DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Session 1: Concept of discourse and text

The Notion of Discourse

In the 1970s, attempts were made to assign slightly different meanings to the terms text and discourse. For instance, discourse was seen as ‘text + situation’ _whence ‘text = discourse minus situation’. For further explanation, according to Widdowson (1979b), text refers to textual cohesion, recognizable in surface lexis, grammar, and prepositional development. Discourse refers to discourse coherence which operates between underlying speech acts. So, it is about the distinction between surface cohesion between linguistic forms and proportions, and the underlying functional coherence which can operate in a given text or discourse.

The term discourse analysis can not be restricted to the description of language forms apart from its purpose or function in using the forms in human’s affairs; but it is used to know what the forms function in its use. For example,

A: “Are you free for lunch today?”
B: “I have to advise students all day”.

Talking about the form of the 1st sentence, it is a question, but the function or the purpose is an invitation. Moreover, the form of the 2nd sentence is a statement, while its function is a refusal.

Two terms to describe the function of language: (1) transactional, and (2) interactional. Transactional function of language is to represent or to reveal the message, while interactional function of language is to identify social relationship and individual attitude. So, language which is used to represent a fact of information is called transactional language; whereas, language used to maintain social relationship is called interactional language. Linguists, psycholinguists, and philosophers are interested in the study of transactional language, while sociolinguists are interested in the study of interactional language.

The function of expression considers the interlocutor’s background. Consider the two example below. The information in the second is pragmatically odd if it is spoken.

a). “I found an old bicycle lying on the ground. The chain was rusted and the tires were flat”.

b). “I found an old bicycle lying on the ground. A bicycle has a chain. The chain was rusted. A bicycle also has tires. The tires were flat”.

The speaker of that expression shares similar knowledge to the O2 that “a bicycle has a chain and tires”. This is not mentioned because O1 presupposes that O2 is not stupid and has already known that knowledge.

The Definition of Discourse

There are three ways to define discourse (Schiffrin, 1994: 23-42). The first, a classic definition of discourse deriving from the formalist’ idea (or using Hymn’s 1974, structuralists), that is discourse as “language above the sentence or above the clause”. This definition has a relation to structural analyses which focus on the way different units function in relation to each other. Structurally based analyses of discourse find constituents that have particular relationships with one another and that can occur in a restricted number of arrangements. Discourse is viewed as a level of structure higher than the sentence, or higher than another unit or text.

The second, a definition of discourse is based on functionalist view, that is “the study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use”. A definition of discourse as language use is consistent with functionalism in general: discourse is viewed as a system (a socially and culturally
organized way of speaking) through which particular functions are realized. A functionalist
definition of discourse leads analysts away from the structural basis of such regularities to focus,
instead, on the way patterns of talk are put to use for certain purposes in particular context and/or
how they result from the application of communicative strategies. Functional definitions of discourse
assume an interrelationship between language and context.

The third definition of discourse is utterances. This view says that discourse is “above”
larger than) other units of language; however, by saying that utterance (rather than sentence) is the
smaller unit of which discourse is comprised, we can suggest that discourse arises not as a collection
of decontextualized units of language structure, but as a collection of inherently contextualized unit
of language use. For many linguists, utterances are contextualized sentences, i.e. they are context
bound (as well as text bound).

Another definition of discourse (this is at the intersection of structure and function):
discourse is utterances. This view captures the idea that discourse is “above” other units of
language; however, … (see p. 39). Discourse is as a collection of inherently contextualized units of
language use. Utterances for many linguists, are context bound (as well text bound).

Exercises:
Determine what are the forms and the functions of the following.
1. A: “Say, there’s a good movie playing tonight”.
   B: “Actually, I have to study”.
2. A: (The class is about over and the students are tired) “Is there any question?”
   B: “Nothing!”
3. A: “Smith doesn’t seem to have a girlfriend these days”.
   B: “He has been paying a lot of visits to New York”.

Discourse analysis, as a study of language use beyond the sentence boundaries, has become
an established discipline. About the early 70-s it has developed into a variety of approaches
motivated by a wide range of interests and orientations. For examples:

In sociology, analysis of language, under the name of ethnography of communication,
provides insights into the structuring of communicative behaviour and its role in conduct of social
life.

In philosophy, speech act theory has motivated an interest in the formulation of rules of
language use as against rules of grammar.

In cognitive psychology, the study of discourse as schema theory, frame analysis, and
conceptual analysis in terms of scripts, has been motivated by the interest in how knowledge of the
world is acquired, organized, stored, represented and used by the human mind in the production
and understanding of discourse.

In literature, in the name of literary or linguistic stylistic, it provides an understand of how
literary writers achieve aesthetic value in their creative writing by describing, interpreting and
analysing literary stule.

In linguistics, it has been given several names, such as: text-linguistics, text analysis,
conversational analysis, rhetorical analysis, functional analysis, and clause-relational analysis.

The main object of all these studies has been to understand the structure and function of
language use to communicate meaning.

Parameters to distinguish the development of discourse analysis in linguistics:

1. Theoretical orientation
   On this scale, one could broadly identify: (1) discourse studies as an extension of grammatical
   formalism, with a focus on formal, and sometimes functional, aspects of language use, including
   semantics and pragmatics; (2) discourse analysis of institutionalized use of language in socio-
   cultural settings with a heavy emphasis on communication as social action.
2. General-specific scale
In the direction of generality we find discourse analysis of everyday conversation, analysis of written discourse in terms of descriptive, narrative, argumentative writing; whereas in the specific direction, we find analysis of research article introduction, legislative provision, doctor-patient consultation and counsel-witness examination as genres. We can also place register analysis of scientific and journalism texts.

3. Application

There are studies of discourse which have been motivated by an applied concern with language teaching, particularly for the teaching of ESP.

Other examples: applied discourse analysis in linguistics, especially on functional variation in written discourse; Earlier work on discourse analysis by Widdowson, register analysis by Halliday, analysis of doctor-patient consultation by Candlin and others, rhetorical-grammatical analysis of scientific discourse by Selinker, Trimble and others, genre analysis of research writing by Swales, and analysis of legislative provisions by Bhatia.

4. Surface-deep analysis

This is particularly significant in the context of applied discourse analysis which has developed from a surface-level formal analysis to a deeper functional analysis, with a corresponding development in language teaching, which marks a movement from form to function, usage to use in Widdowson’s term, grammar to discourse and communication in recent years.

Classification of Discourse

1. Oral discourse: the point of departure is the discourse situation
2. Written discourse

a.d. 1

There are 6 discourse situation (based on sociological analysis): 1. presentation, 2. message, 3. report, 4. public debate, 5. conversation, 6. interview. (This classification is done by Hugo Steger et. Al (1974) in Renkema, 1993:91-92). Oral discourse is mainly divided into 2: monologue and dialogue/ interview. Interview can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. Steger’s term to refer to symmetrical and asymmetrical is “rank”.

Early attempts at Discourse Analysis

According to Harries, the following 4 sentences have identical structures, in terms of equivalence classes (based on a distributional analysis).

1. The trees turn here about the middle of autumn
2. The trees turn here about the end of October
3. The first frost comes after the middle of autumn
4. We start heating after the end of October

Analysis:

The equivalence classes: class X followed by class Y
Class X has patterns: S - P while class Y has patterns: PP (Prep.+NP)

As Harries suggested, a distributional analysis can be successfully applied to a whole text to discover structuring above the rank of sentence. He works within the Bloomfieldian tradition: producing a formal method for the analysis of connected speech or writing which does not depend on the analyst's knowledge of the particular meaning of each morpheme.

Example of discourse analysis by Mitchell as in "Buying and Selling in Cyrenaica". He presents a semantically motivated analysis. He works in Firthian tradition: specifying the relevant participants and elements of situation in detail and dividing the buying-selling process into stages purely on content criteria. (Coulthard:4-5).

Context in Language Use

There are two types of context in language use: (1) verbal/linguistic/sentential context and (2) non-verbal/non-linguistic/non-sentential context. The first refers to linguistic elements which tighten the ideas to form a unified text, while the latter refers to anything except the linguistic elements, which has relation to the understanding the language use.
Session 2: Cohesion and coherence (the verbal context)

Preview: text and discourse; context (:linguistic and non-linguistic context).

Cohesion is connection which exists between elements in the text.
Coherence is connection which is brought about by something outside the text.
It is the familiar and expected relationships in experience which we use to connect the meanings of utterances, even when those connections are not explicitly made.

Coherence in discourse is developed in many ways, among others are using our knowledge of scripts, speech event, and rhetorical organization; and maintain the topic, the result is usually coherent text_text that “stick together” as a unit.

Five cohesions are: 1) substitution, 2) ellipsis, 3) reference, 4) conjunction, and 5) lexical cohesion

1. Substitution is the replacement of a word (group) or sentence segment by a ‘dummy’ word. There are three types of substitution: (a) of a noun, (b) of a verb, and substitution of a clause. The followings are the examples.
   a. These biscuits are stale. Get some fresh ones.
   b. A: Have you called the doctor?
      B: I haven’t done it yet, but I will do it.
      A: Though actually, I think you should do it.
   c. A: Are they still arguing in there?
      B: No, it just seems so.

2. Ellipsis is the omission of a word or part of a sentence. It is related to substitution. The difference lies in that ellipsis is described as ‘substitution by zero’.
   a. These biscuits are stale. Those are fresh.
   b. He participated in the debate, but you didn’t.
   c. Who wants to go shopping? You?

3. Reference is the act of referring to a preceding or following element. Reference deals with a semantic relationship.
   a. I see John is here. He hasn’t changed a bit.
   b. She certainly has changed. No, behind John. I mean Karin.
   c. A man crossed the street. Nobody saw what happened. Suddenly the man was lying there and calling for help.
   d. We grew up in the 1960s. We were idealistic then.

4. Conjunction is a relationship which indicates how the subsequent sentence or clause should be linked to the preceding or the following (parts of the) sentence. The relationship can be hypotactic (combining a main clause with a subclause or phrase) or paratactic (combining two main clauses).
   a. Besides being mean, he is also hateful.
   b. He no longer goes to school and is planning to look for a job.
   c. He is not going to school today because he is sick.
   d. Mary got married to John last year and now she’s pregnant.
   e. After the car had been repaired, we were able to continue our journey.
   f. The car was repaired. Afterwards we were able to continue our journey.

5. Lexical cohesion deals with connections based on the words used but not deal with grammatical and semantic connections. There are two types of lexical cohesion: reiteration and collocation.

   There five types of reiteration: (1) repetition, (2) synonymy, (3) hyponymy, (4) metonymy, and (5) antonymy. The followings are the examples.
   Reiteration types:
1) **repetition** e.g. A conference will be held on national environmental policy. At this conference the issue of salination will play an important role.

2) **synonymy** e.g. A conference will be held on national environmental policy. This environmental symposium will be primarily a conference dealing with water.

3) **hyponymy** e.g. We were in town today shopping for furniture. We saw a lovely table.

4) **metonymy** e.g. At its six-month checkup, the brakes had to be repaired. In general, however, the car was in good condition.

5) **antonymy** e.g. The old movies just don’t do it any more. The new ones are more appealing.

Collocation deals with the relationship between words on the basis of the fact that these often occur in the same surroundings. Some examples are “sheep” and “wool”, “congress” and “politician”, “college” and “study”. For example,

a. Red Cross helicopters were in the air continuously. The blood bank will soon be desperately in need of donors.

b. The hedgehog scurried across the road. Its speed surprised me.

**Exercise:** Analyze the following texts.

**Text 1:** Do you know that 1 out of every 14 cars in the world is a Chevrolet… Do you want to own one of it? When 1 in every 14 cars on the road is yours, you know that you are the world’s favorite car. And it doesn’t take much to know why. Think of an innovation in the automobile industry and, changes are, Chevrolet has something to do with it. It is this fact that probably makes the world want Chevy bow-tie on their car’s grille. CHEVROLET CAPTIVA

**Text 2.** The new child causes jealousy

He seemed a silent, patient child, perhaps because he was used to bad treatment. He accepted Hindley’s beatings without crying once. If I pinched him, he would just breathe deeply and open his eyes, as if he had hurt himself by accident. Hindley’s behaviour made old Mr Earnshaw very angry. When he discovered his son hurting Heathcliff, he always sympathized with Heathcliff and punished Hindley. It is true that Hindley was usually to blame. The master loved this stranger far more than he loved his own daughter, who was too naughty and mischievous to be a favorite.

**Text 3.** The types of locust

Locusts inhabit the warmer parts of the world. The three most studied species are the desert locust, the migratory locust, and the red locust. The desert locust occurs in northern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and eastwards as far as India. The migratory locust has an even wider distribution: it lives in a huge area of the world including southern Europe, and Australia. The red locust, however, is confined to central and southern Africa. These three species of locusts have two phases, in which not only their behaviour differs, but their physical appearance does well. The two phases are the solitarious phase, when the locusts live quietly and as individuals in one location in the manner of ordinary grasshoppers, and the gregarious phase, when the locusts gather together in vast swarms and migrate to new territory which may be hundreds of kilometers away.

**Text 4:** Little Joe is walking down a country lane on a dark night to post a letter to his sweetheart. Joe is a city boy, born and bred, and this is his first summer in the country. Twig-snaps and rustlings in the brush along the roadside have frightened him almost to the point where he will turn heel and retreat to the safety of his summer camp. To bolster his morale, so as to make sure that he completes his mission, he starts talking to himself. “It’s nothing but a squirrel, or at worst a rat. He is frightened and running away from me…”

**Text 5:** William is afraid that he will forget his eleven o’clock appointment with the dentist. He says to his roommate. “Let me know when it is a quarter to eleven.”

**Session 3: Deixis**

1. **Person Deixis**
   Person deixis refers to grammatical markers of participant roles in a speech event. First person is the speaker’s reference to self; second person is the speaker’s reference to addressee(s), and third person is reference to others who are neither speaker nor addressee.
   e.g.: (1) I-I-I was talking to her about the fact that + there isn’t any particular reason why you should stop loving people we’re no longer with …
   (2) According to the organization of the “Turning Point” essay in the composition and handouts, you must have an introduction first and three different turning points in your life. Since the writer only discusses one turning point, I don’t know whether this is acceptable or not. In spite of this, the writer has made his purpose of the story clear … . There are some times my colleague can apply to improve this article. Try to express the same notion by different words and sentence structures. You can use them one way or the other. Well, that’s all.

