In other words, 59 per cent of instances of 'causal' reason occur in two positions in the clause, either in first position in the clause (as part of whatever group it belongs to) or in complement position (again as part of its group)

following a pronoun (including *there)* plus a form of the verb BE. Examples of each type are:

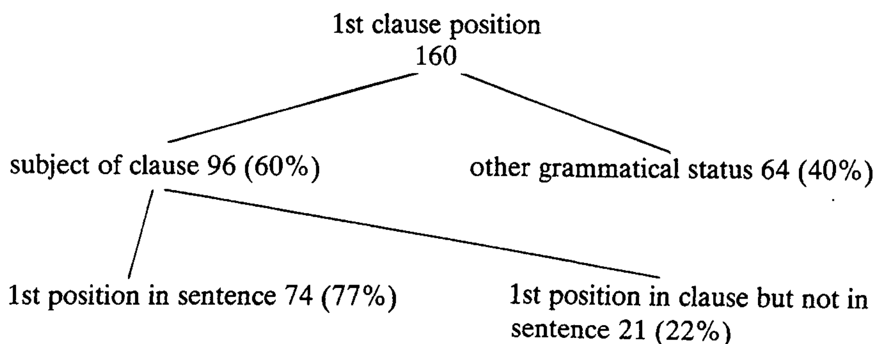
(9) For some reason, the portrait looked like…
(10) That was the very reason I wanted to play a woman.

On the other hand, only 6 per cent of instances of 'rational' reason occur in either of these positions.

It would seem, then, that the homonyms are readily distinguishable on the basis of their regular syntactic patterning.

3 REASON IN CLAUSE-INITIAL POSITION

Let us now consider more closely the 458 examples of 'causal' *reason,* beginning with the 160 examples of its occurrence in first position in the clause. Obviously, given the natural tendency in English for the subject to appear early in the clause and given that there is typically more than one clause in a sentence, it seems reasonable to begin by considering the distribution of 'causal' *reason* (henceforth, to be referred to simply as *reason*) in initial clause position with respect to whether the group it is head of is subject and whether the clause it is part of is first in the sentence.



Subordination and co-ordinators were ignored in all cases.

It is hard without access to more general information about first clause position to be confident of the significance of these figures. What is needed is a large-scale analysis of naturally occurring data to discover what the relative likelihood is of a clause beginning with a subject rather than an adjunct or other grammatical possibility. I have not undertaken analysis on the necessary scale. Nevertheless, examination of 200 clauses, 100 taken from the two main front-page stories of the *Independent,* Friday 17 January 1992, and 100 taken from a travel book, *Spanish Pilgrimage,* by Robin Hanbury-Tenison, is suggestive of what a fuller analysis might find. In the *Independent texts* ('PM attacks "tax-dodger"' and 'Big three push home loan costs down to 1988 level'), 83 per cent of the clauses begin with a

subject while just 17 per cent begin with something other than a subject (ignoring here and elsewhere the inevitable first position of subordinators and co-ordinators).

Analysis of the *Spanish Pilgrimage* passage revealed that 70 per cent of the clauses begin with subject and 30 per cent begin with something other than subject. On first sight these figures seem rather different from those for the *Independent* texts and broadly in line with those given for *reason*. However, these percentages hide a major difference. Of the 30 clauses in the *Spanish Pilgrimage passage* that begin with other than subject, 15 begin with a predicator because of an omitted subject; this is a possibility not available for 'causal' *reason* since none of its uses are verbal. If these predicators are removed, then 82 per cent of the *Spanish Pilgrimage* passage's clauses begin with a subject, leaving a mere 18 per cent of clauses beginning with some other grammatical possibility. (If predicators are removed from the count of sentence-initial elements of the *Independent* texts, then the percentages become 91 per cent beginning with subject and 9 per cent with something else; these proportions seem broadly to support Halliday and James's claims (chapter 2) about the distribution of grammatical choices being either 1:1 or 9:1.)

Obviously, these figures can only be suggestive. It could prove to be the case that Robin Hanbury-Tenison and the *Independent* reporters have a distinctive style in such matters or that the genres chosen (or the size of the samples examined) have skewed the percentages. Nevertheless, they do support a hunch that the proportion of non-subject uses of *reason* is higher than might have been expected on assumptions of typical distribution of clause-initial elements.

Again, without more detailed study, caution must be exercised in the interpretation of the other clear aspect of *reason's* distribution—that 77 per cent of its instances of appearance as subject in first position in the clauses are also instances of its appearance in first position in the sentence. For the purposes of comparison, the first 50 sentences of the *Spanish Pilgrimage* passage and a total of 50 consecutive sentences taken from the two *Independent* texts previously analysed were examined with a view to seeing what proportion of the sentences were complex and/or compound. (For this purpose, compound sentences with omitted subject in the second clause were treated as if they were simple; sentences with P-bound clauses without subjects were likewise ignored.) In the passage from *Spanish Pilgrimage,* there were 14 simple sentences and 36 complex and/or compound sentences. In the *Independent* texts, there were exactly 25 of each. This means that there were 39 simple sentences and 61 complex and/ or compound sentences in total. Self-evidently, 100 sentences mean that there are 100 first positions in those sentences; for the 61 complex and/or compound sentences, there are, equally obviously, a minimum of 61 clause-initial positions that are not sentence-initial. (In fact, of course, a number of sentences had more than one

subordinate or co-ordinated clause.) If the distribution of the instances of a noun were random with respect to sentence- or clause-initial position, the noun would occur 62 per cent of the time in sentence-initial position and 38 per cent in clause-initial positions that were not sentence-initial. If the two sets of data are treated separately, the position does not alter radically: for the *Independent,* random distribution of a noun would result in the noun's appearing 67 per cent of the time in sentence-initial position, and for the *Spanish Pilgrimage* passage it would result in the noun's appearing 58 per cent of the time in such a position. This tentatively supports the view that the distribution of *reason* is not random with regard to its frequency of occurrence (77 per cent) in sentence-initial position.

The small-scale and informal nature of the analyses reported above must be very cautiously interpreted and are only intended to provide light support for intuitions about the significance of the distribution of 'causal' *reason* in the data I examined. At the very least, though, they do not provide counter-evidence for the following claims:

1 *Reason* tends to occur in clause-initial position as part of an adverbial group more often than is the case for other nouns in the language.
2 When it is (part of) the subject of its clause, *reason* tends to occur in sentence-initial position more often than is the case for other nouns in the language.

4 *REASON* AS SUBJECT

Given the apparent importance of *reason* as sentence-initial subject, it is a natural next step to consider the main grammatical patterns in which it appears. I give below representative examples of the use of *reason* as subject, which typify the major uses of the word as reflected in the corpus. Table 3.2 quantifies the main patterns. Here and elsewhere I have given only so much of the example as is required to indicate the pattern.

(11) And the reason was simple.
(12) The reason was that in America such action…
(13) The reason I mention it is that…
(14) The reason for my relief was that…
(15) The reason for this is a simple one.
(16) The reason that the union is the best organisation to protect you is that…
(17) The reason why both sides have to keep their schedules close to their chests is because…
(18) Perhaps the most important reason for GM's management success is that…
(19) The main reason was that I was calling…

(20) One reason she had picked Banners was that...
(21) What earthly reason...? *[sic]*

Table 3.2 Main patterns of subject

Reason as subject without premodification	49
The reason (without postmodification)	16
The reason + BE	14
The reason + BE + *that*-clause	7
The reason + BE + *simple*	6
The reason (with postmodification)	27
The reason + Ø-clause	12
The reason for x	9
The reason for this (x)	6
The reason that-clause	3
The reason why-clause	2
Reason as subject with premodification	47
Evaluative modification	26
The main reason	12
Count modification	13
Reason denied	4

Table 3.2 and all but the last of the examples (11–21) show *reason* functioning as a true signal. A small number are cataphoric across sentences, notably those used in the pattern *The reason is simple.* Here the sentence functions in much the same way as an emphatic conjunct:

x	The reason is (simple).	y
consequence		cause

The great majority, however, present the reason immediately after the *be* in the *that*-clause that follows. The pattern, then, is:

Subject	BE	*Clause complement*
‘reason’		information characterised as reason

Within this pattern, there are two major options. The speaker/writer can either use the subject to refer back to one or more previous clauses or can enshrine in the subject whatever it is for which a reason is sought. Thus, abstracting somewhat, the two patterns available for expressing a reason relation are:

1 x. The reason is y.
2 The reason x is y.

Of the unpremodified instances of *reason* 43 per cent compress the whole clause relation into a single sentence, as in pattern 2. Pattern 1 is the truly

clause-relational one, as Winter (1977) originally characterised it, and takes two basic forms:

x. The reason is y.
x. The reason for this (z)/that (z)/the z is y.

If *this* is chosen, we may have *for this* or some accompanying characterisation (z), for example *for this perverse effect*. If *the* is chosen, there is, of course, no choice but to provide such a characterisation, for example *the exodus*.

The *y* part of the clause in all the patterns mentioned is typically either a *that*-clause or a nominal group. An example of y as *that*-clause is:

(22) The other reason is that oil is as polluting as coal in this context.

The y part as nominal group is illustrated in the following pair of examples:

(23) At least part of the reason was the loyalty of his staff.
(24) Part of the reason for the drop is competition from…

Occasionally the y element may be a *to*-clause, for example:

(25) The third most common reason for borrowing is to pay off…

or a clause without *that:*

(26) The other reason is, you never know what a chum…

In the spoken corpus, the y element may be a *because*-clause, for example:

(27) Solzhenitsyn, the only reason he won the goddamned Nobel Prize was because he slagged…

or a *so that* clause:

(28) The reason for me doing an MA in graphic design is so that I can…

These then are the ways that a reason relation can be set up and expressed by means of the lexical signal *reason* in subject position. It is perhaps worth noting that the plural *reasons* rarely occurs in these patterns except in the phrase *one of the reasons:*

(29) One of the reasons why this area has boomed are it's got a lot of oil.
(30) One of the reasons I'm a socialist is because I loathe bullying.

(both examples are from the spoken corpus).

The question now arises: why should the patterns we have been describing be used? It is, after all, possible to use 'x *because* y' to say what is said by 'x. *The reason is* y.' There are several answers to this question. First, the patterns allow one to comment on the importance or relevance of the reason to be offered:

(31) The *most common* reason for a mother to start worrying...
(32) The *main* reason for joining a motor organisation...

They also allow one to count one's reasons and thereby alert the reader to either the presence or the absence of others:

(33) The *first* reason for caution...
(34) ...the *only* reason for doing their respective jobs...

The characterisation in the z part may also permit a refocussing or clarifying of the writer's or speaker's position. The most obvious motive for using such patterns, however, is to make use of the opportunities for thematisation and separate emphasis on the y element that they provide and which are unavailable if *because* is used. This, of course, also explains why *reason* appears in sentence-initial position so often compared with other nouns, because only there are the thematisation possibilities fully realised.[1]

5 POSTMODIFICATION OF *REASON*

In the previous section we looked briefly at the pattern

The reason x is y

and I noted that this pattern allows the reason relation to be held within the confines of a single sentence. In this section we will look more closely at the x element but I will no longer confine the discussion to the occurrence of *reason* in subject position, for the very good reason that there will be found to be a marked difference in the use to which *reason* is put depending on whether it appears in subject or complement position. There are five ways in which *reason* as head of its group may be postmodified: by 0?-clause, *that-clause, for* x, *why-clause* or *to* x. Each is illustrated below:

(35) the main reason Labour won that first election
(36) the sole reason that they were Black or Brown
(37) the principal reason for the withdrawal
(38) a single overriding personal reason why I wanted to be free
(39) a selfish reason to want to help my own kid

They are not, however, equally likely or evenly distributed across the grammatical functions of the clause. In Table 3.3. each of these post-modifying patterns is plotted against subject, object and complement position in the clause. (I follow Sinclair, 1972, in distinguishing *object* from *complement* rather than combining them as does Halliday, 1985. Thus in the clause *I see* ***no reason why...***, no *reason why* is handled as object, whereas in *That was* ***no reason why...***, *no reason why* is analysed as complement.) A judgement is then made for each instance as to whether the reason being described is being affirmed or denied.

Table 3.3 Patterns of postmodification of *reason* and clause position

	Subject		*Object*		*Complement*	
	Reason affirmed or assumed	*Reason denied*	*Reason affirmed or assumed*	*Reason denied*	*Reason affirmed or assumed*	*Reason denied*
reason + Ø-clause	19	–	–	–	8	1
reason *that*-clause	5	–	–	–	–	–
reason + *for* x	27	–	10	4	13	8
reason + *why*-clause	7	–	4	9	9	27
reason + *to* x	–	–	7	14	3	15

It will immediately be seen that, in the written corpus, there are some striking anomalies of distribution. In subject position, *reason+to* x has not occurred, in object position neither *reason*+0?-clause nor *reason+that*-clause have occurred, and in complement position *reason+that*-clause has not occurred. Indeed, this last pattern has a low frequency of occurrence even in the one position in which it appears. Its main use is not reflected in the table. As we shall see, it tends to appear as part of the adjunct, typically in such phrases as *for the simple reason that...*

A further distributional anomaly will be found in the relative frequency of other choices. *Reason+why*-clause is infrequent in subject position but very common in complement position. *Reason*+0?-clause, on the other hand, is frequent in subject position and relatively uncommon in complement position. The most common pattern in object position is neither of these, *reason+to* x being the most preferred option, while the most common pattern in subject position is *reason+for* x.

It would seem, then, that if we are making *reason* the subject (and typically the theme), we opt for *the reason for x* or *the reason* x. If we are making *reason* the complement (and therefore part of the rheme) we opt most frequently for *the reason why x*. If *reason* is the object, we tend to choose *reason to*. So the grammatical form of the group tends to associate with the grammatical function of the group.

A still more interesting distributional anomaly, however, will be found if we look at the way the grammatical form chosen ties in with the decision to affirm or assume a reason or to deny it. If we want to deny a reason or deny that we have one, we don't place the signal in subject position. Just over half (59 per cent) of objects and complements having *reason* as head are denying the reason or denying the existence of one:

(40) Mahathir sees no reason to tinker with success.

(41) Unless you have any reason to suspect a murder, I'd...
(42) But there was no reason on God's earth why I...
(43) There is no reason to suppose that our stay here...

Furthermore, the choice of denying (the existence of) reason is clearly associated with two of the patterns just illustrated, 75 per cent of instances of *reason why* clauses in complement position and 83 per cent of instances of *reason to* x in complement position being used for negative purposes in this clause position. Although the proportion is lower, these two grammatical patterns are also associated with negative reasons in object position also.

So it would seem that grammatical form is also associated with positive or negative stance towards the mention of *reason.* Since denial of (the existence of) a reason is unlikely to be thematised, the instances with negative stance all occur in object or complement position. It is worth noting that in this negative form the word *reason* is not functioning as the lexical sign of the clause relation of reason. Presumably, then, we use grammatical form and position in the clause (amongst other matters) to determine whether a particular use of the word is relational or not.

One final comment on this aspect of the data: when *reason why* is used negatively in object position, the predicator is normally *see,* for example:

(44) ...really I see no reason why I should be obliged to...

When *reason to* x is used negatively in object position, the predicator most commonly used is *have,* as in

(45) They'd have no reason to come to the surface.

It should be said that the analysis reported here was carried out on a written corpus. Examination of examples from the spoken corpus suggests the same tendencies hold true but perhaps with different weightings. For example, for the pattern *reason why,* 47 examples were examined and the figures were as shown in Table 3.4. If these figures were to prove typical of spoken practice in general, they would suggest a greater tendency in speech for the object position to be used negatively for *reason* and a weaker tendency to use the complement position. Clearly, more work is needed to clarify whether speech and writing differ in these respects.

Table 3.4 Reason why and clause position

	Subject		*Object*		*Complement*	
	Reason affirmed or assumed	*Reason denied*	*Reason affirmed or assumed*	*Reason denied*	*Reason affirmed or assumed*	*Reason denied*
reason + *why*-clause	17	3	1	8	8	10

6 SOME COMMON CLAUSE STRUCTURES INVOLVING *REASON*

It may have been noticed that there were rather more instances of *reason* in complement function than in object function. Indeed, *reason* in complement function was 75 per cent more likely to occur than *reason* in object function. This reflects a general tendency for reason to occur in the pattern

There are 110 instances of *reason* in this pattern; in other words, 24 per cent of all instances of *reason* in the corpus examined were used in this way. Table 3.5 shows the general distribution of these 110 cases. Examples of the patterns mentioned in Table 3.5 are:

(46) That wasn't the reason.
(47) There's no medical reason why a baby needs to change...
(48) There's no reason to trust her.
(49) This was the reason so many of the detainees...
(50) That was a perverse reason.
(51) That's reason number two for your not going.
(52) It was for this reason that I loved acting Hamlet.

Table 3.5 Distribution of reason in slot following pronoun and BE

Pronoun + reason	110	
Denial of (knowledge of) reason	63	(57%)
no reason why clause	17	
no reason to verb	11	
Reason given		
Nominal group	39	
Unpremodified	9	
Premodified	30	
Evaluation	21	
Count	9	
Prepositional phrase	8	
for this reason that	5	
for the same reason that	1	
for this reason among others	1	
for one reason only	1	

It will be noticed that all the positive patterns, illustrated in examples (49)-(52), are actually signals not of reason but of result:

y. This was the reason x

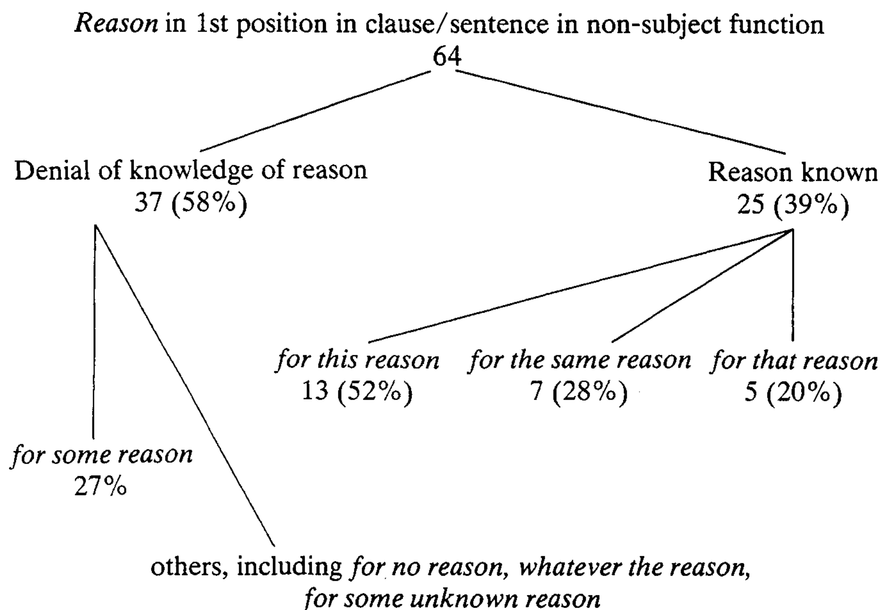
is equivalent to

y. As a result x.

Again the major difference is one of thematisation. *It was for this reason that I loved acting Hamlet* has a dummy theme and rhematises everything including the result relationship; *As a result I loved acting Hamlet* thematises *as a result* and *I* and leaves far less rheme—and far less emphasis on the result relation.

So we find that in a highly common clause pattern *reason* is either denied or used to signal not reason but result. The use of the signal to mark the reason relation has so far been limited to a few patterns, notably those with *reason* in sentence-initial position. There is, however, one more pattern we must consider: the place of *reason* in adverbial (and other) structures. I suggested in Section 3 that there seemed to be a higher ratio of clause-initial positions filled by *reason* in a role other than subject than would be expected on the basis of a normal distribution of clause-initial elements. It is to these elements that we now turn our attention.

The distribution of *reason* in non-subject clause-initial elements can be represented as follows:



Again we find a picture that closely resembles the distribution found for the pronoun+BE+*reason* pattern: 58 per cent of instances are denying a reason relation or denying knowledge of a reason. Those that *are* signalling are signalling result (*for this reason* and *for that reason*) or result and matching compatibility *(for the same reason)*. It would appear then, that *reason* signals result as often as reason, and that much of the time it is not signalling a relation at all but warning the reader that he/she is not going to get to know the reason for some other claimed state

of affairs. Of all uses of *reason* in the corpus examined (that is, 200 out of 458 examples) 44 per cent are denials of (knowledge of) a reason. To check whether this was a property of all lexical signals, that they are used to deny rather than signal relations, I examined 452 instances of *result* drawn from the same corpus; only 11 (that is, 2 per cent) denied (knowledge of) result. It is safe to assume, therefore, that this is a particular characteristic of *reason*.

7 CONCLUSIONS

It may be helpful to draw together in one place the findings I have reported in the course of this chapter. The following findings are made for the functioning of the word *reason* (findings (2) and (3) being more tentative than the others).

1 The two uses of *reason* ('rational faculty' and 'cause') are distinguishable largely on the basis of their syntactic distribution.
2 *Reason* tends to occur in clause-initial position as part of an adverbial group more often than is normal for nouns.
3 *Reason* tends, when it is (part of) the subject of its clause, to occur in sentence-initial position more often than is normal for nouns.
4 When *reason* is sentence-initial, it functions to signal a reason relation in patterns such as

    x. The reason is (simple), y
    x. The reason is y.
    x. The reason for this (z) is y.
    The reason x is y.

5 When *reason* is (part of) the object or complement of its clause, it is typically postmodified by *for* x, *why*-clause, or *to* x.
6 When *reason* is used as (part of) the object or complement of its clause, with *why* clause or *to* x postmodification, it is twice as likely to be there to deny (knowledge of) a reason as to affirm or assume it.
7 When *reason* is (part of) the object, the predicator is often either *see* or *have*.
8 Almost one in four instances of *reason* occur in the pattern pronoun (including *there*)+BE+group containing *reason*.
9 When *reason* is used positively as part of the pattern described in 8, it signals a result relation:

    y. This is the reason x.

10 When *reason* is used as part of a non-subject clause-initial element, it is one-and-a-half times more likely to be a denial of (the knowledge of) a reason than to be an affirmation or assumption of reason.
11 When *reason* is used positively as part of a non-subject clause-initial

element, it signals result (or, sometimes, result and matching compatibility).

All these findings strongly support Sinclair's (1991) claim that particular collocations and grammatical patterns may be associated with particular functions of a word. They also suggest that Winter's (1977) vocabulary 3 items are more complex in their functioning than either he or I bargained for. It is evident that we have only just begun the proper description of signalling in discourse.

NOTE

1 Interestingly, in advertising language, *because* is sometimes used to achieve these ends in contexts where *the reason is* might have been the more natural choice for other varieties of English; for example:

> Maureen White knows almost as many ways to pot a red ball as her husband Jimmy.

Because Edam offers her such a variety of healthy and unusual recipes.

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4

GRAMMAR AND LEXIS SOME PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Dave Willis

1 GRAMMAR AND LEXIS: TWO ASPECTS OF THE SAME PHENOMENON

The grammar and the lexicon are two ways of describing the same phenomenon, language. They contain much the same information. The lexicon lists words and their meanings and exemplifies and categorises the patterns in which they occur. The grammar lists structures and classifies words according to the way they operate as elements in structure. In principle, one could begin with lexis and go on to identify the structures and classes of the grammar, or one could begin with a statement about the grammar and go on to refine this to provide a description of a particular word.

A statement about the grammar, for example, might identify a class of words known as *verbs*. Within this category there is a subclass of verbs which are followed by two objects, one direct and the other indirect. The indirect object may be a recipient, as in:

> The woman gave *me* a dollar tip.

or a beneficiary, as in:

> Let me buy *you* a drink.

The difference between these two is marked if we use a prepositional form:

> Give it *to me*.

as against:

> Many people have their cars bought *for them* by the firm they work for.

The class of double-object verbs can, then, be divided into two sub-classes: those with which the indirect object is a recipient and those with which it is a beneficiary.

The verb *give* is most commonly used with a recipient, but it can be used with a beneficiary:

> They gave *her* a great send-off.
> They gave a farewell party *for her*.

But this use is highly restricted. It occurs only when the direct object is a word denoting some kind of celebratory event—*a party* for example, or *a dinner*. The grammar of the word *give,* then, is quite unique. We can establish this uniqueness by looking at the patterns in which it occurs and the semantics of the words which go to make up those patterns. We could provide further information about the frequency of these patterns and their likely contexts. After an imperative, for example, the prepositional form is normal if the direct object is a pronoun, as in the example above. With a noun group as object the indirect-object form is normally used:

> Give *me* that red pencil please.

All this is part of the grammar. But it is also, of course, part of the lexicon, it is a part of the word *give.* And there is, as we shall see later, a good deal more to the grammar of this word.

So in describing language we can begin with a description of classes within the grammar and go on to refine these classes until we identify a particular word. On the other hand, we could begin with a word and in describing its behaviour go on to identify the classes which make up the grammar. We could begin with the word *give* and in describing its behaviour go on to identify the class of double-object verbs, then to identify other words which behave in the same way, and so on.

Language learners are involved in the job of discovering the language. In carrying out this task they have to work simultaneously with the grammar and the lexicon. They discover words and they assign these words to classes. This may be a conscious or an unconscious process, but it represents a large part of what is involved in learning the grammar of the language. At the same time learners are discovering the classes to which words might belong and assigning the words in their lexicon to these classes. The problem facing those of us involved in language pedagogy is how best to help them cope with this task. I have a feeling that in the present state of teaching English as a foreign or second language (TEFL, TESL) we are not as helpful as we might be in making the bridge between the grammar and the lexicon. The description of the language we offer learners is heavily loaded towards the grammar. To establish this point and to suggest how we might be more helpful I would like to look at grammar under five headings. I would like to look at a number of different perspectives on grammar, which I will refer to as the grammar of:

structure,
necessary choice,
class,
collocation,
probability.

I do not claim that these are separate aspects of the grammar; indeed, I will show that they are very much interrelated. What I do claim, however, is that these are different perspectives on grammar and that each of these perspectives should contribute fully to a pedagogic grammar.

2 THE GRAMMAR OF STRUCTURE

The words *structure* and *structural* are normally used in TEFL to denote a whole range of items in a grammatical syllabus like conditional sentences, the passive or reported speech. I am using the term here in a stricter sense, related to a rank scale in grammar. It relates, for example, to the structure of the clause. The basic structure of the clause in English is SP(O)(C), that is a subject and predicator followed by an object or complement, or both. Clause structure in English is relatively simple and the order of basic elements in the clause is relatively fixed. The main complication is the positioning of adverbial elements in the clause.

Generally, the structure of the clause and the verb group are thoroughly covered in teaching materials. This is not the case, however, with the structure of the noun group, and this is odd because the noun group, and in particular the postmodification of the noun group, is highly complex and carries a wealth of meaning. I shall have a good deal to say later about the noun group and its structure.

3 THE GRAMMAR OF NECESSARY CHOICE

This is the aspect of grammar which is most thoroughly treated pedagogically. By *necessary choice,* I mean a choice that must be made in any clause. Obvious examples are the features of the verb group—mood, tense, aspect and voice. These choices figure massively in most English-language teaching (ELT) coursebooks, in some cases to the exclusion of almost everything else. In the noun group a determiner must be selected or the decision must be taken to omit the determiner. Since the most commonly occurring determiners by far are the definite and indefinite article, it is not surprising that these features of the grammar occupy a prominent place in most coursebooks. The notion of *determiner,* however, including, for example, possessives and demonstratives, does not usually come across so clearly.

Structure and necessary choice overlap when it comes to the ordering of elements in structure and this again features strongly in teaching materials

even though, as I have pointed out, the ordering of elements in English is relatively fixed.

The grammar of necessary choice, therefore, makes up the largest part of most instructional materials. This is hardly surprising since such necessary choices are by definition all-pervasive. It does, however, have the unfortunate consequence that the learners' efforts are concentrated most heavily on those parts of the grammar which seem to be most resistant to teaching and, because they are so frequent, most accessible to acquisition. I am not arguing that learners should not be given guidance in handling these parts of the grammar; I am suggesting that if they are treated as the main, in some cases almost the *only,* elements in the teaching syllabus then the result is likely to be a deficit syllabus in which failure features much more obtrusively than success. The accumulation of words and phrases, on the other hand, marks positive achievement on the part of the learner. It is this process of steady accumulation and growth which should provide the framework for the gradual acquisition of the grammar.

4 THE GRAMMAR OF CLASS

The grammar of class is familiar to teachers. There is, for example, the class of uncountable nouns, which has a prominent part in teaching materials. This prominence may relate to the fact that they are identified as a class by necessary choice. There are restrictions on the choice of determiner and these nouns are not found in the plural. There is also a class of verbs which are not normally found with continuous aspect. Perhaps one should say a class of meanings rather than verbs since, to the consternation of learners, many verbs, such as *be, have, think* and *see* carry meanings which do accommodate continuous aspect as well as meanings which do not. Again these meanings are bound up with necessary choice, in this case the choice of aspect.

But not all classes relate to structure and necessary choice. Sometimes a class of words can appear to be a pretty heterogeneous assortment. What, for example, do the nouns *smile, lecture, slap, glance, example* and *chuckle* have in common? The answer is that they all collocate with the word *give:*

> She gave Etta a quick, shrewd glance.
> Could you give me a few examples.

The link which defines this class is one of collocation. For its part the verb *give* is a member of the class of *delexical verbs,* a verb 'used in expressions where it does not have a very distinct meaning of its own, but where most of the meaning is in the noun which follows it' (Sinclair, 1987). The nouns which follow *give* can be grouped semantically as facial expressions, non-verbal communication, verbal acts and aggressive acts. Other common

delexical verbs are *have, take, make,* and *do*. Here again the nouns which collocate can be grouped semantically. There are also less common verbs which behave in much the same way such as *entertain* (an *idea* or *suspicion*) or *effect* (*savings* or *an entry*).

One value of phrases with delexical verbs is that they lend themselves easily to modification:

> He gave a short laugh.
> ? He laughed shortly.

> Could you give me a few examples.
> ? Could you exemplify that in a few ways.

Given this, it is not surprising that the object of a delexical verb is commonly modified in some way. We can, then, make a probability statement about these verbs and their likely patternings.

Most ELT courses identify a class of verbs like *say, tell* and *suggest* which are associated with reported speech. They spend a good deal of time and space handling reported speech, including reported statements with noun clauses introduced by *(that)*. One might argue indeed that they *waste* a good deal of time and space in this way (see Willis, 1990), since the problems identified are related to tense and deixis even though the tense patterns and deictic forms in reported speech in English operate in a way which can be predicted without taking any account of reported speech. On the other hand, relatively little time is taken identifying the class of nouns like *belief, argument* and *feeling,* commonly followed by noun clauses with *(that)*. Many of these are nouns related to verbs, but some of the commonest, such as *fact* and *possibility,* are not. Words of this kind play an important part in the construction of discourse. Once a proposition has been reified as a belief or a fact or a possibility it can readily be referred to and commented on. The frequency of a phrase like *the fact that* bears testimony to the value of this.

There is also an important class of nouns like *decision, claim,* and *hope* followed by *to*+infinitive, and yet another class including *behaviour, arrival* and *departure* which are followed by *of*. Again many of these are related to verbs and have a particular value. The announcement:

> British Rail apologise for the late arrival/departure of…

has a much more familiar ring than:

> The 2.15 will arrive late. British Rail apologise for this.

Verbs are happenings which can and perhaps should be avoided. Nouns just are. They do not carry the same responsibilities.

As I have already pointed out, the structure of the noun group is relatively neglected in most pedagogic grammars. Murphy (1985), for example, devotes a full 68 units to the verb group. The treatment of noun-group

postmodification, on the other hand, is restricted to five units on relative clauses and another on *-ing* and *-ed* clauses. Some teachers attempt to justify this unequal weighting with the argument that learners make more mistakes with verbs; but this is a deficit view of language learning which regards the main purpose of the exercise as eliminating error rather than creating meanings. While it is agreed that we are aiming in the long run at fluency, it is often argued that accuracy is more important in the short term. No conscientious teacher would deny the importance of accuracy, but if the term is to be really meaningful then it should apply not simply to the construction of acceptable utterances. That is a matter of *conformity* rather than accuracy. This conformity is closely related to structure and necessary choice. It dominates syllabus design and the design of teaching materials.

