

# Language and Power in English Texts

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**Course overview:** The aim of this course is to provide an understanding of how English language works to express power-relations and ideology in different kinds of text (both written and spoken). Through the study of different kinds of discourse, we will be looking at how particular linguistic features are used to persuade and manipulate, and convey social, racial or sexist ideologies.

## Chapter 1

### Notions of Power

'Power' refers to the ability of an entity (e.g., company, individual, social group, etc.) to make change, or conversely, to maintain things as they are. In discussing the power of language, we need to consider two distinct uses of language:

- *Language as public discourse:* the language used in the public print media, television and radio, and now, on the Web.
- *Language as interpersonal communication:* the language used when we as individuals interact with other individuals, e.g., friends talking, doctor and patient, teacher and students.

#### 1 Power in Public Discourse

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In one sense, the word 'power' in the title of this course refers to the power of dominant institutions within our society, and how these institutions maintain their dominance through the use of language: media (newspapers, television), advertising, etc.

The public institutions of our society have powers of various sorts. One important power is to control the flow of information: what gets into the press, and how it is presented. The public media is the primary means of shaping public opinion. And if one can shape public opinion, one can change (or strengthen) the power structures that exist (see figure 1). Fairclough (2001, p3) uses the term 'manufacture of consent': if one can convince the people to accept your right to act in specific ways, then you can so act.

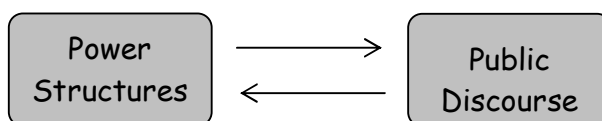


Figure 1: Power controls the media & the media maintains power

These institutions include legally defined entities such as governments, political parties, companies, etc. For instance, if a political party holds some control over a newspaper or television station, then they can control, to some extent, the content delivered through that medium, and also, how that content is expressed. Here in Spain, the government controls some television channels, and the 2 major parties own some newspapers and radio stations.

Companies also can be seen to exert ‘power’ through the media. Firstly, in advertising, a company expresses a message directly to potential consumers. They choose their language carefully to persuade readers to buy their product. Less directly, companies influence the content of news media – the owners of a paper or television station do not like to offend their larger advertisers, and so choose carefully what news they publish, and how it is expressed. For instance, a paper in which McDonalds frequently advertises might ignore reports of food-poisoning in McDonalds, or else place the article in position of low prominence, and lessen the impact of the article by mitigating strategies (e.g., blaming the provider of raw materials instead).

More covertly, since the amount a newspaper can make from advertising depends on how many copies it sells, papers aim to sell as many papers as possible. There is thus a process of selection in what they print – they print what the readership wants to read. Unpopular news will not appear. Similarly for television.

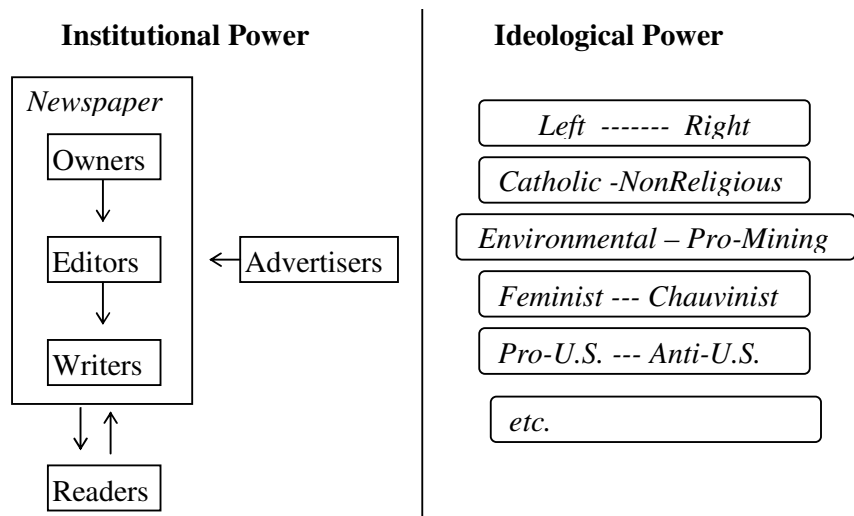
Powerful institutions and individuals often interact to support each other, building *power structures*. Power structures use public discourse to strengthen their own control, and to weaken the power of other groups. For example, the World Bank and the IMF are not totally independent, but swayed by their major contributors (typically U.S.-based multinationals and larger western governments) such that loans to poorer countries are tied with conditions that favour the contributors, e.g., that the recipient must increase their trade with the contributing countries.

Also among these power-wielding institutions, we need to include more vaguely defined groupings. We often talk about groups such as Environmentalists, the Socialists, the Conservatives, Islamic Fundamentalists, Feminists, etc. Here we have groupings of people and institutions which have no legal incorporation. The members of the group are a group only because they share a common *ideology*. That is, they share common beliefs, common goals, and common practices to achieve those goals. Within each group there may be variation as to beliefs, goals and practices, but there is a general commonality.

The members of these ‘movements’ do not actively join the movement (although they may join legally defined groups within the movement). Rather, the movement is an alliance of individuals and institutions, typically acting independently, typically acting for their own self-interest. For example, when one individual writes an article on recycling paper, he draws upon arguments developed by like-minded people, but may have no formal affiliation with them.

On another level, an individual avoids a particular brand because they don’t like the brand values it pushes. For instance, a cigarette brand which pushes macho lifestyle (e.g., horse-riding cowboys) may fail to attract female smokers. See chapter 7 below.

The production of news is controlled at several levels by ideology. The owners of the media have their own ideologies (left or right, strongly catholic or non-religious, etc.). They also respect the ideologies of their advertisers. On another level also, the advertising revenue is based on their readership/viewing levels, so they also want to respect the ideologies of their potential readers/viewers. They may press these views upon the Editors of the news, who in turn may control the writers themselves. Writers soon learn how to write a story to improve its chances of being accepted. Editors also change what the writer originally wrote to fit ‘house style’. Writers themselves have ideologies, and choose the types of news they chase, and the way they perceive that news (which ‘story’ they find within the complex set of events they observe), keeping in mind that they want their articles printed, and to keep their jobs.



So, the news we read or hear is shaped by a complex interaction of ideologies, a fight between those of the owners, the advertisers, the news staff, and the viewing public. The ideology that wins is typically that of the owners or the advertisers.

Whichever ideology is in control, the result is that the news we receive is selected news, and expressed in such a way as to sway us towards their way of looking at events, and thus to share their ideology.

One aim of this course is to make you aware of the strategies used in public media to shape opinion, and thus to ‘immunize’ you from their force.

## 2 Power in Interpersonal Communication

A second sense of ‘power’ is more personal, referring to the power of individuals to influence interactions with others: allowing individuals to be more ‘powerful’ in the sense of being able to achieve their personal goals.