In this, the shifting deictic markers lead to confusion, because the referent being pointed to each time should be the same person but does not appear to be.

2. **Spatial Deixis**
   Spatial, or place, deixis refers to how languages show the relationship between space and the location of the participants in the discourse.
   e.g.: The door of Henry’s lunchroom opened and two men came in.
   The door of Henry’s lunchroom opened and two men went in.

Decide whether the action is viewed from inside or outside the lunchroom in each case, and decide who opens the door.

3. **Temporal Deixis**
   Temporal, or time, deixis refers to time relative to the time of speaking. English, for example, uses “now” vs. “then”, “yesterday”, “today”, and “tomorrow”.

4. **Discourse Deixis**
   Discourse deixis has to do with keeping track of reference in the unfolding discourse. We may use phrases such as “In the following chapter” or pointers such as “this/that” to refer to large chunks of the discourse that are located within the discourse itself.
   e.g.: For two years I will have to interact with a new system, being part of it. This is a dilemma: on one side, I have to be prepared for a different life; on the, I am not inclined to forget all values and tastes that I had before. The trade-off between those two opposite tendencies showed me that, at least, my home should reflect my personality.

Why does the writer use those instead of these?

5. **Social deixis**
   Social deixis is used to code social relationships between speakers and addressee or audience. Included in this category are honorifics, titles of address, vocatives, and pronouns. There are two kinds of social deixis: relational and absolute.

‘I am in last place’ is often used to indicate that the speaker is in last place. But this sentence is also used on a number of occasions to indicate that somebody else is in last place. I am watching a race and the person upon whom I have bet, No.10, drops to the last place. ‘I am in last place!’ I exclaim in anguish to my companion. My companion knows perfectly well what I mean—that the person upon whom I have bet is in last place. Indeed, she replies in kind, disagreeing with my statement. ‘No you aren’t! Look!’ she exclaims, pointing at No.10, ‘You are passing No.3!’

- Can you think of any other contexts where ‘I’ is not to be literally interpreted as ‘the person who is speaking’?
- Do examples such as these mean that we need a new definition of the meaning of the word ‘I’ in English? If yes, what would have to be in that definition? If no, how would you explain this type of ‘extra’ usage?

… you might point at a picture of John Ashberry to identify his most recent book, using the demonstrative that, with no restriction on the things you could say about it:

(94) That is in all the bookstores (on the top shelf, temporarily out of stock).

But while John Ashberry might easily say of himself ‘I am in all the bookstores,’ it would be odd for him to say ‘I am on the top shelf’ or ‘I am temporarily out of stock,’ unless it could be supposed that the fact that an author’s book was on the top shelf or was temporarily out of stock carried some noteworthy implications for him.

Following on from these examples, could you point to an empty space on the bookshelf and and ask the owner of the bookstore, ‘Is that out of stock?’? If yes, do we have to reformulate the definition of deixis (i.e. ‘pointing via language’) when there’s nothing being pointed to?

Why do you think the idea of ‘some noteworthy implications’ is mentioned in this text? Does identifying the reference of deitic expressions depend on information about a person’s thoughts and feelings? If yes, can you think of other examples (involving other deictic forms)?

How does the example with ‘I’ in this text fit in with your analysis of ‘I’ in Text 4?


A woman was telling me why a long-term relationship had ended. She recounted a recurrent and pivotal conversation. She and the man she lived with had agreed that they would both be free, but they would not do anything to hurt each other. When the man began to sleep with other women, she protested, and he was incensed at her protest. Their conversation went like this:

SHE: How can you do this when you know it’s hurting me?
HE: How can you try to limit my freedom?
SHE: But it makes me feel awful.
HE: You are trying to manipulate me.

On one level, this is simply an example of a clash of wills: What he wanted conflicted with what she wanted. But in a fundamental way, it reflects the difference in focus I have been describing. In arguing for his point of view, the key issue for this man was his independence, his freedom of action. The key issue for the woman was their interdependence—how what he did made her feel. He interpreted her insistence on their interdependence as ‘manipulation’: She was using her feelings to control his behavior.

Do you agree with the analysis presented here? Are there other implicatures possible from what is said in the dialog?

We are used to thinking that the term ‘cross-cultural’ will apply to people from different countries. Is it appropriate to think of the interactions between males and females within one country (sharing a lot of one culture) as a site for the study of cross-cultural pragmatics? What kinds of differences might be worthy of investigation?

Session 3: The non-verbal context

The non-verbal or the non-linguistic contexts include: the type of communicative event (for example, joke, story, lecture, greeting, conversation, etc.); the topic; the purpose of the event; the setting, including location, time of day, season of year and physical aspects of the situation (for
example, size of room, arrangement of furniture); the participants and the relationships between them; and the **background knowledge** and assumption underlying the communicative event.

To characterize the knowledge that people have of the structure of stereotypic event sequences, Schank uses the term **script** to represent this knowledge. According to Schank and Abelson (1977), the structure of a script includes a set of actions in temporal sequence to meet a goal. For example, a restaurant script would include an ordering scene, an eating scene, and a paying scene. The script also contains roles. In the grocery shopping script the roles would be played by the customer and important others (e.g., the cashier, the baggers, and so on). Using the term “script”, Nunan calls it as **information structure** (Nunan, 1993: 32). It refers to ways in which information is organized within and beyond the sentence. The way is affected by the pattern of the sentences within the text as a whole.

In short, the knowledge discussed above is background knowledge or schemata of the interpreter of a discourse. That is meant by background knowledge is a pre-existing knowledge structure for interpreting event sequences, while a script is a pre-existing knowledge structure involving event sequence. Moreover, that is meant by cultural schemata is a pre-existing knowledge structure based on experience in a particular culture.

**Exercise:**
1. Use your background knowledge, interpret the following text to find what is it about.

   The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities, that is the next step, otherwise you are pretty well set.

   It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run this may not seem important, but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well.

   At first the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life. It is difficult to foresee any end to the necessity for this task in the immediate future, but then one never can tell.

   After the procedure is completed, one arranges the materials into different groups again. Then they can be put into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated. However, that is part of life.

2. List as many acts as you can think of that might occur: in a visit to the dentist script, in the grocery shopping script, and in the classroom script.

**Session 4: Approaches to Discourse Analysis**

**a. Conversation analysis**

**Aspects in conversation analysis are:**

1. floor: the current right to speak in a conversation
2. turn: the opportunity to speak at the same point during a conversation
3. turn-taking: the change of speaker during conversation
4. local management system: a metaphor for describing the conversation for organizing the right to speak in conversation
5. Transition Relevance Place (TRP): a possible change of speaker point in an interaction.

   Each potential speaker is expected to wait until the current speaker reaches a TRP. The most obvious markers of a TRP are the end of a structural unit (a phrase or clause) and
pause. Normally, those who wish to get the floor will wait for a possible TRP before jumping in.

6. overlap: more than one speaker talking at the same time in conversation
7. pauses
8. backchannels: vocal indications of attention, e.g.: uh-huh, hm. Within an extended turn; however, speakers still expect their conversational partners to indicate that they are listening. Common ways of doing this: head nods, smiles, and other facial expressions and gestures.
9. conversational style: particular way of participating in conversation
10. high involvement style: an active, fast-paced, overlapping way of taking part in conversation
11. high considerateness style: a non-interrupting, non-imposing way of taking part in conversation.
12. adjacency pairs: a sequence of two utterances by different speakers in conversation. The second is a response to the first, e.g. question-answer.
13. insertion sequence: a two part sequence that comes between the first and the second parts of another sequence in conversation.
14. preference structure: a pattern in which one type of utterance will be more typically found in response to another in a conversational sequence, e.g. an acceptance will more typically follow an invitation than a refusal.

(Yule, 1996; Mey, 1993; Searle, 1974)

Exercises:

T: The questions will be on different subjects, so, er, well, one will be about, er, well, some of the questions will be about politics, and some of them will be about, er...what?
S: History.
T: History. Yes, politics and history and, um, and...?
S: Grammar.
T: Grammar’s good, yes ... but the grammar questions were too easy.
S: No.
S: Yes, ha, like before.
S: You can see ... [inaudible]
T: Why? The hardest grammar question I could think up – the hardest one, I wasn’t even sure about the answer, and you got it.
S: Yes.
T: Really! I’m going to have to go to a professor and ask him to make questions for this class. Grammar questions that Azzam can’t answer.
[laughter]
Anyway, that’s um. Thursday ... yeah, Thursday. Ah. But today, er, we’re going to do something different ...
S: ...yes ...
T: ... today, er, we’re going to do something where we, er, listen to a conversation – er, in fact, we’re not going to listen to one conversation. How many conversations’re we going to listen to?
S: Three?
(Nunan: 1989).

Consider the following adjacency pair:

A: How much was it? - QUESTION
B: Pound fifty - ANSWER
Adjacency pair can be separated by a number of intervening utterances which make up what is known as an **insertion sequence**.

A: How much was it?
B: Oh, you don’t really want to know, do you?
A: Oh, tell me.
A: Wasn’t cheap.
A: was it a pound?
B: Pound fifty.

**Theme** is a formal grammatical category which refers to the initial element in a clause. It is the element around which the writer wishes to give prominence. Everything that follows the theme is known as the **rheme**. The sample below has the same information but thematically different.

1. The cat ate the rat.
2. The rat was eaten by the cat.

In the first sentence the theme is *The cat* while in the second sentence, it is *the fate of the rat* that is of primary interest.

Moreover, The importance of theme/rheme structuring is illustrated in the following extracts.

1. All children, except one strange little boy, grow up one day. Wendy, knew she would have to grow up when she was just two years old. She was playing in the garden and picked a flower for her mother. Mrs. Darling saw her daughter running towards her and smiled because Wendy looked so enchanting. ‘Oh why can’t you remain like this for ever!’ she cried. (J.M.Barrie *Peter Pan*).

2. One day, all children, except one strange little boy, grow up. It was Wendy who knew she would have to grow up when she was only two years old. What happened was that she was in the garden playing, and a flower was picked by her for her mother. Enchanting, Wendy looked, and smiled, her mother did, because Wendy looked so enchanting running towards her. ‘Remain like this forever, why can’t you?’ she cried.

For many years, the term ‘genre’ has been used to refer to different styles of literary discourse such as sonnets, tragedies, and romances. It highlights the fact that different types of discourse can be identified by their overall shape or generic structure. However, currently, the term ‘genre’ is used by functional linguists to refer to different types of communicative events (Martin: 1984; Swales: 1990).

They argue that language exists to fulfill certain functions and that these functions will determine the overall shape or ‘generic’ structure of the discourse.

According to functional linguists, a recount consists of a sequence of events which are initiated by an introduction and orientation, and which end with a comment and conclusion. Grammatically, recounts are characterized by the simple past tense, and the use of specific reference to people and places.

For example:

A: What did you do last night?
B: Well, Mum and Dad went out so we went to Marg’s to sleep, and Sarah wouldn’t go to sleep, and she wanted to ring Mum, and Marg said she couldn’t, and so she cried, and so Marg combed her hair, and then she went to sleep. She was really naughty ...
A: What time did she go to sleep?
B: Mmm-‘bout one o’clock.
b. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of the conditions of human language uses as these are determined by the context of society. Context can be of two: societal and social. The societal context is primarily determined by society’s institution (as in macropragmatis), while social context is primarily created in interaction (as in micropragmatic, i.e. the ethnography of speaking).

Terms to Cover in Pragmatics

1. Cooperation and Implicature

In conversation, speakers and listeners are assumed to cooperate each other. However, sometimes a speaker intends more than is said. Since speakers express something meaninglessly in which one word is defined as itself, such as ‘business is business’, it is called tautology. Meanwhile, since there is an additional unstated meaning that has to be assumed in order to maintain the cooperative principle, such as if some one says ‘The President is a mourse’, here it is called implicature, or conversational implicature.

(1) The cooperative principle

The term ‘Cooperative Principle’ is introduced by Grice (1975); it is a basic assumption in conversation that each participant will attempt to contribute appropriately, at the required time, to the current exchange of talk. However, a problem may arise because speakers do not always communicate what they set out to, or what they think they do; instead, as Leech states:”speakers ‘often’ mean more than they say” (1983: 9).

There are four maxims in Cooperative Principle: quantity, quality, relation, and manner (Grice: 1975 in Yule, 1996: 37).

(a) The Maxim of Quantity
- Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

(b) The Maxim of Quality
Try to make your contribution one that is true.
-Do not say what you believe to be false.
-Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

(c) The Maxim of Relation
Be relevant.

(d) The Maxim of Manner
Be perspicuous (easy to understand or clear)
- Avoid obscurity of expression.
- Avoid ambiguity.
- Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- Be orderly.

(2) Implicature (conversational and conventional)

For example:
Charlene: I hope you brought the bread and the cheese
Dexter: Ah, I brought the bread.
Or: Charlene: b & c?
Dexter: b (+> NOT c)

Dexter intends that she infers that what is not mentioned was not brought. In this case, Dexter has conveyed more than he said via a conversational implicature.

The implicatures we have considered have been situated within conversation, with inferences being made by people who hear the utterances and attempt to maintain the assumption of cooperative interaction. The properties of conversational implicatures can be calculated, suspended, cancelled, and reinforced.

For example:
1. You’ve won at least five dollars!
2. You’ve won five dollars, in fact, you’ve won ten!
3. You’ve won five dollars, that’s four more than one!

As in the examples above, it is quite easy for a speaker to suspend the implicature (+>only) using the expression ‘at least’ (1), or to cancel the implicature by adding further information, often following the expression ‘in fact’ (2), or to reinforce the implicature with additional information, as in (3).

Such properties of conversational implicatures can not appear in conventional implicatures. If conversational implicatures are based on cooperative principle; in turn, conventional implicatures are not. They don’t have to occur in conversation, and they don’t depend on special contexts for their interpretation. On the other hand, **conventional implicatures** are associated with specific words and result in additional conveyed meanings when those words are used.