Accuracy should apply to the relationship between form and meaning. The important question is how accurately learners are able to encode the meanings they wish to communicate. In order to do this they will certainly need to conform to certain linguistic conventions, but they will also need insights into the language as a resource for meaning rather than as a set of conventions which must be followed. This means that they need more than just a stock of words. They also need insights into the way those words commonly combine with others to create meaning not simply as elements in a clause but as parts of other units also. An overconcern with conformity relegates accuracy to a very secondary place. There is an obsession with the avoidance of error for its own sake. Error is stigmatised because it interferes with conformity, not because it interferes with accuracy. Once this view of learning and what is to be learned becomes established, it creates its own rationale. Learners are judged in terms of conformity, not in terms of accuracy.

The noun group is an important resource for meaning, particularly in the kind of academic and business discourse which many learners hope eventually to engage in. Almost any noun can be postmodified by a defining relative or an *-ing* or *-ed* clause; but there are also, as we have seen, important classes of noun which are postmodified in particular ways. These and other grammatical classes should be identified and highlighted for learners in a systematic way so they can begin to work towards using the full resources of the language.

5 THE GRAMMAR OF COLLOCATION AND PROBABILITY

Clearly, class and collocation overlap. Most of the classes we have identified so far are identified in terms of collocation, nouns commonly followed by *that* or *to* for example. Another word which collocates with *that* to build a number of important phrases is the word *is*. The word *thing,* for example, occurs frequently in the phrase:

> The *thing is* that…

But we can go beyond this generalisation. When the word *thing* is used in this way it tends to be premodified by words like *main, important, other, silly, annoying* and *worrying*. Phrases of this kind have such a high probability of occurrence that they are worth identifying for the learner.

There are a large number of words which figure frequently in frames like:

> …the (adjective) (noun) is that…
> …the (adjective) (noun) is to…

In a study of nouns related to verbs Au (1991) looks at the behaviour of the words *question* and *answer* in a corpus drawn from *The Times*. In that corpus the word *question* is found much more commonly with the meaning of problem or dilemma than with the meaning of interrogative. Similarly, the word *answer* tends to mean solution rather than response. Interestingly, in the corpus under study around 25 per cent of the occurrences of the word *question* are postmodified and defined by a prepositional group with *of:*

> the question of civil proceedings…
> the fundamental question of how to…

When it functions as complement in the clause, nearly half the occurrences are postmodified in this way:

> It is a question of judgement and balance…
> It is a question of creating ideas…

The word *answer,* however, is rarely defined. Au speculates that this is because *question* comes at the beginning of a situation-problem-response structure in discourse (see Hoey, 1983). We are therefore obliged to identify the *question* under consideration. By the time we come to the *answer* the topic has already been identified so answers are modified in terms of their efficacy rather than in terms of the topic to which they relate. This again is a statement of probability which is worth bringing to the attention of language learners.

Words like *question, problem* and *difficulty,* on the one hand, and words like *answer* and *solution,* on the other, play an important part in the structure of discourse. Learners whose attention is not drawn to the typical behaviour of words like this are in danger of overlooking important meaning resources and of failing to recognise markers in text which enable faster and more efficient reading. Very often the problem for successful learners is not that they make mistakes but that they are inefficient in their use of the language. Their reading is halting and imprecise. The English they speak or write

sounds stilted and unnatural. This is often because they lack the holophrases and frames that are such an important part of the native speaker's armoury.

6 SOME IMPLICATIONS

I have argued elsewhere (Willis, 1990) the case for a lexical syllabus. Everything I have said here reinforces that case. Taking lexis as a starting point for syllabus design ensures that attention is drawn to the most frequent words in the language, their important meanings and the patterns in which they typically occur. This is not for a moment to suggest that grammar should play no part in course design. But there are at least three reasons why the first emphasis should be on lexis. First, the grammar is likely to be more complete if we take words as the starting point. Take care of the words and the structures will take care of themselves. Second, there is the argument for accuracy as opposed to conformity which I have outlined above. Too great a concern with the relatively abstract systems of structure and necessary choice, which lie at the heart of grammar, relegates the creation of meaning to a secondary place. Third, the word provides the learner with a tangible and recognisable starting point for the exploration of the language. In the early stages learners can retrieve and organise a good deal of knowledge from a study of occurrences of the word *in,* for example, in contexts which are familiar to them.

This observation points the way to implications for methodology. When one begins to look at language in the ways I have been describing, it brings home dramatically the size and subtlety of the task faced by a language learner. It is difficult to see how we can draw attention systematically to everything that learners need to know. We can, however, encourage learners to make important generalisations for themselves; if, for example, we identify major word classes, then learners can go on to classify words for themselves. They are more likely to be encouraged to do this if we take an approach based on the kind of data-driven learning described by Johns (1990) than if we seek to 'present' them with the language. It is central to Johns's case that 'Even the best grammars are incomplete, partial and misleading' (1990). It follows from this that we cannot rely on communicating to the learner an outline of the grammar. Johns recommends that learners' investigation of the commonly occurring patterns based round a given word should be a major component in a learner-centred methodology.

Johns's approach, which operates within an English for Overseas Students Unit, makes use of computer-generated concordances drawn from texts relevant to a variety of academic purposes. Willis and Willis (1988) have applied a similar approach to a course in English for general purposes. Grammarians and lexicographers construct their view of language from a detailed study of a given corpus of the language. It is possible to construct a learner's corpus' based on the texts, spoken and written, which learners

are exposed to in the course of a series of task-based activities in the classroom. This is language which learners have processed for meaning in their reading and listening activities and in the rubrics and commentaries which go to make up an ELT coursebook. Having experienced this, language learners are provided with exercises which focus attention on the common word patterns contextualised within it. This is not an approach which presents decontextualised language to students and asks them to imitate it; it is an approach which encourages them to examine their own experience of language and to learn from it.

One exercise draws together words which are commonly followed by *of +-ing:*

Some words are very commonly followed by *of+__ing*. Look at these examples and make a list of words followed by *of:*

1 Another way of doing it is to work abroad.
2 I think it's more a question of specialising in the country in which you live.
3 Their first memory of singing together was during their days as boy scouts.
4 His prayers had been answered and he gave up the idea of committing suicide.
5 I always had this fear of falling downstairs.
6 This would have the twofold effect of getting the job done cheaply and making it possible for local people to cross the river.
7 He took every opportunity of visiting the zoo.
8 So the thought of competing with a three-year-old is quite difficult.
9 …how to reduce the risk of falling a victim to violent crime.
10 The POW group also accuse the government of refusing to provide water as a deliberate policy.
11 It would have to keep right on going if he was to have any chance of winning it now.
12 And then he hit on this crazy plan of jumping overboard.

Of these twelve examples the learner has already experienced the first eight, and the final four follow later in the coursebook. In carrying out an exercise of this kind, the learner brings together the grammar of class, collocation and structure. There is a class of words (*way, question, idea,* etc.) which collocate with the word *of* to create a complex noun group.

This early attempt to realise a lexical syllabus could be refined by a sharper consciousness of the perspectives on grammar I have outlined here, but it would still depend on a discovery rather than a presentational methodology. It also depends on a procedure which draws together the

learner's experience of the language and treats it as a learner's corpus. A methodology of this kind is more likely to arouse and harness the learner's curiosity than a presentational methodology which makes learners more dependent on their teacher. A methodology which encourages learners to look at languages for themselves to see how meaning is created is firmly based on a realistic view of accuracy of the kind described above rather than on the conformity which goes with teacher dependence.

A methodology of this kind reinforces the case for the use of authentic text as a necessary part of the language learner's diet. Concocted texts exemplify the grammar not as it is but as the coursewriter believes it to be. I have suggested that in most courses and pedagogic grammars there is an obsession with the structure of the clause and the verb group, which means that important aspects of the language like the structure of the noun group are largely overlooked. The complex noun group is simply idealised out of teaching materials. There is little point in learners undertaking a detailed study of language which has been carefully constructed to illustrate starkly a limited number of generalisations determined by the coursewriter and which, as a result effectively conceals other important aspects of the language. The use of authentic text makes it likely that not only structure and necessary choice but also the typical behaviour of words and phrases will be captured and can be highlighted for the learner. There are other arguments to do with naturalness in language which I will not go into here. For a debate on this issue see Sinclair (1988) and Owen (1988).

Finally, there are implications for the study of learner language and of the process of language learning. Ever since the interlanguage work of Selinker, Corder and others there has been an interest in the learner's system. Computer-concordancing techniques could be applied to this task. A study of learner language which focussed more clearly on the lexicon as well as on the grammar could provide valuable information for ELT materials writers in the shape of an inventory of the resources available to learners.

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5

DESCRIBING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LANGUAGE: PUPILS, TEACHERS AND THE LINC PROGRAMME

Ronald Carter

> We often draw the distinction between learning language, on the one hand, and on the other hand learning *through* language—that is, using language as a means of learning something else. As children learn their first language they simultaneously use that language to construe their experience and make sense of the world that is around them and inside them. Now for analytical purposes, when we want to study and understand these things, it is useful for us to distinguish between these two aspects of learning language: between learning language and using language to learn. But in doing so we also create a pseudo-problem, of how the two relate one to the other; and it may be more helpful to think of a single, multi-level construction process, in which the language—that is, the semantic system—*is* the representation of experience in the form of knowledge. In this perspective, language is not the means of knowing; it is the form taken by knowledge itself. Language is not *how we know* something else, it is *what we know,* knowledge is not something encoded in language—knowledge is made of language.
>
> (Michael Halliday, 1987)

> …an organism has somehow to acquire the capacity to turn around upon its own 'schemata' and to construct them afresh… It is where consciousness comes in; it is what gives consciousness its most prominent function.
>
> (F.C.Bartlett, 1932)

1 INTRODUCTION

Some examples:[1]

A pre-literate four year old points to a page in a book and asks

the teacher 'What does that say?' The child is demonstrating an implicit awareness that print conveys meaning. Does that generalised concept of which the child is displaying a particular example need to be made explicit? If so, in what way, at this stage? If not, when are children ready to begin to talk about it?

As they play in one of the imaginative-play areas of their 'Y1' classroom, two children take on the roles of cartoon characters they know from television. They adopt American accents and experiment with vocabulary they would probably not use in other situations. Does their teacher have a useful role, once the game is over, in helping the children to reflect on the way their language use varied, or is it sufficient at this stage for her simply to observe what happened? If such guided reflection were to take place, would it help the children towards access to an even greater pool of choices about possible varieties in their play—and perhaps their writing?

A seven year old writes a caption for her picture, which together form part of a story she wants to tell. The sentence is The hippo got stuck trying to get through the hedge and he started to laugh.' The teacher reads the sentence out loud, but misconstrues the meaning because the pronoun 'he' is ambiguous. It was not the hippo, but the little boy watching who started to laugh, explains the writer. She decides, with the teacher, to draw a line linking the word 'he' to the boy in her picture. What is the best way for this teacher to exploit the opportunities presented by this incident for explicit discussion about language?

Some middle-junior-age **children** are working collaboratively in groups of five on a science investigation. The two girls in one group play very little active part in the discussions. Does this indicate the need for explicit consideration with all the children of the dynamics of small-group talk, including, for instance, tendencies for boys to dominate in certain circumstances? Is there time for the reflection on this aspect of the activity which such an undertaking would require? How would we know when to stop analysing the language and return to the science?[2]

A group of seven year olds are working on a project. One boy is not contributing much and the teacher tells him to 'pull your socks up'. The group look puzzled. His socks are already secured just below his knee. Does the teacher 'explain' the idiom?

> An English teacher notices a number of children experiencing difficulty with the spelling of foreign or loan words, particularly those which do not conform to established regularities, for example, *ghetto, khaki, tsar (czar)*. Should such words be extracted to be committed to memory? Should the teacher recognise that exposure to such words will eventually teach their own spelling? Or should the class explore how such words have been imported into English (with spelling based on approximation of words in other languages) as a result of, for example, British colonialism, non-translation equivalents, the compliance of the English lexicon with occupation from abroad.
>
> Every class from junior to secondary has its 'Crack a Joke Book' as well as its self-appointed joke tellers. Should jokes be analysed? What are the pros and cons of discussing different conventions and formulae for jokes? What syntactic and semantic knowledge about language is needed to understand the following joke?
>
> Q: How do you make a Swiss roll?
> A: Push him down a mountain.
>
> The more sophisticated the joke the more it depends on indirect speech acts and on listener inference. What can an explicit comparison of different kinds of joke contribute to knowledge about language? Does knowledge about language kill the joke?
>
> A teacher who is acquainted with Labov's work (1972) on narrative structure is discussing a narrative written by an eleven year old. The narrative is more like a recount because it lacks 'complicating action' and a 'resolution'. Does the teacher use such (highly specialised narratological) terms in suggesting a further draft? If so, how and why? If not, how can the pupil be sensitised to the structural properties of her text?

The above questions are typical of some of the questions with which teachers working on the LINC programme[3] are beginning increasingly to engage. This chapter attempts to draw a preliminary map of the area, elaborate and refine principles and provide some basic guiding questions for teachers and applied linguists to consider in the course of working in the area of pupils' and teachers' language awareness. There is an emphasis on the importance of discourse—an orientation of which Malcolm Coulthard would certainly approve and which he has been instrumental in influencing.

2 WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LANGUAGE? SOME BASIC DISTINCTIONS

It is important to recognise some basic elements for knowledge about language (KAL). The following three-part division is often suggested:

learning language;
learning through language;
learning about language.

The former element refers to the acquisition of language as a basic tool or resource for living. Learning through language refers to the uses of language for the articulation of experience and concepts; the third element refers to learning about the phenomenon of language in ways which illuminate how language works to create meaning. The three elements are, of course, interrelated. However, the different elements have different orientations which have implications for the classroom.

For example, in the case of learning language and learning through language the orientation will be towards language as action, with an emphasis on doing things with language. In the case of learning about language the orientation will be towards language as reflection with an emphasis on standing back to consider and reflect upon the workings of language. In the interrelations between these parts is to be found a question which has emerged as central for the LINC program. *What is the relationship between knowing about language and using it, between 'knowing that' and 'knowing how'?* This basic question is pursued in a context where many doubt the validity of the connection and where many are fearful that knowledge about language can easily become a 'naming of parts', a preoccupation with language as form rather than as a resource for meaning-making.

2.1 A LINC view of language

A 'view of language' is now presented which has emerged from the first two years of the LINC project. There would appear to be a consensus that this is a view of language judged to be especially relevant to teachers.

Language as system Language is systematically organised. Its patterns are not arbitrary. Meaningful language can only be created because of these patterns.

Language as variety Language varies according to purpose, function, place, time and the properties of the context in which it is used. It will vary significantly according to *field* (subject matter), *tenor* (participant relations) and *mode* (the medium, essentially spoken or written)—to use some

Hallidayan distinctions (Halliday, 1989). Variation according to *social* parameters is especially significant.

Language as meaning Meaning is central to language. Humans are meaning-makers and the basis of language acquisition and development is an active sense-making process, a search for meaning. Language conveys meanings by means of variety within the system.

Language as 'discourse'[4] Language is not made of neutral tokens. Meaningful choices from the varieties within the language system regularly have ideological consequences and are related to the operation of social and political power within a speech community.

In our conception of knowledge about language it is also important to remember that 'language' is not an exclusively linguistic property but needs to be seen as part of a system of human communication. Knowledge about media 'language', for example, needs to be incorporated within a broader semiotic system.

2.2 What knowledge about language for teachers?

General principles

In order to facilitate language learning, learning through language and learning about language, teachers need to know a lot about language *explicitly.* On the basis of the above distinctions and definitions I would argue for the following principles in the selection of material for teachers:

1 Descriptions of language should be sufficiently systematic and comprehensive to allow teachers to discuss language use without resorting to impressionism. Language should be described in ways which allow insights and decisions to be retrievable. It is important that teachers develop *for themselves* the confidence to undertake systematic discussion of language.

2 Descriptions of language should, *where appropriate,* be by means of specific *descriptive frameworks*. Descriptive frameworks are either *broad* (for example, field, tenor, mode or Gricean maxims (Grice, 1975) or Labovian narrative structure) or *narrow* (for example, IRF patterns (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975), 'theme' (Berry, 1989)). Some exist along a continuum from narrow to broad. Their usefulness depends on the jobs they are being asked to perform. One of the primary functions of descriptive frameworks is to enable us to pose *principled questions* about the language data under scrutiny. They show us what we can and cannot do, as well as help us notice things we might otherwise not have noticed. We need, of course, to avoid situations where teachers apply descriptive frame-works

mechanically or reject them because they don't say everything about the data. Descriptive frameworks are, necessarily, only ever hypotheses or approximations but they allow us to approach language in a spirit of investigative enquiry without excluding a human dimension or discounting the essential *variety* inherent in language. Indeed, they often work to illuminate varieties (for example, IRF patterns and doctor-patient, teacher-pupil differences).

3 Teachers' primary concern is with the operation of language in *texts*—spoken and written—and they are alert to the ways in which contexts affect how those texts are understood or 'read'. They are rarely interested in sentences *per se*. They are *not* likely to be interested in the following sentences or in explaining the sentence-level semantic and syntactic anomalies of the asterisked sentence:

John is easy to please.
John is eager to please.

It is easy to please John.
*It is eager to please John.

Such problems, however interesting, are only rarely part of real textual worlds. They focus on decontextualised universalist rules of syntax. Teachers are more interested in the *applied linguistic* questions of how language *functions* in specific *texts* and contextual environments.

Of course, one of the paradoxes of the current state of the art in applied linguistics is that we know more about language at the word or clause level than we do about language at the 'higher' text or discourse level—though there is more discourse-based material emerging all the time. Consequently, many courses in language study are 'bottom-up'. They begin from the smallest, most manageable, most intensively studied units of language and work up to larger units. Sometimes the larger units are simply not reached.

4 Notwithstanding, the LINC programme is, where appropriate, *text-based* and *discourse-driven*. Our interest in the lower level operations of language is in terms of the primary *functions* they have in texts.[5] We will focus on forms but primarily in so far as those forms create systems of meaning in real contexts. Wherever feasible, therefore, analysis and description will be top-down or *simultaneously* bottom-up and top-down.

5 The more the programme is discourse-driven, the more likely it is that the ideological functions of language are considered in a less than tangential way.

2.3 Specific frameworks

Examples of descriptive frameworks which are of particular relevance for the analysis and discussion of the ordered and patterned functions of higher levels of language in spoken and written texts and which are drawn on in draft LINC training materials are:

Halliday and Hasan's model of cohesion (including lexical cohesion) (Halliday and Hasan, 1975);
Gricean maxims (Grice, 1975);
Hoey's textual macrostructures (for example, problem/solution; hypothetical/real; general/particular; and associated *lexical* patterns) (Hoey, 1983);
Halliday's field, tenor and mode (Halliday, 1989);
Halliday's tripartite definition of ideational, interpersonal and textual language functions (Halliday, 1989);
Brown's 'listener-oriented'/'message-oriented' speech (Brown, 1982);
Phillips' model for discourse development (Phillips, 1985);
Quirkean grammar (functionally oriented) (Quirk *et al.,* 1985);
Labov's model of narrative structure (Labov, 1972);
Leech's 'politeness principles' (Leech, 1983);
Ethnomethodological/conversational analysis of talk over single exchange boundaries (e.g. Levinson, 1983);
Daneš/Margaret Berry on 'theme' (Daneš, 1974; Berry, 1989);
Sinclair and Coulthard or French and Maclure on classroom discourse (Sinclair and Coulhard, 1975; French and Maclure, 1983); and so on.

This is neither a syllabus nor a prescription. Our view of language has sufficient breadth and complexity to prevent such a limited conception. LINC has resisted advancing descriptive frameworks or language content as syllabus items in advance of identifying both specific pedagogic contexts and the particular questions of learning that it wishes to address. Linguistic descriptive frameworks are, after all, primarily designed to reveal linguistic structures, not educational or cognitive processes. We have also learned that there are numerous occasions where the appropriate descriptive frameworks do not exist or where superior insights are generated by less systematic, non-linguistic frameworks. There are also crucial understandings to be developed into such domains as attitudes to language, language change, multilingualism and the sociology of language (for example, language and gender), which are not always best explored by means of specific linguistic frameworks.

To summarise: discourse-based approaches to language have the following advantages:

1 They help us to explore the *systematicity* of spoken *and* written textual organisation.
2 They illuminate and help us to describe *variation* in language *in use*.
3 They illustrate how choices from within the language system create *meanings*.
4 They have the potential for demonstrating the connections between language and *ideology.*
5 They provide a basis for talking about *texts* (that is, the 'higher levels' of organisation of language beyond the sentence).[4]

In pedagogic terms, the more teachers and students know about the operation of language as discourse, the greater the possibilities for the development of critical and independent readers, writers and talkers and for making sure that pupils master the forms and genres embedded in the dominant culture rather than be mastered by them. *Control* of language cannot be said to be properly exercised unless it is at the higher level of discourse organisation (see *The Cox Report* (DES, 1989) 6.8 and 5.21 and *The Kingman Report* (DES, 1988)).

3 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LANGUAGE FOR PUPILS

The kind of knowledge-about-language (KAL) component elaborated in *The Cox Report* (DES 1989: Ch. 6) is one in which the emphasis is on a systematic study of language variation in field, tenor and mode, on literary varieties and on variation across time. LINC's additional emphasis is on empowering pupils to 'see through' language to the ways in which it can be manipulated: to develop, in other words, a critical language awareness, through an explicit knowledge *about* language.[6] LINC also supports the *social rationale* for KAL with particular reference to a 'reflective stance' on language diversity (*The Cox Report* 5:10; *The Kingman Report* 4.33). There are, however, strong reservations to be expressed about the kinds of progression proposed for KAL and about the assumption that explicit classroom treatment of language is not appropriate before National Curriculum level 5 (as recommended in all National Curriculum English documents at the time of writing).

Discussion of descriptive frameworks and of language in the abstract (or even as a phenomenon for study) can appear arcane and suggest deficit. Competent users of the language know a lot about language. In the case of KAL for teachers our task is to try to make implicit knowledge sufficiently explicit to be enabling for a range of classroom purposes. Pupils too possess remarkable depths of implicit knowledge about language and sometimes make it explicit naturally and without prompting. In the case of pupils learning language, our task is possibly more complex. It is to recognise and respect the existence of a continuum between implicit and

explicit knowledge and to judge at what points along the continuum to draw on the available knowledge for purposes of language development. Fundamentally, however, children are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with KAL. When we consider KAL for pupils we need, therefore, to be continually sensitive to what they already know and what they can already *do* with language.

The LINC programme is committed to the value of increased KAL for pupils. Here are some main arguments to be advanced in its favour:

1 Learning how to 'decentre' implicit awareness is a crucial feature in concept development and one important component in the development of intellectual maturity. Learning to disembed implicit knowledge about language is a complementary cognitive process (see Donaldson, 1978).[7]

2 Pupils demonstrate knowledge about language simply by using language, and demonstrate increasing knowledge through increasing use. However, language use is a necessary but not sufficient condition for knowledge about language. However well we perform at any activity or any exercise of our human capacities we can only benefit from stepping periodically into a more reflective or analytic frame from within which our competence is reviewed (see Bruner, 1986; Bruner and Olson, 1977[8]). (See especially Bruner, quoted in *The Cox Report* 5.15.)

3 The greater a child's explicit knowledge about language, the greater their exercise of control over language. Increasing control over language is closely related to the conscious choices they can make from the language system. Not to impart choice and control in language use can be disempowering.

4 Informed reflection can be an aid to thinking and a tool for learning (*The Cox Report* 5.9). Points 1–4 here relate to what *The Cox Report* has termed a *cognitive rationale* for KAL. (See page 100 for reference to a *social rationale*.)

5 There is a body of evidence which supports the view that conscious or explicit knowledge about language is a *natural* part of the process of language development from the earliest stages (see Garton and Pratt, 1989: Chs 6 and 7, for survey). Such evidence includes: children explicitly monitoring their own performance; 'explaining' jokes to other children; recognising and commenting on dialectal varieties, especially 'talking posh'; explicitly commenting on 'polite' uses of language or on the functions of questions.

6 Knowledge about language embraces knowledge about grammar but it is much more than that. The connection between KAL and grammar and research 'findings' (claiming no effect on language use) needs to be disavowed (see Walmsley, 1984). Language learning has not been proven

to reside wholly in processes of unconscious expressivity; it requires linguistic 'scaffolding', 'zones of proximal development' (in Vygotsky's terms), to support and extend communication. Such scaffolding involves teacher *intervention,* providing a *balance* between teaching and creating the conditions for learning. KAL is an intimate part of this delicate balance.

3.1 Some problems and questions

There are inevitably problems attendant on such 'evidence'. Whereas an intellectual basis for explicit *learning about language* can be justified (alongside, for example, biology) as curriculum content, as a study of human phenomena, specific research into the relations between KAL and *learning language* and between KAL and *learning through language* is much thinner on the ground.

1 We do not yet know what abstractions underpin the production of language at different stages. The systematisation of such knowledge awaits more detailed empirical observation of KAL in action in the context of children learning and teachers teaching.

2 Accordingly, issues of *progression* in knowledge about language are highly complex. For example, each of the first three statements in paragraph 6.21 of *The Cox Report* (DES, 1989) could be fundamentally challenged.

3 The relative 'weightings' of implicit and explicit KAL may vary according to language mode. For example, the practice of fluent reading is normally an unconscious or implicit process. Writing, on the other hand, is more likely to permit reflection on a shaping process and on an organisation of text which talk, bound as it is by time, may not to the same extent permit. The writing process has a potential for a controlled shaping in and through language which, particularly at the level of discourse organisation, is intimately related to processes of cognitive shaping.

4 'Competence precedes reflection or analysis' is a useful and pedagogically relevant principle to which LINC has, to date, generally adhered. If we think about different degrees of KAL, however, it may be distinctly disadvantageous if such a principle is applied inflexibly in multilingual classes. Bilingual children are normally able to reflect on a second language long before they achieve recognisable competence in that language.

5 There are problems associated with a differentiated knowledge about language for different modes, not least for cross-modal work. However, *is* the knowledge about language required by pupils for talk of a different, much more implicit, order from 'literate' KAL? What potential for oral

shaping is there in the technologies of audio and video recording? Is *The Cox Report* (5.2.1) right when it states, 'it seems to help performance to reflect consciously about the higher levels of linguistic organization—how spoken language can be organized to suit audience, topic and purpose'?

6 'Expressive' language is fundamental to the very widespread ideology associated with the values of 'implicit', 'child-centred' learning. How true is it that 'expressive' talk and writing (Britton, 1970) is *central* to learning? We should be alert to increasing challenges to the *primacy* of expressive language (Goody, 1977; Scribner and Cole, 1981).

7 In the minds of many teachers knowledge about language, indeed any explicit focus on language form, is directly associated with a transmissive model of teaching.

8 Very little work has been done on the establishment of metalingual terms; and competing power domains within the academic community ensure different available metalanguages (though see Hudson, 1982). The precise value of a shared metalanguage—or even the value of metalingual terms at all—has not been extensively investigated.

4 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LANGUAGE IN TRAINING MATERIAL: SOME GUIDING QUESTIONS

The following are some suggested guiding questions to consider. They are not an exclusive or finite set and will need to be modified, supplemented or replaced as an exploration of what is needed proceeds. They are not questions to which there are ready answers but they may stimulate opportunities for, where appropriate, demonstrating, reviewing and problematising the role of KAL in relation to pupils' language. Not all the questions are, of course, relevant to all aspects of language in an educational context.

4.1 Knowledge about language and the teacher

1 Is the description of language in the material systematic? Are descriptive frameworks used? If not, why not? If yes, why? Are they broad or narrow frameworks? Are they presented in such a way as to lead to their progressive use by teachers? What *questions* do(es) the framework(s) generate?

2 Can the account of language supplied by the descriptive framework be *supplemented* within a broader account of communication and semiosis? What areas of meaning are best explained by recourse to non-linguistic frameworks?

3 Is analysis mainly top-down? Is it text-based and discourse-driven? If so, can it be ensured that relevant 'lower level' patterns and their realisation of discourse functions are analysed?

4 Is there guidance for the teacher on the use of *metalingual* terms? Will a use of metalingual terms be seen as threatening or inhibiting? Do the reasons for the terminology come before the terminology itself?

5 Is the knowledge about language, both implicit and explicit, which teachers *already possess,* sufficiently respected and utilised?

6 Is the KAL focus of the material related to examples of recognisable good practice?

4.2 Knowledge about language and the pupil

1 Are there enough places in training materials where a continuum between implicit and explicit KAL is explored in relation to pupils' own use of language? What kinds of links are demonstrated between *knowing that* and *knowing how*?

2 Are there relevant examples which explore how explicit knowledge about language can help pupils towards improved language use? Is the possible relationship between pupils' knowledge about language and processes of cognition sufficiently signalled? Do the same examples show pupils' increased *control* over their language and their learning?

3 Does the material address the issue of *intervention* by the teacher? Does it show how a teacher's linguistic knowledge can underpin the decision to intervene and the nature of the intervention? How and why does the intervention assist the pupil? Is it shown how a teacher's knowledge about language illustrates when *not* to intervene?

4 Is there sufficient attention to the variables which affect pupils' knowledge about language, that is, the different stages and routes through and along which pupils pass? Are there different routes and stages for monolingual and for bi- or multilingual children? What is the relationship between these stages and routes and more general developmental trends in language growth? Is the material alert to case-by-case differences?

5 Does the material help teachers to recognise and draw on what pupils already know about language? Are there data showing children commenting on what they are doing as they read or write or talk? Are there examples of children doing this both independently of the teacher and with the support of the teacher? Do the examples show the pros and cons of the use of metalingual terms? Are terms 'used as a way of encouraging active thinking about language and its uses'? (*The Cox Report* (DES, 1989) 5.26.)

6 What are the best existing classroom practices which are most likely to foster increased knowledge about language? What practices already support such a goal? What are the pedagogic principles involved? Will teachers be able to see clearly how training materials relate to established traditions and existing good practice in language and English teaching? Will they see it as *relevant*?

7 Are sufficient opportunities created for helping teachers to teach *about* language for its own sake? The rapid development of English language A-level courses in Britain has already laid a strong basis for language study in schools at all levels.

5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has raised a lot of questions. The questions result from the necessary complexities of applying linguistic insights, especially in contexts of language learning. During the past twenty years descriptions of language use have developed with increasing sophistication, especially at the level of discourse, where patterns are now identified across larger and larger stretches of language. The application of the insights of description to the worlds inhabited by teachers and learners, especially contexts of mother-tongue English teaching, where a strong tradition of resistance to systematic language description exists, is a necessary and valuable step to take and one which Malcolm Coulthard has always supported and to which he has himself contributed, as witnessed in his massively influential *Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (1985). I have attempted to pose questions in this chapter. Even if some answers may be some way off yet, the questions posed here are questions which substantial numbers of teachers involved in the LINC project agree to be relevant and accurate formulations. If at least some right questions are asked, then some right answers may eventually be forthcoming.

NOTES

1 I am especially grateful to Leslie Stratta and John Richmond for conversations about the topics in this chapter and for supplying material on which I have drawn. The first four examples are lifted from a paper by a West Midlands advisory teacher, Alison Sealy, which was distributed at the Cardiff NATE conference in November 1989. The paper is entitled 'Developing a discourse of reflection'.

2 Some examples are supplied by Alison Sealy. See note 1.

3 LINC stands for Language In the National Curriculum. It was a three-year in-service teacher-education programme (from April 1989–March 1992) designed to develop courses and supporting training materials in the area of knowledge about language. The training programme relates to the National Curriculum for English in England and Wales and almost every school in these countries has had involvement with the programme. The programme, funded by a £21 million

education-support grant, was a direct response to calls for extensive in-service training following publication of the Kingman and Cox Reports (DES, 1988, 1989). At the time of writing (January 1992), government ministers have refused to publish the training materials but draft copies continue to circulate in increasing numbers and continue to be used as a basis for in-service training courses. Associated LINC publications include: five BBC television and radio programmes; a reader containing articles covering ground relevant to this chapter (Carter, 1990) and a collection of classroom-based approaches to knowledge about language (Bain, Fitzgerald and Taylor, 1992). Draft copies of the training materials for the design and development of which questions are raised in this chapter can be obtained from the Department of English Studies, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom.

4 We must recognise two main senses of discourse here: one, as used by linguists, refers to the analysis of 'discourse'—stretches of spoken and written texts—beyond the level of the sentence; the other, as used by sociologists or cultural historians, refers to the set of beliefs or ideologies which condition the codes by which meanings are made. (My guess is that, in spite of Fairclough's ground-breaking book (1989), it will be a number of years yet before there is a meaningful synthesis of the view of discourse adopted by linguists and the view of the discourse adopted by sociologists and cultural historians.) See also Edwards and Mercer's *Common Knowledge* (1987: Ch. 2) for a trenchant, if not wholly justifiable, criticism of linguists on classroom discourse.

