ROUTLEDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTRODUCTIONS

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Discourse Analysis

A RESOURCE BOOK FOR STUDENTS

Rodney H. Jones

Third Edition

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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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- includes a revised final section to highlight recent research with case studies showcasing examples of how scholars used the principles illustrated in the book
- is accompanied by online support material with additional student activities, summaries, explanations, and useful links

Other features of the new edition include updated references and a wider range of material from social media that includes TikTok and other more recently popular platforms. Written by an experienced teacher and author, this accessible textbook is essential reading for all students of English language and linguistics.

Rodney H. Jones is Professor of Sociolinguistics at the University of Reading, UK. His other titles with Routledge include *Language and Media: A Resource Book for Students, Second Edition* (with Sylvia Jaworska and Erhan Aslan, Routledge 2020) and *Understanding Digital Literacies: A Practical Introduction, Second Edition* (with Christoph A. Hafner, Routledge 2021). He is also editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Creativity* (Routledge 2015).

ROUTLEDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTRODUCTIONS

SERIES CONSULTANT: PETER STOCKWELL

Peter Stockwell is Professor of Literary Linguistics in the School of English at the University of Nottingham, UK, where his interests include sociolinguistics, stylistics and cognitive poetics. His recent publications include *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics* (2014), *Cognitive Grammar in Literature* (2014) and *The Language and Literature Reader* (2008).

FOUNDING EDITOR: RONALD CARTER

Ronald Carter (1947-2018) was Research Professor of Modern English Language in the School of English at the University of Nottingham, UK. He was the co-founder of the Routledge Applied Linguistics, Routledge Introductions to Applied Linguistics and Routledge Applied Corpus Linguistics series.

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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

A Resource Book for Students

Third Edition

RODNEY H. JONES

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Routledge English Language Introductions are 'flexi-texts' that you can use to suit your own style of study. The books are divided into four sections:

A: Introduction—sets out the key concepts for the area of study. The units of this section take you through the foundational concepts, providing you with an initial toolkit for your own study. By the end of the section, you will have a good overview of the whole field.

B: Development—adds to your knowledge and builds on the key ideas already introduced. Units in this section also introduce key analytical tools and techniques. By the end of this section, you will already have a good and fairly detailed grasp of the field and will be ready to undertake your own exploration and thinking.

C: Exploration—provides examples of language data and guides you through your own investigation of the topic or area. The units in this section will be more open-ended and exploratory and you will be encouraged to try out your ideas and think for yourself, using your newly acquired knowledge.

D: Extension—offers further resources tailored to the topic of the book to deepen your expertise. This may consist of excerpts from key readings, current articles, the author's own research, further activities, and other useful material.

You can read this book like a traditional textbook, 'vertically' straight through from beginning to end. In doing so, you would establish a broad sense of the key ideas by reading through section A, and deepen your knowledge by reading section B. Section C would then present you with one or more activities to test out different aspects of your broad knowledge. Finally, having gained a good level of competence, you can read the section D articles and additional material and follow up the further reading.

However, the Routledge English Language Introductions have been designed so that you can read them in another dimension, 'horizontally' across the numbered units. For example, units A1, B1, C1, and D1 constitute a strand first introducing a topic, then developing your knowledge, then testing out and exploring some key ideas and finally offering you key case studies to read about. The strands across A2, B2, C2, D2, and the other strands 3, 4, 5, and so on, all work in the same way. Reading across the strands will take you rapidly from the key concepts of a specific topic to a level of expertise in that precise topic, all with a very close focus. You can match your way of reading with the best way that you work. The glossarial index at the end together with the suggestions for further reading for each strand will help to keep you orientated. Each textbook has online support material with extra commentary, suggestions, additional material, and support for teachers and students.

CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

This book covers the vast field of discourse analysis. Strand 1 gives a general introduction to the field, and the following strands are broadly arranged across three areas. Strands 2 to 4 cover the study of written discourse, examining cohesion and coherence, the social functions of texts, and the ways ideology is expressed in written texts. Strands 5 to 7 focus more on spoken discourse and more interactive written discourse such as that which occurs in computer-mediated communication, examining how conversations are structured, and how conversational participants strategically construct identities and activities in their talk, as well as how social contexts affect the way utterances are produced and interpreted. The last three strands focus on three more contemporary approaches to discourse: mediated discourse analysis, an approach which examines, among other things, the way media affect the kinds of discourse we can produce and what we can do with it; multimodal discourse analysis, an approach which considers modes of communication beyond spoken and written language such as images and gestures; and corpus-assisted discourse analysis, an approach which uses computers to aid in the analysis of large collections of texts or transcripts.

With the constant development of new technologies and communication and the continuous evolution of social norms about communication and interaction, discourse analysis has become an even more important discipline. This 3rd edition of *Discourse Analysis: A resource book for students* differs from the previous editions by including examples from more up-to-date contexts of communication (such as TikTok) as well as more diverse cultural contexts. The biggest change in this edition is a total redesign of section D. Whereas before, this section contained excerpts from 'classic' texts on discourse analysis, now it contains easy-to-read summaries of more contemporary studies in discourse analysis. These studies show how discourse analysts are addressing contemporary issues in politics, health, social media, and the environment. Following the summaries in each unit are suggestions for projects that students can do themselves to make their own contributions to addressing these issues. The 'classic' readings that were reprinted in the first two editions are still important, and they appear in the list of recommended 'Further reading' at the end of the book.

Discourse analysis is a diverse and rapidly developing field: nearly every observation made about discourse in this book is open to debate and nearly every analytical technique introduced is open to criticism or further refinement. The real aim of this book is to provide you with the basic background to be able to engage in these debates and to assemble a toolkit of analytical techniques that best fit your needs. If you wish to know more about the ways discourse analysis fits into or relates to other approaches to the study of English, there are other books in the RELI series such as Introducing English Language: A resource book for students by Louise Mullany and

Peter Stockwell, Pragmatics and Discourse: A resource book for students by Joan Cutting, and Language and Power: A resource book for students by Paul Simpson and Andrea Mayr.

The RELI books do not aim to replace your teacher or lecturer, but instead they offer both student and expert a resource for you to adapt as you think most appropriate. You will want to take issue with what is presented here, test out the assumptions and—we hope—feel motivated to read and explore further. There is always space for tutors to mediate the material and for students to explore beyond the book.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

Tables

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Section A

INTRODUCTION

KEY TOPICS IN THE STUDY OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

A1 WHAT IS DISCOURSE ANALYSIS?

Our first step in the study of discourse analysis has to be figuring out exactly what we mean by **discourse** and why it is so important to learn how to analyze it.

In one sense we can say that discourse analysis is the study of language. Many people would define discourse analysis as a sub-field of linguistics, which is the scientific study of language. Linguistics has many sub-fields, each of which looks at a different aspect of language. **Phonology** is the study of the sounds of languages and how people put them together to form words. **Grammar** is the study of how words are put together to form sentences and spoken utterances. And **discourse analysis** is the study of the ways sentences and utterances are put together to make texts and conversations and how those texts and conversations fit into the social world.

But discourse analysis is not *just* the study of language. It is a way of looking at language that focuses on how people use it in real life to do things such as joke, argue, persuade, and flirt, and to show that they are certain kinds of people or belong to certain groups. This way of looking at language is based on four main assumptions. They are:

1 *Language is ambiguous*. What things mean is never absolutely clear. All communication involves interpreting what other people mean and what they are trying to do.
2 *Language is always situated 'in the world.'* That is, what language means is always a matter of where and when it is used and what it is used to do.
3 *The way we use language is inseparable from who we are and the different social groups to which we belong.* We use language to display different kinds of social identities and to show that we belong to different groups.
4 *Language is never used all by itself.* It is always combined with other things such as our tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures when we speak, and the fonts, layout and graphics we use in written texts. What language means and what we can do with it is often a matter of how it is combined with these other things.

The ambiguity of language

Everyone has had the experience of puzzling over what someone—a lover, a parent, a friend, or a politician—'really meant' by what they said. In fact, nearly all communication contains some elements of meaning that are not expressed directly by the words that are spoken or written. Even when we think we are expressing ourselves clearly and directly, we may not be. For example, you may want to borrow a pen from someone and express this desire with the question, 'Do you have a pen?' Strictly speaking, though, this question does not *directly* communicate that you need a pen. It only asks if the other person is in possession of one. In order to understand this question as a request, the other person needs to undertake a process of 'figuring out' what you meant, a process which in this case may be largely unconscious and automatic, but which is, all the same, a process of interpretation.

So, we can take as a starting point for our study of discourse analysis the fact that *people don't always say what they mean, and people don't always mean what they say*. This is not because people are trying to trick or deceive each other (though sometimes they are), but because language is, by its very nature, ambiguous. To say exactly what we mean all the time would be impossible: first, because as poets, lovers, and even lawyers know, language is an imperfect tool for the precise expression of many things we think and feel; and second, because whenever we communicate we always mean to communicate more than just one thing. When you ask your friend if he or she has a pen, for example, you mean to communicate not just that you need a pen but also that you do not wish to impose on your friend or that you feel a bit shy about borrowing a pen, which is one of the reasons why you approach the whole business of requesting indirectly by asking if they have a pen, even though you may know very well that they have one.

At the same time, there are instances in which people *are* trying to deceive you, and discourse analysis can also help you to detect these moments and to call out those people. Politicians, advertisers, and others who are trying to win your loyalty, patronage or compliance also depend on the ambiguity of language to persuade you to vote for them, buy their products or otherwise go along with their programme. For example, the manufacturer of a product that does not meet the government's criteria to claim that it is 'low in sugar' may write 'less sweet' on the label instead to give customers the impression that it is healthy. Politicians frequently speak in ambiguous language in order to avoid taking clear positions, or to send different messages to different audiences. A politician who touts 'law and order' might be signalling that they wish to crack down on political dissent, and one who calls refugees 'migrants' may be subtly calling into question their right to seek refuge.

Language in the world

One of the most important ways we understand what people mean when they communicate is by making reference to the social context within which they are speaking or writing. The meaning of an utterance can change dramatically depending on who is saying it, when and where it is said, and to whom it is said. If a teacher asks a student who is about to take an examination the same question we discussed above, 'Do you have a pen?' it is rather unlikely that this is a request or that the teacher is a bit shy about communicating with the student. Rather, this utterance is probably designed to make sure that the student has the proper tool to take the examination or to inform the student that a pen (rather than a pencil) must be used.

In other words, when we speak of discourse, we are always speaking of language that is in some way *situated*. Language is always situated in at least four ways.

First, language is situated within the material world, and where we encounter it, whether it be on a shop sign or in a textbook or on the screen of our phone, will contribute to the way we interpret it.

Second, language is situated within relationships; one of the main ways we understand what people mean when they speak or write is by referring to who they are, how well we know them and whether or not they have some kind of power over us. Third, language is situated in history, that is, in relation to what happened before and what we expect to happen afterwards.

Finally, language is situated in relation to other language—utterances and texts always respond to or refer to other utterances and texts; that is, everything that we say or write is situated in a kind of web of discourse.

Language and social identity

Not only is discourse situated. People are also situated *in* and *by* discourse. What I mean by this is that whenever people speak or write, they are, through their discourse, somehow demonstrating who they are and what their relationship is to other people. They are enacting their identities through discourse, or, to put it another way, the discourse they are using is helping to create 'who they are.' Doctors are not just doctors because they know about medicine, but also because they know how to talk like doctors. Social media influencers are influential not only because of what they say to their followers, but how they say it, and how they use discourse to create their 'personal brand.' One of the most important things about identities is that they are multiple and fluid rather than singular and fixed. The identity a doctor enacts in the clinic on Monday morning might be very different from the one they enact on TikTok on Friday night. The reason for this is not that their personality changes from Monday morning to Friday night, but rather that they change the way they use language in these two different situations.

Another important thing about identities, though, is that people often do not have complete control over who they can 'be.' How they are supposed to talk in certain situations is sometimes decided for them. Students, for example, are constrained by the discourse of the classroom—they can only say certain kinds of things at certain times to certain people—and doctors, to some extent, are constrained by the discourse of the clinic. Even social media influencers can't say whatever they want; they have to follow the community guidelines of whatever platform they appear on. This is what I mean when I say that people are situated *in* discourse: who they can be is determined by the discourse that is available to them.

Language and other modes

Changing the way you use language when you enact the identity of a makeup guru on TikTok or a specialist in infectious diseases, of course, is not enough to fully enact these identities. You also have to dress in certain ways, act in certain ways and hang out in certain places with certain people. In other words, language alone cannot achieve all the things we need to do to be certain kinds of people. We always have to combine that language with other things such as dress, gestures, and the handling of various kinds of objects such as makeup brushes and stethoscopes.

In the same way, most of the *written* texts that we encounter consist of more than just words. They convey their messages through a combination of words, images, layout, and sometimes even sound files or video clips. This is especially true of the texts that we encounter online.

Partially because of its roots in linguistics, discourse analysts used to focus almost exclusively on written or spoken language. Now, people are increasingly realizing not just that we communicate in a lot of ways that do not involve language, but that in order to understand what people mean when they use language, we need to pay attention to the way it is combined with other communicative **modes** such as pictures, gestures, music, and the layout of physical environments. In fact, many of the texts that we encounter in our daily lives (such as selfies sent to us by our friends) contain no words at all. But that doesn't mean that we can't use discourse analysis to understand them (see unit A9). So, often when we speak of the tools that people use to construct texts and conversations, we just talk about language, but rather about all of the different **semiotic resources** that are available to them. The word 'semiotic' means anything that is used to *signify* some kind of meaning, and the resources we have to do this include not just words, but also sounds, gestures, images, colours, and a whole host of other things.

So what good is discourse analysis?

Given these four principles, we can begin to understand some of the reasons why learning how to analyze discourse might be useful. The chief reason is that we *already* engage in discourse analysis all the time when we try to figure out what people mean by what they say and when we try to express our multiple and complicated meanings to them. Much of what you will learn in this book will be about making processes that already take place beneath the surface of your consciousness more explicit. But what is the point of that, you might ask, if all of this communication and interpretation is going on so smoothly without us having to attend to it? But the fact is, it's not. None of us is immune to misunderstandings, to offending people by saying the wrong thing, to struggling to get our message across, or to being tricked by someone who is trying somehow to deceive us with their discourse. Hopefully, by understanding how discourse works, we will be able to understand people better, to communicate more effectively, and to avoid being taken in by lies or propaganda.

Studying discourse analysis, however, can teach you more than that. Since the way we use discourse is tied up with our social identities and our social relationships, discourse analysis can also help us to understand how the societies in which we live are put together and how they are maintained through our day-to-day activities of speaking, writing, and making use of other semiotic resources. It can help us to understand why people interact with one another the way they do and how they exert power and influence over one another. It can help us to understand how people view reality differently and why, and how the texts that we are exposed to come to create our view of reality. The study of discourse analysis, then, is not just the study of how we use language. It is also indirectly the study of politics, power, psychology, romance, and a whole lot of other things.

Look more deeply into why people don't say what they mean or mean what they say in the online resources for this book.

TEXTS AND TEXTURE

A2

Discourse analysts analyze 'texts' and 'conversations.' But what is a 'text' and what is a 'conversation'? What distinguishes texts and conversations from random collections of sentences and utterances? These are the questions taken up in this unit. For now, we will mostly be considering written texts. Conversations will be dealt with in later units.

Consider the following list of words:

- milk
- spaghetti
- tomatoes
- rocket
- light bulbs

You might look at this list and conclude that this is not a text for the simple reason that it 'makes no sense' to you—that it has no **meaning**. According to the linguist M.A.K. Halliday, meaning is the most important thing that makes a text a text; it has to *make sense*. A text, in his view, is everything that is meaningful in a particular situation. And the basis for *meaning* is *choice* (Halliday 1978: 137). Whenever I choose one thing rather than another from a set of alternatives (yes or no, up or down, red or green), I am making meaning. This focus on meaning, in fact, is one of the main things that distinguishes Halliday's brand of linguistics from that of other linguists who are concerned chiefly with linguistic *forms*. Historically, the study of linguistics, he points out (1994 [1985]: xiv), first involved studying the way the language was put together (syntax and morphology) *followed by* the study of meaning. In his view, however, the reverse approach is more useful. As he puts it, 'A language is … *a system of meanings*, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be expressed' (emphasis mine).

So, one way you can begin to make sense of the list of words above is to consider them as a series of choices. In other words, I wrote 'milk' instead of 'juice' and 'spaghetti' instead of 'linguini.' There must be some reason for this. You will still probably not be able to recognize this as a text because you do not have any understanding of what motivated these choices (why I wrote down these particular words) and the relationship between one set of choices (e.g. 'milk' vs. 'juice') and another.

It is these two pieces of missing information—the *context* of these choices and the *relationships* between them—which form the basis for what is known as **texture**—that quality that makes a particular set of words or sentences a *text* rather than a random collection of linguistic items. A language speaker's 'ability to discriminate between a random string of sentences and one forming a discourse,' Halliday explains, 'is due to the inherent texture in the language and to his awareness of it' (Halliday 1968: 210). According to this formulation, there are two important things that make a text a text. One has to do with features inherent in the language itself (things, for example, such as grammar), which help us to understand the relationship among the different words and sentences and other elements in the text. It is these features that help you to figure out the relationship between the various sets of choices that you encounter. The problem with the text above is that there is not much in the language itself that helps you to do this. There are, however, two very basic things that help you to establish a connection among these words. The first is the fact that they appear in a list—they come one after another. This very fact helps to connect them together because you automatically think that they would not have been put together in the same list if they did not have something to do with one another.

Another 'internal' thing that holds these words together as a potential text is that they are similar; with the exception of 'light bulbs,' they all belong to the same **semantic field** (i.e. words having to do with food). In fact, it is because of words such as 'milk' and 'tomatoes' that you are able to infer that what is meant by the word 'rocket' is 'rocket lettuce' (or *arugula*) rather than the kind of rocket that shoots satellites into space. This semantic relationship among the words, however, is probably still not enough for you to make sense of this list as a text as long as you are relying only on features that are intrinsic to the language. The reason for this is that there are no grammatical elements that join these words together. It would be much easier for you to understand the relationship among these words if they appeared in a conversation like this:

Franny: What do we need to get at the shop?
Zoe: Well, we need some milk. And I want to make a salad, so let's get some tomatoes and rocket. And, oh yeah, the light bulb in the living room is burnt out. We'd better get some new ones.

In this conversation, the relationship between the different words is much clearer because new words have been added. One important word that joins these words together is 'and,' which creates an *additive* relationship among them, indicating that they are all part of a cumulative list. Other important words are 'we' and 'need.' The verb 'need' connects the things in the list to some kind of *action* that is associated with them and the word 'we' connects them to some people who are also involved in this action.

This second part of Halliday's formulation has to do with something that cannot be found in the language itself, but rather exists inside the minds of the people who are perceiving the text, what Halliday calls an *awareness* of the conventions of the language (and, by extension, broader conventions of communication in a given society) which helps us to work out the relationships among words, sentences, paragraphs, pictures, and other textual elements, as well as relationships between these combinations of textual elements and certain social situations or communicative purposes. These conventions give us a kind of 'framework' within which we can fit the language. The framework for the text above, for example, is 'a shopping list,' As soon as you have that framework, this list of words makes perfect sense as a text. In fact, you do not even need to refer back to the conversation above to understand what the text means and how it will be used. All of the information about what people do with shopping lists is already part of your **common knowledge** (the knowledge you share with other people in society).

There is still one more thing that helps you to make sense of this as a text, and that has to do with the connections that exist between this particular collection of words and other texts that exist outside of it. For example, this text might be related to the conversation above. In fact, it might be the result of that conversation: Franny might have written down this list as Zoe dictated it to her. It might also be related to other texts, like a recipe for rocket salad Zoe found in a cookbook. Finally, when Franny and Zoe go to the supermarket, they will connect this text to still other texts like signs advertising the price of tomatoes or the label on the milk carton telling them the expiry date. In other words, all texts are somehow related to other texts, and sometimes, in order to make sense of them or use them to perform social actions, you need to make reference to these other texts.

To sum up, the main thing that makes a text a text is *relationships* or *connections*. Sometimes these relationships are between words, sentences, or other elements *inside* the text. These kinds of relationships create what we refer to as **cohesion**. Another kind of relationship exists between the text and the person who is reading it or using it in some way. Here, meaning comes chiefly from the background knowledge the person has about certain social conventions regarding texts as well as the social situation in which the text is found and what the person wants to do with the text. This kind of relationship creates what we call **coherence**. Finally, there is the relationship between one text and other texts in the world that one might, at some point, need to refer to in the process of making sense of this text. This kind of relationship creates what we call **intertextuality**.

Look more deeply into what makes a text a text in the online resources for this book.

A3 TEXTS AND THEIR SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

In the previous unit we explored how the internal structure of a text and the expectations we have about it contribute to the text's *texture*. We also saw how different patterns of texture are often associated with particular kinds of texts (such as shopping lists) and, by extension, particular kinds of text producers (such as shoppers). Newspaper articles, for example, tend to favour particular kinds of cohesive devices and are structured in a conventional way with a summary of the main points in the beginning and the details coming later, a convention that all journalists must learn if they want to get a job (see unit C2). To understand *why* such textual conventions are associated with certain kinds of texts, however, we need to understand something about what the people who produce these texts are trying to *do* with them, and how this *doing* is mixed up with their social or professional identities. In this unit we will examine how the structures and expectations associated with different kinds of texts contribute to how they function in the social world, and how they help to define social activities and the groups of people who take part in them. The study of the social functions of different kinds of texts is called **genre analysis**.

The notion of **genre** is probably familiar to you from your experience as a moviegoer. Different films belong to different genres: there are love stories, horror movies, thrillers, 'chick flicks,' and many other film genres. Before we go to the movies, we always have some idea about the film we are about to see based on the genre that it belongs to. These expectations include ideas about the kind of story the film will tell and the kinds of characters it will include. At the same time, of course, not all films fit neatly into genres. We might go to a film called *Scary Movie*, for example, and find that it is actually a comedy, and sometimes what makes a film successful is that it creatively confounds our expectations by mixing different genres together. We are also familiar with genres in other media as well. On YouTube, for instance, we can watch product reviews, gaming videos, 'vlogs' (video web logs), 'unboxing' videos (which portray people unpacking an item they have just bought), and 'how to' videos (which teach viewers how to perform some kind of task) (see units C3 and D3).

The notion of *genre* in discourse analysis goes beyond examining the features of different kinds of texts to asking what the structures of these texts can tell us about the people who use them and what they are using them to do. Bhatia (1993: 13) defines genre as follows:

> (A genre is) a recognisable communicative *event* characterised by a set of *communicative purposes* identified and mutually understood by members of the community in which it occurs. Most often it is highly structured and *conventionalised* with *constraints* on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often *exploited by expert members* of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of the socially recognised purpose(s).
>
> (emphasis mine)

There are three important aspects to this definition which need to be further explained: the first is that genres are not defined as types of *texts* but rather as types of **communicative events**; the second is that these events are characterized by **constraints** on what can and cannot be done within them; and third is that *expert* users often *exploit* these constraints in creative and unexpected ways.

Genres are communicative events

While it might not seem unusual to refer to spoken genres such as conversations and debates and political speeches as 'events,' thinking of written texts such as newspaper articles, recipes, and job application letters as 'events' might at first seem rather strange. We are in many ways accustomed to thinking of texts as 'objects.' Seeing them as 'events,' however, highlights the fact that all texts are basically instances of people *doing* things with or to other people: a newspaper article is an instance of someone *informing* someone else about some recent event; a recipe is an instance of someone *instructing* another person how to prepare a particular kind of food; and a job application letter is an instance of someone *requesting* that another person give him or her a job. As Martin (1985: 250) points out, 'genres are how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them.'

Of course, most texts are not just trying to get only one thing done. The **communicative purposes** of texts are often multiple and complex. A recipe, for example, may be *persuading* you to make a certain dish (or to buy a certain product with which to make it) as much as it is *instructing* you how to do it, and a newspaper article might be attempting not just to *inform* you about a particular event, but also to somehow affect your opinion about it. The different people using the text might also have different purposes in mind: while a job applicant sees his or her application letter as a way to convince a prospective employer to hire them, the employer might see the very same application letter as a means of 'weeding out' unsuitable candidates.

Conventions and constraints

Because genres are about 'getting things done,' the way they are structured and the kinds of features they contain are largely determined by what people want to do with them.

The kinds of information I might include in a job application, for example, would be designed to convince a prospective employer that I am the right person for the job. This information would probably not include my fondness for taking selfies with marine mammals or my opinion about some event I read about in a newspaper. Genres, therefore, come with ‘built in’ *constraints* as to what kinds of things they can include and what kinds of things they cannot, based on the activity they are trying to accomplish.

These constraints govern not just *what* can be included, but also *how* it should be included. In my job application letter, for example, I would probably want to present the information in a certain order, beginning by indicating the post I am applying for, and then going on to describe my qualifications and experience, and ending by requesting an appointment for an interview. Putting this information in a different order, for example, waiting until the end of the letter to indicate the post for which I am applying, would be considered odd. The order in which I do things in a genre, what in genre analysis is called the **move structure** of a particular genre, often determines how successfully I am able to fulfil the communicative purpose of the genre.

But what is important about these conventions and constraints is not only that they make communicative events more efficient, but also that they demonstrate that the person who produced the text knows ‘how we do things.’ Prospective employers read application letters not just to find out what post an applicant is applying for and what qualifications or experience that person has, but also to find out if that person *knows how to write a job application letter*. In other words, the ability to successfully produce this type of genre following particular conventions is taken as an indication that the writer is a ‘certain kind of person’ who ‘knows how to communicate like us.’ In fact, for some employers, the qualifications that applicants demonstrate through successfully producing this genre are far more important than those they describe in the letter itself.

Creativity

That is not to say that all job application letters, or other genres such as newspaper articles and recipes, are always exactly the same. Often the most successful texts are those which defy conventions and push the boundaries of constraints. Expert producers of texts, for example, sometimes mix different kinds of texts together, or embed one genre into another, or alter the moves that are included or the order in which they are presented. Of course, there are limitations to how much a genre can be altered and still be successful at accomplishing what its producers want to accomplish. There are always risks associated with being creative.

There are several important points to be made here. The first is that such creativity would not be possible without the existence of conventions and constraints; the reason innovations can be effective is that they exploit previously formed expectations. The second is that such creativity must itself have some relationship to the communicative purpose of the genre and the context in which it is used. Writing a job application letter in the form of a sonnet, for example, may be more effective if I want to get a job as an editor at a literary magazine than if I want to get a job as a sales assistant in a department store. Finally, being able to successfully defy conventions is very much a matter of and a marker of expertise: in order to break the rules effectively, you must also be able to show that you have mastered the rules.

Discourse communities

It should be clear by now that at the centre of the concept of genre is the idea of *belonging*. We produce and use genres not just in order to get things done, but also to show ourselves to be members of particular groups and to demonstrate that we are qualified to participate in particular activities. Genres are always associated with certain groups of people that have certain common goals and common ways of reaching these goals.

John Swales calls these groups **discourse communities**, and he describes a number of features that define these communities, among which are that they consist of 'expert' members whose job it is to teach new members 'how things are done,' that members have ways of regularly communicating with and providing feedback to one another, and that members tend to share a common vocabulary or 'jargon.' But the two most important characteristics of discourse communities are that members have *common goals* and *common means* of reaching those goals (*genres*). These goals and the means of reaching them work to reinforce each other. Every time a member makes use of a particular genre, he or she not only moves the group closer to the shared goals, but also validates these goals as worthy and legitimate and shows him or herself to be a worthy and legitimate member of the group.

Thus, genres not only link people together, they also link people with certain activities, identities, roles, and responsibilities. In a very real way, then, genres help to regulate and control what people can do and who people can 'be' in various contexts.

This regulation and control is exercised in a number of ways. First of all, since the goals of the community and the ways those goals are to be accomplished are 'built in' to the texts that members of a discourse community use on a daily basis, it becomes much more difficult to question these goals. Since mastery of the genre is a requirement for membership, members must also 'buy into' the goals of the community. Finally, since texts always create certain kinds of relationships between those who have produced them and those who are using them, when the conventions and constraints associated with texts become fixed and difficult to change, these roles and relationships also become fixed and difficult to change. When looked at in this way, genres are not just 'text types' that are structured in certain ways; they are important tools through which people, groups and institutions define, organize, and structure social life.

Look more deeply into the idea of discourse communities in the online resources for this book.

DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGY

A4

In the last two units we looked at the ways texts are structured and the social functions they fulfil for different groups of people. In this unit we will examine how texts promote certain points of view or **ideologies**. We will focus on four things:

1 the ways authors create '*versions of reality*' based on their choice of words and how they combine words together;

2 the ways authors construct certain *relationships* between themselves and their readers;
3 the ways authors represent *the words of other people* and position themselves in relation to those words (and those people);
4 the ways authors of texts **index** or 'invoke' larger concepts, ideologies, systems of social organization or relationships of power, and by doing so, reinforce these concepts, ideologies, systems, and relationships.

I will talk about the first three things in this unit and focus on the fourth thing in unit B4.

Whether we are aware of it or not, our words are never neutral. They always represent the world in a certain way and create certain relationships with the people with whom we are communicating. For this reason, texts always, to some degree, promote a particular **ideology**. An *ideology* is a specific set of beliefs and assumptions people have about things such as what is good and bad, what is right and wrong, and what is normal and abnormal. Ideologies provide us with models of how the world is 'supposed to be.' In some respects, ideologies help to create a shared worldview and sense of purpose among people in a particular group. Ideologies also limit the way we look at reality and tend to marginalize or exclude altogether people, things, and ideas that do not fit into these models.

All texts, even those that seem rather innocuous or banal, somehow involve these systems of inclusion and exclusion. Often when you fill out a form, such as a university application form, for example, or an application for a driver's licence, you are asked to indicate whether you are married or single. One thing that this question does is reinforce the idea that your marital status is an important aspect of your identity (although it may have very little bearing on whether or not you are qualified to either study in university or drive a car). Another thing it does is limit this aspect of your identity to one of only two choices. Other choices such as divorced, widowed, or in a civil partnership are often not offered, nor are choices having to do with other important relationships in your life, such as your relationship with your parents or your siblings. In Hong Kong, where I used to live, such forms sometimes ask this question slightly differently, offering the categories of 結婚 ('married') or 未婚 ('single,' or literally 'not yet married'). These two choices not only exclude people in the kinds of relationships mentioned above but also people such as Buddhist monks and 'confirmed bachelors' who have no intention of getting married. They also promote the idea that being married is somehow the 'natural' or 'normal' state of affairs—this it, if you are not 'yet' married, it's only a matter of time until you are. A similar kind of observation can be made about forms which ask questions about gender. Although some social media platforms such as Instagram allow users to indicate 'gender non-conforming' or 'not specified' (and to choose up to four pronouns from a list of over 40), most web forms require people to select either 'male' or 'female' (or sometimes, 'rather not say'), reinforcing binary ideas about gender.

In such cases, it is fair to ask how much you are answering questions about yourself, and how much the forms themselves are *constructing* you as a certain kind of person by enabling some choices and constraining others. In other words, are you filling out the form, or is the form filling out you?

'Whos doing whats'

The linguist Michael Halliday (1994 [1985]) pointed out that whenever we use language we are always doing three things at once: we are in some way representing the world, which he called the **ideational** function of language; we are creating, ratifying, or negotiating our relationships with the people with whom we are communicating, which he called the **interpersonal** function of language; and we are joining sentences and ideas together in particular ways to form cohesive and coherent texts, which he called the **textual** function of language. All of these functions play a role in the way a text promotes a particular ideology or worldview. In unit A2 we looked at the *textual* function, discussing how different ways of connecting ideas together and of structuring them based on larger sets of expectations help us to create *texture* in our texts. But these devices can also work to reinforce certain assumptions we or others may have about people, things and ideas and how they are 'naturally' linked together. In this unit the *ideational* and the *interpersonal* functions of language will be the focus.

According to Halliday, we represent the world through language by choosing words that represent people, things, or concepts (**participants**), and words about what these participants are *doing* to, with, or for one another (**processes**). All texts contain these two elements: *participants* and *processes*. James Paul Gee (2010) calls them 'whos doing whats.'

Rather than talking about texts representing reality, however, it might be better to talk about texts 'constructing' reality, since, depending on the words they choose to represent the 'whos doing whats' in a particular situation, people can create very different impressions of what is going on. First of all, we might choose different words to represent the same kinds of participant. In traditional heterosexual church wedding ceremonies in many places, for example, the convener of the ceremony (often a priest or a minister), after the couple have taken their vows, will pronounce them 'man and wife.' By using different kinds of words to describe the groom and the bride, this utterance portrays them as two different *kinds* of people, and as fundamentally unequal. This choice of words gives to the 'man' an independent identity, but makes the woman's (the 'wife's') identity contingent on her relationship to the man. Nowadays, many churches have changed their liturgies to say, 'I now pronounce you husband and wife' (or 'husband and husband' or 'wife and wife') in order to present the two individuals as more equal, or they simply get rid of the 'whos' and focus on the 'what,' saying something like 'I now pronounce you married.'

The words we use for processes and how we use them to link participants together can also create different impressions of what is going on. One of the key things about *processes* is that they always construct a certain kind of *relationship* between participants. Halliday calls this relationship **transitivity**. An important aspect of transitivity when it comes to ideology has to do with which participants are portrayed as *performing* actions and which are portrayed as *having actions performed to or for them*. In the same kinds of traditional church weddings described above, after pronouncing the couple 'man and wife' the convener might turn to the man and say, 'you may now kiss the bride.' Making the male participant the *actor* in the process (kissing) constructs him as the person 'in charge' of the situation, and the woman as a passive recipient of his kiss. We call the actor in processes the **agent** and refer to his or her ability to 'take charge' of the process **agency**. In this sentence, the agency that is given to the male participant reinforces many assumptions about the roles of men and women, especially in romantic and sexual relationships, which are still deeply held in some societies. As with the statement 'I now pronounce you man and wife,' in many places this has changed in recent years, with the couple either simply kissing after the declaration of marriage or the convener saying something like, 'you may now kiss each other.'

Different kinds of processes link participants in different ways. Processes involving some kind of physical action like kissing link participants in ways in which one participant is portrayed as doing something to or for the other (**action processes**). Processes involving saying or writing, on the other hand, often link participants so that one participant takes the position of the speaker or writer and the other takes the position of the listener or reader (**verbal processes**). Processes involving thinking and feeling link participants to ideas or emotions in various ways (**mental processes**).

Participants can also be linked in ways that show their relationship with each other (**relational processes**): they might be portrayed as equal or equivalent with linking verbs such as 'to be' or 'to seem' (as in 'this ice cream is my dinner'); one participant might be portrayed as possessing another with verbs such as 'to have' or 'to contain' (as in 'this ice cream contains nuts'); and participants might be linked to each other in other kinds of relationship such as cause and effect with verbs such as 'to cause,' 'to lead to,' or 'to result in' (as in 'ice cream leads to obesity').

Finally, processes themselves can sometimes be transformed into participants and linked to other participants or other processes (as in 'kissing is a custom at many wedding ceremonies'). In this last example, the action of kissing is turned into a 'thing' and then linked to another thing (a custom) with a **relational process**. Turning a process into a participant is known as **nominalization** and is often a characteristic of technical or academic texts

A good example of how 'whos doing whats' can change the way we perceive something can be seen in the warnings that come on the side of packets of cigarettes. Different countries require cigarette manufacturers to put different warnings on cigarette packets, and lawmakers change these requirements from time to time. Here are two examples, from the United States, one (a) which was required in the 1970s, and the other (b) which is one of the 11 that appear today.

(a) Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined that Cigarette Smoking is Dangerous to Your Health (US circ. 1970s)
(b) WARNING: Smoking causes COPD, a lung disease that can be fatal (US circ. 2020)

In the first warning, the main participant is a person (the Surgeon General), and he or she is portrayed carrying out a mental process (determining something). The fact that 'cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health' is **backgrounded** as the thing that has been determined rather than the main 'whos doing what' of the sentence. Even in this clause, however, 'cigarette smoking' (a *nominalization* of the *action* of smoking cigarettes) is not portrayed as doing anything; rather it is linked with a relational process to an attribute: 'dangerous.' In the second warning, however, the nominalisation of 'smoking' is portrayed as the main participant, and one which actually *does* something: *causing* 'COPD.' This formulation portrays a version of reality in which cigarette smoking is construed as much more 'dangerous' than in the first warning.

Other examples of such warnings can be even more menacing, depending on the kinds of participants and processes that are chosen. A common warning on cigarette packets in the EU, for example, is 'Smoking Kills!,' with the action process 'kills' making 'smoking' seem even more like something with **agency** that intentionally wants to harm you. Since 'to kill' can be both a transitive and intransitive verb, there is no need to add another participant (to say 'whom' smoking kills), which allows this sentence to imply that smoking kills *everybody*.

We have to assume that these differences in wordings on cigarette packets are in some ways deliberate choices. Lawmakers spend a great deal of time writing and debating legislation to require these warnings, and cigarette companies spend a great deal of time and money trying to get lawmakers to make them seem less menacing. Looking at such warnings, then, can tell us not just about the 'ideology' around smoking and health in a particular country, but also about who is more powerful, lawmakers or corporations.

Relationships

Another important way that texts promote ideology is in the *relationships* they create between the people who are communicating, what Halliday calls the *interpersonal* function of language. We construct relationships through words we choose to express things such as certainty and obligation (known as the system of **modality** in a language). The traditional priests or ministers described above, for example, says, 'You may now kiss the bride,' rather than 'Kiss the bride!' constructing the action as a matter of permission rather than obligation and constructing themselves as people who are there to assist the couple in doing what they want to do rather than to force them to do things they do not want to do.

Another way we use language to construct relationships is through the style of speaking or writing that we choose. To take the example of conveners of wedding ceremonies again, they say, 'You many now kiss the bride,' rather than something such as like 'Why don't you give her a kiss!' This use of more formal language helps create a relationship of respectful distance between the couple and the convener and maintains an air of seriousness in the occasion.

Halliday sees the degree of 'formality' of language as a matter of what he calls **register**, the different ways we use language in different situations depending on the topic we are communicating about, the people with whom we are communicating, and the channel through which we are communicating (e.g. formal writing, instant messaging, face-to-face conversation) (see unit A7).

Like genres, registers tend to communicate that we are 'certain kinds of people' and show something about the relationships we have with the people with whom we are communicating. Most people, for instance, use a different register when they are talking or writing to their boss than when they are talking or writing to their peers. The American discourse analyst James Paul Gee refers to these different ways of speaking and writing as **social languages** (see D4).

The use of different registers to create a different kind of relationship between authors and readers can also be seen in cigarette warnings. Consider the two examples below:

(a) Smoking when pregnant harms your baby. (EU)
(b) Smoking during pregnancy stunts fetal growth. (US)

Both of these examples are about the same thing: smoking by pregnant people. The first text, however, positions the reader as pregnant (talking about 'your baby'), whereas the second positions the reader as someone who, while they may be interested in pregnant people, may not be one. Furthermore, the first example uses common, everyday language and few nominalizations, constructing the author as a person not so different from the reader, someone akin to a friend or a relative. The second example, on the other hand, uses more specialized scientific language ('stunts') and nominalization ('growth'). Here, the participant 'your baby' from the previous example is transformed into an adjective modifying that noun ('fetal'). This sort of language constructs the author as some kind of expert, perhaps a doctor or a research scientist, and creates a considerable distance between them and the reader.

Discourse representation

As I mentioned in unit A2, texts often refer to or somehow depend for their meaning on other texts. We call the relationship texts create with other texts *intertextuality*, and intertextuality is another important way ideologies are promoted in discourse.

When we appropriate the words and ideas of others in our texts and utterances, we almost always end up communicating what we think about those words and ideas (and the people who have said or written them) in the way we represent them. We might, for example, quote them verbatim, paraphrase them, or refer to them in an indirect way, and we might characterize them in certain ways using different 'reporting' words such as 'said,' or 'insisted,' or 'claimed.' Sometimes the effect of direct quotation can be to validate the words of the other person by implying that what they said or wrote is so important and profound that it is worth repeating word for word. Ironically, however, this technique can also have the opposite effect, creating a distance between the author and the words he or she is quoting and sometimes implying a certain scepticism towards those words—a way of saying, 'Please note that these are not *my* words.' Often in cases of direct quotation, the reporting word that is used is important in indicating the author's attitude towards the words being quoted; it is quite a different thing to 'note' something, to 'claim' something, or to 'admit' something.

Another way authors represent the words of other people is to paraphrase (or summarize) them. An example of this is the sentence: 'The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.' Here, rather than directly quoting what the Surgeon General said (or was written in their report), the warning gives the 'gist' of what the Surgeon General said.

Sometimes authors will employ a mixture of quotation and paraphrase, using quotation marks only for selected words or phrases. This is most often done when authors want to highlight particular parts of what has been said either to validate those words or to express scepticism about them. Quotes that are put around single words or phrases are sometimes called 'scare quotes' and are usually a way of saying things such as 'so-called …' or 'as they put it …'

By far the most common way to appropriate the words of others is by *not* attributing them to another person at all, but by simply asserting them as facts. For example, the sentence 'Smoking Kills!' is just as much a matter of borrowing the words of others as is the sentence above that is attributed to the Surgeon General. The difference is that in this sentence the author does not tell us who said this. In some ways, this makes for a stronger warning, since the danger of cigarettes is presented as 'a fact' rather than as the opinion or 'determination' of one person (the Surgeon General).

Finally, often the words and ideas of other people are not directly asserted, but rather indirectly *presumed* in texts. Presuppositions are implicit assumptions about

Table A4.1 Different forms of discourse representation

Direct quotation	According to the Surgeon General, 'Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.'
Paraphrase	The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.
Selective quotation	The Surgeon General has long warned that smoking is 'dangerous.'
Assertion	Smoking kills.
Presupposition	The purpose of the legislation is to reduce the harms caused by tobacco.

background beliefs that are presented as taken-for-granted facts. They are among the main devices authors use to promote their ideological positions. They are particularly effective in influencing people because they portray ideas as established truths and pre-empt opportunities to question or debate them.

Table A4.1 gives examples of these different forms of discourse representation.

Discourses

It should be quite clear by now that even a seemingly innocent phrase such as 'You may now kiss the bride' can be seen as *ideological*. That is to say, it promotes what James Paul Gee calls **cultural models** (see unit B2)—'frozen theories' or generalisations about the world and how people should behave, in this case generalisations about brides and grooms and men and women and how they are supposed to act in the context of marriage. Cultural models serve an important role in helping us make sense of the texts and the situations that we encounter in our lives. At the same time, however, they also function to exclude certain people or certain ways of behaving from our consideration.

Cultural models are not random and free-floating. They are parts of larger systems of knowledge, values, and social relationships that grow up within societies and cultures which Gee calls '**Discourses**' (with a capital 'D'). Other people have used different terms. The French philosopher Michel Foucault calls these systems '**orders of discourse,**' and gives as examples things such as 'clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse' (1972: 121).

The phrase 'You may now kiss the bride,' then, does not just reinforce a theory about how brides and grooms are supposed to act *during* a marriage ceremony, but also invokes broader theories about marriage, gender relations, love, sex, morality, and economics. All of these theories are part of a system of discourse which we might call the 'Discourse of traditional heterosexual marriage' which might be seen as intersecting with other Discourses such as the 'Discourse of hegemonic masculinity' and the 'Discourse of heteronormativity.' This view of discourse (with as small 'd'), which aims to understand how it always participates in and promotes particular 'Discourses,' is called **critical discourse analysis**, but many of the kinds of discourse analysis you will learn about in this book can be approached with a critical perspective. By critical here I don't mean that we are necessarily trying to find fault with people and the texts that they produce. Rather, by 'critical' I mean any approach which acknowledges how discourse is shaped by the social world and how the social world is shaped by discourse.

Look more deeply into ideology, cultural models and Discourses in the online resources for this book.

A5 SPOKEN DISCOURSE

So far, we have been focusing mostly on the analysis of written texts. In this unit we will begin to consider some of the special aspects of spoken discourse. In many ways, speech is not so different from writing. When people speak they also produce different kinds of *genres* (such as casual conversations, debates, lectures, and speeches of various kinds) and use different kinds of *registers* or *social languages*. They also promote particular versions of reality or *ideologies*. But there are some ways in which speech is very different from writing.

First of all, speech is more interactive. While we do often expect and receive feedback for our writing, especially when it comes to new media genres such as social media posts, this feedback is not always immediate the way it is in face-to-face communication. When we speak we usually do so in 'real time' with other people, and we receive their responses to what we have said right away. As we carry on conversations, we decide what to say based on what the previous speaker has said as well as what we expect the subsequent speaker to say after we have finished speaking. We can even alter what we are saying as we go along based on how other people seem to be reacting to it. Similarly, listeners can let us know immediately whether they object to, or do not understand, what we are saying. In other words, conversations are always *co-constructed* between or among the different parties having them.

Second, speech tends to be more transient and spontaneous than writing. When we write, we often plan what we are going to write carefully, and we often read over, revise, and edit what we have written before showing it to other people. Because writing has a certain 'permanence,' people can also read what we have written more carefully. They can read it quickly or slowly, and they can re-read it as many times as they like. They can also show it to other people and get their opinions about it. Speech, on the other hand, is usually not as well planned as writing. While some genres such as formal speeches and lectures are planned, most casual conversation is just made up as we go along. It is also transient; that is to say, our words usually disappear the moment we utter them. This makes listening in some ways more challenging than reading. Unless our words are recorded, people cannot return to them, save them or transport them into other contexts. While they might be able to remember what we have said and repeat it to other people, it is never exactly the same as what we have actually said.

Finally, speech tends to be less *explicit* than writing. The reason for this is that when we are speaking, we often also depend on other methods of getting our message across. We communicate with our gaze, our gestures, our facial expressions and the tone of our voice. When we are writing we do not have these tools at our disposal, and so we depend more on the words themselves to express our meaning. Speech also usually takes place in some kind of physical and social *context* which participants share, and often the meaning of what we say is dependent on this context. We can use **deictic expressions** (see unit B3) such as 'this' and 'that' and 'here' and 'there' and expect that the people we are speaking to can understand what we are talking about based on the physical environment in which the conversation takes place, and we can usually assume more about our relationship with the people that are communicating with us in the case of spoken discourse than we can when it comes to written communication.

Of course, there are many kinds of speech that do not share all of the features we have discussed above. People engaged in telephone conversations, for example, like readers and writers, are situated in different places and cannot rely on physical cues such as gestures and facial expressions to convey meaning, although their conversations are still interactive. When people speak to us through television or YouTube or TikTok, on the other hand, while we can see their gestures and facial expressions, we cannot usually respond to what they are saying in real time, though, in the case of YouTube and TikTok we can leave comments about what they have said or, in the case of TikTok, integrate their videos into our own videos in ways that make it *seem* that we are talking to them or reacting to them in real time.

There are also certain kinds of conversations that share features of *both* speech and writing. Messaging and 'texting' using applications like WhatsApp or the chat functions of online games, for example, are, like speech, interactive and usually fairly unplanned, while at the same time, like writing, they involve a certain amount of permanence (the words we write remain in chat windows for some time after we have written them and may be stored on users' devices or on servers). They also lack the non-verbal cues that are part of physical co-presence (though users might resort to other non-verbal cues like 'emojis' or the creative use of punctuation or capitalisation to express the things we express through our tone of voice, facial expressions, or body movements in face-to-face communication). Other more 'hybrid' kinds of interaction are those involving apps like Snapchat, in which users exchange messages that might combine written text, drawings and pictures of themselves or their environments, or Zoom and FaceTime, which in many ways enable conversations that resemble face-to-face conversations, but also might involve users typing into chat windows, exchanging files, sharing their computer screens, or pointing their cameras towards other people or things in their environments.

Making sense of conversations

As I mentioned in unit A1, one of the main problems that people have when communicating is that quite often *people do not mean what they say, and people do not say what they mean*. This is true of both written and spoken discourse, but it can be more dramatic in spoken discourse since speech is usually less explicit and more context-dependent. In the first unit of this section we encountered the example of someone asking to borrow a pen with the words 'Do you have a pen?,' and I pointed out that, strictly speaking, this utterance is *literally* a question about whether or not someone possesses a pen rather than a *request* to borrow one, even though most people would not take it literally, but instead 'hear' it as a request. Similarly, in the comic strip below (Figure A5.1), when Calvin's mother says 'What are you doing to the coffee table?!' she

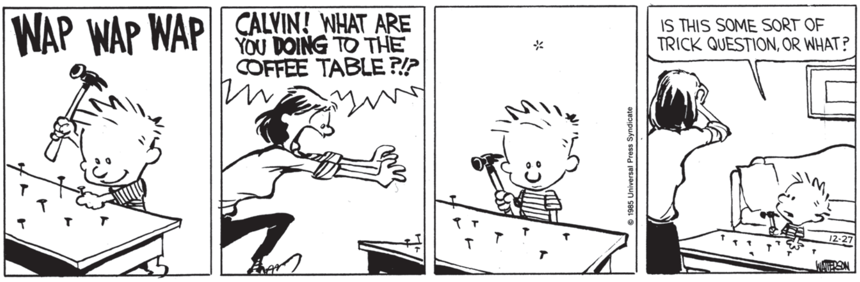

Figure A5.1 Calvin and Hobbes (© 1985 Watterson. Reprinted with permission of Andrews McMeel Syndication. All rights reserved.)

is not so much asking a question as she is expressing shock and disapproval—offering a *rebuke*. The humour in Calvin's response lies in the fact that he has taken her utterance *literally*, responding to it as if it were meant as a question rather than a rebuke. Interestingly, we regard Calvin, who operates on the principle that people *should* mean what they say, as the uncooperative party in this conversation rather than his mother, who, strictly speaking, does not say what she means.

It is, of course, not at all unusual for people to say things like 'Do you have a pen?' and 'What are you doing to the coffee table?' and not mean these questions literally. And so, the question is, if people do not say what they mean or mean what they say, how are we able to successfully engage in conversations with one another, especially face-to-face conversations in which we have to make decisions about what we *think* people mean rather quickly in order for the conversation to proceed smoothly.

Furthermore, sometimes the way we interpret what people say can lead to misunderstandings or even be the source of broader political or ideological disagreements or prejudices, as when someone replies to the slogan 'Black Lives Matter' with the words: '*All* lives matter!' In a way, this person is not unlike Calvin in the cartoon above who uncooperatively takes his mother's words literally rather than interpreting them in relation to the *context* in which they are spoken. The phrase 'Black Lives Matter' is not meant to imply that *all* lives (including white lives) don't matter, but to highlight a social situation in which black lives do not seem to matter to police officers or to the government, at least not in the same way white lives do, and to reply to this utterance with '*All* lives matter!' actually serves to discount or ignore this reality.

In order to understand how conversational participants deal with situations in which interpreting what people mean requires that they go beyond the literal meanings of the words, we can turn to two different analytical traditions in discourse analysis, one with its roots in philosophy and the other with its roots in sociology. These two traditions are called **pragmatics** and **conversation analysis**.

Pragmatics is the study of how people use words to accomplish actions in their conversations: actions such as requesting, threatening, and apologizing. It aims to help us understand how people figure out what actions other people are trying to take with their words and respond appropriately. It has its roots primarily in the work of three philosophers of language: Herbert Paul Grice, John Austin, and John Searle.

Conversation analysis, on the other hand, comes out of a tradition in sociology called ethnomethodology, which focuses on the 'methods' ordinary members of a society use to interact with one another and interpret their experiences. It was developed by three sociologists, Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson, and studies the 'procedural rules' that people use to cooperatively manage conversations and figure out what other people mean.

Because these two analytical frameworks come out of such different intellectual traditions, they approach the problem discussed above in two very different ways. With its roots in philosophy, *pragmatics* tends to approach the problem as a matter of *logic*, asking what conditions need to be present for a participant in a conversation to logically conclude that a given utterance has a certain meaning (or pragmatic 'force'). With its roots in sociology, conversation analysis approaches the problem not as one of abstract logic, but as one of *locally contingent action*. According to this perspective, people make sense of what other people say not by 'figuring it out' logically, but by paying attention to the local conditions of the conversation itself, especially the sequence of utterances.

Rather than being mutually exclusive, these two approaches represent two different windows on the phenomenon of conversation, with each illuminating a different aspect of it. In the units that follow, even more perspectives will be introduced that focus on different aspects of spoken interaction. Taking these various perspectives together will lead to a rich and comprehensive understanding of what people are doing when they engage in conversation and how they cope with the unique challenges of spoken discourse as well as more interactive forms of written and multimodal discourse which people engage in using digital media.

Look more deeply into the differences between pragmatics and conversation analysis in the online resources for this book.

STRATEGIC INTERACTION

A6

When we have conversations with others, we are always engaged in some kind of activity—we are arguing, or flirting, or commiserating, or gossiping, or doing other things with our conversations, and a big part of understanding what people mean is understanding what they are 'doing' and what is 'going on' in the social situation that the conversation is part of. At the same time, we also use conversations to show that we are certain kinds of people and to establish and maintain certain kinds of relationships with the people with whom we are talking. Understanding who somebody is 'trying to be' in a conversation is also an important part of understanding what they mean by what they say.

We do not, however, engage in these activities and construct these identities all by ourselves. We must always negotiate 'what we are doing' and 'who we are being' with the people with whom we are interacting. The methods we use to engage in these negotiations are called **conversational strategies**.

In this unit we will focus on two basic kinds of conversational strategies: **face strategies** and **framing strategies**. Face strategies have to do primarily with showing who we are and what kind of relationship we have with the people with whom we are talking. Framing strategies have more to do with showing what we are doing in the conversation, whether we are, for example, arguing, teasing, flirting, or gossiping.

These two concepts for analysing how we manage conversations come from an approach to discourse known as **interactional sociolinguistics**, which is concerned with the sometimes very subtle ways people signal and interpret what they think they are doing and who they think they are being in social interaction. It is grounded in the work of the anthropologist John Gumperz (1982a, 1982b), who drew on insights from anthropology and linguistics as well as the fields of pragmatics and conversation analysis, which were introduced in the previous unit. One of the most important insights Gumperz had was that people belonging to different groups have different ways of signalling and interpreting cues about 'what they are doing' and 'who they are being,' and this can sometimes result in misunderstandings and even conflict. Not surprisingly, interactional sociolinguistics has been used widely in studies of intercultural communication, including some of the early studies by Gumperz himself on communication between Anglo-British and South Asian immigrants to the UK.

Another important influence on interactional sociolinguistics comes from the American sociologist Erving Goffman, who, in his classic book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), compared social interaction to a dramatic performance. Social actors in everyday life, he argued, like stage actors, use certain 'expressive equipment' such as costumes, props and settings to perform certain 'roles' and 'routines.' Our goal in these performances is to promote our particular 'line' or version of who we are and what is going on. Most of the time, other people help us to maintain our line, especially if we are willing to help them to maintain theirs. Sometimes, however, people's 'lines' are not entirely compatible, which means they need to negotiate an acceptable common 'definition of the situation' or else risk spoiling the performance for one or more of the participants.

It was Goffman who contributed to discourse analysis the concepts of **face** and **frames**. By 'face' he meant 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken' (1955 213). In other words, for Goffman a person's 'face' is tied up with how successful he or she is at 'pulling off' his or her performance and getting others to accept his or her 'line.' What he meant by 'frames' was 'definitions of a situation (that) are built up in accordance with principals of organisation which govern events' (1974: 10). The concept of 'framing' relates to how we negotiate these 'definitions of situations' with other people and use them as a basis for communicating and interpreting meaning.

Showing who we are: Face strategies

Social identity is a complex topic and one that will be further explored in the coming units. For now, the focus will be on one fundamental aspect of identity: the fact that our identities are always constructed *in relation to* the people with whom we are interacting. Some people are our friends, and others are complete strangers. Some people are our superiors and others are our subordinates. When we talk, along with conveying information about the topic about which we are talking, we always convey information about how close to or distant from the people with whom we are talking we think we are, along with information about whether we are social equals or whether one has more power than the other. The strategies we use to do this are called *face strategies*.

The concept of 'face' in its more everyday sense will be familiar to many readers. The term is often used to denote a person's honour or reputation. Many cultures have the notions of 'giving' people face (helping them to maintain a sense of dignity or honour) and of 'losing face' (when people, for some reason or another, suffer a loss of dignity or honour). Interactional sociolinguists, however, have a rather more specific definition of face. They define it as 'the negotiated public image mutually granted to each other by participants in a communicative event' (Scollon *et al.* 2012: 47).

There are three important aspects to this definition: The first is that one's face is one's 'public' image rather than one's 'true self.' This means that the social image that constitutes face is not the same in every interaction in which we engage. We 'wear' different faces for different people. The second important aspect of this definition is that this image is 'negotiated.' That is to say, it is always the result of a kind of 'give and take' with the person or people with whom we are interacting, and throughout a given interaction the image that we present and the images others project to us may undergo multiple adjustments. Finally, this image is 'mutually granted.' In other words, successfully presenting a certain face in interaction depends on the people with whom we are interacting cooperating with us. This is because face is the aspect of our identity which defines us *in relation* to others. If one person's idea of the relationship is different from the other person's idea, chances are one or the other will end up 'losing face.' And so, in this regard, the everyday ideas of 'giving face' and 'losing face' are also quite important in this more specialized definition of face.

There are basically two broad kinds of strategies we use to negotiate our identities and relationships in interaction. The first we will call **involvement strategies (sometimes called 'positive' face strategies)**. They are strategies we use to establish or maintain closeness with the people with whom we are interacting—to show them that we consider them our friends. These include things such as calling people by their first names or using nicknames, using informal language, showing interest in someone by, for example, asking personal questions, and emphasizing our common experiences or points of view. While such strategies can be used to show friendliness—as we will see in the next unit—they can also be used to assert power over people. Teachers, for example, often use such strategies when interacting with young students, and bosses sometimes use them when interacting with their employees.

The second class of face strategies is known as **independence strategies sometimes called 'negative' face strategies)**. These are strategies we use to establish or maintain distance from the people with whom we are interacting either because we are not their friends, or, more commonly, because we wish to show them respect by not imposing on them. They include using more formal language and terms of address, trying to minimize the imposition, being indirect, apologizing, and trying to depersonalize the conversation (see Table A6.1).

These two kinds of face strategy correspond to two fundamentally and, in some ways, contradictory social needs that all humans experience: we all have the need to be liked (sometimes referred to as our **positive face**), and we all have the need to be respected (in the sense of not being imposed on or interfered with—sometimes referred to as our **negative face**). When we interact with others, we must constantly attend to their needs to be liked and respected, and constantly protect our own needs to be liked and

Table A6.1 Face strategies

Involvement strategies	*Independence strategies*
Using first names or nicknames (*Hey, Rodders!*)	Using titles (*Good afternoon, Professor Jones.*)
Expressing interest (*What have you been up to lately?*)	Apologizing (*I'm terribly sorry to bother you.*)
Claiming a common point of view (*I know exactly what you mean.*)	Admitting differences (*Of course, you know much more about it than I do.*)
Making assumptions (*I know you love lots of sugar in your coffee.*)	Not making assumptions (*How would you like your coffee today?*)
Using informal language (*Gotta minute?*)	Using formal language (*Pardon me, can you spare a few moments?*)
Being direct (*Will you come?*)	Being indirect and hedging (*I wonder if you might possibly drop by.*)
Being optimistic (*I'm sure you'll have a great time.*)	Being pessimistic (*I'm afraid you'll fnd it a bit boring.*)
Being voluble (talking a lot)	Being taciturn (not talking much)
Talking about 'us'	Talking about things other than 'us'

respected (Brown and Levinson 1987). How we balance and negotiate these needs in communication is fundamental to the way we show who we are in relation to the people around us.

In any given interaction we are likely to use a combination of both of these strategies as we negotiate our relationships with the people with whom we are interacting. In section B we will go into more detail about how we decide which of these strategies to use, when and with whom.

Showing what we are doing: Framing strategies

In order to understand one another, we have to interpret what other people say in the context of some kind of overall activity in which we are mutually involved. One could think of many examples of utterances whose meanings change based on what the people are doing when they utter them. The meaning of the utterance by a doctor of the phrase, 'Please take off your clothes' is different if uttered in the context of a medical examination or in the context of their apartment. For different kinds of activities we have different sets of expectations about what kinds of things will be said and how those things ought to be interpreted. We call these sets of expectations *frames*.

Goffman took his idea of frames from the work of the anthropologist Gregory Bateson, who used it to explain the behaviour of monkeys he had observed at the zoo. Sometimes, he noticed, the monkeys displayed hostile signals, seemingly fighting with, or attempting to bite, one another. It soon became clear to him, however, that the monkeys were not actually fighting; they were playing. It then occurred to him that they must have some way of communicating to one another how a particular display of aggression should be interpreted, whether as an invitation to fight or an invitation to play.

We bring to most interactions a set of expectations about the overall activity in which we will be engaged, which Goffman called the **primary framework** of the interaction. When we are a patient in a medical examination, for example, we expect that the doctor will touch us, and we interpret this behaviour as a method for diagnosing our particular medical problem. When we attend a lecture, we do so with an idea of what the activities of delivering a lecture and of listening to a lecture involve.

Interaction, however, hardly ever involves just one activity. We often engage in a variety of different activities within the primary framework. While lecturing, for example, a lecturer might give explanations, tell jokes, or even rebuke members of the audience if they are not paying attention. Similarly, medical examinations might include multiple frames. For example, the discourse analysts Deborah Tannen and Cynthia Wallat (1987) analyzed how a doctor uses a 'playing' frame while examining a young child, and then switches back to a 'consultation' frame when talking with the child's mother (see unit B6). These smaller, more local frames are called **interactive frames**. When we are interacting with people, we often change what we are doing within the broader primary framework and, like Bateson's monkeys, we need ways to signal these 'frame changes' and ways to negotiate them with the people with whom we are interacting. Gumperz called the signals we send to each other to show what we are doing 'contextualization cues.' Contextualization cues help to create the *immediate context* for our utterances. They can consist of linguistic cues, such as words or expressions (like 'let's get down to work') or choices about the language or register we use at a given movement in the conversation, or they can consist of **paralinguistic cues**, such as a change in our tone of voice, facial expression, or the posture of our bodies.

Positioning

Another way of understanding how people negotiate 'who they are being' and 'what they are doing' in interaction is through the lens of **positioning theory**, which was developed by the social psychologist Rom Harré (Davies and Harré 1990; Harré and van Langenhove 1999). Harré came up with this theory because he thought the traditional idea in the social sciences that people play **social roles** such as 'mother,' 'teacher,' and 'friend' was too simplistic, ignoring the fact that the roles people play can change from situation to situation and even within the same situation, and also the fact that there are many ways to play different roles—there are different 'types' of 'mothers,' 'teachers,' and 'friends.' The kinds of roles we play, he said, are not static and given, but *positions* that we assume in social interaction through the way we use discourse.

Whereas politeness theory sees social identities as a matter of how we situate ourselves in relation to other people (above them, below them, close to them, or distant from them) positioning theory sees identity as a matter of how we situate ourselves in relation to the *stories* that we are performing when we interact with others. These stories are not things that we make up from scratch every time we interact with someone. Rather they are stories that we take from our cultures and that we perform over and over again. Harré calls them **storylines**. They are a bit like Goffman's idea of *primary frameworks*, ideas about what is going on that everybody recognizes. Some of them come from the stories that we hear as children, such as the story of the 'perfect romance' where people 'live happily ever after.' From this perspective, roles like 'mother,' 'teacher,' and 'friend' are *positions* that we take up in interaction by invoking different storylines, and depending on the story, we may play those roles in different ways, positioning ourselves, for example as a 'hardworking single mum,' a 'strict teacher,' or a 'loyal friend.' In the article summarized in unit D6, for example, Christoph Hafner and Tongle Sun show how, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Prime Minister of New Zealand invoked the storyline of a team working together to win a game in order to position herself in the role of a 'coach.'

By invoking these storylines, we don't just position ourselves, but we also position other people. When an older man holds the door for a younger woman, he might be invoking a storyline of 'chivalry' in which men are meant to take care of women, thus positing himself as a 'noble protector' and the woman as someone in need of his care. The woman, understandably, might want to resist this positioning, not desiring to be a character in his story, and so she might step aside and ask him to go first, perhaps saying something like 'age before beauty.' So, like framing, positioning is also interactive—we negotiate moment by moment with the people with whom we are interacting what kinds of stories we are performing and what kinds of characters we want to play in those stories.

Look more deeply into deeper the idea of positioning in the online resources for this book.

A7

CONTEXT, CULTURE, AND COMMUNICATION

What is context?

By now it should be clear that what an utterance means and the effect it has on a hearer depends crucially on the circumstances under which it is uttered. The different approaches to spoken discourse we have considered so far have all focused on different aspects of these circumstances. Pragmatics focuses on the intentions of speakers and the immediate conditions under which utterances are produced (including the knowledge, goals, and status of those who produce them). Conversation analysis takes a rather narrower view, focusing on how talk occurring immediately before and immediately after utterances creates the circumstances for particular meanings to be produced. Finally, interactional sociolinguistics examines how utterances are interpreted based on the relationship of the participants and what they think they are doing, which are negotiated using *face strategies*, *contextualization cues and positioning*. In this unit we will take a wider view of the circumstances in which conversations. occur, taking into account broader aspects of the context as well as the 'cultural' norms and expectations of the people involved.

The idea that the meaning of utterances depends on the **context** in which they are produced can be traced back to the anthropologist Bronislow Malinowski and his 1923 paper, 'The problem of meaning in primitive languages,' in which he argued that we cannot understand the words spoken by members of societies very different from our own through mere translation. We must also have an understanding of the situation in which the words were spoken and the significance of various relationships and activities in that situation to the speakers. In other words, meaning is transmitted not just through words, but through the ways words are embedded into social relationships, social goals and activities, histories, and the beliefs, values, and ideologies of a particular cultural group.

The problem with this idea is determining exactly *which* aspects of the situation or of 'cultural knowledge' need to be taken into account in the production and interpretation of utterances. 'Context' could mean practically anything from the place and time of day of an utterance, to the colour of the clothing that the speakers are wearing, to speakers' political views or religious beliefs. How does the discourse analyst figure out which aspects of context are relevant to the production and interpretation of discourse and which are not? More to the point, how do people, immersed in conversation, figure this out?

Since Malinowski, a number of scholars have proposed models to address this question. The linguist John Firth (1957), for example, proposed that context can be divided into three components:

1 the relevant features of participants, persons, personalities;
2 the relevant objects in the situation;
3 the effect of the verbal action.