Part of the power of an individual is personal, stemming from their mastery of linguistic skills: knowing *when* to speak (and when not to speak), and *how* to speak. Most of us know the situation of wanting to have our say, but not being sure when to appropriately interrupt, and thus staying silent and feeling powerless. And we have seen those who are always listened to, and believed, even if someone else said the same thing five minutes before, with less belief.

Another part of power stems from the social roles that the individual fills. A doctor talking to a patient inherits the power of his role from the institutional practices we are socialised into: we are trained from a young age into showing respect for our doctor, letting them control the interaction, and answering their questions as well as we can. If we meet our doctor in a different setting (e.g., at a social gathering), then we might interact with them not as a doctor-patient, but more as equals.

Power also stems from the social relationships we have formed with those with whom we talk. Do they trust us or not? (credibility), do they like us? do they respect us? The amount they listen to us and allow us to influence them depends on these factors. If what one says is always worth listening to, then whenever one speaks, those that know you will listen.

## 3 Summary

- When considering ‘language & power’ one needs to distinguish public power vs. personal power.

- Public power is the ability to shape public opinion, and thus to change or maintain the social reality.
- Public power is controlled by institutions, but also by more vaguely defined ideological collectives.
- Personal power is the ability to change or maintain one's local social reality.
- Personal power stems from social roles, social relationships, and personal language competence.

The study of language and power is two sided: firstly, it will enable you to write and interact more effectively (be more powerful), and secondly, it can be used defensively: if you can recognise power strategies in text and writing, then you can avoid being influenced by them.

## 4 Readings

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Talbot et al (2003) Introduction; pp. 1-3.

Talbot et al (2003) Chapter 1: Language & the Media; pp. 9-13.

Fairclough, N. (2001) *Language and Power*. Introduction (pp. 1-5);

Fairclough, N. (1995a) *Media Discourse* "The economics of media" (pp. 42-44)

Goatly, Andrew (2000), *Critical Reading & Writing*: pp. 245-259.

Fowler, R. (1985) "Power".

### Optional Readings

Fairclough, N. (1989) *Language and Power*: Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

Fairclough, N. (1995a) *Media Discourse*: "The politics of media".

Martin, J.R. 1992 *English Texts: system and structure*. Benjamins: p576-588.

Wikipedia "Power (sociology)". See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power\\_\(sociology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_(sociology)).

# Section 1:

## Power in Public Discourse

Fairclough (2001) talks of two ways to exercise power – through physical coercion, or through manufacture of consent. The latter involves convincing people that they should accept things as they are, or accept proposed changes. Physical coercion is time-consuming (it works on only small numbers at a time). Thus, the manufacture of consent is a much preferred vehicle for exercising power.

The public media are the prime vehicle for manufacturing consent, as the media allow contact with large numbers of people, who willingly read/listen to the media. This section of the course will explore the way that language is manipulated to shape public opinion.

The following chapters will explore various techniques used in the public media (spoken or written) to change the way we look at events. We will explore news texts, advertising and political speeches.

## Chapter 3:

### Selecting relevant information

#### 1 Which facts get reported?

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The news we read in the paper does not just happen, it is created. There are uncountable ‘events’ happening every minute on this planet alone, and part of the function of news is to select out of all events those which are considered newsworthy.

The process of selection is a complex one. Reporters on the scene of a ‘happening’ perceive a complex of events, ongoing states, and complex interrelations between people (what we will call ‘facts’), and need to select out those facts which together make a coherent story. The reporter needs to know somewhat of what readers of the paper will enjoy. He is also aware of what his/her editor will accept. The editors themselves may change the story once submitted, adding in information from other sources (e.g., background on participants), or changing the overall message of the story if the message is not in keeping with the paper’s policy, or his own ideologies, or his ideas about what makes a good story. By the time the news gets to the reader, it reports on only a small number of the facts involved in the happening.

The process of fact selection is often driven by literary needs – the need to provide a readable story which entertains the reader. However, of more interest to us here, the selection is also often driven by the ideologies of those in control of the news production process. One includes facts which make a story which reinforces the message you want to make: your allies are made to look good, and your enemies made to look bad.

To demonstrate this process, let's look at two texts, both reporting on a happening during the running of a race during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. The incident involved a collision between two runners, Mary Decker (American) and Zola Budd (South African, but running for Britain). The first article is from an Australian paper, the second from a U.S. paper.

**Australian text:**  
 Budd had been leading the tightly bunched pack narrowly when Decker clipped Budd's left heel. Decker pitched forward and almost somersaulted on to the infield as Budd looked over her shoulder to see what had happened.  
 As Decker lay prostrate, tears streaming down her anguished face, Budd, British team-mate Wendy Sly and Rumania's Maricica Puica, eventual winner, continued running.

**US Text:**  
 Budd and Wendy Sly of England had been vying for the lead when Budd, who runs barefoot, went to the front and tried to cut to the inside of the track.  
 Decker had the inside position, and as Budd moved to the inside, they bumped. Budd moved back outside. A few seconds later, Budd moved in again.  
 This time Decker ran right up Budd's back and clipped Budd's heel with her spiked shoe. Budd veered to the outside, and Decker took a dive into the grassy infield, tearing the number off Budd's back as she fell.  
 She tried to rise, but her left hip muscle was torn, and she fell again and rolled around in agony.  
 Her opponents sprinted away down the track. Her dream of winning Olympic gold ran away with them.

On reading the texts, I had the intuitive impression that the Australian text was pushing the attitude that Decker was at fault, while the American text was pushing the notion that Budd was at fault.

To see how this impression is created, we can contrast these texts in terms of which facts each article includes. We use an 'alignment table', in which the corresponding facts from each article are put on the same line.

In some cases you may need to place facts in an order different to that in the article. One might use one story to sequence the facts, and change the other to fit. Alternatively, one might reorganise both stories to fit the chronological sequencing of the facts.

	Australian	US
1		Budd and Wendy Sly of England had been vying for the lead
2	Budd had been leading the tightly bunched pack narrowly	when Budd, who runs barefoot, went to the front
3		and tried to cut to the inside of the track
4		Decker had the inside position,
5		Budd moved back outside.
6		A few seconds later, Budd moved in again.
7		This time Decker ran right up Budd's back
8	when Decker clipped Budd's left heel.	and clipped Budd's heel with her spiked shoe.

9		Budd veered to the outside,
10	Decker pitched forward and almost somersaulted on to the infield	and Decker took a dive into the grassy infield,
11		tearing the number off Budd's back
12		as she fell.
13		She tried to rise,
14		but her left hip muscle was torn,
15		and she fell again and rolled around in agony.
16	as Budd looked over her shoulder to see what had happened.	
17	As Decker lay prostrate, tears streaming down her anguished face,	
18	Budd, British team-mate Wendy Sly and Rumania's Maricica Puica, eventual winner, continued running.	Her opponents sprinted away down the track.
19		Her dream of winning Olympic gold ran away with them

Note that the two text provides different details in some parts:

- In regards to the opening, both texts say at some point that Budd was in front (2), although the US text starts off by saying that the lead was contentious (1).
- Both texts report that Decker clipped Budd's heel (8), but the US text precedes this by several actions where *Budd* is the Actor (3-7), building up a picture of Budd as the one who was acting (*went to front, cut inside, move back outside, moved in again*). There seems to be an unvoiced implication that Decker's running into Budd was a result of Budd creating a situation.
- The Australian text reports that Budd looked over her shoulder to see what happened (16), suggesting that she was unaware of what happened (and thus that it was not intentional). The US paper ignored this action as irrelevant to their story.