5 There is, of course, much to be said about morpho-phonemics in relation to English spelling, where the emphasis is on minimal units of linguistic form and meaning. However, spelling is best treated both discretely and as part of a total textual focus.

6 See Carter and Nash (1990) *Seeing Through Language* and papers by Carter and Ivanic in Carter (1990). See also the final chapter in Fairclough (1989).

7 See, for example, several passages from Margaret Donaldson's *Children's Minds:* 'a child's first encounters with books provide him *[sic]* with much more favourable opportunities for *becoming aware* of language in its own right than his earlier encounters with the spoken word are likely to have done' (Donaldson, 1978:91); Thus it turns out that those very features of the written word which encourage awareness of language may also encourage awareness of one's own thinking and be relevant to the development of intellectual self-control' ibid. 95).

8 See Bruner and Olson (1977) and Bruner (1986): 'It is a universal routine—in love, in war, in writing a paragraph or solving an equation, or, indeed, in managing to get hold of objects during the initial phases of infant mastery of reaching… Mastery depends on both the acquisition of skills or procedures for utilising that knowledge in attaining some goal' (Bruner and Olson, 1977:3); 'the language of education, if it is to be an invitation to reflection and culture creating…must express stance and counter-stance and in the process leave place for reflection, for metacognition. It is this that permits one to reach higher ground, this process of objectifying in language or image what one has thought and then turning around on it and reconsidering it' (Bruner, 1986:129).

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6

PRINCIPLES OF CONVERSATION IN BEOWULFIAN SPEECH

T.A.Shippey

Discourse analysis had to wait for its development till the invention of the tape-recorder and the availability of large corpora of spoken English, replayable and therefore analysable. Where discourse analysis has been extended to literary materials, the preferred fields have been the novel (for novels are themselves large corpora) or the drama (for drama is both a literary and a spoken mode; see Coulthard, 1985: Ch. 9).

Extension of the insights of discourse analysis to Old English poetry accordingly presents immediate difficulty. The corpus itself is relatively small: some 30,000 lines of verse, no longer in total than one long novel. Within that corpus speech is relatively restricted (though evidently important): some 40 per cent of *Beowulf,* an especially 'talkative' poem, is marked as spoken. However, the reader has little, if anything, to use in determining matters of intonation, so important in modern discourse analysis (see Brazil, 1981). The poets do not seem to have had, or to have wanted to use, a vocabulary of the sort applied by Leech and Short to the 'speech acts' of, for example, *Pride and Prejudice* (see Leech and Short, 1981, cited in Coulthard, 1985:180): speeches in *Beowulf* are not introduced by explanatory verbs like *exhorted, explained, warned, claimed,* but by such relatively opaque expressions as *frœgn, maþelode, word cwœð, word ahead* or, suggestive but uninformative as regards discourse, *word-hord onleac*—these meaning respectively 'asked, spoke formally, said words, offered words, unlocked his wordhoard'.[1] Perhaps most striking of all these difficulties is the fact that characters in Old English poems, while they may talk, often do not seem to talk *to each other*. Of the 44 speeches in *Beowulf,* uttered by ten different speakers, only about half appear even to be part of a verbal exchange, whether they receive a direct answer or not. Many are situational monologues, addressed to no-one in particular. But even speeches which are very clearly and even pointedly addressed to one particular person may elicit no response from the addressee. Hrothgar says in the course of his long speech, lines 1700–84, evidently addressing

Beowulf, *Ic þis gid be þe awrœc wintrum frod* 'old in winters, I made this speech for you/about you': but at the end of it Beowulf says nothing. Earlier on, the Danish queen Wealhtheow had addressed one speech (1169–87) to her husband, and another (1216–31) to Beowulf: neither man replies. At the end of each of the three speeches mentioned, indeed, either the speaker or the recipient simply goes back to their seat—'turned then to the bench…then went to [her] seat…went to seek [his] seat', as if that were an appropriate silent response. At the end of a speech by Beowulf (1474–91), the poet says that 'After those words the man of the Storm-Geats hastened valiantly' (that is, he dived into the monsters' lake), *nalas andsware bidan wolde* 'by no means did he wish to wait for an answer'. One feels like remarking that if he *had* wished to, it would have done him little good: on normal form he would have had to wait for a long time.

Nevertheless, and in spite of all the difficulties mentioned, I feel that while the disciplines of discourse analysis or pragmatic linguistics could never have been derived *from* our scanty Old English corpus, their insights can be applied productively *to* it. This exercise can accomplish three things: (1) it shows what, in a sense, many readers have always known, that speech in Old English obeys many of the laws, principles and maxims now inferred from modern English; (2) by its more analytic approach to this awareness it may bring out some distinctive qualities in the speech of Old English characters, thus indicating particularly literary or stylistic effect; and (3) the rather peculiar nature of speech in these poems may finally be turned back towards our modern theories, raising such interesting questions as whether 'principles of conversation' are linguistic universals or cultural phenomena, whether speech is a reflection of cultural ethos, and whether a form of orality is not after all recoverable from our limited, unpromising, thousand-year-old 'transcripts'. This essay concentrates centrally on *Beowulf,* while referring here and there to the other short, secular, 'heroic' poems (all cited from Dobbie, 1942): that is not to say that much further information could not be gleaned from the Old English religious poetic narratives (often much-altered translations from a Latin original), as from early poetry in other Germanic languages.

In investigating the spoken discourse of *Beowulf,* three modern concepts have proved especially valuable. These are the Co-operative Principle (CP) suggested by H.P.Grice, together with its important corollary, the 'implicature' (Grice, 1975); the Politeness Principle (PP) further suggested by Geoffrey Leech (Leech, 1983); and the Face Threatening Act (FTA), which is the basis of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's book on *Politeness,* with its insistent subtitle, *Some Universals in Language Usage* (Brown and Levinson, 1987). To take these one at a time, Grice's Cooperative Principle is well known, and is stated by him as the general rule, 'Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which

you are engaged' (Grice, 1975:xx). This principle is then embodied by Grice in four maxims, of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner, as follows:

1 Quantity (a) make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange);
(b) do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
2 Quality (a) do not say what you believe to be false;
(b) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. be relevant.
3 Relation
4 Manner (a) avoid obscurity of expression;
(b) avoid ambiguity;
(c) be brief;
(d) be orderly.

It has been observed several times, with different degrees of wryness, that Professor Grice seems to have been rather fortunate in his experience of conversation. His Maxim 1b above, for instance, rarely seems to be obeyed at faculty meetings, while Leech (1983:80) remarks politely that 'Grice himself, and others who have invoked the CP, have understandably reflected the logician's traditional concern with truth.' Nevertheless, an important point is that long-winded speeches at faculty meetings are only a performance error, an accidental mistake. Much more significant are conscious floutings of the Gricean maxims. When a speaker blatantly fails to obey a maxim—giving far too little information, or saying sometime apparently irrelevant—and the hearer realises this has been done deliberately, then under the overall Co-operative Principle a 'conversational implicature' has been created; one may say that it has now become the hearer's job to work out, not what has been implied (implication), but what is to be implied (implicature).

Domestic examples of the above are very familiar. In England the remark *It's twenty past five, you know,* may well be decoded by a hearer as follows:

1 I do know;
2 speaker knows I know;
3 the remark is therefore apparently superfluous;
4 but that is in breach of either Maxim 1b or Maxim 3 (see above);
5 accordingly, something else is to be implied: probably, in England, where many shops shut at 5.30, that hearer has promised to buy something for the speaker, and has apparently forgotten.

Yet, important as the notion of the 'implicature' is, Professor Leech has shown that it and the Co-operative Principle in general cannot fully explain

the way conversations often go. On page 80 again of Leech (1983) this exchange is cited:

> A: We'll all miss Bill and Agatha, won't we?
> B: Well, we'll all miss BILL.

This is a clear case of an implicature created by B's deliberate flouting of the Maxim of Quantity, CP 1a. B has confirmed half of A's opinion, but pointedly ignored the rest. Yet in a purely logical world B would have no need to create the implicature, but could simply have said:

> B: We'll all miss Bill, but I won't miss Agatha.

What restrains B is not logic but (Leech suggests) a Politeness Principle, expressed by him (1983:81) as: 'Minimize the expression of impolite beliefs' and conversely, 'Maximize the expression of polite beliefs.'

This principle in its turn gives rise to a string of maxims, of Tact and Generosity, of Approbation and Modesty, of Agreement and Sympathy (ibid.: 132)—too long a string, according to Brown and Levinson, who argue (1987:4–5) that the Grice and Leech principles should have quite different linguistic status, and that all Leech's points can be accounted for by their own 'more parsimonious' theory. The basis of the Brown and Levinson theory is, however, accepted by Leech, and is especially useful in considering Old English. It is the 'Face Threatening Act' (FTA), obviously an act or speech act which threatens, may threaten, may be thought to threaten the 'face' of a hearer. Interestingly, though everyone now understands this concept without difficulty, 'face' in this sense is both a modern and an alien word in English. *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* (see 1933 Supplement, 10b) makes it clear that 'saving face' and 'losing face' are direct translations from Chinese, first recorded in 1876; the very idea of 'face' was thought by English-speakers originally to be fussy and impractical.

Yet that in itself was a culturally bound and probably imperceptive reaction. There is no difficulty at all in discovering, in Old English and in *Beowulf,* classic or textbook cases of the conversational implicature, modified by the Politeness Principle, and affected by deep and sometimes overtly signalled awareness of the potential for FTAs. The question may remain of whether CP, PP and FTAs between them are sufficient explanations for Old English poetic speech. There is no doubt that all apply.

Take, for instance, the speech by Wealhtheow, the Danish queen, in lines 1169–87. It is delivered during the festivities following Beowulf's killing of the monster Grendel, and is addressed to her husband Hrothgar, the king of the Danes. It runs as follows:

Spræc ða ides Scyldinga:
'Onfoh þissum fulle, freodrihten min,
1170 sinces brytta! þu on sælum wes,
goldwine gumena, ond to Geatum spræc
mildum wordum, swa sceal man don!
Beo wið Geatas glæd, geofena gemyndig,
nean ond feorran þu nu hafast.
1175 Me man sægde, þæt þu ðe for sunu wolde
hereri[n]c habban. Heorot is gefælsod,
beahsele beorhta; bruc þenden þu mote
manigra medo, ond þinum magum læf
folc ond rice, þonne ðu forð scyle,
1180 metodsceaft seon. Ic minne can
glædne Hroþulf, þæt he þa geogoðe wile
arum healdan, gyf þu ær þonne he,
wine Scildinga, worold oflætest;
wene ic þæt he mid gode gyldan wille
1185 uncran eaferan, gif he þæt eal gemon,
hwæt wit to willan ond to worðmyndum
umborwesendum ær arna gefremedon.'
Hwearf þa bi bence…

(The woman of the Scyldings spoke: Take this cup, my noble lord, divider of treasure. Be happy, generous friend of men, and speak to the Geats with kind words, as a man must do. Be gracious to the Geats, mindful of gifts, of all you have from near and far. I have been told that you wished to have the warrior as your son. Heorot is cleansed, the bright ring-hall. Enjoy while you may the rewards of many, and leave to your sons the folk and kingdom, when you will have to go forth, to see destiny. I know my gracious Hrothulf, that he will hold the young ones in honour if you, friend of the Scyldings, leave the world earlier than he; I expect that he will repay our sons with good, if he remembers all the kindnesses that we two have performed for him while he was a child, for his wish and his honour.' She turned then to the bench…)

Since about 1968[2] this speech has been generally perceived as at once reproachful and anxious. Wealhtheow's line 1175 ('I have been told that you wished to have the warrior as your son') is seen as taking up Hrothgar's delighted cry some 230 lines earlier, 'I will cherish you in heart as my son.' But where most readers (and hearers?) may have taken his statement then as mere hyperbole, Wealhtheow has taken it as a performative, a formal adoption. Now she is concerned for the rights of her own sons; she stresses that Hrothgar should give away movable property but not inalienables,

folc ond rice; she sees Beowulf as her sons' rival and—apparently—moves from Beowulf to her nephew Hrothulf as, by association, another potential threat. Further comment could be made on the two adverbial clauses in which she foresees her husband's death; and on what appears to be the opposition *þenden þu mote/þonne ðu…scyle,* that is, while you are alive/ when you have to die. The *ond* in line 1178, it has been remarked, cries out to be a 'but'.

All the explanations above rest covertly on the idea of 'implicature'. Wealhtheow's speech is after all, on the face of it, entirely proper and conventional: an adjuration to her husband to do a series of proper things—be happy (two imperatives), show generosity (four imperatives), live well and die in honour (two more imperatives). As for the seven and a half lines on Hrothulf, what they say is that she is sure of his future protection, if it is ever needed. Why the detection of ominousness? As late as 1965, indeed, Kenneth Sisam, protesting against a generally ominous theory of *Beowulf* without quite focussing on this speech, wrote with a certain prescience:

> Wealhtheow's part in the scene is that of an ideal queen…. A modern reader may feel it to be ominous that nobody answers her; but the explanation is that *Beowulf* has none of the quick exchanges that make dialogue, and speeches in reply would have broken the thread here.
>
> (Sisam, 1965:38)

Just above, he had written that the last seven and a half lines mean only—'If we are depending on implications (and they are dangerous stuff in a poem so loose in thought and expression)—that Hrothulf is a potential regent'.

The answer to Sisam, however, is that readers are not depending on implications but on implicatures; while some sorts of 'looseness' in expression habitually demand a tight decoding. In this case a first implicature is surely created by the two statements which interrupt Wealhtheow's flow of imperatives; 'I have been told that you wished to have the warrior as your son', and immediately following, 'Heorot is cleansed, the bright ring-hall'. The latter of these especially is a clear case of the 'it's twenty past five' type of statement. The statement is true; the hearer knows it is true; the hearer knows moreover that the speaker already knows they both know it is true. What, then, is the point of saying it? Under Grice's principle speakers do not make pointless remarks. This statement, then, so evidently flouting Maxim 1b of the CP, must mean something more, and that something must be related either to what goes before, or what follows after, or both. Probably in this case the implicature should go as follows, the 'unsaids' being enclosed in square brackets:

1 you wish to adopt Beowulf;
2 [but] Heorot [has been] cleansed;
3 [therefore, Beowulf is no longer needed, and should be paid off (as urged already) and sent home (never mentioned)];
4 [by all means] enjoy kingship as long as you are allowed to;
5 [but] leave it to your sons [not to anyone else].

Is this interpretation fanciful? Sisam would have said so, but he knew nothing of discourse analysis or pragmatics. Actually, the interpretation above can be seen as a tight application of a principle now very generally accepted; and one which explains, after all, the otherwise completely irrelevant sentence, ‘Heorot is cleansed, the bright ring-hall’. One may take it instead that both the CP and the conversational implicature can be detected in Old English, and working in exactly the same way that they would in Modern English.

What of Leech’s Politeness Principle, which, as he points out, has to be invoked to rescue the CP in exchanges of the ‘Bill and Agatha’ type? Once again there is at least one moment in a Beowulfian conversation where it is essential—and there clearly intentional—for a speech to be decoded according to its rules: in this case, at lines 2047–56. This is an especially complex presentation. Beowulf is speaking at home, in his uncle Hygelac’s hall in Geatland, and is giving (unasked and unexpectedly) his views on Danish politics. Hrothgar has decided, he says, to marry his daughter to the prince of an enemy nation, the Heathobards, to heal a feud. It will not work, he says. When the bride goes to her new husband’s home, one of her escort is likely to be wearing a sword taken in battle from a dead Heathobard. Some old warrior will recognise it, and will address a young warrior as follows:

onginneð geomormod   geongum cempan
2045 þurh hreðra gehygd   higes cunnian,
wigbealu weccean,   ond þæt word acwyð:
‘Meaht ðu, min wine,   mece gecnawan,
þone þin fæder   to gefeohte bær
under heregriman   hindeman siðe,
2050 dyre iren,   þær hyne Dene slogon,
weoldon wælstowe,   syððan Wiðergyld læg,
æfter hæleþa hryre,   hwate Scyldungas?
Nu her þara banena   byre nathwylces
frætwum hremig   on flet gæð,
2055 morðres gylpeð,   ond þone maðþum byreð,
þone þe ðu mid rihte   rædan sceoldest.’
Manað swa ond myndgað   mæla gehwylce
sarum wordum…

> (…sad at heart, he begins to explore the young warrior's mind through the thoughts of his heart, to wake war evil, and says the word: 'Are you able, my friend, to recognise the sword which your father bore to battle beneath his war-mask the last time, the precious iron, where the Danes killed him, ruled the battlefield, the bold Scyldings, once Withergyld lay dead, after the fall of heroes? Now here some unknown son of the killer walks on the floor, proud of the precious weapon, boasts of the killing, and carries the treasure which by rights you should own.' So he urges and reminds continually with painful words…)

This is a speech inside a speech. Indeed, in a context of an oral delivery of *Beowulf,* one has to imagine a reader (speaker 1) addressing an audience (hearers 1), and asking them to imagine Beowulf (speaker 2) addressing Hygelac (hearer 2), with them in turn imagining the old Heathobard (speaker 3) addressing the young one (hearer 3). Some failure of communication might be expected. Actually, few modern readers (the new class of hearers) have had any trouble at all.

All recognise, unconsciously but not instinctively, that the old warrior's speech is dominated by the Politeness Principle, and that the young warrior is *meant* to recognise that too. In general, the speech shows little or no overt flouting of the Co-operative Principle. There is a slight element of giving more information than necessary in such repetitions as *mece…dyre iren, hyne…slogan, weoldon wælstowe, or Dene…hwate Scyldungas,* but they are readily recognisable as part of the poetic style, carrying no implicatures. One might say there is an element of breach of CP Maxim 2b ('Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence') in the old warrior's *frætwum hremig…morðres gylpeð:* there is no sign the Dane with the sword has been insolently boastful at all, but since the whole situation is imaginary, that can hardly be tested. The CP in fact appears (by contrast with Wealhtheow) to be adhered to. Meanwhile, the most evident element in this speech is the attention it pays to Leech's Politeness Principle. Almost its first words are *min wine* 'my friend', closely following Leech's Sympathy Maxim ('Maximise sympathy between self and other'). At the end of the speech, too, we have 'which you should own by rights', again a remark maximising sympathy. And yet—if we had not already noticed—Beowulf in his framing speech makes it clear that the old warrior intends to 'wake war evil', that he is in fact goading the young warrior *sarum wordum* 'with painful words'.

What are the painful words? It may be remarked that *min wine* itself is a suspicious phrase. It is used twice in the poem (lines 457, 1704) with apparent sincerity, but at line 530—said by Beowulf to Unferth—is clearly sarcastic; while when Hildegyth uses it to Waldere in *Waldere* I, 12, it looks like an attempt to soften following criticism. In the old warrior's

speech its point may be—as addresses like *pal or buddy* often are in Modern English—to stress sympathy superficially in preparation for it to be withdrawn, thus throwing the onus for offence on to the hearer. But the really painful words, one has to conclude, are (just in Leech's 'Bill and Agatha' example) the ones which *are not said*. The old warrior's 'are you able to recognise your father's sword?', one might say, has two possible answers. If no, then that might seem strange, given the strong weapon-ancestry connections evident elsewhere in the poem: does the young warrior lack family feeling? But if yes, then that is even worse, for what is strange then is the lack of response, of attempt to recapture: the accusation lurking there is cowardice. What the old warrior is doing, evidently, is saying less than he might, refusing to speculate on the answers to his question, and doing so out of loyalty to something like Leech's PP Maxim of Approbation: 'Minimize dispraise of other.' It is the mixture of Sympathy and studied lack of dis-Approbation which creates the 'painful words'.

The old warrior, in short, is using, not breach of the CP (except in so far as he says less than he might), but studied adherence to the PP to create a 'conversational implicature'. It is in the nature of such things that they may be used tactically, and (being in a sense unsaid) are almost impossible to counter verbally. The speech as a whole, meanwhile, constitutes an unmistakable example of the deliberate and carefully honed Face Threatening Act. And it is here that one begins for the first time to wonder about the adequacy of modern analyses of conversation for coping with the works of an alien culture. Modern academic thought tends, one may say, to be relentlessly well-meaning. The tendency has already been noticed in Grice. But Leech too prefers to play down impoliteness, saying (1983:105): 'Presumably in the course of socialization children learn to replace conflictive communication by other types…and this is one good reason why conflictive illocutions tend, thankfully, to be rather marginal to human linguistic behaviour in normal circumstances.' Brown and Levinson, in their elaborate account of politeness strategies, recognise the possibility (1987:60) that someone may want to 'do an FTA with maximum efficiency (defined as *bald on record*)', but still accept that normally all speakers will want to minimise threats to their hearers' face.

One wonders if, in a heroic culture, any of this need be so. The old warrior in the example above is certainly committing an FTA, and doing it with a kind of efficiency, but the efficiency depends less on bald assertion than on unanswerable implicature. Elsewhere in heroic literature, FTAs are regularly courted, flirted with, denied, allowed to hover. Unferth's speech to Beowulf in lines 506–28 is certainly an FTA, and as close as one can pacifically get to being 'bald on record': he says Beowulf entered a contest 'for foolish boasting', says he lost the contest and can be expected to lose the next one. Beowulf's reply says Unferth is drunk, a lesser warrior

than himself, a fratricide, and afraid of Grendel. Beowulf stops short, however, of calling Unferth a liar, accepts part of his accusation and allows the possibility to remain that he has been misinformed. As has often been noted, there is in this exchange a formal or conventional element, apparently leaving no hard feelings later. Elsewhere delivering an FTA unanswerably seems to be a valued skill. The Viking's speech in *The Battle of Maldon,* lines 29–41, begins by breaking a string of Leech's PP Maxims, with the Viking maximising praise of self ('The bold seamen', breach of the Modesty Maxim), sarcastically maximising both cost and benefit to his enemy ('you have our permission to send tribute', breach of the Tact Maxim) and again sarcastically maximising both self-praise and benefit to his enemy in the near-threat, 'it is better for you that you buy off this spearclash than that we should deal battle so fiercely'. Interestingly, having said that, the speech turns reasonable and almost flattering, as if offering now to save face. But Byrhtnoth's reply (which I have analysed grammatically in some detail elsewhere: Shippey, 1985:228–30) is scornfully self-praising and face-threatening. Meanwhile one might notice the very clear awareness in Hildegyth's speech in *Waldere* that she is approaching an FTA from which she wishes to dissociate herself: does she mean 'I am not chiding you with words, my friend, for reason A (which would be disgraceful) but for reason B (which is honourable but mistaken)', or does she mean 'my friend, I am not chiding you with words *at all*'? Either way, her address shows a certain sensitivity to the dangers even of privileged female speech.[3] And finally it seems likely that Sigeferth's four-line speech in *The Finnsburh Fragment,* lines 24–7, scrupulously, even Griceanly informative as it appears to be at the beginning—'my name is Sigeferth, I am a man of the Secge'—nevertheless turns into an elaborate FTA at the end: 'it is still destined for you here, whichever [fate?] you yourself mean to seek from me'. There are few FTAs more wounding than evident unconcern about a hearer's reaction.

All round one can say that consciousness of the potentials of an FTA is (as one might expect) widespread in Old English heroic literature. FTAs may be litigated against and punished: the sentence for insult 'by bold speech', *frecnan spræce,* in *Beowulf's* line 1104 will be death. Nevertheless, there are occasions, like Unferth's, Byrhtnoth's or Sigeferth's, when FTAs are not to be avoided, but to be delivered, and delivered not only 'baldly' but also artistically. At this point one may wonder whether the well-meaning, polite, co-operative bias of modern academic discourse is adequate for description of the arts of speech within a heroic culture. I suggest that it is not, and that, just as Leech's PP (or something like it) needs to be invoked to rescue the Co-operative Principle, so the PP in its turn needs—in the case of this particular culture—to be extended by a third principle, which one may call, borrowing the term from Leech's earlier marginalisation of the idea, the Conflictive Principle. I state this in tentative form later on in this chapter, together with

a string of possible embodying maxims. However, I should note here that I am sensitive to the criticism made of Leech by Brown and Levinson, namely that of the generation of principles and maxims there could all too easily be no end. Probably what I have to say about *Beowulf* and Old English could indeed be incorporated in their 'more parsimonious' approach. But that approach, while parsimonious in its rules and diagrams, is by no means easy to grasp or paraphrase briefly. Till the notion of the Cooperative Principle has been set out and tested, it seems best to attempt to state it separately.

One may begin by noting the relative rarity of direct questions in *Beowulf*. In over 1,200 lines of direct speech, I count only six. One is the opening remark of the *eald æscwiga* already quoted. Three occur in identical circumstances. They are the first three things said to Beowulf by Hrothgar's coastguard, Hrothgar's door-ward Wulfgar and Hrothgar's *þyle,* or spokesman, Unferth: see respectively lines 237–40, 333–5 and 506–10. The last two are asked in immediate succession by Beowulf s uncle Hygelac on his return to Geatland, in lines 1987–92. It could be said that maybe no-one in the poem needs to ask further questions, so that this low figure is only natural. But there are several occasions when one feels a question is not far away, is implied if not asked. At about line 1376, for example, Hrothgar has described the route to the monsters' mere and seems very close to asking Beowulf 'Will you go? Will you avenge Æschere for me?' Yet he does not. Again, at about line 1836 Beowulf—just about to change topic in what seems a highly marked manner—appears close to asking Hrothgar 'Why not let your son(s) return with me to Geatland?' But that question too is never put. Reasons for not asking questions are, of course, easy to understand. There is even a saying still used in England, usually to children, *Ask no questions and you'll be told no lies*. The infant Pip, in Dickens's *Great Expectations,* Chapter 2, sees the puzzling quality of this saying, which appears to imply that the person saying it is a potential liar. Yet in fact the users of it are only putting into colloquial English the advice given by Leech (1983:119) as 'Do not put h[earer] in a position where either s[peaker] or h[earer] has to break the Tact Maxim.' Asking a question may force the hearer to reply with injury to the speaker's face, with injury to his or her own face, or (most likely) to lie. It can then be regarded as a hostile act, and in *Beowulf,* I would suggest, it usually is: certainly in the case of the *eald æscwiga,* and certainly in the case of Unferth. Hygelac's two questions may be explained in a different but related way (see the end of this chapter). Beowulf s question in indirect speech at lines 1319–20 meanwhile causes something like an explosion (beginning *Ne frin þu* 'Don't ask!', and, suggestively, the two remaining cases, those of the coastguard and door-ward, are each followed by something like a withdrawal, or at least a demarcation.

What both enquirers do, having asked directly 'What are you…?', 'Where do you [come] from?', is to say immediately what their jobs are: 'I have been

for some time the coastguard', 'I am Hrothgar's herald and officer.' They do not say it, but the implicature (derived from CP Maxim 3) is, 'the nature of my job explains my apparent breach of Tact'. The thought arising from this careful, almost formal, self-presentation is, of course, and not surprisingly, that characters in heroic societies are *prickly:* stiff, on their dignity, ready to take offence, therefore requiring careful handling. But to handle another too carefully might imply over-caution, indeed fear, in oneself. As the Beowulfian characters speak to each other, accordingly, one often has the sense of lines being drawn.

Thus the coastguard begins (lines 237–57) with a potentially tactless question; softens it with a half-explanation; goes on to make four statements, all of them negative in form, about the visitors; and ends with two further statements, both beginning 'Now', and a final remark of curious impersonality. A feature of all he says is its balance. His four central statements go as follows: (1) no-one has come here more openly [so perhaps they have no hostile intent]; (2) they do not have permission to come [this is hostile in itself]; (3) one of the visitors is especially imposing [this is a good quality]; (4) he is unlikely to be a fake, unless appearances are deceptive [it is not an infallibly good quality]. The concluding remarks could be paraphrased thus: now I must know who you are, before *you* go further as spies; now *you* far-travellers, hear *my* simple thought—'Haste is best, to make known where you have come from.' The last few words form a clear and (some would say) characteristically English 'indirect impositive': just as *A lift would be awfully convenient* is more tactful than *Take me home* or *Will you take me home?,* so 'Haste is best' (etc.) is much less inflictive than *Who are you?* or *Tell me quickly who you are.*

Beowulf s reply (260–85) is too long for close analysis here, but shows a similar balance, not between suspicion and acceptance, but between compliance and self-assertion. He answers the coastguard's unstated final question/demand immediately, if not quite fully: he states his nation, his father's name, his group's collective good intention. All this is compliant. Against that, his speech several times bumps on the borders of Leech's Modesty Maxim ('Minimize praise/maximize dispraise of self). He says in succession: 'every wise man will remember [my father]'; 'we have a great errand'; 'I can teach Hrothgar good advice through my capacious spirit.' The last remark at least would be vetoed in modern English society. The first contains a potential threat: if you do *not* remember my father, you cannot be wise. To all this the coastguard replies with the impersonal (and baffling) statement,[4] 'A sharp shield-warrior who thinks well must know how to judge either, words and deeds'; and with an immediately following judgement, 'I hear [I have heard?] that this warband is friendly to the lord of the Danes.' I have said elsewhere (Shippey, 1978:14) that this decision is in a sense unjustified, for the doubtful situation—they could be friends or enemies, be telling the truth or be liars—has not changed. The coastguard

is making his mind up from Beowulf s speech alone. But by that speech, it seems, Beowulf has passed a test. How?

My suggestion is that Beowulf, in this his opening speech, has signalled his awareness of what I have dubbed the Conflictive Principle, and which I would state provisionally as follows:

> In all verbal exchanges, ensure that one's own worth is stated and acknowledged. If it is acknowledged by hearer, be prepared to acknowledge hearer's worth. If not, respond with an appropriate degree of reciprocal non-acknowledgement.

Practical guides for embodying this include the following:

1 Always test awareness of this principle by offering one's own worth and enquiring after hearer's.
2 When enquiring after hearer's, maximise retractability till matters become clear.
3 As part of testing awareness of this principle, offer an FTA.
4 In doing so, attempt, where possible, to present hearer with a dilemma: fail to recognise FTA (thus losing face directly), or fail to recognise retractability (thus showing lack of awareness of CP 2, and losing face indirectly).

Briefly, the coastguard and Beowulf have both indicated their own worth ('I am the coastguard'…'my father is well known'), and retractably shown awareness of the other's ('one of you looks imposing'…'you could be able to offer us advice'). Each has displayed the beginnings of an FTA without actually saying it: the coastguard has used the word 'spies', but in a subjunctive clause, Beowulf has said he can offer advice (=be superior to) the coastguard's superior, though only so that he (not Beowulf) can overcome his enemy—Beowulf does not say 'I can kill Grendel for you', though that is what *he* means, any more than the coastguard says 'Tell me who you are before I kill you', though that is equally certainly what *he* means. The two men in short have shown awareness of conflictive potential. Till they have done that they cannot co-operate.

The three-speech exchange with Wulfgar (333–55) then follows almost exactly the same pattern. Wulfgar asks a direct question, but softens this potential FTA with a statement of his own position: he has both stated his own worth and enquired after Beowulf s. Just as the coastguard's first speech mentioned the idea of *leassceaweras* 'spies', so Wulfgar's recognises the existence of strangers appearing for discreditable motives, *for wrœcsiðum'* 'having been exiled [outlawed?]'. But he maximises retractability, not by putting the remark in the subjunctive, but by saying he expects (expectations in *Beowulf* are often wrong) it isn't true. Beowulf replies with clear, Gricean

information. 'We are Hygelac's table-companions. My name is Beowulf, but goes on with what might be taken as a 'Bill and Agatha' statement: 'I will tell my errand to the son of Healfdene, the famous prince, your lord'—meaning perhaps 'I will tell my errand to Hrothgar [but not to you].' If there is a slight FTA there, it is softened by Beowulf s acceptance of the possibility that Hrothgar may not want to give him audience; Wulfgar's reply 'end-focusses' that possibility, thus showing how to deal with CP Maxim 4. One might conclude that the two men are co-operating, and are certainly being polite, but again, they cannot save each other's face without asserting their own. The conversation is full of gaps. Wulfgar does not say 'What do you want?' or 'Wait here', and Beowulf does not say 'None of your business': each party, though, anticipates such FTAs by not provoking them.

The next four speeches in lines 361–96 also have their points of interest—Wulfgar does not ask Hrothgar 'Do you want to see them?', but when he goes back to Beowulf with a favourable answer he is prepared (in a less tense atmosphere?) to use an imperative. However, the next real test for Beowulf seems to be his long self-introduction to Hrothgar, lines 407–55. This raises a point about the grammatical possibilities open to Old English but not Modern English speakers; and the special modes of speech appropriate to the Conflictive Principle. Briefly I would say that the following features all seem of special importance: (1) subjunctivity, (2) gnomicism, (3) end-focus.