Although Firth's formulation highlights what are undoubtedly central aspects of context, one nevertheless wonders why some elements are included and others are not. Why, for example, is the setting or time not part of his model? Furthermore, while one of the most important aspects of Firth's model is his insight that only those things that are 'relevant' to the communication being analyzed should be considered context, he does not fully explain how such relevance is to be established.

One of the most famous models of context is that developed by the linguist Michael Halliday, whose ideas about the structure of texts and the functions of language were discussed in units A2 and A4. Halliday, drawing heavily on the work of both Malinowski and Firth, also proposed a three-part model of context. For him, context consists of:

1 field: the social action that is taking place;
2 tenor: the participants, their roles and relationships;
3 mode: the symbolic or rhetorical channel and the role which language plays in the situation.

It is these three aspects of context, Halliday says, that chiefly determine the *register* people use when they speak or write (see A4).

Halliday's model of context, however, suffers from some of the same problems as Firth's: without clearer definitions of the three categories, the analyst is unsure where to fit in things such as the social identities of participants and their membership in certain social groups (are these subsumed under 'role' or can they be seen as part of 'field'?), or why things such as the physical mode (or channel), the rhetorical form (or genre), and the role language plays in the situation should be subsumed under the same category (van Dijk 2008). Furthermore, like Firth, he fails to fully address the issue of exactly what makes some contextual features 'relevant' to speakers and others not.

Context and competence

Halliday explains context from an essentially linguistic point of view, seeing it as part of a language's system of 'meaning potential.' 'There is no need to bring in the question of what the speaker knows,' he writes; 'the background to what he does is *what he could do—a potential*, which is objective, not a competence, which is subjective' (1978: 38, emphasis mine). In sharp contrast to this position is that of the linguistic anthropologist Dell Hymes, for whom the notion of 'competence' is central to a model of context he called **the ethnography of speaking**, or, as it is sometimes called, **the ethnography of communication**.

In his work, Hymes focuses on the interaction between language and social life—the ways using and understanding language are related to wider social and cultural knowledge. Knowledge or mastery of the linguistic system alone, he insists, is not sufficient for successful communication. People also need to know and master various rules, norms and conventions regarding *what* to say to *whom, when, where,* and *how*—which he calls **communicative competence**. He writes:

> The sharing of grammatical (variety) rules is not sufficient. There may be persons whose English I can grammatically identify but whose messages escape me. I may be ignorant of what counts as a coherent sequence, request, statement requiring an answer, requisite or forbidden topic, marking of emphasis or irony, normal duration of silence, normal level of voice, etc., and have no metacommunitative means or opportunity for discovering such things.
>
> (Hymes 1974: 49)

The question Hymes asks is: 'What kinds of things do participants in particular activities or *speech events* need to know in order to demonstrate that they are competent members of a particular **speech community**?' What he means by *speech community* is not just a group of people who speak the same language, but a group of people who share the rules and norms for using and interpreting at least one language variety *in particular contexts*.

Like Halliday and Firth, Hymes developed a model of what he considered to be the essential elements of context. Rather than just three components, however, Hymes's consists of eight, each component beginning with one of the letters of the word 'SPEAKING':

- ❑ S stands for *setting* (where and when the speech event takes place)
- ❑ P stands for *participants* (who is involved and what their roles are)
- ❑ E stands for *ends* (the purpose or purposes of the speech event)
- ❑ A stands for *act sequence* (the order in which things normally occur)
- ❑ K stands for *key* (the 'mood' or 'tone' of the speech event)
- ❑ I stands for *instrumentalities* (the different 'tools' people use to communicate)
- ❑ N stands for *norms of interaction* (the shared expectations about how to communicate)
- ❑ G stands for *genre* (the form or structure of the communication; see unit A2)

One might point out that, although Hymes's model seems more 'complete,' it suffers from the same fundamental problem as those of Firth and Halliday: why are some elements included and others not? Why are there only eight elements rather than nine or ten, and why are they divided up the way they are? The crucial difference between this model and the others is that, for Hymes, these elements do not represent *objective* features of context, but rather represent more subjective features of *competence*, the kinds of things about which speakers need to know to be considered competent communicators by other members of their group.

For Hymes, then, the 'subjective' nature of context is not the weakness of his model, but, in a way, the whole point of it. Even when the 'objective' aspects of context—the status of the participants, the nature of the activity and the semiotic modes being used—remain the same, expectations about who should say what to whom, when, where, and how will still vary across different communities of speakers.

An understanding of the communicative competence necessary in a particular speech community in order to participate in a particular speech event cannot be acquired with reference to the linguistic system alone, or simply through the analysis of texts or transcripts of conversations. This is because what is of importance is not just the meanings people communicate and how they are communicated, but the meaning *communication itself* has for them in different situations with different people. Understanding this requires a different approach to the analysis of discourse, an approach which is summed up with the word *ethnography*.

Ethnography is a research method developed in the field of anthropology which is concerned with describing the lived experiences of people in particular social groups. It involves not just analysing the texts and talk that they produce from a distance, but actually spending time with them, observing them as they use language, and talking to them at length about the meanings they ascribe to different kinds of utterances and different kinds of behaviour.

These methods are not just used in the approach to discourse developed by Hymes and his students. Many of the approaches to discourse discussed earlier have also begun to incorporate ethnographic fieldwork: genre analysts, for example, typically interview members of discourse communities about the kinds of texts they use and how they use them; critical discourse analysts are increasingly focusing not just on how producers of texts express ideology and reproduce power relations, but also on how readers respond to and sometimes contest these ideological formations; and issues of cross-cultural pragmatics are increasingly being explored through ethnographic methods.

Look more deeply into the question of context in the online resources for this book.

MEDIATED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

A8

So far, this book has presented different methods for the analysis of written and spoken discourse. These methods include ways to understand how texts and conversations are put together and how people make sense of them, as well as how people use them to manage their activities and identities and to advance their ideological agendas. We have also explored how context, from the narrow context of the immediate situation to the broader context of culture, can affect the ways discourse is produced and interpreted.

In this unit we will step back and attempt to answer a more fundamental question in discourse analysis: 'How do we determine what texts or conversations are worth analysing in the first place?'

We are literally surrounded by discourse. In the course of a single day the number of words we speak and hear and the number of texts that pass before our eyes, from emails to advertising billboards to shop receipts, is mind-boggling. Discourse analyst Ron Scollon (2001), for instance, considers just some of the texts and kinds of spoken language involved in the simple activity of having a cup of coffee at Starbucks. These include things such as conversations between customers and the cashier, the communication between the cashier and the person making the coffee, the chatting that occurs between the people sitting at tables and lounging on sofas throughout the shop, the writing on the paper cups out of which they are drinking their beverages, the menu posted on the wall above the counter, the name badges that the employees wear and the names of customers that they scribble on cups, the magazines and newspapers provided for patrons to read, and the various signs and posters hanging on the walls around the shop, to mention only a few. There is also a whole host of texts and conversations that have contributed to this moment of drinking coffee that are not immediately visible: training manuals and work schedules for employees, orders and invoices for bulk coffee beans, and conversations and text messages between friends planning when and where they might meet up for a cup of coffee.

Given this complex situation, the most important question for a discourse analyst is: Where do I start? Which texts or utterances should I commence analysing? For most discourse analysts the answer to this question is: 'Whatever *I* happen to be interested in.' Thus, analysts interested in casual conversation might focus on the talk that goes on between friends sitting at tables, analysts interested in promotional discourse might zero in on the advertising posters or menus which inform patrons of the 'drink of the month,' and those interested in the speech event of the 'service encounter' might want to record or observe people ordering and paying for their coffee.

In principle there is nothing wrong with this 'analyst-centred' approach. From it we can learn quite a lot about things such as casual conversation, promotional discourse and service encounters. What we might miss, however, is an understanding of what the *practice* of 'having a cup of coffee at Starbucks' is really like for the *actual participants* involved, what this practice means to them, how they go about performing it, and how it fits into their lives.

Mediated discourse analysis, the perspective on discourse that is the topic of this unit, approaches the problem of 'which discourse to analyse' by asking the simple question: 'What's going on here?' and then focusing on whatever texts, conversations or other things play a part in 'what's going on.'

Of course, the answer to that question might not be very simple either. For one thing, it is likely to be different depending on whom you ask: for a customer, it might be 'having a cup of coffee'; for a barista, it might be 'taking orders' or 'making coffee' or more generally 'making a living'; for a government health inspector, it might be determining whether the shop complies with government regulations when it comes to hygiene and food safety.

The focus of mediated discourse analysis is trying to understand the relationships between 'what's going on' for particular participants and the discourse that is available in the situation for them to perform these 'goings on.' Certain kinds of discourse make certain kinds of actions easier to perform and other kinds more difficult to perform. In other words, actions are mediated through discourse (as well as other tools like expresso machines and coffee cups), and the goal of mediated discourse analysis is to understand how this process of **mediation** affects what we are able to do and how we are able to do it. There is also a relationship between the actions we are able to perform and our *social identities.* It is not just that cashiers or customers in a coffee shop need to use certain kinds of tools to perform certain kinds of actions, but that it is chiefly by using these different kinds of tools to perform these actions that they *enact* their identities as cashiers and customers and health inspectors. That is to say, we associate different kinds of actions and different kinds of discourse with different kinds of people. We might find it odd to see someone who is wearing a badge and uniform reading a newspaper and drinking a cup of coffee at one of the tables, or a customer inspecting the cleanliness of the espresso machine.

The point, then, is not that some discourse is more important than other discourse. Rather, it is that to really understand how discourse is relevant to 'real life,' we have to try to understand how different texts and conversations are linked, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, to the concrete, real-time actions that are going on in coffee shops and classrooms and offices and on street corners at particular moments, and how these linkages work to create **social identities** (such as 'friends,' 'colleagues,' 'teachers,' 'cashiers,' and 'customers') and **social practices** (such as 'teaching a lesson' or 'having a cup of coffee').

Discourse and action

One of the definitions of discourse given in the very first unit of this book was that discourse is 'language in use' or, to put it another way, 'language in action.' Nearly all of the approaches to discourse analysis we have discussed are concerned in some way with the relationship between language and action. According to pragmatics (see units A5 and B5), for example, people use language in order to accomplish particular actions such as requesting, apologizing, and warning, and according to genre analysis (see units A3 and B3) the structure of genres is crucially determined by the actions that users are attempting to accomplish with them within particular discourse communities.

Mediated discourse analysis has a similar focus on action, but, whereas these other approaches start with the discourse and ask what kinds of social action speakers or writers can accomplish with it, mediated discourse analysis starts with *actions* and asks what role discourse plays in them.

This may seem to be a rather small distinction, but it is actually a crucial one, because it avoids the assumption that discourse (rather than other things such as espresso machines and coffee cups) is necessarily the most important **cultural tool** involved in the action. It also reminds us that just because a piece of discourse *might* be used to perform certain kinds of action, the way people *actually* use it may be to perform actions which we may not have expected. People might just as easily use a newspaper to wrap fish and chips as to find out about the latest news from Parliament. One's relationship status on Facebook might just as easily be used to *avoid* giving information about one's relationship status as to give it (as when someone chooses 'It's complicated' or jokingly pretends to be 'married' to a friend).

Thus, the unit of analysis in mediated discourse analysis is not the 'utterance' or 'speech act' or 'adjacency pair' or 'conversation' or 'text,' but rather the *mediated action*, that is, the action that is *mediated* through discourse or other tools that may have nothing to do with language such as expresso machines. Such an analysis, then, begins first with the question: 'What is the action going on here?' And then asks 'What makes this action possible?'

The answer to the question 'What is the action going on here?' might have a very complex answer. As mentioned above, it might be different for different people, and even for the same person, it might depend on how broadly or narrowly they are focusing on what they are doing. The person operating the espresso machine at Starbucks, for example, might say they're 'working' or 'making a cappuccino' or 'steaming milk.'

What this tells us is that actions are always dependent on other actions that occur before them and are likely to occur after them, and that whatever one identifies as an action can always be divided up into smaller and smaller actions. In other words, actions are always related to other actions in complex patterns. Often these patterns, such as the sequence of smaller actions and how they combine to make larger actions, become conventionalized in the same way that genres of written and spoken discourse can become conventionalized. When this happens, we refer to these patterns of actions as *social practices*.

Part of what a mediated discourse analyst focuses on is how small, discrete actions such as handing money to a cashier or steaming milk in a stainless-steel pitcher come to be habitually joined with other actions and regarded by participants as the *social practice* of 'having a cup of coffee' or 'making a cappuccino.' In particular they are interested in the role discourse plays in creating and sustaining these *social practices*.

Like other analysts, then, mediated discourse analysts, through their interest in *social practices*, are concerned with the *ideological* dimension of discourse, or what James Paul Gee refers to as 'Discourses with a capital D.' When chains of actions occur over and over again in the same way in the same kinds of situations involving the same kinds of people, they become *social practices*, and thus begin to exert control over the people who carry them out: people come to be *expected* to do things in a certain way and the things that they do come to be associated with the kinds of social identities they are able to claim. Discourse of all kinds, from training manuals to health regulations to conversations, plays a crucial role in this process. In contrast to other approaches concerned with the ideological nature of discourse, however, mediated discourse analysis does not focus so much on how discourse itself expresses ideology, but rather how it is used to help create and maintain the *practices* that come to exert control over us.

Look more deeply into the idea of social practices in the online resources for this book.

A9 MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In the first unit of this book I said that one of the fundamental principles of discourse analysis is that discourse includes more than just language. It also involves things such as non-verbal communication, images, music, and even the arrangement of furniture in rooms. I elaborated on this point a bit further in my examination of spoken discourse, first noting how non-verbal cues can serve to signal the 'frames' within which an utterance is meant to be interpreted, and later how the larger physical and cultural context including such things as setting, participants, and communication media can affect how language is produced and understood. This point was taken even further in the last unit in the discussion of mediated discourse analysis, in which I pointed out that language is only one of many *cultural tools* with which people take actions and warned that focusing on language alone at the expense of these other tools can result in a distorted picture of 'what's going on.'

This unit introduces an approach to discourse called **multimodal discourse analysis**, which focuses more directly on these other tools or 'modes' of communication. Multimodal discourse analysts see discourse as involving multiple modes which often work together. In a face-to-face conversation, for example, people do not just communicate with spoken language. They also communicate through their gestures, gaze, facial expressions, posture, dress, how close or far away they stand or sit from each other, and many other things. Similarly, 'written texts' rarely consist only of words, especially nowadays. They often include pictures, charts, or graphs. Even the font that is used and the way paragraphs are arranged on a page or screen can convey meaning.

The point of multimodal discourse analysis is not to analyze these other modes *instead* of speech and writing, but to understand how different modes, including speech and writing, work together in discourse. The point is also not to study some special kind of discourse—'multimodal discourse'—but rather to understand how *all* discourse involves the interaction of multiple modes.

The idea of a **communicative mode** (sometimes called a **semiotic mode**) should not be confused with the notion of 'modality' in linguistics (the way we express possibility and obligation in language, discussed in B4), or with Halliday's use of the term 'mode' in his model of context (discussed in A7). What is meant by 'mode' in the context of *multimodal discourse analysis* is a system for making meaning. We can speak, for example, of the modes of speech, writing, gesture, colour, dress, and so on. Any system of signs that are used in a consistent and systematic way to make meaning can be considered a mode.

Modes should also not be confused with **media**, which are the material carriers of modes. Telephones, radios and computers are all *media* which can carry the *mode* of spoken language. They can also carry other modes, such as music, and, in the case of computers and mobile telephones, written text, and pictures.

Multimodal discourse analysis can generally be divided into two types: one which focuses on 'texts' such as magazines, comic books, web pages, films, and works of art, and the other which focuses more on social interaction (sometimes referred to as **multimodal interaction analysis**).

Perhaps the most influential approach to the multimodal analysis of texts has grown out of the study of **systemic functional grammar** as it was developed by M.A.K. Halliday, whose work we have already discussed at length (see units A2, A4, and A7). Halliday's view is that grammar is a system of 'resources' for making meaning shaped by the kinds of things people need to *do* with language. Those applying this framework to multimodal discourse analysis propose that other modes such as images, music, and architecture also have a kind of 'grammar.' In other words, their components can be organized as networks of options that users choose from in order to realize different meanings.

The most famous application of this idea is the book *Reading Images: The grammar of visual design*, first published in 1996 by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. Before the publication of this book, most of those involved in the analysis of images assumed that their interpretation depended on their interaction with language—that images themselves were too 'vague' to be understood on their own. In contrast, Kress and van Leeuwen show that, while in many texts images and language work together, images are not dependent on written text, but rather have their own way of structuring and organizing meaning—their own 'grammar.' This approach has also been applied to other modes such as music (van Leeuwen 1999), architecture (O'Toole 1994), colour (van Leeuwen 2011), webpages (Djonov 2007), and mathematical symbolism (O'Halloran 2005).

It is important to note, however, that this approach does *not* involve simply applying the 'grammatical rules' derived from the study of language to other modes. Instead, each mode is seen to have its own special way of organizing meaning, and it is the task of the analyst to discover what that system is, independent of other systems.

The second approach to multimodal discourse analysis grows more out of traditions associated with the analysis of spoken discourse, especially conversation analysis (see A5), interactional sociolinguistics (see A6) and the ethnography of speaking (see unit A7). Some of the work in what has come to be known as *multimodal interaction analysis* (Norris 2004) has also been influenced by meditated discourse analysis (see unit A8).

In analysing multimodality in interaction, analysts pay attention to many of the same kinds of things they do when they analyze spoken language, especially **sequentiality**, how elements are ordered in relation to one another, and **simultaneity**, how elements that occur at the same time affect one another. A multimodal discourse analyst, for example, might look for patterns in the ordering of non-verbal behaviour in a conversation, such as the role that things such as gaze play in the regulation of turn-taking, or at how the meanings of utterances are affected by non-verbal behaviour such as gestures or facial expressions, which often serve to contextualize utterances (see A6).

One of the key preoccupations of multimodal interaction analysis is the fact that, when we are interacting, we are almost always involved in multiple activities. We might, for example, be chatting with a friend at the beauty salon, leafing through a magazine and checking the mirror to see what is going on with our hair all at the same time. Multimodal interaction analysis gives us a way to examine how people use different communicative modes to manage simultaneous activities and to communicate to others about how they are distributing their attention.

It is important to mention that both of these approaches have been applied to both static texts and dynamic interactions. Approaches based on systemic functional grammar have been used to analyze things such as gestures and gaze, and multimodal interaction analysis has been applied to more static texts such as advertisements. Furthermore, with the increasing popularity of interactive text-based forms of communication such as instant messaging, as well as social media platforms where people interact with each other in the form of images and videos such as Instagram and TikTok (see unit D9), discourse analysts often find that they need to focus *both* on patterns and structures in the organisation of elements in texts *and* on the sequentiality and simultaneity of actions as people interact using these texts (see, for example, Jones 2005, 2009a, 2009b).

As new forms of media are developed which allow people to mix modes of communication in new ways over time and space, our whole idea of what we mean by a text or a conversation is beginning to change. If, for example, as we discussed in unit A2, *texture* is a result of elements such as clauses, sentences, and paragraphs being connected together in various ways using *cohesive devices*, then it would make sense to consider not just a particular web page, but an entire website consisting of numerous pages joined together by hyperlinks as a kind of 'text.' We might also be tempted to consider as part of this text other websites outside of the primary site to which this text links, and, before long, following this logic, we might end up with the idea that the entire Internet can on some level be considered a single text.

Similarly, our notion of conversations is changing. Not only do digitally mediated conversations often involve modes such as writing, emojis, images, and animated gifs rather than spoken language, but they also may extend over days or even months on social media platforms such as WhatsApp or Snapchat. Furthermore, conversations often travel across communication media and modes. You might, for example, begin a conversation with a friend over lunch, continue it later in the afternoon by sharing images using Snapchat, carry on chatting about the same topic through the telephone or WhatsApp in the evening, and resume the conversation the next morning over coffee at Starbucks.

These changes associated with multimedia and multimodality present challenges for communicators and discourse analysts alike. Because different modes and media alter the kinds of meanings we can make, we need to learn to adjust our discourse in different ways every time we move from one mode to another and from one medium to another. This phenomenon is known as **resemiotization**—the fact that the meanings that we make change as they are shaped by the different modes we use as social practices unfold. The discourse analyst Rick Iedema (2001) gives as an example of *resemiotization* the way meanings associated with the building of a new wing of a hospital changed as they were expressed orally in planning meetings, then later in the written language of reports, and still later in the graphic language of architectural drawings, and finally in the materiality of bricks and mortar.

The most important point multimodal discourse analysts make is that modes can never really be analyzed in isolation from other modes (although this is, as we have seen in this book, what most discourse analysts do with the modes of spoken and written language). Not only do modes always interact with other modes in texts and interaction, but communicators often shift from foregrounding one mode or set of modes, to foregrounding other modes or sets of modes, and in doing so, alter the 'meaning potential' of the communicative environment.

CORPUS-ASSISTED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

A10

So far all of the approaches to discourse analysis we have considered involve analysing a relatively small number of texts or interactions at one time. In fact, the focus of most discourse analysis is on looking very closely at one or a small number of texts or conversations of a particular type, trying to uncover things such as how the text or conversation is structured, how writers/speakers and readers/listeners are constructed, how the text or conversation promotes the broader ideological agendas of groups or institutions, and how people actually use the text or conversation to perform concrete social actions.

Corpus-assisted discourse analysis is unique in that it allows us to go beyond looking at a small number of texts or interactions to analysing a large number of them and being able to compare them with other texts and conversations that are produced under similar or different circumstances. It also allows us to bring to our analysis some degree of 'objectivity' by giving us the opportunity to test out the theories we have formulated in our close analysis of a few texts or conversations on a much larger body of data in a rather systematic way.

A **corpus** is basically a collection of texts in digital format that it is possible to search through and manipulate using a computer program. There are a number of large corpora, such as the British National Corpus, which is a very general collection of written and spoken texts in English. You can also find general corpora of texts produced in different varieties of English and also other languages. There are also a large number of specialized corpora available, that is, collections of particular kinds of text such as business letters or academic articles. There are even multimodal corpora in which not just verbal data but also visual data are collected and tagged.

Normally, corpora are used by linguists in order to find out things about the grammatical and lexical patterns in particular varieties of language or particular kinds of texts. A lot of what we know about the differences among the different varieties of English (such as British English, American English, and Australian English) or among different registers (such as academic English and 'conversational' English) comes from the analysis of corpora. Corpora have also played an important role in *forensic linguistics* (the use of linguistics to solve crimes): linguists sometimes, for example, compare the features in a piece of writing to those in a corpus of texts by a particular author in order to answer questions about authorship.

Although the number of discourse analysts using corpora has increased dramatically over the past decade, there is a tension between corpus-assisted analysis and the kinds of close examination of situated texts that discourse analysts usually do. As I said at the beginning of this book, discourse analysts are not just interested in linguistic forms and patterns but also in how language is actually used in concrete social situations. Computer analysis using large corpora seems to go against this key aim: texts in corpora are taken out of their social contexts, and even the information we often get from the analysis, which usually consists of things such as lists of frequently used words or phrases, is often presented outside of the context of the texts in which these words and phrases occur.

Other than this, the analysis of corpora also presents other problems for discourse analysts. As we asserted at the beginning of our study of discourse analysis: *People don't always say what they mean, and people don't always mean what they say*. A big part of discourse analysis, in fact, is figuring out what people mean when they do not say (or write) it directly. Any method which takes language and its meaning at face value is of limited use to discourse analysts. Words and phrases, as we have seen, can have multiple meanings depending on how they are used in different circumstances by different people, and just because a word is used frequently, does not mean it is particularly important. Often the most important meanings that we make are implicit or stated indirectly.

Despite these potential problems, however, the *computer-assisted* analysis of corpora has proven to be an enormously valuable tool for discourse analysts. The key word in this phrase is *assisted*. The computer analysis of corpora cannot be used by itself to *do* discourse analysis. But it can *assist* us in doing discourse analysis in some very valuable ways.

First, it can help us to see the data that we are analysing from a new perspective. Often seeing your data broken down into things such as concordances or frequency lists can help you to see things that you missed using more traditional discourse analytical techniques.

Second, it can help us to see if we can generalize our theories or observations about certain kinds of texts or certain kinds of interactions. If you find certain features in a WhatsApp conversation you are analysing, the most you can say is that this particular conversation has these features and that these features function in the particular social situation from which the conversation comes in a certain way. If, however, you have access to a large number of similar WhatsApp conversations, then you can start to make generalisations about the kinds of features that are common to these kinds of texts. This has obvious applications to *genre analysis* in which the analyst is interested in identifying certain conventions of language use associated with particular kinds of communicative purposes.

Finally, and most importantly, the analysis of corpora can help us to detect what we have been calling 'Discourses with a capital D'—systems of language use that promote particular kinds of ideologies and power relationships. One of the biggest problems we have as discourse analysts is that, while we want to make some kind of connection between the texts and conversations that we are analysing and larger 'Discourses'—such as the 'Discourse of medicine' or the 'Discourse of racism'—we are usually just guessing about whether or not these Discourses actually exist and what kinds of ideologies, power relationships, and linguistic strategies they entail. These are usually, of course, educated guesses that we make based on world knowledge, scholarly research, common sense, and the analysis of lots of different texts over a long period of time. The analysis of large corpora, however, gives us a more empirical way to detect trends in language use—how words and phrases tend to reoccur—across a large number of texts, which might signal a 'Discourse,' and also to detect if and how such language use changes over time (Baker 2005, 2006). Examples of this include Baker and McEnery's (2005) study of the portrayal of refugees and asylum-seekers in public discourse, Hardt-Mautner's 1995 study of British newspaper editorials on the European Union, Rey's 2001 study of gender and language in the popular US television series *Star Trek*, and Baker's (2005) study of the various 'Discourses' surrounding male homosexuality in Britain and America.

Of course, being able to detect 'Discourses' through the computer analysis of corpora requires the creative combination of multiple analytical procedures, and it also necessarily involves a large amount of interpretative work by the analyst. Corpus-assisted discourse analysis is not a science, it is an art, and perhaps the biggest danger of employing it is that the analyst comes to see it as somehow more 'scientific' than the close analysis of texts, just because computers and quantification are involved. The computer analysis of corpora does not provide discourse analysts with answers.

Rather, it provides them with additional information to make their educated guesses even more educated and their theory-building more evidence-based.

Theory or method?

One of the differences between corpus-assisted discourse analysis and the other approaches to discourse we have presented in this book is that, while approaches such as genre analysis, conversation analysis, and the ethnography of speaking each explicitly advance a particular theory of discourse, corpus-assisted discourse analysis is often seen to be 'theory neutral.' That is, it is viewed more as a method for assisting in the application of different theories. Thus, one can use corpora in doing genre analysis, conversation analysis, pragmatics, or critical discourse analysis.

Here, however, it would be useful to recall some of the points made in the discussion of *mediated discourse analysis* in unit A8 about the nature of *cultural tools*. Since all tools make certain kinds of action easier and others more difficult, there is really no such thing as an ideologically neutral tool. The computer-assisted analysis of corpora has certain *affordances* and *constraints* which make it more compatible with some approaches to discourse and less compatible with others. In particular, while it seems especially suited for approaches which concern themselves with the ways texts and conversations are structured or patterned (such as genre analysis and conversation analysis), it is perhaps less suitable for approaches which focus more on the social context of communication (such as the ethnography of speaking).

Look more deeply into the applications of the analysis of corpora to discourse analysis in the online resources for this book.

Section B

DEVELOPMENT

APPROACHES TO
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

B1 THREE WAYS OF LOOKING AT DISCOURSE

Over the years people have approached the study of discourse in many different ways, and in this unit you will explore some of these ways of analysing discourse and learn how to apply them to texts and conversations from your own life. People who analyse discourse have basically gone about it from three different perspectives based on three different ideas about what discourse is.

Some have taken a *formal* approach to discourse, seeing it simply as 'language above the level of the clause or sentence.' Those working from this perspective often try to understand the kinds of rules and conventions that govern the ways we join clauses and sentences together to make texts.

Others take a more *functional* approach, defining discourse as 'language in use.' This perspective leads to questions about how people use language to do things such as make requests, issue warnings, and apologize in different kinds of situations and how we interpret what other people are trying to do when they speak or write.

Finally, there are those who take what we might call a *social* approach, conceiving discourse as a kind of *social practice*. The way we use language, they point out, is tied up with the way we construct different social identities and relationships and participate in different kinds of groups and institutions. It is tied up with issues of what we believe to be right and wrong, who has power over whom, and what we have to do and say to 'fit in' to our societies.

Although these three different approaches to discourse are often treated as separate, and are certainly associated with different historical traditions and different individual discourse analysts, the position I will be taking in this book is that good discourse analysis requires that we take into account all three of these perspectives. Instead of three separate definitions of discourse, they are better seen as three interrelated aspects of discourse. The way people use language cannot really be separated from the way it is put together, and the way people communicate who they are and what they believe cannot be separated from the things people use language to do in particular situations.

Language above the clause

The use of the term 'discourse' to mean language above the level of the sentence or the clause originated with the linguist Zellig Harris, who, back in the 1950s, wanted to take the study of linguistics to a new level. Before this, linguists had come a long way in understanding how sounds are put together to form words and how words are put together to form sentences. What Harris wanted to do was to understand how sentences are put together to form texts. He called his new approach 'discourse analysis,' a kind of linguistics that tried to understand not just connections within sentences, but connections between them, as well as connections between texts and the situations in which they were used. He wrote:

> One can approach discourse analysis from two types of problem, which turn out to be related. The first is the problem of continuing descriptive linguistics beyond

> the limits of a single sentence at a time. The other is the question of correlating 'culture' and language (i.e. nonlinguistic and linguistic behavior).
>
> (Harris 1964 [1952]: 356)

Although Harris was interested in the ways the structure of texts connected them to different kinds of social situations and 'cultures,' he spent most of his time trying to develop a method for analysing how texts are put together. The method that he proposed was called **distributional analysis**, and it was not much different from how people go about doing grammatical analysis. The idea was to identify particular linguistic features and determine how they occur in texts relative to other features, that is, which features occur next to other features or 'in the same environment' with them. Later linguists, such as Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (see unit B2) developed other ways of understanding the formal structure of texts by focusing less on the distribution of different features and more on the kinds of strategies people use to *signal* the relationship between different sentences or between different parts of a text.

When focusing on the formal aspect of discourse, we are mostly interested in how the different elements of texts or conversations are put together to form unified wholes. In this respect, we usually look for two kinds of things. We look for linguistic features (words and grammar), which help to link different parts of the text or conversation together, and we look at the overall structure of the text or conversation. We can refer to these two things as: 1) *cohesion*—how pieces of the text are 'stuck together'; and 2) *coherence*—the overall structure or sequence of elements in a text or conversation that conforms to our expectations about how different kinds of texts or interactions ought to be structured. We call these aspects of texts that make them recognizable as unified, coherent units *texture* (see unit A2).

Language in use

The second aspect of discourse that discourse analysts focus on is how people actually use language to get things done in specific contexts. In fact, as was pointed out in unit A1, it is often very difficult to understand what a piece of language means without referring to the social context in which it is being used and what the person who is using it is trying to do.

This view of discourse grew out of the work of a number of important scholars including Michael Halliday, whose approach to the study of grammar differed markedly from earlier approaches by focusing less on the *forms* language takes and more on the social *functions* accomplished by language (see unit A2), and the British philosophers John L. Austin and Paul Grice, who laid the foundation for what we call *pragmatics* (the study of how people *do* things with language) (see unit A5). Another important figure who promoted this view of discourse is the sociolinguist William Labov, whose main interest was the way variations in language use serve to mark people as belonging to different communities of speakers, but who was also interested in the practical ways people in these communities structure their language in particular ways to accomplish social goals.

There are a number of ways to study language in use. One way is to consider discourse itself as a kind of action, and to explore how, when we say things or write things, we are actually *doing* things such as apologizing, promising, threatening, or making requests (see unit A5). This notion of language as performing social actions extends from individual utterances (such as apologies) to complete texts. Genre analysts, for example, consider texts like news articles or dating site profiles as basically made up of collections of actions that people are performing with words, and the sociolinguist William Labov (Labov and Waletzky 1967; see unit B2) held the same view about the stories people tell each other, which he divided into parts based on what each part *accomplished*. The aim of these approaches is to understand how sentences or utterances are put together to perform coherent *communicative actions*.

Another way to consider language in use is to look at how people use discourse strategically to try to communicate *who they are* and *what they are doing* (see unit A6). Subtle aspects of our language use or non-verbal communication can signal to others whether we are 'serious' or 'joking,' 'discussing,' or 'arguing,' and also how we feel about them (friendly, respectful, close, or distant).

Finally, we might examine how different kinds of discourse make certain kinds of actions or activities possible in the first place. The 'like' button on certain social media sites like Instagram, for example, makes it possible to mean so many different things and accomplish so many different actions depending on what you are 'liking,' who posted it, and what your relationship to them is (see unit A8).

Language and 'social practice'

The third aspect of discourse has to do with the role of language in social practice. Language is seen not just as a system for making meaning, but as part of larger systems through which people construct social identities and social realities. Different people use language in different ways. An English teacher talks differently than a hip-hop artist, and a President (usually) talks differently than a reality TV host. These different ways of talking help to show who we are and also reflect our different ideas about the world, different beliefs, and different values. These systems of identities, values, and ways of talking are far from stable, and can sometimes change dramatically when, for example, English teachers suddenly start appropriating the language of hip-hop artists or Presidents start talking like reality TV hosts.

This view of discourse probably owes the most to the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who argued that discourse is the main tool through which we construct 'knowledge' and exert power over other people. Different kinds of discourse (or 'discourses') are associated with different kinds of people and different 'systems of knowledge.' Foucault spoke, for example, of 'clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, [and] psychiatric discourse' (1972: 121). The American discourse analyst James Paul Gee uses a capital 'D' to distinguish this view of discourse from the others we have talked about. For him, **Discourses** are 'ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities' (1996: 127).

This aspect of discourse leads us to explore how people use language to advance certain versions of reality and enforce certain relationships of power, and also how our beliefs, values, and social institutions are constructed through and supported by discourse. A central principle of this view of discourse is that discourse is always 'ideological,' meaning that discourse always has 'an agenda,' that it always ends up serving the interests of certain people over those of others (see unit A4).

As stated above, it is difficult to look at discourse in any meaningful way from only one of these perspectives. Simply looking at how texts are put together, for example, while it may be interesting, has limited practical value. At the same time, you cannot really make broad statements about 'power' or 'ideology' in a text without first understanding some basic things about how the text is put together and how people are actually using it in specific social contexts to perform specific actions. The way people create 'versions of reality' with their discourse or use it to exert power over people depends on the kinds of words they use to describe things and the grammatical structures they use to communicate 'who is doing what to whom,' as well as the way they formulate their words to accomplish particular social actions and create particular relationships with other people.

Look more deeply into these different perspectives on discourse in the online resources for this book.

COHESION, COHERENCE, AND INTERTEXTUALITY

B2

One of the most basic tasks for a discourse analyst is to figure out what makes a text a text and what makes a conversation and conversation, in other words, to figure out what gives texts and conversations *texture. Texture*, as I said in unit A2, comes from c*ohesion, coherence, and intertextuality. Cohesion* mostly has to do with linguistic features in texts, *coherence* has to do with the kinds of expectations or 'interpretative frameworks' readers bring to texts, and *intertextuality* has to do with how texts form connections with other texts (the shopping list I talked about in B1, for example, might be linked to a recipe I have for rocket salad).

First, let's think about cohesion and coherence. When I say that cohesion is about the linguistic features in the text and coherence is about the expectations readers bring to the text about its structure, I don't mean that, when it comes to cohesion, the reader doesn't have to do any work or, in the case of coherence, that the expectations in the mind of the reader are more important than what is actually in the text. In fact, what creates cohesion is not just the linguistic features within the text, but the fact that these features lead readers to perform certain mental operations—to locate and take note of earlier or later parts of the text as they are going through it.

For example, if I were to say, 'Beyoncé doesn't appeal to Nimah, but my sister loves her,' in order to understand the meaning of 'her' in the second clause, you have to do some mental work. Not only do you need to refer back to the first clause, you also have to be smart enough to know that 'her' refers to Beyoncé and not Nimah. Thus, cohesion is the quality in a text that forces you to look either backwards or forwards in the text in order to make sense of the things you read, and it is through your acts of looking backwards and forwards that the text comes to take on a quality of connectedness.

Similarly, to say that *coherence* is a matter of the 'frameworks' or sets of expectations that we bring to texts, does not mean that what is actually in the text is any less important. Concrete features must exist in the text which 'trigger' those expectations. For example, for me to interpret a text as a shopping list (see unit A2), it must have a certain structure (a list), and certain kinds of words (generally nouns), and those words must represent things that I am able to purchase (as opposed to abstract things such as 'world peace' or unaffordable items such as the Golden Gate Bridge).For me to interpret something as a 'story.' The different parts of the story need to be arranged in a certain way so that the story has a clear 'beginning,' 'middle,' and 'end.'

Cohesion

Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976) describe two broad kinds of linguistic devices that are used to force readers to engage in this process of looking backwards and forwards which gives texts a sense of connectedness. One type depends on grammar (which they call **grammatical cohesion**) and the other type depends more on the meanings of words (which they call **lexical cohesion**).

Devices used to create grammatical cohesion include:

- ❑ **conjunction** (using 'connecting words')
- ❑ **reference** (using a pronoun to refer to another word)
- ❑ **substitution** (substituting one word or phrase for another word or phrase)
- ❑ **ellipses** (leaving something out).

Conjunction refers to the use of various 'connecting words' (such as conjunctions like '*and*' and '*but*' and conjunctive adverbs like '*furthermore*' and '*however*') to join together clauses and sentences. Conjunction causes the reader to look back to the first clause in a pair of joined clauses to make sense of the second clause. The important thing about these 'connecting words' is that they do not just establish a relationship between the two clauses, but that they tell us what kind of relationship it is.

Connecting words, then, can be grouped into different kinds depending on the relationship they establish between the clauses or sentences that they join together. Some are called **additive**, because they add information to the previous clause or sentence. Examples are 'and,' 'moreover,' 'furthermore,' 'in addition,' and 'as well.' Others are called **contrastive** because they set up some kind of contrast with the previous sentence or clause. Examples are 'but,' and 'however.' Still others are called **causative** because they set up some kind of cause-and-effect relationship between the two sentences or clauses. Examples of these are 'because,' 'consequently,' and 'therefore.' Finally, some are called **sequential** because they indicate the order facts or events come in. Examples are 'firstly,' 'subsequently,' 'then,' and 'finally.' In the two examples below, the first uses a contrastive connective and the second uses a causative connective.

> He liked the exchange students. She, *however*, would have nothing to do with them.
>
> He liked the exchange students. She, *therefore*, would have nothing to do with them.

All connecting words cause the reader to look back to a previous clause (or sentence) in order to understand the subsequent clause (or sentence), and the kind of connecting word used guides the reader in understanding the relationship between two clauses (or sentences). In the first example given above, the word *however* causes the reader to look back at the first sentence to find out what the difference is between her and him. In the second example, the word *therefore* causes the reader to look back at the first sentence to find out *why* she won't have anything to do with the exchange students. Similarly, in the example given above: 'Beyoncé doesn't appeal to Nimah, but my sister loves her,' the word *but* helps us to figure out that the pronoun her refers to Beyoncé (not Nimah) since the first clause is about somebody *not* liking *Beyoncé*, and the conjunction *but* signals that the second clause will give some contrasting information.

Another very common way we make our texts 'stick together' is by using words that refer to words we used elsewhere in the text. This kind of cohesive device is known as *reference*. The examples above, besides using connecting words, also use this device. The word 'them' in the second sentence refers back to 'the exchange students' in the first sentence, and so, to make sense of it, the reader is forced to look back. 'He' and 'she' are also pronouns and presumably refer to specific people who are probably named at an earlier point in the longer text from which these sentences were taken, though, as with the sentence about Beyoncé and Nimah, figuring out who or what a pronoun refers to sometimes requires that we pay attention to other cohesive devices. The word or group of words that a pronoun refers to is called its **antecedent**. What reference does, then, is help the reader to keep track of the various participants in the text as he or she reads (Eggins 1994: 95).

There are basically three kinds of reference:

1 **anaphoric** reference—using words that point back to a word used before:

> After Lady Gaga appeared at the MTV Music Video Awards in a dress made completely of meat, *she* was criticized by animal rights groups.

2 **cataphoric** reference—using words that point forward to a word that has not been used yet:

> When *she* was challenged by reporters, Lady Gaga insisted that the dress was not intended to offend anyone.

3 **exophoric** reference—using words that point to something outside the text (reference):

> If *you* want to know more about this controversy, *you* can read the comments people have left on animal rights blogs.

The definite article ('the') can also be a form of *anaphoric* reference in that it usually refers the reader back to an earlier mention of a particular noun.

> Lady Gaga appeared in a dress made completely of meat. *The* dress was designed by Franc Fernandez.

Substitution is similar to reference except rather than using pronouns, other words are used to refer to an *antecedent*, which has either appeared earlier or will appear later. In the sentence below, for example, the word *one* is used to substitute for *dress*.

> Besides wearing a meat dress, Lady Gaga has also worn a hair *one*, which was designed by Chris March.

Substitution can also be used to refer to the verb or the entire predicate of a clause, as in the example below.

> If Lady Gaga was intending to shock people, she succeeded in *doing so*.

Ellipsis is the omission of a noun, verb or phrase on the assumption that it is understood from the linguistic context. In order to fill in the gap(s), readers need to look back to previous clauses or sentences, as in the example below.

> There is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us, and *not we, them.*
> (Virginia Woolf)

All of the devices mentioned above are examples of *grammatical cohesion*, the kind of cohesion that is created because of the *grammatical relationships* between words. Lexical cohesion occurs as a result of the *semantic* relationship between words. The simplest kind of lexical cohesion is when words are repeated. But a more common kind is the repetition of words belonging to the same *semantic field*, that is, related to the same subject such as 'fashion' or 'pop music' (see unit A2). We call these 'chains' of similar kinds of words that run through texts **lexical chains**. In the following text, for example, besides the use of reference (who, it, she), the clauses are held together by the repetition of the verb 'to wear' and of other words having to do with clothing and fashion ('bikini,' '*Vogue*'—a famous fashion magazine, 'dress,' and 'outfits').

> Lady Gaga, who came under fire recently for *wearing* a meat *bikini* on the cover of *Vogue* Hommes Japan, *wore* a raw meat *dress* at last night's VMAs. It was one of many *outfits* she *wore* throughout the night.
> (Oldenberg 2010)

Taken together, these words form a **lexical chain**, which helps to bind the text together. *Lexical chains* not only make a text more cohesive but also highlight the topic or topics (such as 'fashion,' 'entertainment,' 'technology') that the text is about—and so can provide context for determining the meaning of ambiguous words (such as 'rocket' in the example of the shopping list given in unit A2). In fact, searching for lexical chains is one of the main techniques used in computer-automated text categorization and summarization.

Halliday and Hasan call these devices 'ties.' Texts are made cohesive, they claim, usually through the use of a combination of different kinds of ties, and it is the job of the discourse analyst to reveal the 'patterns of ties' that give certain kinds of texts 'texture.' In other words, cohesion works not just because of cohesive devices, but also because these devices are deployed in particular kinds of *patterns*, something that we will explore in more detail in unit C3.

Not all the texts we encounter, however, are cohesive in the ways described above. The shopping list I talked about in unit B1, for example, contains no connecting words, and so readers need to figure out how the words are connected themselves, and sometimes speakers or writers make the relationships between different parts of a text ambiguous in order to confuse people or to create humour. An example Halliday and Hasan (1976: 4) give is the exchange:

A: Time flies.
B: You can't; they fly too quickly.

The humour in this exchange lies in the anaphoric reference B creates between 'they' and 'flies,' which turns the word, which was originally intended as a verb, into a noun. Halliday and Hasan also point out that this exchange contains no less than *three* cohesive devices: reference, ellipsis, and lexical repetition.

Sometimes people use cohesive ties in an ambiguous way to make it seem that certain things are logically connected when they are not. For example, former US President Donald Trump, when talking to talk show host Jimmy Kimmel about his proposed Muslim ban, gave the following answer in reply to the question: 'Isn't it wrong to discriminate against people because of their religion?':

> the problem—I mean, look, I'm for it. But look, we have people coming into the country that are looking to do tremendous harm … Look at what happened in Paris. I mean, these people, they did not come from Sweden, okay? Look at what happened in Paris. Look what happened last week in California, with, you know, 14 people dead. Other people are going to die, they're badly injured, we have a real problem.

While Trump's answer, in some ways cohesive because of his repetition of words like 'look,' 'happened,' and 'people,' in other ways it does not seem particularly cohesive because it is difficult to understand what he is referring to when he uses words like 'look,' 'people,' and 'happened.' What makes his answer oddly effective, at least for many listeners, is the very fact that he creates ambiguity about what parts of the text are connected to other parts of the text. He begins by saying, 'Look, I'm for it,' but it is not clear what 'it' refers to (discriminating against people because of their religion, or it being wrong to discriminate against people because of their religion). He then goes on to mention 'people coming into the country that are looking to do tremendous harm,' but he doesn't identify those people. He follows this by mentioning Paris and California, where terrorist attacks had recently taken place, though Paris is not in 'the country' he was referring to in his previous clause. He ties these two incidents together by repeating the phrase: 'Look at what happened …' Then he says 'Other people are going to die,' followed by, 'They're badly injured,' but it is not clear who the 'they' in this clause refers to (the people in Paris, in California, elsewhere?). Trump's ambiguity in his use of reference actually makes it difficult to refute his statements, since is not entirely clear exactly who or what he means by 'it,' 'they,' and 'people.' By drawing loose connections between the terrorist attacks in Paris and California and 'people coming into the country' (who are not from Paris, California, or 'Sweden'), he is able to imply that people from 'non-Western' countries immigrating to the United States are potential terrorists without saying that directly. The way text is held together by a *lexical chain* of words related to violence ('harm,' 'dead,' 'died,' 'injured') also helps Trump create feelings of fear in his listeners.

Cohesion, however, is usually not sufficient to give a text *texture*. In fact, it is possible for a series of sentences to be connected to each other through cohesion, but still not make much sense as a text. The following example is given by Ulla Connor (1984: 302) in the article that is summarized in unit D2:

> The quarterback threw the **ball** toward the tight end. **Balls** are used in many sports. Most **balls** are spheres, but a football is an ellipsoid. The tight end leaped to catch the **ball**.
>
> (Connor 1984: 302)

Although all of the sentences in this passage are connected to one another through the *repetition* of the word 'ball,' the passage does not form a text because all of the sentences seem to be about different things. We are not sure what this text is 'about' and what the overall structure of the story that the writer is trying to tell is. We don't have any overall framework that we can apply to understanding this string of sentences. In other words, the passage lacks *coherence*.

Coherence

As the shopping list we discussed in unit A2 illustrates, sometimes what makes a text a text is a matter of the connections people make between parts of the text *in the absence* of cohesive devices, using sets of expectations and interpretive frameworks that they bring to the reading of texts. The relationship between the words 'tomatoes' and 'rocket' becomes meaningful to a reader based on his or her understanding of what a shopping list is and what it is used for. In the same way, in the passage from Donald Trump above, even though the different parts are not joined up with cohesive devices, listeners are able to connect up 'Paris,' 'California,' people who 'are looking to do tremendous harm,' and people who are 'coming into the country' because of the ideas about terrorism and terrorists that they bring to the text. This aspect of texture is known as *coherence*, and it has to do with our expectations about the way elements in a text ought to be organized and the kinds of social actions (such as shopping) that are associated with a given text. Hughes and Duhamel (1962: 19) write that 'A work is considered coherent when the sequence of its parts … is controlled by some principle *which is meaningful to the reader*' (emphasis mine).

The text in Figure B2.1 is a good example of how we sometimes need to apply our experience with past texts and with certain conventions that have grown up in our society in order to understand new texts we encounter. For most people, as soon as they see the words 'before' and 'after,' a certain body of knowledge is 'triggered' based on texts they have seen in the past which contain these words such as advertisements for beauty products. In such texts, 'before' is usually portrayed as 'bad' and 'after' is usually portrayed as 'good,' and the product being advertised is portrayed as the 'agent' that causes the transformation from 'before' to 'after.' This structure is a variation of what Michael Hoey (1983) has called the 'Problem–Solution' pattern, which underlies many texts from business proposals to newspaper editorials.

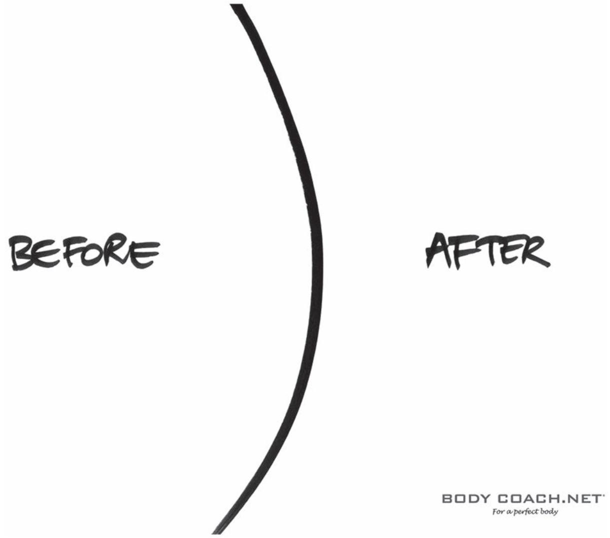

Figure B2.1 Advertisement for Body Coach.Net (Duval Guillaume, Brussels, Belgium)

The challenge this ad presents for the reader is that there is no explicit information about what is meant by 'before' and 'after' other than a curved line drawn down the centre of the page. In order to interpret this line, we must make reference to the smaller words in the lower right corner which give the name of the advertiser: Body Coach. Net, and the slogan: 'For a perfect body.' This information creates for readers an interpretive framework based on their knowledge of the kind of business such a company might be engaged in and cultural notions of what a 'perfect body' might look like. Once this framework is triggered, most readers have no trouble interpreting the space formed on the 'before' side of the ad as portraying the stomach of an overweight person, and the space formed on the 'after' side as the 'hourglass' shape associated (at least in the culture in which this ad appeared) with female beauty, and of the company—Body Coach.Net and the product that it sells—as the agents of this transformation.

There are a number of different kinds of interpretative frameworks that we use to make sense of texts. One kind, which we will discuss further in the next unit, we might call a **generic framework**. This kind of framework is based on the expectations we have about the kinds of information we expect to encounter in texts of different kinds and the order in which we expect that information to be presented, along with other kinds of lexical or grammatical features we expect to encounter. In the example above, for instance, it is partially our knowledge of the structure of 'before and after ads' that helps us to make sense of this particular ad.

Part of what forms such *generic frameworks* is that different parts of a text are not just grammatically and lexically related, but that they are *conceptually* and *procedurally* related—in other words, they appear in a certain logical or predictable sequence. Texts following the 'Problem–Solution' pattern, for example, begin by presenting a problem and then go on to present one or more solutions to the problem. This idea that texts have to have a logical and predictable structure can be seen in the way people tell stories. Even though the story above about the football game contains two sentences that are *procedurally* related: 'The quarterback threw the ball toward the tight end,' happens first, and 'The tight end leaped to catch the ball' happens second, in between these two sentences there is a lot of information about balls that, although conceptually related, is not *procedurally* related to the story and does not seem to have any function in moving the action of the story forward.

The sociolinguists William Labov and Joshua Waletsky (1967), who studied the way people tell stories, argued that stories tend to have predictable components that are usually presented in a predictable order: we usually begin our stories with a short summary of what we're going to say, which he called an ABSTRACT, then we 'set the scene' by telling when and where the story happened, which Labov and Waletsky called the ORIENTATION, then we introduce the 'problem' or 'conflict' in the story, which they called the COMPLICATING ACTION, then we tell how the problem or conflict was resolved, which they called the RESOLUTION, and finally we sometimes end with a statement about what the story meant or what the listener is supposed to learn from it, which Labov and Waletsky called a CODA.

Just as people can create strategic ambiguity through their use of cohesive devices, they can also create ambiguity through playing with these patterns. Filmmakers, for example, might end the movie not with the resolution or coda, but with a new complicating action, in order to prepare for a sequel, and Donald Trump is famous for exploiting the Problem–Solution pattern, frequently describing things or situations as 'big problems' but not offering a solution, thereby implying that he himself is a solution, that 'he alone can fix it.'

Not all of the knowledge we use to make sense of texts comes from our knowledge about the conventions associated with different kinds of text. Some of this knowledge is part of larger conceptual frameworks that we build up based on our understanding of how the world works. I will use the term **cultural models** to describe these frameworks. James Paul Gee (2010) calls *cultural models* 'videotapes in the mind' based on experiences we have had and depicting what we take to be *prototypical* (or 'normal') people, objects, and events. To illustrate the concept, he points out that we would never refer to the Pope as a 'bachelor,' even though the Pope, as an unmarried adult male, fulfils the conditions for the dictionary definition of the word, because he does not fit into our *cultural model* of what a bachelor is. *Cultural models* regarding both the kind of work 'coaches' do and about what constitutes a 'perfect body' are central to our ability to interpret the ad above, and especially for our understanding of the meaning of the two shapes formed by the line drawn down the centre of the page, and cultural models about 'terrorists,' 'people who come into our country,' and 'people who are not from Sweden' are important for listeners to understand the quote from Donald Trump above.

The important thing to remember about *cultural models* (and, for that matter, *generic frameworks*) is that they are *cultural*. In other words, they reflect the beliefs and values of a particular group of people in a particular place at a particular point in history. The ad reprinted above would be totally incomprehensible for people in many societies outside of our own because they would not share either the knowledge of 'before and after ads' or the beliefs about physical attractiveness that we have. It is even more important to remember that such texts do not just reflect such expectations, values, and beliefs, but also *reinforce* them. Every time we encounter a text like the advertisement above, for instance, it reinforces certain ideas in our society about what kind of body is 'normal' and 'correct.'

Intertextuality

The third characteristic of texts that give them texture is **intertextuality**, which refers to the connections that are formed between a text and other texts. The Soviet literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) argued that every time we speak or write we are in some way 'borrowing' the words of others and making them our own. All texts, he said, somehow *make reference* to texts that have come before them and *anticipate* texts that will come after them, and so contribute to the formation of a larger *web of texts* of which they form a part. One way texts exhibit texture, then, is the way they form connections to these larger webs of texts.

Sometimes this borrowing from other texts is explicit: we might, for example, directly quote the words of someone else, as when a newspaper or magazine quotes someone or characterizes what they have said. For example:

> President Trump defended the white nationalists who protested in Charlottesville on Tuesday, saying they included 'some very fine people.'
>
> (Gray, 2017)

More often, however, we make reference to other people's words in more oblique or subtle ways, through paraphrasing them, or by turning them into **presuppositions**, often failing to mention the texts or the people that were the source of these paraphrases or presuppositions. When Trump says 'Look at what happened in Paris,' he is referring not so much to what happened as to the news reports about what happened, and presupposing that his listener has also read or heard those reports and has come to similar conclusions based on them. Presupposition is a particularly powerful form of intertextuality, because it does not just link texts with previous texts, but it also creates links between the speakers or writers and listeners or readers around a body of *shared knowledge* or assumptions. It also functions to make these words or ideas from other texts more difficult to challenge (see unit A4).

Sometimes texts are linked not to specific texts written or spoken in the past, but rather to certain kinds of texts that are associated with certain kinds of people or certain kinds of situations, or 'webs of texts' which might be referred to as 'Discourses' The discourse analysts Norman Fairclough refers to this kind of intertextuality as **interdiscursivity**, the borrowing of certain genres or styles or Discourses.

One of the most explicit ways people link their texts to larger 'webs of texts' or 'Discourses' nowadays is with the use of 'hashtags' in digital genres such as tweets and Instagram posts. When one of my students tweeted 'The worst way to be broken up with is when your boyfriend changes his relationship status without informing you first #savage #FirstWorldProblems,' she used these two hashtags to link her tweet to other tweets with the same hashtag (intertextuality). But in doing this, she also linked her topic (breaking up on social media) with another Discourse, that of 'First World Problems' (a phrase often used to remind privileged people not just that their problems are not as bad as those of less privileged people, but that these problems are, in some respects, a *result* of their privilege).

Just as particular 'patterns' of cohesive ties and particular generic frameworks are associated with particular kinds of texts (and the people that produce them), different kinds of texts exhibit different characteristics when it comes to intertextuality and interdiscursivity. For example, when journalists quote something that someone has said in news articles, they usually 'clean it up,' that is, they take out the pauses, false starts, and sounds like 'um' and 'ah,' whereas when discourse analysts quote people's spoken words in academic articles they often leave these in—in fact sometimes those are the features of the speech they are most interested in (see B6, C6). Similarly, when academics like discourse analysts use a fact or idea from another source, they are usually careful to cite the source and give a complete bibliographic reference, but journalists hardly ever do this.

Find more examples of cohesion and coherence in the online resources for this book.

B3 ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

Texts that are structured according to particular *generic frameworks* are called genres. But genres are more than just texts; they are means by which people *get things done*, and the way they are structured depends crucially on what the particular people using a genre want or need to do. In other words, what determines the way a particular genre is put together is its *communicative purpose*, and so this must be the central focus in analysing genres.

Usually, the overall communicative purpose of a genre can be broken down into a number of steps that users need to follow in order to achieve the desired purpose—rather like the steps in a recipe—and typically the most important constraints and conventions regarding how a genre is structured involve: 1) which steps must be included; and 2) the order in which they should appear. In the field of *genre analysis* these steps are known as **moves**.

John Swales, the father of genre analysis, illustrated the idea of *moves* in his analysis of introductions to academic articles. Instead of asking the traditional question: 'How is this text structured?,' Swales asked 'What do writers of such texts need to *do* in order to achieve their desired purpose?' (which, in the case of an introduction to an academic article, is mainly getting people to believe that the article is worth reading). In answering this question, Swales identified four *moves* characteristic of such texts. An introduction to an academic article, he said, typically:

1. *establishes the field* in which the writer of the study is working;
2. *summarizes the related research* or interpretations on one aspect of the field;
3. *creates a research space* or interpretive space (a 'niche') for the present study by indicating a gap in current knowledge or by raising questions; and
4. *introduces the study* by indicating what the investigation being reported will accomplish for the field.

(adapted from Swales 1990)

Of course, not all introductions to academic articles contain all four of these moves in exactly the order presented by Swales. Some article introductions may contain only some of these moves, and some might contain different moves. Furthermore, the ways these moves are *realized* might be very different for articles about engineering and articles about English literature. The point that Swales was trying to make, however, was not that these moves are universal or in some way *obligatory*, but that these are the *prototypical* moves one would expect to occur in this genre, and understanding these default expectations is the first step to understanding how 'expert users' might creatively flout them. At the same time, it is important to remember that not all genres are equally 'conventionalized'; while some genres have very strict rules about which moves should be included and what order they should be in, other genres exhibit much more variety.

Some genres, such as the oral narratives described by Labov and Waletzky (see unit B2) are familiar to most people, and so few would have trouble reproducing them using the appropriate move structure. In fact, it is difficult to think of oral narratives as being associated with any particular *discourse community*. Certain kinds of narratives, however, are more specialized, and while their structures may resemble or draw upon the more 'universal' structure Labov and Waletzky outlined, they are different enough in both *form* and *communicative purpose* that being able to reproduce them successfully shows that one is a member of a particular group.

One example of a more specialized genre of oral narrative that has been circulating on YouTube over the last decade is the genre of the 'It Gets Better' video, a version of the 'coming out' video in which older LGBTQ+ people share their experiences of being bullied when they were younger with teenagers who might be experiencing bullying themselves. The genre began when a famous online columnist named Dan Savage and his husband, Terry White, shocked by a highly publicized news story of a 15-year-old boy who had hung himself as a result of anti-gay bullying, posted a video on YouTube (https://youtu.be/7IcVyvg2Qlo) in which they talk about their own experiences when they were younger in order to send a message to 'at risk' teens that 'it gets better.' Within weeks, hundreds of videos from other LGBTQ+ adults appeared on the website Savage had set up (www.itgetsbetter.org) and now, after almost 15 years, there are more than 60,000 stories available on the site, organized in different categories such as gay, lesbian, bi, trans, queer, non-binary and celebrity.

When they posted their video, Savage and White presented something like a 'template' or 'model' for this genre, and people who posted videos after them usually followed this structure, even though it was never written down or 'prescribed' in any way. In many ways, the stories told in 'It Gets Better' videos are not that different from the oral narratives that Labov analyzed: they usually begin with an ABSTRACT, include an ORIENTATION, which sets the scene, present some kind of COMPLICATING ACTION, move on to a RESOLUTION, and often end with a CODA, telling the purpose of the story. At the same time, because 'It Gets Better' videos have a particular *communicative purpose*, the way their narrative structure is realized as *moves*—or *actions* which the narrators take in relation to their listeners—is different from other stories. And this is really the main difference between Labov's approach to the genre of narrative and the way genre analysts approach it: whereas Labov is interested in the *structure* of the genre (what makes it *coherent*, see B2), genre analysts are more interested in the genre as a series of *actions*. In most of the 'It Gets Better' videos you can find on the campaign's website, narrators arrange the genre into six *moves*. Below are excerpts from different 'It Gets Better' stories illustrating these moves:

1. *Announcing the purpose of the video (to tell you that 'It gets better')*

   Hi, my name is David from Orange County and I'm making this video so that you know whoever watches that it gets better.

   Hi, my name is Taylor, and I'm just here to make this video to tell you guys that it does get better.

2. *Explaining the problems I had when I was young*

   I grew up in a small town, conservative Wisconsin … there were many incidents of homophobia in my school and community.

   So I started telling other kids that I was gay, launching what was probably the worst year of my life. I was harassed; I was followed; I was threatened; kids wanted to kill me. I couldn't go from class to class without being accosted. Kids would throw desks and chairs at me in class and the teachers would just pretend that they didn't see what was going on.
3. *Explaining how those problems were resolved*

   It wasn't until college that things began to get clearer, that I began to realize that there was a truer me, within the me that everyone else knew.

   It was so refreshing to suddenly have someone to count on. I had been keeping this secret my whole life, and I was finally able to experience what it was like to be completely honest with another person.
4. *Comparing your situation to my situation*

   none of this would have happened if I were not here. If I had ended my life, I would not have been able to meet so many wonderful people. I would not have experienced the togetherness and belonging that comes from truly deep friendships. I would not have been able to fall in love. I would not have known what it feels like to be embraced by a community. I would not have been able to see that life does get better.

   It is too late for me to speak to my own 16-year-old self, so instead I want all of the misfits and weirdos and artists and queer kids to know a couple of things I wish someone had told me back then.
5. *Offering encouragement and advice*

   If you are being bullied, say something. Supportive adults can be your allies.

   Don't take your own life. It's not worth it. If you take your own life, they win. And if you take your own life, that's one less gay person of colour, or white, or disabled, or multi-abled, or whatever, that isn't here, able to show them the truth. So please love yourself. Please be strong. And you'll be all right. That I do promise you.
6. *Reminding you that 'It gets better'*

   Guys don't be scared because no matter what, like I said, at the end of the day it's gonna get better.

   Just remember, no matter what, it does get better.

This is not to say that all of the 'It Gets Better' videos uploaded to the campaign's website contain all of these moves (or *only* these moves) in exactly this order. At the same time, most of the moves in the list above are pretty much *essential* if narrators want to achieve the communicative purpose of the genre (to illustrate to watchers that 'it gets better' through the example of their own life experiences), and to show themselves to be members of the *discourse community* associated with this genre (which is related to but not the same as the 'LGBTQ+ community').

Genres are not just distinguished by the set of moves they employ. They also often use particular kinds of words or phrases (such as the repetition of the phrase 'it gets better'), or they are written, spoken, or performed in a particular style (for example, nearly all 'It Gets Better' videos consist of narrators sitting in domestic settings (such as a bedroom), looking directly at the camera, and speaking in a casual, conversational style). Genres also often are associated with different *modes* (see unit A9) and *media* (see unit B10), and so, for example, an 'It Gets Better' video must be a video (rather than, say, a letter or a conversation in a bar), and it must be uploaded to the internet (either to YouTube or to the campaign's dedicated site). In the same way, the genre of a 'Snapchat story' must involve images of some kind and must be broadcast using the Snapchat app (see unit C3), and a scientific article must be written down and usually appears in either the print or online version of an academic journal.

Communicative purpose

Above I talked about how moves and move structures are associated with the *communicative purpose* of a genre, and how certain moves delivered in a certain order are essential for achieving this communicative purpose. The idea of communicative purpose, however, is not as simple as it might seem. Since many genres have *multiple authors* and *multiple audiences*, genres might have multiple purposes. The genre of a 'rental contract' has different purposes for the landlord, the tenant, the rental agent, the solicitor who helps to make sure that it conforms to legal requirements, and the civil servant at the government office where it might be filed.

Similarly, the genre of the 'It Gets Better' video might have different purposes for different people who make them and different people who watch them. For young people struggling with bullying and their sexual or gender identities, the videos are meant to inspire them and prevent them from attempting suicide, as well as to 'give voice' to the indignities that they are suffering, and we might say that these young people are the main audience of these videos. But sometimes genres are designed with multiple audiences in mind, which in this case might include the parents or teachers of LGBTQ+ teens, their friends, school, or government officials responsible for protecting them, and even the people who now or in the past were involved in bullying them. For parents and teachers, the communicative purpose of the videos might be to arouse concern and to help them to understand what the young people under their care might be going through, for policymakers it might be to alert them to a problem and urge them to take some kind of action, and for bullies and those who enable them, it might be to shame them and get them to stop treating others badly

The different people who make 'It Gets Better' videos may also have different purposes for doing so. Most of the people who appear in these videos are just ordinary LGBTQ+ adults who presumably remember the difficulties they faced when they were young and wish to help others who might be going through the same thing. But not all of them are 'ordinary people,' and some of them are not even members of the LGBTQ+ community. Posters include famous singers, actors, politicians, and even companies like Google and Microsoft:

> I don't know what it's like to be picked on for being gay. But I do know what it's like to grow up feeling that sometimes you don't belong.
>
> (Barack Obama)

> My name is Boris Erickson I'm a gay man and a program manager and software designer here at Microsoft but actually my job title is the Xbox Live enforcement unicorn ninja and if that's not proof that it gets better I don't know what to tell you.
>
> (Microsoft G.L.E.A.M.)