## 2 How are participants described?

Texts usually include certain facts about the participants in the happening, to allow the reader to better visualise them. In this area also, the news creators can be seen to be selecting facts to suite their own purposes.

Looking again at the Budd-Decker texts, the table below shows how Budd and Decker are described:

	<b>Budd</b>	<b>Decker</b>
<b>Australian</b>	little Zola Budd	world titleholder and gold medal favourite Mary Decker, of the United States,
	the barefoot Budd	
	The little South African-born 18-year-old, who took up British citizenship earlier this year to compete in these Olympics	
<b>US</b>	Zola Budd	Mary Decker
	Her main rival	Decker, America's greatest woman-middle distance runner
	18-year-old Zola Budd from South Africa.	a heavy favorite to win the Olympic 3000-

	meter run yesterday
Last March, Budd became a British citizen in order to compete in the Games. South Africa is banned from Olympic competition because of its racial policies.	

The Australian paper contrasted poor little Zola against the world-champion Decker, pushing for sympathy for Zola. The US paper introduces Zola as the rival of Decker, but does not set her up for sympathy.

Both papers mention that Zola was South African and took up British nationality to compete. The US paper manages to make this was a bad thing, her avoiding the ‘morally right’ ban on South Africa participating in international sporting event.

Later in the US text:

“Because South Africa is not allowed to compete in most important meets, Budd came into the competition with almost no international experience. She had achieved her marvellous times running against the clock and the South African wind. She has no concept of strategy. To her, running a 3000 means surging to the lead and holding on for dear life. Decker knew all that before the race and should have been on the lookout for unexpected moves by Budd the way a defensive driver looks for a drunk to pull into his lane on the freeway.”

### 3 Hiding Agency

Look at the following text, reporting on a US bombing of a Baghdad marketplace during the Iraq War:

#### **Bombing of Baghdad market kills 15**

*Globe & Mail March 26, 2003*

The invasion of Iraq claimed its first significant civilian casualties Wednesday when a pair of massive explosions rocked a busy Baghdad marketplace, leaving charred bodies and mangled cars littering the streets.

At least 15 were killed and enraged local residents told a BBC correspondent that the death toll was in the "dozens." Another BBC reporter who visited the scene described it as "a very apocalyptic site."

Reuters News Agency reported that crowds of enraged Iraqis carried bodies away, chanting: "There is no god but Allah" and "We will sacrifice our blood and souls for you, Saddam!"

Television images showed fire engines and ambulances racing to the area as fires blazed in shattered buildings.

The U.S. military said that it was investigating the incident but that there was no reason to assume that coalition forces were responsible.

"We don't know that those were ours," U.S. Brigadier-General Vince Brooks told reporters in Qatar. "we can't say that we had anything to do with that at this point. Once we have more information, we'll be on the record."

One resident said a pair of missiles hit the busy street, which is lined by ground-floor-level shops underneath residential apartment blocks, at around 11:30 a.m. He said he believed as many as 27 people had been killed in the attack.

The thing to notice about this text is its vagueness about who was responsible. The US forces, or the ‘Coalition’, is not mentioned at all until well down in the text. The writer manages to talk about the events without any reference to them.



### 3.1 How Agency is hidden

Texts often hide who is responsible for negatively-perceived actions. How has the writer managed to hide responsibility here? Below are shown the clauses which report of the bombing itself, showing who is Agent and who is Affected.

Agent	Process	Affected
Bombing of market	kills	15
Invasion of Iraq	claimed	civilian casualties
Pair of explosions	rocked	busy street
(explosions)	left	bodies in street
a pair of missiles	hit	busy street

Affected	Process	Circ
At least 15	were killed	
as many as 27 people	had been killed	in the attack

These strategies can be divided between cases which attribute agency to some other entity, and cases where the agent is not mentioned at all:

1. **Attributing agency to intermediate Agent:** Firstly, lets look at the first set of clauses, which are in active voice. In each case, the Agent is not a human. In the last cases, the writer assigns agency to the missiles, not to the ones who dropped them. Imagine a case of murder in your own town. Would the following headline be appropriate:

*Bullet kills woman in home*

Such headlines do not appear. Yet in the case of the bombings, such statements seem to be allowed.

In the first 4 cases, the agent is a nominalised event: an event realised as a nominal group. The writer assigns responsibility to some other event. By nominalising the event, the agency of event does not need to be given (see below).

2. **Non-mention of Agent:** English allows several mechanisms which allow mention of an event without mentioning its Agent:
  - i. *Agentless passive:* a passive clause with no 'by' agent provided. See the two passive clauses above:

*At least 15 were killed*

*as many as 27 people had been killed in the attack*

- ii. *Nominalisation:* by expressing the event as a nominal group rather than as a clause, the agency does not need to be expressed. Lets look at 3 of the cases above, and replace the NP with a full clause. In doing this, we need to make explicit the Subject of the clause:

NP	Expanded form
<i>Bombing of market</i>	<i>US Air force bombed market</i>
<i>The invasion of Iraq</i>	<i>Coalition forces invaded Iraq</i>
<i>a pair of massive explosions</i>	<i>Two US Missiles exploded</i>

It becomes clear who is responsible, and also the writer's way of expressing the events allowed the responsibility to be hidden.

#### Who does what? (using the full text text)

- *Violent actions which kill/hurt people:* invade Iraq, explode things, bomb market.

- The coalition are not presented as the agents.
- Agents: processes (via nominalisation) and technologies (e.g., missiles)
- *Other violent actions*: fight, fire, destroy, attack.
  - Agents: the Coalition forces.
  - Note: these actions do not affect people, only locations, communications or buildings

### 3.2 The news in the making

Sometimes we get to see the process through which news is created. The web-version of the above article included a photo, with the caption:

*An Iraqi man comforts a friend at the Baghdad neighbourhood bombed Wednesday*

However, if one looked at the html, the original caption had been stored as the text to display if the image was missing (my emphasis):

*An Iraqi man comforts a friend at the Baghdad neighbourhood struck Wednesday **by two U.S. missiles.***

Obviously some editor has chosen to delete the U.S. involvement. It would have been interesting to see the whole article before it was edited.

### 3.3 Summary

Responsibility for events can be hidden using the following strategies:

1. Attribution to other entity:
  - i. Attribution to Instrument
  - ii. Attribution to Intermediate Process
2. Non-mention of entity:
  - iii. Agentless passive
  - iv. Nominalisation of event

## 4 Readings

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Lukin, A. (2003) "Softening us up in a subtle war of words".