Beowulf uses five certain subjunctives in his speech, *stande* (411), *forwyrne(429), mote* (431), *sie(435)* and *nime(452)*. One cannot invariably tell a subjunctive from an indicative in Old English: I would suggest that *sohte* (417) and *here* (437) are also intended subjunctively. By using these five (or seven) subjunctives, Beowulf—in the context of strong, overt, even immodest assertion of his own worth, and at least a potential challenge to the face of Hrothgar and his men—maximises retractability. The *stande* (for indicative *standeð*) indicates that while he has heard of Grendel's depredations, the story may be false (in which case he is not needed at all and there is no challenge to Danish face). The *forwyrne…mote* pair implies that fighting Grendel is not a task for which Hrothgar should thank Beowulf, but a privilege for which Beowulf should thank Hrothgar. The *sohte* (if subjunctive) declares that none of this is originally Beowulf s idea, and can accordingly be rejected without threat to Beowulf s face. (It is tactful, as Leech says, always to give one's hearer an escape-route from tactlessness.) But against all these indications of polite retractability there are set balancing indications of (by modern standards) impolite, immodest, heroic self-assertion. Beowulf will not only fight, but fight bare-handed, so that his uncle may be *(sie)* pleased with him; he rejects the idea that he might bear *(here)* a sword. Both *sohte* and *here* are followed by the same strongly contrastive and assertive modal verb, 'and now against Grendel I shall (424)…but with my grip I shall (438)'. Interestingly, the last subjunctive, *gif mec hild nime* (452) is set against a clause virtually identical, but indicative,

gif mec deað nimeð (447), 'if battle should take me… if death does take me'. Beowulf seems to give exactly equal weight to saying defeat is a real and a hypothetical possibility. In modern English culture, as one sees before every sporting fixture, the former is given polite (sometimes virtually superstitious) priority.

Beowulf also ends the speech with a firmly gnomic statement, 'Fate always goes as it must'. The role of gnomicism in modern speech has not been studied, though it is far from dead. Its role under the Conflictive Principle is interestingly tangential to both Co-operative and Politeness Principles. The use of sayings and maxims in speech often contradicts Grice's CP Maxims la, 3 and 4a, while fulfilling his 1b, 2 and 4c to the letter. As regards Politeness, they exploit Leech's Maxim 5b, of Agreement, 'maximize agreement between self and other': one of the things about proverbs is that they cannot easily be rejected, though they can be capped. Nevertheless, this agreement is often exploited tactically in just the same way that the *œscwiga* ('old warrior') exploited sympathy. If hearer agrees to the proverb, then hearer must agree to the implied application of it, though that application may again not have been said. The modem metamaxim here would be *If the cap fits, wear it*. The face-threatening capacities of this mode of speech are taken to their extreme by Wiglaf in lines 2890–1; they are not absent from Beowulf s speech at lines 1384–5. Yet conflictive speech can be at once polite and impolite, co-operative and self-assertive. The coastguard's maxim is accordingly both immodest—he is saying *he* is a 'sharp shield-warrior'—and in effect deferential. Beowulf s maxim at line 455 resigns both his own face and Hrothgar's to a higher power. And Beowulf s very pointed maxim at lines 1838–9 simultaneously offers advice and gives strong awareness of his hearer's insecurity (these are FTAs), while offering open praise and an opportunity for his hearer not to confront insecurity (what one might call FEAs, Face Enhancing Acts).

I have discussed the exchange of lines 1818–65 in detail elsewhere (Shippey, 1977:31–4), and would here accordingly only emphasise these points. Beowulf s speech to Hrothgar there is a textbook example of several of Leech's PP Maxims, Beowulf even going so far in tact as to present offered help as a self-interested response to his hearer's generosity. Yet it creates a sense of strain. It cannot avoid the implication that Hrothgar may *need* help. In the prickly world of the heroes, to imply that help is needed by another adult male is like asking questions or offering advice: a potential assertion of superiority, intrinsically face-threatening. Beowulf softens it as much as he can, making it look self-interested (1823), saying it has been needed before (1828), saying—and using a subjunctive (1831)—that the offer in a sense does not come from him but from his superior, thus lowering his own level of face towards that of his hearer. Yet in his reply Hrothgar does seem to be showing consciousness of a fifth Conflictive Maxim to add to those above:

5 Deny awareness of own insecurity, indicate awareness of other's insecurity.

His reply overtly praises Beowulf, just as Beowulf thanked him. But the one subjunctive in Beowulf s speech is balanced by one in Hrothgar's (1850), and what it says is that Beowulf may not always have the delegated power he now relies on. Tact is answered with tact, and politeness with politeness. Yet the implied FTA of offering help has to be answered too. In this society (the argument runs) men cannot co-operate with each other, even verbally, *unless* they are always ready to defend themselves.

Brown and Levinson remark (1987:36) that there are culturally different 'variations in interactional style', caused, they say, by differential assessments of such factors as power, social distance and ranking of verbal impositions. Leech similarly argues (1983:10) that 'the CP and the PP operate variably in different cultures or language communities, in different social situations, among different social classes, etc.'. It may be that all that has been said here does no more than confirm these conclusions: that (as Brown and Levinson would have it) there is no need for either a Politeness Principle or a Conflictive Principle, both of them assimilable to an over-ruling set of strategies or 'linguistic universals', within which cultural difference is only a variable in an understood equation. It has also to be conceded that in the whole of Old English poetry there is simply not enough information for anything that could be called a well-founded study in post-tape-recorder terms.

Nevertheless, there remains much to be gained, in a literary way, from trying to apply modem linguistic method to Old English text. Awareness of face and the complex strategies of verbal conflict may well sharpen (or refute) previous intuitions about the 'tone' of poetic speech—it is significant that this non-analytic word is still so widely used. Consideration of 'end-focus' in Beowulfian speeches, for instance, throws up several surprising tendencies besides the liking for gnomic endings already recorded. One, for instance, is the fact that over a fifth of the speeches in the poem (nine of them) end either on an *if*-clause or with one very close by, while at least one other (the coastguard's speech of lines 287–300) course, particularly important in that they hand the 'turn' to another could be regarded as closing on a 'silent' *if*. Ends of speeches are, of speaker; raising a query (to see how it is answered) is at that point a highly 'conflictive' thing to do, especially where there is a restraint on direct questions. In a similar way, it would be possible to home in on the notion of such highly dangerous speech acts as expressing criticism: is that really what Wiglaf does, gnomically, in lines 3077–8; and when he says immediately afterwards, 'we could not teach [our] dear lord any advice', is that likely to mean that advice was offered and rejected, or (perhaps more likely in context) that no advice was ever found sayable? As for Hygelac's unique double question in the speech of

1987–98, should that be taken as 'a challenge and an expression of somewhat patronizing doubt that Beowulf could have achieved much against the Grendels' (Irving, 1991), or rather as an early example of what Leech sees nowadays, 'among young people' (1983:144) as 'The Banter Principle': a rule which says that once one has reached a certain level of intimacy, rules are reversed, and impoliteness becomes polite, rudeness a sign of intimacy? Naturally, no definite answer could ever be given to either of the questions just asked. But probabilities can change.

At the very least one should be able to reach a better understanding, through this variant of discourse analysis, of the particular arts of speech so clearly marked and praised within Old English poems, where every 'sharp shield-warrior' aims to be *wis wordcwida* 'wise in spoken words', both as speaker and as discriminating listener. Such analysis could also have some slight effect, as has been said, on the liberal, well-meaning, anti-conflictive and therefore (alas) not entirely realistic bias of much modern linguistic study.

NOTES

1 All quotations of Beowulf are from Klaeber (1950). Translations throughout are my own.

2 The decisive re-interpretation was probably Irving (1968:139–41). Irving notes that there is an earlier similar reading of that speech, dating back to 1933, but (being in German) this seems to have had little influence on Anglophone scholars. For later, similar readings, see Shippey (1972:32–5) and Overing (1990:93–9). A very different view is taken by Damico (1984).

3 Roberta Frank sees this as Hildegyth talking 'out of both sides of her mouth… which must have annoyed Waldere if he were listening' (Frank, 1991:97). This is a case of a modern scholar failing to take FTAs and the speech patterns associated with them entirely seriously: surely a culturally induced reaction.

4 My reading of it is contrasted with earlier ones (Shippey, 1978:12–14). It still gives rise to doubt (see Greenfield, 1982).

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7

LANGUAGE, CHARACTER AND ACTION: A LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER IN A HEMINGWAY SHORT STORY

Martin Montgomery

> What is character but the determination of incident?
> What is incident but the illustration of character?
> (Henry James, *The Art of Fiction,* 1888)

1 INTRODUCTION

Character, it has been claimed, 'serves as the major totalizing force in fiction' (Culler, 1975:230).[1] As a category within the theory of narrative, however, character has received little systematic attention. In this chapter it is argued that the comparative neglect of character in the systematic treatment of narrative stems from emphasising what is done rather than who is doing it; and that the analysis of transitivity may provide a way of reintegrating both emphases in line with the dictum of Henry James: 'What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?'

2 DEFINING NARRATIVE

Basic definitions of narrative rely upon isolating it as a sequence of at least two completed events between which we may discern some kind of consequential relationship. Thus, adapting E.M.Forster's (1927) classic examples we may observe that

> The king died. The queen died.

is less obviously a narrative than

> The king died. Then the queen died of grief.

This is because the former example could be describing two simultaneous or even unconnected events, whereas the latter example makes more explicit that the two events are sequenced in time and that they are mutually implicated so that the second event is presented as a result or a consequence of the first. Definitions of this type provide the bedrock of most theoretical developments in the study of narrative (see, for example, Labov, 1972; Sacks, 1974; Culler, 1975; Barthes, 1977; Chatman, 1978; Toolan, 1988), where the emphasis falls heavily on events in sequence and on what Barthes (1977) refers to as the relationship of 'reciprocal solidarity' between them.

However, in defining the object of narrative theory in this way, attention has been deflected from the way in which narrative events themselves presuppose conscious entities, either to perform them or to react to them, and through whom narrative coherence is supplied. Thus, to return to our opening examples, the narrative connection between events is significantly supported by the pairing of 'queen' with 'king', leading us easily into inferences of a close relationship between them; reinforced in the more elaborated case by the reference to '(dying of) grief'.

The emphasis on events as the defining criterion of a narrative may be traced back to Propp's seminal work (1927/68), *Morphology of the Folk-tale*—widely acknowledged for its influence on the subsequent study of narrative—in which he argued strongly in favour of a procedure that gave pride of place to the relationship between events in isolating recurring structures. And as a corollary of this position he argued that the question of who performs the events should take second place since it led only into a realm of boundless variety and superficial difference that served mainly to obscure the fundamental similarity of the tales he was describing. Thus, when faced with episodes such as the following from separate tales, Propp's strategy was to isolate what is done rather than to consider who or what is doing it.

1. A tsar gives an eagle to a hero. The eagle carries the hero away to another kingdom.
2. An old man gives Sucenko a horse. The horse carries Sucenko away to another kingdom.
3. A princess gives Ivan a ring. Young men appearing from out of the ring carry Ivan away into another kingdom.

The crucial correspondences occur at the level of shared schemata of action rather than similarities between performers: in each case we find, in Propp's terms, receipt of a magical agent paired with transference to another kingdom, and it is this that makes them functionally equivalent as episodes.

This founding insight has helped to underpin much interesting work on typologies of narrative (for example, Frye, 1957; Wright, 1975; Silverstone, 1981) as well as giving an important impetus to more general structural accounts of narrative where actions or events have been the prime terms of the theory.

3 ON CHARACTER

In the face of this emphasis, however, the question posed by Henry James—'what is incident but the illustration of character?'—points to a paradoxical lacuna in structural treatments of narrative. And the paradox is this: the very types of narrative which have been most successfully treated analytically in terms of fixed schema of events are precisely those in which the reader's focus is arguably more upon who is performing the events than upon the events themselves, simply because the fixed schema makes those events predictable. Popular romance fiction would be a case in point. Examples of the genre reiterate a constant event structure which confirms, rather than thwarts, readers' expectations. Indeed, as Radway (1987) reports in *Reading the Romance,* a significant proportion of readers check the ending at the outset to ensure that it holds no surprises, a practice which suggests that what is important to the readership of the genre is not what happens next, or how the narrative is ultimately resolved: that the heroine settles down with the object of her desire is a foregone conclusion. The interest lies instead in how each new heroine responds to events as the well-worn narrative machine unfolds. Indeed, the neglect of what we might call 'character' in structural theories of narrative is surprising, for by so doing they neglect the most salient dimension of the contemporary experience of narrative.

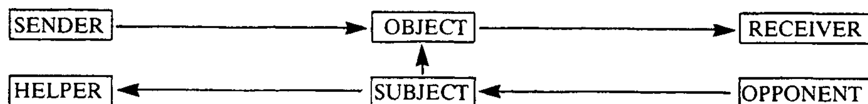
To this tendency the work of Greimas provides perhaps the most notable exception. *Structural Semantics* contains an extended reflection on a suggestive but almost passing aside by Propp concerning seven spheres of action in the folk-tale. Identified by reference to the event line, these spheres of action are performed by personae, listed by Propp as:

the Villain;
the Sought-for Person (and her father);
the Despatcher;
the Donor (Provider);
the Helper;
the False Hero;
the Hero.

In his discussion of these categories, Greimas draws the conclusion that these seven categories may be reconfigured into three pairs of opposing terms, which comprise the basic actantial roles of narrative:

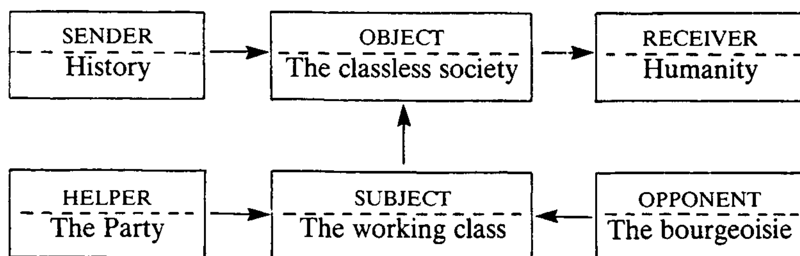
Subject v. Object
Opponent v. Helper
Sender v. Receiver

More significantly, he reconstitutes these terms along three axes of relationship: subject and object along the axis of desire; sender, object, receiver along the axis of communication; and helper, subject, opponent along the axis of power.

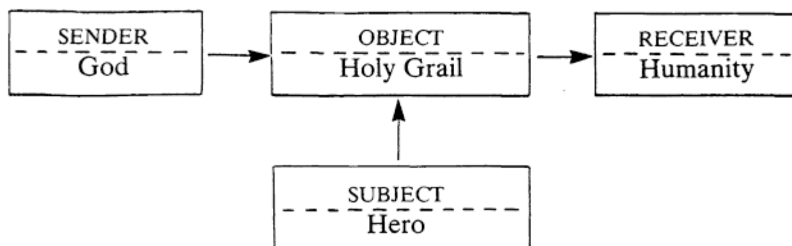


The terms, therefore, are now defined in an explicitly relational fashion.

Most narratives—especially those comprising a quest element—will expound some or all of these categories. The scheme is even applicable to teleological versions of history. A militant version of Marxism, for instance, might be seen as a projection of the actantial roles in the following way:



Less contentiously, perhaps, we can see the same categories of actantial role underlying a well-known quest myth such as the search for the Holy Grail:



As with Propp, these categories operate as the names for highly abstract roles which may be filled in any tale by more than one character. And conversely, the same character may operate in more than one role, so that

for any particular narrative some of the roles may become fused. In this way, it is possible, it is argued, to construct typologies of tales on the basis of how the roles get filled. This is a suggestive framework; but Greimas gives little detail on how the roles are recognised either by readers or in specific procedures of analysis. As Culler (1975) comments:

> In reading a novel we do, presumably, make use of some general hypotheses concerning possible roles…. But if the claim is that we attempt subconsciously to fill these six roles, apportioning characters among them, one can only regret that no evidence has been adduced to show that this is the case.
>
> (1975:235)

More particularly, if we consider narratives operating in the medium of prose, we are given no hints as to what textual features may be relevant to the construction of character and to assigning characters to an actantial role. Thus, whilst apparently offering a basis for a typology of character, Greimas fails to address the more fundamental and primary question of how precisely characters are instantiated in text in the first place.

A suggestive way of answering this question is offered by Fowler (1977), who provides the following definition of character as a precise starting point.

> A character is, then: (a) an 'actant'—s/he performs a role or roles in the structure of plot; (b) an assemblage of semes; (c) a proper name—which is sort of a peg on which the attributes (a) and (b) are hung.
>
> (1977:36)

The innovatory aspect of Fowler's approach lies in the notion of semes, which seem to promise a technique for mediating between the surface of the text and the more abstract underlying actantial roles. Semes are analogous to distinctive or semantic features in linguistics: just as the meaning of an item such as *bachelor* can be modelled in terms of features such as [+CONCRETE; +ANIMATE; +HUMAN; +ADULT; -MARRIED; -FEMALE], so individual characters can be modelled in terms of the features that attach to them as the text unfolds. As an example, Fowler cites Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*.

> Among the semantic features that constitute him are: restlessness, physical strength, virility, athleticism (both competitive and social), dandyism, wealth, materialism, extravagance, vulgarity, possessiveness, jealousy, untrustworthiness, selfishness, carelessness, cruelty… [and the list continues with nine other features, or semes].
>
> (1977:36)

Semes such as these, observes Fowler, are either 'explicitly stated, or implied'

and many of them may be traced to the two pages which initially introduce the character.

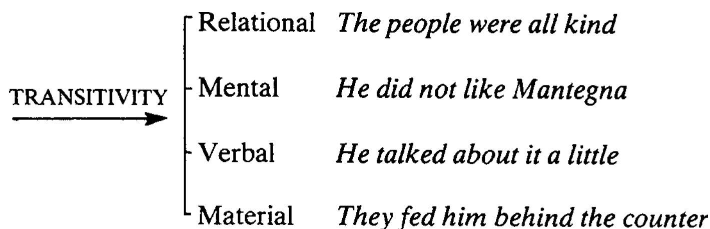
However, the analogy between character semes and semantic features is a precarious one. In linguistics the descriptive and explanatory power of distinctive features depends absolutely on them, constituting a fixed array, a closed and finite set. Fowler's example of character semes, however, suggests that they are as open-ended as the lexicon itself, a problem compounded by their being implied as well as explicitly stated in the text. And so they quickly run the risk of proliferating beyond the point at which they can usefully mediate between the particulars of the surface of the text and the highly abstract and strictly limited categories of actantial role offered by Greimas. If, as Culler argues, interpreters of narrative make use of some general hypotheses concerning possible roles, we need a more developed account of what kinds of textual cues guide readers in apportioning characters to roles.

4 TRANSITIVITY AND THE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER

Halliday's account of transitivity (or variants of it) has been adopted several times for the stylistic analysis of literary text (see Halliday, 1971; Leech and Short, 1981; Burton, 1982; Kennedy, 1982; Hasan, 1985), but only obliquely has its use been linked to the literary construction of character in a theoretical way—the work of Toolan (1988, 1990) being a particular exception. And yet, as an account of the grammatical options expressing 'who does what to whom and how' at the level of the clause, transitivity blends considerations of both role and event within a single framework of analysis. It would, therefore, appear to offer an ideal tool for mediating between surface patterns of the text, on the one hand, and broader considerations of actantial role, on the other. Indeed, transitivity would seem to offer a linguistically precise way of addressing James's question 'What is incident but the illustration of character?' We will briefly outline the terms of the analysis and then show them in operation on Hemingway's short story 'The revolutionist'.

5 TRANSITIVITY AND THE CLAUSE: OUTLINE OF A HALLIDAYAN APPROACH

Transitivity relations in the English clause can be understood in terms of the relationship between the kind of process encoded by the verb and the accompanying participant roles—basically, 'who (or what) does what to whom (or what)'. Four fundamental types of process may be distinguished (but for more complete and complex treatments see Fawcett, 1980; Halliday, 1985):



1 *Material action processes* (realised by verbs such as *break, wipe, dig, unbolt*) are associated with participant roles such as an AGENT (someone or something to perform the action), and AFFECTED (ENTITY) (someone or something on the receiving end of the action). Thus:

Jane	broke	the lock
AGENT	PROCESS	AFFECTED

They	fed	him	behind the counter
AGENT	PROCESS	AFFECTED	

2 *Mental processes* (realised by verbs such as *know, feel, think, believe)* are associated with inherent roles such as SENSER (the one who performs the act of 'knowing', 'thinking' or 'feeling') and PHENOMENON (whatever is 'known', 'thought' or 'felt' by the SENSER). Thus:

He	loved	the mountains
SENSER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON

She	believed in	the world revolution
SENSER	PROCESS	PHENOMENON

The message	amazed	me
PHENOMENON	PROCESS	SENSER

3 *Verbal processes* are processes of saying, though this comes in many forms, for example *suggest, promise, enquire, tell, inform*. Typical participant roles are SAYER, VERBIAGE, and RECIPIENT. Thus,

I	said	it was time to leave
SAYER	PROCESS	VERBIAGE

'No,'	he	said	very shyly
VERBIAGE	SAYER	PROCESS	CIRCUMSTANCE

I	wrote out	for him	where to eat in Milano
SAYER	PROCESS	RECIPIENT	VERBIAGE

4 *Relational processes* in their simplest form involve some entity which is identified by reference to some attribute. The process may be realised by verbs such as *become, seem, be,* and *have* and typical roles are CARRIER and ATTRIBUTE.

He	was	very shy
CARRIER	PROCESS	ATTRIBUTE

Other important roles are those of POSSESSOR and POSSESSED as in:

He	had	no money
POSSESSOR	PROCESS	POSSESSED

6 TRANSITIVITY AND CHARACTER IN A SHORT NARRATIVE TEXT

The title of Hemingway's short story 'The revolutionist' prospectively identifies its central figure and hardly a sentence of text fails to refer to him in one way or another, usually by the pronoun *he* or *him,* which anaphorically refer back ultimately to the title itself. Although other personages are intermittently referred to (Horthy's men, the Whites, the people, the train men, the Swiss, etc.), and although an I-narrator surfaces near the mid-point of the text, no other figure is subject to the same degree of repetitive reference or receives the same degree of narrative attention. The title itself, however, can be seen as something of a misnomer—if by 'revolutionist' is designated 'one who seeks to bring about radical social change'. To a European or North American readership attributes which would stereo-typically be associated with such activity may include idealism but would also conventionally include traits such as 'heroism', 'energy', 'ruthlessness' and 'single-mindedness'. And yet, if such traits are signalled by the title, they are scarcely supported by the text. Instead, rather atypical descriptors are attached to him—principally shyness and youth, as we can see in 5, 6 and 17 of the story, reprinted below:

THE REVOLUTIONIST

In 1919 he was travelling on the railroads in Italy, carrying a square of oilcloth from the headquarters of the party written in indelible pencil and saying here was a comrade who had suffered very much under the Whites in Budapest and requesting comrades to aid him
5 in any way. He used this instead of a ticket. He was very shy and quite young and the train men passed him on from one crew to another. He had no money, and they fed him behind the counter in railway eating houses.

He was delighted with Italy. It was a beautiful country, he said.

10 The people were all kind. He had been in many towns, walked much, and seen many pictures. Giotto, Masaccio, and Piero della Francesca he bought reproductions of and carried wrapped in a copy of *Avanti*. Mantegna he did not like.

He reported at Bologna, and I took him with me up to the 15 Romagna where it was necessary I go to see a man. We had a good trip together. It was early September and the country was pleasant. He was a Magyar, a very nice boy and very shy. Horthy's men had done some bad things to him. He talked about it a little. In spite of Hungary, he believed altogether in the world revolution.

20 'But how is the movement going in Italy?' he asked.

'Very badly,' I said.

'But it will go better,' he said. 'You have everything here. It is the one country that everyone is sure of. It will be the starting point of everything.'

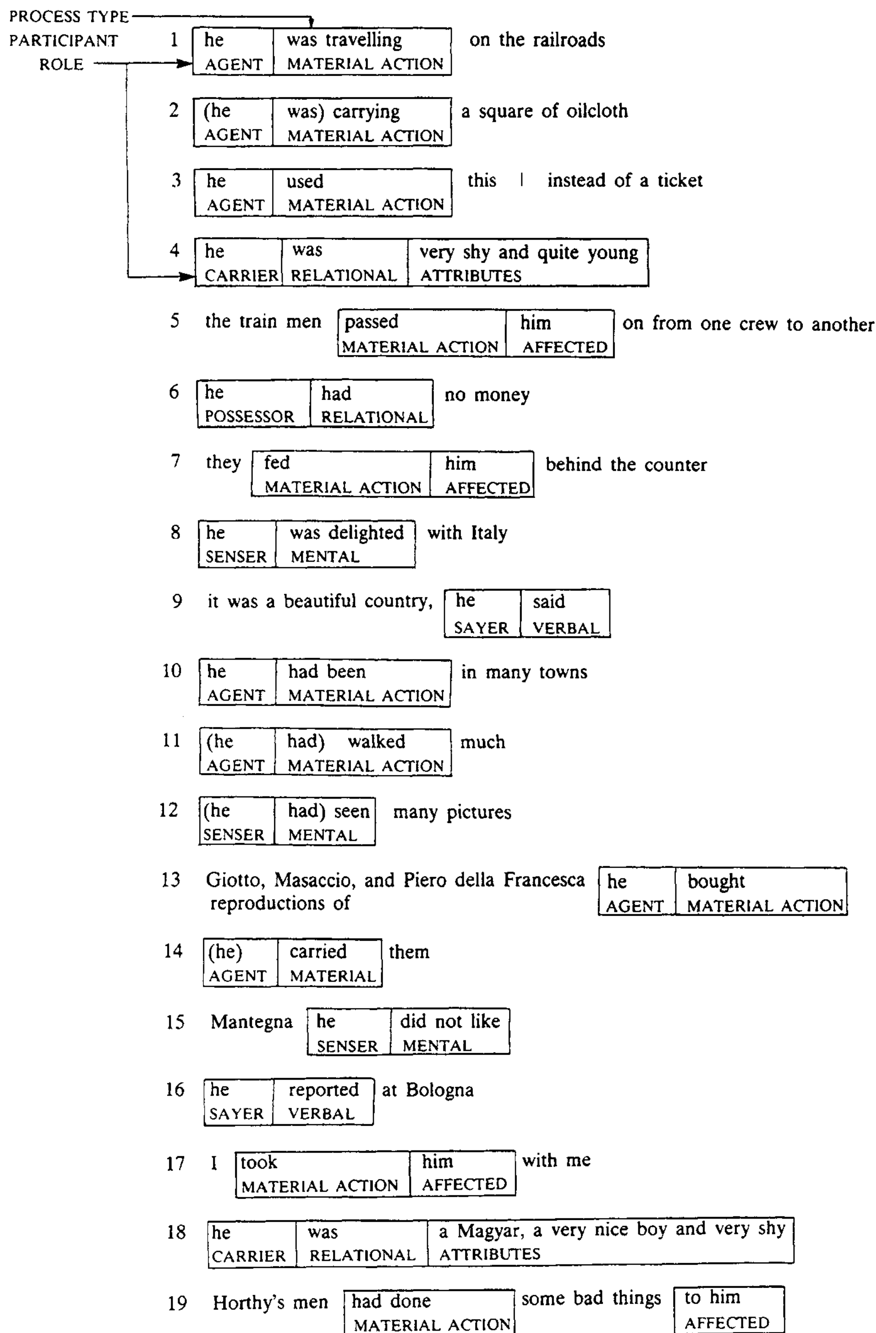
25 I did not say anything.

At Bologna he said good-bye to us to go on the train to Milano and then to Aosta to walk over the pass into Switzerland. I spoke to him about the Mantegnas in Milano. 'No,' he said, very shyly, he did not like Mantegna. I wrote out for him where to eat in Milano and 30 the addresses of comrades. He thanked me very much, but his mind was already looking forward to walking over the pass. He was very eager to walk over the pass while the weather held good. He loved the mountains in the Autumn. The last I heard of him the Swiss had him in jail near Sion.

The attributes (or semes, in Fowler's terms) 'shyness' and 'youth', as atypical descriptors of the revolutionist, are attached to him in clauses of attribution (built around, in Halliday's terms, relational processes) such as

> He was very shy and quite young (lines 5 and 6)
> He was a Magyar, a very nice boy and very shy (line 17)

These, however, are rare in the text. And although the degree of repetition in our two examples is clearly significant, a more comprehensive picture of how the revolutionist is constituted textually can be gained by inspecting those clauses where he figures as a participant role with respect to a process. These are listed below with both the process type and the participant role identified being given in each case.


PROCESS TYPE
PARTICIPANT ROLE
1 he AGENT | was travelling MATERIAL ACTION | on the railroads
2 (he AGENT | was) carrying MATERIAL ACTION | a square of oilcloth
3 he AGENT | used MATERIAL ACTION | this | instead of a ticket
4 he CARRIER | was RELATIONAL | very shy and quite young ATTRIBUTES
5 the train men | passed MATERIAL ACTION | him AFFECTED | on from one crew to another
6 he POSSESSOR | had RELATIONAL | no money
7 they | fed MATERIAL ACTION | him AFFECTED | behind the counter
8 he SENSER | was delighted MENTAL | with Italy
9 it was a beautiful country, | he SAYER | said VERBAL
10 he AGENT | had been MATERIAL ACTION | in many towns
11 (he AGENT | had) walked MATERIAL ACTION | much
12 (he SENSER | had) seen MENTAL | many pictures
13 Giotto, Masaccio, and Piero della Francesca reproductions of | he AGENT | bought MATERIAL ACTION
14 (he) AGENT | carried MATERIAL | them
15 Mantegna | he SENSER | did not like MENTAL
16 he SAYER | reported VERBAL | at Bologna
17 I | took MATERIAL ACTION | him AFFECTED | with me
18 he CARRIER | was RELATIONAL | a Magyar, a very nice boy and very shy ATTRIBUTES
19 Horthy's men | had done MATERIAL ACTION | some bad things | to him AFFECTED

20 he talked about | it | a little
SAYER VERBAL

21 he believed altogether | in the world revolution
SENSER MENTAL

22 he asked
SAYER VERBAL

23 he said
SAYER VERBAL

24 at Bologna he said good-bye | to us
SAYER VERBAL

25 I spoke to him about the Mantegnas in Milano
VERBAL RECIPIENT

26 he said
SAYER VERBAL

27 he did not like Mantegna
SENSER MENTAL

28 I wrote out for him where to eat in Milano
VERBAL RECIPIENT

29 he thanked me very much
SAYER VERBAL

30 he was very eager
CARRIER RELATIONAL ATTRIBUTE

31 he loved the mountains | in the Autumn
SENSER MENTAL

32 the Swiss had him in jail | near Sion
RELATIONAL AFFECTED

This analysis can be summarised in the following chart, which displays proportionally the participant roles into which the revolutionist is inscribed.

Material	*Mental*
AGENT ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (7)	SENSER ✓✓✓✓✓✓ (6)
AFFECTED ✓✓✓✓✓ (5)	
Verbal	*Relational*
SAYER ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (8)	CARRIER ✓✓✓ (3)
RECIPIENT ✓✓ (2)	POSSESSOR ✓ (1)
	POSSESSED ✓ (1)

On the basis of the chart we can make the following observations. First of all, it is true that when we consider the processes associated with the revolutionist, we discover that the largest portion turns out to be of the material action type.

We should note immediately, however, that just over one-third of these figure the revolutionist as AFFECTED rather than AGENT. In these cases he is on the receiving end of activity, rather than the source of it:

> The train men fed him…
> I took him with me.
> Horthy's men had done bad things to him.

And when we turn to those cases where the revolutionist is inscribed into the role of AGENT, it is noticeable either that the activity is not associated with any AFFECTED ENTITIES:

> he was travelling…
> he had…walked much

Or, alternatively, the AFFECTED ENTITY is of an inanimate, non-human type:

> he was carrying a square of oilcloth
> he bought reproductions of (painters)

So, although he is on the receiving end of actions done to him by others, his own actions are not associated with other human figures as AFFECTED ENTITIES. Where he occurs as an AGENT, it is of a limited and circumscribed nature.