Although people like former US President Obama (who actually was President when he made his video) and corporations like Microsoft clearly wish to send a positive message to 'at risk' teens, they also have other purposes (and other audiences) in mind. By making an 'It Gets Better' video while he was President, for example, President Obama was making a *political statement* and sending a message both to his constituents and to other politicians (such as lawmakers considering legislation related to school bullying or LGBTQ+ issues) about policy matters, and Microsoft's 'It Gets Better' video serves not just to show support to its LGBTQ+ employees, but also to portray Microsoft as a 'progressive' company to both its customers and potential employees.

In fact, the 'It Gets Better' genre is so flexible that it can even be used by bullies to apologize for their bullying:

> I saw the program *It Gets Better* and I was on the other end of it growing up. I was the bully, one of the bullies. There was like three or four of us, and we were fucking bad. People got beat up, kicked, punched, put the boots to. It was bad growing up. Um … It was a very small-minded town, very small-minded people, If you didn't fit in, if your skin was the wrong color, if you had the wrong hairdo, you got beat up, pretty much that's how it was … I'm sorry. I cried many nights. Even being a bully. It was hard. I don't know why it happened, or what twisted screwed up thoughts were going through my head … I have no excuses … It's kind of embarrassing. I just hope you all get through whatever you're going through. That's it.

Discourse communities

If so many people, including LGBTQ+ adults and teens, singers and actors, politicians, tech companies, and even former bullies can use the genre of the 'It Gets Better' video for a range of communicative purposes, can we identify one particular 'discourse community' to which this genre belongs? Clearly, the community of people who use this genre is not synonymous with the 'LGBTQ+ community,' since there are members of this larger community who have never watched or made such a video, and people who watch and make 'It Gets Better' videos who are not gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, non-binary or queer.

To answer this question, we need to consider the function that genres serve in discourse communities beyond helping members accomplish the very concrete goals (in this case, encouraging young people not to harm themselves and giving them a sense of hope for the future). First genres have the function of promoting the *values* of the community. They might do this explicitly, or they may do it implicitly through the kinds of social actions and social relationships that they make possible among members. 'It Gets Better' videos, for example, promote values like openness, honesty, tolerance and resilience by giving those who make them a way to share personal experiences of resilience and by giving those who watch them the opportunity to be exposed to examples of tolerance and diversity.

Another important function genres play in discourse communities is bringing new members into the community. Sometimes this includes attracting new members. But it always includes *socializing* new members into the ways of acting and thinking associated with the community. For members who have already been socialized, genres serve as a way of portraying themselves as competent members of the community. In other words, what is important about the various 'rules' and conventions and constraints associated with genres is not only that they make communicative actions more efficient, but also that they demonstrate that the person who uses them knows 'how we do things,' and is therefore a 'person like us.' This process of socialization is particularly evident in 'It Gets Better' videos, as the people who watch them become inspired to make their own videos following the templates provided by those made by others, thus taking up and passing on a kind of 'tradition' of discourse production. And by participating in this tradition, they are able to participate in the political project of promoting the values embedded in this genre. The desire to be part of this tradition and contribute to this political project is not limited to those in the LGBTQ+ community, but extends to others as well, partly because of their desire to support their LGBTQ+ friends and family members, and partly because the stories of suffering and redemption told in these videos are stories that, in some sense, everyone can relate to.

And so best the answer to the question, what is the 'discourse community' that 'It Gets Better' videos support might be 'The It Gets Better Community,' the people who congregate on the project's website and on YouTube, watch and produce these videos, and give one another feedback and encouragement. This online community shares all of the qualities Swales (see A3) identified with 'discourse communities': it has 'expert' and 'novice' members, members have ways of communicating with one another and providing feedback, they share a special vocabulary or 'jargon' (the most obvious example being the catchphrase 'It gets better'), and they share a common goal, to stop people from being bullied and to promote equal rights for LGBTQ+ people. In fact, we might even say that, apart from giving hope to bullied teens, a key purpose of 'It Gets Better' videos is to 'grow' this community and to promote its political agenda by 'gathering together' like-minded people. But this is not just the case for activist videos like this. *All genres* have political or ideological dimensions because their main functions are to create and maintain communities and to serve as the means through which people in those communities learn how to be 'legitimate members.' Although this political dimension is rather explicit in 'It Gets Better' videos, it is as true for other genres like job application letters, academic articles, and Snapchat stories. Understanding the political dimension of genres tells us a lot, not just about how genres work, but also how *politics* works. It's not just that discourse communities invent genres in order to accomplish communicative purposes and reach common goals; genres themselves help to *create* discourse communities by gathering people around them and inviting them to engage in shared actions.

Critical genre analysis

The sub-field of genre analysis that focuses more on these political dimensions is known as **critical genre analysis** (Bhatia 2017). Critical genre analysts are interested not just in the ways genres are structured to help members of discourse communities reach their shared goals, but also in the power dynamics associated with particular genres—who gets to use them, who gets to evaluate others' use of them, and how they function to empower or disempower different kinds of people. Scholars in the field of education, for instance, have noticed that the way genres like 'show and tell' are structured in white dominated primary schools in the US can marginalize students whose home practices of storytelling differ from those valued at school.

Critical genre analysts are also interested in how individuals deploy genres strategically in specific satiations, bending and blending them in order to do what they need to do. As Bhatia (2002: 18, emphasis mine) puts it,

> in critical genre analysis, the 'focus shifts' … from the textual output to the features of *context*, such as the changing identities of the participants, the social structures or professional relationships the genres are likely to maintain or change, the benefits or disadvantages such genres are likely to bring to a particular set of readers.

One important way that people are able to navigate the power dimensions of genre, says Bhatia, is through what he calls **interdiscursive performances** in which people are able to appropriate generic resources across different professional and cultural practices in order to pursue private intentions within socially recognized forms of communication. In unit D3, for example, I summarize a study by A. Bhatia (2018) in which she demonstrates how beauty vloggers combine features of different genres in their makeup tutorials in order to play multiple roles of 'expert,' 'friend,' and 'salesperson.'

Find more examples of the creative use of genres in the online resources for this book.

B4 CONSTRUCTING REALITY

In unit A4 I argued that no text is ideologically 'neutral'—that all texts promote certain kinds of beliefs about the world and certain kinds of power relationships between people. The main ways texts promote ideologies is by constructing particular *versions of reality* in which certain kinds of *participants* are included, and certain kinds are excluded, and those that are included are linked to each other in certain relationships, often based on the actions (*processes*) they are portrayed as engaging in. Texts also create versions of reality with the way they portray the *circumstances* in which these processes are taking place, expressed through **circumstantial adjuncts**, phrases or clauses that tell the reader *when*, *where*, *how*, or *why* an action is happening. In addition, texts construct reality by creating certain kinds of *relationships* between the producers of the texts and those who read them through the resource of *modality*, or through the use of particular styles or *registers*. All of these strategies for constructing reality can be seen in a simple sign that I saw on a bus from Reading to Heathrow Airport that said:

> For your comfort and peace of mind during your journey CCTV is fitted to this bus.

There are a number of different participants in this sentence: there is 'CCTV' (which stands for closed circuit television, referring to the surveillance cameras on the bus), there is the bus, and there is the reader of this sentence, 'you,' the passenger. What is interesting is that the most important participant, the one that has actually carried out the action of fitting the camera to the bus is *excluded*. One strategy made possible by passive verb forms such as 'is fitted' is to allow writers to leave out the *agents* of processes.[1] So passengers don't know who is watching them: is it the bus company? the Government? or some shadowy unknown entity? This makes a difference, because when we are unaware of who is watching us, we are less able to adjust our behaviour accordingly, and we begin to be careful about *everything* we do.

Another important aspect of the version of reality constructed by this sign is the reason that is given for *why* CCTV has been fitted to the bus, expressed in the circumstantial adjunct: 'For your comfort and peace of mind during your journey.' While the presence of surveillance cameras (fitted by some unknown agent) might make passengers uncomfortable, this circumstantial adjunct aims to make them feel that this surveillance is not such a bad thing, though it is not explained exactly how being surveilled would make them more 'comfortable' or give them 'peace of mind.' The answer to this lies in the *relationship* that the sign creates between the writer and the reader using the *interpersonal* resources of the language. First, by speaking directly to readers using the pronoun 'you,' the writer creates a feeling of intimacy with the reader. This strategy, which is used in a lot of advertising texts, is known as **synthetic personalization** (Fairclough 2001): it's a way of giving the impression that the reader and the writer have a personal relationship, but of course, this relationship is 'synthetic' or 'fake,' entirely constructed by the text. Another interpersonal resource that the sign uses is the 'style' of luxury advertising: the phrase 'For your comfort and peace of mind …' is the kind of phrase one would expect to see in an advertisement for a posh hotel or expensive mattress.

The combined effect of all of this is that the sign does not just depict a certain kind of situation involving buses with cameras fitted to them, but also constructs the reader as *a certain kind of person*, who has *a certain kind of relationship* with the bus, the cameras, and the people who fitted them. In other words, the text has created for the reader a particular **reading position** (Kress 1989), a particular way to read and interpret the information about the cameras. More importantly, though, this positioning of the reader also has the effect of creating *another* kind of participant, people who may attempt somehow to disturb the comfort of the passengers by robbing or assaulting them, or who might break the rules of the bus by smoking or not wearing their seatbelts, people whom 'normal' passengers ought to be afraid of. Even more interesting is the fact that, when you think of it, it is *these* participants, the potential pickpockets and smokers and terrorists that are the *real* intended readers of this text, though they are never mentioned or addressed.

Another example of the way signs related to surveillance cameras create different kinds of readers and different ways for them to read the text can be seen in the sign I saw in the supermarket where I shop, which says:

> Images are being monitored and recorded for the safety of our customers and colleagues and to detect crime.
>
> Sainsbury's will prosecute shoplifters and use the civil recovery scheme to recover its expenses due to theft and damage.
>
> Sainsbury's is looking out for you.

In this sign the participants include a number of **concrete** objects and people such as 'images,' 'customers,' 'colleagues,' and 'shoplifters,' as well as a number of **abstract** participants, participants that represent states of affairs such as 'safety,' and those that represent **nominalized processes**, actions that are expressed as nouns such as 'theft.' Interestingly, all of these participants are portrayed as having things done to them: 'images' are monitored, 'customers' and 'colleagues' are made safe, 'crime' is detected, and 'shoplifters' are prosecuted. The only participant in the text that is presented as an agent is Sainsbury's, which is presumably responsible for all of these actions, though the way its responsibility is represented is different in different parts of the text. Sometimes it is portrayed as being responsible for protecting its customers, and sometimes it is portrayed as being responsible for enforcing the law.

According to Mikael Bakhtin (1981), most texts are **heteroglossic,** literally meaning that they contain 'different tongues.' What he means is that, when authors construct texts, they do so by appropriating and mixing the 'voices' of different people, or different *kinds* of people. One way they do this is by using different styles or *social languages* (see units A1 and A4). In the case of this sign, there are two distinct voices, each of which constructs a different kind of writer and a different kind of reader. The first sentence of the text seems to come from a 'concerned' voice and is directed towards 'innocent' customers and colleagues, designed not just to inform them that images of them are being monitored but to explain to them that it is for their own good. In fact, surveillance is portrayed almost as a form of customer service or, in the case of colleagues, a workplace benefit. Sainsbury's, the presumed agent of this monitoring, is not explicitly named; rather, the monitoring is construed as simply 'happening.' The only clue of Sainsbury's as an agent in this sentence is the pronoun 'our' before 'customers' and 'colleagues,' which serves to align Sainsbury's with these other participants in a kind of protective, caring relationship.

The second sentence, on the other hand, is written in a much sterner tone and is directed towards a different kind of reader—potential shoplifters. In this sentence there is no ambiguity about who the agent is and what they will do to shoplifters if they catch them, and the language they use to portray this threat is distant and legalistic rather than caring and paternal. Sainsbury's in this case is not a protective ally, but an uncompromising enforcer of the law.

Perhaps the most interesting sentence in the whole text is the last sentence: 'Sainsbury's is looking out for you,' in which both kinds of readers are addressed simultaneously, with the phrase 'looking out for'—which can mean either 'protecting' or 'monitoring'—taking on a different meaning for each of them.

As we can see in the above example, producers of texts use the lexical and grammatical resources of the language (whos doing whats) as well as interpersonal resources such as *social languages* not just to create different versions of reality, and not just to construct particular relationships with their readers, but sometimes to create different versions of reality for different readers. In doing so, they reinforce certain ideological assumptions not just about the benefits of surveillance but also about the different kinds of people that exist in the world and how they should be treated. The world created by the Sainsbury's sign analysed above is a world of 'good guys' and 'bad guys,' one in which shoplifters could never be customers or colleagues, or vice versa, and in which social or contextual factors associated with shoplifting (such as poverty or the high price of food) are irrelevant.

Ideology and indexicality

The texts above work to create particular versions of reality and promote particular ideologies not just through the way they *represent* the world, but also through the way they *interact* with it. In the last unit, as well as in unit A1, I said that one of the main things that make texts meaningful (and gives them texture) is the *connections* that they create with the world outside of them, which includes both connections to other texts (intertextuality) and to the physical and social environments in which they are found. The sign that says that 'this bus is fitted with CCTV' doesn't make much sense if the sign itself is not fitted to the inside of a bus, and signs that say 'Sainsbury's will prosecute shoplifters' only constitute warnings if they are actually placed in a Sainsbury's. The relationships texts create with the external world is also one of the main things that make texts ideological: a surveillance camera or a sign put in a particular place does not just say: 'This place is under surveillance,' but also 'This is the *kind of place* that *should* be under surveillance' or 'The *kinds of people* who might inhabit or move through this place need to be watched.'

The sign below (Figure B4.1), for example, is found near the border between the United States and Mexico (on the US side) and says: *Caution! Do not expose your life to the elements. It's not worth it*. The literal meaning of this sign depends on the connection it makes with the 'elements' in the environment in which it is placed, a connection which is reinforced by pictures of these elements appearing on the sign (the hot sun, mountains, a desert, rattlesnakes, a drowning man, and an icon that says 'No potable water'). It depends for its ideological meaning on the fact that it is written in Spanish

Figure B4.1 Sign at US–Mexico border (Photo credit: AT2663-commonswiki) (rather than English) and that it appears in a place in which illegal border crossings between Mexico and the US occur. Through these connections to a particular place, a particular practice, and a particular group of people, the sign becomes more than just a piece of friendly advice about the dangers of nature: it becomes a warning to those who have entered the US illegally that they will face consequences.

Texts also interact with the physical world in the way they exclude or include, label or classify people who interact with them. A sign in front of a Chinese Restaurant in Reading, UK, that says 招聘 (which means 'Help wanted') only in Chinese excludes readers who don't read Chinese and sends the message that the restaurant would prefer that a Chinese person apply for the job. Similarly, in the picture below (Figure B4.2) of a currency exchange booth in the Hong Kong International Airport, the surveillance cameras are pointing towards the cashier, sending the message that the cashier (rather than the customer) is the person who should be watched. Although the cameras here are not conventional 'texts,' in the way the signs analysed above are, they function as texts by communicating something through what they are *pointing* at, and this is actually a feature of all texts: part of their meaning comes from the way they *point to* things in the physical or social world. In the case of these cameras, they communicate to workers that they are being monitored ('so you'd better not steal'), and

Figure B4.2 Currency exchange booth (Photo credit: author) they communicate to customers that they can trust that workers at this kiosk won't cheat them. What they don't communicate is anything about how the company might try to profit off of them by applying unfavourable exchange rates to their transactions.

The kind of meaning that texts create, not through the words that they contain, but through the way they 'point' to things in the physical or social world is called *indexical meaning*. An **index** is a kind of sign that points to some aspect of **context** (see unit A7). Some words are always dependent for their meaning on their context: words like 'this' as in 'this bus' or 'you'[2] in 'Sainsbury's is looking after you.' Linguists call these kinds of words **deictic expressions**: expressions (words or phrases) that refer to something that exists in the *context* in which a text occurs. Examples are 'this,' 'that,' 'here,' and 'there.' But indexical meaning doesn't always require deictic expressions. Sometimes it is created simply by placing a text in a particular place: so, a STOP sign placed at an intersection does not just mean 'stop,' it means 'stop *here*.'

Indexical meaning is created not just through the physical connections created with the physical world, but also through the connections that are made with the broader social and cultural worlds in which texts appear. In his book *The Sociolinguistics of Globalisation*, the discourse analyst Jan Blommaert (2010) talks about a sign he saw on the outside of a chocolate shop in Tokyo that says 'Nina's Derrière.' The meaning of this sign is indexical in three ways: It points to the establishment on which it is affixed and says: 'This chocolate shop is called Nina's Derrière.' It uses the French language in which the sign is written and says: 'This is a French chocolate shop.' And it points to the 'Frenchness' of the shop and says 'Buying chocolate here shows that you are engaging in a chic, cosmopolitan lifestyle' based on the kinds of ideas many people in Tokyo have about France and French culture. It doesn't matter that the literal (*or semantic*) meaning of the sign is 'Nina's rear end'; to the non-French speaking potential customer, the sign is an invitation to engage in a certain kind of lifestyle by buying overpriced chocolate from a shop with a French name.

A similar kind of 'layering' of meaning can be seen in the sign below (Figure B4.3), which I found in the lobby of an expensive hotel in the UK. Like other surveillance signs, it uses deictic expressions to point to the place under surveillance ('*THIS* AREA') and to the person who is reading it—who is also the person under surveillance ('YOUR SAFETY' and '[YOU] STRIKE A POSE'). But by using the term 'strike a pose' and the picture of two hands framing a photograph, it also indexes the world of fashion photography and intimates that the person being photographed is like a fashion model. This world of fashion and the identity of a fashion model associated with it index a broader lifestyle of luxury and glamour, so that being filmed by a CCTV camera, rather than communicating suspicion, is made to seem like it is part of the luxurious experience of staying at this fashionable hotel.

The American linguistic anthropologist Michael Silverstein (2003) calls these different levels of indexical meaning *indexical orders*. A simple way to think of these levels in the context of the signs we have been looking at in this chapter is that the 'first order' of indexicality points to a particular person, place, thing, or practice in the physical environment in which the index occurs; the 'second order' of indexicality links these physical things to ideas about particular *types* of people, places, things, or practices that are part of 'models' about the way the world is or should be that we carry around in our heads—what I have referred to previously as *cultural models* (see units A4 and B2); and 'third order' indexicality links these *types* of people to broader 'theories' about lifestyle,

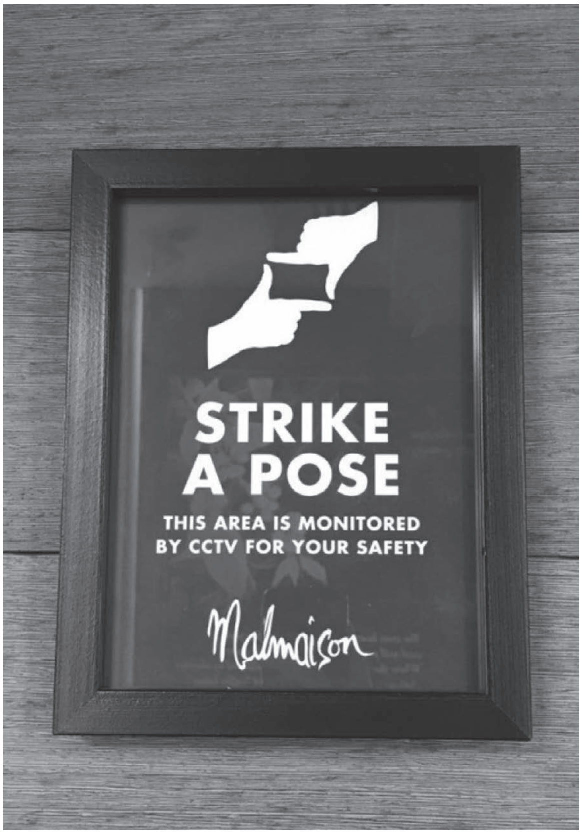

Figure B4.3 Sign in a luxury hotel (Photo credit: author)

morality, identity, and knowledge, which we could call ideologies, but we might also, using the term that I introduced in unit B1, call them 'Discourses' with a capital D.

These three levels can also be seen in the sign I analysed above placed on the border between the US and Mexico warning people about the danger of rattlesnakes and undrinkable water. The 'first order' indexicality refers to the place where the sign is placed (the border) and the dangers in that place, as well as to 'you,' the potential reader. The 'second order' indexicality refers to the kinds of practices that people expect to occur in that place (illegal border crossing) and the kind of people who engage in that practice (undocumented migrants from Mexico) and might be the ones who will read the sign. One way, of course, that it points to such people is through its use of the Spanish language. And the 'third order' of indexicality points to a whole set of ideas about undocumented migrants from Mexico and how they should be treated. The most important thing about these three indexical orders is that they interact with one another to promote a particular 'Discourse' of 'illegal' immigration which depends not just on what the sign says but on it being placed near the border and being written in Spanish, a Discourse in which the kinds of people from Mexico who attempt to enter the US in this way should be prevented from doing so, with even the 'elements' (rattlesnakes and cactuses) being recruited to assist in policing the border. Furthermore, as with the sign in Sainsbury's above, it speaks to different audiences differently: to potential undocumented migrants it is as much of a threat as a warning ('If the snakes don't get you, we will!'). To the English-speaking US citizens who don't understand Spanish, it might serve to remind them about the 'problem' of 'illegal' immigrants or even to suggest that they are somehow associated with dangerous or unpleasant things like rattlesnakes.

This last observation brings us to my final point about indexicality, that indexical meaning can change when texts are read by different people or placed in different social environments. The sign 'Nina's Derrière' would have different literal and ideological meanings if it were placed outside a strip club in Moulin Rouge, a street in Paris famous for adult entertainment, and the sign warning of the dangers of the snakes and treacherous mountains would have different literal and ideological meanings if it were placed on a hiking trail in the Peruvian Andes. Blommaert (2010) argues that beyond the indexical orders explained above, we also need to take into account what he calls **orders of indexicality**, which are not just conventional ways of pointing to certain kinds of people or practices or invoking certain ideologies, but systems of *valuing* people, practices, and ideologies that exist in different social contexts. The sign, 'Nina's Derrière,' only works as an index of chic cosmopolitism because of the way French is *valued* in Japanese society (as opposed to other languages like Romanian). Orders of indexicality also tend to enforce power and inequality through the kinds of people who are included, excluded or 'erased' from texts. The invitation to 'strike a pose' on the hotel sign, for example, is clearly not directed at employees of the hotel such as cleaners and desk clerks, who might read the sign as a warning that they are being watched by the boss. Systematic patterns of indexicality, then, to use Blommaert's words are also 'systemic patterns of authority, of control and evaluation, and hence of inclusion and exclusion' (p. 38). Thus, understanding the ideological effect of texts requires not just an understanding of the 'versions of reality' that texts construct, but also of the social, political and economic contexts in which these texts appear.

Find more examples of critically analysing texts in the online resources for this book.

THE TEXTURE OF TALK

B5

In the analysis of how people make sense of written texts (see A2 and B2), I introduced the concept of *texture*. *Texture*, I said, basically comes from two things: the ways different parts of a text are related to one another, and the various expectations that people have about texts. Making sense of conversations also involves these two aspects of communication: the structure and patterning of the communication and the broader expectations about meaning and human behaviour that participants bring to it. Generally speaking, *conversation analysis* focuses more on the first aspect, and *pragmatics* focuses more on the second.

The basis of *pragmatics* is the idea that people enter into conversations with the assumption that the people they are conversing with will behave in a logical way. The philosopher Herbert Paul Grice called this assumption the *cooperative principle*. When people engage in conversation, he said, they do so with the idea that people will:

> Make (their) 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: 45)

What he meant by this was that when people talk with each other they generally cooperate in making their utterances understandable by conforming to what they believe to be reasonable expectations about how people usually behave in conversation. Most people, he said, have four main expectations about conversational behaviour:

1 what people say will be true (the maxim of quality);
2 what people say will be relevant to the topic under discussion (the maxim of relevance);
3 people will try to make what they mean clear and unambiguous (the maxim of manner);
4 people will say as much as they need to say to express their meaning and not say more than they need to say (the maxim of quantity).

Grice called these four expectations *maxims*. Maxims are not rules that must be followed; rather, they are general statements of principle about how things should be done. In actual conversations, however, people often violate or 'flout' these maxims: they say things that are not true; they make seemingly irrelevant statements; they are not always clear about what they mean; and they sometimes say more than they need to or not enough to fully express their meaning. The point that Grice was making was not that people always follow or even that they 'should' follow these maxims, but that when they *do not* follow them, they usually do so for a reason: the very fact that they have flouted a maxim itself *creates meaning*, a special type of meaning known as **implicature**, which involves *implying* or suggesting something without having to directly express it. When people try to make sense of what others have said, they do so against the background of these default expectations. When speakers do not behave as expected, listeners logically conclude that they are trying to imply something indirectly and try to work out what it is.

For example, if you ask your partner what they want for their birthday, and they say 'Is my birthday coming up? I totally forgot,' you would probably conclude that they are not telling the truth—violating the maxim of quality (it is unlikely that they really forgot about their birthday). They would also be violating the maxim of relevance (not answering your question) as well as the maxim of quantity (not giving enough information). If you want to continue your relationship with them, however, you probably want to examine why they are doing this, which would probably lead you to infer that they take their birthday seriously and that you'd better get them something good.

The obvious question is, why do people do this? Why don't they simply communicate what they mean directly? One reason is that implicature allows us to manage the interpersonal aspect of communication. We might, for example, use implicature to be more polite or avoid hurting someone's feelings. Or we might also use implicature to avoid making ourselves too accountable for what we have said—in other words, to say something without 'really saying' it.

Of course, the fact that someone says something that is not true or is not entirely clear does not necessarily mean they are creating implicature. Sometimes people simply lie. In this case, you have not created any indirect meaning. Your meaning is very direct. It is just not true. Another example can be seen in the often-quoted exchange below from *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* (United Artists 1976):

A: Does your dog bite?
B: No.
A: [Bends down to stroke it and gets bitten] Ow! I thought you said your dog did not bite.
B: That is not my dog.

Here A has violated the maxim of quantity by saying too little, but, in doing so, he has *not* created implicature. He has simply said too little. On the other hand, what A has said is *true*, a fact that he can call upon to defend himself if B accuses him of having deceived him, but the fact is that producing utterances that are, at the same time, true *and* incomplete is a common strategy of people who are trying to deceive others. For the flouting of a maxim to be meaningful in a *pragmatic* sense, rather than just an act of deception, it must be done within the overall framework of the cooperative principle. The person flouting a maxim must expect that the other person will realize that they are flouting the maxim and that the meaning created by this is not too difficult to figure out.

How we do things with words

Another important aspect of pragmatics concerns how people accomplish various social actions when they talk, such as requesting, promising, or threatening. The philosopher John Austin pointed out that certain utterances, when they are spoken, have the effect of actually performing some action in the physical world. When the officiant at a wedding ceremony, for example, says, 'I now pronounce you married,' it is by this *pronouncement* that the couple becomes married, and when a judge says, 'I sentence you to five years in prison,' it is by this utterance that the person to whom this is uttered is *sentenced*. Austin called these kinds of utterances **performatives**.

The more Austin thought about this idea of performatives, the more he realized that many utterances—not just those containing phrases such as 'I pronounce …' and 'I declare …' and 'I command …'—have a performative function. If somebody says to you, 'Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health,' for example, he or she is usually not just making a statement. He or she is also *doing* something, that is, *warning* you not to smoke. In fact, Austin concluded, *whenever* we talk, we are almost *always* trying to do something with our words—such as to inform, apologize, console, explain, request, threaten, or warn.

While Austin's insight might seem rather obvious now, it was quite revolutionary at the time he was writing, when most philosophers of language were mainly focused on analysing sentences in terms of whether or not they were 'true.' Austin pointed out that, for many utterances, their 'truth value' is not as important as whether or not they are able to perform the action they are intended to perform.

Austin called these utterances that perform actions **speech acts**. The important thing about these kinds of utterances, he said, is not so much their 'meaning' as their 'force,' their ability to perform actions. All speech acts have three kinds of force: **locutionary force**, the force of what the words actually mean, **illocutionary force**, the force of the action the words are intended to perform, and **perlocutionary force**, the force of the actual effect of the words on listeners.

One of the problems with analysing speech acts is that, for many of the same reasons speakers express meanings indirectly by flouting conversational maxims, they also express speech acts indirectly. In other words, the *locutionary force* of their speech act (the meaning of the words) might be very different from the *illocutionary force* (what they are actually doing with their words). We have already discussed a number of examples of this, such as the question 'Do you have a pen?' uttered to perform the act of requesting (see A1).

And so the problem is, how do we figure out what people are trying to *do* with their words? For Austin, the main way we do this is by logically analysing the conditions under which a particular utterance is produced. He called the ability of an utterance to perform a particular action the 'felicity' (or 'happiness') of the utterance, and in order for speech acts to be 'happy,' certain kinds of conditions must be met, which Austin called **felicity conditions**.

Some of these conditions relate to what is said. For some speech acts to be felicitous, for example, they must be uttered in a certain conventional way. The officiant at a wedding must say something very close to 'I now pronounce you married' or 'I now pronounce you spouses for life' in order for this to be a pronouncement of marriage. Some of the conditions have to do with who utters the speech act—the kind of authority or identity they have. Only someone specially empowered to do so, for instance, is able to perform marriages. If a random person walked up to you and your companion on the street and said, 'I now pronounce you spouses for life,' this would not be considered a felicitous pronouncement of marriage. Some of these conditions concern the person or people to whom the utterance is addressed. They must generally be able to decipher the speech act and comply with it. People under a certain age, for example, cannot get married, and so the pronouncement of marriage given above would not succeed as a speech act. Similarly, if the two people to whom this pronouncement is uttered are not willing to get married, the pronouncement would also lack felicity. Finally, some of these conditions may have to do with the time or place the utterance is issued. Captains of ships, for example, are only empowered to make pronouncements of marriage aboard their ships.

And so, according to Austin and his followers, the main way we figure out what people are trying to do when they speak to us is by trying to match the conditions in which an utterance is made to the conditions necessary for particular kinds of speech acts. So, when somebody comes up to me in a bar and says, 'Hey mate, I suggest you leave my boyfriend alone,' I use my logic to try to figure out what he is doing and what he is trying to get me to do. At first, I might think that he is making a suggestion to me. But, when I consider the conditions of the situation, I realize that this utterance does not fulfil the necessary conditions of a suggestion, one of which is that whether or not I follow the suggestion is optional. I can tell quite clearly from the expression on this fellow's face that what he is 'suggesting' is not optional. I also realize that there will probably be unpleasant consequences for me should I fail to comply. Given these conditions, I can only conclude that what he is doing with his words is not making a suggestion but issuing a threat.

The important thing about this example is that I must use both of the tools introduced above. I must make use of the cooperative principle to realize that he is flouting the maxim of quality (he is not making a suggestion) and that there must be some reason for this, and I must be able to analyse the conditions in which this utterance is made to figure out what the speaker is actually trying to do.

Sense and sequencing: Conversation analysis

Whereas pragmatics begins with the assumption that conversations are logical, *conversation analysis* begins with the assumption that they are *orderly*. What orderly means is that they follow a certain predictable pattern, with some kinds of utterances necessarily coming before or following other kinds of utterances.

Conversation analysts also see utterances as *actions*. Where they differ is in their ideas about how we interpret these actions—what gives 'force' to our words. Whereas followers of Austin consider the speaker's intentions and the conditions under which the words are uttered to be the most important things, conversation analysts consider the utterance that occurred *prior* to the utterance in question, and those that occur *afterwards* to be more important. In other words, they believe we interpret utterances chiefly based on how they 'fit' sequentially with other utterances in a conversation.

The core of conversation analysis, then, is the exploration of the sequential structure of conversation. According to Schegloff and Sacks (1973), social interaction is often arranged in pairs of utterances—what one person says basically determines what the next person can say. They call these sequences of 'paired actions' **adjacency pairs**. Examples of common adjacency pairs are 'question/answer,' 'invitation/acceptance,' and 'greeting/greeting.'

The most important thing about the two utterances that make up an adjacency pair is that they have a relationship of **conditional relevance**. In other words, one utterance is dependent on (*conditioned by*) the other utterance. The first utterance determines what the second utterance can be (a question, for example, should be followed by an answer, and a greeting should be followed by a greeting). In the same way, the second utterance also determines what the first utterance has been understood to be. If I have given you an answer, this provides evidence that I have taken your preceding utterance to be a question. This is a big difference between conversation analysis and the speech act theory of Austin. For speech act theory, the conditions for whether or not an utterance constitutes a particular speech act include things such as the intentions and identities of the speakers and the context of the situation. For conversation analysts, the conditions that determine how an utterance should be interpreted must exist *within the conversation itself*.

At the same time, conversation analysis also focuses on how speakers make use of the default expectations people bring to conversations in order to make meaning. The main difference is that the kinds of expectations they are concerned with are not so much about the *content* of utterances (whether or not, for example, they are 'true' or 'clear'), but rather about the *structure* of conversation, and particularly the ways that utterances should 'fit' with previous utterances. The idea behind adjacency pairs is that when one person says something, he or she creates a 'slot' for the next person to 'fill in' in a particular way. If they fill it in in the expected way, this is called a **preferred response**. If they do not fill in this slot in the expected way, their interlocutor 'hears' the preferred response as being **officially absent**. As Schegloff (1968: 1083) put it:

> Given the first, the second is expectable. Upon its occurrence, it can be seen to be the second item to the first. Upon its non-occurrence, it can be seen to be officially absent.

Take for example the following exchange between a couple:

A: I love you.
B: Thank you.

The reason this exchange seems odd to us, and undoubtedly seems odd to A, is that the preferred response to an expression of love is a reciprocal expression of love. When this response is not given, it creates *implicature*. Thus, the most important thing about B's response is not the meaning that he expresses (gratitude), but the meaning that is *absent* from the utterance.

All first utterances in adjacency pairs are said to have a 'preferred' second utterance. For example, the preferred response to an invitation is an acceptance. The preferred response to a greeting is a greeting. What makes a preferred response preferred is not that the person who offered the first utterance would 'prefer' this response (the preferred response for an accusation, for example, is a denial), but rather that this is the response which usually requires the least additional conversational work. So the preferred response is the most *efficient* response. When we issue **dispreferred responses**, we often have to add something to them in order to avoid producing unintended implicature. For example, if you ask me to come to your party and I accept your invitation, all I have to do is say 'Sure!' But if I want to refuse the invitation, I cannot just say 'No!' If I do, I create the implicature that I do not much like you or care about your feelings. If I want to avoid communicating this, I have to supplement it with other things such as an apology ('I'm really sorry …') and an excuse or account of why I cannot come to your party ('I have to do my discourse analysis assignment'). I might even try to avoid saying 'No' altogether and just offer apologies and excuses, leaving it to you to infer that I will not be attending.

You can divide almost any conversation into a series of adjacency pairs. Sometimes, though, adjacency pairs can be quite complicated, with pairs of utterances overlapping or being embedded in other pairs of utterances. Nevertheless, for conversation analysts, it is this underlying 'pair wise organisation' of utterances that helps us to make sense of our conversations and use them to accomplish actions in an orderly way.

Apart from being organized in pairs of utterances, conversations also tend to have predictable overall structures. They can be divided into 'stages' or 'phases' based on the kind of 'conversational work' people are doing. The two 'phases' conversation analysts are most concerned with are **openings**—in which people generally ratify their relationship by greeting each other and engaging in ritual exchanges such as A: 'How are you?' B: 'I'm fine and you?' as a way to ease into the conversation and negotiate what they are going to be talking about by opening up **slots** for the other person to introduce a topic—and **closings**—which are usually prepared for with some kind of 'pre-closing' comments like, 'Anyway, I've got to get to class,' as well as 'empty' adjacency pairs like A: 'Okay' B: 'Okay,' which are designed to make sure that the other person does not want to introduce a new topic before goodbyes are exchanged. Sometimes closings are particularly difficult, due to the 'back-and-forth' nature of conversation which makes it difficult to resist filling in a slot created by the other person. In the case of the adjacency pair: A: Goodbye B: Goodbye, this is particularly tricky since the second part of the pair can also function as the first part of a new pair. In other words, even seemingly simple exchanges like openings and closings can be quite complicated and usually require more than one adjacency pair to complete. An example below is one part of the closing of a phone conversation between British King Charles, at that time the Prince of Wales, and his then-girlfriend, now Queen, Camilla Parker Bowles (from Channell 1997: 168–169)

A: Love you.
B: Don't want to say goodbye.
A: Neither do I, but we must get some sleep.
B: Bye.
A: Bye, darling.
B: Love you.
A: Bye.
B: Hopefully talk to you in the morning.
A: Please.
B: Bye.
A: I do love you.
B: Night.
A: Night.
B: Night.
A: Love you forever.
B: Night.
A: G'bye.
B: Bye my darling.
A: Night.
B: Night, night.
A: Night.
B: Bye bye.
A: Going.
B: Bye.
A: Going.
B: Gone.
A: Night.

There is, of course, a lot more to both pragmatics and conversation analysis than has been covered in this brief summary. Pragmatics, for example, has much more to say about the various cognitive models that people bring to interaction, and conversation analysis has much to say about how people manage things such as turn-taking, topic negotiation, openings and closings, and repair in conversations. What we have focused on here is primarily how each of these approaches addresses the problem of ambiguity in spoken discourse—the problem that people do not always say what they mean or mean what they say.

Find more examples of the texture of talk in the online resources for this book.

B6 NEGOTIATING RELATIONSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Power and politeness

Whenever we interact with others we always communicate something about our relationship with them. We do this by using various discursive strategies, which, as I said in unit A6, we can divide into two categories: *involvement strategies* and *independence strategies*. *Involvement strategies* are strategies people use to communicate friendliness or solidarity, and *independence strategies* are strategies people use to communicate respect or deference.

In many cases, both parties in an interaction share a fairly clear idea about how close they are and whether one has more power than the other, but in other cases participants in an interaction need to negotiate their relationship. Such negotiations are common, for example, as people move from more distant to closer relationships, or when one person wishes to challenge another person's assertion of power or dominance.

Regardless of whether or not a relationship is seen as 'negotiable,' we always approach interactions with certain sets of expectations about how independence and involvement strategies will be used to communicate information about power and intimacy. We call these expectations **face systems**. Although expectations about when *independence* and *involvement strategies* are appropriate and what they mean vary across cultures and groups, most people enter interaction with three basic ideas: 1) in interactions where the parties are socially distant but relatively equal, both parties are likely to use independence strategies (**deference face system**); 2) in interactions where people are close and relatively equal, they are likely to use involvement strategies (**solidarity face system**); and 3) in interactions in which one person has more power than the other (regardless of their social distance), the more powerful one is more likely to use involvement strategies and the less powerful one is more likely to use independence strategies (**hierarchical face system**).

Like the conversational maxims we discussed in the last unit, these 'systems' should not be treated as 'rules,' but rather as broad sets of expectations people draw on to decide how to act towards other people and how to interpret others' behaviour towards them. Since power and distance are relative rather than absolute, and because interaction often involves the sometimes subtle use of power and distance, people usually employ both independence and involvement strategies, mixing them tactically depending on the situation and what they are trying to accomplish.

An example of the way participants strategically mix independence and involvement strategies can be seen in the following conversation between a senior engineer (Martin) and his subordinate (Ollie) reported in Ladegaard (2011):

Martin:	Happy birthday or (0.2) whatever it is (laughing)
Ollie:	thank you (0.2) it's actually a while ago
Martin:	okay eh: Ollie//
Ollie:	//there's Danish pastry over there if you're interested (0.2)
Martin:	thanks ah: (0.6) (talks about tape recorder)
Martin:	okay well to cut a long story short Sam called (0.2) and I'm not sure how busy you are or what you're doing right now (0.4)
Ollie:	ah: we're just about to launch the [name] project and ah:
Martin:	okay
Ollie:	so this is where we are [xxx] quite busy (0.5) but Sam called you said
Martin:	yes (0.2)
Ollie:	and he? (0.3)
Martin:	he needs some help here and now (0.2) he needs someone to calculate the price of rubber bands (0.3) for the [name] project in India
Ollie:	okay
Martin:	they expect the customer to sign today (1.3)
Ollie:	okay

(Ladegaard 2011: 14–15)

In this example, Martin, the more powerful participant, begins using involvement strategies, wishing Ollie happy birthday (although it is not his birthday) and laughing. Ollie, on the other hand, though friendly, uses more independence strategies, accepting the inappropriate birthday wish and then using words such as 'actually' and 'a while' to soften his revelation that it is not his birthday, and then offering Martin some pastry in a way which is designed not to impose on him ('… if you're interested'). Were Martin and Ollie equals and friends, the inappropriate birthday wishes might have been answered in a more direct way, such as, 'What are you talking about? My birthday was ages ago!,' and the offer of pastry might have been more insistent (Have some Danish!). In other words, the configuration of involvement and independence strategies at the beginning of the conversation conforms with what one might expect in a hierarchical face system.

What happens next in the conversation, however, is rather interesting. Martin, the more powerful person, changes to independence strategies, asking Ollie how busy he is and making it clear that he does not wish to impose on him. In fact, he acts so reluctant to make the request that Ollie practically has to drag it out of him ('but Sam called you said … and he?'). This, in fact, is the opposite of what one might expect in a hierarchical relationship. Of course, this shift in politeness strategies, with the more powerful participant using independence strategies and the less powerful one showing more involvement does not really reflect a shift in power. Rather, it is a clever strategy Martin has used to make it more difficult for Ollie to refuse the request by putting him in the position of soliciting it.

The point of this analysis is that, even though our expectations about face systems form the background to how we communicate about relationships, people often strategically confound these expectations to their own advantage.

One further factor that determines which strategy a person will use to communicate his or her relationship with another person is the topic of the conversation he or she is engaged in. In cases in which the topic of the conversation is serious or potentially embarrassing for either party, or in which the weight of imposition is seen to be great, independence strategies will be more common, whereas in situations where the topic is less serious, the outcome more predictable and the weight of imposition seen to be relatively small, involvement strategies are more common.

As can be seen in the example above, rather than as simple reflections of *a priori* relationships of power and distance or the 'weightiness' of a particular topic, face strategies can be regarded as *resources* that people use to negotiate social distance, enact power relationships, and sometimes manipulate others into doing things which they may not normally be inclined to do. A person might use involvement strategies with another not *because* they are close, but because he or she wants to *create* or strengthen the impression that there is a power difference. Similarly, a person might use independence strategies not to create a sense of distance from the person they are interacting with, but rather to endow the topic under discussion with a certain 'weightiness.' In other words, face strategies are not just reflections of the expectations about relationships that people bring to interactions but *resources* they make use of to manage and sometimes change those relationships on a moment-by-moment basis.

Framing and contextualization cues

As we have seen above, conversational strategies such as involvement and independence are not just ways that we communicate and manage our relationships with other people, but also ways that we communicate something about what we are doing (the degree, for example, to which we think we are imposing on other people). We also have other ways of signalling to people what we think we are doing in an interaction, whether we, for example, are arguing, joking, commiserating or making small talk. Whenever we speak, in fact, we communicate not just the message contained in (or implied by) our words, but also information about what we think we are doing and, therefore, how our words should be interpreted. We call the signals we use to communicate this information **contextualization cues**.

In unit A6 I said that there are basically two kinds of *frames*: broader *primary frameworks* which consist of the relatively stable sets of expectations we bring to particular situations (such as lectures or medical consultations), and smaller, more dynamic *interactive frames*, which consist of our negotiated ideas about what we are doing moment by moment in a conversation, ideas which often change rapidly in the course of an interaction. Although *contextualization cues* are often important in signalling *primary frameworks*, they are particularly important in the role they play in helping us to manage and negotiate *interactive frames*.

Sometimes contextualization cues are verbal. We might, for example, use specific words to explicitly signal that we are shifting frames. One of the most obvious ways we signal frame shifts verbally is through what are known as **discourse markers**. These are words or phrases that often rather explicitly mark the end of one activity and the beginning of another. A lecturer, for example, might move from the pre-lecture chatting and milling around frame to the formal lecture frame with words such as '*Okay*, let's get started ...' Similarly, the doctor might move from small talk to the more formal medical examination by saying something such as '*So*, how are you feeling?' Discourse markers typically consist of words such as *okay, so, well,* and *anyway*, as well as more formal connectors such as *first, next,* and *however*. It is important to remember that discourse markers do not *always* signal a shift in frame—sometimes they signal other things, such as the relationship between one idea and another (see unit B2).

We also might signal frame shifts through our choice of topic, vocabulary, grammar, or even the language that we use. For example, in her analysis of the talk of teachers in bilingual classrooms, Angel Lin (1996) pointed out that when English teachers in Hong Kong are focusing on teaching, they tend to use English, but when they are engaged in reprimanding their students, they tend to switch to Cantonese.

Sometimes these verbal cues involve adopting a particular register or social language (see units A4 and B4) or certain genres (see units A3 and B3) associated with particular kinds of activities.

A doctor, for example, might begin a consultation with a period of small talk in which the language might be extremely informal and the topic might range from the weather to a local sports team before he or she 'shifts gears' and starts 'talking like a doctor.' Tannen and Wallat's (1987) example of the doctor who is examining a child while at the same time explaining the child's condition to the mother and addressing a group of medical students who will watch the interaction on video is a good example of how people use shifts in register to signal shifts in frame. In the excerpt below, Tannen and Wallat label the different registers the doctor is using: *teasing register* (addressed to the child), *reporting register* (addressed to the students), and *conversational register* (addressed to the mother):

[Teasing register]
Doctor: Let's see. Can you open up like this, Jody. Look.
[Doctor opens her own mouth]
Child: Aaaaaaaaaaaaah.
Doctor: [Good. That's good.
Child: Aaaaaaaaaaah

[Reporting register]
Doctor: /Seeing/ for the palate, she has a high arched palate
Child: [Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah
Doctor: but there's no cleft,
[maneuvers to grasp child's jaw]

[Conversational register]
... what we'd want to look for is to see how she ... moves her palate ... Which may be some of the difficulty with breathing that we're talking about.

(Tannen and Wallat 1987: 209)

These verbal strategies are not the only ways, or even the most common ways, people signal what they are doing when they talk. *Contextualization cues* also include non-verbal signals delivered through things such as gestures, facial expressions, gaze, our use of space, and *paralinguistic* signals delivered through alterations in the pitch, speed, rhythm, or intonation of our voices. For this reason, people who study frames and contextualization cues often pay a lot of attention to marking things such as stress, intonation, and pausing and even facial expressions, gestures, and other movements when they produce transcripts of the conversations they are studying.

These non-verbal and paralinguistic contextualization cues are sometimes much more subtle than verbal strategies and so more easily misunderstood. The way they are used and interpreted might also vary considerably from group to group or even person to person. In one of his most famous studies, Gumperz (1982a: 173–174) found a mismatch between the way South Asian servers in a staff canteen in a British airport used intonation as a contextualization cue and the ways their British customers interpreted it. The South Asian servers used falling intonation when asking customers if they wanted gravy on their meat (consistent with the conventions of their variety of English), but the British customers, expecting the rising intonation they associated with a polite offer, interpreted the servers' behaviour as rude. What this example tells us is that contextualization cues do not in themselves contain information about what we think we are doing—rather, they *activate* culturally conditioned assumptions about context, interactional goals and interpersonal relationships that might be different for different people.

There are many reasons why someone might shift frames in an interaction. They might do so simply to manage multiple tasks or multiple audiences. But sometimes they might use reframing strategically, changing the 'definition of the situation' (Goffman 1974) as a way of getting the upper hand or delegitimizing something their interlocutor is trying to do. Sometimes participants in an interaction will experience disagreement regarding 'what's going on.' The way one person frames the conversation, for example, may be at odds with the other person's wishes, expectations, or interpretation of the situation. In some cases, they may simply accept the framing that has been imposed by the other person, or they may contest or resist it by either attempting to reframe the conversation using their own contextualization cues or by breaking the frame altogether and engaging in a 'meta-conversation' about 'what's going on.'

In an early debate when he was first running for President in 2015, Donald Trump was asked a question by moderator Megyn Kelly about the way he had talked about women in the past. 'You've called women you don't like "fat pigs," dogs and animals,' she noted. 'how will you answer the charge … that you are a part of the war on women?' Trump answered this question not by justifying or explaining his past comments, but by reframing the discussion from one about his own behaviour to one about 'political correctness':

> I think the big problem this country has is being politically correct. I've been challenged by so many people and I don't, frankly, have time for total political correctness. And to be honest with you, this country doesn't have time, either.

By 'reframing' the conversation as a conversation about how other people talk rather than how he has talked about women, Trump was able to deflect the question.

Reframing can also be used as a way to manage *face* (see above). In a famous article called 'Talking the dog,' Deborah Tannen (2004) shows how people sometimes use the frame of playfully talking to their dogs as a way to talk to other people who might be present without confronting them directly. In the example below, Clara uses playful talk with her dog Rickie to communicate to her husband her displeasure at him having left the door open:

Clara: You leave the door open for any reason?
((short pause, sound of door shutting))
—> <babytalk> Rickie,
—> he's helpin' burglars come in,
—> and you have to defend us Rick.>

(Tannen 2004: 413)

Find more examples of how people use face strategies and framing strategies in the online resources for this book.

THE SPEAKING MODEL

B7

Speech acts, speech events, and speech situations

The main unit of analysis for the ethnography of speaking is the *speech event*, which can be defined as a communicative activity that has a clear beginning and a clear ending and in which people's shared understandings of the relevance of various contextual features remain fairly constant throughout the event. Examples of speech events are such things as religious ceremonies, lessons, debates, and conversations. Speech events occur within broader speech situations and are made up of smaller *speech acts* of the type we have already discussed (including such things as greeting, questioning, promising, and insulting, see B5). For example, a university lecture can be considered a *speech event* which occurs within the *speech situation* of a school day and is made up of smaller *speech acts* such as asking and answering questions, giving explanations and illustrations of certain concepts, and even joking or threatening. Similarly, the *speech event* of a conversation may occur within the larger *speech situation* of a party and may include smaller *speech acts* such as joking. Notice that the same speech act, joking for example, can take place in many different kinds of speech events, and that different speech events, conversations for example, can occur in many different kinds of speech situations.

What distinguishes a *speech event* from a *speech situation* is not just its size and the fact that speech events tend to have clearer boundaries. The main distinction is *coherence* (see unit B2): participants tend to approach speech events with consistent sets of expectations that remain the same throughout the speech event, whereas participants' expectations about the relevant features of context may undergo dramatic changes throughout a speech situation: students eating lunch at the university canteen during a school day, for example, are likely to pay attention to different sorts of things than they do in a lecture during the same day. The way to distinguish between a speech situation and a speech event, then, is to ask if the same rules of SPEAKING apply *throughout* the phenomenon. If so, it can be regarded as a speech event.

Speaking

One potentially confusing aspect of the ethnography of speaking is that it does not, as its name implies, focus so much on rules and expectations about *speaking* as on rules and expectations about the *circumstances* in which certain kinds of speaking take place (or, do not take place). In fact, one of the most famous studies using this approach, Keith Basso's examination of silence among the Western Apache in the United States (Basso 1970), explored the conditions under which, for members of this speech community, *not speaking* is considered the most appropriate behaviour.

Ron and Suzanne Wong Scollon have used the term the **grammar of context** to refer to a model very much like Hymes's speaking model (Scollon *et al.* 2012). Their reasons for comparing the rules and expectations associated with context to the kinds of rules and expectations associated with the grammar of a language are twofold: first, to highlight that the same difference between competence and performance which we see in grammar also occurs in rules and expectations associated with context: not everyone performs in particular speech events exactly in accordance with how people in their speech community (including themselves) think they should; and second, to introduce the notion of **markedness** into the analysis of context.

The idea of 'unmarked' (the usual or normal way of saying or doing something) versus 'marked' (an unusual or deviant way of saying or doing something) was introduced into structural linguistics by the Prague School of linguists, which included Roman Jakobson (see Jakobson 1990: 134–140). Although the concept is quite complex, the general idea is that when people deviate from the default or expected way of using language, the result is often the expression of some special, more precise, or additional meaning. This is an idea we have already encountered in our discussion of the *cooperative principle* (see unit B5). When it is applied to 'context,' it reminds us that communicative competence does not refer to a set of 'rules' that must be followed, but rather to a set of expectations that experienced speakers can sometimes manipulate in order to strategically manage the meanings of speech acts, the relationships among participants, or the outcomes of the speech event.

The components of the SPEAKING model devised by Hymes, therefore, are not meant to provide an objective list of those elements of context which need to be taken into account by the analyst, but rather a set of guidelines an analyst can use in attempting to find out what aspects of context are important and relevant *from the point of view of participants*. In other words, in any given speech event, different elements will be afforded different weight by participants, and some might be regarded as totally unimportant.

The first component in the model is **setting**, which refers to the time and place of the speech event as well as any other physical circumstances. Along with the physical aspects of the setting, Hymes included what he called the 'psychological setting' or the 'cultural definition' of a scene. The unmarked setting for a particular speech event, for example, might be in a church. A church has particular physical characteristics, but it is also likely to have certain associations for people in a particular culture so that when they enter a church they are predisposed to speak or behave in certain ways. Thus, the component of setting can have an effect on other components such as *key* and *instrumentalities* (see below).

The second component in the SPEAKING model is **participants**. Most of the approaches to spoken discourse we have looked at so far, including conversation analysis and pragmatics, begin with the assumption of an essentially dyadic model of communication in which the participants are the speaker and the hearer. Ethnographic work, however, indicates that many if not most speech events involve many kinds of participants, not just speakers and hearers, but also participants such as audiences and bystanders. Furthermore, groups differ in their ideas of which participants in speech events are considered legitimate or relevant (for example, domestic helpers, pets, supernatural beings). Besides identifying the relevant participants, the different kinds of identities, roles and rights different participants have are also important. These aspects, of course, will depend on things such as the *genre* of the speech event and may change over the course of the speech event in accordance with a particular *act sequence* (see below).

The third component of the model is **ends**, which refers to the purpose, goals, and outcomes of the event, which, of course, may be different for different participants (the goals of a teacher, for example, are not always the same as the goals of his or her students), and the fourth component is **act sequence**, the form the event takes as it unfolds, including the order of different speech acts and other behaviours. Both of these components are intimately connected not just with expectations about participant roles, but also with the *genre* of the speech event.

The fifth component in the model is **key**, by which is meant the overall 'tone' or mood of the speech event. Key is important because it provides an attitudinal context for speech acts, sometimes dramatically altering their meaning (as with sarcasm). At the same time, key is often signalled in very subtle ways using resources like tone of voice, facial expression, and bodily posture. We have already explored some of these signals in our discussion of *contextualization cues* in B6.

The sixth component is **instrumentalities**, meaning the 'message form'—the means or media through which meaning is made. Speech, for example, might be spoken, sung, chanted, or shouted, and it may be amplified through microphones, broadcast through electronic media, or written down and passed back and forth between participants. Typically, speech events include complex combinations of instrumentalities that interact with one another and with the other components in the model. In the next unit on mediated discourse analysis we will explore in more detail the effect different instrumentalities can have on speech acts and speech events.

The seventh component is **norms**, which can be divided into **norms of interaction** and **norms of interpretation**. These are the common sets of understandings that participants bring to events about what is appropriate behaviour and how different actions and utterances ought to be understood. The important thing about norms is that they may be different for different participants (a waiter versus a customer, for example) and that the setting of norms is often a matter of power and ideology (see A4).

Finally, the eighth component is **genre**, or the 'type' of speech event. We have already dealt at length with the concept of genre (see A3, B3) and, although Hymes's understanding of genre is slightly different from that of genre analysts like Swales and Bhatia, much of what was said before about community expectations, form, and communicative purpose applies here. The most important aspect of this component is the notion that certain speech events are *recognizable* by members of a speech community as being of a certain type, and as soon as they are 'labelled' as such, many of the other components of the model such as ends, act sequence, participant roles and key are taken as givens.

It should be clear from this brief rundown of the components of the SPEAKING model that none of them can really be considered alone: each component interacts with other components in multiple ways. The most important job of an analyst using this model, then, is not just to determine the kinds of knowledge about the different components members of speech communities need to successfully participate in a given speech event, but also to determine how the different components are linked together in particular ways for different speech events. For it is in these *linkages*, the ways, for example, different kinds of participants are associated with different genres, or different settings are seen as suitable for different purposes, or different forms of discourse or media are associated with different keys, that the analyst can begin to get an understanding of deeper *cultural assumptions* about people, places, values, power, and communication itself that exist in a particular speech community.

Find examples of how the SPEAKING model can be applied to different speech events in the online resources for this book.

B8 MEDIATION

Cultural tools

The starting point for mediated discourse analysis is the concept of *mediation*. The traditional definition of mediation is the passing of a message through some *medium*, which is placed between two or more people who are communicating. When we think of *media*, we usually think of things such as newspapers, television, and computers. Lots of people have pointed out that when messages pass through media, they change fundamentally. Different kinds of media favour different kinds of meanings. The kinds of meaning people can make in a newspaper article, for example, are different from those they can make in a television broadcast. This fact led the media scholar Marshall McLuhan (2001 [1964]) to make the famous pronouncement: 'The medium *is* the message.'

Mediated discourse analysis is also interested in how different media such as televisions and computers affect the way people use discourse, but it takes a rather broader view of media and mediation. This view comes from the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1981) had the idea that *all* actions that people take in the world are somehow mediated through what he called *cultural tools. Cultural tools* can include technological tools such as televisions, computers, and megaphones, but also include more abstract tools such as languages, counting systems, diagrams, and mental schema. Anything an individual uses to take action in the world can be considered a cultural tool.

The important thing about cultural tools is that they make it easier to perform some kinds of actions and communicate some kinds of meanings, and more difficult to take other kinds of actions and communicate other kinds of meanings. In other words, all tools come with certain **affordances** and **constraints**. Writing a letter or an email, for example, allows us to do things that we cannot do when we are producing spoken discourse in the context of a conversation, things such as going back and deleting or revising things we have written before. But it is more difficult to do other things such as gauge the reaction of other people to what we are writing as we are writing it (as we can do with spoken language in face-to-face conversations). A microphone makes it easier to talk to a large group of people, but more difficult to say something private to a person standing next to you (as some politicians have rather painfully learned). Messaging applications like WhatsApp make it easy to have a real-time conversation using writing, but more difficult to interrupt one's conversational partner in the middle of an utterance the way we can do in face-to-face conversations.

What this idea of *affordances* and *constraints* means for discourse analysis is that the kinds of discourse and other tools we have available to us affect the kinds of actions that we can take. Different genres (see A3, B3), for instance, such as Tinder profiles and job application letters, make some kinds of actions easier and others more difficult. It might be more difficult to convince an employer to hire you using the genre of a Tinder profile, and it might be more difficult to attract a sexual partner using the genre of a job application letter. Different modes and media also allow us to do different things: we can perform different actions with pictures and gestures than we can with words (see units A9, B9), and we can do different things with mobile telephones than we can with landlines.

When we perform mediated discourse analysis, we first identify the *actions* that are important to a particular social actor in a particular situation and then attempt to determine how the *cultural tools* (such as languages and other modes, media, genres, and social languages) contribute to making these actions possible and making other kinds of actions impossible or more difficult. Of course, we also have to recognize that many of the cultural tools we use to perform actions are *not* discursive. If you want to put together a piece of furniture you have bought at Ikea, while some discourse such as the instructions for assembly or the conversation you have with your spouse or roommate while putting the furniture together might be very important, if you lack access to *technological tools* such as a hammer and a screwdriver, no amount of discourse can make it possible for you to perform the actions you need to perform.

This simple idea that having access to different kinds of tools makes it easier or more difficult to perform social actions has important implications. Earlier, for example, we discussed how people sometimes try to use discourse to advance certain ideologies or versions of reality in order to try to affect what people think. Mediated discourse analysis highlights the fact that discourse does not just have a role in affecting what we think, but also, in a very practical way, in affecting what we can do. If we do not have the proper tools available to us, there are certain things that we simply cannot do. And so people who have access to particular tools (such as languages, genres, electronic media) can often exert certain power over people who do not in very concrete ways. If we also consider that our social identities are *created* through the actions that we can take, we come to the conclusion that the tools we have available to us and how we use them help to determine not just what we can do, but who we can be.

At the same time, human beings are extremely creative in their use of tools. If I do not have a screwdriver to put together my Ikea table, I might try using a butter knife. If the genre of the résumé does not allow me to showcase my talents, I might try to *bend* that genre or *blend* it with another genre. In fact, one important focus of mediated discourse analysis is in exploring the *tension* that exists between the affordances and constraints built into different cultural tools and the ways people creatively *appropriate* and *adapt* those tools to different situations to achieve different goals.

Context revisited: Sites of engagement

Mediated discourse analysts call the situations into which tools are appropriated **sites of engagement**. Sites of engagement are moments when different kinds of social actors, different kinds of cultural tools, and different kinds of social relationships come together to make certain actions possible.

Previously we have explored the importance of 'context' in the production of meaning (see units A7 and A8). The problem with the idea of 'context' from the point of view of mediated discourse analysis is that it takes 'texts' as its reference point. The concept of *sites of engagement* takes social actions as its reference point. Instead of making an artificial distinction between discourse and everything else, it considers all cultural tools (texts, furniture, objects, machines) that are available to social actors at a particular time in a particular place and explores how they contribute to making possible certain kinds of actions.

Ron and Suzanne Wong Scollon (2004) say that all social actions occur at the *nexus* or 'coming together' of three crucial elements: 1) the discursive resources and other cultural tools that people have available for action (which they call **discourses in place**); 2) the social relationships among the people involved (which they call the **interaction order**); and 3) the knowledge, abilities and experiences of the individual social actor (which they call thew **historical body**).

To illustrate how these three elements come together to form the *site of engagement* of a social action we can take the example of crossing a busy city street (see Figure B8.1). There is normally a lot of discourse available to people in this situation. There are things such as street signs, traffic signals, and zebra stripes painted on the pavement to assist pedestrians in crossing the street; there is also a lot of discourse such as shop signs and advertisements that might actually interfere with the action of successfully crossing the street. And so one of the most important things for people engaged in performing this action is determining which discourse to attend to and which discourse to ignore.

The second element is the interaction order, the relationships people have with the people with whom they are crossing the street. If we are crossing the street alone, for example, we might take extra care in checking for oncoming traffic, whereas if we are part of a large crowd of people, we might pay more attention to the actions of other pedestrians to decide when to cross simply by following them. If we are with someone else, we might find we need to distribute our attention between the action of crossing the street and some other action such as carrying on a conversation or making sure our companion (if they are, for instance, a small child) gets across the street safely.

Finally, the action of crossing the street depends on people's knowledge and experience of crossing city streets, the habits and mental models they have built up around this social practice, which the Scollons refer to as the *historical body*. Most of the time we do things

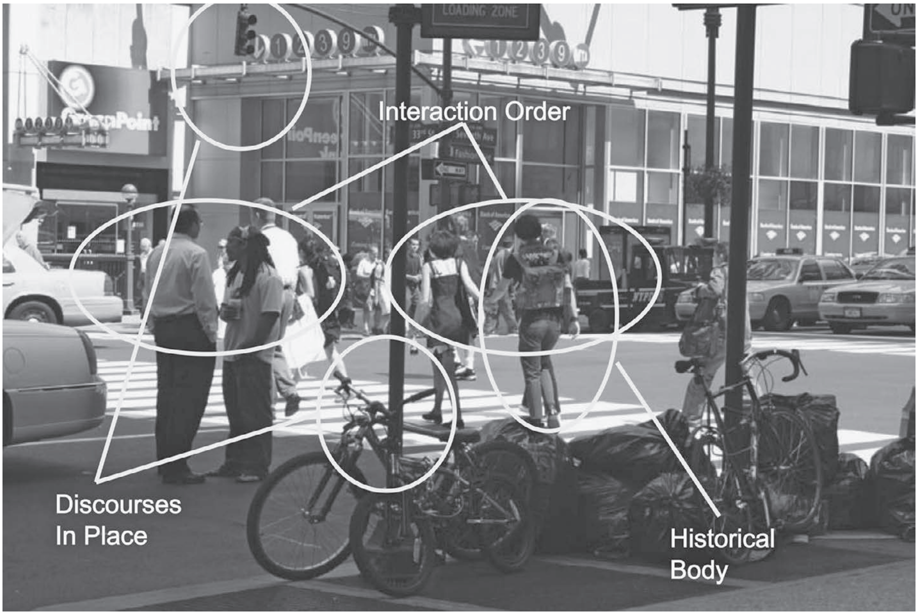

Figure B8.1 Crossing the street

such as crossing the street in a rather automatic way. When we find ourselves in unfamiliar situations, however, our habitual ways of doing things sometimes do not work so well. Most of us have found ourselves having some difficulty crossing streets in cities where conventions about which discourses in place pedestrians ought to attend to or what kind of behaviour is expected from drivers are different from those in the city in which we live.

And so the main differences between the ideas of 'site of engagement' and 'context' are, first, that while 'contexts' take 'texts' as their points of reference, sites of engagement take *actions* as their points of reference, and second, that while contexts are usually considered to be external to the social actor, sites of engagement are a matter of the *interaction* among the texts and other cultural tools available in a social situation, the people that are present and the habits, expectations and goals of those people.

Discourse Itineraries

It should be obvious from the above example that the people (historical bodies), relationships (interaction orders), and discourse in place are not stable; they change over time. They have their own histories, and these historical trajectories also affect how they interact at sites of engagement. The street signs or even the physical configuration of an intersection may change over time in response to traffic patterns; our understanding of the best strategy to use for crossing at a particular intersection is different the first time we cross there and the hundredth time, and our relationship with the people we are with also changes: a parent, for example, will cross the street differently with a 5-year-old child and a 15-year-old child.

Scollon (2008) calls these historical trajectories 'discourse itineraries'; they are the paths people, texts, and relationships travel along, accumulating different meanings along the way. One problem with these itineraries is that often they are invisible to us when we are actually using texts and other cultural tools, which sometimes makes it difficult for us to use texts and tools in ways that help us to meet our goals. The two studies discussed in unit D8 both provide examples of discourse itineraries: Gavin Lamb (2021) shows how discourse about sea turtles and eco-tourism circulates from advertisements of tour companies to the practices of tourists taking selfies with sea turtles on the beach to social media sites where these pictures are posted and commented on by others, and Ron Scollon (2005) traces the itineraries of discourse and action that result in certain claims about the healthiness of food products ending up on product labels, and these products ending up on the dinner tables of consumers.

Find more examples of mediated discourse analysis in the online resources for this book.

B9 MODES, MEANING, AND ACTION

As discussed in unit A9, *multimodal discourse analysis*, the analysis of how multiple modes of communication interact when we communicate, can be divided into two broad approaches, one which focuses on 'texts' (such as magazines and web pages) and the other which focuses on 'real-time' interactions. One important concept that is common to both of these approaches is the idea that different modes have different *affordances* and *constraints*. Different modes have different sets of 'meaning potential' and allow us to take different kinds of actions.