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/24/1048354539919.html>

Trew, T. (1979) "What the papers say" (in Fowler et al. *Language & Control*)

Trew, T. (1979) "Theory & Ideology at work" (in Fowler et al. *Language & Control*)

#### Optional Readings

Kress, G 1985 "Ideological structures in discourse". In Van Dijk, T. (ed.) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis: Dimensions of Discourse*. London: Academic Press.

Bollinger (1980), Chapter 10.

Delin, Chapter 2.

Goatly, Sections 9.6 and 9.7.

# Chapter 4:

## Power in the Media II

### Using Perspective

The previous chapter looked at manipulation through selection of what is reported. This chapter looks at manipulation through selecting *how to say* those facts which are reported.

Regardless of which facts are included in a media text, the author has freedom to express them in various ways. This section examines some ways of packaging information to achieve different effects, to manipulate the reader.

#### 1 Packaging Events into Sentences

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Events that happen in the world are pre-linguistic. It is only when a human looks at the events, and puts them into words, that we can deal with them. Where two people are involved in a process, we can choose which one to treat as focus. For instance:

*John hit Mary.*

*Mary was hit by John.*

Even deeper, we may see different processes expressed:

*Mary taught John*

*John learnt from Mary.*

Or:

*Chapman killed Lennon*

*Lennon died of gunshot wounds.*

There is only one process here, Lennon dying, but it can be expressed in one form to allow the Agent to be expressed, or another to focus on the process of dying.

Usually the perspective is chosen to highlight particular participants. Sometimes it can be used to hide participants. For instance, in reporting riots in South Africa during the Apartheid days, one paper wrote:

*Seven die during demonstration.*

...which makes it look like the protestors killed their own members. Other papers reported closer to the truth:

*Police shoot seven during demonstration.*

Both reports fit the events. They just choose to take different viewpoints, one focusing on what happened to the protestors, the other on what the police did. The first is somewhat dishonest since it implicates the deaths to the protestors themselves.

#### 1.1 An example: Winners and Losers

Recently, the World Skating Championship was held, and most papers reported on the results. In fact, Arakawa, from Japan, won. Cohen and Kwan from the States were in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

The most unmarked way to report such a sports event would be to say who won, as in:

*Arakawa wins Woman's World Skating title*

However, headlines in the US press preferred to stress the relation to their own candidates:

Reuters: *Arakawa Topples Kwan to Win Women's Crown*

CBC: *Arakawa tops Cohen, Kwan at figure skating worlds*

One paper even neglected to mention who won:

FoxNews: *Michelle Kwan Loses World Skate Champ Title*

In reporting any event, one needs to choose the viewpoint, or perspective, from which one sees it. In this example, the writers choose to focus on what happened to the American favourites.

## 2 Field Shift

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Usually when we talk about a particular topic, there are certain words we can use to name participants, and the types of activities that they are involved in. For instance, in a classroom, we have 'teachers' and 'students'. Teachers 'teach' and students 'learn'.

A writer can however choose to express participants and their activities in terms of a different set of words (a different 'field'). They could describe the classroom as 'controlled' by a 'dictator', and the 'subjects' are 'forced to submit' to 'drudge work'.

Alternatively, the same classroom might be described using a garden metaphor, with the teacher 'nurturing' the student's interests, the students 'growing' in understanding, having 'fertile' minds for the 'seeds' of knowledge 'sown' by the teacher.

Jim Martin, in "Grammaticalizing Ecology", calls this process 'field shift'. A 'field' is *a collection of activities which belong together*, such as those associated with 'classroom', 'war', 'economics', 'physics', etc. A field shift involves expressing a set of participants and their activities using the lexis typically used for another field. Field shift is sometimes discussed under the name of 'metaphor'.

Martin provides the example of how two groups talk about wild animals and their commercial hunting. In one text, the killing of baby seals is talked about using the field of 'renewable resources' (e.g., as in wheat, forestry, etc.). Terms used include:

*projected pup production*  
*a harvest of 239,000 animals*  
*seals are a national resource*  
*sale of skins*

In his other text, kangaroos are involved in activities which are closer to murder (usually reserved for humans) rather than 'utilisation of natural resources':

*3 million living creatures whose lives will be obliterated*  
*the horrifying level of assault on our wildlife*  
*take the price off the head of our national symbol*

The point made by Martin is that the writer can use the technique of 'field shift' to change the way that the reader will think about the participants involved and their activities. The container shapes the way we think about the contents. If we talk about kangaroos as sentient beings, then we will respond to their slaughter in a way different from the commercial farming of a natural resource.

### 2.1 An Example: from protest to war

Look at the text below. Look for instances of field shift.

## TEXT 1

### DISORDERLY ARMY VOWS TO INVADE NO-GO ZONE

(British) Daily Telegraph Friday June 20, 2001. P17

The carriages were lined with young men and women giving clenched-fist salutes, and red flags flew out of the windows as trains carrying revolutionaries arrived in Genoa yesterday.

They arrived from all over Italy, part of a gathering army of anarchists, communists and trade unionists pledged to invade today's G8 summit.

At every station they were greeted with a huge roar from their comrades.

The atmosphere created by about 6,000 anarchists at the Carlini football stadium heightened fears that there will be violence and bloodshed today. Talk soon turned to taking over the city centre.

Two huge marquees covered the inside area of a running track. Inside them thousands of protesters patiently manufactured their own body armour to protect them from police batons.

Long-haired, bearded men were joined by a large number of women to cut out cardboard and foam-padding and tape it together. With their home-made suits of armour they hope to bring down the summit of the world's richest nations.

They came from all over Europe, with the British contingent a score of "Wombles" activists from London as well as anarchists and hunt saboteurs from Manchester.

## ANSWER

**Bold:** military

*Italic: anarcho-communist*

### DISORDERLY ARMY VOWS TO INVADE NO-GO ZONE

(British) Daily Telegraph Friday June 20, 2001. P17

The carriages were lined with young men and women giving *clenched-fist salutes*, and *red flags* flew out of the windows as trains carrying *revolutionaries* arrived in Genoa yesterday.

They arrived from all over Italy, part of a gathering **army** of *anarchists*, *communists* and *trade unionists* pledged to **invade** today's G8 summit.

At every station they were greeted with a huge roar from their *comrades*.

The atmosphere created by about 6,000 *anarchists* at the Carlini football stadium heightened **fears** that there will be **violence** and **bloodshed** today. Talk soon turned to **taking over** the city centre.

Two huge marquees covered the inside area of a running track. Inside them thousands of protesters patiently manufactured their own **body armour** to **protect** them from police batons.

*Long-haired, bearded men* were joined by a large number of women to cut out cardboard and foam-padding and tape it together. With their home-made **suits of armour** they hope to *bring down* the summit of the world's richest nations.

