

ROUTLEDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTRODUCTIONS



Language and Media

A RESOURCE BOOK FOR STUDENTS



Rodney H. Jones, Sylvia Jaworska, and Erhan Aslan
Second Edition



Language and Media is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in learning more about media discourse. It provides a clear foundation in relevant theoretical concepts, balanced with plenty of engaging examples. In addition, the sections featuring extension activities and key readings make this an ideal course textbook.'

Camilla Vasquez, *University of South Florida*

'This book is a key volume for the new media age: updating, assessing, and expanding our understanding of media and the many ways language and communication dynamics operate across a changed and changing mediascape. The authors characterize native online media features such as memes, viral spreads, surveillance capacities, and resistance; as well as resituate longstanding elements of media research such as stories, participation frameworks, production dimensions, and representation. It is definitely the go-to resource for understanding the media now.'

Colleen Cotter, *Queen Mary University of London*



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

LANGUAGE AND MEDIA

Routledge English Language Introductions cover core areas of language study and are one-stop resources for students.

Assuming no prior knowledge, books in the series offer an accessible overview of the subject, with activities, study questions, sample analyses, commentaries, and key readings—all in the same volume. The innovative and flexible ‘two-dimensional’ structure is built around four sections—introduction, development, exploration, and extension—which offer self-contained stages for study. Each topic can also be read across these sections, enabling the reader to build gradually on the knowledge gained.

This second edition of *Language and Media*:

- ❑ Provides an accessible introduction and comprehensive overview of the major approaches and methodological tools used in the study of language and media.
- ❑ Focuses on a broad range of media and media content from more traditional print and broadcast media formats to more recent digital media formats.
- ❑ Incorporates practical examples using real data, including newspaper articles, press releases, television shows, advertisements (print, broadcast, and digital), blogs, social media content, internet memes, culture jamming, and protest signs.
- ❑ Includes key readings from leading scholars in the field, such as Jan Blommaert, Sonia Livingstone, David Machin, Martin Montgomery, Ruth Page, Ron Scollon, and Theo van Leeuwen.
- ❑ Offers a wide range of activities, questions, and points for further discussion.

This book emphasizes the increasingly creative ways ordinary people are engaging in media production. It also addresses a number of urgent current concerns around media and media production/reception, including fake news, clickbait, virality, and surveillance.

Written by three experienced teachers and authors, this accessible textbook is an essential resource for all students of English language and linguistics.

Rodney H. Jones is Professor of Sociolinguistics, University of Reading, UK.

Sylvia Jaworska is Associate Professor of Language and Professional Communication, University of Reading, UK.

Erhan Aslan is Lecturer in Applied Linguistics, University of Reading, UK.

ROUTLEDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTRODUCTIONS

SERIES CONSULTANT: PETER STOCKWELL

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

FOUNDING EDITOR: RONALD CARTER

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

TITLES IN THE SERIES:

Child Language

Jean Stilwell Peccei

Sociolinguistics

Peter Stockwell

Researching English Language

Alison Sealey

Stylistics, Second Edition

Paul Simpson

Global Englishes, Third Edition

(previously published as *World Englishes*)

Jennifer Jenkins

Pragmatics, Third Edition

(previously published as *Pragmatics and Discourse*)

Joan Cutting

Introducing English Language, Second Edition

Louise Mullany and Peter Stockwell

Language and Law

Alan Durant and Janny HC Leung

English Grammar, Second Edition

Roger Berry

Language and Power, Second Edition

Paul Simpson, Andrea Mayr and Simon Statham

Discourse Analysis, Second Edition

Rodney Jones

Practical English Phonetics and Phonology, Fourth Edition

Beverley Collins, Inger M. Mees and Paul Carley

History of English, Second Edition

Dan McIntyre

Language and Media, Second Edition

Rodney H. Jones, Sylvia Jaworska, and Erhan Aslan

For more information about this series, please visit: www.routledge.com/series/RELI

LANGUAGE AND MEDIA

A Resource Book for Students

Second Edition

**RODNEY H. JONES, SYLVIA JAWORSKA,
AND ERHAN ASLAN**

A

B

C

D

Second edition published 2021
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2021 Rodney H. Jones, Sylvia Jaworska, and Erhan Aslan

The right of Rodney H. Jones, Sylvia Jaworska, and Erhan Aslan to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

First edition published by Routledge 2009

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Names: Jones, Rodney H., author. | Jaworska, Sylvia, author. | Aslan, Erhan, author.