For example: *Mary suggested black, but I chose white.*
Or: p & q (=> p is in contrast to q).
The fact that ‘Mary suggested black’ (=p_ is contrasted, via the conventional implicature of ‘but’, with my choosing white (=q). The interpretation of any utterance of the type p but q will be based on the conjunction but.

2. **Speech acts and events**

Speech act is an action performed by the use of an utterance to communicate, while speech event is a set of circumstances in which people interact in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome. In many ways, it is the nature of speech events that determines the interpretations of an utterance as performing a particular speech act.

Dealing with speech act, the action performed by producing an utterance will consist of three related acts; they are: (1) **locutionary act**, which is the basic act of utterance, or producing a meaningful linguistic expression; (2) **illocutionary act**, an act of utterance with some kind of function in mind; and (3) **perlocutionary act**, the consequence of recognizing illocutionary act.

The examples:
(1). I’ll see you later (=A)  
(2). [I predict that] A  
(3). [I promise you that] A  
(4). [I warn you that] A.

The same form or locutionary act as in (1) can count or function as a prediction (2), a promise (3), or a warning (4). The different analyses of (2-4) of the utterance (1) represent different illocutionary forces.

Research on the relationship between form and function has been greatly influenced by speech act theory. In speech act theory, language is seen as a form of acting. For example of speech act performance: apologizing, promising, ordering, etc. Speech act theory has had a strong influence on the field of discourse studies because this theory focused on the questions of what people doing when they use language.

Contribution of speech act theory in the study of discourse:

1. It can provide insights into requirements which the production of form (the locution) must meet to ensure that the illocution takes place.
2. It can serve as a framework for indicating what is required in order to determine the relationship between form and function, between locution and illocution. For example, "Can you stop by in a minute?"

This interrogative sentence is generally interpreted as a request or it has the illocutionary intent of a request.

**-IFIDs (the Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices)**

The most obvious device for indicating the illocutionary force is by indicating (1) the performative verbs (Vp), such as: promise, warn, predict, ask, tell, etc.; (2) word order, (3) stress, and(4) intonation, as in the following examples:
You’re going! [I tell you Y-G]
You’re going? [I request confirmation about Y-G]
Are you going? [I ask you if Y-G]

- **Felicity conditions**
  It is the appropriate conditions for a speech act to be recognized as intended.
  1. general condition
  2. content condition
  3. preparatory condition
  4. sincerity condition
  5. essential condition

- **Speech act classification (Searle)**
  (1) Declaration: the speaker changes the world via words.
  e.g. -Priest: I now pronounce you husband and wife -Referee: You’re out!
  (2) Representatives: state what the speaker believes to be the case or not. It is the statements of fact, assertion, conclusion, and descriptions.
  e.g. -The earth is flat -Chomsky didn’t write about peanuts.
  In this case, the speaker makes words fit the world (of belief)
  (3) Expressives: state what the speaker feels (pleasure, pain, like, dislike, joy, sorrow, etc).
  e.g. -I’m really sorry! -Congratulation!
  In this case, the speaker makes words fit the world (of feeling)
  (4) Directives: the speaker uses to get someone else to do something (: command, order, request, suggestion, etc.)
  e.g. -Could you lend me a pen, please? -Don’t touch that.
  In this case, the speaker attempts to make the world fit the words (via hearers).
  (5) Commissives: the speakers use to commit themselves to some future actions (promise, threat, refusal, pledges, etc.)
  e.g. -I’ll be back -I’m going to get it right next time.
  In this case, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words (via the speaker).

That is meant by speech event is a set of circumstances in which people interact in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome. It may include an obvious central speech act, such ‘I don’t really like this’, as in a speech event of ‘complaining’. But it will also include other utterances leading up to and subsequently reacting to that central action. In most cases, a ‘request’ is not made by means of a single speech act suddenly uttered. Requesting is typically a speech event. (see the example on p. 57).

- **Direct and indirect speech acts**

3. **Politeness and Interaction**
   (1) Politeness
   (2) Face wants
   (3) Negative and positive face
   (4) Self and other: say nothing
   (5) Say something: off and on record
   (6) Positive and negative politeness
   (7) Strategies

Read the following texts and try to identify the basis for your decision that they are coherent.

1. A: That’s the telephone.
   B: I’m in the bath.
   A: OK.
2. (A is addressing her husband who is clearing out a garden shed).
   A: Are you wearing gloves?
   B: No.
   A: What about the spiders?
   B: They’re not wearing gloves either.
3. A: There’s no answer at the front door. Shall I try the back?
   B: I shouldn’t, if I were you. There’s a Rhodesian ridgeback in the garden.
4. A: I have two tickets to the theatre tonight.
   B: My examination is tomorrow.
   C: Pity.
5. Context: (On a wintry day, the speaker reaches for a cup of tea, believing that it has been freshly made, takes a sip), and produces the utterance:
   “This tea is really cold!”
   What is the function of the utterance above?
6. Determine what are the forms and the functions of the following.
   A: “Say, there’s a good movie playing tonight”.
   B: “Actually, I have to study”.
7. Context: (The class is almost over while the students seem tired and bored)
   A: “Is there any question?”
   B: “Nothing!”
8. A: “Smith doesn’t seem to have a girlfriend these days”.
   B: “He has been paying a lot of visits to New York”.
9. A: Do you smoke?
   B: Well, if you’ve got a cigarette
10. In the following examples the word “run” has different meanings. Does the determination of the correct meaning have to do with cohesion or coherence?
    a). I’m going to wind up these old clocks I found in the attic, but I don’t know if they will run or not.
    b). A number of lesser-known candidates were promised government funding, but I don’t know if they will run or not.

Exercise:
1. Use your background knowledge, interpret the following text to find what is it about.
   The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities, that is the next step, otherwise you are pretty well set.
   It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run this may not seem important, but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well.
   At first the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life. It is difficult to foresee any end to the necessity for this task in the immediate future, but then one never can tell.
   After the procedure is completed, one arranges the materials into different groups again. Then they can be put into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated. However, that is part of life.
2. List as many acts as you can think of that might occur: in a visit to the dentist script, in the grocery shopping script, and in the classroom script.
3. (Situation: three friends are discussing a personal topic _ their reactions to a wedding reception at which vegetables rather than flowers were used to decorate the tables).

Analyze the following conversation by describing some aspects which occur within the conversation.

A: Actually I would not have chosen vegetables … for my wedding either … but they were interesting.
B: Did you LIKE them?
A: Mmmm I wouldn’t have picked them
B: I didn’t think they were::: (5.0)
A: I mean, I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t have requested them.
B: Besides which, what’re y’gonna do with five million chilis _five million green chilis?
A: ((laugh)) I wanna // go in there.
C: // Y’could have a chili bakeoff.
B: Yeah, right _ MY mother have a chili bakeoff ((loud laughter))
C: ((loud laughter)) Mrs. Lee’s Chili Bakeoff!
A: I wanna go into Silver Birches someday. Never been in there.
B: It’s kind of a near store.

4. T: The questions will be on different subjects, so, er, well, one will be about, er, well, some of the questions will be about politics, and some of them will be about, er...what?
S: History.
T: History. Yes, politics and history and, um, and...?
S: Grammar.
T: Grammar’s good, yes ... but the grammar questions were too easy.
S: No.
S: Yes, ha, like before.
S: You can see ... [inaudible]
T: Why? The hardest grammar question I could think up – the hardest one, I wasn’t even sure about the answer, and you got it.
S: Yes.
T: Really! I’m going to have to go to a professor and ask him to make questions for this class. Grammar questions that Azzam can’t answer. [laughter]
Anyway, that’s um. Thursday ... yeah, Thursday. Ah. But today, er, we’re going to do something different ...
S: ...yes ...
T: ... today, er, we’re going to do something where we, er, listen to a conversation – er, in fact, we’re not going to listen to one conversation. How many conversation’re we going to listen to?
Review: adjacency pairs

Two terms to describe the function of language: (1) transactional, and (2) interactional. Transactional function of language is to represent or to reveal the message, while interactional function of language is to identify social relationship and individual attitude. So, language which is used to represent a fact of information is called transactional language; whereas, language used to maintain social relationship is called interactional language. Linguists, psycholinguists, and philosophers are interested in the study of transactional language, while sociolinguists are interested in the study of interactional language.

One influential approach to the study of spoken discourse is that developed at the University of Birmingham, where research initially concerned itself with the structure of discourse in school classrooms (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975).

This is a part extract of data of spoken discourse in a classroom.

(T= teacher, S= any student who speaks).

T: Now then … I’ve got some things here, too. Hands up. What’s that, what is it?
S: Saw.
T: It’s a saw, yes this is a saw; What do we do with a saw?
S: Cut wood.
T: Yes, You’re shouting out through. What do we do with a saw? Marvelette.
S: Cut wood.

…


A teacher in the planning and execution of the lesson decides that the lesson shall be marked out in some way; s/he does not run on without a pause from one part of the lesson to another. In fact, s/he gives the students a clear signal of the beginning and end of the mini-phase of the lesson by using the words now then and right in a particular way (with falling intonation and a short pause afterwards) that make them into a sort of “frame” on either side of the sequence of, for example, questions and answers.

Framing move is precisely what Sinclair and Coulthard call the function of such utterances. The two framing moves, together with the questions and answers sequence that falls between them, can be called a transaction, which again captures the feeling of what is being done with language, rather in the way that we talk of a ‘transaction’ in a shop between a shopkeeper and a customer, which will similarly be a completed whole, with a recognizable start and finish. However, framing move and transaction are only labels to attach to certain structural features, and the analogy with their non-specialist meanings should not be taken too far.

Talking about moves, we call the first move in each exchange an opening move, the second an answering move and the third a follow-up move. Sinclair and Brazil (1982: 42 in McCarthy, 1991: 16) prefer to talk of initiation, response and follow-up. For example,

A: What time is it? (initiation)
B: Sis-thirty (response)
A: Thanks (follow-up)

Exercises:
1. How many other situations can you think of where framing moves are commonly used to divide up the discourse, apart from classrooms, telephone calls and job interviews?
2. Complete the list of what you think the most common framing words or phrases are in English and make a list of framing words in any other language you know. Do framing words translate directly from language to language?
3. What is your favorite framing word or phrase when you are teaching, or when you talk on the phone?

Answers:
1. Other situations: doctor-patient interviews (‘okay, let’s have a look at you’), church services (‘let us pray’), meetings (‘right, let’s make a start shall we’), checking in at a hotel (‘okay, the boy will show you to your room’), hiring a car (‘right… if you just follow that gettleman, he’ll show you where the car is’). There are, of course, many more.
2. In English, probably the most frequent are: right, right then, okay, so, well, well now, well then, good. Note that this is quite a restricted set. Are the sets in other languages restricted?
3. My students have frequently pointed out to me that my own personal favorite is ‘o-kee-doe’!

Writing for Publication

Everyone’s a Writer

When I tell women, specifically women with children, that I write for children, I often get a knowing look. They nod and tell me that they, also, have written children's books. They wrote stories for their own small children, once upon a time.

What happened to the stories, I always want to know. And what are they working on right now? Have their book characters aged along with their children or are they still doing picture books because they love spare writing or fun language or silly rhymes?

It’s there that I lose them. Most of these women have their manuscripts tucked away in a drawer somewhere. Some submitted their work and were surprised when the publishers didn’t snap their books up. Then their kids got older and there was no more snuggle time at night. No more making up stories to lull the little ones to sleep.

Most Never Reach "The End"

Well, this site isn't for those women. They have moved on to other interests. They are going to soccer games and piano lessons—whatever their kids are into. Now that the children are out of picture books, the mothers are out of them too. That's fine for them.

But this site falls under the category of Writing, which falls under the category of Careers.

Careers.

That doesn’t mean everyone who comes here has to write fulltime. It does mean that I'm assuming that you're reading here because you want to write for publication. I'm assuming you don't want your manuscripts to rest in peace in your dark, coffin-like bottom desk drawer.

And that means that you are willing to do what it takes to write a publishable manuscript. You're willing to take the tough critiques. You're willing to buy the books, both the "how to" books and the best books in the genre you are writing. You're willing to take the online courses and go to the conferences. You're willing to get up early to write and to skip Lost and American Idol or whatever TV shows you love.

Others may think that writing for children is a fun hobby. They may think it's easy to spit out a picture book. But you and I know that writing a short story or a book is not easy. It costs. We have to invest our money and our time if we want to write anything worth reading.

Invest in Your Writing
So lesson number one in my "How to Write Great Children's Books" series is this: **Take your writing seriously and commit to putting in the time and money it will take.** You cannot spit out a picture book in an afternoon while the rug-rats nap.

Not a good one, anyway. So this week I want to start at the beginning and lay some groundwork for writing well.

If you'd like to come along on the journey, then start with two things this week. Two steps toward publication:

1. Print up a writing calendar and make dates with yourself to work on your writing. The greatest difference between my unpublished writer friends and my published friends is that the first group talks about writing while the second actually does the deed.

2. Read in your genre. If you are working on a picture book, go to the library and check out five great picture books—concept books if that's what you are writing, story books if you're working on one of those, and if you're rhyming, check out rhyming books. If you're working on an early reader check out three. If you're doing novels, check out one great one—maybe one you've already read before that kept you turning pages and gave you a character you adored. Don't turn these back into the library right away because we're going to work with them a little more in coming weeks.

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**Text: Florida Recount Results**

**Tuesday, November 14, 2000**

Following is the transcript of Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris's announcement of the certified vote **recounts** in the Florida presidential election.

HARRIS: Good evening. I'm going to read a brief statement, but please understand, on the advice of our legal counsel, I won't be answering any questions this evening. First of all, I'd like to thank all of the independently elected supervisors of elections, their staff, their volunteers for the extraordinary work they performed over the past seven days. And they've just been terrific. And I'd also like to acknowledge the overwhelming support that we have received as we've worked to fulfill our statutory responsibilities in ensuring a consistent, accurate and independent process. As of 5 p.m. today, the director of the Division of Elections reported receiving certified returns from
all 67 counties, as required by law. In the race for the president of the United States, these certified results from Florida's 67 counties for the top two candidates are as follows. Governor George Bush: 2,910,492. Vice President Al Gore: 2,910,192.