They came from all over Europe, with the British contingent a score of "Wombles" activists from London as well as *anarchists* and hunt *saboteurs* from Manchester.

**My Analysis:** There are two related field-shifts applied here. Firstly, the protestors are being recast not as protestors (who normally 'demonstrate', who 'march', who 'sign petitions', etc.), but as anarcho-communists:

**Participants:** *revolutionaries, anarchists, communists, trade unionists, comrades, long-haired bearded men*

**Activities:** *clench-fist salutes, bring down, sabotage (from 'saboteurs')*

**Instruments:** *red flags*

Secondly, the protestors are being portrayed as engaging in warfare:

**Participants:** *army*

**Activities:** *invade, salutes, taking over, violence, bloodshed*

**Instruments:** *body armour*

The same pattern can be seen in many other news reports about protest. The following transcript of a news broadcast is taken from Kress “Ideological Structures in Discourse”, p.32-33. It concerns a protest against South African football tour in New Zealand, and the ‘writer’ also applies a military metaphor.

The first match of the highly controversial springbok tour of New Zealand produced two **victors** today: the South Africans and the police. The Springboks had the easier of the **clashes**, **annihilating** a Poverty Bay rugby side twenty-four to six. But the NZ police forces **guarding** the ground at Gisbourne had to cope with dozens of angry protestors who chanted anti-apartheid slogans, blew whistles to **disrupt** the match, and made two attempts to **invade** the pitch. Here is today's special satellite report.

Things began **peacefully** enough with a **march** through the town. But the calm wasn't to last for long. **Squads** of police hurried to the **vulnerable** back fence but **reinforcements** weren't there quickly enough. The demonstrators **stormed** the fence, with only a handful of police trying to **hold them back**. Many managed to get up a slippery bank and began **tearing** the fence **down**. **Violent clashes** followed. More **clashes**, this time more bitter, erupted. The **confrontation** was to last several hours. Several people claimed to have been injured in the brawls. As some lay on the ground, emotions subsided.

The demonstration ended late this afternoon after thirteen had been arrested. Elsewhere around the country many other people were arrested. Demonstrations such as this one in Auckland this evening spanned the length and breadth of the nation today as the anti-tour groups branded today NZ's day of shame. JW reporting from NZ for Eyewitness News.

Kress comments:

“The choice of lexical items is guided by the metaphor of a military clash, a battle, and this metaphor permits the casting of one side as ‘enemy’ and the other as ‘friend or protector’. So the police *guard the ground* which the protestors attempt to *invade, storm*.” (p35)

In applying the metaphor, the writer is not telling the facts as they are, but also forcing an interpretation of the facts onto the audience.

**Aside:** ‘peacefully’ by its very inclusion defines its opposite, war. As Kress points out elsewhere, by referring to peace, we bring into mind war. If one says things began peacefully, one implies that there was some expectation that things would not begin peacefully. It also implies that things did not end peacefully. Imagine if we describe a friend’s wedding as “proceeding without any fighting”. This would make one think that some fighting was expected.

### 3 Readings

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Martin, J. (1986) “Grammaticalizing Ecology: The Politics of Baby Seals and Kangaroos” In T. Threadgold, E. Grosz, G. Kress, and M.A.K. Halliday (eds.) *Language, Semiotics, Ideology*. Sydney: Sydney Association for Studies in Society and Culture. Pp. 225-267.”

Goatly, Andrew (2000) *Critical Reading and Writing*. Chapter 2.

#### Optional Readings

Bollinger, Chapter 12.

Goatly, Section 9.8.

## Section 2

# Power in Private Discourse

In the previous material, we have looked at ‘power’ in the public domain, and how public discourses can be used to manipulate or maintain public opinion. In this section, we will explore language and power at a more personal level.

‘Power’ for the individual often comes down to how effectively the individual can use their language abilities to interact with others: knowing *when* to speak (and when not to speak), and *how* to speak. Most of us know the situation of wanting to have our say, but not being sure when to appropriately interrupt, and thus staying silent and feeling powerless. And we have seen those who are always listened to, and believed, even if someone else said the same thing five minutes before, with less belief.

We talk with others to negotiate, sometimes explicitly, as when businessmen negotiate a deal, teachers negotiate the division of teaching, or an employee negotiates with employers regarding wages. Sometimes the negotiation is less explicit, for instance, when we talk with friends or colleagues, we are negotiating social standing (how people think of you), trying to achieve respect, or a lessening of social distance.

Another part of power stems from the social roles that the individual fills. A doctor talking to a patient inherits the power of his role from the institutional practices we are socialised into: we are trained from a young age to show respect for our doctor, letting them control the interaction, and answering their questions as well as we can. If we meet our doctor in a different setting (e.g., at a social gathering), then we interact with them not as a doctor-patient, but more as equals.

Power also stems from the social relationships we have formed with those with which we talk. Do they trust us or not? (credibility), do they like us? do they respect us? The amount they listen to us (or allow us to influence them), depends on these factors. If what you say is always worth listening to, then whenever you speak, those that know you will listen.

# Chapter 9

## Establishing & Maintaining Power relationships in interpersonal dialogue

Before discussing how language is used to establish and maintain power relationships in interpersonal dialogue, we will introduce a way of looking at dialogue which will help us analyse discourse. The dialogue model is derived from that proposed by Margaret Berry (1981).

### 1 The Exchange

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The basic unit for analysing dialog is the *exchange*, which is a set of *moves* which together develop a single proposition (or in some cases, a propositional complex).

The simplest exchange consists of a single move, a simple statement:

1. A: *I love camping.*

In some cases, the addressee can respond to the statement, indicating that they accept the statement as true:

2. A: *I love camping.*  
B: *I know.*

Exchanges can also involve a question/answer format. These can be yes/no questions:

3. A: *Do you like camping?*  
B: *Yes, I do.*

...or content questions:

4. A: *What do you want to do?*  
B: *Go camping.*

In some cases, the asker of the question will also state their acceptance of the answer:

5. A: *What do you want to do?*  
B: *Go camping.*  
A: *Ok.*

Sometimes they reject the answer:

6. A: *Do you like camping?*  
B: *Yes, I do.*  
A: *No you don't, silly.*
7. A: *What do you want to do?*  
B: *Go camping.*  
A: *No,*  
(starting a new exchange)  
*...It's raining.*



## 2 Initiation & Response

The power in dialogue is often revealed by studying who initiates each exchange. In each of the exchanges above, the first move is the Initiating (I) move, the others are Responding (R) moves, e.g.,

- 5a. I A: *What do you want to do?*  
 R B: *Go camping.*  
 R A: *Ok.*
- 7a. I A: *What do you want to do?*  
 R B: *Go camping.*  
 R A: *No,*  
       *(starting a new exchange)*  
 I       *...It's raining.*

### EXERCISE 1 (Answers at back)

The following text, taken from Fairclough (1989), p18, is of a policeman interviewing a man who has just witnessed a violent crime.