Second, he is, in any case, more often inscribed into the role of SAYER than that of AGENT. Thus,

> he talked about it a little
> he said good-bye to us
> 'No,' he said very shyly

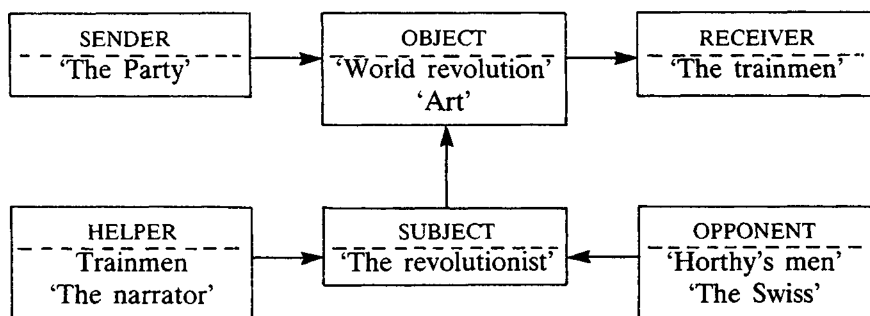
Finally, we may note that he is almost equally as often inscribed into the role of SENSER as that of SAYER and AGENT. 'He believed altogether in the world revolution', we are told; and that 'he did not like Mantegna', but that 'he loved the mountains in the Autumn.' The overall picture that emerges from the analysis, therefore, is one in which the revolutionist is a SENSER and a SAYER in roughly equivalent proportions to cases where he is inscribed into the role of AGENT. As a character he might be summed up—to revert momentarily to the older terminology—as intransitive rather than transitive.

As yet, we do not, as far as I know, have statistical norms for the distribution of process types in passages of narrative prose. But for the purposes of comparison it is worth noting that when an equivalent procedure is applied to Jeanette Winterson's novel, *Sexing the Cherry,* a very different

picture emerges.[2] Indeed, in terms of the dominant participant roles into which they are inscribed, the two central characters—the Dog Woman and her son Jordan—are not only different from the revolutionist but also quite different from each other. Passages that figure the Dog Woman inscribe her into the role of agent in roughly 60 per cent of cases; whereas those that figure Jordan associate him strongly with the role of senser (almost 50 per cent of cases). Since the novel is narrated for the most part in the first person but alternating between Jordan and the Dog Woman, the asymmetrical distribution of participant roles between the characters helps to mark stylistically the transition from one to the other. In general, therefore, we can see that whatever norms may exist for the relative frequency of process types in fictional prose, individual characters may acquire quite distinctive transitivity profiles: and this is certainly the case as regards the revolutionist.

7 TRANSITIVITY, PARTICIPANT ROLES AND ACTANTIAL ROLES

Indeed, the inscription of the revolutionist into a particular configuration of participant roles at the level of the clauses of the text may be seen as cues to the underlying actantial role of the revolutionist in Hemingway's story. Given his place within the network of transitivity choices, it would seem counter-intuitive to place him at the poles of the axes of power and communication: the choice of participant roles seems hardly congruent with an actantial role of HELPER, OPPONENT, SENDER or RECEIVER. Rather, it is the revolutionist who is *sent* (by the headquarters of the Party, whose message he carries), *received* (by the trainmen, who pass him from one crew to another), *helped* (by the comrades, who are requested to aid him, and by the narrator) and *opposed* (by Horthy's men, who have done bad things to him, and by the Swiss, who put him in jail). Instead, choices in transitivity seem most congruently to mark out a role for him on the axis of desire between the SUBJECT and the OBJECT of the narrative. Here, however, he seems to be ambiguously placed. Inasmuch as he is sent and received, he appears like an object, passed from one crew to another. And yet his recurring participant role of SENSER in clauses points to the actantial role of the desiring SUBJECT. Even here, however, there is a further ambiguity. What does he desire? Given the title, we might expect it to be the revolution. And certainly the narration tells us that 'he believed altogether in the world revolution.' But when we inspect the other clauses in which he occurs as senser we discover two broad classes of phenomenon; the countryside (he loved the mountains in the Autumn; he was delighted with Italy); and art (he did not like Mantegna). 'Beauty', we might say, figures more often for him than 'political change'. The actantial framework of the narrative may thus be represented schematically as follows.



8 CONCLUSIONS

In placing the revolutionist within this framework, we have relied initially on the analysis of clauses in terms of the transitivity choices. Indeed, a central contention of this chapter is that transitivity as a domain of linguistic choice is strongly implicated in the construction of character, a claim which can be supported on *a priori* grounds as follows. First, the system of transitivity, as we have applied it above, includes relational processes where semes or attributes are attached to a character (cf. 'shyness' or 'youth' in the case of the revolutionist). Second, and at a more general level, the notion of participant role is built into the terms of the system from the outset, suggesting the possibility of a homology between choices at the level of the clause and the underlying actantial role structure. Finally, however, the set of meanings modelled in the transitivity network combines role with process or action, thus making it possible to re-integrate linguistically the notion of character with the notion of event. If we accept Culler's (1975) claim that as readers 'we do, presumably, make use of some general hypotheses concerning possible roles', then what we have displayed analytically in the case of the revolutionist are the kind of cues which a reader may tacitly be drawing upon in apportioning a character to an actantial role.

Of course, in this respect transitivity choices are not the only source of textual cues. Some discussions of character give particular attention to practices of naming (see Docherty, 1983). And Fowler (1977), following Barthes (1977), incorporates the notion of a proper name in his definition of character. Less attention has been given to instances where no proper name is used—'The revolutionist' being a case in point. Although for a short text it contains a high proportion of reference by proper noun (Budapest, Italy, Bologna, Horthy, Giotto, Massacio, Aosta), it is noticeable that this practice is avoided in the case of the revolutionist himself. Instead, the only definite reference is provided by the pseudo-generic of the title. This has the paradoxical effect of signalling the relevance of a relevance of a stereotype,

even when (as we have noted) the specific choices of the text run counter to it. The story, therefore, could be seen as built upon an ironic tension between the expectations of the title and the linguistic choices that accumulate around the pronoun that refers back to it.

We must also recognise that not all information about the revolutionist is explicitly encoded in the text. Some aspects of the character of the revolutionist will be recovered through inferences. For example, readers habitually infer things about him from his dislike of Mantegna, though what precisely is inferred depends upon real-world knowledge of Italian Renaissance painting and it is difficult to identify which background assumptions about such painting are most relevant in this context. Detailed readings of the story often invoke interpretative activity of this type. These, however, lie somewhat outside the scope of the present chapter, designed as it is not to offer a definitive reading of the character of the revolutionist, but to delimit the framework within which such interpretations take place. This is in the belief that the key goal of linguistic criticism is to elucidate the process of reading rather than to provide substantive readings in themselves. If character is 'the major totalizing force in fiction', then it is important to discover how characters are constructed and on the basis of what kinds of linguistic choices. The argument of this chapter has been that a major source of textual cues for the constitution of character lies in the transitivity choices into which characters are inscribed; and that these accumulating choices help guide readers to the apportionment of underlying actantial roles.

NOTES

1 I have to admit, with some embarrassment, that I first used the materials on which this chapter is based as long ago as 1982 at the Polytechnic of Wales. Since then they have travelled to Damascus, Aleppo, Casablanca, Basra, Mosul, Wroclaw, Stirling, Aberdeen and Lausanne. I am indebted to the many colleagues and students everywhere (but particularly at the University of Strathclyde) who have commented at different times on the analysis of the story, with special thanks to Nigel Fabb, Debbie Cameron, Paul Simpson and Martin Davis. I would also like to thank faculty and students at the University of Lausanne for the quality and vigour of their criticisms when the ideas were delivered recently in the form of a public lecture. I hope that those who have heard it before will not feel themselves in the position of a romance reader—apprised of the ending from the beginning. On the contrary, I hope that they will see that their comments helped to improve the argument, though its faults, of course, remain my own.

2 For this point I am indebted to two students on the Programme in Literary Linguistics, University of Strathclyde. The analysis of passages from *Sexing the Cherry* was undertaken by Emman Abd el Ati. The text was suggested by Stuart Lucas.

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8

REPRESENTATIONS IN PROSE: SETTING THE SCENE

H.G.Widdowson

Let me set my own scene. I want to talk about ways of talking about things in fiction, first considering certain general matters about meaning and how they bear on the nature of literature, and then going on to a stylistic analysis of particular literary texts.

Talking about things usually means making reference to them, so let me begin with that notion. I have, of course, already illustrated it (I could, indeed, hardly have done otherwise): the expression *that notion* refers to the idea of reference. As philosophers and linguists have pointed out in the vast literature on the subject, there are innumerable ways of making reference to the same thing, using proforms, lexical substitution and so on. The various devices available in English for this purpose, that is to say, for the maintenance of cohesion by cross-reference, are well documented (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, is frequently cited).

What determines the choice of one referential device rather than another has been rather less well documented. It is generally easier to specify the semantic resources encoded in a language than to account for the different uses of these resources under pressure of contextual conditions. Cruse, however, is one who has looked at this question of what he calls 'the pragmatics of lexical specificity' (Cruse, 1977). It figures also in the work of Schegloff on what he calls 'formulating place'—the way conversationalists design location descriptions so that they key in with addressee knowledge and are suited to the purpose of the interaction (Schegloff, 1972).

The Gricean Maxim of Quantity is clearly involved here (as Cruse indicates). If your reference is marked in that it provides more information than is necessary for the referent to be identified, then this gives rise to an implication. Now what happens when this, or any other maxim, is flouted is that there is a shift of focus from addressee to addresser. I mean by this that the message is not simply shaped by the dictates of recipient design so that its meaning fits as snugly as possible into patterns of expectation. Instead, in disrupting the continuity, it draws attention to itself as expressive of the addresser's attitude, perspective, point of view or whatever. It creates a modality. In so doing, it ceases to be simply a referential matter.

How this comes about can be explained by invoking the speech-act distinctions of locution, illocution and perlocution. As the expression of pragmatic meaning, the utterance has, we may say, locutionary *reference,* illocutionary *force* and perlocutionary *effect*. Thus, in choosing one referential expression rather than another, one might keep the reference constant but change the force, or keep reference and force constant, but change the effect. An example: if on a transatlantic flight my fellow passenger, in making casual conversation, were to ask *Where do you live?,* the appropriate reply would be a reference to a general location, say London or Leicestershire. If I were to reply *15, Havelock Street, Wandsworth,* it is likely that the utterance would have the force of a rebuff and the effect of nipping the interaction in the bud.

The appropriate, co-operative formulation of place here is a matter of (in Cruse's terms) pragmatic referential specificity, of appropriate indexical focus to meet the requirements of the addressee. In other cases I might make reference to suit myself as addresser and to indicate my own position in regard to the referent. Consider, for example, the expressions

> Kenneth Clarke
> Clarke, Ken
> The Secretary of State for Education
> The ignorant twerp in charge of the DES

All of these point indexically to the same person. They are therefore referentially equivalent, in a way that the different formulations of place considered earlier are not. But they are not, of course, equivalent in other respects. The choice of one rather than another is likely to signal a different intention in terms of illocutionary force, and/or in terms of perlocutionary effect. Thus if I were to say

> The ignorant twerp in charge of the DES has decided to privatise universities

this is likely to be intended as having the force of a complaint rather than a statement of approval or support, and, in making my position clear, I would be deliberately seeking to create an effect of comity or conflict, appealing for agreement, or provoking dissent, and so engaging the familiar features of solidarity or power in the interaction. Such a choice of referring expression is, as I say, a sort of modality, and modality as it is traditionally treated has, of course, to do with both the positioning of the addresser (epistemic) and of the addressee (deontic).

The practice of discourse analysis which goes under the name of critical linguistics (see, for instance, Fairclough, 1989; Kress, 1989; Fowler, 1991) is essentially concerned with this positioning of discourse participants and with the effects that are brought about thereby. Most of its practitioners are,

it would seem, inspired with a sense of mission to expose ideological bias, to reveal the epistemic positions of addressers so that they do not have a deleterious deontic effect on unwary addressees. Their concern is with power rather than solidarity.

Their endeavour is, though, somewhat compromised, I think, by their disregard of the complexity of these discourse rules. And here other factors relating to reference and its different modes or modalities come into consideration. And these factors will lead me (eventually) to the main business on my own agenda.

I refer here to the inadequacy of a dyadic view of discourse which Goffman initially, and others subsequently, have pointed out (Goffman, 1981; Levinson, 1988). The basic (and really rather obvious) point is made that at both the producing and the receiving end of the communication process, there is a plurality of roles in play. Thus the actual speaker, or writer, the one responsible for the transmission of sound or the inscription of letters, may not be the author of what is said or written. They may simply be animating somebody else's wordings. And the author of the wordings may in turn be simply formulating somebody else's thoughts. There is, of course, a similar plurality at the receiving end. The person addressed may not be the only or even the principal intended target of the message. An utterance may be designed to be overheard and people may recognise the designs made upon them, or may tune in anyway to messages, whether intended for them or not. And so on. So the 'real' protagonists in an interaction may not actually be present, or, if present as participants, may not be engaged in actual transmission. Incumbents of the transmission parts are not necessarily the interested parties.

So different discourse roles, at both producing and receiving ends, can be categorised in reference to such factors as transmission, participation and motivation (see again Levinson, 1988). Different combinations of factors define familiar social roles, both those which are permanently ascribed and those temporarily assumed. Consider, for instance, the complementary roles of barrister and defendant in court. Both are participants, but it is the barrister who transmits and speaks for, in the interests of, the defendant. And in speaking for the client, barristers are not relaying the client's words but composing their own. They are, in Goffman's terms, both animators and authors, but not principals. Or consider the difference between the transmission of a message and a military order. In both cases the animator, the actual deliverer of the message, is not responsible for its conceptualisation or its composition. A messenger, however, simply reports and is not implicated as an agent in its reference, force and effect. The transmitter of a military order is so implicated: though not the author, he/she has the authority to see that its original force is understood and has responsibility for its effect. It is because different participant roles are not clearly differentiated or acknowledged that messengers who bear bad tidings run the risk of

retribution, and subordinates who 'simply obey orders' can avoid it. And these roles are obviously implicated too in determining degrees of commitment, both to factuality of reference and intended force, in the utterances of spokespersons, informed sources, delegates, representatives, priests and scribes. Clearly, a recognition of this plurality of discourse participation is crucial to any assignment of pragmatic meaning in respect of reference, force and effect to language in context.

This business of commitment (together with the mention of scribes) brings me to literary authorship and to the main theme of this chapter. How far do authors of literary works assume the role of author in the Goffman sense? In one crucial respect they do not: there is no principal for whom they are composing a form of words. They are not, indeed, expressing *any* established or institutionalised perspective or point of view which can be referred to actual states of affairs. They are themselves acting as principal, but at the same time they take no responsibility for the factuality or feasibility of what they say. They are not speaking in their own voice, but they are not speaking on behalf of anybody else either. They are composing in the manner of a barrister, but there is no defendant and no cause to defend. So literary texts cannot be referred to conventional truth conditions of reference or felicity conditions of force. They create their effect by suspending such conditions. In this way, as I have argued before (e.g. Widdowson, 1984: Ch. 11; 1992), they *represent* alternative realities in a different dimension from reference.

Representation, so conceived, is a mode of meaning which has no modality. It does not epistemically position the writer. It is the first person internal to the text which is positioned, not that which is the text producer. Hence there is no commitment and no accountability to truth or validity in what is said. There is no deontic modality either. What is said is not designed so as to position the reader in respect of reference or force, for the reader is distinct from the text-internal second person. As a result, we get a text which is contextually detached, at a remove from the conventional conditions of communication: a text which, in effect, represents a reality which is non-accountable and which cannot be reduced to referential terms. The literary text, I would suggest, is always in a contextual limbo, and the effect of this is that the experience of literature is the experience of the self in social detachment. To put things in a different way, and making use of Halliday's terms, representation is ideational meaning which is isolated from interpersonal connections, thus requiring readers to provide the interpersonal for themselves by their own response. The reader is, so to speak, drawn into a pragmatic vacuum.

But although representation is essentially non-accountable, it is possible to give an account of it, and that is what I now propose to do by analysing the use of language in two passages of prose fiction. Let us begin with an example of the description of location. It is a formulation of place in a way, but in a representational way; one which creates context and not, as in the

case we considered earlier, one which uses referential expressions to complement contextual knowledge. The passage is from Chapter 8 of Dickens's *Oliver Twist,* and it runs as follows:

> The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt. There was a deal table before the fire: upon which were a candle, stuck in a ginger beer bottle, two or three pewter pots, a loaf and butter, and a plate. In a frying pan which was on a fire, and which was secured to the mantelshelf by a string, some sausages were cooking; and standing over them, with a toasting fork in his hand, was a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair. He was dressed in a greasy flannel gown, with his throat bare; and he seemed to be dividing his attention between the frying-pan and a clothes-horse, over which a great number of silk handkerchiefs were hanging. Several rough beds made of old sacks, were huddled side by side on the floor; and seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking spirits with the air of middle aged men.

Here we have the description of a room and its occupants. To say this is to suggest that the passage has conventional reference and force. But then its effect would presumably not be different if parts of the passage were to be re-arranged or even rephrased. Indeed, in some respects, we might consider certain changes to be an improvement on the original. The first sentence of the passage, for example, makes mention of two of the basic dimensions of the room, namely the walls and ceiling, but Dickens delays mention of the third, the floor, until the last sentence. We could regularise this rhetorical infelicity. Similarly, a table is mentioned briefly at the beginning of the passage and then again at the end. It would surely make for a more satisfactory, a more coherent description if we were to bring these elements together too. There is also, we might suggest, a certain awkwardness in the thematic marking of certain expressions, a cumbersome front-loading of phrases, as in the third sentence. We could surely do something about that. So we might propose an alternative version along the following lines:

> The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt. On the floor several rough beds made of old sacks were huddled side by side. There was a deal table before the fire: upon which were a candle, stuck in a ginger beer bottle, two or three pewter pots, a loaf and butter, and a plate. Seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking spirits with the air of middle aged men. Some sausages were cooking in a frying-pan which was on a fire,

> and which was secured to the mantelshelf by a string. A very old shrivelled Jew was standing over them with a toasting-fork in his hand. His villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair…[etc.]

The prepositional content of this version is no different from that of the original. It is equivalent in respect of reference; and in respect of force it remains a description. But the effect I would argue, is quite different. What, then, is the effect of the original form of words? Why, for example, do we have the table mentioned at the beginning of the passage together with the inanimate objects on it, the candle, the ginger beer bottle, the pewter pots and so on, but with no mention whatever of the human beings sitting around it? They are presumably there at the beginning, so why are they ignored? They are ignored, I want to argue, for the same reason as the sentences (as I indicated earlier) are marked in their thematic organisation: in order to bring about a particular representation of the room and its occupants. This representation, then, depends by its very nature on the original form of the text, and when this is altered, the effect disappears.

Consider then how the description is done. The first two sentences and the first half of the third present us with an itemised list of observations. The description is spare, reminiscent of the scene setting to be found at the beginning of a play script. The table and the objects on it, precisely but concisely stated and located, are like stage properties. Notice that the noun phrases have qualifying elements which provide location *(A deal table **before the fire;** a candle, **stuck in a ginger beer bottle**)* but no modification to provide descriptive detail of the objects themselves. The adjectives in attributive position are all of the classifying and not the qualitative kind *(deal* not *stained* or *rickety table; ginger beer* not *dirty* or *empty bottle; pewter not cracked or rusty pots)*. And this, of course, further contributes to the effect of a bare catalogue. Only when we get half-way through the third sentence, after a succession of minimal modifications, do we get any qualitative attribution on the noun. But there is another feature of the text to be noticed before we get to that point. It is, indeed, what Halliday has referred to as the textual function itself, what the Prague-school linguists before him discussed at length under the name of functional sentence perspective and communicative dynamism (see, for example, Daneš, 1974). How then does this dynamism function in this passage, what perspective is represented and what is its communicative effect?

The ordering of phrases in the first two sentences of the passage is such that information is added which is surplus to requirement as far as syntactic prediction is concerned. John Sinclair has referred to this kind of arrangement as *releasing,* and contrasts it with an *arresting* order, whereby there is a deferring of syntactic completion, and a corresponding suspense of expectation (Sinclair, 1966). Thus the first sentence is syntactically completed

by the word *black,* and the second by the word *table* with the phrases *with age and dirt* and *before the fire* added on as releasing elements. These phrases would have an arresting function, on the other hand, if they were to be moved into a different position as, for example, in:

> The walls and ceiling of the room were, with age and dirt, perfectly black. There was, before the fire, a deal table.

Arrest and release, then, are functions not of syntactic structure but of the alternative sequential order of constituents. What, then, is the relevance of all this to the way this scene is represented?

The point is that there is an abrupt shift from release to arrest at the beginning of the third sentence. Up to that point we have had a series of phrases which are sequentially added without syntactic motivation. They are essentially a list (the colon after *fire* can be said to signal this); a catalogue of items with no structural dependency, and they could indeed be re-ordered in all manner of ways:

> There was a deal table before the fire: upon which were two or three pewter pots, a candle, etc.
> There was a deal table before the fire: upon which was a plate, a loaf and butter, two or three pewter plates, a candle, etc.

This serial listing seems to me to give the description so far a matter-of-fact, offhand, almost inconsequential air. Then we come to the third sentence. Here the heavily thematised front-loading that I referred to earlier has an obvious arresting function, and the phrases are structurally bound together. The effect of the tightening up of the syntax is to tighten up expectation and to hold it in a state of suspense through the sequence of simple noun phrases referred to earlier. First, we have one delayed subject, *some sausages,* to complete the first clause as a kind of preparatory deferral, to increase the tension; and then comes more arrest through thematised phrases, still simple, until we come at last to the subject. This takes the form of a massively complex noun phrase, loaded with adjectives of a qualitative kind. And Fagin appears, dramatically focussed in a close-up: 'a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair'.

This passage is the verbal equivalent, one might suggest, of a film sequence, with the camera panning around the room, picking up a detail in momentary glimpse here and there, and then slowing down the tempo and building up tension before finally zooming in on the central figure. We can now see why the noun phrases descriptive of the inanimate features of the room are so simple and unadorned. Apart from their appropriacy in representing the bareness of the room, they represent too the experience of the observer, Oliver's first perceptions perhaps. To dwell on these features at any greater

length would be to diminish the impact of Fagin's appearance. And of course, we can see that to focus attention on the Dodger and the other human beings around the table at the beginning would have a similar effect of upstaging the central figure. What, in short, the particular linguistic organisation of this passage does is to represent the reality of the room and its occupants as apprehended by a particular but non-specific perception. Such an effect cannot of its nature survive textual alternation, and cannot be reduced to referential paraphrase. It is ideationally unique, and what interpersonal response we as readers might have to it depends on our recognition of its uniqueness.

Representational description may, of course, express all manner of perception and perspective. The point is that the alignment of the participant roles cannot be resolved or reduced to those of conventional communication. We cannot say that in the case of the passage we have just considered this is the projection of Dickens's view or Oliver's, or both, or neither. We may suggest that the dramatic zooming-in on Fagin captures something of the impact of his appearance on Oliver, but although the experience can be associated with him, the expression cannot. The very artifice of the description suggests a detached authorial control. But it is not as if Dickens is speaking *on behalf of* Oliver as a principal, some separate party. He *is* Oliver, even though in another sense he cannot be. And to the extent that readers are drawn into the representation of the scene, they too have the immediate experience. But they cannot be Oliver either. The participant roles are not plural in combination, but singular in fusion. As such, they inevitably set up an internal tension, and it is this, I think, that we are sensitive to in recognising a literary effect.

In the case of the passage we have been considering, the narrator is outside the text. The first-person pronoun makes no appearance to assume overt responsibility. It is, of course, common to find narrators inside the text as well, with explicit first-person identity, and then we would expect some congruence between experience and expression. But such identity is textually bound and closed off from external contextual connection. So it creates its own existence and its own represented and unaccountable reality. As before, the interpersonal modality, the positioning of the narrator and consequently, in effect, that of the reader, is expressed through the manner of the ideational description. Consider the following passage of first-person narration. It is the opening paragraph of Edgar Allen Poe's story *The Fall of the House of Usher:*

> During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of

> Usher. I know not how it was—but with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit.

As with the previous passage, a stylistic feature which is prominent here is the particular ordering of syntactic constituents, a distinctive communicative dynamism. The effect, however, is far from dynamic in this case. Quite the contrary, indeed: it creates, rather, a kind of inertia. Thus, the two adverbial expressions at the beginning of the passage hold up the appearance of the subject. Within these expressions, there are arresting elements within the noun phrases as well *(a dull day/a dull, dark day/a dull, dark, and soundless day)*. Even those elements which are releasing within the phrase *(in the autumn of the year)* have, of course, a further deferring effect. And we might note that some of this detail is not only syntactically surplus but semantically redundant as well: *in the autumn/of the year* (when else would it be?), *the clouds hung…in the heavens* (where else would they hang?). The syntax we might think is burdened enough without unnecessary lexical baggage.

The main clause constituents are, then, held back and when they do eventually arrive they do so only to initiate further delay. *I had been passing alone on horseback…* The most natural expectation activated by the verb form here is that a time clause will follow describing a co-occurrence of some kind: *when I saw…when suddenly…* Instead, we get an expression of place, again heavily modified *(through a singularly dreary tract of country)*. But it is not just that the expected concurrent event is deferred. It never actually happens. And note that this is the only action, the only material process, associated with human agency in the entire passage. The only other finite verbs with the first-person subject are non-volitional: the stative *know* (in a negative verb phrase) and the reflexive *found myself*. And this sole action is at first hindered by delay and then peters out in inconsequence. In the passage from Dickens I suggested that the description was the verbal equivalent of the panning and close-up shots in a film. The effect is that the human figure is foregrounded and dominant. Here, on the other hand, we have the effect of slow motion with the focus on the surroundings and with the human figure accordingly reduced and dominated.

Both the choice and the arrangement of grammatical forms gives a certain inertia to the description. The syntax is charged (hung oppressively indeed) with heavily loaded phrases which prevent the narrator from making an early appearance and impede his progress. They are seemingly expressive of powers which deprive him of volition. A sense of gloom pervades his spirit, we are explicitly told, when he first sees the House of Usher, but something of this sort has pervaded the perceptions attributed to him right from the beginning, and it is represented in the prose.

This is in part the period gloom of the gothic, and the lexis is obviously

loaded with it: *dull, dark, oppressively low, dreary, melancholy.* But there is something else too. There is, for example, a coming together of time and place, so that the *passing* is through both the dark day and the dreary tract of country, fused into a single experience. The clouds appear in a time clause, but they are described in terms of static location. The expression *at length* combines both dimensions. There is a combination too of perceptions: both sight and hearing are engaged but the visual and aural are perceptually combined. The day is *dull,* a word that relates to both sight *(dark)* and hearing *(soundless)* (as indeed does the word *low* in the following clause). Whatever sense it is that pervades the scene, it seems to be one that confounds the different dimensions of time and place and the feeling of gloom during the journey itself.[1] There are two perspectives here co-existing in contradiction to create a referential impossibility: one which is nevertheless apprehended as coherent in some other dimension of awareness. It is this apprehension of coherence, I think, which constitutes literary effect.

All this no doubt sounds somewhat mystical. And I suppose it is. But nobody questions the creation and recognition of such effects in the visual arts. The convergence of the incompatible and the plurality of participation that I have been talking about in this chapter as necessary features of representation as a mode of meaning appear, for example, in the compounding of perspectives we see in modern paintings which represent the human face full frontally and in profile at the same time, or in the impossible superimpositions of images in the pictures of artists like René Magritte.

With the visual arts it seems to be easier to accept that such realignments of elements, such perceptual combinations, have their own validity as representations of alternative realities which cannot be expressed in any other way. But in verbal art the fashioning of language works to the same effect, and the representations in prose I have discussed in this chapter similarly project possibilities of significance beyond the confinements of conventional reference.

NOTE

1 Barthes talks about this plurality of authorial voice as a necessary feature of all writing. His essay 'The death of the author' begins like this:

> In his story *Sarrasine* Balzac, describing a castrato disguised as a woman, writes the following sentence: 'This was woman herself, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive worries, her impetuous boldness, her fussings, and her delicious sensibility.' Who is speaking thus? Is it the hero of the story bent on remaining ignorant of the castrato hidden beneath the woman? Is it Balzac the individual, furnished by his personal experience with a philosophy of Woman? Is it Balzac the author professing 'literary' ideas on femininity? Is it universal wisdom? We shall

> never know for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin.
>
> (Barthes, 1977:142)

I associate these multiple voices with verbal art rather than with writing in general (as, indeed, does Bakhtin) and I argue that it is not that the different voices are destroyed, but that their disparities are somehow brought together into unique choral harmony within the art form. It is this which I refer to as representation. And (as I try to demonstrate in this chapter) it is this which provides the complex texture of literary writing, and provokes the divergence of response we refer to as literary effect.

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9

TELLING TALES

David Brazil

In this chapter I want to explore a tiny bit of the space between two areas of linguistic enquiry that have particularly engaged the interest of Malcolm Coulthard: the separate enterprises of describing the structure of interactive discourse and of investigating the organisation of narrative texts. The former, at least in the work of the Birmingham group to which Coulthard has contributed so importantly, has been seen as an attempt to account for how two (or more) participants jointly construct a coherent object. Its primary concern with the active participation of more than one speaker has made it difficult to extend its methods to take in what we have become accustomed to speak of as 'spoken monologue', and this has, not unnaturally, been seen by many as a limitation upon its usefulness. Spoken narrative (one of the forms that monologue takes) seems at first sight to be something very different from those two-party events like teacher/pupil interactions and doctor/patient consultations that provided the starting-point for much of the work in this area.

Yet very much spoken narrative is, in an important sense, part of conversation, and conversation is certainly one manifestation of verbal activity to which discourse-analysis techniques must be presumed to be applicable. We characteristically relate anecdotes in the course of conversing. It is probably true that the anecdote is normally insulated, as it were, from the surrounding non-anecdotal material, so that, for instance, its beginning and its end are clearly defined. This is certainly true in the sense that the other participant(s) realises that the option of responding in anything more than a minimal way is suspended for the duration of the tale: so long as the tale is understood to continue, turn-taking mechanisms are scarcely an issue.

It is also true that an anecdote is goal-directed. By this I mean that while conversationalists in general accept that their several contributions may take them virtually anywhere, raconteurs—unless, of course, they are hopelessly incompetent raconteurs—present each increment as a step towards whatever 'point' or 'punch-line' the tale is destined to conclude with. Of course, skilful operators can also steer a conversation towards their own predetermined ends; it is, nevertheless, within the legitimate competence of the other participant to resist such manipulation. So it is not unreasonable to take this

goal-directedness, this situation in which the speakers pursue an already determined end when they make each of their linguistic choices along the way, and do so without likelihood of resistance, as a distinguishing feature of spoken narrative.

In this sense, then, spoken narrative and two-party or multi-party discourse are likely to be different. Their similarity lies in that, in another sense, they are both encoded piecemeal: they are both assembled from whatever total repertoire the available linguistic resources comprise as the discourse proceeds. Unless the anecdote is scripted or totally memorised—possibilities we can, for present purposes, ignore—the assembly of each successive increment takes place in real time, and the necessary speaker choices are made on the basis of the state of here-and-now understanding between speaker and hearer. Speakers do what they do from one moment to the next because they appreciate what their present relationships with hearers are and what the present communicative needs of those hearers require them to do.

It may seem that, in the last paragraph, I am saying that story-tellers are compelled to respond to two contradictory sets of constraints: the need to follow their own programme in moving towards the goal which their apprehension of the anecdote as a whole dictates; and the need to respond piecemeal to apprehensions of what each successive step forward demands. The contradiction is resolved once we recognise that the former consideration is included in the latter; for another difference between the two kinds of discourse that I am contrasting lies in the relative importance of the concept of projection. In much everyday conversation the here-and-now communicative needs to which speakers address themselves are largely determined by antecedent events. Typically I know what you need to be told because you have asked me or because my understanding of your present position makes it clear to me. The shared world that speakers orientate towards is one which is, for the most part, already assented to by the hearer. We may say that a co-operative speaker anticipates needs that the hearer is in some sense already aware of, and seeks to satisfy them. But such anticipation cannot, in the nature of things, be guaranteed to be correct. The best that a speaker can do is to 'project' a need (for instance, 'What I assume you need to be told is X'). If projections are made in the spirit of co-operation, and interpreted in the same spirit by the recipient, then conversation usually proceeds smoothly. The case of the spoken anecdote is different, however, in that the hearer has far less clear apprehensions of what his/her present communicative needs are assumed to be. The speaker alone has access to the end point, that is to say the consideration that determines what, from time to time as the narrative proceeds, the hearer should be told. Projection now is a matter of attributing communicative needs to the listener of which the latter is so far largely unaware; and the obligation imposed upon the co-operative listener is to take it on trust that what is said will

ultimately be seen to be relevant. So, in making moment-by-moment decisions, the speaker responds to a set of situational considerations which include, among other things, the obligation not to lead the trusting listener astray. What is projected may not mesh with an already established situation, as it does in most of our utilitarian discourse; instead, it creates a situation. And it is probably not too much to say that the situation and the anecdote are one and the same thing.