The usual practice of the state Elections Canvassing Commission is to certify these returns as soon as the compilations are completed by the division's staff. However, in three Florida counties--Palm Beach, Miami-Dade and Broward Counties--these counties may be contemplating amended returns based upon manual recounts not completed as of today's statutory deadline. Within the past hour, the director of the Division of Elections faxed a memorandum to the supervisors of elections in these three Florida counties. In accordance with today's court ruling confirming my discretion in these matters, I'm requiring a written statement of the facts and circumstances that would cause these counties to believe that a change should be made before the final certification of the state-wide vote. This written statement is due in our office by 2 p.m. tomorrow. Unless I determine, in the exercise of my discretion, that these facts and circumstances contained within these written statements justify an amendment to today's official returns, the state Elections Canvassing Commission, in a manner consistent with its usual and normal practice, will certify statewide results reported to this office today. Subsequently, the overseas ballots that are due by Friday will also be certified, and the final results of the election for president of the United States of America in the state of Florida will be announced. We will continue to keep you informed of the relevant developments as they occur.

Thank you very much.

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**Persuasion vs. Force**

by Mark Skousen

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Sometimes a single book or even a short cogent essay can change an individual's entire outlook on life. For Christians, it is the *New Testament*. For radical socialists, Karl Marx' and Friedrich Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* is revolutionary. For libertarians, Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* is pivotal. For economists, Ludwig von Mises' *Human Action* can be mind-changing.

Recently I came across a little essay in a book called *Adventures of Ideas*, by Alfred North Whitehead, the British philosopher and Harvard professor. The essay, "From Force to Persuasion," had a profound effect upon me. Actually what caught my attention was a single passage on page 83. This one small excerpt in a 300-page book changed my entire political philosophy.

Here's what it says:

"The creation of the world -- said Plato -- is the victory of persuasion over force... Civilization is the maintenance of social order, by its own inherent persuasiveness as embodying the nobler alternative. The recourse to force, however unavoidable, is a disclosure of the failure of civilization, either in the general society or in a remnant of individuals..."

"Now the intercourse between individuals and between social groups takes one of these two forms: force or persuasion. Commerce is the great example of intercourse by way of persuasion. War, slavery, and
governmental compulsion exemplify the reign of force."

Professor Whitehead's vision of civilized society as the triumph of persuasion over force should become paramount in the mind of all civic-minded individuals and government leaders. It should serve as the guideline for the political ideal.

Let me suggest, therefore, a new political creed: The triumph of persuasion over force is the sign of a civilized society.

Surely this is a fundamental principle to which most citizens, no matter where they fit on the political spectrum, can agree.

**Too Many Laws**

Too often lawmakers resort to the force of law rather than the power of persuasion to solve a problem in society. They are too quick to pass another statute or regulation in an effort to suppress the effects of a deeprooted problem in society rather than seeking to recognize and deal with the real cause of the problem, which may require parents, teachers, pastors, and community leaders to convince people to change their ways.

Too often politicians think that new programs requiring new taxes are the only way to pay for citizens' retirement, health care, education or other social needs. "People just aren't willing to pay for these services themselves," they say, so they force others to pay for them instead.

Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "Taxation is the price we pay for civilization." But isn't the opposite really the case? Taxation is the price we pay for failing to build a civilized society. The higher the tax level, the greater the failure. A centrally planned totalitarian state represents a complete defeat for the civilized world, while a totally voluntary society represents its ultimate success.

Thus, legislators, ostensibly concerned about poverty and low wages, pass a minimum wage law and establish a welfare state as their way to abolish poverty. Yet poverty persists, not for want of money, but for want of skills, capital, education, and the desire to succeed.

The community demands a complete education for all children, so the state mandates that all children attend school for at least ten years. Winter Park High School, which two of our children attend, is completely fenced in. Students need a written excuse to leave school grounds and an official explanation for absences. All the gates except one are closed during school hours, and there is a permanent guard placed at the only open gate to monitor students coming and going. Florida recently passed a law that takes away the driver's license of any student who drops out of high school. Surely, they say, that will eliminate the high dropout rate for students.

But suppressing one problem only creates another. Now students who don't want to be in school are disrupting the students who want to learn. The lawmakers forget one thing. Schooling is not the same as education.

Many high-minded citizens don't like to see racial, religious or sexual discrimination in employment, housing, department stores, restaurants, and clubs. Yet instead of persuading people in the schools, the churches and the media that discrimination is inappropriate behavior and morally repugnant, law-makers simply pass civil rights legislation outlawing discrimination, as though making hatred illegal can instantly make it go away. Instead, forced integration often intensifies the already-existing hostilities. Does anyone wonder why discrimination is still a serious problem in our society?

Is competition from the Japanese, the Germans and the Brazilians too stiff for American industry? We can solve that right away, says Congress. No use trying to convince industry to invest in more productive labor and capital, or voting to reduce the tax burden on business. No, they'll just impose import quotas or heavy duties on foreign products and force them to "play fair." Surely that will make us more competitive, and keep American companies in business.

**Drugs, Guns, and Abortion**

Is the use of mind-altering drugs a problem in America? Then let's pass legislation prohibiting the use of certain high-powered drugs. People still want to use them? Then let's hire more police to crack down on the drug users and drug dealers. Surely that will solve the problem. Yet such laws never address the fundamental issue, which would require analyzing why people misuse drugs and discovering ways they can satisfy their needs in a nondestructive manner. By outlawing illicit drugs, we fail to consider the underlying cause of increased drug or alcohol misuse among teenagers and adults, and we fail to accept
the beneficial uses of such drugs in medicine and healthcare. I salute voluntary efforts in communities to deal with these serious problems, such as "no alcohol" high school graduation parties and drug-awareness classes. Tobacco is on the decline as a result of education, and drug use could abate as well if it were treated as a medical problem rather than a criminal one.

Abortion is a troublesome issue, we all agree on that. Whose rights take precedence, the baby's or the mother's? When does life begin, at conception or at birth?

Political conservatives are shocked by the millions of legal killings that take place every year in America and around the world. How can we sing "God Bless America" with this epidemic plaguing our nation? So, for many conservatives the answer is simple: Ban abortions! Force women to give birth to their unexpected and unwanted babies. That will solve the problem. This quick fix will undoubtedly give the appearance that we have instantly solved our national penchant for genocide.

Wouldn't it be better if we first tried to answer the all important questions, "Why is abortion so prevalent today, and how can we prevent unwanted pregnancies?" Or, once an unwanted pregnancy occurs, how can we persuade people to examine alternatives, including adoption?

Crime is another issue plaguing this country. There are those in society who want to ban handguns, rifles and other firearms, or at least have them tightly controlled and registered, in an attempt to reduce crime. We can solve the murder and crime problem in this country, they reason, simply by passing a law taking away the weapons of murder. No guns, no killings. Simple, right? Yet they only change the outward symptoms, while showing little interest in finding ways to discourage a person from becoming criminal or violent in the first place.

Legislators should be slow to pass laws to protect people against themselves. While insisting on a woman's "right to choose" in one area, they deny men and women the right to choose in every other area. Unfortunately, they are all too quick to act. Drivers aren't wearing their seatbelts? Let's pass a mandatory seatbelt law. Motorcyclists aren't wearing helmets? Let's mandate helmets. We'll force people to be responsible!

More Than Just Freedom

How did we get into this situation, where lawmakers feel compelled to legislate personal behavior "for our own good"? Often we only have ourselves to blame.

The lesson is clear: If we are going to preserve what personal and economic freedom we have left in this country, we had better act responsibly, or our freedom is going to be taken away. Too many detractors think that freedom is nothing more than the right to act irresponsibly. They equate liberty with libertine behavior: that the freedom to choose whether to have an abortion means that they should have an abortion, that the freedom to take drugs means that they should take drugs, that the legalization of gambling means that they should play the roulette wheel.

It is significant that Professor Whitehead chose the word "persuasion," not simply "freedom," as the ideal characteristic of the civilized world. The word "persuasion" embodies both freedom of choice and responsibility for choice. In order to persuade, you must have a moral philosophy, a system of right and wrong, which you govern yourself. You want to persuade people to do the right thing not because they have to, but because they want to.

There is little satisfaction from doing good if individuals are mandated to do the right thing. Character and responsibility are built when people voluntarily choose right over wrong, not when they are forced to do so. A soldier will feel a greater sense of victory if he enlists in the armed forces instead of being drafted. And high school students will not comprehend the joy of service if it is mandated by a community-service requirement for graduation.

Admittedly, there will be individuals in a free society who will make the wrong choices, who will become drug addicts and alcoholics, who will refuse to wear a safety helmet, who will hurt themselves playing with firecrackers, and who will drop out of high school. But that is the price we must pay for having a free society, where individuals learn from their mistakes and try to build a better world.

In this context, let us answer the all-important question, "Liberty and morality: can we have both?" The answer is, absolutely yes! Not only can we have both, but we must have both, or eventually we will have neither. As Sir James Russell Lowell said, "The ultimate result of protecting fools from their folly is to fill the planet full of fools."
Our motto should be, "We teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves."

Freedom without responsibility only leads to the destruction of civilization, as evidenced by Rome and other great civilizations of the past. As Alexis de Tocqueville said, "Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot." In a similar vein, Henry Ward Beecher added, "There is no liberty to men who know not how to govern themselves." And Edmund Burke wrote, "What is liberty without wisdom and without virtue?"

Today's political leaders demonstrate their low opinion of the public with every social law they pass. They believe that, if given the right to choose, the citizenry will probably make the wrong choice. Legislators do not think any more in terms of persuading people; they feel the need to force their agenda on the public at the point of a bayonet and the barrel of a gun, in the name of the IRS, the SEC, the FDA, the DEA, the EPA, or a multitude of other ABCs of government authority.

A Challenge to All Lovers of Liberty

My challenge to all lovers of liberty today is to take the moral high ground. Our cause is much more compelling when we can say that we support drug legalization, but do not use mind altering drugs. That we tolerate legal abortion, but choose not to abort our own future generations. That we support the right to bear arms, but do not misuse handguns. That we favor the right of individuals to meet privately as they please, but do not ourselves discriminate.

In the true spirit of liberty, Voltaire once said, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." If we are to be effective in convincing others of the benefits of a tolerant world, we must take the moral high ground by saying, "We may disapprove of what you do, but we will defend to the death your right to do it."

In short, my vision of a responsible free society is one in which we discourage evil, but do not prohibit it. We make our children and students aware of the consequences of drug abuse and other forms of irresponsible behavior. But after all our persuading, if they still want to use harmful drugs, that is their privilege. In a free society, individuals must have the right to do right or wrong, as long as they don't threaten or infringe upon the rights or property of others. They must also suffer the consequences of their actions, as it is from consequences that they learn to choose properly.

We may discourage prostitution or pornography by restricting it to certain areas and to certain ages, but we will not jail or fine those who choose to participate in it privately. If an adult bookstore opens in our neighborhood, we don't run to the law and pass an ordinance, we picket the store and discourage customers. If our religion asks us not to shop on Sunday, we don't pass Sunday "blue" laws forcing stores to close, we simply don't patronize them on Sunday. If we don't like excessive violence and gratuitous sex on TV, we don't write the Federal Communications Commission, we join boycotts of the advertiser's products. Several years ago the owners of Seven Eleven stores removed pornographic magazines from their stores, not because the law required it, but because a group of concerned citizens persuaded them. These actions reflect the true spirit of liberty.

Lovers of liberty should also be strong supporters of the institutions of persuasion, such as churches, charities, foundations, private schools and colleges, and private enterprise. They should engage in many causes of their own free will and choice. They should not rely on the institutions of force, such as government agencies, to carry out the cause of education and the works of charity and welfare. It is not enough simply to pay your taxes and cast your vote and think you've done your part.

It is the duty of every advocate of human liberty to convince the world that we must solve our problems through persuasion and not coercion. Whether the issue is domestic policy or foreign policy, we must recognize that passing another regulation or going to war is not necessarily the only solution to our problems. Simply to pass laws prohibiting the outward symptoms of problems is to sweep the real problems under the rug. It may hide the dirt for a while, but it doesn't dispose of the dirt properly or permanently.

Liberty Under Law

This approach does not mean that laws would not exist. People should have the freedom to act according to their desires, but only to the extent that they do not trample on the rights of others. Rules and regulations, such as traffic laws, need to be established and enforced by private and public institutions in order for a free society to exist. There should be stringent laws against fraud, theft, murder, pollution, and the breaking of contracts, and those laws should be effectively enforced according to the classic principle that the punishment should fit the crime. The full weight of the law should be used to fine and imprison the
perpetrators, to compensate the victims, and to safe-guard the rights of the innocent. Yet within this legal framework, we should permit the maximum degree of freedom in allowing people to choose what they think, act and do to themselves without harming others.

Convincing the public of our message, that "persuasion instead of force is the sign of a civilized society," will require a lot of hard work, but it can be rewarding. The key is to make a convincing case for freedom, to present the facts to the public so that they can see the logic of our arguments, and to develop a dialogue with those who may be opposed to our position. Our emphasis must be on educating and persuading, not on arguing and name-calling. For we shall never change our political leaders until we change the people who elect them.

A Vision of an Ideal Society

Martin Luther King, Jr., gave a famous sermon at the Lincoln Memorial in the mid-1960s. In it, King said that he had a dream about the promised land. Well, I too have a vision of an ideal society.

I have a vision of world peace, not because the military have been called in to maintain order, but because we have peace from within and friendship with every nation.

I have a vision of universal prosperity and an end to poverty, not because of foreign aid or government-subsidized welfare, but because each of us has productive, useful employment where every trade is honest and beneficial to both buyer and seller, and where we eagerly help the less fortunate of our own free will.

I have a vision of an inflation-free nation, not because of wage and price controls, but because our nation has an honest money system.

I have a vision of a crime-free society, not because there's a policeman on every corner, but because we respect the rights and property of others.

I have a vision of a drug-free America, not because harmful drugs are illegal, but because we desire to live long, healthy, self-sustaining lives.

I have a vision of an abortion-free society, not because abortion is illegal, but because we firmly believe in the sanctity of life, sexual responsibility, and family values.

I have a vision of a pollution-free and environmentally sound world, not because of costly controls and arbitrary regulations, but because private enterprise honors its stewardship and commitment to developing rather than exploiting the earth's resources.