Title: Language and media: a resource book for students /

Rodney Jones, Sylvia Jaworska and Erhan Aslan.

Description: 2nd edition. | Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. |

Series: Routledge English language introductions |

Revised edition of: Language and media: a resource book for students /

Alan Durant and Marina Lambrou. 2009. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020013891 (print) | LCCN 2020013892 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781138644397 (hardback) | ISBN 9781138644410 (paperback) |

ISBN 9781003084211 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Mass media and language. | English language—Discourse analysis. |

Discourse analysis.

Classification: LCC P96.L34 J66 2020 (print) | LCC P96.L34 (ebook) |

DDC 302.2301/4—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020013891>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020013892>

ISBN: 978-1-138-64439-7 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-64441-0 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-08421-1 (ebk)

Typeset in Minion Pro
by codeMantra

Visit the companion website: <https://routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/reli/>

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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

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

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

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

D Extension—offers you the chance to compare your expertise with key readings in the area. These are taken from the work of important writers, and are provided with guidance and questions for your further thought.

You can read this book like a traditional textbook, ‘vertically’ straight through from beginning to end. So, you would establish a broad sense of the key ideas by reading through section A and deepen your knowledge by reading section B. Section C would then present you with one or more Activities to test out different aspects of your broad knowledge. Finally, having gained a good level of competence, you can read the section D extracts from books and scholarly articles about language and media. However, the *Routledge English Language Introductions* have been designed so that you can read them in another dimension, ‘horizontally’ across the numbered units. For example, units A1, B1, C1, and D1 constitute a strand, then developing your knowledge, then testing out and exploring some key ideas, and finally offering you a key case study to read. The strand across A2, B2, C2, D2, and the other strands 3, 4, 5, and so on, all work in the same way. Reading across the strands will take you rapidly from the key concepts of a specific topic to a level of expertise in that precise topic, all with a very close focus. You can match your way of reading with the best way that you work. The glossarial index at the end will help to keep you orientated.

This book covers the vast field of the Language and Media. Strand 1 gives a general introduction to media and mediation. Strands 2–4 provide tools that students can use to analyze media texts in terms of their structure, style, and used a semiotic mode.

Strands 5 and 6 focus on the production and use of media texts. Strands 7–9 deal more with the psychological, social, and political dimensions of language and media.

Media are dynamic and rapidly changing and affect our lives in a variety of ways: nearly every observation we have made about language and media in this book is likely to change as new media or new ways of using old media develop. The real aim of this book is to provide you with the basic background to be able to engage in debates about language and media and to assemble a toolkit of analytical techniques that will help you to understand the media you use in your everyday life and how they affect how you talk, how you think, and how you interact with others. If you wish to know more about the ways this topic fits into or relates to other approaches to the study of English, other books in the RELI series such as *Introducing English language: A resource book for students* by Louise Mullany and Peter Stockwell, *Discourse analysis: A resource book for students* by Rodney H. Jones, and *Language and power: A resource book for students* by Paul Simpson, Andrea Mayr, and Simon Statham.

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

CONTENTS

Contents cross-referenced	xii
List of figures	xv
List of tables	xvii
Acknowledgements	xix
A Introduction: key topics in the study of language and media	1
1 Language and mediation	2
2 Media, modes, and materialities	8
3 Media, genre, and style	14
4 Media storytelling	21
5 Media and discourse processes	28
6 Audiences, interaction, and participation	34
7 Media and the attention economy	41
8 Truth, lies, and propaganda	48
9 Media, censorship, and resistance	55
B Development: approaches to language and media	61
1 Language, mediation, and sites of engagement	62
2 Making meaning with modes and materialities	68
3 Analyzing genres and styles in media	77
4 Telling and retelling stories	84
5 Production formats and discourse representation	91
6 Participation frameworks	99
7 Virality and memetics	107
8 Persuasive discourse and media rhetoric	115
9 Censorship and semiotic democracy	123
C Exploration: analyzing language and media	133
1 Media uses and users	134
2 Analyzing intersemiotic relations	140
3 Analyzing news stories and media interviews	149
4 Analyzing narratives in the media	157
5 Analyzing media production	162
6 Analyzing participation in media	169
7 Analyzing spreadable media	174
8 Detecting biased, fallacious, and fake news	179
9 Offensive language and tactics of resistance	185