Those who are familiar with the 'discourse' approach to intonation will recognise that much of the thinking that underlies the foregoing paragraphs derives either from that or from the more recent attempts to apply the same kind of logic to the description of the grammar of speech. I want now to apply some of the analytical machinery that these two related lines of enquiry provide to an examination of a recorded anecdote.[1] In so doing I shall hope to provide concrete exemplification of some of the very general points that I have raised. There is a presentation problem in doing this. One reason for seeking to extend my interests to syntax was to re-establish the view of the utterance as a holistic communicative event, a view which the concentration upon intonation alone tended to obscure. It is, however, still necessary for presentation purposes to adopt a more fragmentary approach than would be ideal. I shall begin by examining tone choice.

1 THE REFERRING/PROCLAIMING OPPOSITION

The description of intonation I work with (see Brazil, 1985) attributes a central meaning opposition to the choice between tones, or pitch movements, which fall at the end and those which rise at the end. End-rising tones place the content of the tone within the assumed shared background of the speaker and hearer. End-falling tones, on the other hand, place the content outside that background. Applying this to the story-telling situation, we may say that parts of the discourse so distinguished, the 'proclaimed' parts, constitute what the hearer is told. That which has end-rising tones, by contrast, constitutes what the speaker assumes is already common ground. The exploitation of the system clearly requires that the speaker should be in an interactive relationship with some—though possibly a hypothetical—hearer: only on the basis of such a relationship is it possible to make the necessary moment-by-moment decisions about what is shared background and what is not.

An alternative to such a direct, listener-oriented, stance is a set towards the language being used. Obliquely oriented discourse makes no assumptions about hearers except that they are listening. It takes no note of how any message the language may carry may impinge upon another participant's world. It occurs typically in connection with ritualised verbal events — events which are viewed not as instances of now-negotiated meaning but of

precoded and fixed routine. It occurs also, often in conjunction with hesitation pauses, when speakers temporarily abandon a hearer-sensitive stance in order to cope with on-line encoding problems. Its characteristic phonological correlate is the level tone.

Most tellers of tales signal when the tale is about to begin, and we can take the opening of our text

> //p it *HA*ppened that//

as just such a signal. One of its functions might be to mark the suspension of turn-taking mechanisms: the narrator claims the right to an uninterrupted hearing until the story is completed. The use of proclaiming tone, with its 'telling' implications, would seem to be appropriate for such a function. It seems appropriate as well, though for different reasons, in what follows:

> //p i was *DA*ting this fellow//o who *WAS* a//p about TWENty seven at the *TIME*//

Here the narrator embarks upon the story by providing essential information for the hearer. The change to oblique orientation before a pause seems to signify a need to think about how best to state the fellow's age. A similar change in

> //o *AND*//o i *MET* him//o at a *DANCE* or whatever//

without pauses seems to require a different explanation. Here, the effect is to marginalise this information as merely incidental and fairly predictable. Spoken as ritual, it rather gives the events referred to as ritual. It turns out, in fact, that in the subsequent development of the story, knowing how or where they met is irrelevant, and choosing this way of separating insignificant fact from information that does matter is helpful to the listener. For instance, what follows,

> //p we DAted for quite a few *MONTHS*//

is significant: knowing that, at the time of the incident, they were fairly well acquainted has a significant effect upon the impact of the final disclosure, and the return to proclaiming tone alerts the listener(s) to this fact.

There follows a return to oblique orientation which effectively downgrades certain other facts that the narrator seemingly wishes to have regarded as no more than stereotypical of the kind of dating relationship she was then involved in:

> //p and i ALways ad*MIRED*//o the *WAY*//o this *PERson*//p was *GROOMED*//o his *HAIR*//...(inaudible)

The narrator seems to want to have her admiration also regarded as of no present consequence. (The fact that information included here does actually

turn out to be relevant can be seen as an instance of the 'false-trail' device that story-tellers are allowed to make use of; or it may simply be that she temporarily loses contact with the drift of her story—something that one might expect to be not at all unusual.) We might almost say that the orientation switch that we find in cases like these is an indication to the hearer that these parts of the discourse are to be heard as not being part of the present interaction: they invite no kind of attention or response, and could indeed be just as well left out.

These uses of zero tone, taken together, therefore differ in their effect from the different kind of departure from proclaiming tone that we find in the subsequent string of tone units:

> //r+and he'd *COME*//r+and meet me at my PArents' *HOUSE*// r+you *KNOW*//r+and we'd go out to the *MO*vies//r+or *SOME*thing//

The units with referring tones (actually they are rising tones) that we get here project as assumption that the hearer will recognise each step in the procedure as readily recognisable parts of what 'dating' means (or meant): 'as you know, these are the things we did'. The effectiveness of many social anecdotes probably depends very much upon the extent to which they invoke a kind of insider's knowingness, an agreement that this is how things really are in our world. I shall not give away prematurely the eventual point of this anecdote if I say that it depends very much upon there being a consensus concerning certain attitudes and prejudices and concerning what constitutes a social gaffe. The details of dating could probably be taken for granted in the particular conversational nexus in which this anecdote occurs, but introducing them serves to insinuate fellow-feeling. A few tone units later, there are references to

> // r+a VEry nice *CAR*//....//r+a FORD con*VER*tible//r+and TOPless *A*rea(?)//r+and *SO* forth//

and to

> //r+an atTRACtive looking *CAR*//r+and the TOP *DOWN*// o and *GUY* that was //r+NICE *LOO*king//

and these tone units actually do elicit appreciative, if undecipherable, noises from the listeners, indicating fairly clearly that the latter identify with the essentially in-group viewpoint from which the references are made.

When the narrator goes on to say

> //o *SO*//r+we GO to the *MO*vies//p we were a little *LATE*//r+ and we're LOOking for a place to *PARK*//

both instances of referring tone are justifiable references back to already negotiated ground. She has already mentioned going to the movies as what

they regularly did, so to say that they were doing so on this occasion would not be heard as news; and since we now know that going in the car is an important part of the attraction, we scarcely need telling that it will have to be parked. The world of shared understanding in which these tone units are located is the world that the tale has so far created, rather than the world of culturally constructed understandings that we noticed above. But the fact that they were 'a little late' is so far not part of that understanding. It is therefore proclaimed.

The business of parking is elaborated on as follows:

> //p it was ALways a *PROB*lem//p we LIVED in a small TOWN/ / o SO//p we DIDn't have to go blocks a WAY//p and it Happened that//p there was a *PAR*king space//p *RIGHT*//r+ in *FRONT*// p of the *MO*vie house//p it was JUST *PER*fect//

The reason for this elaboration is not clear. Subsequent developments do not show any particular importance attaching to exactly where the car was parked, though it may, perhaps, be argued that finding a solution to the parking problem which was 'just perfect' provides a happy background against which the eventual calamity will occur. After a further reference which is self-explanatory,

> //r+so we PARKED the car *THERE*//

we have another string of proclaimed tone units, whose later relevance is beyond question:

> //p it was *STAR*ting//p to SPRINkle with *RAIN*//p and we de*CI*ded/ /p we *deCIded*//p we'd BEtter put the *TOP* up//on the *CAR*//

The objection to putting the top up is then explained in a passage which is also predominantly proclaimed

> //p *WELL*//p the *PROB*lem//p with con*VER*tibles//is the *VAN*dalism you know//…(inaudible)…//p they would TAKE a *KNIFE*//p and CUT the top from the *CAR*//p JUST for *FUN*//r+ YOU *KNOW*//p if ANyone had a con*VER*tible//p they would *DO* that//p it was *VAN*dalism//p i DON'T know what possessed them to *DO* it//

There follows a presumption of understanding on the part of the listeners when the narrator refers to her feelings about running such a risk:

> //o i *HA*ppened to//p to *FEEL*//r a certain amount of *PRIDE* for this car//r and KNOWing how *HE* cared for it//

An alternation of referring and proclaiming tones then reflects a distinction

between what, on a reasonable assessment of the situation, could be taken to have been already negotiated and what could not.

> // r+he PUT the car *TOP* up//p and i was *WO*rried//p ALL the TIME//r+that SOMEbody would come a*LONG* and//p CUT the *TOP*//

There follows a series of referring tones which seem to signify, once again, a predictable sequence of events. Given what we (that is to say, the speaker and the listeners) know about the surrounding circumstances, there is no surprise in the facts that:

> //r+we WENT into the *MO*vies//r+forGOT about the *CAR*//r+ and *EV*erything//r+and when the MOvie was *O*ver//r+COming out of the *MO*vie house//o *AND* er//o the *RAIN*//r+was coming *DOWN*//

It is against this background of 'normality', deliberately evoked as it would seem, that we are then told that

> //p he was SO *CON*scious//p about GEtting *WET*//

while the narrator said that for her part

> //r *I*//p was conscious about the *CAR*//

I have made no distinction in this analysis between the two kinds of referring tone, the fall-rise and the rise, since the attempt to do so turned up little of interest. So far as the central distinction between referring and proclaiming is concerned, however, it is fair to say that the part of the anecdote we have so far examined works in essentially the same way as any other piece of interactive discourse: the narrator can be seen to be reacting to a tenable view of what the changing state of speaker-hearer understanding is like at each moment when she makes a choice, and opting out of the direct, listener-sensitive mode at points where it is expedient to do so. Perhaps the most interesting feature is the extent to which the r/p opposition is exploited to establish the kind of background understanding that an effective telling of the tale requires.

We come to a similar conclusion if we look more briefly at some other features of the intonation system.

2 KEY CHOICE

The key system, which is quite independent of tone, is realised phonologically by a rise to a higher pitch level or a fall to a lower pitch level at the first prominent syllable in the tone unit. It resembles key in that its use is also hearer-sensitive: high key makes a presumption that the hearer will have

certain expectations and contradicts them. Low key makes a similar presumption and confirms them.

There are a number of instances of high key towards the end of the narrative:

SO
// p he was *CON*scious // p about getting *WET* // r *I* was
CAR
conscious // p about the // p i COULDn't under*STAND* why he
*RAIN*drops
was // r SO con*CERNED* // about the // p *A*nyway //
RAN to the
r+ we *CAR* // r and i HAPpened to *SAY* to him // p i *SEE*
TACT
// p your top is still in //

There is little difficulty in seeing that each time the narrator selects high key in this extract, she is making an assertion which goes against the likely ongoing expectations. Thus:

> *SO CONscious* has some such force as 'more conscious than would be expected'—the speaker's consciousness was focussed not upon getting wet, as it sensibly might have been, but upon the *CAR*.
> She could not understand why *RAINdrops* (of all things) should concern him.
> The fact that the top of the car was *inTACT* ran counter to expectations, in the light of what she has already said about the activity of vandals.

There follows an instance of the equative use of low key:

> //p i DON'T know why i *USED*//p that CHOICE of *WORDS*//
> p your
>
> TOP is still in*TACT*//

The hearer would naturally assume that 'that choice of words' meant 'your top is still intact' and the choice of low key underlines the fact that that was indeed what it meant.

In each of these cases, the departure from mid key, either up or down, accords with what we might expect if similar utterances occurred in some non-narrative context.

3 PROMINENCE DISTRIBUTION

Prominence is that phonological feature which marks a word as the location of some existentially relevant choice of sense. All tonic syllables have prominence and there is often an additional prominent syllable earlier in the tone unit. Since assumptions about which words will represent significant

selections in the here-and-now of an utterance depend upon the constantly changing state of conversational play between participants, it follows that, in this respect also, the speaker's performance is listener-sensitive.

There is, in fact, little scope for a different distribution of prominence in most of the tone units. It is difficult, for instance, to imagine circumstances in which the selective elements would be other than those to which the speaker assigns prominent syllables in

> //p and it was *SI*lly//r+but he LET it *GO*//p and he DIDn't//p answer me at the *TIME*//o and i *FELT*//r+he PRObably knew what i *MEANT*//and we GOT in the *CAR*//o and we went to a *LO*cal//r+*RES*taurant//p to share a *PIZ*za//

Either grammatical constraints or obvious factors in the environment rule out the possibility of there being any likely existential alternatives to the items that have no prominent syllable. There are a few earlier cases, however, where the fact that the narrator has selected one distribution where she might well have selected another does seem to be of some significance. She says, for instance:

> //p it *HA*ppened that//p i was *DA*ting this fellow//

It is quite common to begin a story by identifying the central protagonist. Our narrator might, for instance, have said:

> //r+THIS *FE*llow i was dating//...

But she does not do this. Instead, she selects 'dating' (rather than any other activity) as the frame within which the ensuing anecdote is to be cast, and this is almost immediately reinforced in

> //p we'd been DAting for quite a few *MONTHS*//

where 'dating' could very reasonably have been regarded as non-selective. As an alternative to

> //p we'd been dating for QUITE a few *MONTHS*//

the chosen version achieves a significant shift of attention away from the period of time to the nature of the relationship. It is thus made clear at the outset that this is to be a story about the hazards of such relationships in general rather than about any particular person.

When she says later

> //r+and he'd meet me at my PARENTS' *HOUSE*//

the narrator chooses against such possible options as the following:

> //and he'd MEET me at my parents' *HOUSE*//
> //he'd meet me at my *PAR*ents' house//

The point here seems to be the fact that it was the house -not any less 'safe' rendezvous—and the fact that her parents were privy to what was going on are both important. If we see *PARents' HOUSE* as an existential synonym for, for instance, 'family home', we are nudged towards the stereotype of a fresh-faced teenage relationship that the narrator doubtless expects her listeners to find slightly amusing.

We can say, then, that in so far as there is scope for choice, the way the speaker distributes prominent syllables seems to exploit the system in a way which draws upon the same kind of meaning potential as it has in non-narrative discourse.

Exploring the interactive nature of the anecdote is one necessary step towards clarifying the relationship between such data and the kind of two-party event that discourse analysis sets out to handle. Although only one participant is active, it is still possible to say that continuous and detailed apprehension of a second party determines what happens in crucial ways. And, since what the active participant does and how the passive participant(s) interpret(s) this both rely upon an assumption of co-operation, it is still possible to regard monologue like this as the co-operatively produced outcome of an interaction.

4 SEGMENTATION

The next step is to see how the kind of segmentation procedure that has been proposed for two-party discourse in, for instance, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) can be applied to our anecdote. The procedure was, of course, conceived in terms of a 'rank scale', each unit being analysable into one or more occurrences of a unit of the rank next below it. This view of the matter was probably a heuristic necessity, but it is not difficult to reinterpret most of the resulting 'structural' analyses in terms of a Markovian model. I have such a model in mind in what follows.

We can represent the different classes of Sinclair and Coulthard's central analytical category, the exchange by reference to the 'state' that is precipitated by the occurrence of its initiating move. Thus, an eliciting move precipitates a state in which a response is expected, a directing move one in which non-verbal action is expected, and an informing move one in which an acknowledgement is sufficient. The difficulty of applying such criteria to our present data has long been obvious: even acknowledgements are unlikely to occur until the end in the situation we are examining, and the entire episode is, therefore, most convincingly—but unsatisfactorily—represented as a single informing move.

Since we cannot rely upon the behaviour of the other party to provide criteria, we have little alternative to examining the way the behaviour of the active participant is organised formally. It is to this task that I want to apply myself, very tentatively, in the last part of my chapter.

5 PITCH SEQUENCES

I shall take as my starting-point a unit which is recognisable on purely intonational grounds: the pitch sequence. Definition of this unit requires reference to no further intonational categories except termination. This is a feature which, like key, is realised by a distinctive pitch-level choice of high, mid or low. It differs from key in that its place of realisation is the last, not the first, prominent syllable. (When there is only one prominent syllable in the tone unit the two choices are, of course, realised simultaneously.) Part of its communicative significance is that a choice of low termination in any tone unit marks the end of a pitch sequence. We shall see that the key choice in the tone unit following such pitch-sequence closure has a somewhat different effect from that we have noted above.

There is one pitch-sequence boundary after 'pizza' in the continuation of the story, and the sequence continues to the next occurrence of low termination in 'me'.

LEANED
// p to share a // p and he over the *TA*ble (and he
*PIZ*za
said to me er when we were coming out of the movie house er) // p

you MENtioned you MENtioned something to //
ME

(Notice that the prominent syllable in *ME* seems to serve the sole purpose of achieving low termination in order to bring to an end this segment of the discourse.)

6 PITCH-SEQUENCE COMPLEXES

The pitch sequence examined above began with high key. The one which follows it begins with mid key.

... // you MENtioned something to // o is *MY* (I wear a toupee)
ME
// r+ is it //
*SHOW*ing

There is a notional relationship—though it is admittedly one which is difficult to describe in a generalisable way—between the purport of the pitch sequence which ends with 'you mentioned something to me' and the following 'Is my—I wear a toupee—is it showing'; and it is a kind of relationship which does not exist in the case of the previous pitch-sequence boundary. If we recognise the relationship that *does* exist there as one of maximal disjunction, 'He leaned over the table...' being in some sense the the beginning of a new

stage in the development of the narrative, we can say that there is a lesser disjunction across the boundary between 'you mentioned something to me' and 'is my…', and that the difference is signalled by the choice of high and mid key respectively in the new pitch sequence.

If that choice is mid, this means the new sequence depends for its interpretation on the previous one. We have a situation somewhat analogous to that which standard grammatical procedures have sought to characterise as 'subordination': that is to say, the two sequences can be thought of as adhering to each other as a larger unit, a pitch-sequence complex. This unit can be defined as any stretch of speech which begins with high key and ends with low termination. There is a possibility of any number of internal pitch-sequence closures which are not followed by high key.

We have two possible units, therefore, for which we need only intonational evidence, one of which is larger than, and contains, the other. The question arises as to whether we can identify a third unit, smaller than the pitch sequence. To do this we have to take account both of intonational and syntactic features.

7 TELLING INCREMENTS

In the tale we are examining, the speaker's purpose is exclusively to tell (as opposed to such possible alternatives as to ask). We can approach this part of our analysis by examining the least stretch of speech it is necessary to produce before anything can be said to have been told. One such stretch is

> //r+one *EV*ening//r+we were going to the *MO*vies//p and we were a little *LATE*//

This qualifies as a telling increment because it satisfies two separate conditions:

1 It proceeds far enough through a sequence of grammatical elements to represent something that could plausibly be told in those discourse conditions that exist at the time it is uttered.
2 Some part of it is proclaimed.

To enlarge on the second of these conditions first: no increment which merely articulates common ground can be judged to tell anything: it is necessary to proclaim something. Notice that if the intonational requirement were satisfied earlier, as for instance in

> //r+one *EV*ening//p we were going to the *MO*vies//

a shorter stretch of speech might have telling potential. This invented variant would work, of course, only if an entirely different set of discourse

conditions existed; and we can say, further, that in yet another set of conditions

> //r+one *EV*ening//p *WE* were going//

might be an appropriate thing to tell. But an utterance which satisfies the intonational requirement but falls short of certain syntactic requirements will not have telling potential whatever the discourse conditions may be:

> //r+one *EV*ening//p *WE*//

would manifestly not be heard as telling anything in any conceivable circumstances.

It is not possible here to give a detailed account of the view of syntax that underlies this analysis. All that we need to do to segment the data we are presently concerned with, however, is to ask how far the speaker must proceed along a linear chain of syntactic elements in order to reach a state where something can be said to have been told. The deficiency of the last example quoted above is that the speaker has not gone far enough: some further elements such as '…were going to the movies' would be required. Provided present communicative needs are kept in mind, there are no real problems, in segmenting the whole of the our narrative into telling increments by attending to the double requirement of intonational and syntactic sufficiency. In the following breakdown, the relationship between telling increments and the larger units, pitch sequences (PSs) and pitch-sequence complexes (PSCs) can be seen:

PSC PS   I was dating this fellow who was about twenty seven at the time

....

PS   and I met him at a dance or whatever

....

PS   and we dated for quite a few months

....

PSC PS   and I always admired the way this person was groomed his hair was just so and whatever

____

PSC PS   and he'd come and meet me at my parents' house and we'd go out to the movies or something

....

PS   and this one evening we went to the movies and we were a little late
and he had this very nice car I remember it was a Ford

convertible and a topless cab and so forth it really felt good
an attractive looking car and the top down and a guy that was nice looking it really felt great

—————

PSC PS we go to the movies and we're looking for a parking space
it's always a problem
we lived in a small town
so we didn't have to go blocks away

—————

PSC PS there was a parking space right in front of the movie house
it was just perfect

—————

PSC PS we parked the car there and it was starting to sprinkle with rain and we decided we decided we'd better put the top up on the car
the problem with convertibles is the vandalism
they would take a knife
and cut the top
from the car
just for fun
if anybody had a convertible they would do it
it was venomous
I don't know what possessed them to do it
I happen to feel a certain pride for this car
and knowing how he cared for it ? ? ?

—————

PSC PS he put the top up and and I was worried
all the time
that somebody would come along and cut the top
we went into the movies and forgot the car and everything
and when the movie was over coming out of the
movie house and the rain was coming down and he'd he
was so conscious about getting wet
but II was conscious about his car
I couldn't understand why he was so concerned about the rain drops
for me it didn't matter
he was conscious about hair and my hair and all

....

PS	and we ran for the car and I happened to say to him I see your top is still intact I don’t know why I used that choice of words
	....
PS	your top is still intact
	....
PS	and it was silly but he let it go and he didn’t answer at the time and I felt he probably knew what I meant...
	....
PS	and we got in the car and we went to a local restaurant to share a pizza
	__________
PSC PS	and he leaned over the table and he said to me er when we were coming out of the movie house before er you mentioned something to me
	....
PS	is my I wear a toupee is it showing
	__________

Notice that the very last increment is the first part of an uncompleted asking exchange. The fact that it is not completed is clearly part of the ‘design’ of the narrative.

An analysis of this kind, which proceeds from a set of purely formal criteria, says nothing, of course, about the possible communicative significance of the three different kinds of boundary it postulates. Any statement about this would require the analysis of a lot more data, a clearer account of what constitutes a telling increment and a comparison of what happens in this kind of data with what happens when both participants are active. For the expectation would be that at each kind of boundary there was a different possibility of response. The fact that when the anecdote is being recounted there is *no* response that one would say counted as a ‘turn’ does not, of course, mean that listeners are unresponsive: acknowledgements of information received and reactions to that information can take many forms other than discrete verbal contributions. If the end point of a telling increment can be shown to be the time at which acknowledgements are made in two-party discourse, then we might expect that there would be an opportunity for non-verbal acknowledgement here when the listener is passive. This tentative characterisation of the telling increment as the least stretch of language to which the listener responds provides us with a start. The way in which pitch-sequence boundaries affect responses has already

been examined (see Brazil, 1985:191–9). Clearly, there is much more to be done, but this look at a tiny fragment of data at least suggests that it is worth thinking of monologue as something different from a single unanalysable act of telling, on one hand, or from simple, one-by-one concatenation assertions, on the other.

NOTE

1 The recording was used in the course of a Seminar which Malcolm Coulthard arranged in Florianopolis in 1987, and I am indebted to Jose Luiz Meurer for permission to use it here.

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10

SPOKEN DISCOURSE MARKERS IN WRITTEN TEXT

Michael McCarthy

> Now, sire, now wol I tell forth my tale.
> As evere moote I drynken wyn or ale,
> I shal seye sooth
>
> (Chaucer: *The Prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bath; The Canterbury Tales*[1])

1 INTRODUCTION: MEDIA AND MODES

The question of isolating linguistic features which may be characteristic of spoken language, on the one hand, and written language, on the other, has generated a good deal of literature and a healthy debate among descriptive linguists.[2] Chafe (1982, 1991) has investigated the typical features that impart qualities of orality and literacy to texts; classic, data-based studies of speech and writing have been carried out at a variety of linguistic levels by Crystal and Davy (1969); and, more recently, the computer analyses of Biber (1988, 1989) and Biber and Finegan (1988, 1989) have subjected large amounts of written and spoken data to scrutiny. Results have been suggestive, conflicting, open to attack (see especially Tannen, 1982; Mazzie, 1987) and caught in the tension of quantitative versus qualitative approaches (Niyi Akinnaso, 1982).

In this chapter, I wish to examine just one feature that is well documented in spoken and written discourse analysis, the use of discourse markers, and to use that as a fairly blunt instrument to get at what informants feel to be significant clues in deciding whether a given text fits the spoken language better than the written.

Any text can potentially be delivered to its receivers via either the spoken or written medium. A written text primarily intended for silent reading (for example, a modern novel) can be read aloud, and spoken conversations can be written down and read. We can also conceive of what Crystal and Davy (1969:70) call *complex medium:* a press conference might consist of spoken statements whose main motivation is to be transmitted as written text; equally, last wills and testaments are often received as spoken messages and

never actually read by the beneficiaries. A useful distinction, therefore, is that between *medium* and *mode,* where medium is concerned with how the message is transmitted to its receivers, and mode is concerned with how it is composed stylistically, that is, with reference to sociolinguistically grounded norms of archetypical speech and archetypical writing. These norms are norms of appropriacy, culturally conditioned on a cline of 'writtenness' and 'spokenness'. Other definitions of 'medium' and 'mode' exist (for example, Halliday, 1978; Murray, 1988) and others have used different terms to refer to the same phenomena (for example, Mazzie's (1987) use of *modality* for 'mode'), but it is mode as a conscious (or otherwise) choice of imparting to the text qualities of writtenness or spokenness that we shall be concerned with here.

The clines proposed by linguists to represent variation along sets of norms have caused difficulty and debate in previous research. For instance, Chafe (1982) uses terms such as *fragmentation* versus *integration,* and *involvement* versus *detachment,* to describe the opposing ends of scales that typically separate oral and literate strategies, respectively. Although these may be *generally* typical, it is easy to find texts which are integrated (that is, which package information tightly and efficiently) but which are still strongly redolent of the spoken mode, and ones which are involved (in which their authors' presence is foregrounded) but 'written' in terms of mode. Chafe was comparing spontaneous spoken data with formal academic prose, and he does observe that these data are *extremes* of what is a continuum with overlaps; in his words: 'there are other styles of speaking which are more in the direction of writing and other styles of writing which are more like speech (ibid.). Tendencies towards the end points of the scales are therefore neither sufficient nor necessary conditions for the classification of mode. Tannen (1982) and Mazzie (1987) both challenge the oversimplification that such scales can lead to. Tannen's position is that the scalar extremes are more dependent on register and genre than on medium or mode. In Mazzie's case, *content* rather than medium or mode is a greater determinant of 'speech-like' features such as implicitness; texts with abstract subject matter generally have more 'inferrable' information than narrative texts, regardless of whether they derived from written or spoken data.

Biber and Finegan's work depends on the quantifying power of computational analysis to observe how features cluster in different texts and how these may be placed on oppositional scales not entirely unlike those already mentioned. Biber and Finegan (1989) use three sets of oppositions: *informational* versus *involved* production, *elaborated* versus *situation-dependent* reference and *abstract* versus *non-abstract* style. Despite not having eliminated many of the problems attendant on any such analysis, Biber and Finegan show how style in English has drifted in general from the literate towards the more oral between the eighteenth and

twentieth centuries, over a wide corpus of letters, essays and fiction. Biber and Finegan's work is significant since it underlines one of the basic intuitions of the present chapter: that many texts composed and transmitted in the written medium and meant to be read 'mark' themselves on the surface of the text as echoing that which might be spoken and heard. In Biber's (1988) data, for example, what he calls 'popular lore' texts (for example, informative texts in popular magazines) are noticeably 'situation-dependent', in which respect they share several features with spoken discourses.

I have reported elsewhere (McCarthy, 1992) how popular magazine texts in the 'fanzine' genre aim to reproduce conversational styles via the written medium, and that this is partly a result of modern technology (the word-processor) liberating authors from the constraints posed by editors and publishers, pushing the fanzine genre evermore towards the spoken mode and away from the written modes adopted by the more staid institutional sources of information previously available to fan readers (see also Nystrand, 1983, for comments on the influence of desk-top machinery and word-processing on the occurrence of spoken features in written texts). The fanzine data I reported on was, more than anything, notable for its adherence, even in the written text, to linguistic forms which are of their very essence organisational supports to the spoken medium. Spoken data are full of what are commonly referred to in the literature as *discourse markers,* and it was these which were especially notable in fanzine data, and which will be looked at in a selection of other written data here.

2 DISCOURSE MARKERS

Schiffrin (1987) is the most comprehensive investigation of discourse markers in general, though it is not the only one (see also Fraser 1990; Redeker, 1990). Studies of individual markers also exist (for example, Murray, 1979; Svartvik, 1980; Östman, 1981; papers in Tottie and Bäcklund, 1986). Schiffrin defines markers as 'sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk' (1987:31) and as 'members of a functional class of verbal (and non-verbal) devices which provide contextual co-ordinates for ongoing talk' (p. 41). The key function of discourse markers is that they signal to the receiver, independently of content, what is happening, where the discourse is, where it is going, whether it has finished, whether utterances follow smoothly from what has been uttered before or whether some kind of disjunction is occurring; they are therefore a system of management of what is said or written. Within any language, discourse markers consist of a finite set of forms which realise a range of interactive functions.

One of the pioneering descriptions of the role of certain discourse markers may be found in Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) study of teacher-pupil interaction. In the classroom data they investigated, Sinclair and

Coulthard found that teachers regularly marked the boundaries of lesson segments with extraclausal items such as *right, now* and *okay*. These were accompanied by prosodic features which marked them out from the flow of ongoing speech (for example, pitch-level changes, silent stresses and falling pitch contours). In Sinclair and Coulthard's system of analysis, such items were important signals of the boundaries of a unit in their rank scale, the *transaction*. But written modes too have their own conventional markers that organise and segment texts, such as alphabetical and enumerative labelling (*A, 1.3.2,* for example) as well as segmenting markers typically associated with writing and rare in speech (*in sum, firstly,* etc.). Some markers do occur in both written and spoken modes (for example, the use of *now* and *so* sentence- or paragraph-initially plus comma, in some academic styles). But it does seem that some markers are almost uniquely associated with speech, or, as Biber (1988:241) says, are 'rare outside of the conversational genres'. Ones which spring to mind in English are *mind you, you know* and *oh*. The one which I wish to look at here more specifically is *well,* which strikes me intuitively as belonging to the spoken mode, yet for which data offer some fascinating examples composed in the written medium.

McCarthy (1992) compared texts written by football fans for football-fan readers with texts aimed at the same audience in 'institutional' sources such as the national press and football-club souvenir programmes. In one sample of fanzine text matched for topic and length with a club programme text, 18 examples of clause-initial discourse markers of the set described by Schriffrin (1987) were counted, as against only three in the programme text. Initial *so* occurred as nine of the 18 markers, initial *anyway* as four and *well* occurred twice. Initial *so* with comma, we have noted, is found in some 'written' styles, but its very high distribution in the fanzine data corresponded more to the kinds of distributions found in spoken data such as oral narrative, commentary and argument. Other spoken-mode markers occurring frequently elsewhere in the fanzine data included *now, mind you, still, after all, I mean* and *okay*. What the fanzine style adds to the conventional institutional written sources of commentary on football matches is a strongly conversational and intimate mode, appealing more directly to a readership whose evaluation of football games is typically spoken, around public-house tables, after the match. The football fanzine (as with other fanzine types) is therefore a very good example of a genre where the spoken mode is transmitted via the written medium.

3 INFORMANTS' REACTIONS

In pursuit of the potential for discourse markers to evoke a spoken mode in writing, I investigated the reactions of a group of informants to strings of

language taken out of their contexts, some taken from transcripts of recordings of spontaneous speech, and some from classically 'written' sources such as literary fiction and academic prose. Ten stretches of language were tested and 80 informants, in three separate groups, were asked to judge whether they felt the bits of language were more likely to have come from a spoken transcript or from a written, 'monologue' text (that is, not literary dialogue, for example). The full results are reported and commented upon in Carter and McCarthy (forthcoming), but one or two points are worthy of close examination here. Seven of the ten stretches of language were chosen because they contained markers from Schiffrin's (1987) set. These included utterance-initial *so, now, well and you know*. The items which scored *unanimous* votes from the informants as belonging to the spoken mode are given here:

(1) …no, it'll shut. So, try it now. It's better…
(2) …so, you know, up I get, bad temper…

Items which scored 70 per cent and over as belonging to speech were:

(3) …well, eventually he came home, and they had…
(4) …opportunities in Space. Well, not strictly in Space, but in Space Research…

Other items were more difficult to decide, even though they contained markers; these were, notably, two literary examples and one from a magazine advertisement:

(5) …well, the place is gone now; not a stone remains…
(6) …into my eyes and said nothing. Well, it was a good defence…
(7) …are erased away. Now, wouldn't you like to change your image?