I have a vision of a free society, not because of a benevolent dictator commands it, but because we love freedom and the responsibility that goes with it.

The following words, taken from an old Protestant hymn whose author is fittingly anonymous, express the aspiration of every man and every woman in a free society.

Know this, that every soul is free
To choose his life and what he'll be;
For this eternal truth is given
That God will force no man to heaven.
He'll call, persuade, direct aright,
And bless with wisdom, love, and light,
In nameless ways be good and kind,
But never force the human mind.
ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN DISCOURSE

The purpose of this Unit is to provide an introduction to the topic of written discourse analysis and to get you thinking about some of the key issues involved. I hope that by the end of the Unit, you will have had some new thoughts about:

- what text is and why it is worth our while to study it
- what is meant by the authenticity of a text and why it is important
- how and why texts can be interfered with
- what a corpus is and how big it needs to be
- what context is and how it is important in relation to text
- who Firth and Malinowski were and why they were important (but this last I will require you to find out yourself)
- what a schema is
- how inference and background knowledge contribute to coherence

Since these issues are central to the whole module, there is no suggestion that by the end of this Unit you will have discovered everything you need to know about these interesting questions. They will continue to be addressed throughout the module.

Why study written discourse analysis?

It would be a task of mammoth proportions to list all the ways in which language plays a part in the day-to-day life of a society or indeed of any individual in that society. Only a hermit bereft of all printed matter and entirely lacking artificial means of communication and recording - telephone, radio, TV, computer, tape recorder, and so on - could be expected to make a nil return. And even such lonely souls probably talk to themselves or to some Higher Being. Trappist monks, who have taken a vow of silence, read their breviaries and Bibles and make notes, and some probably write grocery lists and orders for religious books. For those of us who live in more interactive communities the range of linguistic activity is enormous. In a British television advertisement for a miracle language-teaching course, a popular entertainer - a magician or illusionist, appropriately enough - said something like: 'Language is not very complicated really. It's just a lot of words. So to learn a language all you need to do is to learn a lot of new words every day. And we have a method for enabling you to do this.' I have no idea how well this represented the course he was selling, but it didn’t inspire me to sign up, even though I would have welcomed a simple route to a fluent command of Spanish or Italian.

Of course, in a sense it is true that language is 'just a lot of words', and you can get a long way in a foreign country with a set of vocabulary items plus an array of gestures and a lot of good will on both sides. But the sort of communication that this restricts you to falls far short of the optimal. When a basic knowledge of the grammar of the target language is added to the vocabulary store, the situation is very different. Instead of communication at a level which is little better than that of gesture, you can attempt to express quite complex ideas with some degree of success. (See Dave Willis. The Lexical Syllabus to see how far one academic thinks you can go with a concentration on lexis.)

In fact, the separation of grammar from vocabulary is a great over-simplification and possibly dangerously misleading. Grammatical regularities do not exist independently of words, but rather within words and in the relationship between words. Grammar regulates how we construct words and how we link them together in hierarchical combinations to express quite complex thoughts which are way beyond the mere naming of objects. Knowing how to use a word in a given language means knowing, amongst many other things, its grammar, which forms it can take, which structures it can occur in, and which other words and structures it can co-occur with. For this reason, following the practice of Michael Halliday, I will from now on speak of lexicogrammar rather than implying that grammar and vocabulary are independent separable components of language.

So would the course salesman have been more correct if he had said 'just a lot of words and some grammar'? Again, to some degree, yes. But is 'knowing a language' really simply a matter of
knowing the lexico-grammar? Only in the most reductionist sense of the expression 'knowing a language', and only in a sense which is not particularly useful for learners or teachers of English. David Bowie once memorably asked in song, 'Is there life on Mars?' Suppose the answer is: Yes, there are life forms on Mars. They have no knowledge of human modes of communication, but by some alien means they have been able to internalise the grammar, including semantics (meaning), phonology and vocabulary of English. Suppose they are then able to take on human form and turn up in an English-language environment. Although they would be able to produce perfectly grammatical English sentences, they would not get very far without being spotted. Comedy science-fiction has played on these truths in a somewhat random way; one example is the American TV series, Third Rock from the Sun, where the humour (?humor) largely resides in the fact that the alien beings constantly try to imitate Earth behaviour and usually succeed only in bewildering the real Earth people.

Why would these imagined Martians get caught out? Because, of course, knowing how to use English involves far more than knowing what constitutes a grammatical sentence in English. To get away with its1 nefarious schemes, our Martian would need to use the grammatical sentences in a manner appropriate to the circumstances. It would need to be able to put its sentences together in such a way that they seemed to an Earthling speaker/ writer of English to 'make sense'. Having no knowledge of how speakers of English put sentences together in a coherent way, or what linguistic devices they use to signal relations between sentences, it would produce sequences of apparently unrelated sentences. And having no feeling for stylistic variation, it might order hamburgers in language more suited to a business letter. It might conceivably say to the attendant at Macdonald's:

'Dear Sir, Thanking you for the prompt delivery of our previous order of today's date of a strawberry milk shake and a cappuccino, we wish to request an order of two Big Macs and fries without ketchup. We remain, Yours faithfully.'2 (constructed)

Suffice it to say that this kind of inappropriate behaviour would lead to prompt unmasking or, possibly, physical assault. Here I end this brief detour into science fantasy.

Being human, your students have all kinds of advantages over alien life forms when it comes to functioning in English. But they also have to do more than simply learn to produce and understand grammatical sentences. They need to be able to produce and understand text. And they need to be able to produce and understand text that is appropriate to the particular situation in which they find themselves. Not all the knowledge (beyond the lexico-grammar) that is required can be carried over from one language to another. French texts differ from English ones in than just grammar and vocabulary, and Japanese texts differ even more. Therefore, as a teacher, you need to know a great deal about the characteristics of English texts, and more specifically about the kinds of texts that figure - or will figure in the future - in your students' lives.

Linguists (and this category, too, now embraces you) need to study text because a text is a manifestation of language. The totality of texts constitutes language in the same way that the totality of human beings constitutes humanity. We might be sceptical of the claims of a model of plant biology that had no place for considering those plants which actually occur and we should be similarly dubious about any linguistic theory that has no place for the consideration of real instances of language usage.

De Beaugrande (1997) starts with a very ambitious statement about text and discourse analysis. Just before the statement already quoted at the head of this Unit, he writes:

The top goal of the science of text and discourse proposed here is to support the freedom of access to knowledge and society through discourse. This goal has become enormously urgent in our 'modernizing' world, where social progress demands that the increasingly diverse social classes and cultures develop more co-operative practices for sharing knowledge and negotiating social roles; and discourse must surely be our central modality for doing so. de Beaugrande 1997: 1

This is a commendable goal and I hope that we will be able to reach it. As teachers, we have a duty to initiate our students in the discourse practices of our disciplines. For language teachers, this is a considerable and complex task and, as de Beaugrande points out, before we can help others, we must ourselves understand what is going on.
What is text?

Text is something that happens, in the form of talking or writing, listening or reading. When we analyse it, we analyse the product of this process, and the term 'text' is usually taken as referring to the product... Halliday 1994: 311

In lay usage (i.e. non-specialist usage), the term text is generally applied exclusively to written material and sometimes more specifically to a course book, for example: a teacher might ask her students to bring their 'texts' to the next lesson. However, when we talk about text as linguists, we are using it with a much broader meaning. For us, and henceforth that includes you, dear Participant, text means any stretch of language in use on which we choose to focus; it can be of any length and spoken or written. In this sense, the huge novel War and Peace is a text. Milton's sonnet On his Blindness is a text. Willis and Willis's Challenge and Change is a text. What you are reading now is a text. But so is a bill, a receipt, an advertisement, a road sign saying Halt, a note on a door reading Closed. A university lecture is a text, as is the verbal exchange that takes place when you buy something, or the exchange of greetings: 'Hello, there!' 'Hi! or a single cry of Help!

We may speak of a complete text to refer to the whole of the language event (for example, a whole research paper, an entire letter, an entire book, a complete lecture); or we may speak of a text fragment (a paragraph from a book, five minutes of a one hour lecture, and so on). But the distinction between a text and a text-fragment is not very precise, and often the simple term text is applied to any piece of actual language regardless of its completeness.

Further, the term text may be applied to the ongoing discourse process (the sales transaction as it occurs, the lecture as it is being given, etc.) or to a written or electronic record of the event (a transcript or a tape-recording of the lecture).

Discourse

There is considerable variation in how terms such as text and discourse are used in linguistics. Sometimes the terminological variation signals important conceptual distinctions, but often it does not and terminological debates are usually of little interest. Stubbs 1996: 4

Some writers make a distinction between text and discourse and some don't; unfortunately those who do aren't always in agreement about what the distinction actually is. I myself usually use the term discourse when I am speaking about the communicative process and text when I am talking about the product. However, it has to be accepted that terminology in general is not yet very fixed in our field, and so some degree of uncertainty is just something we have to learn to live with.

Authentic text

By text, I mean an instance of language in use, either spoken or written: a piece of language behaviour which has occurred naturally, without the intervention of the linguist. This excludes examples of language that have been invented by a linguist merely to illustrate a point in linguistic theory. Stubbs 1996: 4

The description of text given so far presupposes authenticity. In other words, we normally expect a text to be authentic, that it was originally produced as part of a piece of communication and not invented for some exemplificatory purpose. Thus, if I wanted to give you an example of a set of minutes, I could use either of the following:

(i) a text which was produced as a record of a meeting which actually occurred.
(ii) a text which I wrote myself based on imaginary events, but drawing on my experience of many hours spent writing and/or reading real minutes.

I would class the first of these as authentic and the second as inauthentic (or invented or constructed or artificial or simulated, etc.). In the unlikely event of my choosing the second option, I would feel obliged to state clearly that this was constructed, artificial data that I had concocted myself rather than a real set of minutes. I would also be very wary of making any generalisations on the basis of this second type of construct since it is not a real instance of what it purports to be. Of course, my artificial minutes might successfully simulate the real thing, but I could not be sure of this, and I would prefer to use an authentic set.

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Just pause for a moment, take any textbook you are using for teaching and choose any ten texts - what proportion of them are authentic according to my definition? In fact, teachers, materials writers and others are often tempted to use artificial data for understandable reasons. They might, for example, feel that their students lack the necessary linguistic skills to tackle the real thing and so they offer something simpler or simplified. They might believe that this serves their pedagogic purposes, but it is a risky strategy. Risky, because it is very difficult to simulate real text; one risk you run is of teaching an artificial, fake English. If you want your students one day to read or write real minutes, then expose them to real minutes. If you want them to read or write real history books then expose them to text from real history books. If you want them to listen to physics lectures, expose them to data from real physics lectures. It goes without saying that it is equally true that analysts must look at real texts and not concoct something for themselves or use the artificial concoctions of others (unless they have very relevant reason to do so, such as investigating the degree of resemblance and deviation of concoctions from the real thing).

Some academics, notably Widdowson, have tried to justify their own dubious practice by arguing that an authentic text is no longer authentic once it has been taken out of its original environment and presented in a classroom for a different, pedagogic purpose. So, they then argue, as there is no such thing as authenticity in the classroom or in teaching materials, in the sense in which I have been using it, we might as well write our own texts for the classroom. These would then have a different kind of authenticity conferred on them by the fact of being language learning texts. Thus, they argue, any sample of language that serves a useful purpose is authentic in this sense. Widdowson implemented these views by editing a series of ESP books, the Focus series, which, critics have argued fail because of the lack of commitment to authentic text - or rather because of a commitment to an idiosyncratic notion of authenticity.

My own view is that, although there is some truth in the claim that taking a text out of its original setting changes its status, there is still a crucial distinction between such texts and an artificially contrived text. This difference is frequently evident in the fabric of the text itself: the language of a simulated text - the lexicogrammar, the patterns of discourse, and so on - is seldom like that of the real thing. So our insistence on using texts that were originally produced in an actual interactive event (be it written or spoken) is a practical consideration rather than some fanciful preoccupation with the notion of authenticity itself.

**Tampering with texts**

There are various ways in which educators, publishers and others may try to make written text more readily accessible for student readers. And there are other reasons for changing text, too. First of all, they may select texts that are intrinsically easy to read - or rather that are at a level of difficulty with which a given set of students can cope without undue puzzlement. If the texts are appropriate to the needs and interests of the students, this is arguably the optimal situation. There are various methods for measuring the so-called readability of texts, which attempt to identify the relative difficulty in terms of the reading age norms of native speaker/readers, for example. Texts can be graded according to the normal reading age at which they can be comprehended, and reading schemes exploit these methods by offering progressively more difficult texts in the form of books or cards. Such readability measures are often applied to specially written or doctored texts as discussed below.

A second way is to write texts from scratch that conform to predetermined lexicogrammatical constraints. We can call these controlled texts. People who write books for children usually work on fairly loose intuitive lines to produce language that they feel children of the target group will find accessible. But the huge world-wide market for English as a second language has led many publishers to pursue a policy of setting explicit linguistic criteria for newly written books, readers as they are confusingly called. The editors of these books may specify a particular set of vocabulary, certain grammatical structures and other criteria for controlling the degree of sentence complexity. Writers must then work within these constraints. Do you use, or have you ever used, such readers?
A third option is the simplified text, the result of rewriting an existing text according to similar constraints. This is a very popular option for publishers who, for example, produce as part of a series of graded readers simplified versions of classic novels such as Tom Sawyer or Robinson Crusoe. In effect, these versions are a retelling of the same basic plot, usually much more briefly, as well as in a simpler linguistic form, than the original.

A fourth option is the abridged text, a text that has been changed only by removing parts. In other words only part of the original text remains, but what is left is still in the form in which it was originally written. Thus the language remains totally authentic, but, having lost some of its linguistic context, it will paradoxically not be exactly as it was when it was produced originally as a complete authentic text.

Task

Take something you have written previously, perhaps an assignment. Take a 4 paragraph section from somewhere near the middle. This is by definition an extract from an authentic text. Now, imagine you were going to try to communicate just that content to an audience â€“ how would you want to change the textual encoding? You would most likely want to make changes at least to the opening and closing sentences.