1. Look at the following text, and classify each move as either I (initiating) or R (responding).
2. For each participant, add up the number of initiations they make. What percentage of initiations were made by the policeman?
3. On the basis of this result, who would you say is in control of the direction of the conversation?

#### TEXT 1

	I/R	P/W	Text
1	I	P:	Did you get a look at the one in the car?
2	R	W:	I saw his face, yeah.
3		P:	What sort of age was he?
4		W:	About 45.
5			He was wearing a...
6		P:	And how tall?
7		W:	Six foot one.
8		P:	Six foot one.
9			Hair?
10		W:	Dark and curly
11			Is this going to take long?
12			I've got to collect the kids from school.
13		P:	Not much longer, no.
14			What about his clothes?
15		W:	He was a bit scruffy-looking, blue trousers, black...
16		P:	Jeans?
17		W:	Yeah.

**Initiation and Power:** The relationship between initiation and power is not always clear. In one sense, the party who initiates most is controlling what is being talked about. In interviews, the interviewer controls the direction of the conversation by controlling initiation.

However, there are times when the person initiating is the less powerful. We know the situation where a nervous person will talk on and on without stopping, while the one in control keeps reserved, answering minimally, not initiating.

So, when relating initiation to power, one needs to be careful to be clear whether initiation is stemming from a position of power, or from a lack of power.

Note also that the right to initiate is sometimes constrained. In a U.S. Army ‘boot camp’ (training camp), new recruits are tightly disciplined. Dialogs such as the following can occur:

Sarg: (enters briskly, shouts)

*Come to attention, you low lifes.*

(They snap to attention in a straight row)

P1: *Permission to speak, Sergeant?*

Sarg: *Permission granted, dog face.*

P1: *What are you doing here? Where's the chaplain, Sergeant?*

In this made up dialog (part of a comedy sketch), the private is not allowed to initiate an exchange, without permission, but must respond to any request of the sergeant. The one exception to the rule is that he can initiate a request for permission to initiate an exchange. Whether or not such restrictions exist in real life is not clear, although there are numerous such examples in movies and books.

### **3 Propositional Negotiation**

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An exchange can be seen as the joint negotiation of propositional content. As such, the moves in an exchange can be classified into 5 types:

1. Propositional Base (PB): a move which offers a partially complete proposition, with the expectation that the other completes it. These moves are questions, e.g.,

8. PB A: *What time is it?*

2. Propositional Completion (PC): a move which completes the proposition. This could be the response to a PB move, e.g.,

9. PB A: *What time is it?*

PC B: *Seven thirty.*

Alternatively, a speaker can initiate an exchange with a complete proposition (making a statement), e.g.,

10. PC A: *I love camping!*

3. Propositional Support (PS): after a propositional completion, the other speaker can state their agreement with the proposition, e.g.,

11. PB A: *Where are you going?*

PC B: *To the theatre.*

PS A: *Ok.*

PS moves are usually optional. If not provided, agreement is (generally) assumed. PS moves can merely indicate acceptance (*Ok, oh*), or in some cases indicate that the utterer already knew the information (*yes, correct, etc.*), e.g.,

12. PB T: *What is an aphid?*  
 PC S: *A type of insect.*  
 PS T: *Correct.*
4. Propositional Rejection (PS): a move where the speaker rejects the just-completed proposition. Such moves are sometimes followed by alternative completions, e.g.,
13. PB T: *What is an aphid?*  
 PC S: *A type of ant?*  
 PR T: *No,*  
 PC ... *it's another type of insect.*
5. Proposition Unknown (PU): a move where the speaker indicates their lack of knowledge in relation to the proposition, e.g.,
14. PB A: *Is John coming?*  
 PU B: *I don't know.*

One needs to be careful distinguishing the following two cases:

15. PB A: *John is coming?*  
 PC B: *Yes.*
16. PC A: *John is coming.*  
 PS B: *Yes.*

In 15, (A) starts with a question (indicating they don't know the polarity of the proposition), and (B) provides the polarity, thus completing the proposition. In 16, (A) provides a complete proposition from the start (their opinion of the polarity of the statement is explicit), and (B) merely confirms that they accept this statement.

**Knowledge Roles:** Berry uses the terms “primary knower” (the participant with complete knowledge of the proposition being negotiated), and “secondary knower” (the one to whom this information is given). Her model is relatively simple, ignoring the cases where i) both participants know the proposition being negotiated (as in 12 above), or ii) neither participant can complete the proposition (as in 14). In the first case, we have two primary knowers, and in the second, we have two secondary knowers.

We can generalize the notion of knowledge roles, and talk about who is seen as the primary knower for the current topic, the ‘expert’ in the domain which is being talked about. In a classroom, the teacher is generally assumed to be the primary knower in regards to the subject matter of the class. However, if the teacher asks *What did you do on your vacation?*, then it is the student who is the primary knower in regards to this topic.

Primary knowers generally provide the PC element of the exchange – they either make statements, or they answer questions. However, in some limited contexts, the primary knower can ask questions for which they already know the answer. Two obvious contexts are quiz shows and teacher-student interactions. The primary knower will ask a question for which they know the answer, and the secondary knower will either answer or deny knowledge. The primary knower will then typically provide the PS or PR slot of the exchange, and possibly a PC slot if the secondary knower did not give the right answer. See examples (12) and (13) above.

**Knowledge roles & Power:** ‘Knowledge is power’ is an often quoted phrase. In some situations (e.g., business, politics) having the answers that others want puts one in a good negotiating position, one can withhold information unless one is offered what one wants (respect, favours,

money, etc.). Knowledge also allows one to control situations in that those who know more can bend the truth, and the ignorant may not know enough to recognize the deception. On the other hand, those with knowledge can recognize (some of) the deception of those who don't know enough to lie convincingly.

To demonstrate, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, recently told an investigating panel that there was no organization behind the recent prison scandal in Iraq. He said this with full knowledge that, at that time, no-one in the general public knew of the Pentagon's top-secret intelligence operation "Copper Green" which was "encouraging physical coercion and sexual humiliation of Iraqi prisoners in an effort to generate more intelligence about the growing insurgency in Iraq" (from Seymour M. Hersh article). He could not have made the statements he made if the facts had been more widespread.

Even beside the power one gains by withholding or manipulating truth, being in a primary knower role gives one social standing. One who freely shares their wisdom and knowledge is usually socially respected.

The other side of the coin involves the manipulation of knowledge roles. A useful strategy to "win someone over" involves putting them in the primary knower role – asking them about topics on which they are knowledgeable, and showing that you value their knowledge. One thus strengthens phatic (friendship) bonds with the other by raising their social status in this way. Movies often show the hero 'chatting up' a secretary/archivist in this way as a means to gain access to the company records.