In written text and spoken language, for example, we must present information in a sequential way governed by the logic of time. Thus, an author or speaker can manipulate the order and speed at which information is given out, perhaps withholding certain facts until later in the text or conversation for strategic purposes. Images, on the other hand, are governed by the logic of space. The producer of the image presents all of the elements in the image all at once and has limited control over the order in which viewers look at those elements. At the same time, whereas images allow for the communication of very fine gradations of meaning when it comes to things such as shape and colour—the exact shade of pink in someone's cheeks, for example—language forces us to represent things in terms of *types*—the word 'pink,' for example, cannot represent an exact colour, but only a range of colours within a particular class.

The fact that different modes make some kinds of meaning making more possible and others less possible is one of the reasons why people strategically mix different modes when they are communicating, so that the constraints of one mode are balanced out by the affordances of others. While there are some things that 'just cannot be expressed in words,' it might be possible to express them with a carefully timed facial expression or a carefully placed image.

Communicative functions of modes

In unit A4 I introduced Halliday's idea that language has three basic functions: it is used to represent our experience of the world; it is used to communicate something about the relationship between us and the people with whom we are communicating; and it is used to organize ideas, representations and other kinds of information in ways that people can make sense of. Halliday calls these three functions the *ideational function*, the *interpersonal function,* and the *textual function*. Although these three functions were originally conceived of as a model for understanding language, Kress and van Leeuwen insist that they provide a useful starting point for studying all modes. In their book *Reading Images: The grammar of visual design*, they explore how images also fulfil these three functions, but do so in a rather different way than language.

Ideational function

As noted in unit A4, the ideational function of language is accomplished through the linking together of *participants* (typically nouns) with *processes* (typically verbs), creating what Gee (2010) calls 'whos doing whats.' In images, on the other hand, participants are generally portrayed as *figures*, and the processes that join them together are portrayed visually.

Images can be **narrative**, representing figures engaged in actions or events, **classificatory**, representing figures in ways in which they are related to one another in terms of similarities and differences or as representatives of 'types,' or **analytical**, representing figures in ways in which parts are related to wholes.

In narrative images, *action processes* are usually represented by what Kress and van Leeuwen call **vectors**, compositional elements that indicate the directionality of an action. In Figure B9.1, for example, the arm of the boxer on the left extending rightward towards the head of the other boxer portrays the process of 'hitting.' There are also other processes portrayed. For example, the upward gazes of the figures in the background create vectors connecting the spectators with the fighters.

Like this image, many images actually represent multiple processes simultaneously. Figure B9.2, for example, also involves action processes, the process of taking a photograph and the process of 'posing' for a photograph. At the same time, the expressions on the faces of the people in the photo represent mental processes: the look on the woman's face suggests a concentrated focus on the act of taking the picture, and the look on the man's face communicates amiable confidence. That is not to say that he really is amiable or confident. Whether we are communicating with photographs or with our bodies, we are always using the resources available to use to send a certain kind of message to others.

Interpersonal function

Another important function of any mode is to create and maintain some kind of relationship between the producer of the message and its recipient. As discussed in units A4 and B4, in language these relationships are usually created through the language's system of modality, as well as through the use of different *social languages* or *registers*.

In images, viewers are placed into relationships with the figures in the image and, by extension, the producers of the image, through devices such as perspective and gaze. The image of the child in Figure B9.3 illustrates both of these devices. The camera

Figure B9.1 Warriors (Photo credit: Claudio Gennari)

Figure B9.2 Selfie (Photo credit: Robert Couse-Baker) angle positions the viewer above the child rather than on the same level, creating the perspective of an adult, and the child's direct gaze into the camera creates a sense of intimacy with the viewer, though the expression on the child's face does denote some degree of uncertainty. Another important device for expressing the relationship between the viewer and the figures in an image is how close or far away they appear. Long shots tend to create a more impersonal relationship, whereas close-ups tend to create a feeling of psychological closeness along with physical closeness.

Smartphones with cameras in the front have created a range of new possibilities for the creation of interpersonal meaning and perspective. In the image below (Figure B9.4), for example, the photographer is able to create multiple perspectives for the viewer. The image is of the photographer taking a selfie. The direct gaze of a selfie, however, is slightly different from the direct gaze of the image above, since the figure in the photograph is looking simultaneously at the viewer and at him or herself. This image, however, also includes the shadow of another figure taking a photo of the first figure, which creates for the viewer the perspective of being a photographer documenting someone taking a selfie. Finally, the hand holding the phone on which the picture is displayed creates a third perspective for the viewer, the perspective of someone looking at a selfie after it has been taken.

'Modality' in images is partially realized by how 'realistic' the image seems to the viewer. Photographs, for example, generally attest more strongly to the 'truth' of a representation than drawings or paintings. However, this is not always the case. Scientific diagrams and sketches, for example, are often regarded as having even more 'authority' than photographs, and black and white photographs like those often found in newspapers are often regarded as more 'realistic' than highly saturated colour images in magazine advertisements. The 'filters' that are now part of most standard photo apps can also affect the modality of images. Changing a colour photo to black and white, for example, might make it seem more 'real' because of the association with traditional news photography, and sepia tones can give the image a nostalgic or 'retro' feeling.

Figure B9.3 Child (Photo credit: Denis Mihailov)

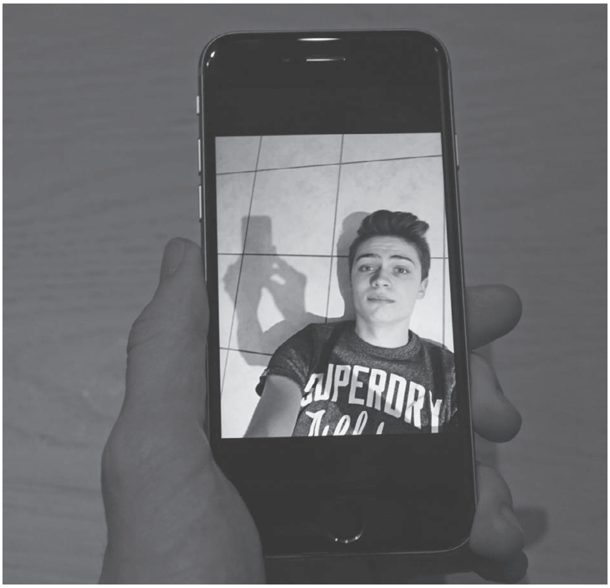

Figure B9.4 Selfie II (Photo credit: hannesdesmet)

Textual function

As I said above, while texts are organized in a linear fashion based on sequentiality, images are organized spatially. Figures in an image, for example, can be placed in the centre or periphery of the image, on the top or the bottom, the left or the right, and in the foreground or in the background. Although producers of images have much less control than producers of written texts over how viewers 'read' the image, they can create pathways for the viewer's gaze by, for example, placing different figures in different places within the frame and making some more prominent and others less prominent.

One obvious way to do this is by creating a distinction between foreground and background, the figures which seem closer to the viewer generally commanding more prominence. Another way is to place one or more figures in the centre of the image and others on the margins. Many images make use of the centre/margin distinction to present one figure or piece of information as the centre or 'nucleus' of the image and the marginal figures as somehow dependent upon or subservient to the central figure (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

Two other important distinctions in the composition of images, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), are the distinction between the left side and the right side of the image, and the distinction between the upper part and the lower part. Taking as their starting point Halliday's idea that in language, 'given' information (information that the reader or hearer is already familiar with) tends to appear at the beginning of clauses, and new information tends to appear closer to the end of clauses, they posit that, similarly, the left side of an image is more likely to contain 'given' information and the right side to contain 'new' information. This is based on the assumption that people tend to 'read' images in the same way they read texts, starting at the left and moving towards the right. This, of course, may be different for people from speech communities that are accustomed to reading text from right to left or from top to bottom.

The distinction between the upper part of an image and the lower part is related to the strong metaphorical connotations of 'up' and 'down' in many cultures (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). According to Kress and van Leeuwen, the top part of the image is often used for more 'ideal,' generalized or abstract information, and the bottom for 'real,' specific and concrete information. They give as an example advertisements in which the upper section usually shows 'the "promise of the product," the status of glamour it can bestow on its users' and the lower section tends to provide factual information such as where the product can be obtained (2006: 186).

The strategic use of the textual function can often be seen in the way information is arranged in 'infographics,' texts which often combine narrative, classificatory, and analytical genres. The image below (Figure B9.5), for example, is divided into two halves, each populated with human-like figures meant to represent different kinds of people (men, women, those who have and have not been sexually assaulted, false rape accusers, and rapists).

The information in this chart is strategically arranged so that as we move our eyes from left to right we move from the 'given' (more familiar) information (women who have been sexually assaulted), to the 'new' (less familiar) information (men who have been sexually assaulted), creating the message: 'just as women are victims of sexual assault, so are men.' At the same time, the text at the top part of the

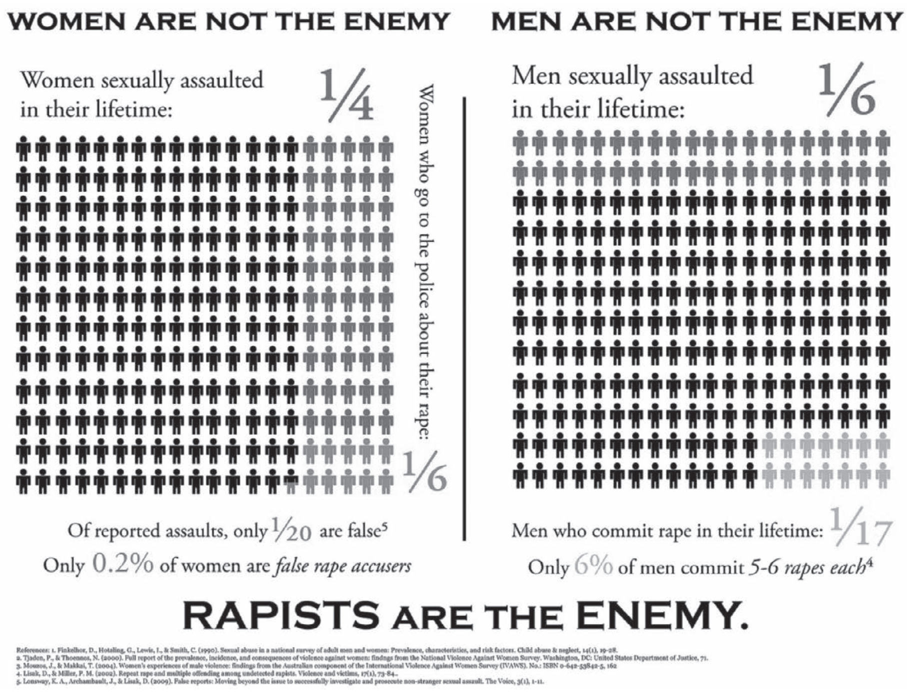

Figure B9.5 Rape infographic (Photo credit: Snipegirl) image talks about 'ideal' men and women who 'are not the enemy,' and the text at the bottom of the image informs us who the 'real' enemy is.

Multimodality in interaction

Modes in face-to-face interaction such as gaze and gesture also fulfil these three functions. The mode of gaze, for example, has an obvious *interpersonal* function, creating a relationship between the gazer and whomever or whatever is the object of the gaze. It also carries *ideational* meaning, conveying that the gazer is looking at, watching or paying attention to something. Finally, gaze is often an important *textual* resource, helping people to manage things such as turn-taking in conversations.

While the 'inter-modal' relationships (the ways multiple modes work together) in static texts such as the advertisement analysed above can be complicated, they can be even more complicated in dynamic interactions. One of the problems with analysing real-time, face-to-face interactions is that participants have so many modes available to them to make meaning. There are what Norris (2004) calls 'embodied' modes such as gaze, gesture, posture, head movement, proxemics (the distance one maintains from his or her interlocutor), spoken language, and prosody (features of stress and intonation in a person's voice). And there are also 'disembodied' modes such as written texts, images, signs, clothing, the layout of furniture, and the architectural arrangement of rooms and other spaces in which the interaction takes place. All of these different modes organize meaning differently. Some, such as spoken language and gaze, tend to operate *sequentially*, while others, such as gesture and prosody, tend to operate *globally*, often helping to create the context in which other modes such as spoken language are to be interpreted (see unit B6). Not all of these modes are of equal importance to participants at any given moment in the interaction. In fact, different modes are likely to take on different degrees of importance at different times. How then is the analyst to determine which modes to focus on in a multimodal analysis?

Norris (2004) solves this problem by adopting the practice of *mediated discourse analysis* (see units A8 and B8) and taking *action* as her unit of analysis. Thus, in determining which modes to focus on, the analyst begins by asking what actions participants are engaged in and then attempts to determine which modes are being used to accomplish these actions.

As I said in unit A8, actions are always made up of smaller actions and themselves contribute to making up larger actions. Norris divides actions into three types: *lower-level actions*, the smallest pragmatic meaning units of communicative modes (including things such as gestures, postural shifts, gaze shifts, and tone units), *higher-level actions* (such as 'having a cup of coffee'), and *frozen actions* (previously performed actions that are instantiated in material modes—a half-eaten plate of food, for example, or an unmade bed).

One of the goals of multimodal interaction analysis, then, is to understand how participants in interaction work cooperatively to weave together lower-level actions such as gestures, glances and head and body movements into higher-level actions and, in doing so, help to create and reinforce social practices, social relationships, and social identities (see C9).

Modal density and attention

Whenever we are interacting, we are always using more than one mode at the same time. We might be using our voice to talk on the telephone with our boss, our body to lean towards our partner sitting across from us at the kitchen table, and a pen to point to a written text, maybe a particular word on a shopping list he is making, and our gaze and facial expression to communicate to him that this item—rocket—is really important and that he'd better not forget to buy it. One reason we are using so many modes in such a complicated way is that we are engaged in more than one higher-level action. We are talking to our boss about a client, and we are communicating with our partner about what to buy for dinner. How we are using these different modes, in fact, can tell us about which of the actions we are paying more attention to, and it is *not* our conversation with our boss. The reason I say that is because of something that Norris (2004) calls **modal density**.

Modal density is created either by *modal intensity*, how much prominence we give to a particular mode (we might, for example, be gazing at our partner very intensely or tapping our pen forcefully on the part of the shopping list where the item we want him to buy is written), or by *modal complexity*, the number of different modes we are devoting to our action (our body, our gaze, the pen we are holding). Modal density is the way we use modes to *foreground* or *background* different actions that we are involved in. It is because of modal density that it is obvious that you are paying more attention to your partner than to your boss, even though you are engaging with your boss using spoken language, which we often assume is the locus of attention in social interaction. More importantly, modal density is also the way you communicate to your partner that it's really important that he doesn't forget to buy the rocket.

Transduction

The whole point of multimodality, then, is that we rarely use only one mode together, and meaning is not just made through exploiting the resources of particular modes, but also in the way modes work together. Text, for example, is often used together with images to explain the image or comment on it, and lecturers commonly project writing on-screen behind them to clarify or summarize their spoken words.

Sometimes people try to communicate or 'translate' the meanings of one mode using a different mode. Kress (1997) calls this process **transduction**. For example, verbs in a verbal description of an action might be translated into vectors in a drawing of that action, or we might attempt to communicate the taste of a sandwich we are eating through the sounds we make when we are chewing. Shifting across modes can be tricky. It requires us to use different semiotic resources but, at the same time, to retain consistency of meaning. One particular *genre* where transduction is particularly evident is in what is known as ASMR videos on YouTube. ASMR stands for autonomous sensory meridian response, and it refers to a kind of physical sensation that is triggered by certain kinds of sounds or images. In these videos people try to use sound effects and representations of action to communicate things like textures and physical feelings.

Find more examples of the communicative functions of different modes and how they work together in the online resources for this book.

B10 PROCEDURES FOR CORPUS-ASSISTED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Conducting a corpus-assisted discourse analysis requires a number of steps, which include building a corpus, cleaning and tagging the corpus, analysing the corpus with computer tools using a number of procedures, and, finally, interpreting the data. These last two steps tend to be cyclical and recursive. That is, usually the results of several procedures need to be combined when we are interpreting the data, and often our interpretations lead us to re-perform these procedures or perform other procedures.

The first step in building a corpus is deciding what kinds of texts you want to include in it and making sure that you can include a representative sample of those kinds of texts. For very specialized corpora, such as the works of a particular author, this is easy since there are a limited number of texts and you can simply include them all. This is more difficult the less specific the corpus is. For example, if you want to build a corpus of business letters, you need to decide what kind of letters (sales letters, complaint letters, etc.) you want to include and what kinds of company these letters will come from. You might choose texts based on some predetermined criteria such as topic or the inclusion of some keyword. Baker, in his study on the representation of Muslims in British newspapers reprinted in unit D10, for example, chose the texts for his corpus on the basis of whether or not they contained words referring to Muslims or Islam.

Another important decision is how many texts you are going to include in your corpus. Generally, with corpus-assisted analysis, the bigger the corpus the easier it will be for you to make generalizations from your results. However, it is also possible to have very small corpora.

You will probably also need a **reference corpus**. A reference corpus is another corpus that you will compare your primary corpus with. It is usually made up of a broader spectrum of texts or conversations than the corpus you are analysing.

You might, for example, use one of the large corpora such as the British National Corpus, or you might choose another specialized corpus with a broader sample of texts.

Nowadays it is actually quite easy to build a corpus since so many texts are already in electronic format on the internet. But it is important that you go through these texts carefully and take out any HTML code or formatting that might have been attached to them, which might interfere with your analysis. You also might want to attach new code to certain parts of the text or to certain words to aid your analysis. This latter process is called 'tagging.' Analysts, for example, sometimes insert code to indicate different parts of a text (such as introduction, body and conclusion), and others tag individual words based on their grammatical function so they can detect grammatical patterns in their analysis along with lexical patterns. It is important that each text in your corpus is saved in a separate text file.

The analysis of the corpus is carried out with a computer program, and there are a number of such programs available on the internet. The most widely used commercial programs are called WordSmith Tools (www.lexically.net/wordsmith/index.html) and Sketch Engine (www.sketchengine.co.uk/), but there is also a very good free program available called AntConc, developed by Laurence Anthony, which works on both Windows and Macintosh operating systems (www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc_index.html). In the explanations and examples below I will describe how to perform the relevant procedures using AntConc.

After your corpus has been 'cleaned' and 'tagged,' you need to import it in the form of text files into your analysis program. In AntConc this is done by using the commands File > Open File(s) (or Ctrl F). You may choose as many files as you wish. If you would like to open a directory of files, choose Open Dir (or Ctrl D).

While there are a whole host of different operations that can be performed on corpora using this software, the six most basic procedures useful for discourse analysis are as follows:

1. generating word frequency lists;
2. calculating type token ratio;
3. analysing concordances;
4. analysing collocation;
5. analysing keywords;
6. creating dispersion plots.

Most of these procedures can be performed on their own, but it is usually a good idea to perform them together with the other procedures since the results from one procedure can often inform your interpretation of the results from the others.

Word frequency and type token ratio

One of the most basic pieces of information you can get from a computer-aided analysis of your corpus is information about the frequency with which different words occur. In AntConc a **word frequency** list for a corpus can be generated by clicking on the Word List tab and then clicking the Start button. Unless you have a good reason to treat words in different cases (e.g. 'selfie' versus 'Selfie') as separate words, you should tick 'Treat all data as lower case' in the Display Options. Words in frequency lists can be sorted by rank, frequency or word, so an analyst can easily determine not just the most or least frequently occurring words, but also check the frequency of specific words.

After a word list is generated, the information necessary to calculate **type token ratio** appears at the top of the AntConc window. Type token ratio is basically a measure of how many different kinds of words occur in the text in relation to the total number of words, and so can give some indication of the lexical complexity of texts in a corpus. It is calculated by dividing the number of types by the number of tokens. A low type token ratio generally indicates a relatively narrow range of subjects, a lack of lexical variety or frequent repetition. A high type token ratio indicates a wider range of subjects, greater lexical variation and/or less frequent repetition. In the British National Corpus, the type token ratio for the corpus of written texts is 45.53, whereas the type token ratio for the corpus of spoken texts is 32.96. This confirms a number of things we already know about the differences between speech and writing, in particular that writing tends to involve a much more varied and complex vocabulary, and that speech tends to involve frequent repetition.

Usually, the most frequent words in any text are **function words** (articles, prepositions, pronouns, and other grammatical words) such as 'the' and 'a.' While looking at function words can be useful in helping you to understand grammatical patterns, style and register in the corpus, **content words** such as nouns, verbs and adjectives are usually more relevant to finding evidence of 'Discourses.'

Concordances

Concordances show words in the context of the sentences or utterances in which they were used. Usually, we use frequency lists to give us an idea of what some of the important words in a corpus might be, and then we do a concordance of those words in order to find out more information about them. Concordances can be sorted alphabetically based on the words either to the right or left of the word that you searched for, and playing around with this sorting system is often a good way to spot patterns in word usage. For example, in my analysis of words that Taylor Swift uses to describe herself (see Fig. (10.2), the alphabetical sorting of words directly to the left and right of the target word (I'm) helped me to focus in particular on what Swift described herself as *not* being by focusing on the right collocate 'not.'

In AntConc concordances are created by typing a word or phrase into the Search Term box, generating a list of instances in which this word appears in the corpus listed in their immediate contexts. The search word appears in the concordance in the centre of the page highlighted in blue, with what occurs before and after appearing to the left and the right of the word. The Kwic Sort dialogue can be used to sort the concordance alphabetically based on the word one, two, three, etc. places to the left or the right of the search term.

Collocation analysis

Collocation has to do with the fact that certain words tend to appear together. Often words take on a negative or positive meaning based on the kinds of words they are most often grouped with. As Firth (1957) put it, 'You shall know a lot about a word from the company it keeps.' For example, the verb 'commit' is nearly always associated with negative words such as 'crime.' We don't 'commit' good deeds, we 'perform' them. Thus we find phrases such as 'commit random acts of kindness' humorous.

Analysing the kinds of words that appear together with other words is an especially useful way to understand the 'Discourses' that are expressed in a corpus because they can reveal patterns of association between different kinds of words or concepts. In their study of the portrayal of refugees in the British press, for example, Baker and McEnery (2005) note not just that the word 'stream' is used frequently in their corpus to describe the movement of refugees, but that in the British National Corpus this word frequently collocates with the words 'tears,' 'blood,' 'sweat,' 'water,' and 'rain,' giving it a generally negative connotation. Baker (2006) refers to the situation where patterns can be found between words and various sets of related words in ways that suggest a 'Discourse' as **discourse prosody**. Others (see for example Sinclair 1991) refer to this as **semantic prosody**.

Some programs have additional tools to analyse collocates. In the study summarized in D10, for example, Baker uses the Word Sketch function in Sketch engine to determine the most statistically salient adjective and verb collocates of extreme belief words (such as *fanatic* and *extremist*). Word Sketch provides a summary of the grammatical and collocational behaviour by categorizing collocates by grammatical relations (e.g. words that function as the subject or object of the word in question).

Unfortunately, AntConc does not provide such sophisticated tools, but, in most cases, simple collocation analysis is sufficient. In order to perform a collocation analysis with AntConc, click the Collocate tab and enter your chosen search term. You will also need to determine the **span** to the left or right of the search term within which you want to check for collocates. This can be set from any number of words to the left of the search term to any number of words to the right of the search term using the Window Span dialogue. The result will be a list of collocates, their rank, overall frequency, and the frequency with which they occur to the left of the search term and to the right of the search term.

Keyword analysis

Word frequency lists can only tell you how frequently certain words occur in the corpus. Some words, however, such as articles, occur frequently in nearly every text or conversation. The frequency with which a word occurs in a corpus is not in itself necessarily meaningful. What is more important is whether or not a word occurs more or less frequently than 'normal.' This is what **keyword analysis** is designed to determine.

The difference between keywords and frequent words is that keywords are words that appear with a greater frequency in the corpus that you are studying than they do in a 'reference corpus.' Reference corpora usually consist of a broader sampling of texts or conversations. Many people, for example, use large publicly available corpora such as the British National Corpus.

In order to generate a list of keywords for your corpus with AntConc, it is first necessary to load your reference corpus. This is done using the Keyword List preferences (Tool Preferences < Keyword List). The reference corpus can be loaded either as a list of files or as a directory. Once it is loaded, the Keyword List is generated by choosing the Keyword List tab and clicking Start. The result will be a list of keywords, their rank, frequency and a number measuring their **keyness**. The *keyness* value indicates the degree to which the word occurs more frequently than expected in your primary corpus (taking the reference corpus as representing a 'normal' pattern of frequency). Some programs also allow you to calculate **negative keyness**, that is, to determine which words occur *less* frequently than expected.

Dispersion plots

Dispersion plots, referred to in AntConc as 'concordance plots,' can give you information about where words occur in texts. This can be particularly useful if an analyst is interested in the structure of texts or conversations. A genre analyst, for example, might be interested in the kinds of words or phrases that occur in a section of a text associated with a particular move, or a conversation analyst might want to explore the kinds of words that occur in different parts of a conversation, such as the opening or the closing.

In AntConc, concordance plots are generated by clicking the Concordance Plot tab, typing in a search term and clicking Start. The result is a series of bars, each representing a text in the corpus with lines representing where the search term has appeared.

Find examples of these and other procedures for corpus analysis in the online resources for this book.

NOTES

1 When people use the passive voice, they don't always leave out the agent, and when the agent is included, the passive voice can actually have the effect of *emphasizing* the agent, as in the sentence: 'The cameras were installed by the Government.'

2 Here 'you' is a deictic pronoun. **Deictic pronouns** refer to entities that must be identified according to the context of utterance rather than referring to an antecedent in another part of the utterance or text (See B2).

Section C

EXPLORATION

ANALYSING DISCOURSE

C1 DOING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: FIRST STEPS

As discussed in unit B1, there are basically three different ways of looking at discourse: discourse as language beyond the clause; discourse as language in use; and discourse as social practice. Each of the three different ways of looking at discourse can lead us to ask different kinds of questions about the texts and interactions that we encounter in our everyday lives. A view that sees discourse as language above the level of the clause or the sentence leads us to ask: What makes this text or conversation a *text* or *conversation* rather than just a random collection of sentences or utterances? What holds it together so that people can make sense of it? A view that sees discourse as language in use leads us to ask: What are people trying to *do* with this text and how do we know? And who are these people anyway, and what sort of relationship do they have? Finally, a view that sees discourse as a matter of social practice and ideology leads us to ask: What 'kinds' of people are the authors of this text or the participants in this conversation trying to show themselves to be, and what kinds of beliefs or values are they promoting? How does this text 'fit in' to our larger society, and how does it contribute to *creating* that society?

Consider, for example, the following signs (Figures C1.1 and C1.2). These may seem like odd texts to perform discourse analysis on. After all, they seem rather simple and

Figure C1.1 'Please note …' (Photo credit: Jim Griffin CC0 1.0 Public Domain)

Figure C1.2 MelroseINC (Photo credit: Cory Doctrow CCBY SA 2.0 Attribution)

straightforward. But even seemingly trivial texts can tell us a lot about how people construct their messages strategically to accomplish particular goals, and they can also reveal something about the social relationships and ideologies in the societies in which these texts are found.

The first question a discourse analyst might ask about these signs is how the different elements in them are connected to make them easy to understand and recognizable as certain 'kinds' of texts. Both of them contain both words and pictures, but the picture on the first sign—a face with a surgical mask—seems more relevant than the picture on the second sign. A person wearing a mask seems to be a visual version of the verbal message. The meaning of the star in the second text may, however, also be important. It may, for example, be the logo of the company that authored the sign, in which case it would also have a relationship to the message, a relationship of ownership, or even 'branding.' In this case, the sign becomes part of a wider collection of corporate discourse associated with the company.

The way the words are arranged in these signs is also a bit different. In the first sign, the verbal message is prefaced with some words that signal to the reader that it is something they should pay attention to ('PLEASE NOTE'). This is followed by the sentence MASK OR FACE COVERING REQUIRED TO ENTER BUILDING. One thing that is interesting about this sentence is that a lot of 'little words' like articles and the auxiliary verbs are missing, so the reader needs to fill in these missing words: (a) mask or face covering (is) required to enter (this) building. This kind of writing is often seen not just on signs, but also in newspaper headlines, and functions to give people information in an 'efficient' way that doesn't 'waste' words. One reason for this is that people who read messages like signs and newspaper headlines are often in a hurry. So, using language like this also creates the feeling that this message is an important one for people in a hurry. The written message in the second sign is much more complex, sometimes using this kind of 'headline' style language ('As per mandate by …' and NO EXCEPTIONS), and sometimes using more formal and 'complete' grammar ('ALL customers must wear a face covering while interacting with our staff'). In some ways it seems as if the sign is 'speaking' in two different 'tones of voice': one which wants to give people the facts in a rather emphatic (even bossy) way (NO EXCEPTIONS), and the other which wants to explain things to people in more detail.

Another important feature of both of these signs is the way they use font size and style to signal to the reader what the important parts of the messages are. In the first sign, for example, **MASK** and **FACE COVERING** are in bold to emphasize to the reader what they have to wear, and the word REQUIRED is in a different font and also a different colour (red) to emphasize to the reader that wearing a mask or face covering is not optional. The second sign uses typography in a similar way, for example using capital letters and underlining for words such as ALL, **MUST**, and **NO EXCEPTIONS,** whilst words that are peripheral to the main message (We apologize for any inconvenience) are in a small font at the bottom. By emphasizing certain words or phrases, writers are not just telling readers what they want them to pay attention to, but also anticipating things that readers might misunderstand or try to object to about the message. Here, for instance, it seems as if the writers are trying to pre-empt people who might want to make excuses for not wearing a mask.

The question of what people are trying to do with this discourse seems at first glance rather obvious. They are trying to get people to wear face masks. The question becomes more complicated, however, when you start to think about who these people are: *who* is trying to get *whom* to wear a face mask? What's interesting about the first sign is that it does not say. Although it addresses itself to the reader in the first line: (You) PLEASE NOTE, the main message is really a statement rather than a request or a command. That is, it is *stating* that wearing a mask is 'required' rather than directly telling people to wear a mask. Phrasing commands or requests as statements is sometimes a way to do things in a more indirect way. Rather than 'commanding' the reader to do something, this sign is just 'informing' them that something must be done. This also allows the writer to avoid revealing who it is that is doing the informing, which further depersonalizes the message, making it seem like it comes from some general 'authority' rather than a particular person to whom readers might go if they want to complain about having to wear a mask.

The second sign provides much more information about who is responsible for the message. First of all, the sign begins with the name and logo of the company MelroseINC. It would seem that by putting their name on the sign, the company is taking responsibility for the message, but this is not entirely the case, since right underneath it they assign responsibility to someone else, namely 'the City of Los Angeles.' It is as if they are saying, 'Don't blame us; we're just following orders given to us by the government.' Another thing that is different about this sign is that the people who should wear the masks (customers) and the people they are interacting with while they do so (staff) are stated explicitly. In other words, this sign, rather than offering an impersonal message like the first one, provides a much more detailed 'story' about what is going on in this situation, a story that is told by a company to its customers about how it follows the government's rules and cares about protecting its staff. And, although the voice of the company can be rather stern ('NO EXCEPTIONS'), it is also somewhat solicitous ('We apologise …'). Here we can see how the company uses discourse in rather subtle ways to balance the different demands of this kind of communication, demands to simultaneously be polite to their customers, obedient to the government, and protective of their staff.

Of course, neither of these signs really makes sense outside of the COVID-19 pandemic during which masks were required to enter many buildings, and many governments instituted 'mask mandates' in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus. But none of this information about the pandemic or the virus actually appears on the signs. Rather, this is information that readers were expected to bring from their experiences with other kinds of discourse such as media reports, government briefings, social media posts, and conversations with other people. Indeed, different people may have had rather different reactions to these signs or 'read into' them different kinds of messages based on their exposure to different kinds of other texts from other sources. People who were exposed to conspiracy theories about COVID-19 on their social media feeds, for example, might have responded to such signs with scepticism or even anger.

At the same time, discourse does not just reflect reality, but also helps to *create* it. It was signs like this, for instance, that helped to reinforce the message that a pandemic was going on and that close contact with other people could be dangerous. And, of course, people complying with such signs and wearing masks found that their interactions with the people around them were in some ways different, since our facial expressions are important resources for communication (see unit A6).

Figure C1.3 is a similar sign that appeared during the pandemic in the Mount Vernon Triangle, a middle-class neighbourhood in Washington DC inhabited by well-off families and young professionals. How does this sign differ from the signs we analyzed above? Consider:

1 How are the different elements in the sign (words, fonts, colours, images) combined to make the text clear and understandable?
2 What are the people who created the text trying to do? What kind of relationship are they trying to create with their readers?
3 What does this sign tell us about the social context in which it appeared?

Another 'way in' to discourse analysis might be to apply the *four principles of discourse* discussed in unit A1 to a particular text or interaction. Look at the text in Figure C1.3 and consider the following questions:

1 Is there anything about the language that is ambiguous; what kinds of **inferences** do you need to make to understand it?
2 How is the meaning of the text dependent on the way it is situated in the physical and social world?
3 How do the authors of the text use language to talk about social identity?
4 Does the text involve more than one 'mode' of communication (e.g. verbal, visual, material)? How do the different modes work together?

Now, look at the sign in Figure C1.4 and analyze it using both the *three perspectives on discourse* and *the four principles of discourse*.

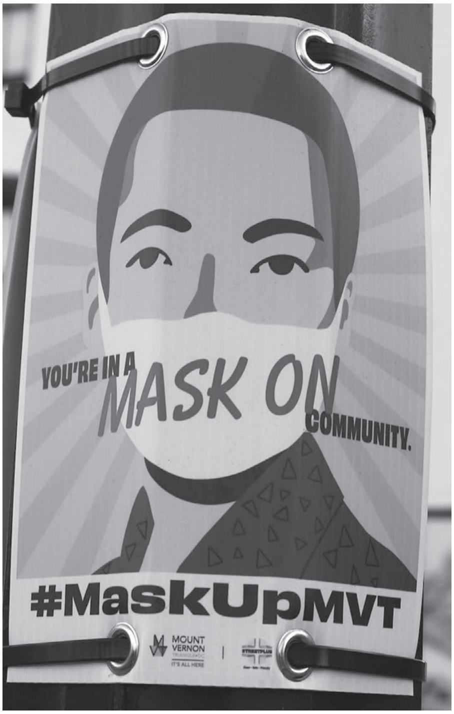

Figure C1.3 'You're in a Mask On Community' (Photo credit: Elvert Barnes CCBY SA 2.0 Attribution)

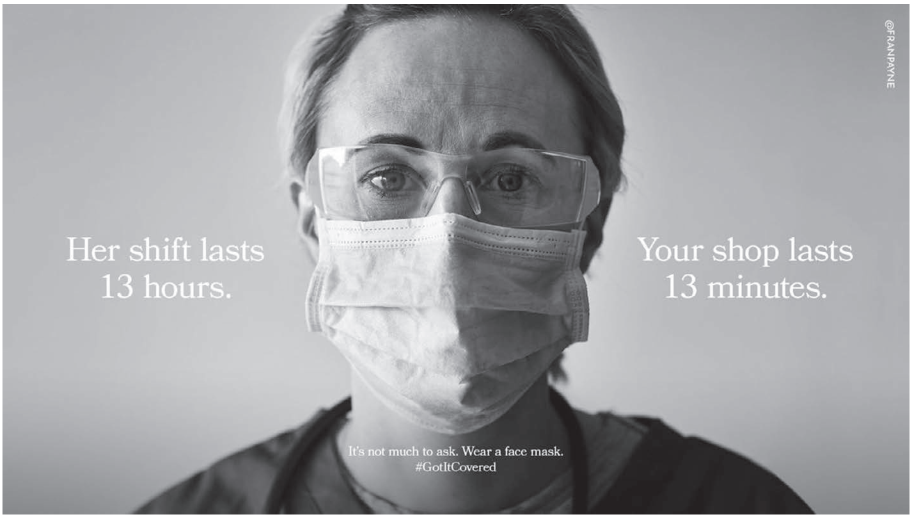

Figure C1.4 'Her shift last 13 hours ...' (Photo credit: Fran Payne)

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

ANALYSING TEXTURE

As I noted in unit B2, not only is *texture* (*cohesion*, *coherence*, and *intertextuality*) necessary to turn a collection of words or sentences into a *text*, but different kinds of texts—such as shopping lists, newspaper articles, and 'before and after ads'—have specific kinds of texture associated with them.

First, different kinds of texts tend to use different kinds of cohesive devices. Descriptive texts which give information about people or things such as encyclopaedia articles often make heavy use of pronoun reference since pronouns allow writers to refer to the person or thing being talked about without repeating his, her, or its name. Advertising texts, on the other hand, which describe products, are more likely to use repetition, since there are benefits to repeating the name of the product in this context. Legal texts also prefer repetition to reference since repeating a word rather than referring to it with a pronoun avoids ambiguity. Analytical and argumentative texts often make heavy use of *conjunction*, since making logical connections between ideas is usually central to the process of making an argument.

I also mentioned in unit B2 that different kinds of texts are based on different kinds of *generic frameworks*—they present information or actions in certain predictable sequences—and they trigger different kinds of *world knowledge*.

Finally, whilst nearly all texts exhibit *intertextuality*, they may make connections to other texts using different kinds of devices such as quotation, presupposition, or hashtags.

In order to explore these ideas further, consider the newspaper article in Text C2.1.

***Text C2.1 From the* Independent**

Baby dolphin dies after being passed around for selfies with tourists

Marine rescue group condemns 'selfish' holiday-makers who poked and took photos of 'terrified' calf after it washed up at beach

Chris Baynes, Wednesday 16 August 2017 14:29 BST 105 comments

Figure C2.1 One of the photos shows a child appearing to accidentally cover the dolphin's blowhole Equinac/Facebook (Reprinted with permission of Independent Digital News & Media Ltd)

1. A baby dolphin died after being passed around and photographed by tourists who found it stranded at a busy Spanish beach.
2. Curious holiday-makers flocked to examine the calf—some of them taking selfies with the creature—after it washed up in Mojácar, Almeira.
3. They were criticized by a marine wildlife rescue group, which said the dolphin would have been 'terrified' and may have been saved if beach-goers had been quicker to alert authorities.
4. Pictures emerged of bathers stroking the tiny mammal, young enough to still need breast-feeding, as it floated 'frightened and weak' in the shallows after being separated from its mother.
5. 'Once again we find that human beings are the most irrational species that exist,' wrote conservation group Equinac in an impassioned statement.
6. 'Many are unable to feel empathy for a living being alone, scared, starving, without his mother and terrified because many of you, in your selfishness, only want to photograph and touch it, even if the animal suffers from stress.'
7. The non-profit group said 'hundreds' of people had mobbed the dolphin and were 'obsessed' with touching and photographing the calf.
8. One picture appeared to show a child inadvertently covering the young animal's blowhole as they stroked it.
9. Equinac rescuers rushed to help the dolphin after a concerned beach-goer called Spain's 112 emergency number. But it was already dead by the time they arrived 15 minutes later.
10. 'Cetaceans are animals very susceptible to stress and … crowding them to take pictures and touching them causes them a very strong shock that greatly accelerates a cardiorespiratory failure, which is what finally happened,' said the marine rescue organization.
11. Rescuers retrieved the dolphin's corpse and are to conduct an autopsy.
12. Equinac also warned disturbing a protected species of dolphin could be a criminal offence.
13. Four species of dolphin are found off the coast of Almeira, along with porpoises and six species of whale.

Cohesion

Many of the cohesive devices that we discussed in unit B2 can be found in this article. Perhaps the most prevalent are *substitution* and *reference*. The noun 'baby dolphin' used in the headline, for example, is later substituted with 'the creature' (paragraph 2), and 'the tiny mammal' (paragraph 4). Pronouns are also used to refer back to participants that were mentioned earlier. 'They' at the beginning of paragraph 4 refers to the 'curious holiday-makers' in the previous paragraph. Connecting words such as conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs seem to be used much less frequently as cohesive devices in this text, but words referring to time such as 'after' sometimes play an important role in connecting clauses, as in paragraph 2 ('Curious holiday-makers flocked to examine the calf … *after* it washed up in Mojácar, Almeira'). Lexical cohesion, in the form of 'chains' of words having to do with particular 'semantic domains' also appears to play a role in giving this text 'texture.' One example is words having to do with negative emotions such as 'terrified' (paragraph 3), 'frightened' (paragraph 4), 'irrational' (paragraph 5), and 'scared,' 'terrified,' and 'stress' (paragraph 6).

Use these observations as a starting point for *mapping* the cohesion in this text.

- ❑ Circle all of the examples of substitution you can find and use lines to connect the words together with the words that they stand for.
- ❑ Put a rectangle around all of the pronouns and use lines to connect them to their **antecedents**.
- ❑ Find any connecting words you can (including conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs such as *and*, *but*, *after*, *before*, *also*).
- ❑ Choose one 'semantic domain' that you think is important in the text and list all of the words you can find that are related to this domain.
- ❑ What role does the picture at the beginning of the article have in contributing to the overall cohesion of the text? Can you find places in the article that refer specifically to objects and actions in the photograph or to the photograph itself?
- ❑ Discuss:
  - ❑ What are the most common cohesive devices in this text? What are the least common? Why do you think some devices are used more than others?
  - ❑ In what ways are types of cohesive devices used in this text typical of newspaper articles? Can you find similar patterns in other newspaper articles?

Coherence

The rich texture created by the combination of cohesive devices described above is not the only thing that holds this text together. It is also held together by the fact that we, as readers, recognize it to be a certain kind of text: a news article, and along with this recognition comes a set of expectations about what the purpose of the text is and how it will be structured. Most newspaper articles are structured based on what journalists have come to refer to as the 'inverted pyramid' (Pöttker 2003), a structure in which the main points of the story are summarized in the first paragraph (known as the 'summary news lead'), and the rest of the article is used to elaborate on these main points and give details. As in this article, quotations from people involved in the incident being reported on often appear near the end of stories.

A good example of how coherence works can be seen in the headline. We expect newspaper headlines to give us a short and pithy summary of the contents of the article. In fact, we sometimes feel that the information we get in headlines is sufficient to tell us 'what happened' so that we don't have to read the rest of the article. Most important, headlines provide us with a kind of framework or *schema* for navigating through the information in the article. The headline in the article above: 'Baby dolphin dies after being passed around for selfies with tourists' tells us the most important information about the story, in particular, what happened, why it happened, and who was involved. Many news stories also have secondary headlines, such as:

> Marine rescue group condemns 'selfish' holiday-makers who poked and took photos of 'terrified' calf after it washed up at beach

When we see such secondary headlines, we are likely to treat them as elaborations of the information that we learned in the primary headline. In this case, or example, the secondary headline contains a *commentary* on what happened by the marine rescue group, Equinac.

Finally, there is also a certain amount of *world knowledge* that you need to have in order to interpret this article as the authors intended. In particular you have to share with the authors *cultural models* having to do with things like dolphins, tourists, and selfies, models which, for example, characterize dolphins not just as 'good' animals that ought to be protected, but also as cute and cuddly, worthy subjects of tourists' snapshots, and models which see the taking of selfies both as a normal practice of holiday-makers and something that is sometimes associated with self-indulgence or self-absorption.

Consider the following questions:

- ❑ What is the overall order of information in the article? Does the order in which information appears reveal some sort of overall pattern or 'logic'?
- ❑ One of the particularly striking features of this text is that the paragraphs tend to be very short. Why do you think this is the case?
- ❑ In what ways is the overall structure or 'shape' of the article similar to other news articles you have read? Why do you think news articles are structured in this way? How are news stories structured differently from other kinds of stories?

Intertextuality

Another important aspect of 'texture' is *intertextuality*, the way texts are connected to other texts through quotations from and paraphrases of other texts. The text above, for example, achieves texture through the connections that it creates with a number of other texts: things people said, things Equinac posted on its Facebook page, and printed regulations about the treatment of wildlife. The main questions we need to ask about intertextuality are: Whose voices are represented in this text? How are they represented? and Whose voices are left out?

In the 'secondary headline' discussed above, for example, the words of the marine rescue group, Equinac, from the press release it posted on its Facebook page are *appropriated* into this text: The group is characterized as *condemning* the holiday-makers, calling them 'selfish' and saying that the dolphin was 'terrified.' This sentence illustrates some of the choices writers have to make when they use the words of others. Sometimes they can paraphrase them, for example, characterizing the statement by the marine rescue group as a *condemnation* of the tourists; and sometimes they can quote the words of others verbatim, as when the words 'selfish' and 'terrified' are put in quotes. There are many reasons why authors might make such choices. Direct quotes, for example, might lend an air of authority to a text by more directly linking it to its primary source. At the same time, such cases of intertextuality can also function to create links *within* a text. For example, the words quoted in the secondary headline are repeated in the article in the context of a longer quotation in paragraph 10. At the same time, there are no quotes from the tourists themselves. In other words, whilst they are the main topic of the article, and portrayed as the causes of the dolphin's death, none of them is afforded the chance to tell their 'side of the story.'

- ❑ Go through the article above and identify all the instances of intertextuality that you can find. Whose 'voices' are represented in this text? Whose voices are left out?

❑ Identify when the author of the article uses paraphrase and when he uses direct quotations. What do you think motivated these choices?

The main text that the article cites is Equinac's Facebook page, but if you go to that page, you find that there are actually several postings related to this incident posted before this article was published on 16 August 2017. Two posts appeared on 12 August, the first[1] with a picture of an Equinac member holding the dead dolphin along with text reporting many details about the incident that never made it into the news story, for example, the fact that the lifeguard was unable to control the crowd that gathered around the animal. The second[2] post on that day includes the photo that the *Independent* reprinted of a child covering the dolphin's breathing hole, with an angry statement condemning the people involved (see Figure C2.1). This was the post where many of the quotes for the newspaper article came. One thing you will notice is that this post is in Spanish, and so the author of the *Independent* article did not appropriate the *actual* words, but rather *translated* those words into English.

On 15 August, a day before the *Independent* article, the organization re-posted[3] a news story from another organization called Pardito Aminalista (PACMA), which recounts the same events detailed in the *Independent* article using similar words. The first paragraph of that story (translated from Spanish) reads:

> A small dolphin was stranded on a beach in Mojácar (Almeria), and was subjected to harassment by bathers, who took pictures with him and manipulated him to death.

Another source of the article might have been a later posting by Equinac of an 'official statement' on 16 August,[4] which also covers most of the information contained in the article.

Just as this text likely borrowed from a dense web of other texts, it itself also became part of a web of texts from which other texts—including other newspaper articles—inevitably borrowed—paraphrasing, interpreting, and evaluating the events

Figure C2.2 From Equinac's Facebook page in different ways, as, for example, the story posted on a website called *True Activist*, whose headline reads: 'Baby Dolphin Dies After Selfie-Obsessed Humans Surround It, Take Photos,' or the one posted on the site *Carbonated TV*, whose headline reads: 'Horrible Humans Kill Baby Dolphin After Passing It Around For Selfies.' Regular readers like you and me also have a hand in weaving these dense intertextual webs when we share and comment on such stories from our own social media accounts.

The main point I'm trying to make here is that it is often difficult to tell whose voices are represented in texts since the writers of many kinds of texts (including newspaper articles) are not always explicit about their sources. The information in the *Independent* article could have come from a range of different texts mentioned above, including other newspaper articles about this incident.

❑ Do an internet web search for '*baby dolphin* and *tourists* and *selfies*' and find as many articles about this incident as you can. Can you find differences between the ways different voices are represented in these different texts? Can you find any intertextual links between these texts?

*****

The text reproduced below (Text C2.2) is a different kind of text about a similar topic: an excerpt from the website of an organization called British Divers Marine Life Rescue explaining to people what to do if they find a stranded marine mammal on the beach. Look at this text and try to conduct the same kind of analysis we conducted above. Specifically, attempt to answer the following questions:

❑ What are the main cohesive devices used in the text? How are they different from those in the text analyzed above? Can you think of any reason for the difference?
❑ What sorts of expectations do readers bring to texts like this in terms of both the structure of the text and the world knowledge needed to interpret it, and how are these expectations reflected in the text?
❑ Does the text draw on other texts in the same way the text above does? Does it contain the 'voices' of different people?

Text C2.2 If you find a live stranded animal (British Divers Marine Rescue)

If you find a live stranded animal

Finding a stranded animal can be distressing. Though your first instinct may be to try to help it back into the water, you should never try to do this—they have been stranded for a reason and require urgent professional medical attention.

Keep your distance, and keep other people, dogs, and gulls away. They are wild animals so contact with or proximity to humans can add additional stress to an already distressing situation, and you also put yourself at risk of injury if the animal thrashes or tries to move. Direct contact can also transmit disease.

Contact the relevant organization as soon as possible using the details above. Note your location, the state of the tide, and any obvious injuries you can see.

Figure C2.3 Never try to put an animal back in the sea yourself. Always contact the relevant organization before trying to help (©Tanya Perdikou)

Do more activities in the online resources for this book.

ANALYSING GENRES

C3

Analysing genres involves more than just analysing the 'moves' in particular types of texts. It involves understanding how these text types function in social groups, how they reinforce and reflect the concerns of and social relationships in these groups, and how they change over time as societies and the groups within them change. Therefore, analysing genres requires as much attention to *social context* as it does to texts.

Part of this context includes other genres that the genre under consideration is related to. Genres are related to other genres in a number of different ways. First, actions or 'communicative events' associated with genres are usually part of larger *chains* of events that involve different genres. The videos we looked at in unit B3, for example, might be followed by comments from viewers, and might inspire viewers to engage in genres like 'coming out' discussions with their parents or friends. And so, just as moves in a genre are often arranged in a kind of sequential structure, genres themselves are also often related to one another in sequential chains based on the ways they are employed by people as they work to achieve larger communicative purposes.

Genres are also related to other genres in non-sequential relationships that are called *networks*. A job application letter, for example, is related to the job ad that prompted it, the applicant's résumé which might accompany the letter, and any letters of reference former employers or teachers of the applicant might have written in support of the application. The letter is also related to the letters of all of the other applicants who are applying for the same job. Genres are said to be linked together in *networks* when they have some sort of *intertextual* relationship with one another, that is, when one genre makes reference to another genre or when the users of a genre need to make reference to another genre in order to realize the communicative purpose for which the first genre is intended.

Genres can also be seen as existing in larger *genre ecologies* in which texts that are not directly related to one another in chains or networks can nevertheless affect one another

Figure C3.1 Review from Trip Advisor I

in sometimes subtle and sometimes dramatic ways. Like natural ecologies, genre ecologies are not static: conditions change; old discourse communities dissolve and new ones form; and genres themselves change and evolve as users creatively *bend* or *blend* them, or else become extinct if they can no longer fulfil the communicative goals of their users.

Genre analysis, therefore, must account not just for the way a particular genre is structured and its function in a particular discourse community, but also for the dynamic nature of the genre, how it has and continues to evolve in response to changing social conditions, the relationships it has to other genres past and present, and the multiple functions it might serve in multiple discourse communities.

One example of a genre that has evolved from earlier genres and also exists in a complex relationship with other genres are online restaurant reviews of the kind you might find on sites like *Trip Advisor*.

Consider the review in Figure C3.1 of a restaurant in New York City called *Ninja*

The first thing we might notice about online restaurant reviews such as this one is that although they are related to the kinds of restaurant reviews written for newspapers and food websites by professional restaurant reviewers and share some of the same features (such as a rating system), they are also very different in both structure and style. For one thing, they tend to be much shorter and written in a more informal style. They also tend to include more personal details about the writers.

If we were to do a 'move analysis' of this review, we might start with the notion that the purpose of a restaurant review is to *recommend* that people either go to the restaurant, or *not* go to the restaurant. The review above begins with a 'headline' ('Memorable') which, along with the four-star rating summarizes the recommendation of the review. The first part of the review *describes* the circumstances in which the restaurant was visited and the overall experience of dining there. The second part *informs* about the quality and prices of particular dishes. The last part gives an *overall evaluation* ('A good time was had by all').

But this review is also connected to other genres. It is connected to the menu of the restaurant, for example, from which information about prices and dishes can be

Figure C3.2 Review from Trip Advisor II

discerned, and it might be connected to genres like restaurant guidebooks which the writer may have used when deciding what restaurant to eat at. It is also connected to other reviews on Trip Advisor of this restaurant (and the rating given in this review will be aggregated with that of other reviews to produce an overall rating of the restaurant). This review might also lead to future genres such as comments or questions to 'Lisa R' who wrote the review, and positive reviews like this are sometimes incorporated into genres like advertisements for restaurants.

Understanding what *discourse community* is implicated in this review is also complex. An easy answer might be the discourse community of Trip Advisor users or the wider community of 'restaurant-goers.' However, there are other discourse communities that are 'gathered' by this particular review, such as the discourse community of parents looking for a suitable restaurant to take their children to.

Now look at another review of this restaurant (Figure C3.3) and answer the following questions:

- ❑ In what ways is the 'move structure' of this review similar to the one above? In what ways does it differ? Can you account for these differences?
- ❑ What other genres does this review link to? What is the nature of these links?

YouTube genres

Genres on YouTube are particularly good examples of new media genres that imitate old media genres that came before them and adapt to the affordances and constraints of digital media. They are also good examples of people trying to *do* specific things with language, showing themselves to be members of particular *discourse communities*, and using the genre to 'gather' members of these communities around them to interact with the texts they've created by 'liking' them and leaving comments. Finally, YouTube genres are often good examples of what Bhatia (2018: 324) calls 'creative interdiscursivity.' In other words, they often 'blend' different genres together or 'bend' the rules of existing genres, often because they have multiple audiences or multiple communicative purposes. Consider some of the YouTube genres you are familiar with and fill in the table below. You might visit YouTube and search for these genres by name to get some ideas.

Table C3.1 Analysing YouTube genres

Genre	*Beauty/ Makeup Videos*	*Unboxing/ 'Haul' Videos*	*Gaming Videos*	*'Coming Out' Videos*
What is are/the communicative purpose/s of the genre?				
What discourse community or communities does the genre 'gather around' it?				
What are the characteristic features of the genre? Does it follow a particular 'move structure'?				
Does the genre mix together different genres? Which ones? Why?				

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

C4 COMPETING DISCOURSES

In Sections A4 and B4, I discussed some of the main ways we can analyze texts in order to understand the kinds of ideologies they are promoting. These included:

- ❑ Examining how the text creates a certain 'version of reality' by representing people, things, and what they do to one another in certain ways ('whos doing whats').
- ❑ Examining how the text creates a relationship between the reader and the writer—how it makes available certain 'reading positions' for the reader or 'hails' the reader as a certain kind of person, often through the use of different 'voices' or what Gee calls 'social languages.'
- ❑ Examining how authors of texts *appropriate* and *represent* the words of other people.
- ❑ Examining how certain features in texts 'point to' or *index* things in the social world (such as certain kinds of people, certain kinds of relationships and certain kinds of situations), thus invoking particular 'Discourses.'

Two good sources of texts for **critical discourse analysis** are newspapers and websites where people representing different political ideologies or social positions describe or comment on the same social event or situation. The newspaper commentary below is from the local paper of the London borough of Tower Hamlets. In it, the mayor of the borough talks about the use of CCTV surveillance cameras in the town.

Text C4.1 Lutfur Rahman, Mayor of Tower Hamlets

In Tower Hamlets, the council has been making effective use of CCTV to tackle crime and make the borough a safer place to live, work and visit.

Live 24-hour monitoring of the CCTV system by council operators resulted in 837 proactive arrests in 2012, and 907 in 2011.

A proactive arrest happens when a council CCTV operator either alerts the police to an incident, or leads the police to a suspect after hearing a call out on the police radio and identifies the suspect using CCTV at the time of the incident.

Hundreds more arrests take place as a result of police officers reviewing video and suspects being identified at a later date.

CCTV is one of the most powerful tools to be developed during recent years to assist with efforts to combat crime and disorder.

One way to approach this text is to explore what kind of 'world' it is portraying, what kinds of people and things inhabit this world, what kinds of actions these people or things take and who or what exerts *agency* in these actions.

The most prominent participant in the text is the town council and 'council operators,' which 'make use' of CCTV cameras, 'monitor CCTV systems,' 'alert the police,' 'lead the police to suspects,' and 'make the borough safe.' In almost all cases, the council or 'council operators' are portrayed as *agents* in the clauses in which they appear (they are *doing the action* with which they are associated). Moreover, most of these actions are *material processes* ('physical' actions). Another prominent actor is the CCTV camera itself, which is portrayed as a 'tool' that the council uses to 'combat crime and disorder.' Other participants include 'suspects,' a generic class of people about which little information is given (including what they are suspected of or why they are suspicious); and the broad abstract noun 'crime,' which is similarly undefined. These participants are never in agentive positions. Versions of reality are defined as much by the participants that are *left out* as by those that are included. One important class of participants that *does not* appear in this text is 'citizens,' the residents of the borough who are not 'suspects' and whom the cameras are intended to protect (but who also might feel that they violate their privacy).

This text also contains many 'voices,' that is, words and ideas taken from other texts. What is striking is none of these words or ideas are attributed to anyone other than the author of the text. For instance, the statistics 'Live 24-hour monitoring of the CCTV system by council operators resulted in 837 proactive arrests in 2012, and 907 in 2011' must have come from somewhere, but the source of these statistics is not provided. Moreover, some of the words used in this text *index* broader Discourses. Words such as 'crime' and 'disorder,' for example, index a Discourse that might be called a 'law and order Discourse,' one that promotes a worldview in which obeying authority is seen as a key feature of a successful society and not doing so makes someone a dangerous 'suspect,' and in which any action taken to maintain 'order' is seen as justified, even when it involves compromising other social values like privacy.

Now look at the commentary below by an opponent of the CCTV cameras and perform a similar analysis, exploring what kind of 'world' this writer portrays and what kinds of people and things are included or excluded. Consider the following questions:

- ❑ Which participants are construed as agents, and what kinds of processes are they represented as performing?
- ❑ Whose voices are represented in this text? How are they represented and how does this representation serve to position the author (and reader) in relation to these voices?
- ❑ Do any of the words *index* particular kinds of people or particular Discourses?
- ❑ What can you say about how these two texts reflect the different ideologies and the different social agendas of the writers?

Text C4.2 Tahmeena Bax, a volunteer at the Newham Monitoring Project

Whilst most of us at Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) would agree that safety is a priority, we have doubts that increased CCTV is the way to deliver this. The cost to the community, both financial and in terms of intrusion, is potentially high. The question, therefore, is do the benefits outweigh the risks? Through our work at a community level, we come across divided views.

Support for cameras tends to come from those frustrated with inaction over antisocial behaviour. However, Newham already has 959 cameras—more than Birmingham and Liverpool combined.

Despite this high figure, of the 32,809 crimes recorded in Newham in 2012, less than one per cent of arrests resulted from this network. These statistics suggest that CCTV is neither an effective deterrent nor a quick-fix solution.

Any decision to extend the surveillance of citizens erodes the basic right to privacy. A common argument in favour of CCTV is: 'If you are doing nothing wrong, you have nothing to worry about.'

However, this does not answer the question: 'If you are doing nothing wrong, why are you being watched at all?'

Some may argue cameras don't discriminate in whom they film.

However, at NMP, we receive frequent complaints that cameras are installed in areas where communities already feel unfairly targeted by police or authorities and CCTV only serves to exasperate tensions and increase alienation.

'Five things I can't live without'

As we discussed in unit B4, one of the most important uses of *indexicality* in discourse is that it allows people to *invoke* certain cultural models or stereotypes very efficiently without having to spell them out. The French writing on the sign discussed in unit B4, for example, allows shop owners to efficiently invoke sophistication and cosmopolitanism to passers-by without having to spell it out (even though the sign would invoke something very different for people who actually understand French).

One place where people have to be very efficient in invoking cultural models is online dating advertisements. In an analysis of such advertisements, Melonie Fullick (2013) talks about one website that asks users to list 'five things I can't live without.' Fullick quotes one user who listed:

My Mac
The next bottle of wine
Business cards
My passport
A dinner companion (hate eating alone!)

Fullick analyzes this list as a list of *indexicals* which 'point to' certain stereotypes about gender and class and certain 'cultural models' about lifestyle and romance. She writes:

> Within a single line, (the poster) makes references that indicate an affiliation with and reliance on particular forms of technology (a trendy laptop); an appreciation for wine (as opposed to beer, which may be viewed as less 'classy' and also more 'male'); the importance of work and international travel; and a 'place' for a partner within a particular vision of urban living.
>
> (Fullick 2013: 555–556)

She compares this with a list from a female poster:

Crockpot
Guitar
Microphone
A Man (unfortunate but true …)
Spices

- ❑ Conduct a similar analysis of this list, exploring what kinds of traits or stereotypes each of these terms 'points to' and how, taken as a whole, the list promotes a particular set of *cultural models* associated with gender and romance.
- ❑ Now, look at the way people describe themselves on online dating sites or apps like Tinder that you have access to, or in profiles on social media sites such as Twitter. How do the kinds of words they use and objects and activities they include 'point to' certain 'types' of people and promote certain cultural models?

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

ANALYSING SPEECH ACTS

C5

In this unit we will consider how principles from pragmatics and conversation analysis can be applied to understanding how people make sense of potentially ambiguous contributions in social interaction. The kinds of contribution we will focus on are apologies and refusals.

Apologies are potentially ambiguous because, although they are often accompanied by rather explicit language such as 'I'm sorry' or 'I apologize,' this language, in the absence of other things such as an assumption of responsibility or a promise not to repeat the offending action, is sometimes not enough to make the apology felicitous. Furthermore, words such as 'I'm sorry' are sometimes used in cases where no apology is intended at all. Refusals are sometimes ambiguous because they are often delivered in an indirect fashion: Because refusals constitute a *dispreferred* response to a request, people usually try to 'soften' or 'mitigate' their refusals or even avoid refusing altogether and instead use some other means to 'hint' that they do not wish to carry out a request. Refusals can be particularly important speech acts in certain situations which might involve negotiations of power or a person's ability to maintain their personal autonomy, freedom of choice, or integrity, as we will see below. Related to refusals is 'consent,' the speech act by which people agree to do something or give permission for something to happen. 'Consent' can also be a tricky speech act since in many situations consent is inferred when there is a lack of refusal, and in other situations, consent is 'coerced' through the employment of various strategies that make it difficult for people to understand exactly what they are consenting to, as when internet companies ask you to 'Agree' to 'Terms and Conditions' that you couldn't possibly understand and don't have the time to read.

Interpreting apologies

Apologies are among the most studied kinds of speech act. Despite this, because of the complexity and context-dependent nature of apologies, there is still considerable disagreement among scholars as to the conditions that must be present to make an apology felicitous. Part of the reason for this is that people themselves vary considerably in terms of what they require to be 'satisfied' by another's attempt at apologizing in different situations. Consider the following conversation):

A: You forgot!
B: Yes. I am sorry.
A: You're always doing it.
B: I know.

(from Schegloff 1988)

As analysts looking at this conversation with no knowledge of the context in which it takes place, we must rely on the sequential placement of the utterances in order to make sense of what the speakers mean by their words. In particular, the phrase 'I am sorry' in B's utterance in the second line helps us to make sense of A's previous utterance ('You forgot') as a 'complaint' rather than as simply an assertion. At the very least, we can be sure that B has taken this utterance to be a complaint. Furthermore, coming as it does after a statement about his or her own behaviour ('You forgot!'), rather than a statement about something or somebody else (such as 'It's raining'), we are able to interpret B's statement I am sorry' as an apology rather than an expression of sympathy. Finally, we are able to interpret B's statement as an apology because A appears to interpret it in that way.

At the same time, however, A does not fully 'accept' B's apology: rather than saying something such as, 'It's okay,' they make yet another assertion ('You're always doing it'), which we also interpret as a complaint, or rather, an elaboration on the first complaint. This is not the preferred response to an apology (which is an acceptance of the apology) and thus leads B to infer that further work has to be performed on the apology front. Thus B's next contribution ('I know') is offered not as a simple statement of fact or agreement but as a further *admission* of guilt, an elaboration of the original apology.

The important thing to notice about this exchange is that the statement 'I am sorry' is apparently not sufficient to successfully perform the apology. In the fist instance it is also accompanied by an acknowledgement of fault ('Yes'), but even this is not enough to elicit A's acceptance of the apology. B is also required to acknowledge an even greater fault (that their forgetting is not a momentary lapse but a habitual behaviour). Therefore, even when an utterance *seems* to satisfy a set of objective conditions for an apology, there is no guarantee that it will be accepted as such by the recipient.

A number of scholars have attempted to formulate the *felicity conditions* for apologies. Owen (1983), for example, offers this simple set of criteria:

- ❑ The act A specified in the propositional content is an offence against addressee H.
- ❑ H would have preferred S's not doing A to S's doing A, and S believes H would have preferred S's not doing A to his doing A.
- ❑ A does not benefit H, and S believes A does not benefit H.
- ❑ S regrets (is sorry for) having done A.
- ❑ (The utterance) counts as an expression of regret by S for having done A.

There are at least two potential problems with this set of conditions. The first is that the propositional content of apologies (what is being apologized for) is often not explicitly stated in the apology itself but rather implied based on some previous action or utterance, and when it is stated, even if it represents an offence against the addressee, it may not be exactly the offence for which the addressee is seeking an apology. B in the above example might say, 'I'm sorry for upsetting you,' which is quite different from saying 'I'm sorry I forgot.'

The second problem has to do with what needs to be done in order for the utterance to 'count' as an expression of regret. As we saw above, the utterance 'I am sorry,' which is clearly an expression of regret, is not always sufficient to accomplish an apology. At the same time, there are many instances in which 'regret' is expressed which would not be considered apologies. For example, a job applicant might receive a letter with the sentence, 'We regret to inform you that your application has not been accepted.' Even though this is an explicit expression of 'regret,' and the addressee might indeed regard the rejection as an offence, few people would regard this as a true apology.

Cohen et al. (1986) have pointed out that apologies often involve one or more of the following verbal strategies:

- ❑ an expression of apology ('I am sorry');
- ❑ an explanation or account of the situation ('I've had a lot on my mind lately');
- ❑ an acknowledgement of responsibility (I know);
- ❑ an offer of repair ('how can I make it up to you?');
- ❑ a promise of forbearance ('I'll never do it again').