Obviously, texts can be abridged in varying degrees. There may be many reasons for wanting to make a text shorter: economy of production costs, physical convenience, limitations of space. Or the motivation may be to make the text more easily processible. Because of this last aim, abridgement can be seen to have something in common with vocabulary and structure control and with simplification. As I indicated above, simplified texts too are often much shorter than the original, but the term abridged is usually reserved for texts that have simply been cut.

When a text has been altered simply to remove taboo words and concepts, it is said to have been bowdlerized. Thomas Bowdler (1745-1825) was a Scottish medical doctor who published a 'family version' of Shakespeare's plays with all the â€“naughtyâ€” bits cut out. Such texts are sometimes described as censored since it is official or self-appointed censors who impose such alterations.

British TV broadcasts of films are sometimes advertised as 'edited for strong language and nudity'. That is a form of bowdlerization - a rather special case of the role of context of culture in text. It is curious that non-linguists refer to taboo words as strong language, and sometimes as just language; less surprising, perhaps, is the term bad language.

By definition, all these forms of simplifying or modifying produce something that is different from the authentic original. For most purposes in discourse analysis and teaching, and perhaps most obviously in English for Specific Purposes, as I have already said, authentic texts are preferable to those that have been interfered with.

It is possible, of course, for a re-telling to be a valued text in its own right. In the field of literature, Charles & Mary Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare is a work of children's literature in its own right. But it is not Shakespeare. Shakespeare himself borrowed most of his plots, although he did for the most part greatly improve on the originals, but the greatness of Shakespeare's work is not in the plots but in the language. And you would not teach people to write history essays by giving them Shakespeare's history plays to read. In any case, this kind of re-telling of stories is part and parcel of the narrative tradition and is a far cry from the kind of tinkering that we have doubts about. Similarly, a book such as Bloor and Bloor's The Functional Analysis of English is not a doctored version of any of Halliday's texts, but a new text expounding Halliday's ideas from a particular point of view - their own and their students'.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with simplified readers or other alternative versions of stories (or ideas), but there is a pedagogic risk attached. To repeat: this is that students may be exposed to an artificial EFL variety of English and be shielded from the kind of language that they need or will need later. The advocacy of authenticity is not a religious dogma; it is based on common-sense about what students need to learn and what claims researchers are justified in making.

Sometimes authentic texts can be modified without seriously affecting their authenticity. For example in the sample of legal text given in the next Unit, I have changed the names of people.
and also the street and town names, to prevent identification. In doing so, I have not seriously undermined the authenticity of the text for the purposes of analysis, although, in a real legal context, changing the names in such a document might be a heinous crime. Such ethical issues are less liable to arise (though they are not absolutely ruled out) when dealing with texts which are already in the public domain: published articles, books, advertisements, and so on); but here the question of legal copyright may be an issue. What is more rarely justifiable is adjustment to fit the convenience of the example. Even here, though, there may be occasions where a case can be made for emendation - so long as it is not done surreptitiously.

Data and corpus

For discourse analysts, texts constitute potential data. Data are the phenomena under investigation or the phenomena that provide evidence for the claims that the analyst makes. Thus, the research process in which the analyst is engaged is the investigation of texts. Usually, this involves the putting together of a collection or corpus of texts from which the data are to be selected.

Question: Is size important?

At the present time, the use of the term corpus analysis or corpus linguistics usually implies computational analysis of some kind, but corpora were used in linguistic analysis long before electronic computers, and a corpus can be a very small sample of text, which could be easily analysed manually. Some corpus linguists set great store by the size of their corpus, arguing that only a collection of many millions of words can provide a valid basis for useful generalisations about language use, but the fact is that the necessary size of a corpus depends on the type of investigation being carried out; that is to say, it is a question of what you are looking for. If you are interested in 'of', which is the second most frequent word in English and makes up roughly 3% of all the words in a given text, you need a very much smaller collection of texts than if you want to investigate 'man' which despite being the 150th most frequent word occurs roughly once in every 2000 words, or 'presumption' which occurs roughly three times per million words. Of course, it might be rash to make sweeping generalisations on the basis of a small sample, but it is also true that not all the questions we ask about texts can be answered by electronic surveys of huge corpora or by the use of statistical procedures. Computational methods have allowed significant developments in the study of language, but some kinds of truth can be better observed through a local analysis and some questions require judgements that computers cannot make.

One reason for using massive corpora is the desire to make generalisations about the English language as a whole. For example, a major advocate of huge corpora and a key figure in the creation of the massive Bank of English corpus in Birmingham, Sinclair (1991) offers interesting observations about the word of in English on the basis of its frequency of occurrence in certain grammatical structure types. If Sinclair had examined only a few thousand words, we might say: 'Come on, John! How do we know that this is typical of English in general? Perhaps another few thousand words might give a different result.' Even with a million words, we might say something of the sort, and so Sinclair opts for a multi-million word corpus. Similarly, to make generalisations about 'English', we need to have a corpus that represents an enormous range of text types, varying in subject matter, purpose of production, degree of formality, context, etc. - in fact, as many different varieties of English as we can lay our hands on. Hence, Sinclair uses a corpus that includes as wide a range of sources as possible. But other goals and other circumstances might lead to differently structured corpora.

Task

Suppose you have been asked to teach the writing of minutes in English to a group of trainee secretaries in a foreign branch of an English company. Time is short. Would you base your teaching on an analysis of:
(a) the entire multi-million word Cobuild corpus
(b) a large corpus of minutes from various sources in the English-speaking world
(c) a corpus of minutes produced in the company in question

Note: This is based on an actual teaching situation I was told about.

If your answer was (c), I agree with you. If your answer was (a) or (b), I wonder how you reached your conclusion. I think (a) is far less plausible than (b), although, of course, there is scope for a lot of 'ifs' and 'buts' here. You might, for example, argue that you have a moral duty to inform your students of a wide variety of ways of writing minutes in case they want to work for another firm some day; therefore you chose (b). I can sympathise with that argument. Or perhaps you wished to teach more than just minute-writing and so chose (a) - and to hell with the capitalists who are footing the bill. Again, this has a certain appeal but there are a few practical drawbacks. Do you wish to be employed again? Will the secretaries lose their jobs? I think that, by and large, the relation between your hypothetical goals and the choices are relatively clear.

I concede that the choice here is not exactly a question of the size of the corpus, but rather of its focus, but it has a bearing on the issue of size since macro-corpora are less likely to be highly focused. And, in any case, the point has been made that various types of corpora are suited to various purposes. And to go back to a previous point, I am sure that whatever you did, you would not wish to use simplified minutes with half the features of real minutes removed.

If we are interested in the nature of some particular variety, say courtroom discourse or medical research articles, then we would be well advised to focus on a corpus of such items rather than a sweeping selection of entirely unrelated data. It may well be that the results we get from a comprehensive collection of text will be different from those obtained from a carefully selected set. We might, of course, sometimes wish to compare our variety-specific results with more general ones, and then access to a large corpus will be necessary, but the primary interest will be in the narrow corpus. For most pedagogic purposes, it is the narrow corpus that is the most enlightening; certainly for people engaged in ESP. Of course, if you have access to a macro-corpus that allows selection on the basis of text type, then you can extract the set of data relevant for your purposes and ignore the rest, but in this case your corpus is the specialised section that you have selected and not the macro-corpus itself. A useful small corpus may, for example, consist of a mere dozen or so articles, or abstracts, or subject textbooks, or business letters, or transcripts of lessons.

So, the short answer to the question: 'Is size important?' is 'Not always. It depends what you are trying to do.' However, in spite of all this, the term corpus does sound a little grand and for some people does connote considerable bulk, so you might be wise to avoid using it in public if you have analysed only five business letters - even though they do technically constitute a corpus. I myself have used the term to refer to a dozen or so articles, but I am aware of the risk I run of being criticised by size-fixated corpus linguists. Of course, I believe that what I am doing in looking at a few articles in the way I do is as valid a way of doing discourse analysis as carrying out a computer study of a multi-million word corpus. Not better but as good.

Even when a computer is an appropriate tool for text analysis (and indisputably it very often is), it is the questions that the analyst asks and the quality of the deductions drawn from the results of the analysis, that determine the value of the investigation. In the words of the old computational proverb: 'Garbage in; garbage out.'

Context

I hope that I have already more than hinted at the fact that text is not created in a vacuum. It is created - indeed it is part of - a context. The notion of context is central to the study of discourse. People sometimes complain that a given utterance attributed to them (by the Press, for example, or in a court of law) was misinterpreted, because it was 'taken out of context'. By this they may mean one of two things: (a) that the rest of what they said has been ignored or (b) that the circumstances in which the utterance was made and all the paraphernalia of presuppositions, etc., have been ignored. In either case, the complainant is appealing to the indisputable view that the sense of an utterance is not inherent in the words and grammar alone, but is crucially affected by contextual factors. Context in the first sense we can call co-text; the second can be labelled context of
situation. A major aspect of context of situation is sometimes labelled context of culture. Some people treat this as separate from the context of situation, but it seems to make more sense to see it as an integral part of it.

**CO-TEXT**

At the micro-level, a stretch of language under consideration can be seen to fit into the context of its surrounding text. The surrounding text is the co-text. The sense of a chunk of language - a few words or a paragraph - is in part dependent on words and paragraphs around it; these constitute the co-text of the chunk in focus. The co-text of the Unit you are now reading is made up of the other Units comprising this module. Some of the meaning of this Unit is inherent in its positioning as part of the module as a whole, on the fact that is the first of a series of such units, that they resemble it in format, and so on.

**CONTEXT OF SITUATION**

The context of situation is made up of all the phenomena which affect the discourse. In face-to-face interaction, the context of situation includes the immediate and wider environment in which the text actually occurs, like the classroom in the case of a teaching discourse, the shop or market in a sales transaction, the workshop in the case of a discussion about a gearbox replacement.

It may be that the physical setting of the discourse is not germane to the nature of the text itself. If you discuss gearbox replacement while on top of a mountain, the precise fact of the altitude may have little bearing on the discourse (on the other hand, it might), but the fact that there is no engine present is likely to be very significant. In addition to the physical location, there is the location in time of the event: time in history, time of the year, time of day may all play a determining role.

The interactants also play a part in the context of situation. The people who are discussing gearbox replacement, their ages, nationalities, gender and especially their social roles on this occasion (for example, mechanic and car-owner; apprentice mechanic and skilled mechanic; teacher and student; two non-expert car-owners; friends or strangers) may all be significant. In the case of written text the situation is more complex as the writer writes for an imagined reader to whom s/he attributes certain knowledge and certain ignorance, but the text is processed only by real readers who may differ considerably from the imagined and may have more or less difficulty understanding the text. As I begin this module I am assuming certain things and telling you others, but I am conscious that for some readers I may be telling you what you already know and/or assuming things of which you are ignorant, as in the throw-away reference to the paraphernalia of presuppositions a short time ago.

**CONTEXT OF CULTURE**

Every immediate situation is located in a cultural context. The context of culture is an intricate complex of various social phenomena involving historical and geographical settings but also more general aspects like the field of the activity: education, medicine, provision of goods and services in exchange for money. Car maintenance discourse in a highly hierarchical society may be different from that which takes place in a relatively egalitarian society. Classroom discourse takes place within a wider cultural context of, say, university education or secondary school education, or slightly more specifically African university education, or Kenyan University education. The discipline in question also plays a part in the context of culture: thus a physics lecture takes place within the cultural practices and traditions of the field of physics at large as well as in a particular education system or institution.

Much of the credit for the emphasis on the role of context in language can be attributed to two significant figures in the history of linguistics: Firth and Malinowski. Rather than repeat facts which I have written up elsewhere, I will ask you to read Bloor and Bloor 2004, 244-246 (1995, 248-50), now, before proceeding to the next section.
TEXTUALITY
De Beaugrande (1997) posits a set of criteria for textuality, well known from earlier publications, including De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). These are listed in the box below with my own paraphrase of his explanation:

DE BEAUGRANDE'S CRITERIA
cohesion: the relation between forms and patterns
coherence: the way meanings are understood
intentionality: what text producers intend, mean to achieve
informativity: the extent to which the text tells you what you don't already know
situationality: the relation between the text-event and the situation in which it occurs
intertextuality: the relation between this text and other texts

In this module, we shall not be giving all these issues equal attention or necessarily discussing them under these headings, but they will all figure to a greater or lesser degree in the ensuing units.

Optimally, we might ask two things of a contextual model of variation in discourse: (a) that given a text, we should be able to say something about the context of situation that produced it; and (b) that given a context of situation, we should be able to predict the type of text which it generates. I think that there is little doubt that we can meet the first criterion with a reasonable degree of satisfaction. I have rather cautiously said 'say something about', but I think that in the vast majority of cases, we can say a great deal. This is not to say that we can always, without exception, state precisely the circumstances which produced the text. No test of a theory could ask that. But with the right expertise, we should be able to deduce a great deal of information about the context of situation from the lexicogrammatical form and other relevant features (for example, in the case of written text: layout, accompanying illustrations, and so on; in the case of a sound recording: intonation, timing, presence of echo, and so on).

It is matter for debate how far we can predict from a knowledge of the situation the type of language that will ensue. However, it might be argued that, if we knew enough about how discourse works, we would be able to predict with reasonable statistical success. The notion of context of situation is bound up with the notion of social institutions. All forms of social activity can be seen as in a sense institutional. Weddings, funerals, trials are obviously institutional activities, but for the sociologist, ethnographer or discourse analyst, so are university lectures, buying and selling, making a will, banking transactions, writing minutes, joke-telling, eating in a restaurant, writing a letter of complaint.

In every situation, there is scope for variation from the norm and for idiosyncratic behaviour, and the degree of detail that can be predicted varies from situation to situation: the more obviously 'institutional' the situation, by and large, the more predictable the language. For example, for a given narrowly-specified society, we can reasonably predict the sort of text produced in a marriage ceremony. Given the context of a Catholic church in Britain, say, or a mosque, or a registry office, we might even be able to specify much of what will be uttered because weddings make considerable use of prescribed and ritualised 'written-to-be-spoken language. More generally, we will expect the discourse to have certain characteristics: predominantly spoken channel, initiation of verbal exchanges by the presiding official (priest, Imam, local government official), responses from the marrying couple, some declarations of intent/promises, and so on. These matters are pursued in more detail in subsequent units.