**EXERCISE 2 (answers in Appendix)**

1. Once again analyse text 1, this time in terms of PB/PC/PS/PR/PU.
2. Who is the primary knower in this situation?

	P?	P/W	Text
1		P:	Did you get a look at the one in the car?
2		W:	I saw his face, yeah.
3		P:	What sort of age was he?
4		W:	About 45.
5			He was wearing a...
6		P:	And how tall?
7		W:	Six foot one.
8		P:	Six foot one.
9			Hair?
10		W:	Dark and curly
11			Is this going to take long?
12			I've got to collect the kids from school.
13		P:	Not much longer, no.
14			What about his clothes?
15		W:	He was a bit scruffy-looking, blue trousers, black...
16		P:	Jeans?
17		W:	Yeah.

## 4 Speaker Turns

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A *turn* is simply the sequences of moves by a speaker during which the other participant(s) do not speak. Turns are not coextensive with exchanges, as a turn may begin with a response to one exchange, and the initiation of another, e.g.,

10.	I	A:	<i>I'm going out.</i>	<b>Turn 1</b>
	I		<i>What time is it?</i>	
	R	B:	<i>Seven o'clock.</i>	<b>Turn 2</b>
	I		<i>Where are you going?</i>	

Sometimes a speaker's turn will consist of a series of statements (e.g., if they are telling a story, recounting events, etc.). The other speaker will occasionally utter a *backchannel* move, e.g., 'ahah', 'oh', 'hmmm', which shows they are listening (acting as a PS move) but without actually taking the floor.

If a speaker wishes to continue his turn, but needs a pause to get their words together, they typically 'hold the floor' by issuing some sound, such as "ahhhh" or "errr", which they maintain until they resume speaking.

When the speaker wants to give up the floor, they usually indicate this in some way. They might end their turn by issuing a question, and ceasing to talk. Or their last statement might end with a particular intonation, gesture or eye contact, indicating they have finished talking.

The amount of pause needed to pass the turn is culturally dependent. In Anglo cultures, the average pause between one speaker and the next is around 0.2 seconds. Scandinavian cultures, a speaker can pause for up to a second without intending to pass the turn (nor would another Scandinavian expect to take up the turn until a second had passed). In Spanish culture, in informal conversation between friends, there is almost no pause at all, and often an overlap, which is not considered rude.

When a Spaniard and a Scandinavian talk, at first they might find the other rude, the Scandinavian finding the Spaniard always interrupting, the Spaniard finding the Scandinavian reticent and uninvolved.

The length of pause allowed without passing turn also increases with power differences. If talking to the elderly, or to one's employer, one waits to be sure they have finished before taking a turn, while the more powerful can interrupt a turn more freely.

A good conversationalist will be a master of turn management, knowing how to maintain the floor when they want to, and how to usurp (take) the floor when they don't have it but want it. Such speakers have an innate sense of timing – when to speak, how long they can pause. They are also in full command of the paralinguistic signals which indicate they wish to take-up, maintain or pass the floor.

## 5 Interruptions

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In dialogue, there are expectations about whose turn it is to speak. One speaker can break these expectations in various ways.

Firstly, the interruption can occur *while the other is speaking*, e.g.,

- A: *Can you tell me ...*  
B: *Don't bother me right now.*

Alternatively, the interruption can occur between moves. This could involve a forced taking of the turn (e.g., taking the turn before the other participant was willing to pass it):

A: *I went to the market today, and ...*

B: *Did you get some meat?*

Sometime the turn is voluntarily passed, but the new speaker, rather than continuing the exchange begun by the other, starts a new one:

A: *Can you tell me the time?*

B: *Did you see John today?* (ignoring the question)

In many situations, it is considered rude to interrupt. This is more the case where the person interrupted has higher social status. Interruption is more common between social equals (friends or family). Those of higher social status seem to be able to interrupt more frequently those of lower social status. Whatever the social standing, an interruption is usually tolerated if it is helpful, as in cases where the interruption clarifies some misunderstanding, or provides information to the benefit of the interrupted person(s). For instance, it is not rude to interrupt to tell someone their train is leaving, or their jacket is on fire.

The decision to interrupt has semiotic power (the very act of interruption carries meaning). It states something about how the interrupter views the relative social standing of the participants, and of the importance of their message. Someone who frequently interrupts is stating that they think they are more important, or what they have to say is more important than that of the person interrupted.

However, to build personal power, one has to use such strategies appropriately. An individual who interrupts where others don't think the situation warranted interruption will establish a reputation of being rude, someone to be avoided. On the other hand, someone who uses the strategy appropriately achieves credibility and respect.

### **EXERCISE 3 - Interruptions**

1. Look again at text 1. Count the number of times each participant interrupts the other.
2. What percentage of the interruptions are by the policeman?
3. Explain the result in question (2) in terms of relative power, and importance of messages.

### **EXERCISE 4**

Look at the following text, taken from Fairclough (1989), p44-5. It is a conversation between a doctor and a medical student. Here we use a pair of square brackets ([ ]) to indicate an interruption.

4. Count the number of times each participant interrupts the other.
5. What percentage of the interruptions are by the doctor?
6. Explain the result in (2) in terms of relative power, and importance of messages.

### **TEXT 2**

1. D: And let's gather round the first of the infants. Now what I want you to do is to make a basic neo-natal examination just as Dr Mathews has to do as soon as a baby arrives in the ward. All right so you are actually going to get your hands on the infant and look at the key points and demonstrate them to the group as you're doing it. Will you do that for me please. Off you go.
2. S: Well first of all I'm going to [

3. D: [ First before you do that is do you wash your hands isn't it. Cos you've just been examining another baby. Are you still in a position to start examining yet?
4. S: Just going to remove this.
5. D: Very good. It's putting it back that's the problem isn't it, eh? ...
6. S: Come back Mum ...
7. D: That's right. OK now, just get a little more room by shifting baby up the thing a bit more, that's very good. Well now, off you go and describe what's going on.
8. S: Well, here's a young baby boy, who we've decided is thirty seven weeks old now, was born two weeks ago, un is fairly active, his er eyes are open, he's got hair on his head  
[ . his eyes are [ open
9. D: [ yes [ yes you've told me that
10. S: um he's crying or [ making
11. D: [ yeah we we we've heard that now what other examination are you going to make I mean-
12. S: erm we'll see if he'll respond to [
13. D: [ now look, did we not look at a baby with a head problem yesterday?
14. S: Right.
15. D: And might you not make one examination of the head almost at square one before you begin?
16. S: Feel for the ( )
17. D: Now what's the next most important thing .
18. S: Gross mo- gross motor [ function
19. D: [ well now you come down to the mouth don't we.
20. S: yes
21. D: now what about the mouth

## 6 Other Exercises

Let's apply the above analytical methods to some other texts.