Many informants felt (5) and (6) had a 'literary tone', especially (5), with its solemn vocabulary, but also (6) with its descriptive detail and evaluation. Example (7) was spotted as advertising text because of *image*.

4 ADVERTISING A CONTEXT

What do such results tell us? First, items with markers were overwhelmingly more easily assigned to spoken mode than other stretches taken from speech transcripts but which did not contain markers. Second, where the informants felt they were in the presence of literary or advertising text, they were quite content to assign a written origin to the text regardless of the speech markers. This underlines nicely the point that mode is perceived as something separate from medium, and that certain genres are accepted as characteristically incorporating spoken features, or of mixing modes, even though they are

mostly written in form and style. However, example (4) above is an interesting case. Virtually 100 per cent of informants had no hesitation in assigning it to speech, and were mildly surprised when shown its original source, which is, in fact, a written advertisement for an academic post at the University of Birmingham. It is reproduced in part here:

> UNIVERSITY OF
> BIRMINGHAM
> OPPORTUNITIES
> IN SPACE
> Well, not strictly in
> Space, but in Space
> Research.
> The Department of Space
> Research builds instru-
> ments for operation…
> etc.
> (*The Guardian,* 15 September 1987, p. 20)

The advertisement continues in the style of a typical British academic job-advertisement text, and is in all other respects like every other text on the page it appears on, and like the hundreds of similar texts which appear in the academic jobs pages of that newspaper week after week. In my experience, this is the only advertisement striking such a note of chattiness and intimacy to have appeared in *The Guardian's* academic jobs pages. By breaking a convention, the advertisement obviously stands out among a rather jejune collection of neighbouring texts. The effect of 'well, not strictly in Space' is to suggest a self-correction, an afterthought, something not normally left visible on a composed and revised written text; in other words, we have the traces of real-time communication characteristic of spontaneous speech. Another interpretation is that the words are a retraction following a challenge from an interlocutor, giving the text a dyadic exchange structure or suggesting adjacency pairing. It is one of the common functions of *well* in English to signal a contrast between first- and second-pair parts, or some sort of unpredicted direction for the second-pair part, as in examples where polarity is challenged, such as:

> A: D'you live in Cambridge, then?
> B: Well, near Cambridge, not in the city itself.
> (attested)

The academic-job advertisement shows just how genre-specific the distribution of linguistic forms can be. Many other subgenres of advertising reveal the use of spoken discourse markers to be almost routine, without any marked effect. This was largely the case with our data sample (7) above. Indeed, some uses

of markers and other speech-like conventions in written advertising texts have become so regular that typical patterns for whole texts have emerged. One such pattern (examples of which British newspaper and magazine readers will have little difficulty in finding in large numbers), might be called the *well/and/so* pattern, because of the regularity with which these elements occur and how they occur. An example follows, edited for reasons of length:

> BROWNIES GO AS DEEP AS THEY CAN
> Would you like to tan deeper than you've ever tanned before? And faster?
> Well, New Formula Bergasol has been specially formulated to help everyone do just that.
> And we do mean everyone.
> [...intervening text]
> So, forget about those shallow tans of the past.
> This is your year of being deep and meaningful.
> (*Cosmopolitan,* May 1989, p. 80)

The patterning of *well, and* and *so* is typical. *Well* often occurs near the beginning of the text, anticipating or offering a response to a predictable reaction of the reader, as in the space-research text, and as in these extracts from the opening lines of other advertising examples:

> GREAT BAKING NEEDS A LIGHT TOUCH
> (Well, alright, two light touches)
> You can't beat a home-baked cake. Everyone knows that...etc.
> (Panasonic microwave oven advertisement)
> ...what should you look for in a new bed, for yourself, or the kids, or maybe Granny?
> Well, of course there's no one answer. We at Hypnos think...etc.
> (Hypnos bed advertisement)

And frequently occurs sentence-initially (in contravention of 'good' written style), just as it often occurs turn- and utterance-initially in spoken data (see Schiffrin, 1987:128–52, for numerous examples) and *so* often occurs as a signal of closure of the text or as a point where topic may change, again echoing functions common in spoken data (see Schiffrin, 1987:217–25):[3]

> So, you may need a firm bed, or a softer one, a single or a double.
> (penultimate sentence: Hypnos bed advertisement)

These patterns seem to have become engrained in British English advertising texts for consumer goods, and are not generally perceived as marked in any way. The same patterns still strike us as somewhat marked when used in other advertising subgenres (as in the space text), or in texts that carry expectations of 'serious' writing, such as reports in the quality newspapers:

> ELECTRIC CAR MAY DRIVE POLLUTION LEVELS HIGHER
> Bonn—Tony Catterall
> Vehicle manufacturers everywhere, spurred by actual or potential legislation aimed at reducing air pollution, are busy developing electric cars, which are cleaner, it is said. Well, not necessarily.
> (*The Observer,* 4 August 1991, p. 12)

What kinds of written texts, therefore, are spoken discourse markers commonly used in without producing marked examples of genre? Our informant test seemed to suggest that literary text might do so without creating a clash of expectations.

5 THE LITERARY CONTEXT

Literary texts often display, to a greater or lesser extent, traces of orality, and some texts are heavily signalled as 'to be heard' rather than 'to be read'. The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, taken from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,*[4] with its double *now,* suggests an oral performance organising itself metadiscursively as well as temporally, so that the written organisation of the tale, into 'Prologue' and the tale proper, achieved by orthographic organisation and the use of headings, is supplemented by its oral equivalent. The historiography of the transition from 'oral' literature to 'written' styles is a huge subject, well beyond the scope of this chapter to contribute anything to, but scholars have commented upon 'trace elements' of orality in modern writing styles. Wårvik (1990), for example, speaks of a 'common denominator' between Old English narratives and modern spoken narrative not shared by Modern English written narrative, while Nagy (1989) comments on the age-old tension of putting the oral tradition into the written in Irish literature, with predictable losses of orality.

Looking at spoken discourse markers in literary texts, we find them fulfilling functions not dissimilar to those they had in the advertising texts, in that they project a dialogue between writer and reader even in so-called monologue texts. Crystal and Davy's definition of monologue as an 'utterance with no expectation of a response' and dialogue as an 'utterance with alternating participants' (1969:69–70) is one no less relevant to literary prose and poetry, except that 'alternating participants' needs to take account of voices in the text which may be implicit rather than explicit. The traditional division of literary narrative into first- and third-person narrative often obscures the fact that first-person narratives may well be more dialogic than 'first person' (with its hints of soliloquy) may suggest. Clews (1985:13–15) underlines the point that monologue novels are, like dramatic and poetic monologues, addressed to a listener 'whose presence is overtly acknowledged by the speaker'. We have already noted two examples of the use of *well* in informant test examples (5) and (6), taken from Sean O'Faoláin's novel *Bird*

Alone.[5] O'Faoláin's monologue slips in and out of more and less dialogic passages, the dialogic being more foregrounded typically by the use of questions directed at the reader, and by the occurrence of discourse markers, as in these extracts:

> Oh, Gilabbey was a good place to live in, all right, the very names a history of Ireland…
>
> (p. 12)

> Still and all, in spite of my grander's disapproval of the refined Hoares we continued to visit them—even after the sad occasion of Virginia's return to Cork; and my grander's only retort was to take me out, as often, to Sherlock's or the Condoorums: though, there again, it was our connection with the disreputable Condoorums that people chose to observe and remember to our discredit. As for the Sherlocks—well, that is my story.
>
> (p. 66)[6]

Oh (see James, 1972), *all right, still and all* and *well* contribute here as typical spoken markers to recreate a conversational context. Therefore 'monologic', though it is in one sense, and though, as its title, *Bird Alone,* suggests, it is a novel about isolation and loneliness, there is an intimacy created between writer and reader, the intimacy of direct, conversational address. The fact that this is intermittent and not constant in the text only serves to foreground it even more when it does occur.

Poets have long exploited dialogic elements as a feature of their mode of address, and, not surprisingly, we find exactly the same discourse markers appearing in poetic monologues as we have in our advertisements and prose narrative. Coleridge's *Dejection: an Ode* begins with a quotation from the *Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence* and then has as its opening lines:

> Well! If the bard was weather-wise, who made
> The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
> This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence.[7]

Here we seem to have a response or reaction to the lines of the old ballad, illustrating the typical 'responding' (rather than initiating) function of *well* (see Schiffrin, 1987:102–27).

Thomas Hardy's *Reflection* on his eighty-sixth birthday, entitled *He Never Expected Much,* opens with a slightly different *well,* more like the transactional boundary marker of the type identified by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), and again projecting the conversational mode into the written poetic style:

> Well, World, you have kept faith with me,
> Kept faith with me;

Upon the whole you have proved to be
Much as you said you were.[8]

Elsewhere in Hardy, we find the 'responsive/reactive', *well* opening the poem *A Philosophical Fantasy:*

Well, if thou wilt, then, ask me;
To answer will not task me:
I've a response, I doubt not.[9]

W.H.Auden also captures the spoken mode with the use of markers. On the one hand, we find the narrator in *For the Time Being,* in a section intended to be heard as a closing oration, beginning with a boundary-marking *well* that gives an informal, conversational feel to the text:

Well, so that is that. Now we must dismantle the tree,
Putting the decorations back into their cardboard boxes.[10]

But equally, in other, more conventional poems, we find discourse markers playing their characteristic role of projecting conversational contexts. Poem XIV of *In Time of War* opens with a *yes* that instantly recreates a spoken context, and here we sense it is the 'cataphoric' *yes* used by speakers to preface a statement of their view or position (rather than a polar response), a feature found in conversational data (see Bald, 1980):

Yes, we are going to suffer, now; the sky
Throbs like a feverish forehead; pain is real.[11]

A similar *yes* also opens *Under Sirius:*

Yes, these are the dog-days, Fortunatus:
The heather lies limp and dead
On the mountain, the baltering torrent
Shrunk to a soodling thread[12]

Under Sirius has other dialogic features too, such as direct address and references to utterances by the addressee:

All day *you tell us, you* wish
Some earthquake would astonish,

And last night, *you say, you* dreamed of that bright blue morning.[13]
(my italics)

Our few examples here are only some of the many that can be found in English poetry. The researcher seeking further examples is considerably aided by the existence of computerised concordances for the works of a number of great literary figures, though some concordances are more helpful than others in indicating precisely which occurrences of words like *well* are most likely to be discourse markers (for example, compare the Borello, 1969,

concordance of Gerard Manley Hopkins with the Dilligan and Todd, 1970, concordance; the latter retains punctuation, indicating clearly distinctions between syntactically ambiguous strings such as 'well I know…' and 'well, I know…').

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I have looked at the occurrence of spoken discourse markers in written texts taken from journalistic, advertising and literary sources, and argued that they play a major role in our judgement of the degree of spokenness present in the text. I offer it as a small contribution to the general argument that written text is no less interactive than spoken text, that terms such as 'spoken' and 'written' can often be misleading, as can 'monologue' and 'dialogue', and that literary texts no less than advertising texts exploit creatively the very stuff of everyday conversation, a point nowhere put more persuasively (but without much attention to the precise role of discourse markers attempted here) than in Tannen (1989). Well, that's all, then. And I don't want to say any more. So, that's that.

NOTES

1. From *The Riverside Chaucer,* 3rd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1988), 107.
2. As well as the works cited hereafter, the reader is referred to the annotated bibliography on spoken and written language by Luetkemeyer, Van Antwerp and Kindell (1984).
3. This is true not only of English but also of Mandarin Chinese, with its so-equivalent: *na(me)* (see Yung-O, 1990), of Japanese, with its so-equivalent: *Dakara* (see Maynard, 1989), and may well be true of many other languages.
4. I am greatly indebted to my colleagues Helen Phillips and Norman Page of Nottingham University, whose vast knowledge of Medieval and Modern English literature has helped me track down some of the literary references in this chapter.
5. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.
6. For further examples contrasting monologic passages with more dialogic ones in O'Faoláin, and contrasting him with Laurie Lee, see Carter and McCarthy (forthcoming).
7. Coleridge, *Select Poems,* ed. S.G.Dunn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924).
8. *The Poems of Thomas Hardy: a New Selection,* ed. T.R.M.Creighton, rev. edn (London: Macmillan, 1977).
9. Ibid.
10. W.H.Auden, *Collected Poems,* ed. E.Mendelson (London: Faber & Faber, 1976).
11. *In Time of War,* poem XIV: in *Collected Poems,* ed. E.Mendelson (London: Faber & Faber, 1976). *In Time of War,* in Auden, *Collected Poems*.
12. Auden's *Secondary Epic* in the *Collected Poems* uses an initial *no* with similar dialogic effect:

No, Virgil, no:
Not even the first of the Romans can learn
His Roman history in the future tense.

13 See Note 11.

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11

A COMPARISON OF 'POLICESPEAK' AND 'NORMALSPEAK': A PRELIMINARY STUDY

Gwyneth Fox

Corpus work in linguistics is not new. As long ago as the early 1960s John Sinclair received a grant from OSTI to do studies in lexical collocation. For this Sinclair used a corpus of 135,000 words of spontaneous conversation and 12,000 words of written scientific English (Sinclair *et al.,* 1970), and all the statements he made about collocation were based on the evidence of what they actually found in the language.

There are many other small corpora of this kind collected mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. In the United States Nelson Francis and Henry Kucera built up a 1 million word corpus known as the Brown Corpus; there is an equivalent British English corpus, known as LOB (Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen); there is the Survey of English Usage, with 200 'texts' of 5,000 words each; there is the International Corpus of English, where 1 million words of different Englishes from around the world are presently being collected, and so on.

In 1980, however, a new era in corpus linguistics began. The COBUILD project was set up as a joint venture between Collins Publishers (now HarperCollins) and the English Department at the University of Birmingham, under the editorship of John Sinclair. The project has two main aims: to do research into Modern English in order to find out how the language is being used at the present time; and to present these research findings in reference books for learners of English as a foreign language. From the beginning it was realised that a large corpus would be needed in order to have enough evidence to make authoritative statements about the language. It was therefore decided to build a corpus of at least 6 million words. Corpus building began, and the data—books, magazines, pamphlets, lectures, conversations—were keyed or scanned onto the computer. The data were then alphabetised and concordanced, and within a couple of years there was a corpus available to the researchers of 7.3 million words, 6 million written and 1.3 million spoken.

The researchers were given concordances for each word in the corpus, and they then analysed the data, looking at meaning, word class, syntactic patterns, register, field of discourse, pragmatic implications and so on. This information was then fed into a lexical database, and the first publication, the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (Sinclair *et al.,* 1987), was extracted from it and published. Since then, eleven other publications have followed.

Corpus building has continued at COBUILD, and the original 7.3 million words have been increased to more than 150 million words. The corpus is now known as the Bank of English, and is continually being added to.

Although we now have so much data, it is mainly of what is usually termed 'general English', namely the type of English which is typically read, written and spoken by people in their ordinary everyday lives. This means that there is massive data on how ordinary people use, and therefore understand, words. And ordinary, everyday understanding is not necessarily the same as an expert might expect; that is, a word may be used by the lay public differently from the way the same word is used by a specialist in a subject.

Two years ago COBUILD was approached by a law firm asking about the lay understanding of the word *visa* and how it would be interpreted by the average visitor to Britain, as a student who had a visa was refused entry to Britain because he also needed 'leave to enter'. Sinclair (personal communication) checked the data for *visa* and *visas,* and found there were approximately 300 citations for it in the 30 million words held at that time on the computers at COBUILD. In his submission to the lawyers he concentrated particularly on the 100 instances there were in 8 million words taken from *The Times* and the *Sunday Times,* checking these against the rest of the corpus.

He found 26 citations of *Visa card,* and these he rejected. He looked at the verbs typically found with *visa* and found there were over 50 instances of verbs such as *grant, issue, refuse, apply for, require* and *need,* showing how visas fit into our daily life: you ask for a visa when you need one and you either get one or you do not. The word *visa* is used with words to do with travel, such as passports and money and names of countries. Typical examples are:

> You cannot enter an Arab country with an Israeli visa stamped in your passport.
> British passport holders do not require visas.
> Non-commonwealth students who require an entry visa will need a re-entry visa even if you only leave the country for a couple of days.

Further data is shown in Figure 11.1.