Task 1.3
What can you deduce about the context of situation of the following texts?
1 Warning. Customers are advised that videoscan closed circuit television is in operation with video-recording.
2 I'll need a 19 gauge needle, IV tubing and a preptic swab.
3 SKYE lounger. Grey lacquered tubular steel frame.
Light brown buffalo leather cover padded with foam and fibres.
W68, L160, H98 cm, seat height 35 cm Â£295
Take it home today. See page 218 for details.

4 E 180
This VHS videocassette is designed exclusively for use with video recorders bearing the VHS mark.

5 Williams cleared over Senna death
(Note: the physical format of these texts is not identical to the original but is approximate)

Coherence, inference and schemata

Coherence is no joke
Flaherty is in the bar. O'Reilly says to him, 'Pat, your glass is empty. Would you like another?'
Flaherty replies: 'And why would I be wanting two empty glasses?'

There are thousands of jokes based on the idea of misunderstanding ambiguous or vague utterances. The above is one of them. (The sub-class of joke is the Irish/Kerryman/Polish/policeman/Portuguese/Sikh/Swedish/etc. joke, which can be found worldwide.) It didn't have a lot of life in it, but let's kill it completely. The joke lies in Flaherty's failure/refusal to pick up the obvious meaning of the question, namely whether he would like another drink - another glass, not another empty glass. Out of context, the two sentences that make up O'Reilly's utterance can plausibly be interpreted in the way Flaherty takes them, but knowing what we know about behaviour in bars and what would constitute a likely question in the circumstances, Flaherty's interpretation is ridiculous. Flaherty's interpretation imposes on O'Reilly's question a kind of incoherence - or at least a lack of appropriateness to the situation. In making the utterance, O'Reilly assumes that Flaherty will bring to the utterance the knowledge that would permit only one interpretation: the right one in the circumstances.

When someone in a pub says, 'Would you like another?', it normally constitutes an offer of a drink. We bring our background knowledge into play, and we do not take it to mean another chair, another barman, another overcoat, even though all these things (chair, barman, overcoat) are present. But suppose you are in a bar and you have no chair and there are a few empty chairs on the other side of the room. You cross the room and take a chair and a person sitting next to another empty chair says 'Would you like another?' You assume that s/he is enquiring whether you need another chair, not offering you a drink. And the speaker knows that you will make that leap of understanding. That is how people communicate.

What I am saying is that in making sense of any sentence/utterance, we don't rely exclusively on our knowledge of the words and grammar of the language; we also have to use what we know of the situation and of the world and things and people and the way they function. I think that this section also serves to demonstrate that explaining the joke largely deprives it of its humorous effect. This is because jokes often depend on some element being implicit.

Looking for Al

This question of what we expect is quite important in the way that we process text (or indeed most other things in our experience). You must have experienced situations where you join a group of people engaged in conversation. You listen to a couple of exchanges and you remain mystified as to what they are talking about. So you say: 'What are you talking about?' One of the conversationalists says, 'We're talking about Al Pacino' - or whatever. And you say, 'Oh, right.' And then you can join in the conversation. Without that clue to the topic, you are lost. You know the vocabulary; you know the grammar; but you don't really know what the conversation means. You cannot fit it into any framework that enables you to make sense of it.
Of course, that is the unusual case. Usually, you do pick up the topic without any help, and you provide your own frame of reference, which, with luck, more or less coincides with that of the other people present. Possibly this is harder to do in a foreign language because it is harder to recognise the subtle clues, but it is still no mean feat in your own. Of course, if you don't know who Al Pacino is, then you are not much wiser, and you still cannot participate very effectively. You say, 'Is he an applied linguist?' They say, 'No, you moron, he's a film actor. Where have you been living?' If you don't ask, but proceed on the assumption that they are discussing an Applied Linguist and say, 'Well, I'm having a hard time with Henry Widdowson myself', there is a serious breakdown: a pragmatic breakdown, to use a technical term.

The hypothetical exchanges that I have just outlined serve to illustrate the importance of background knowledge in human interaction. The reason that you were bewildered by the conversation at the outset is that talk (i.e. the oral production of text) proceeds on the basis of presuppositions regarding the things being talked about. Its coherence depends on a lot of assumptions made by speaker/writer and hearer/reader. That is another reason why a Martian or a computer would have an enormous job talking like a human; almost every utterance involves a colossal freight of background knowledge: not just such things as who Al Pacino is, but also such facts as that films have actors, that some actors are considered to be better at their job than others, that some are considered more physically attractive than others, and so on. Other conversations might take it for granted that a car runs on petrol, that houses have doors, that the only way to avoid growing old is to die young (though people sometimes forget that one).

The coherence of a text depends not only on what the text actually says, but also on what inferences the reader/listener makes. Text producers (speakers or writers) automatically assume that text processors (hearers or readers) bring a great deal of prior knowledge with them to the text. Without such assumptions being made, it would be virtually impossible to communicate. Imagine how laborious it would be if you had to spell out all the background information for everything uttered.

When someone asks: 'What time is it?' and the person addressed says: 'The ferry has just left', the success of the interaction depends on all kinds of mutual knowledge. If both people know that the ferry always leaves at six o'clock, then the inference is that it is just after six o'clock. But that is an extreme case.

It is easy to agree that more money is the key to meeting the government's education aims, but we have to face facts: the public purse is not bottomless.

The above statement presupposes that the reader will know the following (among other) things: education costs money; public money is spent on education; the government administers public money; public money comes from taxes; money helps to maintain high standards. If a speaker or a writer over-estimates the background knowledge of the hearer or reader, there will be some degree of break-down in communication; if the writer under-estimates, the text will be tedious for the hearer or reader.

Schema theory

One attempt to present a model of background knowledge is schema theory. The singular term is schema; the plural is schemata. When you tune in correctly to the conversation about Al Pacino, outlined above, you could be said to activate a film actor schema: a mental construct into which you can attempt to fit aspects of the present conversation. This entails knowing the things about film actors mentioned above, and many more. Everyone's knowledge will differ, at least in the details, but with sufficient common ground communication is possible.

If you know about Al already, you might even be said at a very local level to activate an Al Pacino schema. This would probably include such elements as: male, small, dark, animated, American, Italian ancestry, starred in The Godfather films; it might also include more esoteric facts such as New Yorker, Shakespeare enthusiast, appeared in Dog Day Afternoon, Revolution, Looking for Richard, Scent of a Woman, Donny Brasco, and so on. It might also include evaluative elements: talented actor/genius/ham; handsome/sexy/ugly/; short; thin; etc. Any or all of these
could be presupposed in the course of a conversation. As you can see, I myself have a fairly
detailed schema for Al Pacino, and so I could join in easily. But even with only the film actor
schema activated, you could probably make sense of most of the conversation, and not lose your
credibility as a conversationalist on this occasion.

What I have just said seems to suggest that each person has a different schema in his or her
mind, and this seems very plausible. But there must be enough similarity, enough information
common to everyone's schemata, to enable us to communicate. Obviously, if your schema and
mine were different in every respect, effective communication on the topic would be impossible;
we would simply misunderstand each other.

What we are talking about here is what Carrell (1988: 101) describes as: 'the role of pre-
existing knowledge structures in providing information left implicit in text™. But it is not just a
single schema that needs to be activated for any situation. The background knowledge presupposed
in almost any text - written or spoken - is enormous. Let's take a real bit of text from the journal
English Language Teaching. Some contextual (co-
text) detail: the text appears on a new page
below the title Action and condition in the post-
elementary classroom in a larger bold font and also
below the name Sherrill Howard Pochieca. The stretch of text cited here is an extract from a longer
stretch all printed in italic, which in turn occurs before a much longer non-italicised stretch that
continues for nearly six pages.

**TEXT**

This article proposes that a distinction between 'action verbs' and 'condition verbs' can be
very useful for post-elementary learners who have trouble choosing correct verb forms. By
facilitating a more functional approach to the tense system, the distinction can contribute to a better
understanding of the appropriateness of target structures.

This text could be said to exploit a language-learning schema. (It also involves a 'research
article schema', and all the things that go with that, which is text-oriented rather than content-
oriented - I shall focus on content here. The text-oriented schema is discussed again in Unit 8.) This
includes or interacts with a 'grammar schema'. Certain elements are built into the schema (or
schemata) and so they don't need to be spelled out by the writer.

They include:

People usually learn foreign languages by studying verbs can be rightly or wrongly chosen
by learners learners can be classified into developmental stages learners need to choose tenses
(when they speak/write). Some verb functions are difficult for learners. There are different
approaches to teaching the tense system structures can be targeted teachers teach learners
teachers target structures teachers make choices about how to teach/what to target/etc. Languages
have grammar that has categories, which include verbs having functions that can be classified into
different types according to function verbs have tenses tenses can be viewed as a system etc.

Note that although learners are mentioned, teachers are not. Yet we can reasonably assume
a teacher (or someone in a teacher-type role: course-writer, materials-writer, etc.). In fact, we can
say that our socially-induced language-learning schema involves a teacher. Of course, people learn
languages without teachers and so, whereas learner is an obligatory element, teacher is usually but
not necessarily taken for granted. We could call this a default item. In computing, a default item is
one that is present unless you specify that you don't want it. In a language-learning schema, we
might assume the existence of a teacher unless we are told there isn't one: e.g. by the use of the
term self-tuition or some other indicator of a no-teacher situation.

The word schema, like most words, is used with several different meanings. In the sense
(more or less) in which I am using it here, it originates in the field of psychology in the 1930s
(Bartlett 1932), although it has been traced back to the 18th Century German philosopher Kant. It
came back into academic prominence with work on artificial intelligence (AI). AI is the interface
between psychology and computational science. It is concerned with such issues as human
interaction with the computer, making computers talk or think like humans and also with shedding
light on the workings of the human mind by computer simulations and modelling. Computers are
very good at some things that people find difficult, like calculating the sum of a huge list of very
large numbers. But computers have enormous difficulty with things that people find easy. For example, even a very young child knows that a cup is still a cup when it is seen from a different point of view or turned upside down; computers have difficulty with things like that. (They are improving though, whilst we are not improving at all.) So it might be argued - and indeed it is - that computer modelling is not the best way to shed light on the workings of the human mind, but luckily we don't need to pursue that sort of question here.

The term schema theory tends to be used as a blanket term to include work that uses other terms and concepts for related ideas, such as scenario, script, frame. It is not really necessary for you to pay much attention to the fine points of difference between these terms. The theory was not initially concerned with language, but more with mental representations of the material world: how do we recognise something as a house and something else as a cup and yet another thing as a horse when instances of these things vary so much? Do we have a picture of a typical house in our minds? Do we have a list of attributes that we tick off and if they are all there say: Yes, that's a house? Psychologists tried to build up models of what we store in our minds. The suggestion is that we match what we experience with some mentally stored information and in this way make sense of our environment. The schema is the mental framework or pattern.

The term frame has been used for a kind of proposed pattern for such as house. It has obligatory and optional features: a roof might be obligatory; walls and door might also; but windows might be optional; probably a porch or a patio would need to be optional. Some items are default items; that is, we assume they are there unless told otherwise. One question that needs to be answered is: how is it that a person who has learned to recognise a house in one culture (e.g. as having a roof, doors, windows, several rooms devoted to different activities; and so on) also recognises as a house a structure on stilts without doors or windows and not divided into rooms?

A roof seems to be the most basic requirement, but we can still recognise a building without a roof - a defective house perhaps but still a house. However, the presence of a roof on a house is so much part of our concept that we would feel obliged to mention the lack of a roof, if we talked about it. If I gave you directions, for example, and said, 'Walk down the road until you come to a house', I would be pretty sure to say 'without a roof', and, if I didn't, when you got there you would be surprised and perhaps even doubtful about whether this was the house I meant. In Britain, I think that a door would also be assumed, but there are parts of the world where it might not be. So when I write about a house, I don't need to say, 'And by the way it had a roof'. The existence of the roof is taken for granted, unless I explicitly mention that there wasn't one. This has important effects on the way we talk and write. Once the 'house' schema or frame has been activated, the roof is part of the picture, as it were.

The term script (by analogy with a film script) has been used for mental representations of various human activities. The best known is the restaurant script. The hypothesis is that when we think about eating in a restaurant - or even just hear the word restaurant - we call up a stored representation involving food, waiters, tables, chairs, etc. We do not need to be told that these things are present because we take them for granted.

Look at the following text. It comes from a Do-It-Yourself book on home improvements.

TEXT

Every now and again somebody hits the headlines by building something his local council doesn't like and then, after a long legal struggle, being ordered to pull it down again. Prudent householders will avoid such confrontations, if only because lawyers cost even more than builders; but if you are self-sufficient as well as prudent you must check carefully before you begin putting brick on brick, and even sometimes before dipping brush into paintpot.

To understand this it is not enough to know the vocabulary and grammar of English. We might say that to make full sense of the text we need to activate a building permission schema (or script or scenario); we need to know that in some societies there are social constraints on what you can do or have done to the structure of a house that you own, and that these constraints are enforceable by law. The authority that deals with these matters in Britain is the local council. If they object to changes in your house they can take you to court and you may need lawyers to
represent you. You may have to pay these lawyers. This text embeds, as it were, what we might call a home improvement schema or scenario, which assumes building and painting. Building assumes the presence of bricks (or other building materials) and painting assumes paint and brushes. So the script would include as characters: householders, the local council, lawyers. Props include: bricks, paint, paintbrush. Proceeding on the assumption that the reader has these schemata, the writer leaves out such things as the connection between the council not liking something and a long legal struggle. An additional set of assumptions underlies Every now and again somebody hits the headlines, which requires the activation of a newspaper schema. It also requires us not to interpret it literally.

This text might well be incoherent for a reader with none of this background knowledge. At least, it would be hard to understand. When I, as a linguist with a professional background in English teaching, try to read a specialist text about nuclear physics, it is unlikely that it will have the coherence for me that it has for a nuclear physicist. To put it another way: I am unlikely to be able to impose upon it the coherence which s/he can impose upon it. Even if they might not put it in the same terms, writers know this and act accordingly. Nuclear physicists do not write in the same way for their peer group as for a nonspecialist readership. They assume different background knowledge, different schemata, a different potential for making inferences. Of course, some people do this better than others, but everyone makes some effort in this direction. (And I hope I am making the right assumptions as far as you are concerned.)