### EXERCISE 5: Making a medical appointment by phone

P Patient R Receptionist

I/R	P?	Sp.	Move.
		P:	<i>Hello.</i>
			<i>This is Richard Brown.</i>
			<i>I'd like to make an appointment to see Dr. Habi.</i>
		R:	<i>Certainly.</i>
			<i>What seems to be the problem?</i>
		P:	<i>I'd like to have my annual check-up.</i>
		R:	<i>Fine.</i>
			<i>When would you be available to come in to see Dr. Habi?</i>
		P:	<i>Any day next week in the morning would be great.</i>
		R:	<i>How about next Thursday at 10 o'clock?</i>
		P:	<i>That sounds fine. Thank you.</i>
		R:	<i>We'll see you next Thursday Mr. Brown.</i>
			<i>Goodbye.</i>

## 7 Summary

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The relationship between power and personal interaction is a complex one. Firstly, a skilled conversationalist can achieve their interactional goals better than an unskilled one. Skill in turn management allows a speaker to take-up, maintain or pass the turn smoothly, without hiccups. And when necessary, interruption can be a useful tool to keep an interaction on track, but if used unwisely, can lessen one's personal effectiveness. Skilled direction of topics (via initiation) allows one to discuss the issues that one needs to be addressed (and to avoid those you don't want addressed). In addition, appropriate use of knowledge roles (assigning a primary knower role to the other) can improve one's phatic standing. When cast in the role as primary knower, one can manipulate the situation by withholding information, or by delivering false or coloured information.

On the other hand, an interactant's power to manipulate these dialogic strategies often derives in part from one's social role or standing. In some cases, the ability to assert such power can stem from the fact that the participant represents the institution which 'houses' the dialogue (e.g., receptionist, police interviewer, TV interviewer, teacher). Directing the flow of topics (through initiation and interruption) is more appropriate for those in the host institution. Social status also helps: when two speakers are competing for the floor, the more respected individual often wins out.

These two themes – power as command of the language and power through social roles – are often interlinked. The more developed your linguistic skills, the more likely you are to develop social respect, and also the more likely you are to be able to negotiate into socially powerful positions. And in turn, the respect you gain from being in a socially respected situation allows one to act with confidence, and thus increase your skills.

Additionally, a participant can have 'power' through the knowledge they have. The degree of power that this knowledge allows them depends on various factors, e.g., is the knowledge a negotiable commodity? (how much does the other party desire the knowledge) Does the speaker have the language skills to take advantage of her superiority of knowledge?

In summary, power in dialog stems from the control of two commodities:

1. *Control of the floor*: the power to initiate exchanges, to maintain the floor, and to interrupt exchanges one feels less important;
2. *Control of information*: the possession of information which is 'negotiable'.

## 8 Readings

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(Turn taking) Levinson, S. (1983), Pp. 296-303



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## ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

### EXERCISE 1

	I/R	P/W	Text
1	I	P:	Did you get a look at the one in the car?
2	R	W:	I saw his face, yeah.
3	I	P:	What sort of age was he?
4	R	W:	About 45.
5	I		He was wearing a...
6	I	P:	And how tall?
7	R	W:	Six foot one.
8	R	P:	Six foot one.
9	I		Hair?
10	R	W:	Dark and curly
11	I		Is this going to take long?
12	I		I've got to collect the kids from school.
13	R	P:	Not much longer, no.
14	I		What about his clothes?
15	R	W:	He was a bit scruffy-looking, blue trousers, black...
16	I	P:	Jeans?
17	R	W:	Yeah.

- The policeman initiated 6 times, the witness 3 times.
- It is clear that the policeman is in control. In move 5, the witness attempts to take some active control of the dialogue, but the policeman quickly re-asserts control, interrupting the witness's unprompted statement, with his own question. In the exchange 11-13, the witness once again tries to take control of the dialogue, but the policeman provides a fairly empty answer and continues with his interrogation.

### EXERCISE 2

	P?	P/W	Text
1	PB	P:	Did you get a look at the one in the car?
2	PC	W:	I saw his face, yeah.
3	PB	P:	What sort of age was he?
4	PC	W:	About 45.
5	<del>PC</del>		He was wearing a...
6	PB	P:	And how tall?
7	PC	W:	Six foot one.
8	PS	P:	Six foot one.
9	PB		Hair?
10	PC	W:	Dark and curly
11	PB		Is this going to take long?
12	PC		I've got to collect the kids from school.
13	PC	P:	Not much longer, no.
14	PB		What about his clothes?
15	PC	W:	He was a bit scruffy-looking, blue trousers, black...
16	PB	P:	Jeans?
17	PC	W:	Yeah.

**Interpretation:** The policeman utters almost entirely PB moves, and the witness PC moves. Clearly the witness is the primary knower in regards to the events he witnessed. This could give him power if he tried to withhold information to get, e.g., more respect. However, in this situation, he is fully cooperative, his main concern being to finish as quickly as possible.

The one place where the knowledge roles are reversed is in relation to the topic “interview procedure” – the witness asks how long the interview will take, and the policeman (primary knower on this topic) provides the PC move.

### EXERCISE 3

Looking back at text 1, we see there are two interruptions in the dialogue: in both cases, the witness is providing information which is not relevant at that point of the dialogue, and the policeman interrupts him. The policeman interrupts because he believes that what he is asking is more relevant to the goals of the interaction than what the witness is providing.

### EXERCISE 4

1. The Doctor is the only one to interrupt, which he does six times.
2. The doctor makes 100% of the interruptions.
3. The doctor is in a situation where time is limited, but he needs to teach the student. Thus, whenever he sees the student is not giving the answer he wants, he interrupts to put the student on the correct path. This is not taken as rude as it is to the student’s benefit.

### EXERCISE 5 Making a medical appointment by phone

	I/R	P?	Sp.	Move.
1	I	-	P.	<i>Hello.</i>
2	I	PC		<i>This is Richard Brown.</i>
3	I	PB or PC		<i>I'd like to make an appointment to see Dr. Habi.</i>
4	R	PC or PS	R:	<i>Certainly.</i>
5	I	PB		<i>What seems to be the problem?</i>
6	R	PC	P:	<i>I'd like to have my annual check-up.</i>
7	R	PS	R:	<i>Fine.</i>
8	I	PB		<i>When would you be available to come in to see Dr. Habi?</i>
9	R	PC	P:	<i>Any day next week in the morning would be great.</i>
10	I	PB	R:	<i>How about next Thursday at 10 o'clock?</i>
11	R	PC	P:	<i>That sounds fine. Thank you.</i>
12	I	PC	R:	<i>We'll see you next Thursday Mr. Brown.</i>
13	I	-		<i>Goodbye.</i>

Note:

1. Phatic moves such as “hello” and “goodbye” have no propositional content, so are not coded in the propositional scheme.
2. Move (3) is ambiguous – is he stating a fact (what he would like), or is he making a request – “can I make an appointment?”. Indirect speech acts, not covered here, often involve requests in the form of statements.
3. I have here modelled (10) as starting a new exchange. Another analysis might treat (10) as the continuation of the exchange started in (8). The receptionist counter-proposes a more specific time for the appointment.

**Interpretation of power relations:** the patient is in general the primary knower, as he is the one who knows what problem he has, and when he is available. The receptionist on the other hand controls the script, as he/she, representing the doctor, knows what information is needed for the making of an appointment.