From evidence of this kind Sinclair concluded that the average visitor,

```
" "Because, you dumb bastard, a Frenchman needs an American visa in his passport before they will let him into the Unit
 will let him into the United States. And he must show that visa in his passport to the airline people, otherwise they
as a Scene of panic and chaos. The Germans were playing the visa market for all it was worth. The more desperate the Je
stry to the embassy of the country concerned in Moscow. The visa may be granted by the embassy, which will advise its o
hmar and hike to Beirut On foot He carried the passport and visa of a Jew who had recently arrived in Palestine as a "t
ars of trying to quit China, he was finally granted an exit visa on te eve of Chairman Hua Guofeng's goodwill visit to
port or national identity card. You do not need to obtain a visa or a letter of consent nor would you normally be asked
icates. You should make enquiries to find out if you need a visa or entry certificate and also to find out whether you
ver possible for the husband and/or children to apply for a visa or entry certificate to [1visit]1 during the study per
d extremely tight controls on foreigners. You had to have a visa or they would not even admit you. Paraguay. That was a
e West. He is my half-brother, Yu Soong Kwong. on a one-way visa out of the land that had Yu Gim, father of Yu Soong Kw
the half-brother a Chinese peasant now aged 59 on a one-way visa out of the land that had imprisoned him. We told each
. "How much would you pay me?" "Not much. But there'd be no visa problems. Would you get me a towel from the closet, ho
nges course mid-way. This had led to students being refused visa renewal to allow them to remain in the United Kingdom
the 20 minute interview. This should enable you to get your visa renewed for another 12 months. International Family Se
t always the first notice of a new arrival results from the visa request made by the Soviet Foreign Ministry to the emb
ther periods of study. Note: Countries for which the UK has visa requirements: Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Benin (for
 System". What's more they've got me <P 187> working in the visa section with an F.S.O. 8 leaning over my shoulder all
ssport and found blankness on those pages where the Russian visa should have been stamped. "For God's sake, Warner. The
e United States Consulate-General in Johannesburg to get my visa stamp and spoke with several senior members of the Ame
ave to remain, well before it runs out. You can extend your visa through Welfare. They issue the application form and w
 dissidents allowed to leave. "I asked for a passport and a visa to Hong Kong," he told me. "For a long tim the authori
 dissidents allowed to leave. "I asked for a passport and a visa to Hong Kong," he told me. "For a long tim the authori
consulate. And finally, after great hardship, he obtained a visa to come to Australia. But even in far-off Australia Hu
time you enter the United Kingdom, you will need a re-entry visa to enable you to return. You can obtain a re-entry vis
utside Britain. lf you are a foreign student and required a visa to enter Britain initially, you will need a re-entry v
les on the Stalin-made famine, I should always be refused a visa to enter the USSR. On the one or two occasions that I
I had had any." He stayed in Hong Kong long enough to get a visa to join his family in America. "Hong Kong is a miracle
oria, explained that she had been <P 242> granted a lengthy visa to live in the Soviet Union and study Russian law, a s
d on an impulse applied at the Soviet Embassy for a transit visa to return to London via Moscow. This was stamped into
a visa to enter Britain initially, you will need a re-entry visa to show to the immigration officer on your return to B
9 2BY. After renewal you should then apply for the re-entry visa to the Passport Office. In addition to obtaining a re-
h less difficulty than I had expected, I obtained a limited visa to visit East Germany, and made my reverent way not on
migration. From the time that she first applied for an exit visa until her eventual departure almost a year later, the
cluding juice (extra fruit can substitute for vegetable and visa versa). 6 Starchy vegetable, 1 or 2 times. 7. Whole-gr
I should be seen as a class enemy and anathema, and have my visa withdrawn. How many truths have been suppressed to sav
se, Petty France, London SW1. When you apply for a re-entry visa you must enclose your passport, a letter from the Univ
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Figure 11.1

meeting everyday English of the type recorded in the corpus, would deduce that a visa was a kind of permit to enter a country. A visitor has to acquire a visa by prior application; the visa has a certain validity, and without it there are likely to be problems. A country can control people entering its borders by issuing or refusing visas, seemingly at will. However, if you have a visa for a particular country there is no reason to expect that you will not be allowed to enter; indeed, there is every reason to expect that you will enter the country with no problems at all. Nothing else should be needed. The student who was told he also needed 'leave to enter' Britain therefore had every right to feel aggrieved. People's understanding of everyday language is not sensitive to legal niceties; they understand the language they hear and read according to the contexts in which they find it; they cannot be expected to know specialised interpretations.

Having worked on COBUILD corpus data since 1981, my interest in its potential in forensic linguistics was aroused by Malcolm Coulthard's asking me a couple of years ago to provide him with data about the comparative frequencies of *then I* and I *then*. The difference was staggering: in the written corpus there were 235 *then I* and 24 I *then;* in the spoken corpus there were 202 *then I* and only 9 I *then*. This shows conclusively which is the more common structure. Yet in the data Coulthard was looking at, I *then* was much more frequent—even though it purported to be a verbatim account given by a witness to the police. From previous analysis Coulthard knew that I *then, he then, the suspect then* and so on is a structure typically found in formal police reports; you would not expect it to occur in statements given by lay witnesses, as they have not been trained in 'policespeak' of this kind.

My interest aroused, I succeeded in getting some statements given by both policemen and witnesses, and looked at some of the grammatical and lexical features which I found, comparing them against our general corpus data.

The most obvious grammatical feature in statements given by police officers was the one that Coulthard had originally asked about: the use of *then* immediately after a subject rather than at the beginning of the clause. All the statements I looked at had this syntactic feature in startling numbers: 'Detective Constable X then left the room' 'She then started talking to the girl'; 'Y then stated…'; and so on. In one statement every possible combination of *then* occurred in three adjacent sentences: 'Z then thought and then said could he see his mother and then he might be able to…. We agreed and then returned to the station. I then went for Z's mother.' This is very untypical writing when compared with the data in the Bank of English.

The unusualness of it would not matter if this feature were only found in police statements, as this would simply be a feature of 'policespeak'. Unfortunately, as Coulthard noted, the structure is also found in what are said to be 'full, unaltered and accurate' records of words spoken by

witnesses. This is particularly worrying when those records are compared with transcripts of interviews given by the same witnesses. French (personal communication) has analysed the patterns of vocabulary and grammar in statements and has compared them with those found in interviews which he has carried out with the same witnesses. In one case a statement contained eleven occurrences of *then* after the subject of a sentence, and this constituted 100 per cent of all occurrences of the word. In French's interview with the witness *then* occurred on each occasion in front of the subject. This means that his interview and the official statement were mirror images of each other—an unlikely variation on the part of the witness.

Then is not the only adjunct found in post-subject position in police statements. Time and frequency adjuncts such as *again, at first* and *continually* are untypically frequent in that position when compared with data in the Bank of English. For example, the word *continually* is found 23 times in 2.6 million words of spoken data. Not once is it used in post-subject position. However, in one statement of 473 words *continually* is used three times, always in immediate post-subject position. This is interesting in itself, as a feature of 'policespeak'. When, however, it is also found in statements which are said to be the actual words spoken by a witness, it must be suspect: most people simply do not use the word *continually* in post-subject position, even in a formal, perhaps frightening, situation.

Police officers are obsessed by time. Or so it seems from their statements. Actual times are often given: 'at 5.12 p.m.', 'at 9.23 p.m.', 'at 12.46 p.m.' etc. These are frequently the times at which questioning begins and ends, but by no means only that; for example, 'at 12.20 p.m., at a rubbish site…'; 'Lunch was provided at 12.39 p.m.' There are also many approximate times: 'at approximately 3.15 p.m.', 'at 10.28 a.m. approximately', 'at about 3.45 p.m.', 'at round about 10.05 a.m.' This feature is carried over into the statements given by witnesses—perhaps because the preoccupation of the police with time is felt by the witnesses, who carefully try to get all events into the correct time sequence; or perhaps the police, when taking down the statement, impose on it some structure of their own. In this case the statement is obviously not completely in the witness's own words. There is something unnatural about the following extract, which must be based on answers to questions put to a witness by the police: 'She stated that she put them [her children] to bed around 10 p.m. or so. She stated her husband was working until 11 p.m. and arrived home around 11.20 p.m. She stated…they went to bed around 12.30 a.m. to 1 a.m.' It seems as if *she stated* really means 'she answered our question in this way'.

Even more common in police statements than actual times are adverbials of time, usually used at the beginning of a clause: *later, later on, later the same day, at this time, after this, a short time after this, the next day* and so on. Again, the incidence of such phrases is much higher in the police

statements than is found in the COBUILD corpus, although it is difficult to say how much higher because of the variety of phrases which are used.

There is one other feature related to time which is worth mentioning. Police statements are often very precise in the way they describe events relative to one another. This is done by the expressions of time already described, and also by clauses typically introduced by *as, when, while,* and *whilst:* 'just as we were walking out…' 'when he had finished raping her he then threw her out of the van', 'whilst patrolling the area looking for the pond', 'while he was doing it', 'after examining the item', 'on entering the kitchen I saw…', 'at this point she asked…', etc. Looking at evidence from our spoken corpus, this is unusual in its frequency in the police statements. We do specify in this way in our daily conversations, but much less often. We have, for example, only 24 instances of *whilst in* a corpus of 1.3 million words, and the majority of those do not occur at the beginning of sentences but follow the main clause: 'I wouldn't want to stay at home whilst I was at university'; whereas in the police statements the *whilst* clauses almost always precede the main clause. This observation is also true of the other introductory conjunctions and prepositions, which has the effect of very precisely specifying the sequence of events.

Equally precise is the setting of the scene: where the interview is taking place, where they were at the time of the arrest, where they found the body and so on. This is entirely understandable, but it does lead to some unnatural overspecificity: 'in an interview room at X Police Station', 'at a rubbish site off Mary Jane Road', 'in Shottery Lane at the entrance to the Sports Club', 'we returned to the yard of XY Police Station'. In normal conversation you would probably say *we returned* (more likely, *went back*) *to the station* rather than mentioning the actual part of the station.

None of the features mentioned so far is particularly unusual in itself, although it might not be very common. What gives 'statement-speak' its very distinctive flavour is the juxtaposition of two or three of these features in very close proximity: 'later, at approximately 3.15 p.m.', 'at approximately 6.45 a.m. on Friday 3 March 1989', 'later at 3.05 p.m. on that day', 'later the same day, at 5.12 p.m., in a cell at XY Police Station', 'on Tuesday 12 July 1988, at 5.35 p.m., in a first-floor interview room at XY Police Station'. The accumulation of adjuncts in this way is unusual. We are normally much less precise and more casual about exact details of time and place, and I could find no examples in the Bank of English of structures similar to the two last-quoted ones—a date followed by a time followed by a place. It is important, however, for police records that all events are carefully timed and located, as they might be queried at some later time, and perhaps challenged by defence lawyers.

In most of the police statements I have looked at, the passive voice is much more frequently used than in normal writing. This gives a very impersonal feel to some statements, with things seeming to happen without

human intervention: 'The police were called and a search was commenced'; 'The car was removed to XY Police Station, where it was technically examined'; 'Mr Z was served a meal in his cell.' There are also a large number of prepositional phrases starting with *by,* which thus say who did something, and which could in many cases, therefore, have been expressed in the active rather than in the passive: 'The licensed premises was robbed by two armed and masked men'; 'Y was ordered across to the traffic island in the middle of the road by the gunman with the shotgun'; 'Z was taken to an interview room at 10.28 by Detective Constable B. Prior to that he was supplied with a meal by Detective Constable C.' This last example is a use of the passive voice where, more typically, you would find the active. Other examples are: 'A carton of ribena was provided to X whilst he was making the statement' and 'Lunch was provided to Y.' It is odd to find the passive used in this way, as it is more usual to say who the provider was, either by the use of the active voice, or by a prepositional phrase introduced by *by*. *Provided to* is also unusual: things are normally provided *for* someone rather than *to* them. In the original 20 million words of the Bank of English *provided to* occurs 18 times, ten of which are the infinitive *to,* and only eight are prepositional *to,* with seven of the objects referring to people. In contrast, there are 146 *provided for,* and 55 of the prepositional objects refer to people.

Another obvious area of difference between 'policespeak' and 'normalspeak' is vocabulary. One set of words refers to the names of offences, all of which have a very precise meaning in law, and yet mean very little to the innocent layman.

A defendant is charged with *a scheduled offence*. This compound cannot be found in any general British or American dictionary. Nor is its meaning covered by the senses of *scheduled* which are listed, even in *Collins English Dictionary,* which has the fullest account of the word. The nearest you can get to the meaning of *scheduled* in this compound is to look at the definitions of the noun *schedule,* where there are two meanings which seem to come close: the first is the general 'a list of items', and the second is a more specific legal sense, 'a list or inventory, usually supplementary to a contract, will, etc.' (*Collins English Dictionary,* 1991). 'A listed offence' is obviously a rough paraphrase, but even this does not seem quite precise enough to explain the meaning fully. Looking at COBUILD data gives little help. A concordance of *scheduled* in modifier position is given in Figure 11.2. From this it can be seen that the most common collocates are *airline, departure, flights* and *time*—all to do with transport. Yet the phrase *scheduled offence* is used to people who are being charged with a crime. Do they understand what it means?

In the statements available to me one person was charged with 'serious assault', another with 'causing grievous bodily harm'. As a layperson I have no idea whether the one follows from the other. Are they roughly the same

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AVEL (OTHER THAN AS  A  FARE-PAYING  PASSENGER ON A REGULAR SCHEDULED  AIRLINE  OR LICENSED  CHARTER  AIRCRAFT)  DISEAS
AVEL (OTHER THAN AS  A  FARE-PAYING  PASSENGER ON A REGULAR SCHEDULED  AIRLINE  OR LICENSED  CHARTER AIRCRAFT).  MEDICA
Duggan," he began without preliminary. "He left London on a scheduled BEA flight on Monday morning. The booking was tak
V8 MERCEDES OR  VOLVO ULTRA-SMOOTH POWER. BY AIR:  LICENSED SCHEDULED CARRIERS OR SELECTED CHARTER SERVICES ARE  USED.
ough you were supposed nowadays to call him a member of the Scheduled Castes. He had been an orphan and a ragamuffin wh
 discussion groups. You can see why the Russians feared the scheduled Communist Party Congress in 1968. Who knows what
 BMA,  DAN  AIR,  SEALINK,  TOWNSEND  THORESEN,  AND  OTHER SCHEDULED OPERATORS.  SOME AIR HOLIDAYS ARE CONTRACTED ON C
 HOLIDAY RESORT. TRAVEL  BY  AIR:  TRAVEL  IS BY  SELECTED  SCHEDULED  OR  CHARTER SERVICES  (DAY FLIGHTS).  THE UK DEP
FOR THE PERIOD OF THAT DELAY. COVER APPLIES ON LAND, SEA OR SCHEDULED OR CHARTER FLIGHTS IN THE UNITED  KINGDOM  AND  T
the Health and Safety Executive. The Inspectorate monitors "Scheduled Processes" - which include most industri
TION,  CLOSURE  OF  AIRPORTS, ALTERATION OR CANCELLATION OF SCHEDULED SERVICES, OR OTHER EVENTS OUTSIDE THE CONTROL OF
LS CAUSED THE POSTPONEMENT OF THEIR QUETTA COUNCIL FROM ITS SCHEDULED START TODAY UNTIL AFTER PRESIDENT ZIA-UL-HAQ FINI
scenery, would be attached to The Blue Express, a regularly scheduled Soviet train running between East Berlin and Mos-
rticular line of products meet from time to time. There are scheduled company flights, and a fleet of airplanes stands
d then analyse the nature of response. (FCA Prospectus) The scheduled courses are approximately five weeks and are resi
unted, an extra 20,000 jobs would have to go, on top of the scheduled demanning cuts of 35,000 in 1981-86 There was lit
You'll be warm. I promise.' 7 Forty-five minutes before its scheduled departure time of 10.0 pm, Trans America Airlines
ght Two to Rome, which was then thirty-six hours away from scheduled departure. An operations vice- president in New Y
rt or other departure point by more than 12 hours from your scheduled departure time, due to industrial action, bad wea
of the Society for Experimental Biology. Two days before my scheduled departure there was a heavy fall of snow, giving
friendly Italian customs official, and the night before her scheduled departure Israeli skin divers swam along the wate
  for  congressional  Democrats to seek or  stave  off  the scheduled elimination of the benefit.  "This is going to af
y ten more days of virginity, only nine more days until the scheduled fecundation, now only eight. I could conceive of
ork unfoffinately was titled "Theatre of Cruelty" and ran a scheduled five weeks at the LAMDA Theatre Club in London. I
read) are several times more likely to crash than planes on scheduled flights, being, he infers, machines long past the
ith a wide range of facilities and arrangements, some using scheduled flights, others on special charters. Twickenham T
ause the transport, if any, will be emergency transport. No scheduled flights can be expected after war breaks out." "W
airports in all the main cities. If you are travelling on a scheduled flight it is quicker and more convenient to book
o any kind of harassment of this sort; his was the world of scheduled flights, luxury hotels and private beaches. Which
main speakers was to have been Luria. Two weeks prior to is scheduled flight to London, he was notified that he would n
etween Germany and Russia. In July Beaverbrook set off on a scheduled holiday in Canada, returning to England a few day
ounter - -not that he was likely to have forgotten the only scheduled in-flight event of the entire voyage. The track o
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Figure 11.2

charge? Are they separate charges? If so, which is more serious? The dictionaries list *grievous bodily harm;* they do not list *serious assault.* Again, what is the difference between *burglary* and *aggravated burglary*? Presumably, the second is more serious than the first, but in what way? Are goods taken which are more valuable? Is more damage done? Has there been violence towards people? The dictionaries offer no help in unravelling the differences. I think I know the difference between *causing damage* and *causing malicious damage* and between *sexual misbehaviour* and *unlawful sex,* two other pairs of offences mentioned in the statements. But the implications of the differences are unclear. The Bank of English is no help; we have no citations for either *sexual misbehaviour or unlawful sex*. Their use in legal language is therefore a very clear example of jargon, important not only to the people who use it but to the people it is used to, which is not explained in any general dictionary, even though it is being used day after day throughout the land, in solicitors' offices, police stations, prisons and courts of law.

The words *alleged* and *allegation* are interesting in the data. An allegation can be defined as 'an unproved statement or assertion, esp. one in an accusation' (*Collins English Dictionary,* 1991). This fits with the use found in the police statements: '…an allegation made to police officers earlier on that day'. But then a subtle distinction seems to emerge between the singular and the plural: 'the allegations pointed to a series of rapes' and 'all she had to do was come in and make a single allegation in relation to the latest episode'. So, on the one hand, 'an allegation' seems to be the entire assertion; on the other hand, it seems to be an assertion of a single instance of something, in this case rape. However, in more general spoken language this distinction is not so clear-cut, with the plural being used interchangeably with the singular, although the plural is six times as common as the singular. In the COBUILD spoken corpus there is one very interesting line which makes a distinction between *accusation* and *allegation,* the first perhaps being more capable of proof than the second:

> and inevitably it will lead to all sorts of accusations and allegations which will not be at all pleasant to our democracy.

Alleged as an attributive adjective is common in the police data: *alleged incident, alleged rape, alleged traffic accident.* It can be defined as 'said to have taken place, although it has not yet been proved'. This definition seems reasonable for *alleged incident* and *alleged rape,* although not, in the circumstances described, for *alleged traffic accident,* for in this case there is no doubt that the accident took place. The car was a police car which ran over a girl who had crawled under it while it was stopped at a gipsy site. The driver of the car admits to the accident, but says it was not the result of negligence or carelessness. It must be the case that the travellers are claiming negligence

on the part of the police, and the case might therefore more properly be called one of *alleged negligence* rather than of *alleged traffic accident*.

There is a formality in some of the vocabulary in the written police statements which is untypical of lay people's accounts of incidents or events. Shots are not *fired* but *discharged,* although in the original 20 million word corpus at COBUILD there were only three examples of guns being *discharged* (out of 94 citations for *discharged)* as compared with over 400 (out of 451) examples of guns being *fired*. Jewellery is *recovered,* rather than *found* or *got back*. People *undergo* an examination; they do not *have* one, which is the typical verb in general English. The police *retain possession* of property, they do not *keep* it. Prisoners are *conveyed back* to prison, they are not *taken back*.

Journeys are *commenced* or even *recommenced* rather than *begun* or *started*. There are no citations at all for *commence, commenced,* or *commencing* in the spoken corpus, and only one for *commences*; and that is merely a bracketed note to show that there was a new conversation starting. In the 20 million word corpus there are 26 citations for *commenced,* but it is not journeys that commence, rather trials, physical activity and employment (see Figure 11.3). This use of *commence* by the police is therefore untypical, both in its frequency and its collocates.

One verb which is repeated frequently in police statements is the verb *continue*. Police *continue with enquiries,* they *continue to question,* they *continue questioning,* they even *continue on and question*. There are 194 citations for all the forms of *continue* in the spoken corpus, of which 60 are *continue to do,* eight are *continue doing,* eight are *continue with something,* and only one is *continue and do*. We have no citations with the collocates *question* or *enquiries;* and so this is again a collocation more or less unique to police jargon.

Police officers *enumerate* dates and times, rather than *list* or *give* them. This is legal jargon, as borne out by the following line from the COBUILD data:

> …bind themselves mutually to surrender such persons as, being charged with or convicted of any of the crimes or offences enumerated hereinafter in Article II, shall be found in the territory of the other state…

Enumerate is an example of legal jargon, unlikely to be used by the lay public. Another is *tender,* which is found in the declaration signed by all police witnesses:

> I declare that this statement…is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence

y, however, shortly after her regime of garden exercise had commenced, Fanny was impelled to speak to Goble when she fo
IAL ACTION WHICH, AT THE TIME OF BOOKING THE HOLIDAY, HAS COMMENCED, OR FOR WHICH A STATED COMMENCING DATE WHICH C
she was sneered at. She made a point, whenever a soliloquy commenced, of turning away from the Iceberg and staring out
ukovsky had been <P 95> held for nine months whcn his trial commenced, yet it lasted only a day and was closed to journ
n the Frenchman had ceased to edify the throng, the bidding commenced. "What shall we say, gentlemen, for this elegant
nothing to iron, because nothing dry. "Lucky school hasn't commenced.' She used the word "com- menced' instead of "beg
SPOT FOR A MINOAN SETTLEMENT, AND IN 1967 DIGGING COMMENCED. ALMOST AT ONCE, POTTERY SHARDS WERE DISCOVERED
ss bloodless than the invasion with which the Falklands War commenced. It is odd that we should be so moralistic today
a pidgin variety, but he was conscientious and the shopping commenced. Kitty and Karen browsed around the shop blowing
a drubbing every morning in the boiler room before classes commenced. The boiler room was very hot. I had a little tal
y young age of 37 after a brilliant career in biology which commenced after the second world war. The sacking was initi
est social pressure when courting, marriage, employment all commenced and an adjustment to a new life style was frequen
eclares ,that "sexual intimacy be- tween plaintiff and King commenced approximately six months after their first date."
r sticky, but not bad at all. Afterwards, feeling spruce, I commenced a round of visits. The occupant of Compartment 1,
a damn. No one did; until, soon after the war, the Heights commenced attracting a bright new clientele, brave pioneers
A. This foundation was conceived in the U.S.A. in 1966 and commenced its first field programme in Kenya, in 1970. It h
and open up further horizons. As with any physical activity commenced later in life the veteran beginner is well advise
Association at Stanleville. Black Trade Union organization commenced not with proletarians and depressed craftsmen, bu
he National Swedish Telecommuni- cations Administration and commenced operation in late 19801. The Tepidus system not o
June 1736, "no Prosecution, Suit, or Proceedings, shall be commenced or carried on against any Person or Persons for W
nto this trap is Laurie O'Hara of Belgrave Harriers. Laurie commenced running in his late twenties and although he won
space-probe Mariner 9 arrived at Mars, went into orbit, and commenced taking a series of photographs which over the cou
immersed herself in a study of the map. I got out again and commenced the "ordeal of the orb", as Charlotte used to say
sent the snows of yesteryear in which we had optimistically commenced the shooting, and which had long since melted awa
e minutes or so Cameron noticed that the water in the basin commenced to undulate a little, like a pool where a crocodi
Then he read physics at University College, London, and had commenced work on an advanced degree when the war broke out

Figure 11.3

at a preliminary enquiry…, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false.

In lay language, the most common collocation for *tendered* is *resignation,* as in 'Dr Mayfield has already tendered his resignation', and this is probably the only use of the verb that most people would know, although COBUILD has evidence for *tender an account, tender advice* and *tender a plea*. One other use is fairly common: you can *make a tender* for a contract of some kind, and you can *tender for* it. There are, though, no examples of *tender something in evidence* in the present COBUILD corpora of more than 150 million words, which means that the phrase has not come into use in general English.

Some of the phrases used in the statements immediately place the genre for the reader: 'a person whom I now know to be…' could only have been said by a police officer, as could 'as a result of further enquiries'. Only policemen (or helicopter gunships) *patrol an area*. 'The scene of the crime' is actually used by their statements, and is not simply found in bad detective stories. In one statement there was even the phrase 'at the scene of the grave'! It seems that police officers do not go somewhere *with* a colleague; they go there *in company with* them, or they *accompany* or *are accompanied by* them.

There are some unusual grammatical uses of otherwise common words. These are obviously in some cases idiosyncratic uses on the part of the witness. The verb *deny,* however, was used in various statements both in transitive and in intransitive clauses: *X denied the allegations, X denied, X continually denied*. In the 20 million word corpus we have 462 citations for *denied;* none of them are intransitive. However, all the statements in which the intransitive use occurred were from Northern Ireland, and so this might be Northern Irish dialect rather than police dialect. More policespeak will need to be collected from other parts of Britain before we know whether this use is typical.

The prevailing tone of many police statements is pomposity, caused by too high a level of formality. This is not true of all statements, or indeed of the whole of a statement, which means there is often a jarring change of tone in the middle of a sentence. It is as if for a moment the police officer forgets himself/herself, lapses into his/her ordinary speaking voice, and then pulls up sharp again and 'recommences' policespeak. For example, when speaking about a traffic accident, one policeman wrote: 'The members [of the patrol car] tried in a hurried way to ascertain the names of the travellers', where 'in a hurried way' is in the wrong register. Again: 'We told X that this is only the tip of the iceberg and we were continuing with same.' In both these examples, some spoken language intrudes on the more formal written style adopted through the rest of the statement. This happens frequently: 'We continued to talk about targeting [them] in order to extort money or to have

kinked up sex', or 'As previously stated, it seems beyond doubt that little Ellen crawled under the car.'

The conclusions reached here are based on an examination of fewer than twenty police statements, and a comparison of grammatical and lexical features found in them with similar features in the Bank of English. More work needs to be done to discover how representative these findings are before any conclusive statements can be made about the differences between 'policespeak' and 'normalspeak'.

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12

FROM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TO CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: THE DIFFERENTIAL RE-PRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND MEN SPEAKING IN WRITTEN NEWS

Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard

> Whose voice do we hear in those
> great, wise books we find in
> libraries? Who speaks in the Capitol?
> Who speaks in the temple? Who speaks
> in the Law-courts and whose voices is
> it that we hear in laws?
>
> (Annie Leclerc, 1974)

> The narrator is the prisoner of 'his'
> own premises.
>
> (Umberto Eco, 1985. My translation)

1 INTRODUCTION

The book *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis,* by Malcolm Coulthard, first published in the 1970s, was one of the first attempts to lay down the fundamental concepts of what was to become a discipline in the 1980s. After almost two decades of research on oral and written interaction, scholars are turning in the 1990s to the application of discourse analysis to social practice and to the implications of linguistic analysis for social change.

In this chapter, I will examine in terms of gender relations (the cultural and social concepts of achieved sexual roles), the ways newspaper reporters

'represent' oral interaction in the 'news'. I am particularly interested here in exploring the concept of 'accessed voice' (Hartley, 1982) in the representation of speech; in other words, who is given voice and how this voice is reported in the press. Since, much of the time, 'news is what is said' the values and words of a privileged body of people who have special roles in society are generally put forward. Women in general are part of the unaccessed-voice group and the small quantity of female speech reported in the press, as I shall point out below, is sufficient to demonstrate that their social role has a special or deviant status. Unequal access is evident in what is reported and who speaks, and as a consequence the linguistic code imposes and reinforces attitudes and values on what it represents. If, in the media, women are less heard than men, and their contributions less reported, newspapers continue to encode bias and legitimate assumptions about linguistic behaviour and social asymmetries.

By deconstructing 'news' texts, I hope to make visible not only the linguistic difference assumed by those who represent interaction, but also the ways newspapers handle men and women in terms of different sets of categories or different stereotypes. 'Discrimination in discourse helps maintain intellectual habits that promote discrimination in practice' (Fowler, 1991:105). No discourse is impartial, neutral, without a point of view or, as Eco (1985) puts it, 'free of the teller's premises'. We can no longer dissociate linguistic production from what it represents and what it reflects. And 'news' in the quality papers, one of the institutional gate-keepers of linguistic production, reinforces sexism—a system in which women and men are not simply different but unequal.

The concern of the critical discourse analyst is to identify, discuss and expose misinterpretations and discrimination in discourse as a tool for social change.

2 DATA

For this study I collected a sample of 200 narratives from quality papers (*The Guardian,* the *Independent* and *The Times*) during a period of ten consecutive days (January 1992). From the three broad categories of printed media content—news, service information and opinion—I chose 'news' (130 home and 70 international articles) because this is the most prominent genre read by vast quantities of people (Bell, 1991). I concentrated on what is called by journalists the *core news product* or 'hard news'—reports of accidents, political events, conflicts, crimes and discoveries, that come to light during the time of reporting.

My choice was motivated by the following assumptions:

> Quality newspapers, because targeted at an educated audience, were likely to have a 'serious' insight into, and a version of, what is considered 'important'.

> News in quality papers would be addressed to a non-gender-marked population—both women and men read (and watch on television) the news daily.

These texts, therefore, should not in principle favour one of the sexes.

However, as I quickly realised by examining my corpus and will demonstrate here, because news 'is not a value-free reflection of a "fact"' (Fowler, 1991:4) but a construction and a representation of the world through language, quality newspapers do not differ from the tabloids in many ways. In both cases, news texts are basically oriented to a male audience and exclude women from the speaking position.

The discourse of the media in general is an instrument of cultural reproduction, highly implicated within the power structures and reflecting values about the world, one of which is male supremacy. Writers in quality papers seem to abide by and be dominated by this ideology.

Although women constitute 52 per cent of the population, they are under-represented in the news. They are also described differently; in other words, women are a separate category, generally dissociated from power structures. Men in general are represented speaking in their public or professional roles, while women when speaking are identified with their private sphere. They are the mothers, the daughters, the wives, the widows, the page 3 girls, the stars. The private/public distinction is a very important feature of social organisation. If women are represented mostly speaking in their personal roles, they are marginalised in terms of public or ritual speech.

In order to back up and confirm my findings, I also made use of concordance lists of verbs of 'saying' and frequency counts of some significant lexical items from a 2 million word corpus of *The Times,* part of the COBUILD Project—Collins Birmingham University International Language Database.

3 NEWS AS NARRATIVE

Hard news is a subgenre of narrative discourse. Like any other narrative text, hard news is centrally concerned with past events, which develop to some kind of conclusion. In contrast with commentary/opinion and political evaluation, hard news focusses on event orientation and causality. The structural components of 'news' are headlines, lead (the first paragraph that summarises the whole story—a micro-story), source attributions, actors, time and place. In fact, according to Bell (1991:175), journalists have a shortlist of what should go in a story, the 'five W's and a H'—who, when, where, what, why and how. Labov's (1972) categorisation of oral narratives of personal experience—the abstract, the orientation, the complicating action, the resolution, the evaluation and the coda—shows how these two forms of narrating are similar.

The primary aim or 'intent' of 'news as narrative' is to *inform*. Most narratives of 'law and order' (Chibnall, 1977), however, as in fiction, are about 'heroes' and 'villains', who personify good and evil and who are actors in a drama. Their presentation, therefore, is conditioned more by the desire to *entertain* than to *inform*. That is why the imperatives of immediacy, dramatisation, personalisation, simplification, conventionalism and novelty among others suggested by Chibnall (*ibid.:* 23) are implicit in most of the factual narratives of crime, deviance and tragedy. These imperatives control and order the framework of concepts and values and are guides to the construction of the news. Readers, as spectators, 'participate vicariously in the performance through projecting themselves into the situation and/or identifying with the central character' (Murdock, 1973, quoted in Chibnall, 1977:25).

One of the strategies used by newspapers to involve the reader is to make people talk. As in other narrative texts, speech representation is a pervasive feature of the news. In fact, most news is what 'people say more than what people do' (Bell, 1991:53).

4 SPEECH REPRESENTATION

Linguistically, 'quote' is the last layer in a hierarchy of narrative levels, since it is the introduction of one text into another. Halliday (1985) refers to the notion of *projection:* 'the logical-semantic relationship whereby a clause comes to function not as a direct representation of (non-linguistic) experience, but as a representation of a (linguistic) representation' (pp. 287–8). The projecting clause, '*he said*…' is a verbal process of saying, while the projected clause, 'he said: "…"'; or 'he said *that*…', *represents* what is said; it has the status of a wording, which for Halliday is the representation of a lexicogrammatical phenomenon. 'The main function of the projecting clause is simply to show that the other one is projected: someone said it' (ibid.)

Although quoted material *represents* interaction, it is an intratextual game because the words are either borrowed from another interactive situation or created by an author. In either case, represented speech is always a mediated and indirect discourse, since it is always produced by a recounter who interprets the speech acts represented according to her/his point of view.

Writers, when representing oral interaction, make use of their assumptions about real interactive strategies in order to create their intratextual interactions. In a fictional text an author creates a conversation based upon her/his imagination.

In factual texts the situation is more complicated, since there are speakers in the real world who are quoted. But in both situations, fictional or

factual, represented conversations are tidied-up versions of real talk and the representation of speech is a simplification and a reduction of the organisational characteristics of real interaction. Because of newspaper space constraints, for example, there is no place for the interpersonal features of conversations to be reported at all. So openings, closings, hesitations, repair mechanisms, overlaps, gasps, etc. are 'ellipted'. The turn-taking system is simplified, since the distribution of turns is organised by the writer(s) and does not reflect what really happens in the interactive situation.

The structural properties are also reduced. In naturally occurring interactions the exchange structure (see Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Coulthard, 1985) is generally realised by three moves: initiation, response and follow-up. In factual reports the vast majority of exchanges are represented by an informing move alone, which is generally evaluatory in its function in the discourse. In the example below, only one move is represented directly. However, the illocutionary verb of saying, *admit,* makes explicit that there was a previous move not reported:

> Top Model Jerry Hall is in the clear, a vital witness told her drugs smuggling trial yesterday.
> Airline employee Jane Branker admitted to the court: 'Don't blame Jerry—it was all my fault.'
> (*Daily Mirror,* 14 February 1987)

Exchanges are not reported in full because both factual and fictional writers can rely on the reader to *reconstruct* the interaction.

According to Bell (1991), most of the information which journalists use is second-hand and the process of news making is a case of language produced by multiple parties. The final 'copy', or the actual written news story, is handled by a number of people and follows a complex route. The news source can be a written document or a face-to-face interview, submitted to a chief reporter, who passes it on to a writer, who writes up the events into narrative. The chief reporter then checks the text for changes and passes it on to a subeditor and an editor, who edit the final copy.

Although we could arrive at an outside source who produced some 'saying' in the real world, since the 'averral' (Sinclair, 1986) or the verbal assertion of a fact depends on a saying outside the text, the above complicating situation of authorship makes the process of reporting factual speech very problematic. Although in some cases we could arrive at two explicit layers of narration—the primary source and the reporter—both of them could be submitted to questions of truthfulness. In some cases, however, because of the linguistic property of 'recursiveness' (for example, *He said that she said that Mary said that…*), the quoted saying is presented through many different voices and the 'real' words become as fictionalised as any dialogue created

by a fictional narrator. The following example from *The Times* (20 January 1992) illustrates this point:

> *BBC Television* quoted *Mr Nazarbayev* as saying of his republic's nuclear weapons: 'We are prepared. We are ready to sign all of the treaties....'
> (p. 10)

In this case, the reporter from *The Times,* Susan Viets, quotes the institutionalised voice (the BBC) as quoting Mr Nazarbeyev! The multi-layering of saying makes the direct quote very doubtful.

Who, then, is ultimately responsible for selecting and organising the representation of a 'saying' in a factual situation? The problem is that the words of a real person, already interpreted and represented according to the point of view of a first reporter, are re-interpreted (and probably changed) by a chain of people. In most cases, a direct attribution to characters in a direct mode:

> Mary said: 'I will not go there.'

or the averral by the teller in an indirect mode

> Mary refused to go there.

have nothing to do with people speaking in the real world. The direct mode is a textual strategy which dramatises the narrative, legitimates or evaluates the story being told. The indirect mode marks the explicit interference of the reporter in her/his report. In this mode, there is 'integration' of the secondary discourse into the discourse of the narrator; in other words, the primary discourse absorbs the secondary one. The author, therefore, is in complete control of the character's supposed talk, since a speech-act verb generally introduces reported utterances that are averred by the author. There is not even the pretence that the voice of the character is heard. In both cases, however, the recounter is always in control of what is being reported and faithfulness to the words originally produced can always be challenged.

Fairclough (1988), in his discussion of reported representation in media discourses, suggests that one of the tendencies which emerge from the analysis of this kind of discourse is that what is represented is to a great extent the ideational meanings of the words used, rather than their interpersonal meanings. Quoting Volosinov (1973:199), he goes on to say that

> it may be that ours is a highly ideational culture, that another speech is received as one whole block of social behaviour, as the speaker's indivisible, conceptual position—in which case, only the 'what' of speech is taken in and the 'how' is left outside reception.
> (Fairclough, 1988:131)

What we have to realise, therefore, is that like rituals, art, games and other symbolic configurations, the representation of people talking in hard-news texts is a cultural construct that encodes values. The same supposed words uttered by a real person, for example, can be interpreted and therefore retold differently in different newspapers, according to different points of view and according to different social conventions and roles. The choice of who is given voice depends on the importance given to some people instead of others. But again here the selection of the speakers reflects cultural belief systems and power structures.

5 PAGE 2 MAN

It is not insignificant that *The Times* of 21 January 1992, presents a section on page 2 labelled *Man in the News*.

After examining 35 pages of home news and 22 pages of international news, it became evident that most texts were about men and written by men. Of the 200 total stories, 149 were written by male writers, 29 by female writers and 22 were press releases.

A frequency count of some lexical items illustrates the differential presence of women and men in the COBUILD *Times* corpus. *Mr,* for example, occurs 8,396 times, while *Mrs* occurs 1,138, *Miss* 464 and *Ms* 43 times. *Spokesman* occurs 312 times, *spokeswoman* 14. *Chairman* occurs 860 times, *chairwoman* 0, while *chairperson* occurs only 3 times, and all these occurrences are metalinguistic—a woman talking about the word *chairperson*.

I also counted the advertisements published in two sections of all the newspapers examined. Not surprisingly, cars, banks, building societies, xerox machines, business links and hotels for business men were there. There was only one advertisement for fitted bedrooms and one clothes shop, which, even then, was advertising shirts for men! Again, the advertisements significantly tell us to whom the discourse is addressed.

If we consider the topics explored in 'hard' news (politics, economy, foreign affairs, relations between governments, report of wars, tragedies or accidents, crime and court reports) we can see that basically they cover the public sphere. 'Soft' news, as the name implies, is often defined by the journalistic profession (Hartley, 1982:38) as having a 'woman's angle', in other words, the sphere of private life. However, there is an overwhelming bias towards public as opposed to private life. Decisions about the economy, politics and working relations are given priority, while topics like personal relations, sexuality, family and working conditions are invisible in the news. Hartley asks the relevant question 'Are the events that get so much coverage there because they already "affect our lives", or do they affect our lives largely because they are constantly reported in the news?' (1982:39).

6 ACCESSED VOICE OR 'WHERE ARE ALL THESE "TALKATIVE WOMEN"?'—SOME FIGURES

Since most news is about public issues, it is normal that voice is given to representative personalities. Typically, therefore, the exploitation of a topic includes the opinions and 'arguments' of a privileged body of powerful members of the society. As Fowler (1991) suggests, access is a reciprocal relationship between the powerful and the media:

> the media conventionally expect and receive the right of access to the statement of these individuals, because the individuals have roles in the public domain; and reciprocally, these people receive access to the columns of the papers when they wish to air their views.
>
> (1991:22)

The political effect between the accessed and the unaccessed provokes

> an imbalance between the representation of the already privileged, on the one hand, and the already unprivileged, on the other, with the views of the official, the powerful and the rich being constantly invoked to legitimate the status quo.
>
> (Fowler, 1991:22)

Women in general are part of the unaccessed voice. To demonstrate this point, I selected from the COBUILD corpus one example (the most frequent one) of the subcategories of a general taxonomy of verbs of saying (Caldas-Coulthard, 1987, 1988). I classified these according to their function in relation to the reported clause. *Neutral 'glossing' verbs* are ones that introduce a 'saying' without explicitly evaluating it. So, verbs like *say* and *tell* simply signal the illocutionary act—the saying. By using these verbs, the author only gives the reader the 'literal meaning' (sense and reference in Austin's terms) of the speech. The intended meaning (illocutionary force) has to be derived from the saying itself. The *illocutionary 'glossing' verbs* are the ones that convey the presence of the author in the text, and are highly interpretative. They name a supposed speech situation, they clarify and make explicit the illocutionary force of the quote they refer to. These verbs are not only *metalinguistic,* they are also *metapropositional,* since they label and categorise the contribution of a speaker. Verbs like *urge, declare* or *grumble* mark, for example, a directive, an assertive or an expressive proposition. Other verbs are *descriptive* in relation to the represented interaction. Verbs like *yell, shout, scream* or *whisper* and *murmur* mark *manner* and *attitude* of speakers in relation to what is being said. Finally, *discourse-signalling verbs* are not speech-reporting verbs, but very often they accompany direct speech. They mark the relationship of the quote to other parts of the discourse, like *repeat* and *add,* or they mark the development of the discourse, for example *pause, continue* and *go on.*

The neutral verb *say* in its past-tense form *said* is the most frequent verb in the corpus, with a total occurrence of 6,274 instances. The present form *says* occurs 1,140 times. The verb *tell* also in its past form is the next most frequent *neutral* verb, occurring 686 times. The *structuring* verb *ask,* in its past form, appears 512 times. By contrast, all the other reporting verbs occur less than 500 times. The discourse-signalling verb *add (added)* occurs 426 times and the metapropositional *agree (agreed)* 349. I examined 250 occurrences of the more frequent verbs and 150 occurrences of the less frequent verbs.

I also looked at 100 occurrences of those verbs that appear between 100 and 200 times. These were the metapropositional *suggest (suggested)* and the discourse-signalling *continue (continued)*.

I disregarded all the other verbs that occur in the corpus less than 100 times. Not all occurrences of verbs are with quotes.

I was interested in checking whether the *sayer* was a woman or a man. The results are indicative: men are quoted 497 times, women 62 times.

The frequency of the descriptive verbs is naturally very low. However, they point to a crucial linguistic assumption about gender relations. Men *shout* and *groan,* while women (and children) *scream* and *yell.* Other verbs like *nag, gossip, chatter* and so on are also associated with beliefs which are accepted as common sense within a society and mark 'stereotypes' of particular groups. There is a whole vocabulary, according to Cameron (1985:31), which denigrates the talk of women who do not conform to the male ideas of femininity. 'Screaming', 'yelling', 'nagging' mark the negative image of the 'housewife', the 'mother-in-law', the 'mother'. The quote below exemplifies these assumptions:

> The Labour party is like a wife…who is always *complaining* about her husband to the neighbours and *nagging* him at home.
>
> (Alan Watkins, *The Observer,* 9 February 1992)

Returning to my own corpus of texts, I isolated 451 instances where men were given voice as compared with 76 times for the females. These figures show that a rhetoric of silencing and alienation is working here in the way women are excluded from speaking in the news. The figures confirm the theoretical model proposed by the anthropologist S.Ardener (1975) of the 'dominant and muted' groups. They suggest that in every society the communicative channels are under the control of a dominant group. Women are the 'muted group'. Although they generate a reality of their own, they do not have access to ways of expressing this reality linguistically. Cameron (1985:103), discussing the Ardeners' theories, suggests that for them silence is not the defining characteristic of a muted group, since women can speak a lot. The question is whether they are able to say what they want to say, in the appropriate place and time.

In the context of news, women are in statistical terms under-represented

linguistically and, when given voice, they are not given the same speaking space. Sara Dunn, writing for the 'Women' page of *The Guardian* (20 February 1992, p. 36) states, for example, that women make up 10 per cent of Britain's 4 million anglers and hold the most coveted salmon-fishing record, and she asks the question: 'So why do they get so little coverage in publishing and the press?'

7 HOW WOMEN ARE DESCRIBED IN THE PRESS

The other important question I want to discuss here is the differential manner in which women are described when given voice. As I suggested earlier, access is given to representatives of some kind of power—the more powerful or established in an institution, the more attributes the person will have when introduced as a speaker. I found a cline of modification ranging from the personal name of the speaker through the simple terms of address *(Mr, Mrs, Miss)* or a title *(Dr, Lord)* to highly complex nominal groups. The categorisation of the sayers depends on her/his role in the power structures.

Generally, male speakers are glossed by their professional designations or position in the government or in some kind of public institution. The following examples (in a cline from simple to complex nominal groups) illustrate the point:

Mr Maxwell
Dr Bartell
Lord Desborough
James Capel, the broker
Keith Walter, medical direct of Cilag
Mr Paul Davie, economist
Mr [name+surname], the chairman of Warner
Mr [name+surname], the Australian syndicate chairman
Mr [name+surname], chief opposition spokesman on employment
Mr [name+surname], Northern Ireland Education Minister
Prof. Patrick Minford, of the University of Liverpool, a monetarist and supply-side economist
Denis Clifford, the founder of ACE, the Association for Comics Enthusiasts and owner
Dr Jan Pentreath, chief scientist of the government authority
Sir Charles Tidbury, former chairman of Whitbread brewers the prominent conservative activist, Paul Weyrich
Clinton, front runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, the Arkansas Governor

Women, on the other hand, are described differently:

Jane Grigson
Mrs Reagan
Miss Hilary Campbell, of Edinburgh 23-year-old Nicole Stewart his grandmother, Mrs Barbara Wilkinson
Mrs Frances McDaid, his mother
Ursula Vaughan Williams, widow of the composer
Richard's cousin Anne, chain smoking behind the bar
Tricia Howard, 48, the women with whom the Liberal Democrat leader dallied in 1986
Mrs Clasper, a mother of two and part-time charity worker
Hilary, Mr Clinton's politically attuned wife the wife of the front-running Democratic presidential contender, Bill Clinton the 18-year-old Miss Black America beauty pageant contestant
Miss Asia Chorley, of Sotheby's
Lyz Stayce, policy director of Mind
Miss Ann Widdecombe, Conservative MP for…
Sara Keays, the colonel's daughter who once hoped to marry the then Conservative Party chairman Cecil Parkinson and become an MP
Miss Keays, aged 44, left with an epileptic eight-year-old daughter

Although we could say that unimportant people, both male and female, are described similarly, either by full name or by a simple term of address, the striking difference between the two lists is that women are, in the main, characterised in terms of marital or family relations, especially in their relationship with a man, and also in terms of age. I could not find any examples where a professional male is presented in relation to a female.

The following invented examples are unlikely to occur:

Lord MacGregor of Durris, husband of the chairwoman of Blogg
Dr Mary Smith
Mr Ted Hughes, widower of the famous poet Sylvia Plath

However, I found this counter-example:

The wife of Dr Wyatt, Dr Val Hall said that…

Even when women are described in their professional status, the nominal groups qualifying them tend to be shorter, as we can see from the examples above.

8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Quality newspapers, as I have tried to show, see women as a minority group that is marginalised by being denied the role of speakers. The linguistic

differences in the way women are represented in hard news are a reflection of women's lack of access to power, since language is located in a power structure which is in its turn reflected in linguistic production. The male representatives of powerful institutions, frequently accessed, 'provide newspapers with the modes of discourse which already encode the attitudes of a powerful elite' (Fowler, 1991:23). And women, according to this research, are far from being in powerful positions. The striking disparity between the two genders makes clear a disparity which most people do not reflect upon.

By pointing out the differences between the amount of talk given to men in relation to what is given to women, I have tried to make visible these differences, showing that quality newspapers handle women and men as different categories. There is no doubt that language simply reflects 'facts' and the ways society in general treats the genders, but by ignoring the asymmetries, we tend to reinforce the stereotypes. As Fowler (1991:105) says, 'it would be complacent to accept that the relationship between language and society is merely reflective'. By pointing out the asymmetrical reproduction of power relations between the genders, I hope to make readers aware of the discrimination in practice to which we are exposed daily.

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