Inference obviously plays a major role in our processing of text. It is one of the key ways in which coherence is achieved. We might say that coherence is given to the text, at least in large part, by the listener or reader, whose contribution is as crucial as that of the writer/speaker.

**Task 1.4**

1. Explain the inference involved in making sense of the following utterance (one speaker only):
   - Can you buy me a coffee? I left my coat in the classroom.

2. Explain the following joke.
   - Caller: I'd like an ambulance urgently, please, Mrs Smith is about to have a baby.
   - Hospital: Is this her first baby?
   - Caller: No, this is her husband.

3. What kind of basic schema or scenario might be activated by the following:
   - (i) Do you have a table for two near the window?
   - (ii) I'd like to cash a cheque, please.
   - (iii) Swab, please, nurse! Scalpel!
   - (iv) Just the one suitcase? Did you pack it yourself? And has it been with you since you packed it?
   - (v) The Giancano family had locked up the action in Orleans and Jefferson parishes in Prohibition. Their sanction and charter came from the Chicago commission, of course, and no other crime family ever tried to intrude.

**Background knowledge and the processing of headlines**

Headlines seem to cover the gamut of informative potential from excessively explicit to very cryptic. In the first instance, they seem to almost make the reading of the rest of the text redundant; in the second they seem to be deliberately obscure, perhaps in order to compel the reader to continue reading beyond the headline. (The grammar of headlines is very distinctive, too. This topic is dealt with in more detail in Unit 8 of the GLE module.)

But the obscurity of the headline (as of any text) is not just a quality of the text itself; it varies with the reader. Inevitably, much of the material in this course is culturally biased since the sources are predominantly British. This is something I am constantly aware of and try to mitigate. With some kinds of material this is much less significant than with others. With headlines, it can be very significant.
The processing of headlines often demands more than a knowledge of English, and, even more than a knowledge of the register of newspaper headlines and the practices of newspapers in Britain. It often depends as well on prior background knowledge of the events, persons and circumstances referred to in the headlines. Thus, some course participants - regardless of country of origin - will find de-coding these headlines more difficult than will others. For example, those who are unfamiliar with UK football will miss meanings that are apparent to the football fans who read the papers in Britain. The Sun headline and subhead below illustrate this:

**TAYLS YOU WIN, VILLA**
**Little Euro joy**

This heads a report on Aston Villa's 2-0 victory over Steaua Bucharest in an early round of the 1997 European cup; the match took place just down the road from your alma mater, Aston University. As Neil Custis of the Sun tells it: 'ASTON VILLA roared into the UEFA Cup quarter-finals on a night of high drama.') Tayls you win' is a pun: a play on the expression used when tossing a coin and the name of one of the goal-scorers, Ian Taylor. The caption to an impressive action shot of Taylor kicking the ball is TAYLOR-MADE, another pun.) Processing this requires detailed knowledge of current football and some familiarity with the names of the people involved. But, of course, this headline is no easier for a British native speaker of English who is not a football fan than it is for someone who lives in another country.

The nominal group Little Euro joy is not the negative item it appears to be to the uninitiated, but a reference to Brian Little, Aston Villa's manager at the time. Thus, fully spelt out in 'non-headline' English, it means something like Brian Little's joy about the European Cup competition. The second sentence of the text says: 'Brian Little's gallant warriors booted out the Romanians amid incredible tension in this third round tie at Villa Park.' Thus the co-text gives the reader a chance to correct any false impression and re-process the headline, but the informed reader will probably have decoded the intended meaning the first time.

Proper names can have different significance depending on the time and place: the word City in a headline in a national - or in a London local - paper usually refers to the City of London; that is, not literally the city of London itself, or even the region of London known as the City (within the ancient boundaries), but to the Stock Exchange and the Banks: the financial powers. In the Birmingham Evening Mail, the same word usually refers to the city of Birmingham: so the phrase City man means a man from Birmingham. However, in local newspapers in Manchester, Stoke and Bristol, city usually refers to the football team. (To spell out the inference that my last statement requires: there are teams called Stoke City, Manchester City, Bristol City etc. You might deduce this even if you did not know already, but it would be hard work without the help of some awareness of football teams and their naming practices.)

Even the time gap between publication and the time when you read the headlines will have an effect on how easy it is to process them. Newspapers by their very nature deal primarily with immediate events. People and organizations that are in the news today may be forgotten in a few weeks.

This question of how the reader's background knowledge contributes to understanding is a crucial factor in all text processing. As a final task what can you say about the following headlines?

**Task**

See if you can explain the connections and what the following headlines are about. What background knowledge is assumed? Some or all may be incomprehensible to non-Brits - or even to Brits, but try anyway.

(1) In Penny Lane there is an adman selling motor-cars
   Volkswagen in Â£6m bid for
   Beatles songs to plug Beetles

(2) Let them eat cakes - with compulsory folic acid
   **Gloss:** This headline precedes an item about a possible government policy of adding
supplements to all bread and cakes to prevent neural tube defects in new-born babies. (A science news item in a national paper)

(3) PM's fury at 'tacky Diana death industry'

**Keys to tasks**

**Task**

Obviously, many different correct answers are possible, but you might have mentioned the following:

1 Physical setting: Store or supermarket. Written notice, large size for easy reading, displayed in prominent place e.g. at high level. Context of culture: retail sales, large, relatively impersonal company (not one-to-one small shop) with acceptance of shop-lifting as a serious possibility. Participants: store management to customers. Impersonal style. Co-text: no predictable precise co-text though other texts in the same environment indicating location of goods, special offers, prices, etc.

2 Physical setting: probably hospital, operating theatre, surgery, or clinic or vicinity thereof. Participants: doctor to assistant, e.g. nurse, dresser or junior doctor. (Note: IV means 'intravenous'). Doctor about to perform some form of surgery or demonstrate surgical technique. Relatively urgent situation. Spoken discourse (or a written representation of it).

All sorts of alternatives are possible, of course. It might all be taking place in someone's kitchen. Or the speaker might be an amateur about to operate because no doctor is available, etc. Or it could be an actor in a drama about hospitals. But the features of the text are still determined by the institutional context of situation outlined above. Of course, the whole thing could be a discussion of a hypothetical situation; e.g. a discussion of how to perform this process, but in that case the imagined situation would be similar and this is what in part determines the discourse. Similar things could be said of all these texts. To say that a situation can be imitated or imagined is not to say that situations do not determine text.

3 Physical location of the text: part of furniture catalogue (note reference to page 218) for actual warehouse or store (Note: Take it home today). Sales culture; promotion of sale. (Note the similarity to advertising discourse). Participants: management to customers. Written. Predictable co-text: similar information about other items of furniture; possibly illustrations.

4 Physical location of the text: part of the information on a video-cassette box. Manufacturer to user. Written. Context of culture: includes sales of goods, ownership of patents.

5 Physical location of text: Newspaper headline. Context of culture: Press accounts of legal trials, alleged crimes, etc. Editorial journalists to general news reading public. If you recognise the names, you might also identify it as being about alleged crime in motor-racing.

(Don't worry too much if your answers were not quite the same as mine. They may be as good or better. Besides, we go further into this type of analysis in subsequent units.)

**Task**

1. We need to infer that the speaker's money is in the coat and so s/he cannot buy the coffee.

2. The speaker from the hospital means this to refer to the baby that is about to appear on the scene; the father implausibly assumes that it means himself (as in Who is this speaking? Incidentally, this an Australian joke. Brits would usually say that rather than this in this situation and so the misunderstanding could not arise.


**Task**

1. A news item about the German/multinational car manufacturing company, Volkswagen, trying to buy songs by the long defunct British pop group, the Beatles, to advertise their Beetle car. One of the Beatles 'songs is 'Penny Lane' and it has similar lyrics: 'adman' is substituted for 'barber' and 'selling motor-cars' substituted for 'showing photographs'. The sub-head helps to
explain, but you still need to know roughly the identity of Volkswagen, Beatles and Beetles. You need to activate a motor-car sales/advertising schema and a pop song schema.

2. Without reading on, it is unlikely that any reader could make much of just the headline here. But I guessed it was something to do with food supplements from the mention of 'compulsory folic acid'; this triggered for me a 'nutrition' schema since I knew that folic acid is an important vitamin. 'Let them eat cakes' is a near-quotation of the supposed comment of Marie-Antoinette, Queen of France, shortly before the Revolution, in response to being told that the poor had no bread. It adds little to the meaning here, though knowing the story makes us feel better retrospectively about Marie-Antoinette having her head cut off - not that this has any relevance at all to the folic acid story. The usual quote is â€˜Let them eat cakeâ€™, but if she said it, she said it in French, or maybe, since she was an Austrian, in German. None of this is at all apposite to this particular text, but it is part of my Marie Antoinette schema or French Revolution schema which was activated by the quotation and which might be relevant on another occasion.

3. At the time of publication (1998), this issue of the commercial spin-off of the accidental death of Diana, Princess of Wales, (sales of memorabilia, mugs, pictures, records, etc.) was still an occasional news item though this was six months after the incident. The editors could assume that most readers would know that 'PM' meant the British Prime Minister (otherwise the headline would have specified 'of Sri Lanka' or whatever) and that the PM at the time was Tony Blair; also of course that 'Diana' meant that particular Diana and not someone else of the same name. Also 'Diana death industry' was a familiar schema at the time.

References
More TV NEWS

- **RTL says can't afford to bid for Bundesliga soccer**
  Reuters - Sun Apr 6, 3:41 AM PDT
  European broadcast group RTL will not bid for the next round of TV rights for the Bundesliga, Germany's premier-league soccer, because it will be too expensive, the head of its German operations told Der Spiegel magazine. "Of course, in our fondest dreams, we'd love to have the Bundesliga," Anke Schaeferkordt said in an interview released over the weekend ahead of publication on Monday. "But I don't need to ask my owners first to know that we can't pay more »

- **TV show finds humor in getting sued**
  Associated Press - Sat Apr 5, 5:40 PM PDT
  Courtroom drama is usually nothing to chuckle about -- unless it's in the Laugh Factory and Tom Arnold or Sinbad are the lawyers. Entrepreneur Jamie Masada was sitting in his venerable Sunset Boulevard comedy club one night when a patron screamed so loudly at a comedian's joke that the guy sitting next to him claimed his hearing was damaged. Next thing the club owner knew, Masada said, he was being named in a lawsuit. "It was so ridiculous. I thought, 'This is a TV more »

- **Beyoncé, Jay-Z Hip-Hop to the Altar**
  E! Online - Sat Apr 5, 6:59 AM PDT
  First comes crazy in love, then comes marriage. Beyoncé Knowles and Jay-Z, a match made in musical heaven, tied the knot in New York Friday, just three days after setting tongues wagging by taking out a marriage license—and hours after what appeared to be the signs of lavish (and possibly nuptial) party preparations compelled dozens of reporters and photogs to gather outside Jay-Z's Tribeca loft. "Yes, it's a wedding," a source at the scene told E! News. However, more »

- **DOJ sues Fox over indecency fines**
  Associated Press - Sat Apr 5, 3:29 AM PDT
  In an unusual move, the Justice Department sued Fox Broadcasting Co. and another broadcaster Friday to collect $56,000 in fines for the broadcast of a raunchy reality show in 2003 that included scenes from bachelor and bachelorette parties. Fox's "Married by America" included the "thrusting of a male stripper's crotch into a woman's face" in one show in addition to other scenes the agency found objectionable, according to a complaint filed in the U.S. District Court more »

- **Guests for the Sunday TV news shows**
  Associated Press - Sat Apr 5, 12:34 AM PDT
  Guest lineup for the Sunday TV news shows: ___ ABC's "This Week" -- Sens. Jim Webb, D-Va., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.; Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean ___ CBS' "Face the Nation" -- Howard Dean ___ NBC's "Meet the Press" -- Sen. Bob
Casey Jr., D-Pa.; Gov. Ed Rendell, D-Pa.; Michael Eric Dyson, author of a book on Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Andrew Young, former Atlanta mayor and an aide to King during the civil rights movement. ___ CNN's "Late more »

- **TV Lookout: highlights April 6-12**
  Associated Press - Fri Apr 4, 9:00 PM PDT
  Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated when he was 39. Now, four decades later, the anniversary of his death is marked by a documentary that explores his life and legacy. "King" revisits signal moments from his fight for civil rights: the bus boycott in Montgomery; the march in Selma; his incarceration in Birmingham; the march on Washington and his speech where he declared unforgettable "I have a dream." Among those interviewed for the special are former President Clinton, Harry more »

- **Fox headed to court to overturn indecency fines**
  Reuters - Fri Apr 4, 4:48 PM PDT
  Fox Broadcasting said on Friday that it would go to court to try to overturn indecency fines imposed on 13 Fox television stations after regulators declined to reconsider the fines. The News Corp's Fox Broadcasting said it would go to court to appeal the fines after the Federal Communications Commission declined a petition for reconsideration and the Department of Justice filed suit to collect the fines. The fines were aimed at penalizing stations for airing episodes more »

- **National Ratings in Prime-Time: Week of March 24, 2008**
  Media Week - Fri Apr 4, 3:40 PM PDT
  Veteran King of the Hill, the second longest running animated sitcom in the history of television behind The Simpsons, has been renewed by Fox for the 2008-09 season. The network has ordered 13 new episodes. -John O'Hurley Named Host of CBS' Secret Talents of the Stars: Current Family Feud host and former Dancing With the Stars runner-up John O'Hurley has been named host of CBS' upcoming Secret Talents of the Stars, which premieres on Tuesday, April 8 at 10 more »

- **Prime-Time Metered Market Thursday Ratings: All Original Programming Rules on CBS**
  Media Week - Fri Apr 4, 3:40 PM PDT
  -Yesterday's Winners: Survivor: Micronesia (CBS), CSI (CBS), Without a Trace (CBS) - Honorable Mention: Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader? (Fox) -Yesterday's Losers (Excluding Repeats): Miss Guided (ABC) -------- -Ratings Breakdown: Led by the return of an original installment of CSI (and still minus Grey's Anatomy on ABC), CBS stood well above any competing network on Thursday in the overnights. And it is poised for a hefty victory in total viewers and adults more »