We might say that a 'perfect' apology contains all of these elements, even when some or most of them are implicit rather than stated outright. For something to have the 'force of the apology', however, only one of these strategies is necessary. In some cases, in which only one strategy is used, however, the speaker leaves it up to the addressee to infer that an apology has been made by referring to the conversational maxims. I might, for example, say, 'I feel terrible about shouting at you yesterday, and I'd like to make it up to you,' flouting the maxim of relevance (my internal state of mind may not seem directly relevant to our conversation), leading my interlocutor to take the statement as implying something more than a simple assertion. At the same time, sometimes the presence of one of these strategies might be the very thing that causes my interlocuter to consider my apology insufficient or insincere. Explanations and accounts are especially dangerous in this regard since they can sometimes make it sound as if I am justifying my behaviour rather than taking responsibility for it.

The TikTok creator and licensed therapist Jeff Guenther (@therapyjeff) has a series of videos in which he teaches people how to successfully deliver apologies and to recognize 'non-apologies.' Below (Text C5.1) is the transcript of a video[5] he made called 'Four examples of non-apologies that sound like real apologies.'

Text C5.1 Four examples of non-apologies that sound like real apologies (Jeff Guenther)

Four examples of non-apologies that sound like real apologies: One, let's start with the all-time classic, 'I'm sorry you feel that way.' This one is great because it kind of sounds like they're sorry for doing the thing that hurt you but they're not taking accountability for their harmful actions *at all*, and, bonus points, 'cause it can sound really condescending at the same time. Two: 'I'm sorry but you don't know how to take a joke.' Oh, no, I know how to take a joke, but there's a difference between a joke that we're all in on together and you being mean. You're just being mean, and apparently trying to gaslight me now. Three, 'I'm sorry, but there are two sides to the story.' Babe, there are a million sides to the story. That's not the point. The point is that my side of the story includes you hurting my feelings, and I need you to take responsibility for that. Four: my personal fave, 'Mistakes were made.' Okay, this one always makes me smile, and, honestly, you're halfway there … you just have to express regret and take the blame for the mistake you *personally* made. If you could just do that, we could reconnect. Tell me what your favourite non-apology in the comments.

Based on Guenther's video, discuss the following:

- ❑ What are the features of the different 'non-apologies' that Guenther talks about that makes them 'non-apologies'? In what ways might they fail to meet the felicity conditions for an apology discussed above?

- ❑ Can you give examples of 'non-apologies' that sound like 'real apologies' that you have heard? What made them 'non-apologies.'
- ❑ Based on Guenther's discussion, can you *revise* Owen's set of felicity conditions, especially the last two conditions?
- ❑ Can your revised set of felicity conditions be applied to all situations, or does the application of these felicity conditions depend on a) the person to whom you are apologizing and/or b) the thing you are apologizing for?

Sometimes, TikTok creators and other social media influencers end up having to apologize for something they said or did which offended their followers. Delivering these apologies in a *felicitous* way is particularly important for these individuals since, failure to do so can result in a loss of followers or in being 'cancelled.' At the same time, many apology videos from prominent influencers have been criticized for being insincere or otherwise not fulfilling the felicity conditions for a 'real apology.' Some TikTok creators have posted parodies of these influencer 'non-apology videos.' Below is a transcript from one of these by Grace Long (@gdiddlydog) called 'influencer posts apology video.'[6]

Text C5.2 Influencer posts apology video (Grace Long)

(heavy sigh, sniffing) I didn't think that I'd have to make a video about this, but clearly people are upset. (hugging pillow) Apparently I said a word that I wasn't supposed to say … bear in mind this was *six* years ago, and I … I don't even remember saying it. What's even worse is people are now harassing me in my DMs and (weeping) sorry … Okay, I am not a bad person. I share petitions on my Instagram. I went to the protest, okay? There's *visual* evidence of that. And like the last thing I want to do is offend you guys because you guys have given me so much … money. I just feel like, if someone had called me something six years ago, like, life is so precious, in that why would you fixate on that one thing? Move on! Anyway, if I have offended you, I … from the bottom of my heart, I'm *so* sorry … that you feel that way.

- ❑ Read through this transcript or watch the video online and point out the features that make this apology *infelicitous*.
- ❑ Do you think the strategies used in this video reflect the ways real influencers sometimes apologize? Can you give some examples? Can you think of an example of what you would consider a 'successful' influencer apology?
- ❑ Watch more parodies of influencer 'non-apologies' by searching the hashtag '#influencer apologies be like.' If you like, produce your own parody of an influencer, celebrity, or politician 'non-apology.'

Saying 'no'

In unit B5 we talked about two different perspectives on how people make sense of what people mean by what they say: pragmatics and conversation analysis. According to pragmatics, people figure out what other people mean based on analysing the immediate context of the utterance (who said it, to whom it was said, and what was happening in the relationship between them or in the physical environment when it was said and whether or not people are conforming to some very basic expectations about conversation). According to conversation analysis, people figure out what other people mean by looking at what was said before and making their utterances relevant within a particular *sequence* of utterances. Both of these perspectives, however, tend to ignore another very important aspect of the way people make sense of other people's utterances, the fact that sometimes utterances make sense because of our broader understanding of what certain kinds of people are supposed to say in certain kinds of situations.

In earlier units (A4, B2, B4, C4) I talked about how *cultural models*—deep-seated, sometimes unconscious expectations about how the social world is organized and how certain kinds of people are supposed to act—can affect how people design and interpret written texts. In spoken discourse, we might talk about *cultural scripts*, deep-seated expectations about who should say what to whom, when, where, and how (see also units A7 and B7). In a way, the adjacency pairs that conversation analysts talk about are kinds of *cultural scripts*; we can think of them as 'mini-scripts': for example, exchanges such as: 'A: Thank you, B: You're welcome,' and 'A: Would you like a piece of cake,' 'B: Yes, I'd love one.' Not only do these scripts come with set phrases that signal to others what kind of utterance is being produced (such as an 'offer' or a 'request'), but they are also governed by the expectations about *preferred responses* (see unit B5), so that certain responses, such as accepting an invitation or offer, are considered culturally more appropriate. One important thing to remember about such cultural scripts is that they are *cultural*, and what is considered a *preferred* response in one culture might actually be a *dispreferred* one in others. Whereas the preferred response to a complement in Anglo cultures is to accept it with words such as 'thank you,' in other cultures, including some cultures in East Asia, the preferred response is to refuse the complement and try to undermine the truth of the proposition on which it is based as a way of displaying humility. This whole idea of preferred responses and their relationship to cultural scripts is highly relevant to the speech act of *refusal*. Refusals are among the most difficult speech acts to deliver. It is never pleasant to disappoint someone, to turn down the offer for a job, for example, to turn down someone who wants to date you but that you don't fancy, or even to refuse to give someone a pen if they need one. In some cases, such as when an utterance is interpreted as an order, the hearer might find it almost impossible to refuse. Refusals are *dispreferred responses* to requests or invitations because they threaten the 'face' (see units A6 and B6) of the person who has made the request or issued the invitation, and they usually require an explanation as well as some other kind of speech act to soften the blow, such as an apology ('I'm sorry. I'm afraid I only have one pen, and I need it to take the exam.') or a complement ('You're a really nice guy, but I already have a boyfriend').

One area of life where refusals are particularly important is in the area of sexual interaction. Of course, it is important whenever people engage in sexual activity that both parties have consented to it, and to force someone to have sex without their consent is a crime. But the way consent and refusal work can be extremely complicated and depends a great deal on the context, including the relationship between the parties (for example, are they long time partners or have they just met?), the conditions under which the sexual activity is taking place (for example, are they drunk or sober?), and the nature of the sexual activity itself.

Experts like campus counsellors often advise people, particularly women, to 'just say no' when they wish to refuse sexual activity, but sometimes this is not so simple. One reason for this is that, because of a deep-seated cultural script in some societies that says that women should display reluctance to have sex (even when they want to), some men think that 'no' might mean 'yes' or 'maybe.' Another problem, pointed out by the feminist conversation analysts Celia Kitzinger and Hannah Frith (1999) is that refusals are particularly complex speech acts to produce since they are *dispreferred responses* that might hurt the feelings of the other party; in most other kinds of situations (such as refusing the offer of a piece of cake), refusals usually incorporate things like delays, hedges, apologies, and accounts, and quite often people try to refuse *without* saying 'no.' Kitzinger and Firth argue that, in an ideal world, women should not have to say 'no' to be 'heard' as refusing sex—these indirect forms of refusal should suffice, as they do in most other situations. Of course, in such cases it is always best to be as clear as possible, but Kitzinger and Frith do show us why sometimes it might be 'conversationally awkward' for a woman to say 'no' to sexual advances, even when she wants to refuse, and why saying no often involves attempts to be 'tactful,' which, in the context of sex, might send the wrong message.

The issues of what constitutes sexual consent, how people ought to communicate consent, and the kinds of utterances and actions that people might interpret as signalling consent are thorny ones. How can the tools of conversation analysis and pragmatics help us to sort out these issues? Specifically, we can ask:

- ❑ What kinds of utterances are needed to signal consent? Is it possible to signal consent non-verbally?
- ❑ What other *felicity conditions* are necessary to make the utterances or non-verbal behaviours you discussed above successfully perform the speech act of consent?
- ❑ Is there something about the *sequencing* of certain utterances or behaviours, their function in adjacency pairs, or the preference structure of these pairs that might affect how people might give or refuse consent or interpret or misinterpret the signals of others?

Look at the text below published by the University of Pittsburgh-Bradford. How does it compare to your own analysis? Can you think of any challenges you might have implementing this advice from the point of view of pragmatics or conversation analysis? How might you deal with these challenges?

Text C5.2 What is consent? (University of Pittsburgh-Bradford)

What is consent?

Pitt-Bradford defines consent as an informed, affirmative decision made freely and actively by all parties to engage in mutually acceptable sexual activity. Consent is given by clear words or actions and may not be inferred

from silence, passivity, or lack of resistance alone. Existence of a current or previous dating, marital, and/or sexual relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent to additional sexual activity. Consent to one type of sexual activity does not imply consent to other types of sexual activity.

Only 'YES' means 'YES.' The absence of 'NO' does not mean 'YES'!

Someone who is unconscious, asleep, or otherwise mentally or physically incapacitated, whether due to alcohol, drugs, or some other condition, cannot give consent. Consent cannot be obtained by force, intimidation, threat, coercion, isolation, or confinement. Agreement obtained under such conditions does not constitute consent.

http://www.upb.pitt.edu/oaadi/

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

C6 CONVERSATIONAL STRATEGIES ONLINE

In this unit you will have a chance to apply some of the ideas about conversational strategies that were introduced in A6 and B6. The kinds of interactions I would like to explore here, however, are not face-to-face conversations, but rather computer-mediated interactions, in particular, interactions using Instagram and WhatsApp.

As noted in unit A6, mediated interactions are different from face-to-face spoken conversations in a number of ways. For one thing, in some kinds of computer-mediated communication, people type their 'utterances' rather than speaking them, and in other kinds, images like selfies actually count as 'utterances.' In addition, these interactions rarely involve the same kind of synchrony that face-to-face conversation does. Whereas face-to-face interactions occur in 'real time,' giving us access to other people's utterances as they are forming them, most computer-mediated interactions are asynchronous, involving a 'time lag' between production and reception, whether it be the momentary lag between the time when one party types a message and the other person reads it, which we experience in instant messaging and texting, or the much longer time lags associated with social networking sites like Instagram.

Perhaps the most important difference between face-to-face interaction and text-based computer-mediated interactions is that the non-verbal and paralinguistic resources available in face-to-face communication are not available. This is significant because these are precisely the resources people often use as *contextualization cues* to frame their conversational activities, and they can also play an important role in the face strategies of *involvement* and *independence*. Users of text-based communication tools, then, need to make use of different resources such as graphics, emoticons, orthography, punctuation, and hashtags to fulfil the functions that non-verbal and paralinguistic communication do in face-to-face encounters. In image-based computer-mediated communication, such as messages we post on Instagram or Snapchat, it is often gestures, facial expressions, or other visual elements that serve as the main message, and the words, in the form or captions or hashtags, that function to *contextualize* the image, to provide information about how it should be interpreted, or to manage the relationship between the poster and the viewer of the image.

'Mixed messages' on Instagram

Perhaps more than any other kind of computer-mediated communication, social networking platforms are designed to give users tools to communicate about and manage their social relationships with others. The content that we post to social media such as selfies and photos of fancy meals we have eaten or expensive presents our romantic partners have given us are designed to construct positive self-presentations, and the way we respond to other people's posts by 'liking' or commenting on them are usually designed to support their positive self-presentations. Not surprisingly, social media platforms are dominated by what we called in unit B6 *involvement strategies*, discursive strategies designed to communicate our 'closeness' or 'friendliness' with other people. But, of course, it is much more complicated than that. Sometimes people use *independence strategies* on social media, showing respect for others through things like apologies. And sometimes, people on social media are not interested in enhancing other people's positive self-presentations at all and go out of their way to be *impolite* through strategies like 'flaming,' 'trolling,' and 'ghosting.' Perhaps most often, however, people send 'mixed messages.' One reason for this is that human relationships are complicated and often require nuanced ways of communicating, and another reason is that many of the kinds of communication that we engage in on social media platforms such as explicit self-promotion are inherently awkward, requiring that we *frame* them carefully in order not to inadvertently presenting ourselves in a poor light. Producing 'mixed messages' is also a way to 'get away' with engaging in inappropriate behaviour as, for instance, when people frame hateful speech as 'joking.' In their book *The Ambivalent Internet: Mischief, oddity and antagonism online*, media scholars Witney Phillips and Ryan Milner argue that most online communication is characterized by ambiguity or irony. It is precisely the kinds of strategies we talked about in unit B6, face strategies, framing, and positioning, that are central to the strategic production of mixed messages.

One of the main tools users of social media platforms such as Instagram use to signal 'what they are doing and who they are being' is the hashtag. Hashtags have multiple functions. Sometimes they simply serve to indicate the 'topic' of somebody's post, but more often they also serve to achieve some kind of *relational work* between a poster and their audience or to *contextualize* their post in some way. Sometimes this relational work is simply a matter of creating what Michelle Zappavigna (2012) calls 'ambient affiliation,' a sense of 'belonging' to the same group through expressions of common interests or common stances. Other times, however, hashtags are tools posters use to manage their relationships of power or distance with their followers or to mitigate possible 'face threats' that may have been created by the content of their post.

One example of a hashtag that might send a 'mixed message' is the hashtag #uglyselfie, which is sometimes attached to selfies in which posters seem to be intentionally making themselves look 'ugly,' and sometimes to selfies that don't seem to be particularly ugly. The discourse analyst Ruth Page (2019) has done an extensive study of this hashtag on Instagram and found that people use it in a variety of ways. They might, for example, use it in order to elicit compliments from their followers (such as, 'actually, you look great!'), to show themselves as 'real' and 'authentic,' to be funny, to avoid seeming vain by engaging in self-deprecation, or to engage in 'troubles talk' and elicit understanding or sympathy from their audience. Look at some examples from Page's study below and use some of the tools that you learned about in unit B6 to analyze them. Specifically, ask yourself:

- ❑ How does the poster use this hashtag to show 'what they are doing'? Does the 'framing' made possible by this hashtag alter the way people might interpret the message?
- ❑ How does the poster use this hashtag to show 'who they are being' and what kind of relationship they have with the viewers of the image? In particular, does the hashtag perform any kind of *facework* (e.g. does it signal friendliness, respect, or serve to mitigate some kind of threat to either the poster or the viewer's face?).
- ❑ Does this hashtag along with the content of the post invoke a particular *storyline* within which the poster is *positioning* themselves and their audience?

Text C6.1 Instagram posts using the hashtag #uglyselfie (from Page 2019)

a) Ugly ass selfie. But haven't posted in a while, so hi! #ugly selfie [image of poster that is not particularly ugly]

b) I wanted to take an Ugly Selfie today. Luckily, I had just eaten something spicy and my nose was runny. Luckily, this long string of snot creeped out at the perfect moment to make this picture 'extra special.' Luckily, I love myself enough to know that no matter how awful this picture is … I'm still the sexiest I've ever been in my entire life. Cute selfies are too easy. If you're feeling ultra sexy and sleek today … maybe go ahead and post an ugly selfie. It's amazing how incredible you'll feel afterwards. Mega bonus would be laughing so hard in the process that you fart. I love you … #uglyselfie #wokeasswoman #wokeaf #moveandshift #awakening #spiritualandproud #bonergraveyard [image of poster making an exaggerated 'ugly' facial expression]

c) So, haven't posted in a few, because this happened! Not the best picture to post, but its real life! I had my AICD implanted on Thursday 11/28 and will be recovering for the next 6–9 weeks. Although sore. I feel ok. I Thank Jesus for guiding my surgeon's hands, the nurses and anesthesiologist and Electrophysiologists who did my surgery and take care of so many others like me!! My ejection fraction was down to 15% … I could have (and am still at risk for) sudden cardiac death, and now, with this, I have a chance to live longer. I FEEL SO BLESSED!! #PraisetheLord #Blessed #Godisgood #Reallife #LovetheLord #Heismystrength #uglyselfie #heartsurgery #Notasbadasitlooks [image of poster's surgery scar]

Another example of a hashtag that sends a 'mixed message' is the hashtag #sorrynot-sorry. In unit C5 we talked about 'non-apologies,' but in the examples that we looked at there, at least the speakers were pretending that their 'non-apologies' were 'real apologies.' In using the hashtag #sorrynotsorry, however, posters seem to be explicating signalling their insincerity or being blatantly impolite. In his study of this hashtag on Instagram, David Matley (2018b) (see also unit D6) argues that it is often much more complicated. The hashtag #sorrynotsorry, he argues, is frequently used as a form of 'strategic ambiguity,' a way of being 'polite' (by saying 'sorry') and 'impolite' (by saying 'not sorry') at the same time. It can frame an utterance or image as aggressive, as playful, or even as both. Look at the examples below from Matley's study and analyze them using the same set of questions:

- ❑ How does the poster use this hashtag to show 'what they are doing'? Does the 'framing' made possible by this hashtag alter the way people might interpret the message?
- ❑ How does the poster use this hashtag to show 'who they are being' and what kind of relationship they have with the viewers of the image? In particular, does the hashtag perform any kind of *facework* (e.g. does it signal friendliness, respect, or serve to mitigate some kind of threat to either the poster or the viewer's face?).
- ❑ Does this hashtag along with the content of the post invoke a particular *storyline* within which the poster is *positioning* themselves and their audience?

Text C6.2 Instagram posts using the hashtag #sorrynotsorry (from Matley 2018b)

a) Bad hair day #sorrynotsorry [selfie]
b) I look angry but my hair's on point, so #sorrynotsorry #greathairday #ellentracylipstick #restingbitchface #selfie [selfie]
c) I made a total stranger take this picture of me 😂#shameless #sorrynot-sorry [image of poster in tourist location]
d) #sorrynotsorry about all the flower pics. It's the most wonderful time of the year. #poppy #poppieswillmakeyousleep [image of flowers]
e) Haters are going to hate. Thing is I don't care the more haters the better #sorrynotsorry #suckitupbuttercup #mylifemybusiness #peopletalk #smalltownproblems [Meme reading 'Fellas, if you got 20 haters, you need 40 of them mother fuckers before summer time']

Contextualization cues in WhatsApp

As I said above, text-based communication using applications like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger differs from face-to-face conversation in that users do not have access to many of the resources normally used to issue contextualization cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and paralinguistic signals. As a result, they have, over the years, developed a multitude of other ways with which to frame and reframe their utterances, including emojis, screen names, status updates, unconventional spellings, creative use of punctuation, and code-mixing (the mixing of words from different languages). A number of scholars (see, for example, Danet *et al.* 1997; Herring 2001) have shown how users of chat and messaging systems use such cues to signal 'what's going on' in online interaction.

Below is an example of how such resources can be used as *contextualization cues* in a WhatsApp exchange between a woman named Elaine and her boyfriend in which they discuss her Christmas present. Giving gifts is, in most cultures, a complex ritual which is itself a form of communication, and there are different conventions regarding how it should be done. In some cases, parties agree among themselves what gifts should be exchanged, or they explicitly inform others about what gifts they want (sometimes though services like Amazon 'Wish List'), but in other cases, parties are expected to

Figure C6.1 WhatsApp conversation

Figure C6.2 Emojis

surprise each other, and the choice of gift is meant to communicate how intimately one person knows the other. In any event, talking about gift giving can be awkward. In the conversation below, Elaine's boyfriend uses emojis to show his embarrassment (and 'panic') at not having chosen a gift for her, and his desperation when she doesn't tell him what she wants. These emojis don't mean that he really is as panicked or as desperate as the expressions on the faces of the emojis imply. Rather, he is using the emojis to *reframe* what might otherwise be a serious conversation into a kind of dramatic performance. As for Elaine, she uses her emojis in two ways. First she uses a 'thinking emoji' to playfully tell him to think harder about what to get her, and, at the end of the conversation, and she uses a 'grimacing face' emoji to frame her request for him to save the receipts as slightly embarrassing (since the request implies that she does not trust him to choose a suitable gift).

- ❑ Choose a message which you have sent to a friend via WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, or some other messaging app.) and discuss how the message could be 'framed' differently by attaching to it one of the emojis from the range of choices below (Figure C6.2).
- ❑ Save a WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger conversation as a 'history file' and analyze it in terms of how things such as code choice, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and emoticons are used to strategically frame and reframe messages.

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

C7 ANALYSING CONTEXTS

Analysing the communicative competence that members of a particular speech community bring to a particular speech event requires more than just the analysis of texts or transcripts (though one can often tell a lot from such an analysis). It requires actually *observing* people interacting in the speech event and talking to them about what they think they need to know in order to participate in it successfully. Often one must talk with multiple participants in order to find out what it is like for people playing different roles in the event.

The anthropologist Gregory Bateson and the psychiatrist Jurgen Ruesch (Ruesch and Bateson 1968 [1951]) say that there are at least four kinds of information an ethnographer should gather about a speech event: 1) members' generalizations (what participants think other people need to know and do to participate in the speech event); 2) individual experiences (the specific, concrete knowledge and experiences of individual people who have participated in the speech event in the past); 3) 'objective' observation (the observation of people participating in the speech event); and 4) the analyst's comparison of what he or she has observed and heard from participants with his or her own knowledge and behaviour in similar speech events in his or her own speech community. Sometimes these different kinds of information contradict one another: participants, for example, may attribute certain behaviour to other members of their speech community but say that they themselves do things differently, or they may say they behave in a particular way but can be observed behaving in an entirely different way. The important thing for the analyst is not to privilege any of these four kinds of information, but to take them together in order to get a full picture of what is going on from the point of view of the participants. It is important to remember that the ethnographer of speaking is less interested in what is 'objectively' occurring in a speech event as in what participants *think* is occurring and what they need to *know* to participate as legitimate members of their group.

Sample analysis: 'Don't bite my shit'

It would be impossible to conduct a full ethnographic analysis of a speech event in the space of this unit. What I can do, however, is discuss the meaning and significance of a particular utterance in the social and cultural context in which it occurs. The utterance, one which I heard frequently during my ethnographic study of urban skateboarders in Hong Kong (reported in Jones 2008, 2011), is: 'Hey man, don't bite my shit.' I heard this utterance or some variation of it many times during my fieldwork, sometimes uttered in a playful manner and sometimes with deadly seriousness.

One way of trying to understand the meaning of this phrase might be to look it up in the dictionary. According to the Urban Dictionary (www.urbandictionary.com), a popular internet dictionary of slang, *bite my shit* means:

> to steal originality or to get on someone's case, depending on context.

Whilst this definition can give us some insights into the possible meaning of the phrase when used by the skateboarders I observed, we can't really tell which of the two definitions apply without, as the entry itself states, referring to the *context*. Just knowing the meaning of 'don't bite my shit' is not enough. What we really need to know is how it is *used*: who says it to whom, when, where, and how and to what effect? In order to know this, it is necessary to understand something about the *cultural* context in which it occurs.

Skateboarding in Hong Kong, as in most places, takes place within the context of a speech situation called a 'skate session.' These sessions usually occur at skate parks, but sometimes occur in other places such as on sidewalks, in parking lots and in city squares. Skaters regard the skating that goes on in parks and that which goes on in these other places to be two different *genres* of skating, one which is called 'park skating' and the other which is called 'street skating.' In Hong Kong, 'park skating' always occurs during the day when the skate parks are open and 'street skating' almost always occurs at night when fewer people are around to interfere with the activity. Skate sessions can last many hours and sometimes involve skaters moving from setting to setting. They may, for example, begin a session in the skate park in the afternoon and then move to the street after the skate park closes (*setting*).

Skaters generally participate in skate sessions in 'crews' or 'posses,' groups of people who usually skate together and who often share a certain style of dressing or acting (for example 'punk' or 'hip-hop') and are usually of a similar level of skill (*participants*). People hardly ever skate alone. One reason for this is that among the main aims of a skating session is to let others witness one performing daring or difficult tricks (*ends*). This aim of making oneself a spectacle for others is reinforced by the fact that skaters often bring video cameras with them during skate sessions to film one another (*instrumentalities*).

At a skate park at any given time there are likely to be multiple 'crews' and one of the core competencies for members of this community is understanding how to manage the use of space in order to avoid conflicts among crews. In street skating sessions these conflicts can sometimes become intense if one crew claims the exclusive right to skate at a particular spot and tries to deny access to other crews. At skate parks, this does not happen since these parks are public property and the right for all skaters to use them is policed by park attendants and security guards. Therefore, different crews must cooperate and carefully negotiate the use of space (*norms*).

Skate sessions normally consist of multiple 'speech events' including conversations, horseplay, games of 'SKATE' (a highly structured game in which skaters compete in performing tricks), and 'doing lines.' 'Doing lines' involves skaters taking turns executing sequences of 'tricks' (many of which have standard names such as 'ollie' and 'kickflip') upon various obstacles (such as rails, stairs, and ramps). Skaters work to compose lines which showcase their skill and imagination. Often members of different crews will occupy different parts of the park and content themselves with different obstacles. Sometimes, however, people from different crews make use of the same obstacle, having to take turns with one another (*act sequence*). It is in the mechanism of turn-taking among members of different crews that the notion of 'biting someone's shit' becomes relevant.

'Biting someone's shit' in the context of the 'speech event' of 'doing lines' refers to the action of imitating or repeating the line executed by the previous person in the queue.

The meaning of this action depends crucially on the relationship between the person who does it and the person whose line has been imitated. When it is done by a member of a different crew, it can be taken as a challenge or sign of disrespect—a transgression of the rules of etiquette associated with 'doing lines.' In this case, the utterance 'Hey man, don't bite my shit,' can be interpreted as a warning or a threat. In cases where the person who 'bites one's shit' is a member of one's own crew, it can be seen as a matter of friendly competition or even a way of showing respect for one's crew member by emulating him. In this case, the utterance 'Hey man, don't bite my shit,' might be uttered in a more playful *key* and interpreted as teasing. In the context of a different speech event, such as a game of 'SKATE,' repeating the trick that the previous person has done is expected and so does not constitute 'biting someone's shit.'

The point that this example illustrates is that the meaning of an utterance such as 'don't bite my shit' cannot be interpreted with reference to only the definition in the Urban Dictionary, or with reference to only one component of the SPEAKING model, but can only be understood as a matter of the *interaction* among multiple components: place, participants, goals, the expected sequence of acts, the tone in which the utterance is said, the various media involved in the communication (including things such as participants' dress, and their skateboards, and other things such as video cameras), norms about what constitutes 'showing respect' to others, and the genre—whether it is 'park skating' or 'street skating.' More importantly, successful use of and interpretation of this speech act incorporates a complex range of cultural knowledge regarding the values, identities and norms of conduct of this particular community of young skateboarders in Hong Kong.

- ❑ Choose a speech event in which people that you know normally participate but with which you are not entirely familiar. Interview the people involved with the aim of finding out what their expectations are about who should say what to whom, when, how, and why. Use the components of the SPEAKING model as a guide for your questioning. Ask people both about the kinds of communicative competences most members of their speech community have and about their own personal experiences with this particular speech event.
- ❑ After that, see if you can find an occasion to observe people taking part in this speech event. Notice not just what is said, but who says it, when and how. Fill out Table C7.1 with information from both your interviews and your observations.

Table C7.1 Analysing a speech event

Date and time of observation: *Name of event:*
Setting
Participants
Ends
Act sequence
Key
Instrumentalities
Norms
Genre

Refining your analysis

The greatest danger in using a model such as Hymes's SPEAKING model is that the analyst simply describes the expectations participants have regarding each of the components in a rather mechanical way, like filling out a checklist, without offering much in the way of analysis. Whilst this can at least provide a general idea of how the speech event happens, it does not tell us very much about *why* it happens the way it does. The analyst cannot stop at just describing the various components, but also needs to ask: 1) *why* different components have particular expectations associated with them; 2) *how* the expectations associated with different components interact and affect one another; and 3) *why* certain components seem more important and other components less important to participants.

Below are some useful tips to help you avoid falling into the trap of mechanical description.

Be specific

It is important for the analyst to be as specific as possible in his or her description of the expectations people have about the different components. This sometimes involves asking probing questions or observing what people say or do carefully, paying close attention to detail.

Remember that all components are not equal

One of the most important things an analyst will want to notice is that participants may regard the expectations governing some components to be stricter than those governing others and that some behaviour might be regarded as more or less 'compulsory,' whilst other behaviour might be regarded as 'optional.' It is also important to note how expectations regarding one component can affect the kinds of expectations participants have about other components. In other words, it is important to notice which kinds of behaviour tend to co-occur in speech events (for example, the genre of a joke may tend to co-occur with a humorous or light-hearted key).

Compare and contrast

One way to really understand whether the communicative competencies you have uncovered through your analysis are really significant is to compare and contrast different speech events or the different experiences and perspectives of different participants engaged in the same speech event. One of the reasons Ruesch and Bateson recommend that analysts compare the speech event they are studying with one that is more familiar to them is to help them to better notice those aspects of the speech event which they might be misunderstanding or taking for granted.

Explore transgressions

One good way to understand what people are expected to do in a particular situation is to find out what happens when they fail to do what they are expected to do. This is because, whilst appropriate behaviour usually passes unremarked upon, inappropriate behaviour is often an occasion for participants to explicitly discuss their otherwise tacit assumptions and expectations. Therefore, noticing or talking with participants about mistakes, transgressions, inappropriate behaviour or 'incompetence' can be a good way to clarify what they regard as appropriate and why.

Activity

Further refine the analysis you did in the last activity by doing the following:

- ❑ Talk to your participants about what you have written down for each component and ask them if they think it is accurate. See if they can help you to make your descriptions of the knowledge that members need about each component more specific.
- ❑ Try to determine what kind of knowledge is most important for successful participation in the speech event. Is knowledge about some components more important than knowledge about others?
- ❑ Try to determine what the relationships among components might be and how they affect one another.
- ❑ Compare and contrast this speech event with a similar speech event that you are also familiar with. How can you account for the similarities and differences?
- ❑ Ask your participants what would happen if any of the conventions associated with this speech event were violated? How would people react? What would need to be done to repair such a violation?

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

C8 DOING MEDIATED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In this unit you will explore how to apply the tools of mediated discourse analysis to the analysis of social actions, social practices and *sites of engagement*. The three concepts that we will be working with are:

1. the notion of *affordances* and *constraints*: the idea that different kinds of cultural tools make certain kinds of actions and certain kinds of social identities associated with those actions either more or less possible;
2. the notion of *social practices*: the idea that certain actions combined with other actions and with certain cultural tools come to be regarded as recognizable social practices and that discourse can play an important role in maintaining and promoting these social practices;
3. the notion of *sites of engagement*: the idea that actions take place at the *nexus* of cultural tools, social relationships and the experiences, knowledge and skill of individual social actors, and the way these three elements come together can help us to understand how a particular social action will be performed.

'Fifty ways to leave your lover'

In her book *The Breakup 2.0*, Ilana Gershon discusses how different kinds of media affect the way people perform the action of 'breaking up' with a romantic partner and the way they come to regard this action as a particular kind of *social practice*. Of course, there are many ways this action could be performed. One might confront the person with whom one wishes to break up face-to-face, either in public or in a private place, call them on the telephone, or send what is known as a 'Dear John' or 'Dear Jane' Letter. Technology has introduced a number of new cultural tools with which to perform this action: one could send an email, for example, negotiate the break-up using instant messaging or mobile phone-based text messaging, or one could also change one's 'relationship status' on Facebook, send an image on Snapchat, or even create a TikTok video.

Gershon interviewed a large number of people about their ideas about and experiences of breaking up and found that people had very strong feelings about how the medium used can affect the action of breaking up. In particular, they felt that people who used the 'wrong' medium risked enacting the 'wrong' kind of social identity, and so being considered 'the wrong kind of person' by others.

Activity

- ❑ Think about the *affordances* and *constraints* of the different kinds of media one might use to accomplish the action of breaking up. For example, breaking up face-to-face makes it easier for the person doing the breaking up to gauge the other person's reaction and adapt his or her message accordingly, but it can make it more difficult to end the conversation (and the relationship) quickly and easily. This medium also makes it easier for the person being 'broken up with' to respond and ask for reasons and clarification, but it may make it more difficult for him or her to hide any feelings of disappointment or sadness that might arise. Because of these affordances and constraints, people tend to think some media are 'better' for breaking up than other media and associate different media for breaking up with different 'kinds of people.'
- ❑ Fill in Table C8.1 based on your own beliefs and experiences about the things different media make harder or more difficult to do during the breaking-up process. Then *rank* the different media in terms of: 1) how much you would prefer to use it if you are breaking up with someone; and 2) how much you would prefer it to be used if you are the one being broken up with. Note if there is a difference in your ranking for these two situations. How do you account for this difference? What does this tell you about the relationship between cultural tools and social identities?
- ❑ Compare your answers with those of someone else and discuss if and why you have different opinions about the kinds of people associated with different media for breaking up.

Table C8.1 Cultural tools for breaking up

Medium	*Affordances and constraints*	*Rank*	
		(1)	*(2)*
Face-to-face conversation			
Telephone conversation			
Letter or email			
WhatsApp			
Text message			
Snapchat			
TikTok			

Of course, most of the time when people engage in a complex social practice such as breaking up with a lover, they use a combination of cultural tools, including a combination of media. They might begin breaking up with a text message, continue the negotiation of the break-up through an instant messaging conversation and complete the process in a face-to-face meeting.

Think about how the social practice of breaking up is constructed in your social circle. What smaller actions are usually included in this practice (such as 'deciding on a time to meet' or 'apologising for hurting the other person's feelings') and how are these usually combined? What sorts of cultural tools (such as objects, media, genres, social languages, gestures or facial expressions) are used and how do these tools affect how the practice is accomplished?

'Buy with one click'

One thing that mediated discourse analysis is especially good at is helping us to understand why people take certain actions in situations where these actions have some kind of cost or consequence. One example of such a situation is when we have to decide whether to buy something or not. Ron Scollon, as I noted in unit A8, talks about all of the texts and other cultural tools that need to come together to make purchasing a cup of coffee possible. In the study summarized in unit D8, Scollon makes a similar point about food packages, discussing all of the different processes that go into deciding what kinds of discourse appears on these packages and how this discourse affects consumers' purchasing decisions and ultimately their health.

Moments when we decide to buy something are usually not random or impulsive, although they may sometimes seem that way; they occur at particular *sites of engagement* where different *discourses and other cultural tools* (online shopping sites, credit cards, signs in shops announcing sales), come together with the *relationships* (*interactions orders*) you have with the person you are buying from and with other people involved in the purchase (such as your parents who might be providing the funds), and your own *history* of buying things and of planning to buy this particular item—your *historical body*.

- ❑ Think about the last time you bought something and analyze the *site of engagement* at which the purchase occurred.
  - ❑ Think about the different 'itineraries of discourse' that led up to that site of engagement.
  - ❑ Analyze the way the interaction among 1) the *discourses in place*, 2) the *interaction order* and 3) your own historical body made the purchase possible and think about the ways in which this interaction may have affected your decision-making.

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

ANALYSING MULTIMODALITY

In this section you will practise applying some of the ideas introduced in units A9 and B9 to the analysis of multimodality in texts and face-to-face interactions. You will explore how the analysis of multimodality cannot just help us understand how texts and interactions are structured, but also how they promote certain ideologies and power relationships.

Multimodal discourse analysis is a complex and rapidly developing field, and it would be impossible to demonstrate all of the many tools and concepts analysts have developed for the analysis of things such as images, gestures, gaze and posture. Instead I will introduce a few basic tools and key questions that can guide you in this kind of analysis and encourage you to refer to the sources in the list of further reading for information on other tools and procedures.

When analysing 'static' images in print or on the internet, many analysts adapt Halliday's framework of the different functions of language (discussed in units A4 and B9). Based on this framework, we might use the following set of questions to guide us in analysing images:

Ideational function

- ❑ Who/what are the main participants in the image?
- ❑ Is the image a narrative image, an analytical image or a classificatory image?
- ❑ What are the processes portrayed in the image and how are they portrayed?
- ❑ What are the primary vectors formed by actions, gestures, gaze and the positioning of the figures?
- ❑ If there are multiple vectors, how do they interact with one another?

Interpersonal function

- ❑ From what perspective are the figures in the image shown? How does this create a position for the viewer?
- ❑ Are the figures depicted close up or far away from the viewer?
- ❑ Are the figures looking at the viewer or away?

- ❑ What kind of relationship do they establish with the viewer through things such as gaze and gesture?
- ❑ Does the image seem realistic, and how does this affect how the viewer relates to the figures in the image?

Textual function

- ❑ What are the most prominent and least prominent elements in the image?
- ❑ What is in the centre of the image?
- ❑ What is the relationship between the background and the foreground?
- ❑ What is in the top section of the image and what is in the bottom section?
- ❑ What is on the left and what is on the right?
- ❑ How does the placement of elements in the image affect how the viewers' eyes are likely to move across it?
- ❑ Are there other modes combined with the image (such as text or arrows/lines)? How do these elements interact with the image?

Ideology

- ❑ How do the choices about what has been included in the image and what has been excluded portray a certain version of reality?
- ❑ Are the figures in the image portrayed in stereotypical or unexpected ways?
- ❑ Are some figures active and others passive? What is the significance of this?
- ❑ What do you think the image is trying to get you to think or do?

Snapchat

One of the most common ways people use images to communicate nowadays is through social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram. Although such images are often very different from those taken by professional photographers which we encounter in print publications and online, they are carefully constructed, with their creators usually paying a great deal of attention to the people and objects that are included in the images, the way these people and/or objects are arranged, the way other elements like written text are used to help give meaning to the elements that are represented, and the kind of interpersonal relationship the image constructs between the viewer and the photographer and/or the people or objects in the image. Furthermore, despite their status as informal and 'fun' forms of communication, images sent over social media platforms also serve to express or reinforce certain ideologies and relationships of power.

Consider the image below which was posted on the Snapchat 'story' of a female university student in Saudi Arabia (Figure C9.1, from Albwardi 2018).

Like many images shared on Snapchat, this image captures an 'ordinary' moment in the photographer's life by depicting everyday objects in her translation classroom: the surface of the desk, her notebook, and her bag. In some respects, this image might be considered an analytical one, which uses the 'hard' surface of the desk to communicate the experience of being in translation class. It might also be considered a classificatory image which simply communicates the types of objects found on a student's desk in a

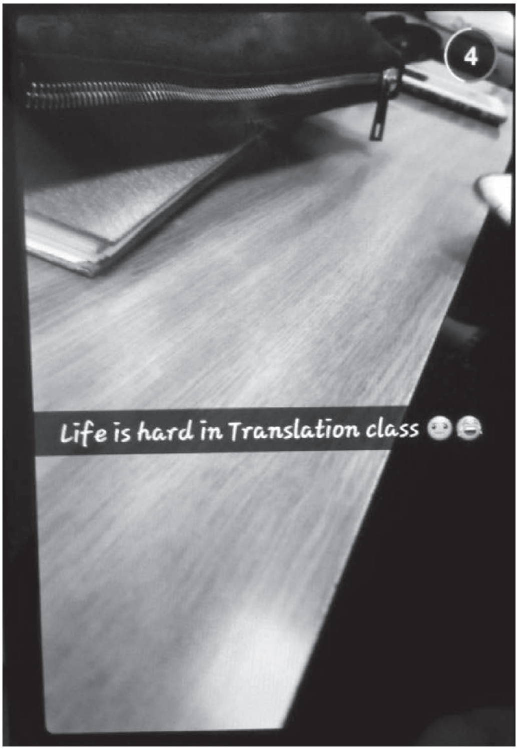

Figure C9.1 Life is hard in translation class (from Albwardi 2018)

university classroom. At the same time, there is a vector created by the diagonal line of the desk that runs from the lower left of the image to the upper right. The process communicated by this vector is the act of 'looking,' the gaze of the photographer looking over her desk towards something or someone outside of the fame of the image, presumably the teacher. In this respect, the image tells the story of the photographer sitting in her translation class and taking a picture.

The way the elements are arranged in the image also contributes to the way it creates meaning. The placement of the student's belongings on the left of the picture presents them as 'given' and reproduces the direction of readers' gazes as they move from left to right, reading the caption 'Life is hard in translation class,' settling on the two small emojis at the end of the sentence. The sentence is placed at the bottom of the image, usually reserved for the 'real,' and the upper section of the image, the 'ideal' is the unseen activity of the classroom that the photographer is gazing at. As in the WhatsApp conversation we analyzed in C6, the emojis serve as contextualization cues, communicating an ironic attitude towards the utterance.

The most important aspect of this image is the interpersonal meaning the photographer creates by holding the camera behind her desk, inviting the viewer to share the perspective of someone sitting in her translation class and surreptitiously taking a picture and uploading it onto Snapchat. In fact, the contrast between the message in the caption and the transgressive activity the photographer is engaged in is what creates the humour in this image, and positions the viewer in a kind of conspiratorial relationship with the photographer.

Based on this analysis, we might conclude that this is an image about power and solidarity—the 'hard' power that teachers exert over students by prohibiting activities such as using mobile phones during lessons, the 'soft' power students exert by secretly breaking these rules, and the solidarity students create with each other by sharing stories of such transgressions.

Eyeliner on fleek

Now consider the image below (Figure C9.2), also taken by a Saudi university student. Use the questions above to analyze how this photographer represents a certain kind of reality, creates a certain kind of relationship with the viewer, and promotes a certain ideology. Pay special attention to the way different modes (image, writing, font, emojis) are combined to create meaning.

Fifteen seconds in a writing centre

Now we will turn to how you might go about analysing multimodality in face-to-face interaction, using as an example just 15 seconds of interaction in a university writing centre where students go to get advice about their written assignments from peer

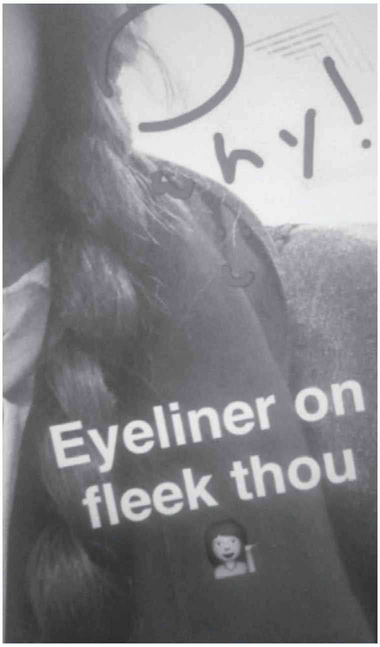

Figure C9.2 Eyeliner on fleek (from Albwardi 2018) tutors. The fact that we will only be looking at a very small segment attests to the multimodal richness of most face-to-face interaction—quite a lot can occur in just 15 seconds. At the same time, this kind of microanalysis can also be risky if the analyst loses sight of the higher-level actions that the segment under analysis is part of. Thus, in a thorough multimodal analysis of interaction, the analyst always alternates his or her attention from the small details to the 'big picture,' always asking how micro-elements such as gaze and posture shifts, gestures and intonation contours help participants to accomplish the higher-level actions they are engaged in.

This example also demonstrates one way of producing a multimodal transcription. The segment of interaction to be analyzed is presented in 12 frames captured from a digital video of the tutoring session (see Figure C9.3). The frames were not captured at any regular time interval. Rather, a frame was captured each time a new meaningful lower-level action such as a gaze shift, a gesture or a 'tone unit' of speech was produced. As can be seen in the images, in many of the frames, multiple meaningful actions were performed across multiple modes simultaneously. In the type of transcription demonstrated here (adapted from Norris 2004), things such as head movements, the trajectory of gestures, and the direction of gaze are marked with arrows, and the speech of participants is represented in text of varying sizes above their heads, the size and direction of the letters representing stress and intonation.

The analysis I will demonstrate here will focus on *intermodal relationships*, how actions taken with different modes of communication work together and affect one another. It will make use of two basic concepts: *sequentiality*—the idea that lower-level actions are arranged in meaningful sequences to form higher-level actions—and *simultaneity*—the idea that when actions are produced at the same time, they can affect how each should be interpreted. Related to these two concepts is the notion that all actions are mutually negotiated between participants in interaction. The actions that one person performs are always in some ways influenced or constrained by the actions that the other person performs. I will also focus on *modal density*, which, as I mentioned in unit B9, refers to the intensity with which a particular mode is engaged with, or the complexity of the configuration of different modes, and can tell us about how participants are managing their attention and trying to direct the attention of other participants (see also unit D9).

As mentioned above, one aim of such an analysis is to identify the lower-level actions and understand how they combine to form higher-level actions. The ultimate aim, however, is to use such analysis to understand how people use the many resources that are available to them to perform *social practices* and enact *social identities* in ways that promote and reinforce particular 'Discourses' or social relationships.

The two participants in this segment are the tutor (the woman seated on the right) and the client (the man seated on the left). The session begins with the tutor saying, 'So… ummm,' and making two small **beat gestures** with her pen towards the client's essay lying on the table in time with the two syllables (frame a). *Beat gestures* are perhaps the most common kinds of gestures. We use them to keep time in interactions, often tracking the rhythm of our speech, and they are important in helping participants synchronize things such as turn-taking. They can also function to signal that a new higher-level action or a new 'frame' is being taken up, much like *discourse markers* (see B6). In this case the two beats along with the utterance signal that a new part of the tutoring session is about to start.

Figure C9.3 An interaction in a writing centre

In frames b through f the tutor asks, 'Is there anything in particular you think you want some more help with?' This utterance is accompanied by a complex combination of actions that contribute to constructing the meaning of the utterance and the relationship between the participants. As she says the words 'anything particular,' the tutor points to the client's essay and inscribes a circle in the air with her pen. This is followed by a downward motion on the stressed syllable 'TIC.' Gestures like this, which involve pointing, are known as **deictic gestures**. The tutor follows this deictic gesture towards the essay with another one, pointing her pen towards the client when she says, 'YOU think.' Right after she utters the word 'think,' the client leans slightly forward and raises his hand to his chin, forming the **iconic gesture** of a person deep in thought. Iconic gestures are those which symbolize some kind of abstract idea or higher-level action in a rather conventionalized way. This gesture on the part of the client is a good example of the way listeners use modes such as gesture to contribute to conversations even when they do not make use of the resource of speech.

As the tutor says 'you want some more help with,' she gazes at the client, signalling that she is preparing to end her turn. Gaze is an important resource for the management of turn-taking in conversation, with speakers often looking away when they are speaking and then turning their gaze back to their interlocutors when they are finished. When the tutor finishes her question, she leans back slightly and brushes the hair from her face, almost as if she is clearing interactional space for the client's response as he issues a hesitant 'ummmmm.'

As she is waiting for his response, the tutor tilts her head downward and directs her gaze towards the essay, as if signalling that it is there that the client might find the answer to her questions (frame i). This is also a kind of deictic gesture, but she is using her head to point rather than her hand. The client answers this downward motion with an upward motion of his arm to touch his glasses, another iconic gesture signalling that he is 'searching' for something he would like help with. Then the client lowers his hand and asks, 'Do you know the meaning of this paragraph?,' inscribing exactly the same kind of circle above his essay that the tutor had made just moments before (frame k).

The modes of gaze, head movement, posture, gesture, and prosody in this short segment do not just help participants to frame their utterances and organize the interaction. These modes also work together to construct the higher-level action of 'having a tutorial' and to construct the relationship between the two participants as one of unequal power. For the tutor, the mode that carries the most *modal* density is her gaze. She gazes at the client much more than he does at her, using her eyes to direct the client's attention to different aspects of the situation and to assert her power over him. Another particularly dense mode is the dietic gesture (she frequently points at him and at his essay with her pen and her head). Furthermore, all of the client's gestures (the 'thinking' gesture, the 'searching' gesture and the imitation of the tutor's deictic circle) seem to be in response to the tutor's words or gestures, as if she is controlling him like a puppet. Another important mode the tutor uses to maintain control of the interaction, which we have not mentioned, is **object handling**. Not only does she hold a pen throughout the interaction (whilst the client is empty handed), but she also keeps her left hand placed on the edge of the client's essay during this entire segment as if she is prepared to take it away from him at any moment.

❑ Videotape a short interaction and divide a segment of the video into frames using an easy-to-use computer program such as iMovie (Mac) or Windows Video Editor. Analyze how participants use the modes of gesture, gaze, posture, head movement, and prosody along with the mode of spoken language to create meaning and manage the interaction. Pay attention to how lower-level actions are sequenced to form higher-level actions and how actions performed simultaneously affect one another's meaning.

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

C10 WHAT HAPPENED TO TAYLOR SWIFT?

In order to illustrate the procedures for corpus-assisted discourse analysis explained in unit B10, in this unit I will examine a corpus of song lyrics by the American pop-star Taylor Swift. The reason that Taylor Swift is such a good singer to perform discourse analysis on is that she provides a good example of what people in the music business call a 'brand pivot,' and what people in the discourse analysis business might call a 'Discourse pivot,' a movement from one Discourse to another. The word 'pivot' is often used in politics to describe when a politician changes the ideological content of their speeches and public statements to appeal to a different (usually a wider) audience. But politicians aren't the only ones that pivot. Pop stars do it too. By analysing the discursive characteristics of such pivots, we can understand something about how discourse is related to the social world and what kinds of discourse appeals to different kinds of audiences.

When she started to make a name for herself in the music industry in 2005, Taylor Swift projected the sweet, innocent persona of a country singer. Starting in 2012, however, she began changing her image, engaging in a number of high-profile feuds with other celebrities like Katy Perry, Kim Kardashian, Lorde, and Demi Lovato and changing the kinds of things she sang about to appeal to a different market demographic. Many of her early fans accused her of 'going-pop' or 'selling out,' making her music more superficial and becoming 'self-absorbed.' This change in style was signalled by Taylor herself: in her 2017 single 'Look What You Made Me Do,' she informed her fans: the 'old Taylor' is 'dead.' In 2021, with the release of her album *Folklore*, Taylor pivoted once again to a more 'folk' image.

In this analysis I am going to use corpus tools to compare Taylor's pre-2012 music with the music she created from 2012–2017 in terms of the kinds of words she used, and the ways she portrayed herself.

Before you read further in this unit I recommend that you download AntConc or some other software program for corpus analysis, and as you read, try to replicate the procedures described on a corpus of your own creation. You might, for example, create a similar corpus of lyrics from another singer such as Beyoncé or Rhiana and compare your findings with those generated from the corpora analyzed here.

My corpus consists of the lyrics of 100 songs released by Taylor Swift from 2006 to 2017. Song lyrics are a good example of a type of text which might have to be 'cleaned' or otherwise altered before being suitable for inclusion in a corpus. For example, such texts often include things such as labels indicating 'chorus' or 'verse,' which are not relevant to the analysis and should be removed. Sometimes repeated words or phrases

Table C10.1 Size of corpora and type token ratio

	No. of texts	*No. of tokens*	*No. of types*	*Type token ratio*
Pre-2012	50	39,831	2,316	17.1
Post-2012	50	21,286	1,668	12.7

Table C10.2 Top five words

Pre-2012				*Post-2012*			
Word	Rank	Freq.	% of tokens	Word	Rank	Freq.	% of tokens
you	1	2,226	5.6	I	1	1,169	5.5
I	2	2,154	5.4	you	2	1,101	5.1
the	3	1,182	2.9	the	3	509	2.4
and	4	1,160	2.9	and	4	433	2.2
It	5	863	2.1	it	5	398	2.03

are written in a kind of shorthand (e.g. I love you x 3). These need to be written out fully so that the texts reflect exactly what is sung. For my corpus, song titles and labels such as chorus and verse were deleted. Each song was saved in a separate text file, and then the songs released before 2012 and after 2012 were put into separate directories. Each of these corpora consisted of 50 songs. Table C10.1 shows the size of each of the corpora, the number of tokens (actual words) and types (specific words), as well as the 'type token ratio.'

The first thing we might notice is that the type token ratio for both of these corpora is rather low compared with the BNC written (45.53) and spoken (32.96) corpora. This is not surprising. Pop music generally involves quite a lot of repetition and a fairly narrow range of lexical items. As can be seen from the chart, the type token ratio for the pre-2012 corpus is slightly higher than that of the post-2012 corpus, suggesting that Taylor Swift's earlier music exhibited more lexical complexity than her later music. Not only have her songs become 'simpler' and more repetitious, but they have also become shorter: the average length of her pre-2012 songs was 796.6 words, whereas the average length of the post-2012 songs was 425.7 words. One explanation for this is that shorter and simpler songs might better suit a more commercial market.

Table C10.2 shows the frequency of the most frequently occurring *words* in the two corpora along with their overall ranking, their numerical frequency and the percentage of the total tokens they represent. Note that the percentage of total tokens is important when you are comparing corpora of different sizes. Some programs will calculate this for you, but with AntConc users must do this themselves.

The fact that *function words* like pronouns, conjunctions, and articles are the most frequent words in these texts is not surprising; this is the case with most texts. The fact that the most frequent words in both of these corpora are 'I' and 'you' is also consistent with other corpus-based studies of popular music. Murphey (1992), for example, found a similar degree of frequency for these pronouns in a corpus of English pop songs from the late 1980s. This, of course, makes sense given that pop songs usually involve a singer (or singer *persona*) singing to another person, usually a lover. What is interesting here is that the items 'you' and 'I' are reversed in the two corpora, with 'you' being the most frequent word in the pre-2012 corpus and 'I' being the most frequent word in the post-2012 corpus. Although the differences in the percentages of the two words are not high, this lends some support to the suggestion that Taylor's music has become more self-absorbed—more about her.

Table C10.3 Right collocates of 'I'

Pre-2012	*Post-2012*
'm	I
you	you
was	'm
don't	it
know	know

Word frequency lists can often suggest suitable candidates for concordance searches and collocation analyses. In this case, I have decided to look more closely at the word 'I' in the pre- and post-2012 corpora to find out not just how much but *how* Swift talked about herself in these periods. Figure C10.1 shows a comparison of the words that most frequently *followed* the word 'I' in the two corpora. The way I generated this was by choosing 'collocates' in the AntConc menu and adjusting the 'window span' to from 0L to 3R. This will presumably tell me what verbs are associated with 'I' (what Taylor portrayed herself as doing), as well as how she described herself.

There are a few observations that we can make about this list of collocates right off the bat. The first is that in the pre-2012 corpus, the auxiliary verbs 'am' ('m) and 'was' are in the top three right collocates of I, suggesting that in her earlier songs Taylor spent less time talking about what she did and more time talking about what she *was like* or what someone else had *done to her*. Another interesting observation is the presence of the word 'don't' in the pre-2012 corpus, suggesting that not only did she not frequently put herself in the role of agent (*doing* things), but also that she frequently talked about what she *didn't* do. It is also important to note the unusual fact that in the post-2012 corpus, the most frequent collocate of 'I' was 'I,' and that both 'you' and 'know' were frequent collocates of 'I' in both corpora, but from this list alone we can't tell if they were used in the same way.

In order to make sense of lists like this, it is usually necessary to look at the collocates in question in the context in which they occurred using the concordance tool. For example, if we generate a concordance for I *am* (I'm) in the pre-2012 corpus (Figure C10.1), we find that in many cases Taylor uses this construction to talk not about what she is, but what she is *not* ('I'm no one special,' 'I'm not a princess,' 'I'm not so sure,' 'I'm not the one').

The concordance of I *am* (I'm) in the post-2012 corpus reveals a much more active and confident Taylor (with phrases like 'I'm telling you,' and 'I'm gonna dance,' and 'I'm the one'). A particular focus on the item 'not' (Figure C10.2) shows that it collocates with 'I'm' much less frequently in the post-2012 corpus, and, when it does, it is often used to portray Taylor in a positive light or put her in an agentive position (more 'in charge' of the situation) (in phrases such as 'I'm not a bad girl,' 'I'm not dancing with you,' 'I'm not even going to try').

Similar differences can be found in other words common to the pre- and post-2012 lists. In the pre-2012 corpus, for example, the word 'know' is most often used to talk about what Taylor *doesn't* know (in phrases such as 'I didn't know it at fifteen,' and 'I don't know how it gets better'), whereas in the post-2012 corpus, the word 'know' is

C10

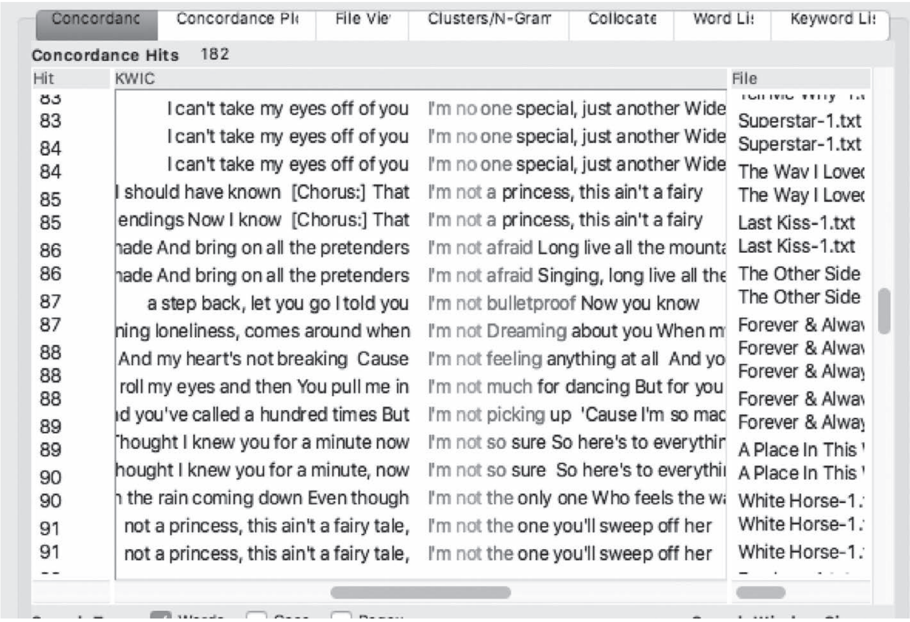

Figure C10.1 Partial concordance list for ‘I’m’ in a pre-2012 corpus

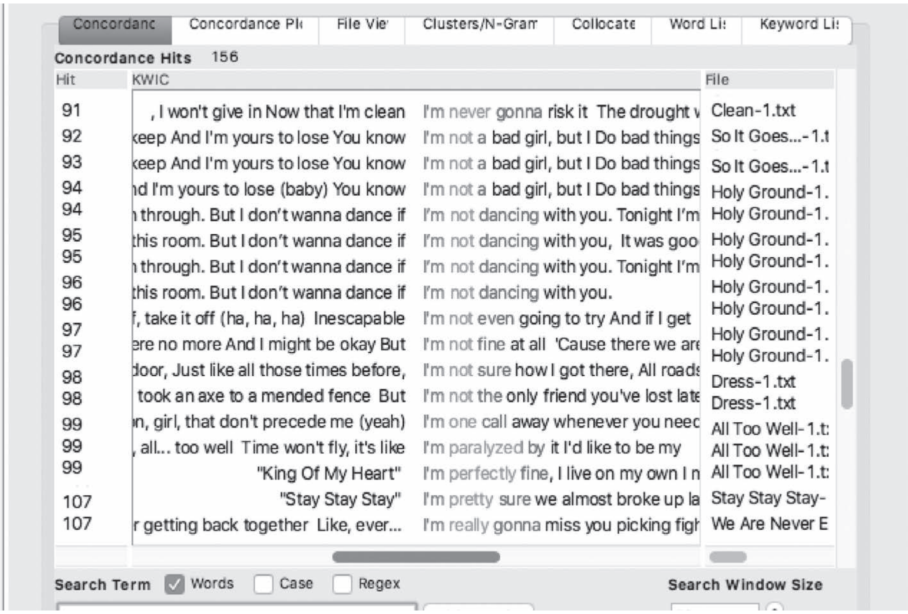

Figure C10.2 Partial concordance list for ‘I’m’ in a post-2012 corpus

Table C10.4 'Keywords' in the pre- and post-2012 corpora

Pre-2012 corpus	*Post-2012 corpus*
she	ooh
la	shake
rains	we
grow	new
smile	it

most often used to talk about what she *does* know (in phrases such as 'I know exactly where it leads,' and 'I know what you heard about me'). Similarly, in the pre-2012 collocates of 'I' with 'you,' the most common word linking these items is 'love' (as in 'I love you'), whereas in the post-2012 corpus, love only appears twice; much more common constructions are 'I want you' and 'I wish you …'). The odd case of the frequent collocation of 'I' with 'I' in the post-2012 corpus is the result of Taylor frequently repeating the word (in phrases such as 'I, I, I like it' and 'I, I, I shake it off').

From this initial analysis, we can hypothesize that the Taylor of the post-2012 corpus is more agentive, confident, practical and self-absorbed, whereas the Taylor of the pre-2012 corpus is more modest, self-deprecating, romantic and unsure of herself. Of course, this is only a hypothesis, which needs to be tested through a close discourse analysis of the actual texts.

One final method I will demonstrate for interrogating the differences between the two corpora is keyword analysis. *Keyness* refers to the degree to which a particular word appears more frequently in one corpus *compared* to another corpus. When doing keyword analysis, analysts usually compare a small, specialized corpus (such as a corpus of newspaper articles about Muslims) with a larger, more general corpus (such as a more general corpus of newspaper articles or the British National Corpus of Written Language).

In our case, our main question already has to do with comparing one corpus to another, and so it makes sense to use the post-2012 corpus as the reference corpus for the pre-2012 corpus and *vice versa*. In this way, what *keyness* will represent is not the degree to which Taylor uses certain words compared to other singers, but the difference between the words used by the 'old Taylor' and the 'new Taylor.'

The two lists (see Table C10.4) give some hints as to the kinds of things Taylor was preoccupied with in her pre- and post-2012 music. The keyness of the word 'she' in the pre-2012 corpus, for example, reflects the frequency with which Taylor was singing about 'the other woman' who had stolen her lover in this period (in phrases such as 'she's never gonna love you like I want to'). Words like 'rains,' 'grows,' and 'smile' also reflect the generally more romantic orientation of her earlier period, whereas words like 'ooh' and 'shake' reflect the generally more hedonistic, 'pop' style of her later music.

❑ Use the analysis described above as the starting point for a closer examination of Taylor Swift's lyrics (available at www.azlyrics.com/t/taylorswift.html), using some of the principles of text analysis discussed in section B4. You might, for example, focus on things such as *transitivity, indexicality* and *intertextuality)*. Does your close reading of the text confirm and build upon any of the findings of the corpus analysis?

- ❑ Construct a corpus of Taylor Swift's more recent music. Has the kind of words and the combinations of words that she uses changed? Is she using a different Discourse than she used in the periods covered by this analysis?
- ❑ Conduct a similar analysis using the same procedures on a corpus of pop songs from another artist, or compare the songs of two different artists.

Find more activities in the online resources for this book.

Notes

1 www.facebook.com/asociacionequinac.org/posts/1480068602042371
2 www.facebook.com/asociacionequinac.org/posts/1485542178161680
3 https://pacma.es/muere-una-cria-de-delfin-en-almeria-por-el-acoso-de-los-banistas/
4 www.facebook.com/asociacionequinac.org/posts/1486027154779849
5 www.tiktok.com/@therapyjeff/video/7149551361816825131
6 www.tiktok.com/@gdiddlydog/video/7048263298554350853

Section D

EXTENSION

RESEARCH IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In this section you will find examples of actual discourse analysts at work applying some of the principles and techniques we have discussed in the last three sections of the book to solving real-world problems involving discourse in domains such as politics, social media, food and diet, medicine, and the environment. The studies presented here have been conducted by researchers working in a range of different cultural and linguistic contexts and were published in some of the most influential academic journals in the field. They were chosen to demonstrate the different ways the approaches to and methods for discourse analysis that you have learned about in this book can help you better understand the kinds of texts and conversations that you are likely to encounter in your everyday lives.

These research studies are summarized for you in a clear and concise manner so that you can understand 1) the background and aims of the study, 2) what kind of discourse was analyzed and how it was collected, 3) how it was analyzed, and 4) what the researchers learned from their analysis. These summaries, of course, do not cover all of the details of the analyses and findings presented in these articles, but rather aim to highlight the aspects of these studies that best illustrate the concepts covered in the previous sections. If you find these summaries interesting, I encourage you to seek out and read the articles in full using the bibliographic information provided at the beginning of the summaries.

At the end of each subsection, you will find ideas for discourse analysis projects that you can do, either on your own or together with your classmates. As you plan your own projects, try to reflect upon and answer the same questions that I've used to organize the summaries: 1) What is the aim of my analysis; what kind of problem do I want to solve? 2) What kind of discourse do I want to analyze and how will I collect samples of it to analyze? 2) What are the methods and techniques I want to use to analyze the discourse and how can I best apply them? After you have completed your analysis, ask yourself: 4) What have I learned from doing this analysis?

D1 THE LITTLE TEXTS IN OUR LIVES

In unit A1 we talked about some of the important features of discourse: 1) the fact that it is often *ambiguous*, requiring people to interpret what it means, 2) the fact that it is always *situated* in real-world contexts and depends for its meaning on these contexts, 3) the fact that discourse is the main tool that people have at their disposal to construct their social identities, and 4) the fact that discourse is never just about 'words': it always involves words combined with other things like fonts, pictures, and even the kinds of physical *media* that are used to carry it (e.g. paper, computers or smartphone screens, sounds moving through the air).

All of these features of discourse can be seen in the kinds of texts that are analyzed in the two studies presented in this unit. In the first study, Gwen Bouvier and Ariel Chen analyze health food packages. They show how these packages combine lots of different *semiotic resources* such as words, colours, pictures, and even the material that the packages are made of to convey their messages. They also talk about how these packages are related to the social identities of the customers to whom they are marketed, especially their gender identities. In the second article, Erhan Aslan analyzes the memes that people circulated over the internet during the COVID-19 pandemic. His study shows how the meaning of discourse depends crucially on how it is situated at particular moments in history. He also demonstrates how the meaning of discourse depends on the way different semiotic resources, in this case words and pictures, are combined. Like the COVID-19 signs we analyzed in unit C1, these are mundane pieces of discourse that we encounter in our everyday lives. But, as you should have realized by now, sometimes these simple little texts are not as simple as they might seem, and not as 'little' as they may seem either since they can have big effects on people and on the societies where they are found.

Many of the concepts and methods that these researchers used in their studies are covered in the later units of this book, for instance, texture and intertextuality, critical discourse analysis, pragmatics, and multimodal discourse analysis. What I will mostly focus on in my summaries is how the researchers address the kinds of questions we asked in our sample analysis in unit C1 about how these texts are 'put together,' what the people who make them and circulate them are trying to do, what kinds of relationships the texts create between text producers and text creators, and how these texts serve to both reflect and create social realities.

A.

Gwen Bouvier and Ariel Chen (2021). 'The gendering of healthy diets: A multimodal discourse study of food packages marketed at men and women.' *Gender and Language 15* (3), pp. 347–368.

Background

Over the past few decades there has been increasing evidence of the link between diet and health and an increasing interest in healthy eating. As a result, many food manufacturers are producing 'functional foods,' products that have particular 'functions' such as helping people lose or gain weight, increase their energy, or maintain their heart health. These foods are packaged to attract not just customers who are concerned about their health, but also certain *kinds* of health-conscious customers such as men, women, older people, or younger people. Therefore, by analysing the discourse on these packages, we can understand something about the strategies food manufacturers use to attract customers, as well as the more general ideas about things like health, gender, and age that they are promoting. In this article, Gwen Bouvier and Ariel Chen are especially interested in how particular ideas about gender are 'buried in packages' (p. 347) for healthy foods. In order to explore this, they analyzed the packages for energy snacks and protein drinks that are marketed to male and female customers.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The data analyzed in this article came from a collection of 100 health and fitness-related snacks and drinks which Bouvier and Chen gathered in Belgium, Sweden, and the UK as part of a larger project on food and health. For this article, they picked out four products, two energy snacks (SCIMX protein flapjacks and BOUNCE energy balls) and two drinks (UFIT and SLIMFAST), that reflect the kinds of trends that they saw in the larger collection when it came to the different strategies used to target men and women.

How did they analyze it?

The method the researchers used to analyze the packages generally follows the principles we discussed in unit C1. First, they looked at how the manufacturers 'assemble' the packages by choosing among a range of different *semiotic resources* (words and grammatical structures, pictures and icons, colours and textures) and combining them in specific ways. Second, they considered how these choices and combinations can then be *used* by different kinds of consumers in their everyday practices of 'body management' and identity construction. Finally, they explored how the packages form part of larger *Discourses* that help promote ideas about how certain people should act in society.

What did they learn?

Bouvier and Chen found a number of clear differences between the ways the products marketed to men (the SCIMX protein flapjacks and the UFIT protein drink) and to women (the BOUNCE energy balls and the SLIMFAST vitality drink) were designed. For the purposes of this summary, I will just present a comparison of the snack products and invite readers to consult the original article for a detailed analysis of the drink products.

The SCIMX protein flapjacks come in a minimalist package with few words, clean lines and a limited colour palette. The name of the product is written on the front of the package in angular metallic letters, with a small icon resembling a molecule inserted between 'SCI' and 'MX.' Underneath the name are the words:

CHOCOLATE & HAZELNUT
PROTEIN
FLAPJACK

The words are presented in list form, left-justified in the same way a computer might present a list, creating a sense of 'no-nonsense' objectivity. The words 'protein' and 'flapjack' are separated on different lines in a way that emphasizes the word 'protein' not just as part of the phrase 'protein flapjack,' but itself as an indication of the contents of the package. To the right of these words are the words 'PRE/POST WORKOUT SNACK' in much smaller font inside of a diamond shape border which resembles a kind of 'stamp' of quality, connoting a promise of reliability or 'standards.' The words also communicate what users are supposed to *do* with the product, situating it in a planned and regimented programme of body management. Next to this stamp, there is a picture of nuts and chunks of chocolate in front of a pattern that looks like a bar chart that someone might use to measure or monitor some scientific process. The packaging is made out of metallic plastic with fits closely around the rectangular bar.

While there are no explicit claims on the package about the health benefits of the product, Bouvier and Chen point out that the combination of words, fronts, images, and colours invokes Discourses of science, engineering, and technology, implying that health maintenance is something that requires specialist scientific knowledge. Bouvier and Chen note that this aligns with the kinds of discourse found on other products in their collection marketed to men which use technical sounding terms such as 'advanced body fuel' and 'optimum mass.' The view of health communicated through such discourse is one in which being healthy is a matter not just of gaining strength and bulk (the more traditional view of 'masculine' health), but of doing so through a precise, highly controlled form of body management.

In contrast, the packaging for the BOUNCE protein ball, marketed more towards women, is much brighter and busier, containing a lot more words than the SCIMX package with the same or similar information repeated over and over in slightly different ways. In other words, while the SCMIX protein bar 'speaks' to customers in a terse, serious way, the BOUNCE package seems much more 'chatty' and playful. The name of the product is written in a rounded, uneven font, with the 'O' raised to resemble a bouncing ball with a small human figure jumping above it. Unlike the more formal, 'scientific' font used for the SCMIX protein bar, this font communicates informality and fun.

As with the SCMIX bar, below the name of the product on the BOUNCE package there appears a list of 'buzzwords': 'V life,' 'almond,' 'spirulina,' and '9g veggie protein.' Unlike the laconic, ordered list on the protein bar, however, this list is unevenly spaced and written in a font resembling handwriting, making it seem more like a shopping list or sticky notes placed here and there to remind someone to do different things. Below this are two lines of text defining the product, the first in rather plain terms: PROTEIN ENERGY BALL, and underneath in a much more detailed and sensuous way: A chewy mix of vegan protein, nuts and seeds. Underneath this is another list of 'buzzwords' in another font: GLUTEN FREE | SOURCE OF FIBRE | NO ARTIFICAL PRESERVATIVES. Bouvier and Chen note that this variety of fonts communicates ideas of individuality, irregularity, and fun compared to the highly regulated design of the SCIMX bar.

On the back of the package, much of the information implied by the 'buzzwords' on the front is explained in a more detailed and discursive way in blocks of text irregularly placed around the slogan, 'Nutritious & Tasty':

> A chewy mix of vegan proteins, fats and carbs, our great tasting Balls are packed with veggie protein energy to keep you going and feeling great.
>
> Our Balls are bursting with nutritious natural ingredients and a blend of vegan proteins, so there's no room for artificial colours, flavours or preservatives.
>
> NEW BOUNCE V LIFE VEGAN PROTEIN ENERGY BALLS—PACKED WITH PROTEIN ENERGY SO YOU CAN STAY UNSTOPPABLE.

These statements, say Bouvier and Chen, create a closer, more intimate relationship with the reader compared to the list of nutritional facts and figures that appear on the back of the SCIMX bar, not just because they are written in informal prose full of 'dramatic' language like 'packed with' and 'bursting with,' but also because they make use of the pronouns 'our' and 'you' to make it seem like the writer is talking directly the reader.

Bouvier and Chen also point out that the phrase 'there's no room for artificial colours, flavours or preservatives' signals a kind of 'moral' universe where 'good' things (such as 'natural ingredients' and 'vegan proteins') are pitted against 'bad' things (such as 'artificial colours' and 'preservatives'). This 'virtue signalling' can also be seen on the front of the package, where a 'stamp' (much like the stamp-like text on the SCIMX bar) appears to the upper right of the product name featuring the word 'Vegan' with a sunflower growing out of it. It is also implicit in the 'buzzwords' that appear on the package, each invoking a key 'value': 'ethical (vegan, organic), healthy (gluten-free) and natural (spirulina, organic)' (Bouvier and Chen 2021: 359).

Finally, in contrast to the SCIMX bar's angular rectangle wrapped in smooth, metallic plastic, the BOUNCE package has a slightly rough texture and fits loosely around the product, giving the impression of something 'natural' or 'handmade.'

Bouvier and Chen's comparison of these two product packages shows how health and fitness can be discursively constructed in very different ways for different kinds of customers. For consumers of SCIMX bars, health is not just about building muscle, but doing it in a scientific and systematic way: health is a matter of 'engineering the body.' For consumers of BOUNCE balls, health is a matter of happiness and vitality combined with living a virtuous and ethical life. It is less 'scientific' and 'objective' and more 'sensuous' and 'personalized.'

These packages don't just reflect ideologies of health, but also ideologies of gender. The SCIMX bar, for example, constructs its consumers as rational and systematic, and the BOUNCE ball constructs its consumers as emotional and hopeful. It also communicates to its customers that they can (and should) be all things: slim and shapely, funny, open-minded, ethical, and 'unstoppable,' reflecting the kinds of unreasonable demands that are often placed on women in contemporary societies.

B.

Erhan Aslan (2022). 'Days of our "quarantined" lives: Multimodal humour in COVID-19 internet memes.' *Internet Pragmatics 5* (2), pp. 227–256.

Background

During the COVID-19 pandemic people all around the world had to adapt to dramatic changes in their social lives, having to stay home and not see their friends for long periods of time, and, when they did see them, having to maintain 'social distancing.' These changes created a great deal of mental and emotional stress for many people. One way they dealt with this stress during COVID-19 lockdowns was to circulate texts on social media in the form of funny TikTok videos, Instagram posts, and memes about their experiences of lockdown. These texts both provided them with a way to relieve their stress through humour and to feel connected with the people with whom they shared these texts.

Internet memes are particularly interesting kinds of texts, which illustrate many of the points about discourse that we discussed in unit A1. They often take advantage of the *ambiguity* of language—the fact that words and other semiotic resource can often have multiple possible meanings; they demonstrate how the *situation* in which discourse is produced can be crucial to helping us understand what the discourse means; they highlight the function of discourse in helping people to communicate their individual identities and show that they are part of a group of people with common experiences and ideas; and they are good examples of a kind of discourse in which language is typically mixed with other semiotic resources like pictures. Another thing that is important about memes is the way they 'go viral,' spreading quickly from one person to another. Discourse analysis can help us to understand what makes some memes more 'spreadable' by directing our attention to the specific ways different semiotic resources are *combined* as well as the way they draw on or refer to other texts in the media and popular culture.

In this study, Erhan Aslan analyzed image-macro memes that were circulated during COVID-19 lockdowns. He shows how memes provided people a way to collectively 'play' with discourse in order to relieve their feelings of loneliness and isolation.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The data for this study consisted of image-macro memes, a specific kind of meme made up of an image with a funny caption attached to it. Typically, as these memes circulate online, people replace the captions on particular images with new captions, or attach particular captions to new images. The memes were collected from the popular website *Know Your Meme* (knowyourmeme.com) using the search terms 'coronavirus,' 'quarantine,' and 'COVID-19' in early February 2021. After manually going through the results and picking out only those memes that had to do with quarantine, 303 memes were identified for analysis.

How did they analyze it?

Like Bouvier and Chen in the article described above, Aslan used many of the approaches to discourse analysis that are explained later in this book such as pragmatics and multimodal discourse analysis. The key focus of his analysis, however, was to pay attention to the kinds of meanings that were made when people combined different semiotic resources (words and images together), especially the way the images resituated (or *recontextualized*) the words in ways that changed their meanings. He also paid attention to how these texts often created links to other texts, and how, through making these connections, meme creators were able to communicate not just about their feelings in quarantine but also about their social identities and the groups that they belonged to.

The first thing that Aslan did was to categorize the memes he had gathered into 'themes.' By doing this he identified three different types of quarantine meme to analyze more closely: 1) *Quarantine Day X* memes, which featured images meant to depict and compare different days of quarantine, 2) *Quarantine Routine* memes, which depicted what people typically did while they were in quarantine, and 3) *Coming out of Quarantine* memes, which depicted how people thought they looked or would look after coming out of quarantine.

What did they learn?

Most of the *Quarantine Day X* memes communicated how being stuck at home had a progressive effect on people's physical appearance or their mental health. An example can be seen in Figure D1.1, where a woman is rolling her belly fat with a rolling pin underneath the words 'Day 6 in quarantine.'

What is interesting about this meme from the point of view of discourse analysis is the ambiguity of the picture. Indeed, a picture of someone rolling their belly fat as if it were dough is, at first glance, absurd. The caption is also ambiguous; the phrase 'Day 6 in quarantine' does not have any clear meaning on its own. But when the picture and the caption

Figure D1.1 'Day 6 in Quarantine' (from Aslan 2022: 238) are combined, the ambiguity is resolved: rolling one's belly fat, or, being 'fat' enough to do so, is seen as a consequence of being in quarantine for six days. The caption, therefore, serves to *situate* the picture in the context of quarantine lockdowns. But for the ambiguity to be completely resolved and for the humour of the meme to be fully appreciated requires some shared knowledge between the meme's creator and the viewer about the larger cultural context, specifically the oft-reported fact that many people used their time in quarantine to improve their cooking and baking skills. It is partly this reference to shared knowledge that creates a feeling of solidarity among the people who circulated this meme.

Other memes in this category used multiple pictures to illustrate people's progressive mental or physical deterioration during lockdown. One of these Aslan analyses is a meme showing four pictures of the actor Jack Nicholson as he appeared in the film *The Shining*, each one depicting him with an increasingly manic-looking expression on his face, and the last one taken from the part of the movie in which he is trying to kill his wife with an axe. The pictures are labelled: 'Day 1,' 'Day 3,' 'Day 5,' and 'Day 7,' and the caption underneath the pictures reads: '1 WEEK OF QUARANTINE.' As with the meme described above, the meaning of each of these individual pictures is ambiguous. Being ordered in a particular sequence and combined with the captions, however, makes them make sense. Also, like the meme above, they invite viewers to share a common cultural reference, thereby making them feel that they belong to the same group.

Many of the *Covid Routine* memes Aslan collected made reference to the lethargy that characterized many people's daily lives during quarantine, an example of which can be seen in Figure D2.2, which shows a man in bed, appearing to be waking up, beneath the words: 'I need to get out of this bed or I'm going to be late for the couch.'

As with the memes discussed above, the meaning of the image of the man in bed is ambiguous without the caption, which *situates* it in some kind of social context, the immediate context of waking up, and the larger context of being quarantined, during

Figure D2.2 'I need to get out of this bed ...' (from Aslan 2022: 244) which the usual social practice of waking up and going to work was disrupted. The phrase 'I'm going to be late to the couch' references the phrase 'I'm going to be late to work,' humorously portraying sitting on the couch as a scheduled activity. The contrast created by the idea of living one's life according to a schedule and the relative lack of scheduled activities that many people experienced during lockdown is what makes the meme funny. Another thing that makes it funny is the knowledge that, unlike travelling to work, travelling from one's bed to the couch is not something that normally takes a long time.

Finally, *Coming out of Quarantine* memes derived their meaning from a visual contrast between what people presumably looked like before quarantine and what they looked like afterwards, often through depictions of unusual physical features, inviting the viewer to imagine what they were going through during quarantine that led to this transformation.

In Figure D1.3, a man is shown taking off a headset and revealing an indentation in his head underneath the words: 'Gamers coming out of quarantine.' This picture illustrates the fact that, in discourse, people can communicate things indirectly by inviting others to come to their own conclusions about what is going on (see unit B5). Here, the viewer is asked to imagine why the man has an indentation in his head, and the words above the image provide a hint: it is because he has been wearing his gaming headset excessively during lockdown. Another important thing to notice about this meme is that, while it might be funny to everybody, it references an issue faced by a specific group of people—gamers—and so functions as a way for gamers to share their common experiences with other gamers.

Based on his analysis, Aslan is able to make some important observations not just about the kinds of texts that people were sharing during lockdowns, but also about the way memes work as a specific type of discourse. Since both the words and the images, taken alone, are often ambiguous, he notes, memes communicate their meaning by the

Figure D1.3 'Gamers coming out of quarantine' (from Aslan 2022: 248) way the words and the images are *combined*. One of the ways memes create humour he says, is by combining different *incongruous* meanings (such as 'going to work' vs. 'going to the couch'). Finally, he observes how memes often depend on references to *other* texts (such as movies) or to particular kinds of social practices (such as gaming), and through these references serve to create a feeling of empathy and togetherness among the people who share knowledge about these other texts or these social practices, a feeling that was particularly important during pandemic quarantines.

Project ideas

1. Collect some examples of packages of a particular kind of food and analyze how different semiotic resources are combined on the packages. What kinds of meanings are created through these combinations? What kinds of ideas about health and nutrition are being promoted? What kinds of customers do you think these products are being marketed to, and what does the discourse tell you about what the food manufactures think these kinds of people are like and what they care about?
2. Collect some examples of internet memes related to a particular topic. The memes you choose should combine words and pictures (e.g. image-macro memes, animated gifs). Try to understand how meaning is created by the way the words are connected to the images. Also, try to understand how the meaning of the memes depends on how they are connected to other texts (such as movies, television shows, or news reports). What are people *doing* when they share memes like this, and what kinds of *identities* are they trying to construct for themselves?

D2 TEXTURE: OLD AND NEW

In unit B1, we talked about how important 'texture' is in helping us to recognize a collection or words or other semiotic resources as a 'text.' We talked about the different ways that texture is created, including how different parts of the text are 'stuck together' (*cohesion*), and how texts are structured to conform to different kinds of expectations we have as readers (*coherence*). In units B2 and C2 we saw that different kinds of texts tend to have different overall structures and to favour different kinds of cohesive devices. These differences are especially apparent when we compare more traditional written texts to some of the newer forms of multi-authored writing that we now see online. Although these forms of online writing can sometimes seem fragmented and chaotic, they still have an underlying cohesion and coherence.

In this unit we will compare the coherence and cohesion in one kind of more 'traditional' text—the student essay—with a more recent form of writing that is popular on Chinese social media sites. The first article summarized below is a classic study by Ulla Connor of cohesion and coherence in the school-based writing of students, comparing essays written by students who speak English as their first language and those who speak English as a second language. In the second article, Leticia-Tian Zhang and Daniel Cassany discuss a very different kind of 'written' text, namely, *danmu*—user comments that travel across the screen while videos are playing, which are common on many Chinese video-sharing platforms. Reading these two summaries will not just give you a sense of how texture is achieved differently in 'old media' and 'new media' texts, but also of the challenges people have in managing cohesion and coherence when they are writing in a language that is less familiar to them, and the limitations of Halliday and Hasan's account of cohesion in English when analysing texts written in different languages such as Chinese.

A.

Ulla Conner (1984). 'A study of cohesion and coherence in English as a Second Language students' writing.' *Paper in Linguistics 17* (3), pp. 301–316.

Background

Writing teachers often notice that the main problem that students have with writing school-based assignments like essays and research papers often has less to do with their command of grammar and vocabulary and more to do with their ability to connect their sentences together in a way that makes sense (cohesion) and their ability to arrange the different parts of their texts in a systematic and logical way (coherence). These are referred to as the *discourse-level* features of writing.

Since Halliday and Hasan first published their book *Cohesion in English* in 1976, many researchers have used their description of the different devices that are used in English to create cohesion in texts (see unit B2) to analyze the writing of students and to understand the ways their use of different cohesive devices contributes to the overall quality of their writing. This study by Ulla Connor, however, was one of the first to use this approach.

What is particularly interesting about this study is that it compares the writing of students whose first language is English with the writing of those who have learned English as a second language (ESL), pointing to the particular difficulties people have with using cohesive devices effectively when they are writing in a language that they are less familiar with. These difficulties highlight the fact that learning another language well does not just require that we acquire a good command of the grammar and vocabulary of the language, but also that we acquire a good command of the *discourse*, including learning how *texture* is typically created in the new language.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

For this study Connor analyzed six essays from students studying in a large US university. Four of the essays were written by two advanced ESL students, one Spanish speaker and one Japanese speaker. Each of these students contributed two essays written seven weeks apart. Two of the essays were chosen from a group of students whose first language was English. Students were given 50 minutes during class to write them. The essays were what are often called 'argumentative essays,' essays in which students need to make an argument for or against some proposition. The first assignment, given to both the ESL students and those who spoke English as their first language, was on the topic: 'The advantages and disadvantages of testing' (Topic 1). Seven weeks later the ESL students were asked to write on a different topic to see if their writing had improved: 'The advantages and disadvantages of foreign aid' (Topic 2).

Before conducting her analysis of cohesion and coherence in the essays, Connor wanted to get an idea of what readers thought about their overall quality, so she asked two graduate students in the university's Department of Linguistics to independently rank them. The readers were in absolute agreement about their rankings, which are presented below with the first being the 'best' and the sixth being the 'worst':

1 Student with English as first language #1 (Topic 1)
2 Student with English as first language #2 (Topic 1)
3 ESL Student #1 (Topic 1)
4 ESL Student #2 (Topic 1)
5 ESL Student #1 (Topic 2)
6 ESL Student #2 (Topic 2)

How did they analyze it?

In order to analyze the cohesion in the texts, Connor counted the different kinds of cohesive devices that were used in the different essays, including lexical cohesion and repetition, reference, conjunction, and ellipsis (see unit B2). In order to analyze coherence in the texts, she made reference to research on the structure of arguments which shows that they tend to be structured in a 'Problem–Solution' format in which the writer assumes that the reader has an incorrect view of the issue (problem) and that the goal of the argument is to change the reader's mind (solution). This is usually done through a series of 'moves' (see unit B3) in which the writer asserts a claim, then introduces evidence to support the claim, and then induces the correctness of the claim based on the evidence given. She also examined the sub-topics in the essays, that is, the sequences of sentences that shared the same topic, and how these sub-topics related to the overall topic of the essay (the 'main idea').

What did they learn?

The results of the cohesion analysis were initially surprising, showing that the essays by second-language writers contained the same amount of cohesive devices as the essays written by first-language writers. However, there were differences in the *kind and variety* of the cohesive devices that the two kinds of students used. When it came to lexical cohesion, second-language writers were more likely to use repetition, whereas first-language writers created cohesion not by repeating the same word, but by using synonyms or words from the same *semantic field* (see unit B2). For example, in the most highly ranked essay, written by a first-language writer, tests were referred to in a variety of different ways: 'examinations,' 'methods of measuring,' 'means of testing,' 'a set of questions,' and 'a means of measuring a student's achievement,' whereas ESL Student #1, in their essay on testing, tended to repeat the word 'tests.' This suggests that first-language writers might have more choices for creating lexical cohesion because of their larger vocabularies.

Another difference between the first-language and second-language writers was that, while both groups used the devices of reference and conjunction, the first-language writers used more reference than conjunction, and the second-language writers used more conjunction than reference. ESL writers' tendency to use more conjunctions might be due to the fact that in many ESL classes conjunctions are taught as a good way for students to make their texts cohesive. In fact, later researchers observed that many ESL writers *overuse* conjunctive adverbs such as 'furthermore,' 'moreover,' and 'however' in their writing (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 2015).

In her analysis of the essays written by the same ESL students seven weeks later, Connor found that one of the students, Student #2, used a much greater variety of cohesive devices, increasing the amount of reference they used, and creating lexical cohesion by using different words rather than just repeating the same word. This improvement in the variety of cohesive devices, however, did not seem to improve the quality of the essay, which was still ranked last by the raters. The reason for this became clear when Connor analyzed coherence in the essays.

To analyze coherence, Connor divided the texts into smaller units of ideas and subtopics and mapped out how these smaller units were arranged. She found some big differences in the kinds of ideas and sub-topics that were included and how they were sequenced in the essays written by the students whose first language was English and the ESL students. She gives an example of an essay about testing that was ranked first by the raters, which was written by a first-language writer. The writer began the essay by introducing the main topic and talking about the context, and then setting up the two main positions on the main topic (for and against testing) and making a claim that introduced the first subtopic (tests are not necessary). They then went on the justify this claim ('there are other methods of measuring what a student has learned'). Two other sub-topics were then introduced as claims (the harmful effects of tests and the existence of alternatives to testing). These claims were also justified, and, in the case of the last claim, an induction was offered which did not just highlight the validity of the claim, but also the validity of the whole argument by making reference to the other two claims (tests are unnecessary and harmful):

The essays written by the ESL students were not so well organized. One of their main problems was that they often failed to produce the 'claim + justification + induction' structure effectively. For example, ESL Student #1's essay on testing, which was ranked as third, while containing two claims, as well as justifications for those claims, ended with an induction that did not make any reference to the two claims and so failed to summarize the argument in a convincing way at the end. ESL Student #2, whose second essay had much more variety in the use of cohesive devices, made three claims, but only justified one of them and did not include an induction at the end of the essay.

This study highlights how important cohesion and coherence are to producing effective texts (and to getting good grades in school!). But it also shows that cohesion alone is often not enough to give a text *texture*. Indeed, as ESL Student #2 demonstrated, it is possible to write a very cohesive text which, nevertheless, is incoherent.

Finally, the study highlights some of the challenges people have when writing texts in languages that are not their first language. Even though the ESL students in the study were advanced learners of English, they still had difficulty using a variety of cohesive devices and arranging the information in their texts in a way that conformed to expectations about how a text like this should be structured in an American academic context.

B.

Leticia-Tian Zhang and Daniel Cassany (2020). 'Making sense of *danmu* : Coherence in massive anonymous chats on Bilibili.Com.' *Discourse Studies 22* (4), pp. 483–502.

Background

Sometimes the texts that we encounter do not exhibit *texture* in quite the same way as the essays analyzed by Connor in the example above, and so, at first glance, may seem to be a bit chaotic. Nevertheless, we often still regard these texts as 'texts' and are able to understand how their different parts are related and how their overall structure makes sense. This is especially true of some kinds of texts that we encounter online such as YouTube or TikTok videos that are accompanied by a large number of comments from different people who have watched them, or chats in multiplayer online games that are produced by many people over long spans of time. One of the main features of such texts is that they are produced by multiple authors who have to make their comments somehow relevant to the main topic of the text (such as the video) and to other people's comments, much in the same way that people, when they are having face-to-face conversations, have to make their contributions relevant to what other people have said. In conversation, one of the main ways people do this is by paying attention to the sequencing of utterances (e.g. 'answers' come after 'questions') (see unit B5). But, when it comes to multi-authored online texts, sometimes the normal sequencing of conversations is messed up, as people contribute their different parts to the text at different times and may be replying to comments that were made long before the comment that precedes theirs. Algorithms can also mess up this sequencing by sorting comments in ways that are different from the order in which they are produced by, for example, ranking them based on how 'popular' they are. Another feature of these texts is that, while temporal sequentially is the main thing that makes conversations cohesive and coherent, online texts are also arranged in space, and the spatial arrangement of the different parts of the text can also sometimes be important to understanding how they relate to one another (see unit B9).

These problems are part of the challenge of making sense of the kind of text analyzed in this study by Leticia-Tian Zhang and Daniel Cassany. Zhang and Cassany are interested in texts that appear on the website Bilibi.com, a popular video-sharing site in China, which are formed not with words or sentences, but with *danmu* (弹幕)—small comments made up of words and symbols (emojis) that move across the surface of a video as it is playing in a way that resembles a 'barrage' of comments.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

For their data, Zhang and Cassany chose a *danmu* commented episode of a Spanish television series popular in China and uploaded onto Bilibili.com. As secondary data, they also gathered the 'most liked' answers from a discussion thread entitled 'What are the funny *danmu*?' on the website Zhihu (a site where people ask questions and then rate the best answers, similar to Quora). From this discussion they were able to collect screenshots of a large number of 'funny *danmu*' that users had posted that illustrated both conventional and unconventional ways *danmu* can be used.

How did they analyze it?

Originally, Zhang and Cassany intended to use Halliday and Hasan's (1976, see unit B2) model, of cohesion to analyze their data, but it soon became clear to them that the model, which was created based on the English language, has significant limitations when it comes to Chinese. Reference, for example, is expressed differently in Chinese since pronouns (such as 'he') can often be deleted from the subject position of sentences. Cohesion in Chinese is often created more through lexical choices, pragmatics (see unit B5), and reference to context (see unit A7) than through grammatical markers. As Yeh (2004: 258) writes, 'Some [cohesive devices] might be avoided in a particular language, while the others are preferred.' In Chinese, he continues, 'the third person impersonal pronoun is generally avoided and another cohesive device, lexical repetition, is, in compensation, adopted.' In light of this, Zhang and Cassany coded the *danmu* with specific attention to lexical cohesion and—*deictic expressions*—words referencing the context of the communication (see unit B4). They also paid attention to the different contexts the authors were referring to: 1) the video, 2) their personal viewing situation, and 3) comments from other contributors.

What did they learn?

One of the main things Zhang and Cassany learned from their analysis was that the job of making sense of the 'barrage' of *danmu* that move across the video screen mostly falls to viewers, who have to use their own knowledge and expectations about meaning to make connections between different *danmu* and between individual *danmu* and what was happening in the video.

Nevertheless, they did notice a range of devices that *danmu* authors used to create connections between their comments and other comments. One way they did this was by taking advantage of the *spatial* arrangement of the comments. Since *danmu* move across the screen from right to left, *danmu* inserted at an earlier point appear to the left of those inserted later. One way of referencing an earlier comment, then, was to simply refer to it as 'the left.' Some users also created connections with previous *danmu* by making reference to the *movement* of earlier *danmu* towards the edge of the screen by inserting phrases like 'wait for me' and 'don't go' into their comments.

The main way that commentors created cohesion was through *lexical cohesion*, by, for example, quoting what another person said (e.g. 'the person who said ...'), addressing another commenter, often in ways that included some kind of evaluation of what they had said (e.g. 'You male chauvinist ...'), or simply repeating words or phrases, using words about the same topic, or using the same emojis that appeared in earlier *danmu*. Sometimes they used other methods to link their comments to other comments such as reproducing the font colour that another commentor used. As expected Zhang and Cassany found relatively few grammar-based cohesive devices (e.g. substitution, ellipsis).

In order to create connections between their comments and what was happening on the screen, commenters relied heavily on temporality (the time in the video when they inserted their *danmu*) as well as the multimodal properties of the video (commenting on something that they could see in the scene). Sometimes they also used the multimodal properties of *danmu* themselves, for example, inserting an arrow in their *danmu* that pointed to something on the screen. Another way they created cohesion between their comments and the video was to 'talk' to the characters on the screen, producing answers when they asked questions, and asking them questions based on things they said or did (e.g. 'What about your wife, your wife. How long has it been?' and 'Wait you just accept it like this?').

Based on their analysis, Zhang and Cassany conclude that *danmu* conversations have a lot of features that might not make them seem particularly cohesive or coherent, especially to people who are not used to using them. At the same time, users of *danmu* still make use of a range of verbal and non-verbal cohesive devices to create links between their comments and other comments and to the video they are commenting on, thus facilitating shared interpretations of the video and of the conversation they are having about it. Among the most common of these is lexical cohesion, but they also do things like referring to the people and objects that appear on the screen or using the spatial configuration and movement of the comments in order to refer to them.

This study highlights how principles of cohesion and coherence are relevant to all kinds of texts, even those that, at first glance, may not seem cohesive or coherent. It also highlights the fact that different kinds of texts use cohesion in different ways, and that cohesion is sometimes achieved differently in different languages.

Project ideas

1. Collect a sample of school assignments written by you or by your classmates and analyze how cohesive devices are used in them and how they are structured to create coherence. Are some kinds of cohesive devices used more than others? How do you think this affects the overall quality of the text? What is the overall structure of the assignment? How closely do you think it adheres to the expectations (of your teacher) regarding how an assignment like this ought to be structured?
2. Collect one or more samples of a multi-authored text from the internet such as a comment thread from YouTube or Twitch. Try to identify the ways the producers of these comments link their comments to other comments or to the video or stream that they are commenting on.

3. If you speak a language other than English, find two examples of a similar kind of text (such as a newspaper article) in both languages and compare how cohesion and coherence are achieved in the different texts.

ONLINE GENRES AND DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES

In this unit you will read about two studies that used genre analysis to understand how different online genres—online product reviews and makeup tutorials on YouTube—are structured and used by members of particular discourse communities. One interesting thing about internet genres is that they are often in some way related to or adapted from earlier analogue genres. In the case of the genres analyzed in these studies, for example, online product reviews are in some ways related to product reviews that were printed in magazines and reports from consumer groups before the dawn of the internet, and makeup tutorials share some similarities with other instructional genres such as lectures. At the same time, these online genres are also different in very important ways from their offline progenitors. The relationship between new media genres and old media genres often provides good opportunities for discourse analysts to observe *genre-bending* and *genre-blending* (see unit B3).

In unit C3, you analyzed the generic features of restaurant reviews posted on TripAdvisor, but there are also many other websites and platforms where people can leave reviews of products or services they have purchased, and these reviews can be very influential in helping people to make purchasing decisions. In the first study summarized below, Stephen Skalicky presents a genre analysis of Amazon.com product reviews that have been rated as 'most helpful' by readers in order to determine the generic features they share.

Also, in unit C3 you were asked to consider the features of different genres of YouTube videos, focusing on their communicative purpose, their move structure, and whether or not they involved the mixing or blending of other genres. The second summary, based on an article by Aditi Bhatia, illustrates how the concepts we discussed in unit B3 can be used to analyze a *particular* genre on YouTube, in this case, the genre of the makeup tutorial.

A.

Stephen Skalicky (2013) 'Was this analysis helpful? A genre analysis of the Amazon.com discourse community and its "most helpful" product reviews.' *Discourse, Context and Media 2*, pp. 84–93.

Background

Because online reviews are generally written by amateurs rather than professional review writers, they sometimes do not follow strict and predictable generic conventions, something that you might have noticed when you analyzed the TripAdvisor reviews in unit C3. Moreover, as with the 'It Gets Better' videos discussed in unit B3, the discourse communities associated with online reviews are much more diverse and harder to define than the discourse communities for other genres. These communities consist basically of those people who use a particular website or platform (such as TripAdvisor). At the same time, many of these websites or platforms provide ways for members of these diverse discourse communities to collectively establish a set of shared expectations about the discursive features of successful genre performances by 'upvoting' or 'downvoting' users' reviews. Amazon.com, for instance, provides readers a chance to indicate whether they have found a review 'helpful' or not. Skalicky's aim in studying the 'most helpful' product reviews on Amazon.com is to try to determine what these sets of shared expectations are for users of the Amazon platform, and if they have different expectations regarding positive and negative reviews.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

For this study Skalicky gathered a collection of the 'most helpful' reviews on Amazon.com for 71 different products. For each product he chose the 'most helpful' positive reviews and the 'most helpful' critical (negative) reviews, resulting in a final dataset of 142 reviews.

How did they analyze it?

For his analytical framework, Skalicky used the principles of genre analysis as laid out in units A3 and B3, in particular, the technique of 'move analysis.' As discussed in unit B3, moves are the 'steps' users of a genre need to accomplish in order to fulfil their overall communicative purpose. Swales (2004: 228) calls them 'discoursal or rhetorical unit(s) that perform … coherent communicative function(s).' Skalicky (2013: 85) defines them more simply as 'recognizable section(s) of spoken or written discourse that perform … certain task(s).'

As I said above, in more everyday genres like product reviews, moves are often patterned in much more irregular ways than they are in genres that are more traditionally analyzed using move analysis (such as the introductions to academic articles analyzed by Swales; see unit B3). Because of this, Skalicky chose to focus primarily on the kinds of moves that can be found in product reviews and the communicative purposes they fulfil rather than trying to identify any consistent sequential pattern across reviews.

Since he collected a large number of reviews, Skalicky wanted to devise a method that would allow him to give a **quantitative** account of the different moves used in positive and negative reviews, in other words, to *count* how frequently different move types were used. To do this, he first read through a small sample of reviews and made of list of the moves that he found. He then went through the rest of the samples, **coding** (labelling) each move based on this scheme, all the while refining his list of codes by adding new moves to it when he found them.

He also analyzed what he called the 'rhetorical focus' of the reviews, sorting them into three different categories: *author-based reviews* (reviews that focus on the author's experience with the product and contain a high number of first-person pronouns), *audience-based reviews* (reviews that focus on the reader of the review and contain a high number of second-person pronouns), and *product-based reviews* (reviews focusing on the product and containing a high number of demonstrative pronouns such as 'this' and 'that').

What did they learn?

In his analysis of the 142 reviews, Skalicky identified 943 moves which fell into nine move categories, as follows:

1. Evaluation moves (where the author provides an evaluation of the product).
2. User information moves (where the author provides information about the product gleaned through using it).
3. Title moves (each review was required to have a title, which was usually a statement summarizing the review).
4. External information moves (where the author provides information about the review itself, such as their reason for writing it).
5. Overall statement moves (where the author provides an overall statement about the product, often recommending whether or not it should be purchased).
6. Personal experience moves (where the author talks about their personal experiences with the product, usually through narrative).
7. Comparison moves (where the author compares the product with other products).
8. Background information moves (where the author provides background information either about themselves or about the product).
9. Refer to other review moves (where the author refers to other reviews about the same product).

Table D3.1 shows how these different moves were distributed between positive and negative reviews.

Table D3.1 Distribution of moves across the dataset (adapted from Skalicky 2013)

Move Name	*Positive Reviews*	*Negative Reviews*
Evaluation	99 (19%)	99 (23%)
User information	98 (19%)	52 (12%)
Personal experience	35 (7%)	52 (12%)
Title	71 (14%)	71 (17%)
Comparison	54 (10%)	30 (7%)
External information	55 (11%)	51 (12%)
Overall statement	54 (10%)	40 (9%)
Background information	22 (6%)	19 (5%)
Refer to other reviews	22 (4%)	12 (3%)
Totals	517	426

Skalicky found that the most common move type in both positive and negative reviews was 'Evaluation,' which is not surprising since the overall communicative purpose of a product review is to render some kind of judgement about the product. However, there were differences in the frequency with which evaluations were made between the different review types, with negative reviews containing a higher frequency of evaluative moves. There were other differences as well. The moves that displayed the largest amount of variation between the two review types were 'User information' and 'Personal experience,' with positive reviews more likely to contain 'User information' moves and negative reviews more likely to contain 'Personal experience' moves.

In interpreting these results, Skalicky considered not just the relationship of the different moves to the overall rhetorical purposes of the two different review types (either to praise/recommend or to criticize/not recommend the product), but also the kinds of moves readers of the different kinds of reviews found 'most helpful.' One reason positive reviews might have contained more 'User information' moves (such as statements that the product 'works as advertised') is because, when reviewers pointed out negative aspects of products, they were more likely to do so not through providing 'information' but through talking about their 'personal experiences.' Similarly, Skalicky found that the 'Evaluation' moves in negative reviews tended to be longer and contain more different kinds of 'steps,' suggesting that, when reviews say something bad about a product, there is the need to elaborate or explain themselves more.

Apart from these differences, Skalicky found that the main thing that all of the 'most helpful' reviews had in common was that they provided new or experience-based information of the kind that usually cannot be found in other forms of information about products such as advertisements or product specifications. The 'value' held by members of this discourse community regarding new information was also borne out in Skalicky's analysis of the 'rhetorical focus,' where he found that many of the 'most helpful' reviews (45%) were 'author-based,' focusing on the experiences authors had with the product, rather than 'reader-based' (23%), focusing on how the reader *might* like the product, or 'product-based' (32%), focusing on the product alone.

Through this analysis, Skalicky is able to establish a set of moves that are common to product reviews on Amazon, as well as to show how these moves are used differently in positive and negative reviews. By focusing on reviews that were voted to be 'helpful' by Amazon users, he is able to argue not just that these particular features appear in this genre, but that they reflect the values and understandings about the communicative purpose of the genre that are shared by members of this discourse community.

B.

Aditi Bhatia (2018). 'Interdiscursive performance in digital professions: The case of YouTube tutorials.' *Journal of Pragmatics 124* , pp. 106–120.

Background

YouTube is a space where a range of different communities gather to share and comment on a wide range of user-generated content designed to, among other things, entertain, teach, promote political opinions, and market products and services. Although the platform is dominated by amateur creators, large companies and commercial brands have an increasingly strong presence, especially in the form of advertisements that accompany many of the videos. Many creators have sought to become 'influencers' by professionalizing their content, gathering a loyal base of fans ('followers'), and profiting from their popularity by endorsing different products in their videos. Among the most visible YouTube influencers are beauty gurus, or what Bhatia calls 'beauty vloggers.' These individuals can have millions of loyal fans, and their impact on beauty and makeup trends can sometimes even exceed that of the companies whose products they endorse (Lieber 2014).

Like other groups of professionals, YouTube influencers often come to be associated with particular genres through which they communicate with their followers and achieve the communicative goals associated with their professional identities. For beauty vloggers, the most common of these are makeup tutorials (videos in which they demonstrate to their fans how to apply different kinds of makeup to produce different 'looks') and 'get ready with me' videos (videos demonstrating their daily makeup routines). In some ways these tutorials are similar to other instructional genres on YouTube such as videos in which people teach others how to make desserts or fix their computers. But they also have elements that distinguish them from other kinds of instructional videos. One of the biggest challenges for users of this genre is that they need to show to their viewers not just that they are 'experts' in applying makeup, but that they are also 'authentic,' 'ordinary' people, just like their followers. In fact, much of the loyalty of their fans comes from the feelings of intimacy and friendliness that they feel with the influencers. This article explores how beauty vloggers construct their professional identities as both 'experts' and 'friends' though examining the *interdiscursive* nature of makeup tutorials.

What discourse was analyzed and where did they get it?

For this article, Bhatia analyzed a set of 20 makeup tutorials posted by the popular beauty vlogger Jaclyn Hill (www.youtube.com/@Jaclynhill1). They came from a larger collection of over 250 videos posted by ten different YouTubers collected as part of a larger research project. The reason Hill's videos were chosen, apart from her popularity, was because Bhatia considered Hill's videos to be typical examples of the genre and Hill herself to be a suitable 'representative' case study. Sometimes, discourse analysts attempt to get samples of a particular kind of discourse from a range of different people. But there are also advantages to focusing on a single producer of discourse as a 'case study,' allowing us to not just understand the conventions of a genre, but also to witness how a particular user of the genre 'plays with' those conventions to reach her individual communicative goals and create her individual brand identity. Apart from the videos, Bhatia also collected the comments that viewers left, allowing her to understand something about the effectiveness of Hill's discursive strategies and the role of viewers/subscribers in affecting how this genre was used.

How did they analyze it?

The framework Bhatia used to analyze the videos was *critical genre analysis* (Bhatia 2017; see unit B3), which means that she did not just analyze the move structure of the genre, but also tried to understand how the vlogger exploited the features of the genre to construct a certain kind of 'expertise' by displaying both 'disciplinary knowledge' (the knowledge associated with makeup and beauty) and 'discursive knowledge' (the knowledge associated with YouTube) (Bhatia 2017: 206). In particular, she paid attention to *interdiscursive performances* (see unit B3): the strategic appropriation of different semiotic and linguistic resources in the pursuit of 'private intentions within socially accepted communicative practices' (Bhatia 2017: 36–37).

What did they learn?

When it came to the typical 'move structure' of makeup tutorials, Bhatia observed that Hill's makeup videos typically begin with 1) an enthusiastic greeting and expression of gratitude to her viewers, and then move on to 2) an introduction, stating the reason for the tutorial and what viewers can expect to learn, proceeding to 3) the tutorial, which is typically broken down into different 'steps' or 'Problem–Solution' statements, and ending with 4) a request for viewers to subscribe to her channel. In many ways, the genre appropriates features from traditional instructional genres, especially in its overall structure and the preponderance of particular grammatical forms (directives) and lexical choices (beauty jargon), which help to portray Hill as an expert and to position her viewers as 'students' of the 'discipline' of beauty.

At the same time, however, there are a lot of features in Hill's makeup tutorials that distinguish them from more traditional educational genres. Hill's tone, for example, is informal: she refers to her viewers as 'guys' and 'you guys' and frequently shares her personal opinions and experiences, encouraging feelings of intimacy from her audience. She also frequently refers to remarks and questions that her viewers have posted and encourages them to comment further, making the tutorial seem almost like a conversation between Hill and her fans. While she makes use of the expert vocabulary of beauty, she mixes it with colloquial expressions, hyperbolic vocabulary (e.g. 'I personally *love* mixing foundations'), and self-deprecating humour when talking about her opinions and personal experiences. One of the main genres that she *embeds* into her tutorials is that of the personal narrative. These stories have the dual function of making her seem both more 'ordinary' and 'authentic' and more like an 'expert' by highlighting her credentials and long personal history in the field.

This blending of the formal genre of the tutorial and the informal genre of a 'chat' allows Hill to simultaneously perform the identities of both an 'expert' and a 'friend.' The third kind of identity she needs to perform is that of a 'salesperson,' which is performed much more subtly by being enfolded within these other two identities. One way she does this is by skilfully interweaving promotion with instruction (e.g. 'I am using my Jaclyn Hill Favourites Palette by Morphe Brushes … if you choose to purchase this palette, the code JACATTACK will get you 10% off of this … only discount code that will work for this palette …'). Another way is by framing her promotional statements as a matter of personal opinion or as arising from her personal experiences (e.g. 'These are my favourite lashes ever, they are very dramatic … if you love drama then I would highly recommend Slayla lashes … they are beautiful … they are the most comfortable lashes I have ever worn').

Bhatia concludes her analysis by reiterating her findings about how skilful Hill is at using the genre of the makeup video to perform a range of different roles,

> transitioning between a teacher in a 'managerial classroom mode' in which she conveys information and instruction in typical teaching turns and employs specific jargon, to becoming a participant of the YouTube community socializing with her viewers, to transitioning further into a prosumer promoting her credentials and affiliations in the pursuit of more capitalistic aspirations.
>
> (Bhatia 2018: 118)

She ends by emphasizing how useful genre analysis can be in helping us to understand not only the new genres that are developing in digital spaces, but also the new kinds of *professional identities* that these new genres help people to enact.

Project ideas

1. Gather a collection of online reviews from a particular website. They might be restaurant reviews, product reviews, movie reviews, or even reviews of lecturers from a site such as Ratemyprofessors.com. Try to determine if there is a common set of moves and conventional 'move structure' associated with this genre. Do negative and positive reviews contain the same kinds of moves and follow the same structure?
2. Choose a social media influencer who is successful or popular in their particular domain (e.g. beauty, gaming, politics) and gather a collection of their posts (videos, Instagram photos). Do these posts tend to fall into a single genre, or do they use different genres? What are the features of these genres and how do the influencers use these genres to assume certain kinds of roles or identities? Do these genres involve the mixing of features from other genres? Are there ways that this influencer uses these genres that are special or unique, and, if so, how does this help to contribute to this influencer's 'personal brand.'

IDEOLOGIES IN DISCOURSE

D4

In units A4 and B4 we explored how texts can be used to promote different kinds of ideologies or support different kinds of power relations in society by constructing different 'versions of reality.' One way writers create 'versions of reality' is by choosing to represent people (participants) and what they are doing (processes) in particular ways. We called these combinations of participants and processes 'whos doing whats.' A more technical way to talk about how participants and processes are combined in discourse is *transitivity* (see unit A4). According to the linguist Michael Halliday, transitivity is how users of a language communicate their understanding of reality and talk about their experiences of the world. The first study summarized in this unit, by

Juan Li, shows how the tool of transitivity can be used to present two very different versions of the same event, the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in what was then Yugoslavia in May 1999.

Another way people construct 'versions of reality' is by invoking 'versions of reality' that are already circulating in a society in the form of *Discourses*, through things like metaphors and presuppositions. The second summary, based on an article by Yating Yu and Hongsheng Sui, is also about newspaper discourse and also about China, but rather than comparing and contrasting the ways two different newspapers portray an event, it focuses on how people with different points of view argue about a particular issue—the issue of gender.

A.

Juan Li (2010). 'Transitivity and lexical cohesion: Press representations of a political disaster and its actors.' *Journal of Pragmatics 42* , pp. 3444–3458.

Background

In the late 1990s, the United States, along with its NATO allies, intervened in a conflict between the Serbian-dominated government of what was then Yugoslavia and ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo, where they said the government was involved in a programme of 'ethnic cleansing' against the Albanians. As part of its intervention, NATO conducted airstrikes against Serbian military targets. On 7 May 1999, during one of these strikes, the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was bombed, killing three Chinese journalists. The bombing set off massive anti-American demonstrations in China and calls from the Chinese Government for the United States and NATO to offer an official apology. After the incident, the media in the United States and China offered very different accounts of the situation. These different 'versions of reality' presented in the media in the respective countries contributed significantly to anti-American sentiments in China and anti-Chinese sentiments in the United States. This article uses principles from critical discourse analysis to explore how the use of language in these media accounts contributed to the ways readers understood the event and helped to promote an 'us vs. them' mentality on both sides.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The discourse analyzed for this study consisted of the headlines and news stories about the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy (and the related protests in China) from the *New York Times* and *China Daily*. The *New York Times* was chosen as one of the largest and most respected newspapers in the United States, known for its coverage of international news. *China Daily*, China's state-run English language newspaper is, according to Li, regarded as the English version of *People's Daily* and reflects the views of the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party. Li collected all of the articles about the bombing that appeared on the front-pages of these two newspapers in the month of May 1999. This consisted of a total of 40 articles—nine from *The New York Tines* and 31 from *China Daily*.

How did they analyze it?

The method of analysis chosen for this study was critical discourse analysis (CDA), a method which attempts to uncover the ideologies embedded in discourse and how discourse affects how we see the world (see units A4, B4, C4). One of the main concerns of critical discourse analysts is the way different 'versions of reality,' which serve the ideological interests of different groups, are created through the linguistic choices people make.

Many critical discourse analysts are heavily influenced by Michael Halliday's ideas about grammar, especially his notion of *transitivity*. For Halliday, clauses represent reality by combining certain kinds of *participants* with certain kinds of *processes*. Often, the hidden ideologies in a text can be uncovered by paying attention to the kinds of processes that are associated with different participants. Halliday divided processes into several different kinds. The main kinds of processes are those having to do with actions in the external world (*material processes*), internal actions of thinking or feeling (*mental processes*), and actions of classifying, identifying, or showing the relationship between participants (*relational processes*). Other processes include *behavioural processes* (actions that communicate our thoughts or feelings in the material world), *verbal processes* (actions of 'saying'), and *existential processes* (actions of 'being' or existing). Table 34.1 gives examples of these different kinds of processes from Li's data.

The important thing about these different kinds of processes is that, when people or things are associated with them, they are construed as certain *kinds* of people or things. When someone is portrayed as doing a material process, for example, they are construed as an ACTOR; when they are portrayed as doing a mental action, they are construed as a THINKER or PERCEIVER; and when they are portrayed as doing a verbal action, they are construed as a SAYER.

In his study, Li first analyzed the transitivity in the headlines of the news stories that he collected. He then did a more detailed analysis of the transitivity in the articles themselves. In addition, he looked at the kinds of words that appeared frequently in

Table D4.1 Process types (adapted from Li 2010)

Process type	*Example*
Material	NATO forces struck the Chinese Embassy
Behavioural	Nation mourns three martyrs
Mental	Officials predicted a heavy night of bombardment
Verbal	NATO said it had conducted its attack
Relational	China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council
Existential	There were 20 people in the embassy

the texts and how they were used to create *lexical cohesion* (see unit B2). He did this to try to understand if the kinds of words used and the *semantic fields* they belonged to suggested any patterns or themes.

What did they learn?

In his analysis of the headlines, Li found some important differences between the *New York Times* and *China Daily* in terms of the social actors portrayed and what they were portrayed as doing. In the *New York Times*, participants associated with the United States or NATO were frequently portrayed as *agents* in material or verbal processes.

> NATO {Actor} hits {material} China Embassy
> NATO {Sayer} says {verbal} it thought Embassy was Arms Agency

The Chinese Government were not portrayed at all in these headlines. The only Chinese participants portrayed were the 'anti-American' protesters, who were depicted not as *acting*, but as *behaving* or being *acted upon* by outside forces or abstract ideologies (such as 'nationalism').

> China protesters {behaver} rage at {behavioural} America
> China students {Target/Goal} are caught up {material} by nationalism

The headlines in *China Daily* presented a very different picture of the power relations between the participants. Here, the Chinese participants (and those in support of them) were portrayed as playing an active role, performing both material and verbal processes.

> (Chinese) Diplomat {Sayer} refutes {verbal} U.S. excuse for bombing
> Jiang (the President of the PRC) {Sayer} slamming {verbal} act of aggression
> Thousands {Actor} demonstrate {material} throughout the world

Li's more thorough analysis of transitivity within the articles tells a more detailed story, not just about which participants were portrayed as more active, but also, about what kinds of participants they were and what other participants they were related to. An analysis of *relational processes*, in the *New York Times* articles, for example, shows that articles in this newspaper focused on characterizing the protests (rather than the attack), construing them as emotional and anti-American. They also tended to group China together with social actors like Russia and Serbia as countries that opposed NATO, depicting the crisis as a confrontation between 'democracy' and 'authoritarianism.'

> It was by far the largest anti-American demonstration in China
> The demonstrations reflected a resentment towards the United States
> Russia and China are the strongest opponents of the NATO air attacks

In depictions of the protesters, the *Times* portrayed them as performing violent actions or 'roaming' the streets like animals.

> A group of 50 demonstrators burst through police lines
> Several thousand protesters threw rocks and bottle-rockets at embassy buildings
> Large unruly throngs roamed the embassy district

Articles in *China Daily*, on the other hand, focused much more on describing the attack on the embassy rather than the subsequent protests, portraying it as an act of aggression. The 'version of reality' depicted is also bipolar, but here the conflict is between countries (including China) who abide by international norms, and the United States and NATO, who violate them.

> The raid was an overt provocation against reporters throughout the world
> NATO's attack on the Chinese Embassy was an act of aggression
> The atrocious attack is a serious violation of Chinese sovereignty and an open provocation of the 1.2 billion Chinese people

When *China Daily* did address the actions of the protesters, they were described as engaging not in (violent) *material processes*, but rather (peaceful) *verbal processes*.

> The demonstrators condemned the bombing
> They voiced their support for the stand taken by the Chinese Government

This transitivity analysis shows how each of the two newspapers strategically chose the kinds of participants to include in their stories and the kinds of actions to associate with them to portray particular 'versions' of the situation. Whereas *China Daily* portrayed the bombing as a violent action carried out by NATO and the US, which the Chinese Government and Chinese people responded to verbally, the *New York Times* constructed the protests as the main reason for the diplomatic rift between the two countries, portraying them as violent and emotional.

These 'versions' of reality were also reflected in the kinds of lexical items that were repeated throughout the articles and the *Discourses* they invoked. In the articles from the *Times*, words associated with floods, violent fire, and untamed animals occur throughout the texts to describe the protests. For instance, the protests are depicted as an 'outpouring of anger,' and an 'explosion of public rage,' and the Chinese Government is depicted as 'fanning the flames' with its 'inflammatory' rhetoric. The *Times* also used theatre metaphors to try to represent the protests as 'staged' or 'choreographed' by the government. The *China Daily* articles, on the other hand, frequently used words associated with 'crime' such as 'criminal' and 'culprit' to describe NATO, as well as words associated with the violation of sovereignty such as 'encroaching,' 'infringing,' and 'invading.'

This article is a good example of how critical discourse analysis, especially with its attention to the ways social actors and social actions are portrayed, can help to reveal the underlying ideologies in texts. The article shows how both the *New York Times* and *China Daily* presented a biased perspective on the situation designed to make one side look more moral, reasonable, and righteous than the other.

B.

Yating Yu and Hongsheng Sui (2022) '"The anxiety over soft masculinity": A critical discourse analysis of the "prevention of feminisation of male teenagers" debate in the Chinese-language news media.' ***Feminist Media Studies*** , published online 11 March 2022.

Background

Lately, partly influenced by the popularity of Korean 'boy bands,' young male singers and actors who do not conform to traditional ideals of masculinity have become more and more popular across Asia. In Korea, male entertainers who have a 'softer,' more androgynous appearance and manner are known as 'flower boys' (*Kkonminam*). In China, they are known as 'little fresh meat' (*xiao xian rou*). Although this style is very popular with fans across Asia and the rest of the world, some, who adhere to more traditional ideas about gender roles, are concerned about the effects more fluid understandings of gender behaviour might have on society. In China, this concern has given rise to increased discrimination against effeminate men, often associated with Discourses of nationalism and militarism. It has even given rise to a conspiracy theory in China that the United States has been secretly promoting androgynous male stars in Asia in order to 'weaken' China. This concern also was a factor in the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference tabling a proposal entitled 'Prevention of Feminisation of Male Teenagers,' which, among other things, called on the Ministry of Education to pay more attention to physical education for male students. Not surprisingly, this proposal led to a heated debate in the Chinese press about the feminization of male teenagers and the gender-related behaviour of young people more generally. This article is an analysis of the *Discourses* that people invoked in this debate and the discursive strategies they used to argue for and against the government's proposal.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The data for the analysis was 27 Chinese-language news articles published between 29 January and 8 July 2021 from a range of different newspapers in China. The articles were collected by typing the phrase 'Prevention of Feminisation of Male Teenagers Proposal' in Chinese (防止男性 青少年女性化的提案) into Factiva, a search engine for global news.

How did they analyze it?

As in Li's (2010) article summarized above, the authors of this article used critical discourse analysis to analyze the data, but, since they were asking rather different questions, they used different methods. While Li was interested in how writers of articles in the *New York Times* and *China Daily* used grammar to present different versions of the same event, Yu and Sui were more interested in understanding the *discursive strategies* people used to *argue* about the issue of gender.

To do this, they first of all attempted to identify the main Discourses that they found in the articles. As we said in unit A4, Discourses (with a capital 'D') are ways of talking, thinking, and treating other people that promote particular *cultural models*, ideas about how the world 'should' be, and *ideologies*, ideas about what is good and bad, right and wrong, and normal and abnormal. Once they identified these Discourses, they proceeded to attempt to identify the kinds of argumentation strategies that were associated with them. To do this, they made use of a model developed by Theo van Leeuwen (2008) to analyze the ways people use language to engage in **legitimation**, that is, making an idea or point of view seem 'legitimate' or 'true.' Among the ways they do this are *authorization*, appealing to outside authorities such as experts, *moral evaluation* appealing to moral or ethical standards, *rationalization*, appealing to logic, reason, or some kind of empirical research, and *narrativization*, telling a story to support their point of view. Legitimation is also partly achieved through the strategies writers use to represent social actors (participants). Among these are *abstraction*, portraying social actors as abstract phenomena rather than 'real' people, *categorization*, portraying people as members of categories or groups based on what they do or how they look, and *exclusion*, not mentioning certain kinds of social actors at all.

What did they learn?

Yu and Sui found three dominant Discourses in the newspaper articles associated with the debate about the 'Prevention of Feminisation of Male Teenagers Proposal': 1) Anti-feminine Discourse—which promoted patriarchal beliefs about the superiority of men (and masculinity) and the inferiority of women (and femininity) 2) Nationalism—which promoted the belief that people's actions and behaviour (including their gender-related behaviour) should support and glorify the nation and the state, and 3) Anti-gender stereotype Discourse—which promoted egalitarianism and the idea that men and women should be able to act the way they want.

They also found that different strategies for legitimation tended to be associated with these different Discourses. When the Anti-feminine Discourse was promoted, they found that the strategy of *categorization* was used to assign positive traits to masculinity and negative traits to femininity. One article, for instance, defined 'femininity' as

> characterised by timidity, dependence, quietness, inactivity, lack of confidence and spirit of adventure, etc., which are quite contrary to the so-called 'responsibility' assumed to be possessed by boys with masculinity, and even more contrary to the creativity, imagination and innovative practical ability to be cultivated of the future leaders.

Obviously, such statements not only *presuppose* that masculinity and femininity are two 'opposite' and 'essential' traits of people, but also that one (masculinity) is better than the other and 'naturally' belongs to a particular category of people (boys). Based on this categorization, other voices arguing for this Discourse used *rationalization* to try to 'logically' explain why some boys did not fit 'correctly' into these binary categories, such as a lack of 'male role models.' Such reasoning helped to support government policies such as the Ministry of Education's decision to hire more male physical education teachers to promote virility among teenage boys.

The Discourse of Nationalism made use of the priorities of the nation—namely the need to maintain the population and to defend the nation from foreign enemies—to argue for traditional gender roles. One strategy Yu and Siu noticed was associated with this Discourse was *authorization*, quoting 'authorities' (such as politicians) talking about how the phenomenon of feminization was hurting the country. For example, one article quoted Si Zefu, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, as saying that

> certain types of male stars like 'sissy boys'and 'little fresh meat' … make boys no longer want to be 'battle heroes," and that if the feminisation trend of Chinese male youth is not effectively managed, it will inevitably endanger the survival and development of the Chinese nation.

In such statements, there really isn't any rational argument or empirical proof, only the 'authority' of the person who said them. Yu and Siu also note that this Discourse also often used the strategy of *abstraction*: rather than 'feminine men' as members of a category, the threat was the abstract phenomenon of 'feminization,' which makes it sound more pervasive and 'scary,' like an infectious disease.

The main legitimation strategy associated with the Anti-gender stereotype Discourse was *moralization*. People who promoted this Discourse appealed to common *values* in the society such as egalitarianism, fairness, and compassion. They argued, for example, that 'feminization' is a 'derogatory term' which implies 'disrespect and discrimination against women.' They also argued that *all* people should be allowed to develop the traits associated with 'masculinity' such as 'decisiveness, courage, enterprise, generosity, open-mindedness, rationality, perseverance, responsibility, etc.' Finally, some cautioned that the 'anti-feminization' drive could cause harm to young people, leading to the increased bullying of gender-non-conforming boys.

This study shows that when people or groups are arguing about an issue, it is often a clash not just between those individuals or groups with their respective 'opinions,' but a conflict between different *Discourse*s, each with their own sets of assumptions about what is right and wrong, good and bad, and normal and abnormal. This is why is sometimes so difficult for people who have different positions on issues to reach common ground, because when they are talking about these issues, they are talking from 'inside' of these different Discourses.

Project ideas

1. Collect articles from two different news sources which are associated with different political groups, ideological positions, or from different countries which are reporting on a common event. Analyze the way the event is represented by focusing on *transitivity* in the articles. Pay attention to the kinds of processes that are attributed to different participants and which of the participants are portrayed as *agents* and which are not. Explore how these different configurations of participants and processes promote not just different versions of the event but also different 'versions of reality.'

2. Collect data from news sources or from social media about an issue that people are arguing about. Try to identify the *Discourses* that are associated with different sides of the argument and what sorts of discursive strategies are associated with these different Discourses.

CONVERSATIONS IN ONLINE 'DATING' AND 'GROOMING'

One thing that is useful about pragmatics and conversation analysis is how they can be applied to the study of human relationships, helping to understand how those relationships unfold moment-by-moment in conversation through the way people formulate turns in talk and the way the 'do things' like 'complimenting,' 'apologizing,' or 'sharing' personal information. Conversations can be especially consequential at the beginning of relationships when people are just getting to know each other and trying to decide whether or not to take the relationship further.

Many relationships nowadays begin online through dating apps, on dating websites, or on other platforms such as social media sites. In a sense, the way people conduct their conversations online can be even more high stakes since they do not have the benefit of seeing the other person 'in the flesh' and they are not entirely sure of their intentions or how much to trust them. The two articles reviewed in this unit show how pragmatics and conversation analysis can be used to analyze the online conversations that occur at the beginning of relationships. The first article, by Carles Roca-Cuberes, Will Gibson and Michael Mora-Rodriguez, looks at how Spanish-speaking users of the popular dating app Tinder manage the challenges of these initial interactions. In their analysis they use some of the principles from conversation analysis discussed in unit B5, paying attention to the ways the *sequencing* of different kinds of utterances affect how people are able to accomplish things through talk, the ways conversationalists need to manage things like introducing new topics and dealing with *dispreferred responses*, and the difficulties inherent in *opening* and *closing* conversations.

The second study, conducted by Nuria Lorenzo-Dus and Cristina Izura, explores a more sinister form of human interaction, the way sexual predators 'groom' young people online in order to win their trust as a prelude to exploiting them. Lorenzo-Dus and Izura use tools from pragmatics, focusing on how one particular kind of speech act—the compliment—is formulated in such encounters and the ways 'groomers' use this speech act to manipulate their targets.

A.

Carles Roca-Cuberes, Will Gibson, and Michael Mora-Rodriguez (2023). 'Relationship initiation and formation in post-match Tinder chat conversations.' *Discourse and Communication* , published online 2 March 2023.

Background

Tinder is a dating app used by 75 million people every month, most of whom are below the age of 35. It allows users to scroll through pictures of other users in their geographical area and 'swipe right' if they are attracted to them and 'left' if they are not. If two users 'swipe right' on each other's photos, the app announces to them that they are 'a match,' and they are then able to chat via the app. In these initial chats, users need to find out more information about each other in order to decide whether or not they are really compatible. This requires users to conversationally manage *disclosures*, trying to find ways to reveal relevant information about themselves to the other person in a way that seems 'natural,' and trying to get the other person to reveal relevant information about themselves. Self-disclosure is especially important in initial interactions between strangers, and it normally occurs in a *reciprocal* fashion—that is, one person will disclose something about themselves as a way of inviting the other person to make a similar disclosure. This reciprocity is one of the reasons that the sequencing of talk in these initial encounters is so important. At the same time, it is usually easier to manage the mutual disclosure of less 'personal' information such as one's occupation, hobbies, and interests, than it is to manage the disclosure of more 'personal' information, such as one's relationship status. The aim of this study is to understand how people on Tinder use the structure of their online conversations to manage mutual disclosure and, thereby, to decide whether or not to keep talking.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The researchers collected 157 conversations from ten Spanish-speaking users of Tinder (four women and six men). The users ranged in age from 19 to 60 and all identified as heterosexual. After getting their participants' consent for the study, they asked them to share screenshots of the conversations they had had on Tinder with other users that they had 'matched' with.

Getting the consent from people to collect samples of their discourse for analysis is especially important when we are analysing talk or 'talk-like' discourse, since, unlike when they write things to be published in the 'public domain' (newspapers, webpages), when they have conversations with others, they don't normally consider that other people might be listening in. This business of getting consent, however, is sometimes difficult when you are collecting data from apps and social media sites. While it might be easy to get the consent of the person who has agreed to share their online conversations with you, it is often hard to find the other person with whom they were talking. Roca-Cuberes and his colleagues addressed this problem by asking their participants to blank out the names and other identifying information of the people they interacted with before submitting their conversations with them in order to protect the anonymity of their conversational partners.

How did they analyze it?

As stated above, the researchers used conversation analysis to analyze their data, paying attention to the sequencing of turns in the chats and how participants elicited information from each other as they were trying to get acquainted. First, they analyzed the sequential structure of chat openings and how people negotiated the exchange of information about themselves in these beginning stages of the interaction. Then they examined later parts of the conversations where people talked about more intimate things. Finally, they picked out places in the conversations where it appeared that things had 'gone wrong' in one way or another and tried to understand if these breakdowns could be explained with reference to the turn-taking system of the conversations.

What did they learn?

Based on their analysis of the data, the researchers found that self-disclosures were usually accomplished through a predictable orderly pattern of talk which they call the 'elicited self-disclosure sequence.' This sequence normally involves five moves:

(1) One person asks a question to elicit a disclosure from the other.
(2) The second person produces the requested disclosure.
(3) The second person then reciprocates with a similar question.
(4) The first person reciprocates with a similar disclosure of information.
(5) The disclosures are positively assessed by either person to display affiliation.

The fifth move in the sequence may occur either at the end of the successful exchange of information or after the second person has produced their disclosure. An example of this sequence can be seen in the extract below (with the English translation in italics):

1	A	Holaaaaa
		Helooooo
2	B	Hey
		Hey
3	A	Que taaaal :))
		How's it going :))
4	B	Muy bien
		Great
5		Pero aburrida
		But bored
6		Tu?
		You?
7	A	Hahahahahahah normal
		Hahahahahahah sure
8		Bieen aquí haciendo clases online
		Fiiine here doing online classes
9	B	Same
		Same
10		Y encima no me entero de nada
		And on top of that I don't understand anything
11	A	Hahahahahahaa
12		K estudias?
		What do you study?

13 B Ciencias políticas
Political science
14 Tu?
You?
15 A Música y bellas artes
Music and fine arts
16 Un poco random hahahaha
A bit random hahahaha
17 B Bua pero es brutal
Wow but that's amazing
18 A Yaaaa
Yeahhh
19 Si te gusta la verdad es k si
If you like it indeed it is
20 Tu k música escuchas
What music do you listen to?

(Roca-Cuberes et al. 2023, pp. 6–7)

One of the most important aspects of these sequences is the way they *occasion* self-disclosure, that is, how they create opportunities or 'slots' (see unit B5) for people to reveal information about themselves and to ask for the other person to reveal information. In the extract above, for example, after the initial greeting, B offers the information that she is 'bored,' which opens up a slot for A not just to agree but to offer additional information, the fact that he is 'doing online classes,' an utterance that both elaborates on his own boredom and lets B know that he is a student. When B answers 'same,' this creates the conditions for a further exchange of information, initiated by A ('What do you study?'). This exchange follows exactly the format of the 'elicited self-disclosure sequence' explained above, with A eliciting a disclosure, B providing the disclosure and requesting a similar disclosure (You?), A providing his own answer, and then B offering a positive assessment of the disclosure. One thing that is interesting about A's disclosure is that it is accompanied by a self-deprecating comment about what he studies ('A bit random hahahaha'). This comment serves to elicit an assessment from B, and since the *preferred response* to a self-deprecating comment is disagreement, the assessment that is elicited is positive ('Wow but that's amazing'). The talk about A's major also provides an occasion for him to elicit a disclosure about a related topic ('What music do you listen to?').

Exchanges like the one above, where people share general information about their occupations and interests, are typical of the beginnings of these chats, and help the conversationalists gradually work up to disclosing more intimate information later in the conversation. One interesting feature that Roca-Cuberes and his colleagues found about these later sequences was that, unlike the earlier ones where disclosure tends to be elicited with open-ended questions ('What do you study?'), in later sequences conversationalists are more likely to elicit more 'personal' information with yes/no questions. This gives the other person the choice about how much information they would like to give. When they do provide information beyond yes or no, this can be taken as a more voluntary self-disclosure and a signal that the person is willing to talk more about themselves. At the same time, these yes/no questions are often accompanied by some kind of polite language that acknowledges the delicateness of the question (e.g. 'If you don't mind me asking …'). An example of talk about more intimate information can be seen in the next excerpt.

1 A Tens nanos Anna?
Do you have children Anna?
2 B No
No
3 A Si no és indiscreció
If it's not indiscreet
4 B I tu?
And you?
5 Bueno, tinc un peque de 5 mesos pero es caní 🐶
Well, I have a little one that is 5 months old but he's a dog 🐶
6 A El gran 25 anys, profesor emancipat. I una petita de 9 amb custo
dia compartida *The eldest is 25 years old, he left home and is a teacher, and a 9-year-old daughter with shared custody*

(Roca-Cuberes et al. 2023: 12)

The arrow next to line 3 indicates that the utterance 'If it's not indiscreet' appeared at the same time as B's response, indicating that it was probably typed as part of A's initial question as a way to signal the delicateness of the question about whether or not B has children. In line with the normal sequencing of such exchanges, B uses the opportunity to elicit a similar disclosure from A ('And you?') after her response, but interestingly, before he answers, she offers an elaboration by telling A about her dog, even though a 'no' response to such a question does not normally require elaboration. This (along with the addition of a dog face emoji) serves to show B's interest in continuing the conversation. A then responds to her question by offering details about his own children.

Sometimes, yes/no questions fail to elicit the desired disclosure of intimate information, in which case, the person who asked the question might offer a voluntary disclosure of their own in order to encourage the other person to give more information, as in the following excerpt.

1 A Tú que haces
What are you doing
2 B Yo preparar cena ya
I'm preparing dinner now
3 Mañana madrugar
Tomorrow wake up early
4 A Vaya
Oh
5 Cena para ti sola?
Dinner on your own?
6 B No
No
7 A Ahh okey
Ahh okay

8 Yo la hago para mi y Nu hija
I make it for me and my daughter
9 Vive conmigo
She lives with me
10 B Mi hija Tambien
My daughter too

(Roca-Cuberes et al. 2023: 21)

Here, A's question in line 4 ('Dinner on your own?') is obviously designed to elicit some information about B's living situation or relationship status. When B does not elaborate on her 'no' answer, A offers his own disclosure about his own dinner arrangements, and in so doing, reveals that he lives with his daughter, which results in B's reciprocal disclosure that she too lives with her daughter.

Not all of these chats, however, progress as smoothly as those analyzed above. Sometimes trouble occurs. One source of this trouble might be a violation of expectations about when in the conversation certain disclosures ought to occur, as can be seen in the next excerpt, which occurs in the conversation after the two parties have spent some time planning where and when to meet up.

1 A Per cert, t'he de comentar una cosa que crec que es important,
tinc una especie de relació oberta amb una noia de ((nom deciutat)) *By the way, I have to tell you something that I think is important, I have a kind of open relationship with a ((name of city)) girl*
2 B Una especie? O la tens o no la tens hahahahahaa
A kind of? Either you have it or you don't have it hahahahahaa
3 Mersi per comentar-mo
Thanks for letting me know
4 A Hahahahahaha bueno, la veritat es que no sha acabat de parlar
entre els dos, pero pel temps que fa jo diría que si que es una relacio oberta
Hahahahahahahahaha well, the truth is that we haven't finished
talking about it, but by the time it's lasted, I would say that yes it
is an open relationship
5 B Bueno ja ho parlareu
Well, you'll talk about it
6 Veig que timporta
I see that it matters to you
7 A No t'ho negare jajajaja
I won't deny it hahahaha
8 B ☺

(Roca-Cuberes et al. 2023: 23)

Here, A interrupts the planning by bringing up what conversation analysts call an 'unmentioned mentionable,' that is, something that he should have mentioned earlier but didn't, namely the fact that he is already in a relationship. He signals the misplacement of this topic with the phrase 'By the way, I have to tell you something that I think is important.' B's response implies that she is not very happy with the information or where it is placed in the conversation, indicated both by her request for clarification ('A kind of? Either you have it or you don't have it'), and by her expression of 'gratitude' ('Thanks for letting me know’), which can be heard as an admonition of him for not letting her know sooner. This occasions further explanation from A, to which B responds with what is called an ‘upshot’—a kind of summary evaluation of what he has said—(‘I see that it matters to you’), which serves to close off any further explanation from A and elicits from him an admission that it does. B offers a smiley emoji, which is not so much an indication that she is happy as it is a way to politely terminate the disclosure sequence. Not surprisingly, the two do not return to their discussion about meeting up in the future.

In the last excerpt, the source of trouble in the conversation is that an important self-disclosure sequence comes too late. It is also possible, however, for trouble to result when sequences that are usually expected later in the conversation come too early, as in the next excerpt. The numbers in brackets are timestamps showing the time the messages were sent.

1 A Hola!!! Que tal? Eres de ((nombre de ciudad 1))?
Hi!!! How's it going? Are you from ((name of city 1))? [15:07]

2 B De ((nombre de ciudad 2))
From ((name of city 2))

3 I tu?
And you?
[17:02]

4 A Jo de ((nom de ciutat 1))!! No tenim excusa per fer un día un cafetó en un día assolellat i terrasseta! 😊 Jo puc quasi sempre, tant entre semana com caps de setmana! Com vas de temps?
I'm from ((name of city 1))!! We have no excuse to have one day a coffee on a sunny day and in a terrace! 😊 I can almost always, both on weekdays and weekends! How are you doing with your time?
[18:55]

5 Jo tinc dos fills amb custodia compartida
I have two children with shared custody

6 A que et dediques? *What do you do?*

7 Tens fills?
Do you have children?

8 Altura?
Height?

(Roca-Cuberes et al. 2023: 27)

Here, A asks B at the very beginning of their conversation what city she is from, and, after B replies, he immediately tries to make plans to meet up. After waiting almost two hours for B to respond, A offers a voluntary self-disclosure to try to encourage B to reengage, and when that doesn’t work, starts eliciting various kinds of disclosures from B (‘What do you do?’ ‘Do you have children?’ ‘Height?’), but still gets no response. A has obviously been ‘ghosted.’ Being ‘ghosted’ of course, is one of the main risks when having conversations on Tinder, and, to avoid this, people try to show engagement in the conversation by, among other things, asking questions and giving elaborate responses to the other person’s questions. But it is also possible to cause someone to ‘ghost you’ by disclosing things and asking the other person to disclose things too early in the interaction, or by engaging in other kinds of sequences (such as making arrangements to meet) at what might be considered inappropriate points in the conversation.

What Roca-Cuberes and his colleagues' study shows is that developing an intimate relationship on dating apps (and presumably in face-to-face interaction as well) is an *orderly* interactional accomplishment with distinctive patterns of turn-taking and expectations about the kinds of topics that will be talked about at different stages in the interaction and how they will be talked about. People who violate this orderliness risk creating trouble in the conversation (and in the relationship) or even being rejected altogether. The study also demonstrates how useful the tools of conversation analysis can be in helping us to understand how human relationships develop through the moment-by-moment management of talk.

B.

Nuria Lorenzo-Dus and Cristina Izura (2017). '"Cause ur special": Understanding trust and complimenting behaviour in online grooming discourse.' *Journal of Pragmatics 112* , pp. 68–82.

Background

Online grooming is the process through which an adult establishes a sexually abusive relationship with a child using digital tools such as smartphones, gaming consoles, or computers. The aim of online sexual predators is often to lure their target into a face-to-face meeting and, eventually, some kind of sexual interaction. But regardless of whether the predator actually ends up having physical contact with the victim, online grooming is still considered a form of sexual abuse and a crime (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre—CEOP 2013). People who think they might be victims of online grooming can seek help by reporting the activity to an adult they trust as well as to the authorities, such as the police, in the area where they live. In many countries there are special websites or hotlines for children who think they are targets of grooming. In the UK, they can call Victim Support on 08081689111, or contact the CEOP (www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/), which is part of the National Crime Agency. In the United States they can call 1-800-843-5678 or use the Cyber Tip Line operated by the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline).

There have been a number of studies exploring the verbal strategies that sexual predators use to lure children, such as probing about the target's living situation, commenting on the inappropriateness of the relationship in order to gauge the target's reaction, hinting about sexual activities while talking about other things, and expressing love and trust. Most of these studies have shown that praise is a particularly prevalent strategy that predators use, and the most common way to deliver praise is through the speech act of the *compliment*. A compliment is defined by Holmes (1988: 446) as:

> a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer.

Perhaps the most important thing about Holmes's definition is the fact that compliments are always about something 'good' that the speaker attributes to the hearer. Scholars in pragmatics have paid a lot of attention to the kinds of things people compliment other people about, and the most common things seem to be their appearance, a skill or achievement, a possession they own, or their personality. The reason it is useful to look at the topic of compliments is that, since the 'good' should be something that is 'positively valued by both the speaker and the hearer,' they can tell us something about the values that the speaker and hearer share and perhaps the wider values of the society in which they live. Because of this, compliments are not just ways of saying something nice about someone, but also ways for the speaker to establish *solidarity* with the hearer by showing that they share the same values (or by implying that the hearer should value the things that the speaker does). While the perlocutionary forces of compliments may vary (they might, for example, result in embarrassment from the hearer), one of the most common perlocutionary forces is to increase the hearers' feelings of affiliation with and trust in the speaker.

In some ways, however, Holmes's definition does not fully capture the complexity of compliments. Compliments are what are known as *multifunctional* speech acts. That is to say, we often use them to perform speech acts other than just complimenting. Often, for example, we give people compliments when we want something from them, and so a compliment can be seen as an indirect way of making a request. We can also use compliments to create implicatures about the kind of relationship we think we have or would like to have with the other person. Focusing our compliments on certain topics, such as certain aspects of a person's appearance, for instance, might imply a degree of intimacy (or wished for intimacy). Finally, we can use compliments to try to get people to disclose information or to elicit some kind of reaction from them about what they think about our relationship or what we are 'doing' in the conversation. When it comes to online groomers, compliments may be designed to engender a feeling of trust in the target, establish areas of commonality between the groomer and the target, prepare the target for some kind of request (such as a request for a picture or a face-to-face meeting), generate some kind of reaction, steer the topic towards more intimate or sexual matters, or get them to comply with a request.

In this study, Nuria Lorenzo-Dus and Cristina Izura explored how compliments are used as a discourse strategy by sexual predators using tools from pragmatics. By exploring the kinds of things predators compliment their targets about, the form their compliments take, and the stages in the interactions when compliments are most common, they aimed to understand how compliments are used as a discourse strategy to commit a crime.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

Of course, it is very difficult and ethically problematic to gather data on sexual predators actually talking to children. Consequently, the data for this study came from conversations of adults posing as children in order to engage online groomers in an attempt to catch them in the act of committing a crime. It came from the website of the Perverted Justice Foundation, a non-profit group dedicated to fighting the online sexual abuse of children. Volunteers in the organization receive training on how to pose as children and interact with potential predators online. In the event that an adult contacts them and initiates a sexual conversation, they work together with law enforcement to try to secure an arrest. In the case of a conviction, the chat logs of the conversations between the volunteer and the predator are made publicly available on the foundation's website. Data from this website has been used in countless studies examining the language and behaviour of online sexual predators.

For their study Lorenzo-Dus and Izura collected 70 chat logs from the website, in each of these chat logs they identified all of the compliments, ending with 1269 compliments altogether. They divided up the chat logs based on how quickly the grooming progressed, creating a 'fast,' 'moderate,' and 'slow' group. Then they coded the compliments from each of the groups based on the topic of the compliment (e.g. appearance, personality, performance, skills) and whether or not they were sexually or non-sexually orientated. They also coded them based on the syntactic structure of the compliment (e.g. 'I like/love your NP,' 'You are so ADJ,' or 'You really have an ADJ NP').

How did they analyze it?

In their study Lorenzo-Dus and Izura used principles from pragmatics, as outlined in units A5 and B5, to try to understand what predators were 'doing' with their compliments. To do this they paid attention to the linguistic forms compliments took, but also to how the meanings of compliments were affected by the contexts in which they were delivered. They also paid attention to the topics that these compliments focused on and how these topics served to perform relational work or to create *implicature*.

What did they learn?

In their analysis of the topics that predators complimented their targets about, Lorenzo-Dus and Izura found not surprisingly that physical appearance and personality were the most common topics. One reason this is not surprising is that these topics are closely related to what sexual predators are trying to do, that is, establish an intimate relationship with their targets. When we talk about somebody's appearance or personality, we are already implying that we are close to them. Another reason it is not surprising is that these are the two topics that people most often compliment others about in other contexts. Compliments about other things such as skills or material possessions were much less common in this data than they are in other contexts. Around half of the compliments were sexual in nature, with more sexually orientated comments occurring in the 'fast group' and fewer in the 'slow' group. At the same time, a large percentage of the compliments were non-sexual in nature. It seems that one strategy that predators use is to strategically intersperse sexual and non-sexual compliments. This is important because much of the software currently employed to detect online sexual abuse searches for words having to do with sex, but compliments in which sexual issues are not mentioned or referred to in an indirect way are also important ways that predators elicit feelings of trust from their victims.

Compliments tend to be very formulaic, that is, they tend to have a similar syntactic structure across contexts, and this was also true for the compliments that Lorenzo-Dus and Izura analyzed. In line with the research mentioned above, an overwhelming number of these compliments followed one of three basic patterns: 'NP is/looks really ADJ,' 'I really like/love NP,' and 'You have (a) really ADJ NP.' Interestingly, the 'fast group' used the first pattern the most, and the second group used the second pattern the most. There also was a pattern that occurred frequently in this data that is not seen so much in other data on compliments, the pattern: 'ADJ NP' (for example, 'great body :o,' 'dream come true' and 'sooooo cute'). This pattern makes use of *ellipsis* (see unit B2) where the verb is left out of the formulation. One reason for this might be the fact that this kind of 'abbreviated' talk is very common online. But another reason might be that, since ellipsis requires the other person to fill in the missing information, it often has the effect of 'creating a bond of respect and shared assumptions' between interactants, who 'become collaborators in the [elliptical] discourse' (Grant-Davie 1995: 461). In other words, this kind of structure might be particularly effective in creating feelings of intimacy and trust.

Although most of the compliments in the data were 'second-person' compliments using the words 'you' or 'your' (e.g. 'you are just so sweet'), a large number, especially in the 'slow' group were 'first-person' compliments in which the focus was on the groomer (e.g. 'I see the real beauty you have and other's don't' and 'Im just a friend who thinks ur beautiful'). The effect of these 'first-person' compliments is to create a stronger bond between the groomer and his victim by mentioning them both in the same utterance. They can also serve to isolate the victim by making them feel that their relationship with others might not be as special as their relationship with the groomer. Finally, focusing on himself and his feelings might also be a way for the groomer to increase his own sexual gratification.

In a closer analysis of the compliments in the context of longer conversations, Lorenzo-Dus and Izura found that compliments functioned in a variety of ways. They were used to create feelings of intimacy and commonality between the groomer and the victim, to test the victim's willingness to engage in talk about certain kinds of topics, and to isolate the victim from their friends or family members by pointing out things that the groomer appreciated about them that others didn't. One important aspect of compliments was where they occurred in the interactions. Lorenzo-Dus and Izura found that compliments often preceded sequences in which groomers were trying to entrap their targets by, for instance, making requests for photographs or face-to-face meetings. They also found that non-sexual compliments often served as a prelude to more sexually orientated compliments, paving the way for more abusive talk.

This study demonstrates how tools from pragmatics can help us to understand the complexity of seemingly simple and benign speech acts like compliments. It is also an example of the *practical* utility of pragmatics and discourse analysis more generally in helping people to understand how criminals go about luring others into criminal activity and to develop linguistic tools (such as software for the detection of online grooming) to prevent it. A particular contribution of this study in this respect is to highlight that just paying attention to sexually orientated vocabulary may not be entirely effective, and that such tools should also take into account the pragmatic strategies that predators use.

Project ideas

1. Collect some online conversations in which you are talking to a stranger or someone you are just getting to know. How do you and the other person use things like turn-taking patterns and the overall structure of the conversation to manage things like self-disclosure?
2. Collect a number of examples of the same speech act (such as compliments, apologies, requests) that take place in a particular context (such as a social media site or an online game). Pay attention to the topics that people are talking about when they perform these speech acts, the syntactic structures that they use, and the other things they might be 'doing' with these speech acts.

D6 'COACHING' AND 'BRAGGING': POSITIONING AND POLITENESS IN DISCOURSE

Interactional sociolinguistics is a method of discourse analysis which can help us to understand how people use discourse strategically to manage their interpersonal relationships and to discursively create contexts for their utterances. Sometimes these strategies can be particularly consequential, as in cases in which the 'stakes' of the talk are high or in which there is the possibility that the face of one or both of the interactants might be threatened. The studies summarized in this unit are about these kinds of situations. In the first study, Christoph Hafner and Tongle Sun explored how the Prime Minister of New Zealand used strategies of *framing* and *positioning* to encourage the public to comply with the very severe restrictions on public gatherings that were put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic and to show herself to be a 'strong leader.' In the second study, David Matley analyzed the *face strategies* people use to manage self-praise on social media sites.

A.

Christoph A. Hafner and Tongle Sun (2021). 'The "team of 5 million": The joint construction of leadership discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic in New Zealand.' *Discourse, Context and Media* 43, p. 100523.

Background

During the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the most striking examples of the importance of strategic communication could be seen in instances where the leaders of different countries had to communicate with citizens about the crisis, often having to convince them to do things they didn't want to do such as stay at home or wear facemasks. These communications often took the form of official briefings in which the leader would interact directly with members of the press. Analysing the strategies leaders used during these briefings can tell us a lot about the role discursive strategies like *framing* and *positioning* play in successful (and unsuccessful) crisis communication and leadership.

New Zealand, under the leadership of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, is a country that is often pointed to as an example of a place where both efforts to slow the spread of the virus and efforts to communicate with the public were relatively successful. This study, conducted by Christoph A. Hafner and Tongle Sun, examines how the Prime Minister and her team communicated their policies to the public and elicited support and cooperation in the context of government press briefings. It demonstrates that leadership is not so much a quality that leaders 'have' as it is something that they *enact* through the way they use discourse. Moreover, it shows how this process of discursively enacting leadership, in the context of these press briefings, was *cooperatively achieved* by the Prime Minister, members of her team, and the journalists who asked her questions.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The researchers collected transcripts and videos of 98 New Zealand government press briefings that were held between 27 January 2020 and 2 September 2020 from the official government website. They chose a subset of 13 press briefings that involved Prime Minister Arden which took place during periods of uncertainty or significant policy changes at the beginning of the first wave of the pandemic in New Zealand (21–29 March, eight briefings) and the second wave (11–14 August, five briefings). By choosing press briefings to analyze, they were able to focus both on periods at the beginning of the briefings in which the Prime Minister or members of her team spoke uninterrupted and periods when they interacted directly with journalists in the form of Q&A sessions.

How did they analyze it?

Hafner and Sun used principles from interactional sociolinguistics similar to those discussed in units A6 and B6 to analyze their data. As discussed in those units, interactional sociolinguistics is a method of discourse analysis which seeks to understand how people use speech and non-verbal cues to negotiate a common understanding of what's going on and to manage their identities and relationships. In this study, the researchers make use of three main concepts from interactional sociolinguistics: 1) Framing: the way people use discourse to create 'frames' with which to interpret what they and others are doing and what is happening in the interaction and in the larger social context; 2) Positioning: the way people 'locate' themselves as 'characters' within conversations and within larger *storylines;* and 3) Rhetorical strategies: ways that people use discourse to influence others through, for example, appealing to their reason or appealing to their feelings. They applied these concepts by closely analysing the transcripts to identify the key 'discursive actions' the people involved were taking and the effect of these discursive actions on the way the interaction unfolded and the kinds of identities the people in the interaction were able to enact, especially during moments of critical questioning from the media.

What did they learn?

The first part of Hafner and Sun's analysis focused on the speeches that occurred at the beginning of the briefings. In these speeches, they observed two frequent discursive actions, namely, 'explaining practical issues and information plans to the public' and 'coaching.' The former involved, for instance, explaining different levels in the NZ COVID-19 alert system or laying out the government's policies. The latter involved giving concrete instructions, setting overall goals and aspirations, and eliciting the cooperation of the public. One interesting difference they found in their two sets of data was that 'coaching' was more frequent in the speeches the Prime Minster gave during the first wave of the pandemic, when the virus was not well understood and there was more fear and uncertainty among the public, as well as, perhaps, more scepticism regarding the rather intrusive policies the government was putting in place, whereas more 'explaining' occurred in speeches given during the second wave of the pandemic.

The researchers also paid attention to the way the Prime Minister positioned herself, the virus, the government, and the public in these speeches. Arden herself assumed a range of different positions, sometimes portraying herself as a powerful authority, and sometimes as an ordinary member of the public, as a way to both effectively communicate her policies and to create a sense of closeness and empathy with the people she was addressing. When she positioned herself as an authority, she often used strong directives and the first-person pronoun ('I') to portray the government policy as her own individual actions and make herself seem like a strong leader, as can be seen in the extracts below:

> Over the next 48 hours, those who provide, for instance, takeaway services must move to close their operations also. All indoor and outdoor events cannot proceed.
>
> (Press briefing speech, 23 March 2020) (Hafner and Sun 2021: 5)

> Today I am announcing an alert system for COVID-19.
>
> (Statement to the nation, 21 March 2020)

At other times she positioned herself as a caring and empathetic leader. Here the pronoun 'I' was also used, but more often to talk about her feelings and inner thought processes rather than what she was doing. At the same time, she also used the pronoun 'we' to position herself both as a member of a larger team that was working to protect the public and as a 'fellow New Zealander,' as can be seen in the following examples:

> I understand that all of this rapid change creates anxiety and uncertainty, especially when it means changing how we live.
>
> (Statement to the nation, 21 March 2020)

> I know that this information will be very difficult to receive. We had all hoped not to find ourselves in this position again. But we had also prepared for it and as a team we have also been here before.
>
> (Press briefing speech, 11 August 2020) (Hafner and Sun 2021: 5)

The effectiveness of Arden's discourse, however, depended not just on how she positioned herself, but also on how she positioned the virus, the government, and the New Zealand people as certain kinds of characters in the COVID-19 story. When it came to the virus, she consistently positioned it as a dangerous force which, if 'left unchecked,' would cause devastation in the country. She positioned the government, on the other hand, as a responsible, protective force, planning, preparing, and making decisions that would protect the public from the virus. The public was positioned by Arden as cooperative 'team players' who were kind and community-minded, as can be seen in the extract below:

> We may not have experienced anything like this in our lifetimes, but we know how to rally, and we know how to look after one another, and right now what could be more important than that.
>
> (Statement to the nation, 21 March 2020) (Hafner and Sun 2021: 5)

Finally, much of the effectiveness of Arden's communication came from the way she *framed* the situation and the government's efforts to address it. As was seen with many other leaders during the pandemic, efforts to respond to it were often framed by Arden as a 'fight.' The fight metaphor allowed her to present the situation as a serious one requiring serious action and to hold up the possibility that the fight could be 'won' through collective action. But rather than the 'war' imagery that was used by so many other leaders, Arden more often used imagery associated with sport such as 'going hard and going early,' which resembles what a coach might say to a team when explaining a game plan. By invoking a sport metaphor, Arden was able to position the public as 'teammates' who were mutually responsible for one another, tapping into a common cultural value and steering them away from the violence and acrimony that occurred in countries where the 'war' metaphor was prevalent:

> … while this initial three-day lockdown will mainly affect the Auckland region, I am asking the team of 5 million to stand ready again as well. Together we've beaten the virus before and with fast action and by acting together, we can do so again.
>
> (Press briefing speech, 11 August 2020)

> One point five million New Zealanders in our biggest city are carrying a heavy load for our team of 5 million right now. But, together, we will overcome an obstacle that we knew had the potential to come our way, which is why we have a plan, why we are rolling out that plan, and why we once again can pull together to eliminate Covid.
>
> (Press briefing speech, 14 August 2020) (Hafner and Sun 2021: 5)

One of the most interesting findings in Hafner and Sun's study is the way Arden used framing and positioning strategically in interactions with the press, who sometimes challenged her portrayal of the situation. At one point, for example, a reporter challenged the 'sport' frame, calling into question whether New Zealand could be considered one 'team' when part of the country (Auckland) was experiencing more severe restrictions than other regions:

> Media: With a third of the population now in much more severe restrictions for a much longer time, does NZ still consider itself a team of 5 million?
>
> Jacinda Ardern: Yes. You know, not everyone in a team is on the field at the same time. Some of us, currently, are on the sidelines really rooting for those who are experiencing that level of restriction. That's why I just ask the rest of the team to be really supportive—just to be mindful of that …
>
> (Q&A, 14 August 2020) (Hafner and Sun 2021: 7)

Here, Arden responded to the reporter's attempt to reposition members of the public as belonging to *different* teams by reasserting the 'sport' frame, positioning some members of the public as 'active players' on the field and others as their teammates cheering them on from the bench. Another time, a reporter attempted to exploit Arden's positioning as an 'ordinary member of the public' by asking her if, like other 'ordinary people' she was 'scared,' a positioning that is incompatible with the identity of a 'strong leader':

> Media: You've painted a fairly grim picture of what might be possible for New Zealand and admitted that many New Zealanders will be scared. Are you scared?
>
> Jacinda Ardern: No, because we have a plan. And so that's my message to New Zealanders: we have a window that we are utilizing in a way that some countries did not, and so we have the opportunity to make sure that we're not like other places. Now, because of the natural trajectory and the lag time of Covid, there will be a period where we will see cases continue to rise, but I ask New Zealanders that while we're in that four-week period, our hope is that we see that then start turning around. But no, I am not—I am not afraid, because we have a plan. We've listened to the science, we are moving early, and I just ask New Zealanders now to come with us on what will be an extraordinary period of time for everyone.
>
> (Q&A, 23 March 2020) (Hafner and Sun 2021: 7)

In her response to this repositioning, rather than asserting her individual courage, Arden shifted the pronoun from 'I' to 'we,' asserting that 'we have a plan' and reminding the public of the role of the government in protecting the public through careful planning and prudent decision making.

The most common strategy Arden used to respond to reporters' challenges was to reassert her position as a 'coach' and to produce what Hafner and Sun (2021: 8) refer to as a 'three-step coaching pattern' consisting of 1) showing empathy, 2) providing a negative vision of the risks and the consequences of not complying with the government's instructions, and 3) explaining what *collective* actions members of the public could take:

> I know that this is a very, very difficult time for our small businesses, our butchers, our bakers, our grocers—you know, they are providing, generally, usually, food services for their community, but if every single one of them opened up across

> the country, it defeats the point. It opens up a huge chain of transmission. So I'm asking them to do right by their community and to close.
>
> (Q&A, 27 March 2020) (Hafner and Sun 2021: 7)

This study shows how concepts from interactional sociolinguistics, especially the concepts of framing and positioning, can help us to understand how leaders talk to the public during times of crisis. In particular, it shows how the way leaders frame what is happening (e.g. as a 'fight') and position themselves and others in it (e.g. as 'teammates') can have an effect on whether or not people are willing to comply with a leader's policies and whether or not politicians are seen as 'strong leaders.'

B.

David Matley (2018a) '"This is NOT a #humblebrag, this is just a #brag": The pragmatics of self-praise, hashtags and politeness in Instagram posts.' *Discourse, Context and Media 22* , pp. 30–38.

Background

Social media platforms such as Instagram are places where people usually try to present positive images of themselves by, for example, posting flattering selfies or alerting other people to their accomplishments. At the same time, communicating positive things about yourself online be can risky, because it can make you seem self-centred or conceited. In fact, in face-to-face communication the norm is to avoid self-praise. Praising yourself can be seen as a 'face-threatening act': it can threaten the *positive face* of the hearer because it might give the impression that you think you are better than the person you are talking to, but it can also threaten the positive face of the speaker, making them seem insensitive or narcissistic. Positive self-presentation, therefore, requires that speakers strike a delicate 'balance' between self-praise and humility.

There are lots of ways that people can signal humility in face-to-face communication through, for example, adding disclaimers, qualifiers or self-deprecating comments to their self-praise or using their tone of voice or body language (what we called in unit B6 *contextualization cues*) to signal embarrassment or shyness. Online, people can also engage in what is known as 'humble bragging' by, for example, communicating their good news in an indirect way or adding a self-deprecating caption to a particularly flattering picture. At the same time, social media offers users other kinds of contextualization cues (ways of showing 'what we are doing') that are not available in face-to-face communication such as emojis and hashtags (see unit C6).

In this article, David Matley explores the complex ways people on Instagram manage self-presentation by using the hashtags #brag and #humblebrag in posts that present them in a positive light. It may seem strange that people use these hashtags to make themselves seem more humble, but sometimes a contextualization cue that frames what you are doing as bragging can also be a form of self-deprecation. Matley examines how posters combine these hashtags with different kinds of politeness strategies in order to manage the risks inherent in self-promotion.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

Matley gathered the data for this study by searching for posts with the hashtags #fitness, #brag and #humblebrag between June and September 2015. He included the hashtag #fitness because images labelled with this hashtag usually present people in a positive light without overtly marking the fact that they are 'bragging.' He collected 200 posts for each hashtag and, after removing spam posts, ended up with 199, 188 and 192 posts for #fitness, #brag and #humblebrag, respectively.

How did they analyze it?

In his analysis, Matley draws on concepts from both pragmatics (see units A5 and B5) and interactional sociolinguistics (see units A6 and B6). He considers 'bragging' as a kind of 'speech act' and explores what kinds of features need to be present in the discourse to create the *illocutionary force* of 'bragging.' What he is most interested in, however, is when people actually *announce* that they are bragging (using the hashtags #brag and #humblebrag), in which case, bragging becomes a kind of *performative* (see unit B5). In order to understand why they do this, he uses interactional sociolinguistics, examining how explicit admissions of 'bragging' serve to *frame* people's utterances, and how people use *politeness strategies* in order to manage the face threat inherent in the act of bragging.

The first part of the analysis involved categorizing the posts based on whether or not they contained 'mitigation' or 'aggravation' strategies. Mitigation strategies are strategies people use to downplay their bragging by, for example, shifting the focus from themselves to other people (e.g. 'I owe it all to Casey …'), apologizing for bragging, or distancing themselves from the speech act (e.g. 'I don't mean to brag but …'). Aggravation strategies are strategies people use to amplify their bragging, including statements such as 'I'm totally going to brag about X' or even comparing other people unfavourably to themselves. It is possible, of course, to use both strategies at the same time, as in the statement 'I don't mean to brag, but—phft, who am I kidding?,' where the speaker is both denying their brag and making it explicit at the same time.

Matley then performed a more detailed analysis of posts in the different categories, trying to understand how posters used a combination of hashtags and politeness strategies to negotiate the delicate balance between self-praise and humility.

What did they learn?

Table 36.1 shows the results of Matley's initial categorization. As can be seen, the posts with the hashtag #fitness contained a lot fewer instances of face strategies (either mitigation or aggregation) than those with the hashtags signalling that the posters were bragging. A little less than half of the posts with the hashtag #brag and a little more than half of those with the hashtag #humblebrag contained politeness strategies, suggesting that many of those who used these hashtags realized that bragging is a risky activity, especially when you are announcing that you are doing it, and requires some extra interactional work to negotiate the face threats involved.

Table D6.1 Distribution of politeness strategies for #fitness, #brag, and #humblebrag (adapted from Matley 2018a: 34)

		No strategies	*Mitigation*	*Aggravation*	*Both*	*Total*
#f tness	No. of posts (%)	142 (71.45)	49 (24.6%)	4 (2.0%)	4 (2.0%)	199
#brag	No. of posts (%)	84 (44.7%)	56 (29.8%)	21 (11.2%)	27 (14.4%)	188
#humblebrag	No. of posts (%)	104 (54.2%)	62 (32.6%)	15 (7.8%)	11 (5.7%)	192
Total	No. of posts (%)	330 (57.0%)	167 (28.8%)	40 (6.9%)	42 (7.3%)	579

This is not to say that many of those who posted with the hashtag #fitness were *not* engaged in various forms of self-paise and humility. In the excerpt below, for example, the poster offers a picture of the breakfast he just made, emphasizing with the hashtags he does use (#healthyeating, #healthy) his positive assessment of it. His initial description of the meal ('kale, tomato, chicken, and tomato omelette') also highlights the positive qualities of what he cooked and the emoticon :D signals his positive evaluation of it. But he follows this with a self-deprecating remark (well … scrambled eggs) which highlights the ordinariness of the meal.

> [username] Quickest breakfast/lunch :D kale, tomato, chicken, and tomato omelette. Well … scrambled eggs. #healthyeating #healthy #fitness #onedishmeal #omelette #kale [photo of a breakfast dish]
>
> (Matley 2018a: 32)

As can be seen in the table above, not all of the posters who used the hashtag #brag were engaging exclusively in unmitigated bragging. Almost a third communicated humility in their posts through the use of mitigation strategies, indicating their awareness of the face threats associated with self-praise. In the example below, the poster uses the common strategy of distancing himself from his bragging with a disclaimer ('Don't mean to #brag').

> [username] Don't mean to #brag but this #basil is growing on the 13th floor in my NYC apartment!!! #pesto for dinner today. #cookingfromthebook #apartment #gardening. Thanks for the inspiration @[username]. [photo of basil plant on rooftop]
>
> (Matley 2018a: 33)

What is interesting about this post is that the hashtag #brag is integrated into the sentence, 'Don't mean to #brag,' making it serve a dual role of both bragging and showing humility. More broadly, such declaimers allow users to conduct what Matley (2018a: 34) calls 'a double discourse,' allowing them to conform to the norm against self-praise while at the same time violating it.

Another common mitigation strategy posters who used the hashtag #brag used was to shift the focus away from themselves and towards another person, as can be seen in the post below which is accompanied by a picture of the present the poster's boyfriend gave her for her birthday.

> [username] Look at this geezer excelling himself. Early birthday present #brag #brag #smoothoperator [hashtag] #crazy #bear #crazy #lou #crazy #paul #crazy [hashtag] #crazy #champagne #crazy #pool #crazy #mincing [photo of boyfriend's birthday present to the poster]

Rather than praising herself in the post, the poster praises her boyfriend. Here the hashtag #brag is a way for the poster to more subtly shift the limelight back onto herself by framing what she is doing as showing off. In such cases, posters minimize the face threat associated with the act of bragging by showing themselves to be polite and generous towards the people they are praising, while at the same time, praising them as a way of praising themselves.

These examples show not just that these posters were aware of the risks of labelling their speech acts as bragging, but that they also engaged in different kinds of interactional work to try to balance their self-praise, which might have negative connotations, with strategies designed to portray them in a more positive light. At the same time, there were people who used the hashtag #brag who not only didn’t try to mitigate the possible face threat in their posts, but actually amplified their bragging and exasperated its face-threatening potential. Rather than a politeness strategy, we might in fact refer to this as an *impoliteness strategy*. The most common strategy of this kind was to ‘own’ the act of bragging in the post, as can be seen in the example below:

> [username] Okay, I want to #brag a little #imdown #som weight and I’m #slowly but #surely #loosingmytummy #yoga- journey #feelinggood #bodypositive #lovemysize #lovemyfigure #curvymama #fit #curvy #thickmama #his #effyourbodystandards #bodyconfidence #happyintheskinimin #love #positiveattitude #instasize #wip #workinprogress #workout #happy #mombod #helovesit @[username] #my-mombod #mombody [photo of poster posing in front of mirror]
>
> (Matley 2018a: 33)

Here, the act of bragging is not only explicitly claimed in the post, but it is also exasperated with the use of a large number of other hashtags which communicate positive self-appraisal such as #lovemysize, #lovemyfigure, #happyintheskinimin, and #helovesit. At the same time, there are also a few places in this post where the poster subtly tempers her self-praise by emphasizing that her transformation is a slow process that is not yet finished (e.g. #slowly but #surely, #workinprogress).

Another, more aggressive way for posters to ‘own’ their bragging was to compare their situation to those of others, thereby threatening the positive face of the people viewing their post, as can be seen in the next two examples:

> [username] My sunset is better than your sunset #brag #south-africa #africa [photo of sunset in South Africa]
>
> [username] Largest glass of wine imaginable and the pool to myself #brag #sttropez [photo of a glass of wine on poster’s lap by poolside]
>
> (Matley 2018a: 32)

In these examples, comparatives (‘better than …’) and superlatives (‘largest’) imply a kind of competitive stance which, while claiming praise for oneself, also serves to put down those with, for instance, ‘inferior’ sunsets or ‘smaller’ glasses of wine.

One possibility for these impoliteness strategies is that the norms against self-praise in face-to-face communication are simply not as strong on social media, where bragging is something people are almost expected to do. Another possibility, though, is that exaggerating one’s bragging can, in some sense, be a way of showing humility by highlighting one’s *awareness* that they are bragging. Matley (p. 33) calls this ‘reflexive bragging.’ ‘A “knowingness” that the poster is bragging,’ he writes, ‘can also be seen as a protective self-presentation strategy against accusations of unthinkingly and routinely praising oneself’ (p. 33).

The use of the hashtag #humblebrag was a bit more complicated, highlighting not just that the poster was admitting that they were bragging, and not just that they were trying to mitigate their brag with a show of humility, but also strangely signalling that there was something 'fake' about their humility. The term 'humble brag' is frequently used to describe situations where people pretend they are not bragging when they really are by, for example, phrasing their brag as a complaint (e.g. 'having the #1 video on YouTube is such a hassle!'). In the post below, for example, the complaint ('Isn't working on the weekend the worst?') is accompanied by a photo which implies the opposite:

> [username] Isn't working on the weekend the worst? #humblebrag [photo of the view of a pool in a luxury hotel in Florida]
>
> (Matley 2018a: 36)

Many of the posts that contained the #humblebrag hashtag featured a compliment that the poster was given by a third party, as in the following post:

> [username] Someone told me I 'glow' and light up the whole room—I told them it was just my spray tan. #humble- brag [selfie]
>
> (Matley 2018a: 35)

Attributing the act of praising to someone else rather than oneself is a way of distancing oneself from the praise, and the self-deprecating comment that follows ('I told them it was just my spray tan') further mitigates the act of bragging. At the same time, by attributing this comment to another person, the poster is also 'showing off' how humble she is. Adding the hashtag #humblebrag adds yet another layer to the poster's speech act. She is at once bragging by reporting on the compliment she received (and posting a flattering selfie), showing humility with her self-deprecating comment, and *admitting* that her modesty is not genuine. As with the examples of impoliteness strategies discussed above, though, such moves may be examples of 'reflexive bragging,' or, in this case 'reflexive humble bragging': the use of the hashtag can be seen as a way of being *ironic*, the poster making fun of herself by calling attention to her own insincerity and thus protecting herself against accusations of narcissism. As I mentioned in unit C6, researchers of online discourse have pointed out how this form of irony is a prominent feature in social media posts (e.g. Phillips and Milner 2017; Zappavigna 2012).

This article demonstrates how tools from interactional sociolinguistics can be used to understand the complicated ways people manage face-threatening acts online. It highlights how hashtags such as #brag and #humblebrag, which function as contextualization cues to signal what social media posters are doing, are used by posters in conjunction with different kinds of politeness strategies to manage the difficult balancing act of positive self-presentation.

Project ideas

1. Collect examples of politicians in press conferences talking about their policies or achievements. How do they frame the situation and position themselves to make themselves seem like 'strong leaders'? Pay attention to places where members of

the press challenge their frames or positions. How do they handle these challenges, and how do the politicians and the press collaborate in framing the situation and positioning the people involved in it?

2. Collect social media posts in which people are either praising themselves or criticizing other people. How do they manage the face threats inherent in these speech acts using things like politeness strategies, hashtags, spelling and punctuation, and emojis?

ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

One kind of setting where people's understanding of and expectations about *context* and *communicative competence* (see unit A7) are particularly consequential are institutions such as schools, hospitals, courts, and churches. In such settings, the rules about *what* to say to *whom*, *when*, *where*, and *how* tend to be more fixed and rigid than they are in casual conversations. Institutional settings are also typically characterized by power differences, that is, some people in these settings have more or different communicative rights or responsibilities than others. In classrooms, for example, teachers normally have more speaking rights than students, and students have more responsibilities to listen to what the teacher says. At the same time, institutional settings also typically involve participants from *different* backgrounds, including people of different ethnicities, different ages, and different socio-economic backgrounds, who may bring to the situation different expectations about *communicative competence*. This can make displaying competence as a legitimate 'member' in these settings more difficult for some people and can result in those people being marginalized or treated unfairly. Finally, institutions are always embedded within larger societies and often function to reflect and reinforce the values of those societies around things like personhood and communication. This also sometimes makes them particularly susceptible to political and social events or trends within societies. One example is the way political debates around things like race and gender in the United States are having an impact on the way people communicate in classrooms, in some places forcing students and teachers to limit their speech about certain topics.

Both of the articles summarized below deal with discourse in institutional settings from an ethnographic perspective. In the first article, Rosemary H. Moeketsi applies Hymes's SPEAKING model (see unit B7) to communication in courtrooms in South Africa. Through a detailed analysis of a particular trial, she describes the kinds of contextual features that characterize courtroom communication more generally, as well as some of the features particular to courtrooms in multilingual and multi-ethnic contexts like South Africa. She also zeros in on the special kinds of communicative competence that are required from one particular kind of participant in such settings: court interpreters.

In the second article, Ben Rampton and Constadina Charalambous focus on interactions in classrooms. In particular, they are interested in what happens when topics usually not discussed in such contexts are brought up, and how the 'breaking of silences' can disrupt these speech situations in potentially negative and potentially positive ways.

A.

R.H. Moeketsi (2001). 'In court with Dell Hymes: Implications for courtroom discourse and court interpreting.' *South African Journal of African Languages 21* (2), pp. 133–147.

Background

As I said above, one thing that often complicates communication in institutional settings is that they involve people from different backgrounds who are there for different reasons. In such cases, different participants may be required to act differently or follow different sets of rules. In some cases, some participants might be less familiar with the *grammar of context* (see unit B7) of a particular speech event than others, putting them at a disadvantage, and in some cases these speech events might involve people who speak different languages, requiring interpreters to translate what one group of people are saying so that the other group understands. If we take seriously Hymes's claim that *meaning* in spoken discourse depends not just on the words spoken, but also on the *context* in which they are spoken and on people's *expectations* about the context, then we realize that the job of an interpreter is not just to translate the words and sentences that people speak, but also to mediate the different understandings of and expectations about context that the different parties may have.

This article describes how context affects courtroom communication in the multilingual setting of South Africa, where there are 11 'official' languages (Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, and IsiZulu) and hundreds of different subvarieties of these languages. In it, one particular trial is analyzed: the 'Bronkhorstspruit Cash Heist Trial' of 1998, which involved the armed robbery of a cash-in-transit vehicle in a town called Bronkhorstspruit resulting in the death if two of the guards escorting the vehicle; 15 men were charged and appeared before the Pretoria High Court. In the midst of the trial, however, three of the accused attempted to escape. In the ensuing gun battle, two of them were killed, and the other ended up in hospital. This incident had a profound impact on how the trial of the remaining 12 subjects proceeded.

In this analysis Moeketsi aims to understand the contextual variables that affect courtroom discourse more generally, the particular variables that affect communication in South African courts, and the very specific contextual variables surrounding this case and how they affected how communication unfolded. She is especially interested in the role of court interpreters in such cases and the unique range of communicative competencies that they need to bring to them.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The main data for this study were the transcripts from the trail and accounts from observers of what occurred in the courtroom. Moeketsi also conducted interviews with the interpreters who were involved in the trial.

How did they analyze it?

Moeketsi makes use of Hymes's SPEAKING model, which I described in unit B7, first attempting to identify the features of the different components of the model, and then exploring the ways in which these different components interacted in the speech situation and the ways they required different kinds of competencies from the different parties involved.

What did they learn?

Setting

As discussed in unit B7, the component of setting has two parts: the *physical* setting and the *psychological* setting (sometimes called the **scene**). The physical setting for this trial was courtroom G.B. of the Pretoria High Court. It was a particularly spacious courtroom capable of accommodating 100 spectators, but during the bulk of the trial, because of the violent escape attempt, most of the seats were empty, and most of the spectators that were there sat in the last row, far away from the accused. The relative emptiness of the courtroom for such a high-profile trial contributed to a feeling of tension in the room. Further contributing to this tension was the fact that, directly after the escape attempt, the 12 remaining accused persons appeared in court shackled, prompting the defence counsel to object on the grounds that the restrains violated the human rights of the defendants. After two hours of deliberation, the judge finally assented to the shackles being removed.

The unusually tense atmosphere in this trial no doubt affected the communication of all involved, especially the defendants. Based on her interviews, Moeketsi also highlights the unique impact this tension had on the interpreters who had to sit right next to the defendants when they were being questioned and share a microphone with them. Both of the interpreters admitted that their concerns about their safety distracted them and sometimes interfered with their ability to listen carefully and provide accurate translations.

Participants

Trials generally involve a fixed set of participants, each with very specific rights and responsibilities. They always, for instance, include 'the Bench,' which in this case consisted of a judge and two assessors. There are also prosecutors, defence counsel, defendants, witnesses, as well as various more peripheral participants such as the court clerk and stenographer. In typical trials, each of these different kinds of participants follows different rules about what to say to whom, when, where, and how. Judges are mostly silent during trials, only intervening to act as a kind of 'umpire' for the proceedings, until the end when they deliver monologues regarding the verdict and sentencing. The job of attorneys is to ask questions, and the job of witnesses and defendants is to answer them.

How people communicate in such situations, however, is not just a matter of their roles, but also of their social identities. In this trial, the judge and two assessors were all white males who only spoke English and Afrikaans. The attorneys, both for the prosecution and the defence were also white male Afrikaans speakers. All of the defendants were black, and none of them spoke Afrikaans as a native language. Rather, they were speakers of different varieties of Sotho and Nguni languages. The background of the participants was important for two reasons. The first has to do with the historical power inequities between blacks and whites in South Africa where, only a few years before this trial, people were still segregated based on race within a system called apartheid. In courtrooms, judges and attorneys are always more powerful than defendants, but the racial profile of the participants in this particular context served to exasperate that inequality. The second reason has to do with the different languages spoken by the participants, which created the need for a third set of participants: court interpreters. This resulted in the trial proceeding much more slowly than in cases where participants share a common language. In this case, since some of the defendants spoke IsiZulu and others Northern Sotho, two interpreters had to be employed and everything had to be translated twice. For instance, when an IsiZulu-speaking defendant was testifying, the prosecutor asked his questions in Afrikaans, which were translated into IsiZulu for the defendant testifying, who provided answers in IsiZulu, which were then translated into Afrikaans. Then the second interpreter had to translate both the questions and the answers into Northern Sotho for the non-IsiZulu-speaking defendants. This didn't just affect the act sequence of the event (see below) but also put the defendants at a disadvantage, having to depend on the interpreter to help them understand the most consequential things that were being said to them and about them, and to render their own statements accurately. It also put the interpreters in the difficult position of not only having to produce accurate translations, but also of having to mediate the power difference between parties.

Ends

'Ends' are basically the aims of the speech situation, which include the overall *outcome* that is to be achieved and the various *goals* that the different parties bring to the situation. In the case of this trial, as with all trials, the overall purpose was to pass judgement on the defendants. The goals, on the other hand, were obviously different for different parties. The goal of the judge was to ensure that the trial proceeded in a fair and orderly way so as to make it possible for him to reach a verdict. The goal of the prosecutors was to elicit information from witnesses and defendants in a way that convincingly established the defendant's guilt, and the goal of defence counsel was to call into question the prosecution's narrative of events and attempt to establish their client's innocence or at least to cast doubt on their guilt. For the accused, their goal was to answer questions in a way that exonerated them from blame, justified their actions, or provided excuses for their deeds. The goal of the interpreters can be seen as facilitating all of the various, contradictory goals of the other parties, which is one of the things that makes court interpreting so difficult.

Act sequence

Act sequence has to do with both the content of the proceedings (what participants talk about and do), and the form of the communication (how and in what order they say things). What people talk about and the way communication proceeds in courts of law is governed by a set of legal rules and conventions. But when it comes to these conventions, some participants are at an obvious advantage. Judges and attorneys will be much more familiar with the expected course of the proceedings and the topics under discussion (including those that are expressed in specialized language) than the defendants. This particular trial, Moeketsi notes, was especially complex, with its many defendants, number of 'trials within trials,' and the violent escape attempt that disrupted the normal course of the proceedings.

Within the overall act sequence, attorneys will also engage in various speech acts (questioning, probing, pleading, reprimanding, and even mocking and joking) in rather unpredictable ways. It is in fact, this unpredictability, rather than the overall act sequence or the use of specialized language, that most often creates challenges for interpreters. The biggest challenge comes from the fact that the locutionary force of an utterance (the words spoken) is not always the same as the intended illocutionary force (what the speaker means) (see unit B5), creating a dilemma for the interpreter regarding what to translate: the actual words of the speaker or their inference about the speaker's meaning.

Key

The *key* is the mood or tone of a speech situation. Most court proceedings, especially those such as the Bronkhorstspruit Trial, in which the defendants were accused of a serious crime, are sombre. But within this overall key, there will be various expressions of emotion from the different participants such as anger, remorse, and fear. Here again, the interpreter is in a particularly challenging position, having to understand, for instance, the role of emotions in colouring the meaning of what is said, and also having to themselves avoid getting caught up in the emotions of other participants.

Instrumentalities

Instrumentalities refer to the modes (see unit A9) and media (see unit A8) though which messages are delivered. Of course, spoken language is the main instrument used for communication in court, but other instrumentalities are also important such as gestures and facial expressions, written documents, and exhibits such as photographs, charts, lab tests, and objects found at the crime scene. In this trial, perhaps the most important instrumentalities were the different languages spoken by the participants, and the most important consideration was that different participants had different competences in using these instrumentalities. But it was not just a matter of three different 'languages' being spoken (Afrikaans, IsiZulu, and Northern Sotho). There are many different varieties of IsiZulu and Northern Sotho, and many people are accustomed to mixing different varieties together. In addition, as in all trials, there were a range of different *registers* (or *social languages*) employed, including the formal language of the law, the scientific language of forensics, and various informal argots used by witnesses and defendants. Such a situation demanded a particularly wide range of competencies from court interpreters, who didn't just need to understand all of the different varieties and registers involved but also to formulate equivalents in other varieties and registers.

Norms

Many important aspects of the norms of interaction were discussed above under act sequence, namely the rather strict allocation of turns and topics among participants. Here, it is important to note that in this trial *different* sets of norms of interaction had to be observed, norms associated with asking and answering questions and those associated with providing and receiving interpretation, and Moeketsi observes that sometimes these norms were in conflict with each other as enthusiastic prosecutors often interrupted interpreters with new questions before the translation into the third language had been finished.

Genre

As we know from unit A3, a genre is a particular *type* of communication with conventionalized sequences of *moves*, as well as specific kinds of jargon and style associated with them. Obviously, a trial is itself a kind of genre. But we also noted in unit A3 that genres often resemble or draw on other genres, and thinking about the other kinds of genres that are proximate to that of a trial can be useful, especially in understanding the way the proceedings might be understood by people less familiar with the trial genre. One genre that a trial resembles is a drama in which attorneys, witnesses, and defendants 'put on a show' for the judge or jury. This comparison highlights the fact that most of the participants in trials are working off particular 'scripts,' and in some cases may have 'rehearsed' their lines beforehand. The court interpreter, however, is often in the position of having to improvise the lines that others have rehearsed. Another genre that a trial is often compared to is a contest in which the prosecutors and defence counsel treat each other as adversaries. This is also a genre in which the court interpreter is placed in an awkward situation, having to give voice to the positions and points of the different attorneys without 'taking sides' one way or the other.

This general account of the 'contextual grammar' of trials shows how they differ from other kinds of speech situations and the range of contextual factors that influence the production and interpretation of meaning in them. It also shows how local conditions such as language, culture, and the political situation can alter this grammar, so that trials in one country may proceed differently than those in other countries, and also how these differences can function to advantage or disadvantage certain sets of participants. When it comes to this specific trial, this analysis shows how aspects of this contextual grammar can be distorted or disrupted by events that occur during the trial or by historical power differences between participants. Finally, this study highlights the challenges involved in interpretation, not just in legal settings, but also in other institutional settings, when it comes to managing all of the different communicative competences involved and translating meanings that are not just a matter of words, but also a matter of context.

B.

Ben Rampton and Constadina Charalambous (2016). 'Breaking classroom silences: A view from linguistic ethnography.' *Language and Intercultural Communication 16*(1), pp. 4–21.

Background

In all speech situations there are many things that are taken for granted by participants, things that are unstated but still understood by 'competent' members of a community. In some sense, the whole point of Hymes's SPEAKING model is to make these implicit rules and assumptions *explicit* so that we can analyze them.

Often in institutional settings, the 'code a silence' around some of these shared assumptions is itself part of the *grammar of context*: competent members know to avoid bringing up certain topics, perhaps in order to be polite or avoid conflict. It is, however, often these topics that are normally *not* spoken about explicitly that are most consequential for participants. In the South African court trail we discussed above, for instance, the fact that the bench and all of the attorneys were white and the defendants were all black, a reflection of the persistence of systemic racism in South African society even after the end of apartheid, was an important feature of the speech situation which likely had a significant impact on how the defendants were treated, but it is an aspect that remained mostly unremarked upon, even by the defence counsel.

In this article, Ben Rampton and Constadina Charalambous focus on episodes in which such silences are broken and topics normally not spoken about are raised. In particular they are interested in instances in which, as they put it, 'someone speaks out about a potentially very sensitive social category, touches a deep prejudice, and raises critical questions about types of stratification and division that are normally taken for granted.' In their article they analyze two such occurrences, one taking place in a Turkish language classroom in a secondary school in Cyprus, and the other in an English classroom in an ethnically diverse secondary school in London.

To understand the 'silences' that are broken in these two classrooms, it is necessary to understand something about the social and political situations in these settings. Cyprus is an island nation near Greece inhabited by people of Greek and Turkish ethnicity. In 1974, it was invaded by Turkey, which occupied the northern third of the island, and after that, for almost 30 years there was a *de facto* division between the Turkish-Cypriot region in the north and the Greek-Cypriot region in the south, with travel and communication between the two sides impossible. In 2003, as part of Cyprus's negotiations to join the EU, and with the help of the United Nations, the border between the two regions was opened and the Greek-Cypriot government began offering passports and healthcare to citizens of Turkish origin. As part of the effort to increase understanding between the two communities, secondary schools and universities in the Greek-Cypriot region also began offering Turkish language classes of the type analyzed in this article. At the same time, the deep-seated prejudice against Turks in Greek-Cypriot society has proven to be persistent, and sometimes Greek-Cypriot teachers who teach Turkish and Greek-Cypriot students who study it are still viewed with suspicion by their colleagues and classmates. As a result, teachers of Turkish, such as the one featured in this study, generally avoid discussing any cultural aspects of the language and, especially, the current political situation, and stick to the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. In fact, in the 32 hours of lessons that Charalambous recorded for this study, the teacher mentioned the words 'Turks' and 'Turkish-Cypriots' only four times.

The English class in London, which was the topic of Rampton and Charalambous's second case study, was obviously quite different. Here, students were not learning a 'foreign' language, but rather learning how to operate in the language that they normally spoke in their daily lives at a high level in order to eventually gain entry into university. At the same time, many of the students in this school were from immigrant families, and most of them were working class. This meant that the variety of English they spoke in their daily lives was not the kind of 'standard' English that is often emphasized in British schools (based on the variety spoken by upper-class people in southern England), but rather a variety called multicultural London English, which has been influenced by working-class London English (Cockney) as well as other language such as Jamaican Creole and Bengali. Starting in the 1970s, many schools in the UK began to encourage more linguistic diversity, recognizing the different accents and dialects that students used. Starting in the 1980s, however, the Conservative government began introducing tests in the schools that measured students' oral command of so-called 'standard' English. These tests were high stakes, not just for students, but also for schools, with students' performance on the tests being published in 'league tables' which parents used to choose schools for their children. Consequently, schools like the one Rampton and Charalambous talk about in this article became more ethnically diverse and working-class, as middle-class white students gravitated to schools with more middle-class white students. The ways that the students in this school were disadvantaged by the standardized tests, and the impact that this had on the demographic makeup of the school, was something that both teachers and students were well aware of, but rarely discussed explicitly.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The episodes that Rampton and Charalambous recount were both part of larger *ethnographic* research projects. The Cypriot data were collected by Charalambous in the course of her six months of fieldwork in Turkish language classrooms in Cyprus during which she engaged in classroom observation and recordings, conducted interviews with language teachers and learners, and analyzed teaching material and policy documents. The London data were collected by Rampton during his 28-month study of London secondary school students in which he collected everyday interactions using radio microphones as well as conducting retrospective interviews with participants.

How did they analyze it?

In their analysis of these moments of 'breaking silences,' Rampton and Charalambous do not explicitly employ Hymes's SPEAKING model as Moeketsi did in the study summarized above. But their analysis is nevertheless heavily influenced by the tradition of linguistic ethnography started by Hymes, which attempts to understand the relationship between *micro-discursive* aspects of people's talk (things like speech acts, their tone of voice, the way they manage interactions) with *macro-discursive* contextual factors associated with both the immediate speech situation and with the larger society in which it is embedded. They describe their analysis as 'multi-layered' and 'multi-scalar' (p. 5). It involved starting with the close analysis of particular episodes of talk that seemed to them to be relevant to the issues they were concerned with (specifically issues around ethnicity, class and prejudice), mostly using tools from interactional sociolinguistics (see units A6 and B6), and then considering how the way these episodes unfolded was affected by contextual factors on various 'scales'—the scale of the immediate classroom, the scale of the institution, and the scale of the broader society.

What did they learn?

The first interaction that Rampton and Charalambous analyze took place in the Turkish language classroom when the teacher, Mr Andreou, was teaching the 'politeness plural' in Turkish, which is normally used when addressing someone older than the speaker, and remarked that Turkish is a 'very polite language,' sometimes sounding even 'more polite' than Greek. Below is how Charalambous described the students' reaction in her fieldnotes:

> [t]he moment Mr A said that the Turkish language might sound better than Greek, the students, who until then had been quietly listening to his talk, started shouting. This was unusual for this class which was always well-behaved. Students started talking all together despite Mr A's repetition of 'please.' Although it was not clear what they were saying, since they talked simultaneously, I could hear a student saying 'but they are Turks' and some others saying about Turkish players of 'Survivor' being impolite during the reality show.
>
> (Rampton and Charalambous 2016: 7)

What occurred when Mr Andreou made his comment about the 'politeness' of the Turkish language was, in a way, a breakdown of the 'contextual grammar' of the speech situation, with people speaking out of turn and the teacher unable to assume his normal role in maintaining order in the classroom. The key of the situation also changed from the normal formal but convivial key of the classroom to one that was more informal and aggressive. Most importantly, the students started talking about a topic that they usually avoided: Turkish people, and revealing some of their deep-seated prejudices against them which, understandably, they usually repressed in their Turkish class. The teacher tried for some time to reassert his authority, at first attempting to point out to the students that it was unfair to judge a whole group of people based on the behaviour of contestants on a television show, but this seemed to make the situation even worse. The way Mr Andreou ended up restoring order, as seen in the extract below, was by, in a way, giving in to his students' prejudices against Turks, and even somehow justifying them, by bringing up the 1974 invasion, before shifting back to talking about Turkish as a language.

Mr A:	[((sighs))
F:	[Yeah!
Mr A:	Don't go to extre:mes 'they did an invasion'
	Yes! They did an invasion
	Was it don-
	I- we are talking in general {Turkish} as a language

(Rampton and Charalambous 2016: 8)

In their analysis of this interaction, Rampton and Charalambous make the point that it is impossible to understand what occurred without reference to the broader institutional and social context. They remind us that these students (and certainly this teacher), by virtue of the fact that they had chosen to study Turkish, were normally people who *opposed* discrimination against Turkish-Cypriots and advocated for more integration between the two communities, a position that made them, in some ways, unpopular in their institution. It was perhaps this position of precariousness that caused the students to assert the 'otherness' of Turks in order to maintain their own tenuous position as 'loyal' Greek-Cypriots. Another important thing to note is the way the potential awkwardness of talking about Turkish people and Turkish culture in this context altered the contextual grammar of the language classroom more generally, causing the teacher to abandon the kinds of activities and discussions that normally take place in language classrooms in favour of a rather boring focus on Turkish 'as a language.'

The second case study Rampton and Charalambous discuss has to do with the breaking of silences around class and ethnicity in a British secondary school. Before the extract below, the teacher. Mr Newton, was explaining to the boys in his class the importance of the upcoming Standardised Assessment Task in Oral English. In the extract, the students react to the teacher's remarks about how, given the variety of English they speak in their everyday lives, they may be disadvantaged.

Mr N:	to get to level Five it starts:
	to be a bit more difficult because
	the words Standard English start cropping up
	…
	sort of people who er answer every question
	with lots of aints and innits
	are in fact
	(.) handicappin' 'emselves
	(.) so unfortunately
	…
	Because you're all from (.)
Hanif:	Ban[gladesh
Mr N:	[because you're all from Lon[don
	Hannif [Bangladesh
	oh (.)
Several:	((laughter, noise levels rise gradually))
Rafiq:	((in hyper-Cockney accent)) sonar bangla ((laughs))
Masud:	((in hyper-Cockney accent)) sonar bangla
John:	((in hyper-Cockney accent)) sonar bangla
Mr N:	(you know) I'm getting fed up with (back)
	((quite a lot of talk going on))
	Because you're from London
	you're handicapped to a certain ext[ent
Several:	[((loud laughs))
Nr N:	because erm: (.)
	your everyday language (.)
	if you're from Eton
	wouldn't include too many innits
	would it
	(.)
	alright
	[listen

Anon (m): [((in a posh voice))
(because they're very) posh
Mr N: ((faster and quieter)) yes exactly

(Rampton and Charalambous 2016: 10)

Whereas in the data from the Turkish classroom in Cyprus, the 'silence breaking' involved the expression of deep-seated personal prejudices against a particular group of people which are usually suppressed in the classroom, in this case it was the underlying unfairness of the British educational system as a whole—particularly the way it discriminated against both working-class and non-white students. Again, Rampton and Charalambous stress that to understand what is going on requires an understanding of both the institutional context and the broader social context. The institution where this interaction took place, they remind us, was a generally progressive institution in which students' home language varieties were respected. This was perhaps what made it so awkward for Mr Newton to point out the obvious, that the students were 'handicapped' by the way they spoke when it came to the Standardised Assessment Task. Nevertheless, he tried to align with the students in a number of ways, for instance, by using their own vernacular pronunciation (talking about the students 'handicappin' 'emselves'). What is interesting is the way that the students escalated the class-based inequity that Mr Newton pointed out (comparing his students' speech to that of students at Eton, a posh private school) to an *ethically* based inequality—insisting that it was not just because they were 'from London' but because (many of them) were 'from Bangladesh' (or at least their parents were). What is also interesting is that the *key* of the episode, rather than turning angry as it did in the episode in the Turkish class, became humorous and convivial, with students critiquing both the inequities in the system and Mr Newton's well-meaning attempts to help them navigate these inequities though parodying the social prejudice that they are targets of.

Both of these episodes show how a more ethnographic approach to discourse analysis can enrich our understanding of situated talk, directing our attention to the role contextual factors such as politics and prejudice can play in the way people talk about different kinds of topics. Rampton and Charalambous's analysis also shows how the contextual grammar of institutional encounters can be disrupted when assumptions that usually remain unstated are brought out into the open. In some ways it reminds us that many of the speech situations that we engage in every day involve the 'silencing' of certain topics. Sometimes the silencing of some topics is good, especially when they involve potentially harmful ideas or discriminatory attitudes. In other situations, however, the disruptions in the speech situation caused by 'breaking silences' can be a powerful means of revealing and critiquing injustices in society.

Project ideas

1. Record a short episode in some kind of institutional context such as a classroom or a meeting. In analysing the transcript of the episode, first consider how different elements of Hymes's SPEAKING model apply to the speech situation under consideration, and if the different people involved bring to the situation the same kinds of competencies. Then think about how broader contextual

factors such as the 'culture' of the institution and the political situation in the country, region or city in which the interaction happened may have affected the way people talk.

2. Choose a speech situation in which you think there are certain unstated assumptions among participants, which, were they to be made explicit, would somehow disrupt the situation. Analyze why you think this is so and assess the benefits and risks of bringing these unstated assumptions out into the open.

D8 DISCOURSE AND ACTION

Mediated discourse analysis is an effective way of understanding the relationship between 'small d' discourse and 'capital D' Discourse by focusing on specific actions that people are taking in their daily lives and how the discourse that they use to take those actions connects them to longer 'chains' of discourse and action which Scollon calls *discourse itineraries* (see unit B8). The two articles summarized in this unit demonstrate how you might go about tracing these discourse itineraries. In the first study, Gavin Lamb analyzes the actions that tourists take with sea turtles on a beach in Hawai'i, and how these actions are connected to earlier discourses of tourist advertising and later actions of 'bragging' about one's trip on social media. In the second study, Ron Scollon explores how people use food labels in their everyday actions of shopping, cooking and eating, and how these labels connect them to larger processes of legislation and food production in the 'world food system.'

A.

Gavin Lamb (2021). 'Spectacular sea turtles: Circuits of a wildlife ecotourism discourse in Hawai'i.' *Applied Linguistics Review 12* (1), pp. 93–121.

Background

Hawai'ian green sea turtles have become important symbols for the tourism industry in Hawai'i, with pictures of them appearing regularly in tourism advertisements and guidebooks, and on street signs, shop fronts, and tourist souvenirs such as t-shirts. Tourists from around the world regularly visit Laniākea Beach on the North Shore of the island of O'ahu, marketed as 'Turtle Beach,' to witness the turtles crawling onto the shore to sleep during the day, to swim and snorkel with them, and to take selfies with these creatures. In fact, turtle-related 'ecotourism' has become an important and profitable industry on this island.

Many people have promoted 'ecotourism' as a way to encourage people to have intimate and 'authentic' encounters with wildlife in the hopes that it can help them develop an appreciation for nature and for the environment. Others, however, have criticized the ecotourism industry as exploitative and potentially harmful to the very creatures and natural settings that it claims to be helping to preserve.

This research project aimed to understand the role of *discourse* in mediating people's experiences in this setting and in transforming this stretch of beach into a world-famous tourist destination. The researcher uses concepts and techniques from *mediated discourse analysis*, treating Laniākea Beach as a *site of engagement* where different kinds of social actors, different kinds of social relationships, and different kinds of discourses converge to make particular actions possible. In particular, he is interested in the itineraries of discourse (see unit B8) that circulate through this site to construct sea turtles as a 'spectacle' for tourists to 'consume,' and to understand how, as Thurlow and Jaworski (2014: 468) put it, 'tourism emerges as/through a series of *mediated actions* … an intersection of different, repeatable practices that are recognized as a specific genre of activity and the group of people engaging in that activity.'

What kind of discourse was analyzed and how did they analyze it?

When it comes to mediated discourse analysis, the kind of discourse that we analyze and the way we analyze it are inseparable: choosing the discourse to focus on is part of the analytical process. Mediated discourse analysts, in fact, don't start with discourse, but rather first identify the *social actions* and *social practices* that they are interested in and then attempt to determine the role that discourse plays in how these actions and practices get done. In the context of this research, the most obvious actions of interest were those that tourists engage in when visiting the beach, actions that are mediated through other creatures (the sea turtles), technological tools, such as the cameras they use to take selfies, social relationships (interaction orders) such as those with tour guides, volunteer *honu* guardians (sea turtle protectors) and fellow tourists, and discourse, in the form of words and images online, on signs, in guidebooks, verbal language spoken among the people present, and embodied gestures and actions performed by people and animals.

These actions on the beach, however, are inevitably part of longer chains of discourse and action—discourse itineraries—which span from the time prospective tourists learn about the sea turtles from ecotourism promotional materials (often online) to their sharing stories and photos of their visit (also often online) after the fact. What Lamb is interested in is how discourse about sea turtles circulates through these itinerates—from the *representations* of them that appear on ecotourism websites, to the way people's interactions with them are *mediated* through cameras and practices of taking selfies, to how these encounters are then *remediated* when people post their selfies on social media sites, images that themselves become enticing *representations* of the experience for potential future visitors (see Figure 38.1)

At each of these points along this trajectory of discourse and action, Lamb (2021: 94) attempts first to identify the elements of discourse, 'visual, narrative and material … that compose a tourism discourse of spectacular sea turtles, and then ask(s) how these elements are routinely mobilized at key moments of the turtle tourist experience.'

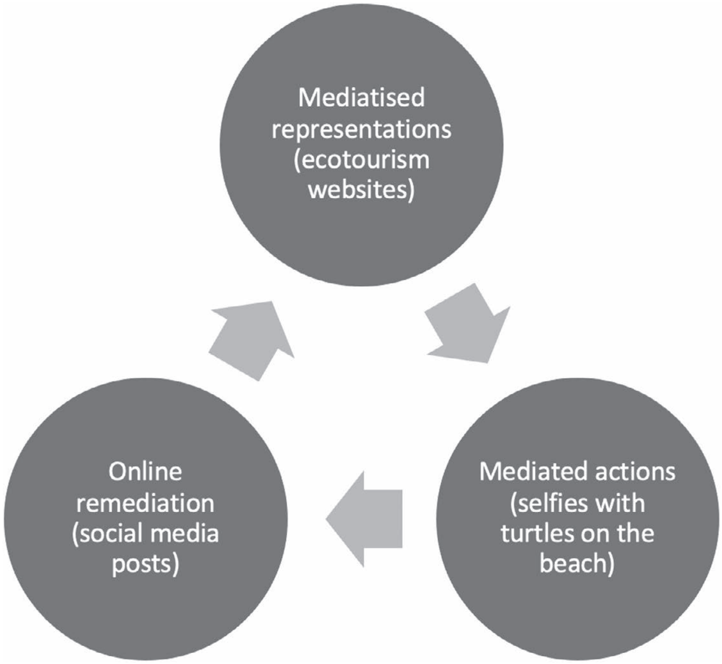

Figure D8.1 The circuits of sea turtle tourism (adapted from Lamb 2021: 98)

What did they learn?

Lamb starts out his analysis by examining the images and language found on a website for a popular 'Turtle Eco Adventure Oahu Hawaii Tour' as well as the discourse on signs at kiosks and brochure stands located throughout Waikīkī, advertising 'turtle tours' in multiple languages. The images generally depict close-up and intimate interactions between tourists and sea turtles in which they stand or swim next to the turtles, the creatures gazing at them in a way that makes it seem that they are welcoming or even initiating the contact. These images, Lamb says, help to craft what he calls the 'sea turtle tourism gaze,' mediating would-be tourists' actions of imagining stories of their future encounters with turtles. Just as important, though, is what is missing or *erased* from these representations, in particular crowds of other tourists jostling to have their own 'intimate' encounters with the creatures, warning signs and barriers on the beach, and conservation workers tasked with preventing tourists from getting too close to the turtles. What is represented instead are solitary tourists seemingly encountering sea turtles 'in the wild.'

The analysis of what actually occurs on the beach, however, reveals that it is very different from these idealized representations. Rather than the wild, solitary setting depicted in the advertisements, tourists encounter a complex semiotic landscape full of signs warning them to 'look but don't touch,' to maintain a 3-metre distance from the turtles, and not to feed the turtles, along with information about federal and state laws about wildlife protection and the penalties for violating these laws. There is also a red rope surrounding the area where the turtles usually congregate with volunteers stationed at various points around it, who issue verbal warnings if tourists breach the barrier. There are also educational signs describing sea turtle ecology and verbal explanations of turtle behaviour delivered by tour guides.

In attempting to understand these situated moments when tourists gather on Laniākea Beach, the main question for the mediated discourse analyst is how the tourists manage to 'pull off' the 'sea turtle tourist gaze' promised in representations they have encountered on ecotourism websites and in advertising brochures, given the affordances and constraints (see unit A8) introduced by the elements of discourse that surround them. Lamb identifies a range of different strategies they use to create a sense of proximity with the sea turtles, including embodied actions of pointing, positioning their bodies, posing for photographs, and reaching over the rope to touch the turtles when the volunteers are not looking. One particularly popular practice he observes is what he calls the 'turtle hold' (p. 112) where tourists position their hands in relation to a distant sea turtle in a way that, when photographed, makes it seem as if they are holding it. This practice, along with variations, such as framing distant turtles within heart-shaped gestures made by their hands, has, in fact, become a kind of photographic genre—which tourists learn from other people and from images they have seen on social media, and which mediates the way the tourists move around the beach and position themselves in relation to the turtles, other tourists, and the volunteers. Actions of pointing, posing, and touching the turtles are further mediated through conversations tourists have with each other and emotional outbursts of surprise and delight. Finally, these movements, gestures, and utterances are also, of course, enabled or constrained by the movements of the turtles themselves as they move between land and sea over the course of a day, creating what Lamb (p. 108) calls 'a symphony of human and nonhuman entanglements.'

The final stop in the discourse itinerary that Lamb considers involves the digital images that tourists upload onto Instagram. Indeed, much of the action that takes place on the beach itself is designed with an eye towards creating these new pieces of discourse that the tourists can use to document their experience and brag about it to their friends and followers. What is interesting here is how the affordances and constraints of digital photography and the Instagram platform create opportunities for tourists not just to record their experience, but to *transform* it. One way they do this is by editing their photographs to erase from the frame elements that might distract from the story they want to tell, including volunteers, other tourists, traces of the barrier rope and warning signs, in an attempt to reproduce the kinds of representations they saw in the advertising brochures and websites. Another thing they do is layer on top of their images various other elements such as captions and emojis and attach to them comments, location markers, and hashtags such as #TurtleBeach which they use to create stories about their encounters with turtles and communicate certain attitudes towards these encounters.

One important point that can be made about these 'remediated' representations of human-turtle encounters has to do with what people are actually *doing* with them—what actions they are taking. A key point that Lamb makes is that, with these images, tourists are not just engaged in communicating about turtles. In fact, the turtles themselves are more accurately seen as *cultural tools* (see unit A8) that people deploy to communicate something about *themselves* as part of larger projects of 'self-branding.' So here we have moved through this itinerary of discourse and actions from a point at which ecotourism companies are branding sea turtles to tourists, to a point where tourists are using turtles to brand themselves.

Lamb gives an example of such a post on Instagram which includes a photo of a tourist's arm reaching from outside of the frame to touch a turtle's head over the barrier and the caption 'It seems it was prohibited to touch sea turtles, I didn't know and touched them anyway … ((sea turtle emoji)) Sorry ((sea turtle emoji))' (Lamb 2021: 115). With this image, as Lamb points out, the tourist manages to 'pull off' an 'intimate encounter' with the turtle of the kind promised in the advertising brochures while at the same time displaying her developing knowledge of sea turtle protection discourse, and in so doing, portraying herself as both a 'daring rebel' and a 'concerned conservationist.'

Another important thing to remember is that such images themselves become tools for future tourists to imagine their own encounters with turtles, ways that they learn things like how to get away with touching the turtles and how to take photos using the 'turtle hold' pose.

What is particularly useful about an analysis like this is what it adds to the debate about whether or not ecotourism is harmful or helpful. It reminds us that the answer to this question lies in the ways tourist themselves actively *perform* their encounters with nature using the various discursive tools that are available to them, and how the affordances and constraints of these tools influence what they do, and what they don't do, at these sites.

B.

Ron Scollon (2005). 'The discourse of food in the world system: Toward a nexus analysis of a world problem.' *Journal of Language and Politics 4* (3), pp. 465–488.

Background

The production and distribution of the world's food supply is becoming increasingly corporatized and centralized. When Ron Scollon wrote this article back in 2005, 90% of the international trade of staple foods such as grain and seed was under the control of only five large corporations. Meanwhile, there are fewer and fewer independent farmers and grocers, and the people who are responsible for actually producing the planet's food (by, for example, working in fields or in food processing plants) are among the lowest-paid workers in the world. While the food industry's practices of mass production have helped to increase the world's food supplies, they have also contributed significantly to climate change and other forms of environmental pollution as well as to the spread of deadly diseases from pathogens that come from livestock. At the same time, consumers often seem to have less control over the food they eat, either though restricted choices that come from the centralization of food production, or because of the fact that they often have to navigate complex webs of *discourse* (news reports, advertisements, labels on food packages) in order to decide what to eat.

In this article, Scollon illustrates how tools from mediated discourse analysis can be used to understand the complexities of the world's food system. Since mediated discourse analysis is not just concerned with discourse, but also with the social actions that discourse makes possible, it gives us a way to make connections between our everyday actions of shopping and eating (and the texts that we use to perform those actions) and larger actions taken by governments and corporations and the *Discourses* that they promote. What is so useful about this approach for us is that it can help us to understand how the 'little' actions that we do in our daily lives are part of larger systems of discourse and action, and how, by changing our actions, we might be able to make a contribution to changing the world.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

In line the with principles of mediated discourse analysis, Scollon's strategy in this article is to identify concrete moments in the daily lives of people in which they have to make choices about food (moments of shopping, cooking, and eating) and then to identify the texts and other *cultural tools* (see unit B8) that are involved in these actions. The data for the projects that he describes are not just these texts, but also ethnographic observations (see unit B7) of people in kitchens, at dinner tables, and in grocery stores.

How did they analyze it?

Scollon's method of analysis, which he calls **nexus analysis**, has the aim of understanding how the broader Discourse and ideologies in the world's food system are 'made real in the actions of common people' (p. 467). As we discussed in unit B8, mediated discourse analysts see all actions as taking place at the *nexus* of 1) particular collections of tools and texts (such as cooking implements, recipes, and nutritional labels), 2) particular kinds of social relationships (such as the relationship between family members that eat together, or the relationship between a food manufacturer and its customers), and 3) the 'historical bodies' of individuals (which includes their habits of eating, their knowledge of nutrition, and any health conditions or food allergies they might have). Each of these components—texts, relationships, and people—arrive at a moment of action by travelling along certain *trajectories* which involve other discourses and other actions, either by themselves or by other people. A nutritional label on a food package, for example, is the result of a long chain of actions and texts which include, for example, scientific studies, labelling legislation passed by lawmakers, and design decisions within a company about where to place different words and images on a package. Similarly, a person's diagnosis with type-2 diabetes, which causes her to seek out sugar-free food, may have resulted from a long history of dietary and exercise decisions influenced by things like food advertisements for high-sugar and high-carb snacks. By analysing the texts that people use to take actions and what they do with these texts, mediated discourse analysts are able to uncover the way these texts are linked to other texts and other actions taken in other places, and to larger social practices, ideologies and economic systems.

In this article, Scollon illustrates his method with an analysis of the way product labels are used in two different instances of mediated action, someone buying a can of tomatoes at the supermarket, and a family trying to manage their daughter's corn allergy. In both of these examples he shows how the analysis of texts—in this case, food labels—is necessary and important, but not sufficient for understanding the whole effect of the discourse, where it came from and the consequences it can have both for the individuals concerned and for the planet as a whole. So Scollon goes beyond these food labels, digging into the other texts, such as labelling regulations and corporate advertisements, that helped to make these labels and the actions that the people are taking with them possible.

What did they learn?

The first example Scollon analyzes is the action of a man who takes a can of tomatoes from a supermarket shelf and decides to buy it. Obviously, the most important piece of discourse that makes this action possible is the label on the can which identifies it as tomatoes, but also provides lots of other information that may influence the man's decision. The label on this can be divided into two parts, the front and the back. The front of the can features a photo of tomatoes growing on the vine, the company name, and the words 'Tomatoes, WHOLE PEELED.' There is also the net weight of the product and a star-shaped callout that says 'Tomatoes provide vitamins A and C,' below which it says in italics, '*See Back Panel for Nutrition Information.*' The back of the product has a table with the 'Nutrition Facts' that are mandated by law. This includes things like serving size, calories per serving, and amounts and percentages of fat, sodium, carbohydrates and protein. Underneath the table is a list of ingredients: Tomatoes, Tomato Juice, Salt, Calcium Chloride, Citric Acid. Next to this, and above the bar code, is a text box, inside of which there is a drawing of a flower framed by a rainbow and surrounded by the words: 'Working in a Sensible Environment.' Underneath this graphic is the following text:

> **HEALTHWISE:**
> Development of cancer depends on many factors. Eating a diet low in fat and high in fruits and vegetables, foods that are low in fat and may contain vitamin A, vitamin C and dietary fiber, may reduce your risk of some cancers. Tomato, a food low in fat, provide vitamins A and C.
> **ENVIRONMENT WISE:** Steel Recycles.

Taken together, then, this can of tomatoes consists of at least eight texts and images. From what we know about discourse from the other units in this book, we might be able to answer some questions about what these texts and images 'mean,' or, at least, what they are implying. The first thing that we might wonder is why the text on the back suddenly mentions cancer. Most people, when they buy a can of tomatoes, do not have cancer on their minds, but clearly the company selling this can of tomatoes wants them to. Specifically, they want them to think that tomatoes have something to do with preventing cancer. But the label is very careful not to make the claim that tomatoes prevent cancer by using lots of **hedging** words: 'Development of cancer **depends on**

many factors … vitamin A, vitamin C and dietary fiber **may** reduce your risk of **some** cancers.' At least, though, this text helps to explain the star-shaped callout on the front of the can with the big words: 'Tomatoes Provide Vitamin A and C.' The flash star suggests that the most important thing to know about tomatoes is that they have vitamins A and C. Scollon suggests that this is a common manipulative strategy that food manufacturers use—separating crucial information into different discursive spaces. But to understand why the manufactures don't make the claim that tomatoes prevent cancer on the front of the package (as well as the presence of things like Nutrition Facts) requires that we refer to other texts, namely laws and regulations about what manufactures can and cannot say on their labels. In the case of this product, the health claim that tomatoes prevent cancer is not allowed because the scientific evidence for it is not strong enough. But the producer of these tomatoes can strongly imply this is the case by highlighting the presence of vitamins A and C in the product, and then directing them to the back of the package which contains a paragraph which, in the very first sentence, suddenly mentions cancer.

The key question for mediated discourse analysts, though, is whether or not the man in the supermarket actually *uses* all of these texts and images when making the decision to buy the can of tomatoes. In fact, many of them, including those that are mandated by law such as the Nutrition Facts, may be irrelevant to the man, especially if his historical body includes the habitual practice of choosing this particular brand of tomatoes, in which case just the familiar colours on the can and the words 'Tomatoes, WHOLE PEELED' might be enough. As it turns out, there are also a number of other texts that are connected to the decision, such as the conversation he has had with his wife about their dinner plans, and the scribbled shopping list that he holds in his hands. The shopping list then becomes part of another trajectory of discourse and action that includes talking about what to have for dinner, searching the kitchen cupboards to determine that a key ingredient—tomatoes—is not there, writing the word tomatoes on the shopping list, reading the word in the supermarket, finding the appropriate aisle, and selecting the can from the shelf. Figure 38.1 shows the *nexus of practice* at which, from the point of view of the man, this action takes place. What this figure

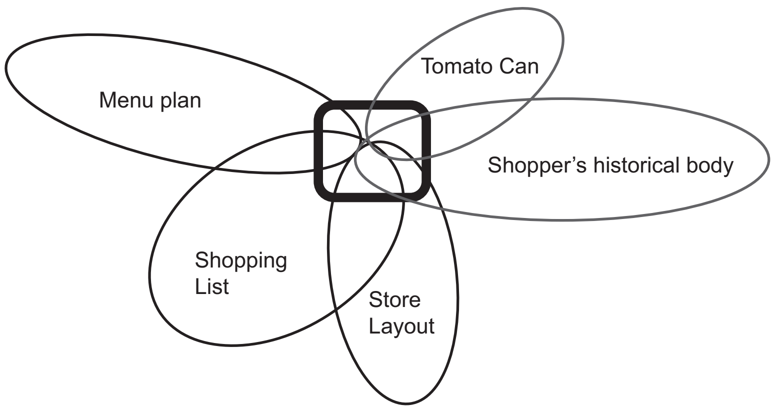

Figure D8.2 Nexus of practice in the supermarket (adapted from Scollon 2005: 474) doesn't show are all of the other trajectories of discourse and action having to do with scientists determining that vitamins A and D may reduce the risk of cancer, lawmakers passing laws about what manufacturers can put on their labels, and manufacturers designing the label.

The second example Scollon gives is the case of a pre-adolescent girl who is allergic to corn, which makes her hyperactive. After consulting with their doctor, her parents developed the practice of carefully reading the packages of all of the food products they buy to make sure that they don't have corn. One day, however, after eating a product that the family buys regularly, the girl becomes hyperactive. The parents then notice a *new* piece of discourse on the package: a bright yellow graphic with the word, '*New!*' This causes them to recheck the ingredients listed on the package. The word 'corn' does not appear, but another one does which their doctor has told them is a derivative of corn. Consequently, they resolve not to buy this product again.

The parents in this scenario normally read different parts of packages of products that they buy (such as the ingredient list) very carefully. But, like the man buying tomatoes in the previous example, since they have previously bought this product, they buy it again without reading the label carefully. The only hint that they might need to do so is the word 'new,' the meaning of which is ambiguous. It is only after their daughter suffers an allergic reaction that the meaning becomes clear: 'new' means that the company has added a derivative of corn to the product. In this example, the nexus of practice formed by the family's trajectories of discourse and action and the nexus of practice formed by the company's trajectories of discourse and action—which includes reformulating their recipe for this product, perhaps to cut costs—intersect in a way that is medically dangerous for the young girl. But there are also many other cycles of discourse and action that occur far away from this family that also affect the actions they take with regard to the product, such as research scientists developing new, more economical strains of corn, large multinational corporations searching for ways to sell more corn by putting it (or its derivatives) into more products, researchers at the company determining that adding a corn derivative might make the product less expensive to produce or increase its shelf life, and marketers deciding that placing the word 'new' on the package might increase sales.

In this example, rather basic discourse analytical questions about what words actually mean become highly relevant. For these parents, protecting their daughter's health is not just a matter of keeping her away from corn, but also a matter of constantly considering the linguistic question: when is corn 'corn' when the presence of corn can be signalled in so many different ways. In this case the main thing that signalled the presence of corn in this product was the totally unrelated word, 'new.' But there is also a dizzying list of other ways to signal corn such as 'dextrose,' 'glucose,' 'dextrin,' 'maltodextrin,' 'lecithin,' 'fructose,' 'high fructose,' 'vegetable starch,' 'thickeners,' 'sweeteners,' 'syrup,' 'vegetable oil,' 'alcohol,' 'maize,' and 'sorbitol.' The seemingly simple action of 'keeping their daughter away from corn,' therefore, requires the parents to consult a range of other texts such as the list of corn derivatives their doctor has given them and other lists published on the internet. In this case, then, the parents must become 'discourse analysts,' developing the ability to interpret food packages with a level of skill and knowledge that most consumers don't have. For Scollon, this is one way that 'corporate interests are able to exert their hegemony over the world food system by using a language and a discourse that is largely opaque and inaccessible to the people who need the information in order to undertake important actions' (p. 482).

This article provides two good examples of how mediated discourse analysis can be used to understand how people's everyday actions are affected by the discourses that they have available to them, as well as how these discourses themselves are affected by the actions of people and institutions over which we often have little control. But he also shows how analysing discourse in this way can reveal how powerful interests might be controlling our actions in subtle ways, and can help us reflect on how, by changing our actions, we can contribute to challenging the hegemony of these powerful interests.

Project ideas

1. Observe people in a public place like a concert, a tourist attraction, or a skating rink. Also gather whatever other discourse you can about this place or event such as advertisements. Finally, search social media sites for images that people have posted about their visits to these places or events. Try to understand the relationship between the way the place or event is represented in advertisements, the way people act when they are in the place or at the event, and the pictures that they post online.
2. Find one or more packages of a food product that you consume regularly and analyze it using the method outlined by Scollon. Then do some research about things like labelling laws and the company that manufactured the food and try to figure out how parts of the label are the result of discourses and actions taken by people like legislators, manufacturers, and marketers. Finally, reflect on the moments when you have bought this product. Think of which parts of the label you paid attention to when you did. Reflect upon why you regularly buy this product and how it is related to your own trajectories of discourse and action, your own historical body, and the interaction order in your family or among your friends.

IDENTITY, STEREOTYPES, AND MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

D9

Much of our understanding of what the world is like comes from visual media, things like photographs, videos, films, and television shows. In fact, when we see things represented in visual media, we are more likely to regard them as 'true' or 'real' than if we read about them or listen to people talk about them. In this way, images are very powerful tools for promoting ideologies or 'versions of reality,' which includes promoting **stereotypes** about particular kinds of people, particular places, and particular kinds of social activities. At the same time, we also create and use images ourselves—often in the context of online environments—to portray ourselves in certain ways and to highlight aspects of our identities such as where we are from and the things that we like to do in ways that we believe benefit us.

The two articles in this unit demonstrate the power of images to reinforce stereotypes and to allow people to communicate certain kinds of social identities. In the first study summarized, Areej Albawardi and I analyzed the 'stock images' that circulated on social media of Saudi Arabian women driving in the weeks after the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia was lifted, examining how these 'generic' images foreground different aspects of Saudi women's identities and background others. In the second study, Ron Darvin analyzed how TikTok creators from Hong Kong used the tool of *modal density* to highlight aspects of their local identities in the months before the app was discontinued in the city.

A.

Areej Albawardi and Rodney H. Jones (2023). 'Saudi women driving: Images, stereotyping and digital media.' *Visual Communication 22* (1), pp. 96–127.

Background

In September 2017 the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced that it was lifting its 27-year ban on women driving to take effect on 24 June 2018. This significant historical event was reported widely in the domestic and international media with news stories that were usually accompanied by images purporting to represent Saudi women sitting behind the wheels of automobiles. Most of these images, however, were not photographs of *actual* women driving produced by photojournalists, but rather *stock images* purchased from companies such as Getty Images and Shutterstock. Stock images are convenient and economical ways for journalists to include images with their stories when they don't have the time or resources to produce their own pictures. Such images, however, tend to be rather general or 'generic,' which makes it easier for them to 'fit' into different contexts. They also tend to present people and their actions in rather stereotypical ways, highlighting, for example, certain physical attributes (such as white coats for doctors, hard hats for construction workers) to signal particular 'social types.' Some scholars (see, for example, Machin and van Leeuwen 2007) have argued that these kinds of images have the tendency to reinforce already existing stereotypes about what certain kinds of people are like (especially what they look like) and contribute to a 'standardization' or 'homogenization' of visual language in the media.

In this article, Albawardi and Jones examined how the phenomenon of Saudi women driving was represented in stock images used by international media outlets in the months after the ban on women driving was lifted, paying special attention to how these representations either reinforced or challenged existing stereotypes about gender and culture. They were also interested in how the technological apparatus (such as search engines and metadata) that determined how these images were circulated contributed to the 'version of reality' created by these representations.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

For this study the researchers used the search term 'Saudi women driving' to collect 142 images and 4477 metadata tags (the words that are attached to images to make it easy to search for them on the internet) from the websites of Shutterstock, Getty Images, and Goggle Images from 2 August to 28 August 2018—a little over a month after women in Saudi Arabia began to be issued driving licences. These sources were chosen because of their prominence: Shutterstock is the most popular image bank in the world, Getty Images was one of the first image banks to go online, and Google dominates the search engine market for images. All of these sites allow users to filter their searches in different ways. For this study, the researchers used the default setting: 'most relevant.' The first 50 images returned on Shutterstock were collected. For Getty Images, only 42 images were returned, and all of them were collected. To control for the fact that Google Image searches often return different results based on things like the location of the searcher, the Google Image search was simultaneously carried out in Saudi Arabia, the US, the UK, and Turkey. The results were largely identical except for the order of the images returned. The first 50 images returned in all of the searches were selected for analysis. In all cases, the metadata attached to each of the images was also collected.

How did they analyze it?

The researchers analyzed the images using van Leeuwen's (2008) model for analysing the representation of social actors and social practices which is heavily based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) system for the analysis of images discussed in unit B9.

The first dimension of the images that was analyzed was the *ideational* dimension (see unit B9), the way images represent the word by portraying certain *participants* (people, objects) performing particular *processes* (actions). Van Leeuwen's model provides a much more detailed way of analysing how participants are represented than the method introduced in unit B9, focusing on questions such as what kinds of participants are *included* and *excluded*, the different *roles* they play, whether or not they are depicted as *specific* people or things or *generic* representatives of 'categories' of people or things, and the kinds of *attributes* given to them signal to viewers what 'category' of people or thing they are. Social categories of people can be communicated through biological characteristics (such as sex characteristics or racial features), and they can also be communicated through cultural characteristics such as hairdos, makeup, the way the people are dressed, and the objects that they are holding or interacting with. As we said in unit B9, material *action processes* in images are usually signalled by *vectors* (implied lines in the image) which connect actors to the thing or person they are acting on or with. But other kinds of processes can also be depicted in images, such as *behavioural processes* (such as 'smiling'), and verbal processes (such as 'shouting').

The second dimension of the images that was analyzed was the *interpersonal* dimension (see unit B9), which is how the figures in images interact with viewers and the kind of relationship they establish with them. As we said in unit B9, this dimension is mainly a function of distance (how close or far away the figure seems), perspective (whether the viewer seems to be looking up at or down on the figure), and gaze, whether or not the figure is looking at the viewer.

What did they learn?

The coding of the images performed using the dimensions explained above revealed that the way Saudi women were depicted in these stock images was strikingly uniform. Not surprisingly, all of the images include women and cars. What is more interesting, however, is what was *excluded* from the images, specifically, other people. In most of the images, the women were depicted alone, and in the few images that did include other people, they were men (presumably husbands) and children, emphasizing the women's roles as wives and mothers. A few of the pictures didn't depict the faces of the women, but rather just body parts such as a hand grasping a steering wheel.

The majority of the women depicted in the images appeared to be models, given the fact that they appeared in several images striking different poses, rather than 'ordinary' Saudi women or famous people. These models were all slim and 'conventionally attractive' with no particularly unusual or striking characteristics, suggesting that they were meant to represent 'typical Saudi women.' The identities of the figures were signalled through physical characteristics associated with women. Even the images that just included body parts signalled the gender of the figure with things like long, polished nails and jewellery. There were also biological traits that indexed ethnicity such as dark hair, brown eyes, and medium light skin. Although a range of skin pigmentations were represented, none of the figures had dark skin, as some Saudi women do. Cultural categorization was signalled mostly through what the women were wearing. All of them wore a traditional Arab *abaya* (a loose, robe-like garment worn by some Muslim women) along with some kind of head covering. Interestingly, more of the women in the pictures from the image banks were wearing more conservative head coverings which cover both the hair and the face (a *niqab*), whereas images returned in the Google search (representing the images that were more widely taken up by news organizations and circulated on the internet) contained more women wearing the less conservative *hijab* (which covers only the hair). Of course, in Saudi Arabia women wear a wide variety of head-dress, and some wear none at all (though there are no examples of such women in the data).

There are also differences between the way Saudis look and dress and the way women in other Gulf countries do, raising the question of whether or not the women depicted were really Saudi. To test this, the researchers administered an online questionnaire to 497 Saudis with a sample of pictures of five of the most frequently appearing models in the corpus, asking the respondents what nationality they thought the women were. Surprisingly, *none* of the models were identified by a majority of the respondents as Saudi. Instead, they guessed that the women were Egyptian, Syrian, Kuwaiti, Pakistani, or Jordanian. In other words, there was something about the way the models looked and dressed that did not 'seem Saudi' to a large number of Saudi viewers. This suggests that what the creators of the images were trying to depict was not 'Saudiness,' but rather a 'generic Arabness' with little attention to the sometimes subtle ways different kinds of Arab women might look different from one another.

The actions that the women in the images were performing were also quite limited. In most of the images (88%), the women were depicted as performing some kind of action process (such as pressing an ignition button, holding the steering wheel, or getting into a car). Some of these processes had nothing to do with driving (such as applying lipstick using the rear-view mirror). None of the images depicted the woman visibly interacting with another person. In about half of the images, these action processes were accompanied by *behavioural processes* such as smiling or making a ‘thumbs up’ gesture. So, while most of the images depicted women in *agentive* positions (*doing* things), what they were depicted as doing was rather simple and mundane. Notably, in none of the images were women actually depicted driving the car!

The analysis of the interpersonal dimension of the images revealed that, in most of the images, the women were photographed at close range on an equal level with the viewer, which creates a feeling of closeness. While the images showed the women both from front and side views, the number of images taken from the side returned in the Google Image search exceeded the number taken from the front. A side view has the effect of creating a slight sense of detachment from the figure, the feeling that the women in the images were ‘spectacles’ meant to be inspected by viewers. On the other hand, slightly more than half of the pictures returned in the Google Image search portrayed the women looking directly at the viewer, creating a feeling of connection. In such images, the woman was almost always smiling, inviting the viewer to ‘feel happy’ for them.

The analysis of the metadata (the words that people could use to search for the images) showed that words related to some semantic fields (see unit B2) were more prominent than others. The three most common semantic fields were ‘automobile-related’ words (e.g. *car*, *driver*), words denoting geographical places (e.g. *Saudi Arabia*, *Riyadh*), and ‘gender-related’ words (e.g. *woman*, *female*). What is perhaps more interesting is the prominence of other semantic fields having nothing to do with driving. For example, the fifth most frequent semantic field was ‘dress-related’ words (*hijab*, *niqab*, *veil*), with all of the words referring to traditional articles of clothing. The sixth most frequent semantic field was words having to do with ‘emotion,’ all of them denoting positive emotions (e.g. *happy*, *excited*). Other semantic fields represented in the data included ‘appearance’ (e.g. *beautiful*, *attractive*, *pretty*) and words having to do with ‘lifestyle,’ particularly wealth (e.g. *modern*, *luxury*, *wealth*). The reason it is so important to analyze these search terms is that they have such a profound effect on the kinds of images that people who are searching for images get to see. They represent the words that the owners of the image banks believe represent the way users ‘divide up and label things in the world’ (Albawardi and Jones 2023: 19). In the case of these images, these words show not just that the images are divided up along the lines of gender and nationality, but also *dress*, *physical appearance*, and *class*.

Although none of these images are sexist, they nevertheless subtly reinforce stereotypical ideas about Arab women and women in general, even as they are trying to depict an event that marks the ‘empowerment’ of women. The images represented ‘generic’ Arab women whose identity was mostly reduced to a few key characteristics (such as head scarves). Driving was associated with uncomplicated feelings of happiness, physical attractiveness, and a wealthy urban lifestyle. What was missing from the images was any reference to the context in which the ban on driving was lifted, especially the political context, and none of the women activists who campaigned for the lifting of the ban appeared in any of the images.

This study demonstrates how multimodal discourse analysis can be used to reveal something about the *ideological* nature of images. Specifically, it shows how the stock images that accompany many of the news stories that we read about important events in the world can sometimes function both to *erase* from the representations of such events important contextual and political information and to reinforce existing gender and ethnic stereotypes. In this case, what is presented in stock images of Saudi women driving is not the reality of actual women, but rather what image bank owners believe to be their (mostly Western) customers' stereotypes about how Saudi women are 'supposed to look' and how they are 'supposed to feel' about 'finally' being able to drive.

B.

Ron Darvin (2022). 'Design, resistance and the performance of identity on TikTok.' *Discourse Context and Media 46*, p. 100591.

Background

TikTok is an app that allows users to assemble very complex multimodal texts by combining and remixing videos, music, voices, and bodily performances, along with text, emojis, and other graphics, as well as a number of different kinds of filters and special effects. Because of this complexity, it presents special challenges for multimodal discourse analysts.

In this article, Ron Darvin explores how young people in Hong Kong used the app to communicate about their local identities and their pride for their city in the months before the app, which is itself owned by a Chinese company, was discontinued and replaced by *Douyin*, the Chinese version of the platform. Darvin prefaces his analysis by noting how TikTok is designed to encourage imitation in the form of (often global) trends and memes. One challenge that users have is figuring out ways to express more individual and local identities within this memetic culture of imitation, driven by the app's algorithm, which works to steer users towards particular kinds of behaviour and forms of creativity. So, the main question he asks is how the young people he studied worked with the affordances and constraints of the platform to express their unique Hong Kong identities by *recontextualizing* popular sounds, music and dances into their own narratives.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The data for this study consisted of 20 15-second TikTok videos from verified users in Hong Kong that were collected by searching for the term 'Hong Kong' on TikTok's 'Discover' page. From the results that were returned, five users were chosen, and four videos from each which featured something unique about Hong Kong (such as its landmarks, its language, or its food) were chosen for closer analysis. Darvin transcribed the videos by taking screenshots every time there was a change in lower-level action or a change in the visual composition of the screen (see unit C9), and these screenshots were arranged in a table. In the three columns next to each screenshot, Davin recorded 1) the information that appeared throughout the video including captions, hashtags and the sound that was used, 2) the modes and semiotic resources used in each screenshot and how these modes (such as gestures, gaze, spoken language) were connected across different frames, and 3) his observations about the *density* of different modes (see below) and how they affected what was foregrounded and backgrounded in the frame.

How did they analyze it?

Darvin used many of the principles from multimodal discourse discussed in units B9 and C9. In particular, he focused on the affordances and constraints of different modes and how they were combined to make meaning. He also used tools from *multimodal interaction analysis*, paying attention to how *lower-level actions* were embedded in *higher-level actions* and exploring how different modes were used to accomplish these actions. He also deployed the concept of *modal density* (see units B9 and C9), noting how the prominence of specific modes or specific combinations of modes was used to direct people's attention to particular aspects of the performances.

What did they learn?

Davin's analysis demonstrates how the Hong Kong creators he studied strategically used the tool of modal density to call viewers' attention to particular aspects of their performances in a way that highlighted the local colour of Hong Kong. In one, for example, entitled 'Sounds of Hong Kong in 15 seconds,' the creator strings together a montage of moving images with sounds that are characteristic of the city such as the beep that people hear when they go through the turnstiles in the Mass Transit Railway, the PA announcement to 'Please mind the gap' when people are alighting from a train, and the rapid clicking sounds that crossing signals on the street make when it is permissible to cross as an aid to blind pedestrians. Although the images in the video are matched with the sounds, it is the sounds that acquire higher modal density, both through the way they invoked Hong Kong daily life and through the way the creator calls attention to them in the title of the video and with his hashtag #ASMR (a hashtag that often accompanies videos that are designed to help people relax by listening to particular sounds; see unit B9). This video was subsequently incorporated into a large number of 'duets' in which other creators showed themselves on a split screen listening to the sounds with expressions of pleasure or rapt attention.

One of the ways Darvin discovered that the Hong Kong creators asserted their unique local identities was through using trending sounds in their videos, but then strategically recontextualizing them by visually foregrounding elements that they believed would be things that other Hong Kongers could relate to. One example is a video in which a young Hong Kong woman dances to a soundtrack made popular by Charlie D'Amelio, one of the most famous TikTokers in the world—a musical mashup entitled 'I will find the hood.' As the song plays, the creator dances in her small Hong Kong flat, imitating the moves that D'Amelio used in her original video and that have been imitated by hundreds of thousands of other creators around the world who have used this sound. But as she is dancing, her mother, who is sweeping the floor in the background, gradually moves into the foreground of the frame, seemingly oblivious to the fact that she is being recorded, and when she reaches the feet of her dancing daughter with her broom, she says 'Aiya!' (aai1 jaa1), a Cantonese expression used to signal annoyance, and then says in English, 'Can you move?!' This is accompanied by captions that pop up on top of the video with the mother's words written in both English and Chinese.

By appropriating this trending sound and the accompanying dance move, this creator positioned herself as a member of the global TikTok community. At the same time, by featuring her annoyed mother, who, based on the accompanying hashtag is meant to be recognizable to other Hong Kong viewers as a typical #asianmom, she interrupted her performance of this global identity by asserting her unique local identity. To do this, she strategically manipulated the density of the different modes in her video. At the beginning of the video, the soundtrack and her own dance moves have high modal density. But as her mother moves slowly into the foreground, it is the visual aspect of the video that takes on a higher modal density, calling viewers' attention not just to the creator's 'typical' Hong Kong mom, but also to her 'typical' Hong Kong small flat where it is difficult to have the space and privacy to produce a TikTok video uninterrupted by other family members.

This study shows how tools from multimodal interaction analysis can be used to analyze videos, especially videos on social media sites in which people use their bodies, their surroundings, and other people in the video to communicate with their viewers. One concept that is particularly useful to Darvin in his analysis is the concept of *modal density*, the way the intensity and complexity of modes can be used to direct people's attention to things that we think are important. Especially in the videos that featured more global sounds and dances, the creators Darvin studied were able to employ modal density to draw viewers' attention away from the more generic, global identities they were indexing and towards the more unique and local aspects of their identities.

Project ideas

1. Do a search on Google images for a particular kind of social identity (e.g. 'doctors') or a particular kind of social practice (e.g. 'taking selfies'). Collect the first 50 images that are returned in your search and analyze them using the tools of multimodal discourse analysis, paying attention to what kinds of people are included (and excluded) in the images, how they are represented through certain attributes, and the kinds of actions they are portrayed as doing. Also look at the ways the figures in the images are or are not interacting with the viewers of the image. Can you find any consistent patterns across the collection of images? What do these images tell you about the stereotypes people might have about these kinds of people or these kinds of practices?
2. Gather a collection of videos from YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram about a particular topic. Examine how the creators make use of different modes, and how

they combine these different modes, to communicate about the topic. How do the affordances and constraints of the different modes affect how they are able to communicate about the topic? How do they use the intensity and complexity of modes to foreground different aspects of the topic and background others?

CORPUS-ASSISTED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

D10

As I noted in unit A10, corpus-assisted discourse analysis is a good way of detecting trends across a large body of texts. These trends might have to do with how particular kinds of people or practices are represented and the kinds of emotions, judgements and evaluations that are associated with them. We can do this by creating a corpus of texts that are related to our topic of interest and then using collocation analysis to understand the particular way different things or people are talked about based on the kinds of words that appear in the vicinity of words about those things or people. The two articles summarized in this unit demonstrate these techniques. The first study summarized below was conducted by Paul Baker. In it he used corpus tools to examine the ways Muslim people are represented in the British Press. In the second study, Sylvia Jaworska and Kath Ryan explored the way men and women talk about pain using a large corpus of patient narratives produced in medical settings. These studies highlight both the methodological benefits of corpus-assisted discourse analysis—how it can help us to construct a more 'objective' picture of how discourse is used in different genres and social situations—and its *practical* benefits—how it can help us to address problems like racial or religious discrimination or how to provide better medical care for people.

A.

Paul Baker (2012). 'Acceptable bias? Using corpus linguistics methods with critical discourse analysis.' *Critical Discourse Studies 9* (3), pp. 247–256.

Background

Over the years, studies using critical discourse analysis have found biases in the ways Muslims are portrayed in the British media. These studies, for example, have noted how media stories about Muslims treat them as 'different' from other people living in the UK, as 'culturally deviant,' and as 'dangerous.' Particularly salient in these representations are associations of Muslims with extreme beliefs, and with terrorism. Such negative stereotypes, of course, can have consequences for how Muslims are treated in society in places like schools and workplaces, as well as on the kind of legislation that gets passed related to things like immigration, which might impact their lives and families. While such biases might seem obvious based on even a cursory survey of British newspapers, more powerful analytical methods are needed to understand the true extent of this bias and the different forms that it takes. This is where corpus-assisted discourse analysis can prove useful.

In this study, Paul Baker conducted a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis on a corpus of articles from British newspapers, focusing on words having to do with Muslims.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

The corpus Baker constructed consisted of 200,000 articles from British newspapers published between 1998 and 2009 and totalled approximately 143 million words. The articles were collected by typing relevant search terms such as Muslim and Islam into the search engine of the Nexis UK database, a large database of newspaper articles. The articles came from 12 different newspapers—the *Star*, the *Mirror*, the *Sun*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Times*, the *Independent*, the *Guardian*, the *Business*, and the *People*—representing a range of political positions and including both tabloid and broadside publications.

How did they analyze it and what did they learn?

Baker started his analysis by searching for the words that appeared next to or close to the words 'Mulsim(s),' 'Islam,' and 'Islamic.' This analysis revealed that a large number of these words were related to extreme beliefs such as 'extremist(s),' 'fundamentalist(s)' and 'militant(s).' He then used the Word Sketch function of Sketch Engine to reveal the most statistically salient adjective and verb *collocates* of these extreme belief words and found that they tended to be associated with negative adjectives such as 'murderous,' 'hate-filled,' and 'crazed,' as well as negative verbs such as 'attack,' 'threaten,' 'kidnap,' 'plot' and 'assassinate.' Missing from the list of top ten collocates were more positive words that might be associated with extreme beliefs such as 'pious.'

He then calculated the proportional frequencies of words having to do with extreme beliefs—specifically the words 'fanatic(al),' 'militant,' 'extremist,' 'fundamentalist,' 'radical,' 'separatist,' 'hardline(r),' and 'firebrand'—that collocated with the words 'Mulsim(s),' 'Islam' and 'Islamic' in the 12 different newspapers, taking into account the total number of times that each paper used the words 'Mulsim(s),' 'Islam' and 'Islamic' and then calculating the proportion of times that such words co-occurred with an extreme belief word. As can be seen in Figure 40.1, words denoting extreme beliefs were more frequently associated with the word 'Islamic' than they were with the word 'Muslim(s)' across all of the newspapers. There was also a greater tendency to use words having to do with extreme beliefs when talking about Muslims or Islam in tabloid newspapers such as the *Star*, the *Sun*, the *Daily Express*, and the *Mirror*. Notably, articles from the *Guardian*, a left-leaning newspaper, had the fewest associations of this kind.

This analysis seems to confirm that there was a bias in British newspapers, especially tabloid newspapers, at the time that this study was done, for associating Muslims with extreme beliefs, which cast them in an unfavourable light. To further check this,

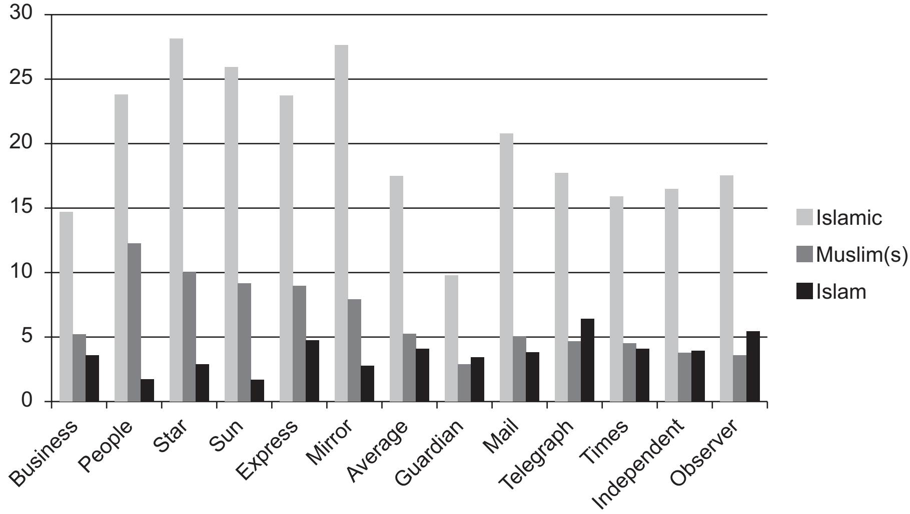

Figure D10.1 Proportion of times (%) that extreme belief words occur before or after Muslim(s), Islamic and Islam for each newspaper (adapted from Baker 2012: 251)

however, Baker searched for collocates associated with more moderate beliefs, such as 'moderate(s),' 'progressive(s),' 'secular,' and 'liberal(s),' as well as words for strong beliefs that have a more positive connotation, such as 'pious' 'committed,' 'devout,' and 'faithful.' This analysis showed that collocates related to strong beliefs were 21 times more common in the corpus than collocates related to moderate beliefs. On the whole, 1 in 6 cases of Islamic were modified by an extreme belief word, and 1 in 20 cases of 'Muslim(s)' were, and words for extreme beliefs with negative connotations greatly outnumbered words with positive connotations.

Baker concludes his analysis by saying that he can be fairly confident that the British Press at the time were biased against Muslims because they tended to focus on extremist Muslims and to associate Islam with extremism. At the same time, he also reflects on some of the limitations of his study and on corpus analysis more generally. For instance, he notes that while the words 'Muslim(s),' 'Islamic' and 'Islam' collocated with words about extreme beliefs much of the time, most of the time these words were used they did not. In order to objectively determine whether or not bias existed, it would be necessary to compare the portrayal of Muslims with portrayals of other groups. He also notes that his focus on words about extreme beliefs did not allow him to take into account other kinds of negative representations of Muslims. Finally, he acknowledges that the biases in the newspapers may not be entirely attributable to the papers themselves since some of the associations of Muslims with extremism might have occurred in quotes from government ministers, politicians, or other media sources.

This study demonstrates the utility of corpus analysis in detecting bias in news reporting, but Baker warns that such an analysis cannot replace more qualitative critical discourse analysis which can provide a richer and more nuanced picture of the discursive strategies writers use to express bias.

B.

Sylvia Jaworska and Kath Ryan (2018). 'Gender and the language of pain in chronic and terminal illness: A corpus-based discourse analysis of patients' narratives.' *Social Science & Medicine 215*, pp. 107–114.

Background

One of the most important things people need to do when they seek medical care is to communicate about their bodily experiences. This is even more important when it comes to experiences of pain. The way patients describe their pain can have a big impact on the kinds of treatments they are given, and, consequently, on their health outcomes. One example of this can be seen in the different ways pain is often treated in male and female patients. Although women are more likely to report pain than men, their verbal reports are frequently ignored by medical practitioners, who might regard women's pain reports as signs of anxiety or emotional distress. As a result, women are routinely under-treated for their pain, while men are more likely to be referred to specialists or receive appropriate treatment sooner. While research about gender and pain has emphasized the importance of language in communicating what is largely a subjective experience, there has not been much work in the field of discourse analysis looking at the different ways different kinds of people talk about pain. The article summarized here is an exception.

In this study, Jaworska and Ryan aim to contribute to understanding pain experience as a 'gendered communicative practice' (p. 108) by analysing verbal reports of pain from men and women of different ages who are experiencing pain due to chronic or terminal illnesses.

What kind of discourse was analyzed?

For their data, the researchers used a corpus of health and illness narratives collected by the University of Oxford's Health Experiences Research Group and published on the HealthTalk website (www.healthtalk.org). They identified 16 conditions in which men and women talked about their physical pain (including various kinds of arthritis and cancer), and then divided their dataset into a female data set (174 texts) and a male dataset (158 texts) based on the genders patients identified with in their profiles. The men's corpus consisted of 123,845 words, and the women's corpus consisted of 146,194 words.

How did they analyze it?

This study used corpus-assisted discourse analysis using Sketch Engine. The quantitative analysis was followed by a closer discourse analysis of selected texts guided by the findings of the corpus analysis. To understand the kinds of words and phrases typically associated with pain, they retrieved the most common collocates of 'pain' (and its synonyms: 'hurt' and 'ache') using a – 4 to + 4 span. In other words, they retrieved the words that commonly occurred within four words either before or after a pain-related word. They then categorized the collocations into thematic groups and compared the themes in the two corpora. They then explored these patterns further by examining longer stretches of text that exemplified different themes.

What did they learn?

The first thing that Jaworska and Ryan noticed in their study was that the word 'pain' appeared more frequently in the women's corpus (408 occurrences out of 146,194 words) than the men's corpus (262 occurrences out of 123,845 words). In their analysis of the words that most frequently collocated with pain, they also found differences between the two corpora. Table 40.1 shows the ten strongest collocations of 'pain' in the women's corpus and the men's corpus. The number next to each collocate is the mutual information (MI) score, which is a measure of statistical association. If two words are found together more than would be expected by chance, they have a high mutual information score.

In the men's narratives, the top collocate of 'pain' was 'excruciating,' a highly emotional word describing extreme pain or anguish. This suggests not that men found their pain more intense, but that they might have waited to report their pain until it reached a certain point, staying silent about less intense pain experiences. A closer look at the narratives where the word 'excruciating' appeared also suggests feelings of helplessness and vulnerability experienced by men reporting 'excruciating' pain:

> I was lying in bed and it was in the middle of the night and it was absolutely excruciating pain and I couldn't even put a sheet over my foot, it really was bad. At which point my wife called the doctor.
>
> This arm's absolutely giving me excruciating pain and I was really, I was really at a low and I just burst out crying. She, she called the GP.
>
> (Jaworska and Ryan 2018: 110)

Table D10.1 The ten strongest collocations of 'pain' in the women's corpus and the men's corpus (adapted from Jaworska and Ryan 2018: 110)

Women Collocation	*MI*	*Men Collocation*	*MI*
gate	9.122	excruciating	9.226
psychologist	8.952	(pain) killer	9.195
management	8.537	intensity	8.781
abdominal	8.537	management	8.195
Sharp	8.385	chronic	8.058
boring	8.385	severe	7.665
chart	8.385	increase	7.533
intense	8.063	ease	7.495
relief	8.023	control	7.337
(pain) killer	7.893	ease	7.195

What is also interesting is that, in the narratives, it was often other people (such as their wives or partners) who sought help for the pain rather than the men themselves.

The word 'excruciating' did not occur in any of the women's narratives. Instead, the women used a greater range of adjectives when describing their pain such as 'sharp,' 'boring,' and 'intense.' The top collocate in the women's corpus was the word 'gate,' which is a reference to the 'gate control' theory of pain that is part of some psychological treatments for pain management. The occurrence of this collocate in the women's corpus but not in the men's suggests that women may have been offered or sought this kind of treatment more than men. Below are some extracts from women's narratives where they used this term:

> And what opens that pain gate, so if you're feeling more emotional, you're feeling less able to cope on a certain day then.
>
> … and you're feeling particularly emotional, you're feeling down, then your pain gate is going to make it a level five.
>
> (Jaworska and Ryan 2018: 111)

After the initial collocation analysis, which just looked at the top ten collocates of 'pain' in each corpus, the researchers manually sorted all of the collocates into semantic domains (or *semantic fields*; see unit B2). Tables 40.2 and 40.3 show the different collocations in each of the semantic domains for the two corpora.

As the tables show, women and men produced collocations from similar semantic domains when talking about pain, including sensory words, affective (emotional)

Table D10.2 Semantic domains in the women's corpus (adapted from Jaworska and Ryan 2018: 111)

Semantic Category	*Collocations*
Sensory qualities	sharp, stiffness, chronic, lower, top
Affective qualities	boring, terrible, awful, bad
Evaluative qualities	severe, intense, real, different
Body parts and functions	abdominal, elbow, pelvic, neck, shoulder, leg, hip, lump, knee, period, foot, chest, arm, back, side
Medical terminology of pain management	gate, (pain) killer, control, relief, management, level, chart, button, clinic
Physical actions	reduce, ease, cause, open (gate), manage, make, cope, give, stop, start, eat, keep, get, help, take, come, go
Mental actions	interpret, thought, believe, learn, explain, realize, see, know, want
Sensory actions	feeling, feel, suffer
Quantifiers	lot, most, many, much, little
Time references	sometimes, never ache, wall
People	psychologist, nurse
Others	experience, ache, wall

Table D10.3 Semantic domains in the men's corpus (Adapted from Jaworska and Ryan 2018: 111)

Semantic Category	*Collocations*
Sensory qualities	chronic, big, background
Affective qualities	excruciating, bad, horrendous
Evaluative qualities	intensity, severe
Intensifiers	absolutely
Body parts and functions	joint, muscle, toe, stomach, leg, foot, back, (groin) area
Medical terminology of pain management	(pain) killer, control, management, relief, level
Physical actions	increase, ease, cause, call, use, get, give
Mental actions	imagine, want
Sensory actions	feel, suffer
Quantifiers	lot, much, more
Time references	sometimes, night, minute
People	
Others	bed

words, evaluative words, words for body parts and functions, medical terminology and words about pain management, words related to physical actions, mental actions, sensory actions, as well as words referring to the temporal dimensions of pain and to people associated with pain treatment or management.

Since the women talked more about pain, it is not surprising that the number of collocates in these different domains was greater in the women's corpus. This suggests that women in this study had a larger communicative repertoire for talking about pain than the men did. While both men and women used emotional words in relation to pain, women referred to a wider range of sensations from 'boring' to 'terrible,' whereas the men tended to use only three strong words: 'excruciating,' 'bad,' and 'horrendous,' all of which fall into a narrow range of (intense) experience.

Another interesting difference was the number of collocates associated with cognitive activity in the women's corpus, such as 'interpret,' 'believe,' 'learn,' 'explain,' 'realize,' and 'know.' This suggests that the women may have considered pain more of a psychological struggle or a learning process. The following excerpt from one of the women's narratives illustrates this orientation towards pain:

> Learning to recognise my pain, instead of feeling the pain when it was excruciating, learning to recognise the slight signal that was going to say you're going to be in pain in an hour or two's time, so slow down and that will decrease the pain.
>
> (Jaworska and Ryan 2018: 112)

This finding suggests that the women in this study were more likely to perceive pain as something one must cope and live with rather than something that needs to be reduced or eliminated. This inference is further supported by the presence in their talk of words associated with people who could assist with this process of coping (*nurse*, *psychologist*), while these words did not occur in the men's corpus.

In summary, Jaworska and Ryan's corpus analysis found a number of key differences between the women's corpus and the men's corpus. In the women's corpus they found both more talk about pain and more diverse collocations associated with it, with women's descriptions of pain often being very specific and including exact references to many body parts. The fact that there were more collocates associated with physical, cognitive and psychological actions related to pain also suggests that the women in the study coped with and managed their pain in a greater variety of ways. In contrast, not only were there fewer references to pain in the men's corpus, but the men's repertoire for talking about pain was much smaller. The most frequent words associated with pain in the men's corpus were strong emotional words such as 'excruciating,' 'horrendous' and 'bad,' which were absent in the collocation list for the women's corpus. This confirms the findings of other studies on pain and masculinity that have shown that many men would rather keep silent about pain—in order to protect their 'masculine' image—and don't talk about it until it becomes very intense. A closer look at the text extracts also suggests that pain in the men's narratives was sometimes associated with feelings of vulnerability and helplessness. One reason for this might be that experiences of pain threaten some men's traditional ideas about what it means to be a man.

This study demonstrates how a corpus-assisted analysis of a large collection of illness narratives can add to our understanding of how men and women talk about pain. A quantitative analysis of the collocations associated with the word 'pain' allowed the researchers to identify patterns that might not have been so obvious using more traditional methods of discourse analysis. Understanding how men and women talk about pain differently can help health professionals respond more effectively to people's reports of pain and perhaps also reduce some of the gender biases that affect how different kinds of people are treated for pain. The researchers end, however, by cautioning us about the limitation of studies that treat gender as a binary and don't take into account how other social categories such as ethnicity, economic status, and age *intersect* with gender.

Project ideas

1. Construct a corpus of texts from an online forum where people are talking about a particular problem or issue. Perform a collocation analysis of words related to this problem or issue and use the findings from that analysis to inform a closer analysis of selected texts from your corpus using some of the other methods of discourse analysis you learned about in this book.
2. Choose a word or phrase that people from different groups use differently (such as 'woke' or 'fake news'). Construct two corpora from two different news sources that are ideologically aligned with these different groups, and, using corpus tools, try to discover some of the differences in the way the word or phrase is used in the two different corpora.

WHAT TO READ NEXT

Strand 1: What is discourse?

There are many good overviews of discourse analysis including by Brown and Yule (1983), Carter (1997), Johnstone (2018), Paltridge (2006), and Widdowson (2007). Good edited collections are by Schiffrin *et al.* (2004), Bhatia *et al.* (2007), Hyland, Paltridge, and Wong (2021), and Handford and Gee (2023). Jaworski and Coupland (2006) provide a fine compilation of key readings. For an elaboration of the three approaches to discourse, see Schiffrin (1994). For more on 'capital D Discourses,' see Gee (2010). Classic books and articles on discourse analysis that you should read include Harris (1952) and Widdowson (2004).

Strand 2: Texts and texture

The classic book on cohesion is Halliday and Hasan (1976). For a thorough treatment of cohesion and other aspects of texture, see Martin (1992). Stoddard (1991) is also a good introduction. Eggins (1994) provides a more general overview of systemic functional linguistics. A classic compilation of papers on coherence in discourse is Tannen (1984). Another important work on the structure and comprehension of narrative are Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Kintsch (1977). Carrell (1984) discusses the effects of schema on second-language readers. Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) provide another perspective on discourse coherence. Liu and O'Halloran (2009) discuss cohesion from a multimodal perspective.

Strand 3: Texts and their social functions

Apart from Bhatia (1993) and Swales (1990), Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) is a good introduction to genre analysis. Johns (1997) and Swales (2004) focus more on academic genres. Bhatia (2004) gives a more detailed treatment of the field of genre analysis, and Bhatia (2017) discusses critical genre analysis. See Christie and Martin (1997) for a systemic functional view of genre. Bateman (2008) takes a multimodal approach to genre analysis. A more detailed analysis of 'It Gets Better' videos can be found in Jones (2015). Vasquez (2014) gives a thorough analysis of the genre of online reviews. For a perspective on YouTube genres, see Simonsen (2011), and for a genre analysis of internet memes, see Wiggins and Bowers (2015).

Strand 4: Discourse and ideology

The Routledge English Language Introduction which focuses most on discourse and ideology is Simpson and Mayr's (2009) *Language and Power: A resource book for students*. A Routledge English Language Introduction which offers more information on aspects of grammar covered in this strand is Jackson's (2002) *Grammar and Vocabulary: A resource book for students*. Hodge and Kress (1988) and Fairclough (1992) provide classic works in the critical analysis of discourse. Good collections of papers on critical discourse analysis are by Fairclough (1995) and Wodak and Meyer (2001). Fairclough (2003) gives an excellent practical introduction to the critical analysis of texts, and van Leeuwen (2008) provides a more practice-based approach to critical discourse analysis. Silverstein (2003) presents a rather dense treatment of indexical orders. A more readable explanation can be found in Johnstone et al. (2006). Blommaert (2005, 2010) are excellent introductions to critical discourse analysis from a sociolinguistic perspective. Jones (2017) presents a more detailed analysis of surveillance signs.

Strand 5: Spoken discourse

A good overview of different approaches to spoken discourse is by Jones (2016). The Routledge English Language Introduction which focuses most on spoken discourse is Cutting's (2007) *Pragmatics and Discourse: A resource book for students*. Coulthard (1992) is a classic edited collection on the analysis of spoken language. Austin (1976) is a classic, and Austin's speech act theory was further developed by Searle (1966). Good introductions to pragmatics include Mey (2001) and Verschueren (1999), and good introductions to conversation analysis include Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008), Schegloff (2007), and ten Have (2007). The lectures of Harvey Sacks are collected in Sacks (1992). Drew and Heritage (1993) deal with talk in institutional settings.

Strand 6: Strategic interaction

The classic work on face strategies is Brown and Levinson (1987). A more recent book on face and politeness is Watts (2003). For more information on framing in interaction see Tannen (1993). Tannen (2005) provides a good overview of conversational strategies. An excellent collection on discourse and identity from an interactional sociolinguistic perspective is De Fina *et al.* (2006). A collection dealing with speech styles and social languages is by Auer (2007). For more on positioning theory see Davies and Harré (1990) and Harré and van Langenhove (1999). A good introduction to pragmatics online is Yus (2011).

Strand 7: Context, culture, and communication

Duranti and Goodwin's (1992) edited collection provides multiple perspectives on the problem of context. Van Dijk (2008) examines context from a sociocognitive perspective. A very accessible introduction to culture and conversation is by Agar (1994).

Bauman and Sherzer (1989) present an overview of the principles and practices associated with the ethnography of communication, and Philipsen (1975) is a good example of an application of this method. For more information on ethnographic research methods see Agar (1996) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1995). Tusting (2019) is a good edited collection on linguistic ethnography, and Blommaert and Dong (2009) is a good introduction to ethnographic fieldwork.

Strand 8: Mediated discourse analysis

Wertsch (1993) provides a good introduction to the socio-cultural theory on which mediated discourse analysis is based. The seminal texts on mediated discourse analysis and nexus analysis are Scollon (2001) and Scollon and Scollon (2004). Scollon (2008) provides a good introduction to discourse itineraries. Norris and Jones (2005) is a collection which shows the wide range of contexts to which mediated discourse analysis can be applied. It also contains a clear explanation of the principles and terminology used in MDA.

Strand 9: Multimodal discourse analysis

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) is a good theoretical introduction to multimodal discourse analysis, and Jewitt, Bezemer, and O'Halloran (2016) presents a good overview of different approaches. O'Halloran (2004) and Royce and Bowcher (2006) are good collections of studies from a systemic functional perspective. The papers in Jewitt (2014) present a more varied range of perspectives. Machin (2007) and Machin and Mayr (2012) take a critical approach to multimodality, and Forceville and Urios-Aparisi (2009) present an approach informed by cognitive linguistics. For more information on the transcription of multimodal data, see Baldry and Thibault (2005) and Norris (2004).

Strand 10: Corpus-assisted discourse analysis

The Routledge resource book which focuses on corpus-based analysis is McEnery and Xiao's (2006) *Corpus-based Language Studies: An advanced resource book*. Stubbs (1996) is a well-known introductory text for corpus-based linguistics. Other good introductions are Biber *et al.* (1998) and Hunston (2002). Baker (2006) presents a clear overview of using corpora in discourse analysis. A classic application of corpus-based methods to critical discourse analysis is Orpin (2005).

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AUTHOR INDEX

GLOSSARIAL INDEX