D Extension: readings in language and media	195
1 Media, mediation, and mediated discourse (Ruth Finnegan; Sonia Livingstone; Ron Scollon)	196
2 Global modes and future modes (David Machin and Theo van Leeuwen; Astrid Esslin)	202
3 Media talk and media genres (Martin Montgomery; Paola Catenaccio)	211
4 Media storytelling and the shaping of reality (Michael Toolan; Ruth Page)	216
5 Media production (Colleen Cotter; Eva Gredel)	222
6 Participation frameworks and surveillant media (Anne O’Keeffe; Rodney H. Jones)	228
7 Spreadability: from news language to internet memes (Monika Bednarek and Helen Caple; Piia Varis and Jan Blommaert)	234
8 Political rhetoric and fake news (Martin Montgomery; Johan Farkas and Jannick Schou)	245
9 Resistance and citizen journalism (Paolo Peverini; Rodney H. Jones and Neville C.H. Li)	252
References	259
Glossarial index	277
Index	291



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

A INTRODUCTION

Key topics in the study of language and media

1 Language and mediation
2

2 Media, modes, and materialities
8

3 Media, genre, and style
14

4 Media storytelling
21

5 Media and discourse processes
28

6 Audiences, interaction, and participation
34

7 Media and the attention economy
41

8 Truth, lies, and propaganda
48

9 Media, censorship, and resistance
55

B DEVELOPMENT

Approaches to language and media

Language, mediation, and sites of engagement
62

Making meaning with modes and materialities
68

Analyzing genres and styles in media
77

Telling and retelling stories
84

Production formats and discourse representation
91

Participation frameworks
99

Virality and memetics
107

Persuasive discourse and media rhetoric
115

Censorship and semiotic democracy
123

References

Glossarial index

Index

C

EXPLORATION

Analyzing language and media

Media uses and users
134

Analyzing intersemiotic relations
140

Analyzing news stories and media interviews
149

Analyzing narratives in the media
157

Analyzing media production
162

Analyzing participation in media
169

Analyzing spreadable media
174

Detecting biased, fallacious, and fake news
179

Offensive language & tactics of resistance
185

D

EXTENSION

Readings in language and media

Media, mediation, and mediated discourse (Ruth Finnegan; Sonia Livingstone; Ron Scollon)
196

Global modes and future modes (David Machin and Theo van Leeuwen; Astrid Esslin)
202

Media talk and media genres (Martin Montgomery; Paola Catenaccio)
211

Media storytelling and the shaping of reality (Michael Toolan; Ruth Page)
216

Media production (Colleen Cotter; Eva Gredel)
222

Participation frameworks and surveillant media (Anne O’Keeffe; Rodney H. Jones)
228

Spreadability: from news language to internet memes (Monika Bednarek and Helen Caple; Piia Varis and Jan Blommaert)
234

Political rhetoric and fake news (Martin Montgomery; Johan Farkas and Jannick Schou)
245

Resistance and citizen journalism (Paolo Peverini; Rodney H. Jones and Neville C.H. Li)
252

1

2

3

4

5

5

7

8

9

References

Glossarial index

Index



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

FIGURES

A1.1	Tweet with photo of schoolchildren at the Rijksmuseum	2
A6.1	Ferdinand de Saussure's talking heads	34
A6.2	Shannon and Weaver's model of communication	35
A6.3	From the addressee to the eavesdropper	38
B2.1	Border crossing	69
B2.2	News story from <i>The Guardian</i> , 2 October 2018	71
B2.3	Homepage of <i>The Guardian</i> , 2 October 2018	72
B2.4	F-shaped pattern of reading on the web	72
B2.5	Woman laughing alone with salad 1	74
B2.6	Woman laughing alone with salad 2	75
B2.7	<i>The Guardian</i> front page as shown on an iWatch	76
B3.1	WhatsApp message	83
B3.2	Public notice	83
B4.1	WhatsApp message: 2 hours 12 minutes	89
B5.1	An automatically generated post on Facebook	92
B5.2	Tweet from Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez	95
B5.3	Allusion to Hitchcock's <i>The Birds</i> in <i>The Week</i> (24 November 2012)	97
B5.4	Movie poster for Alfred Hitchcock's <i>The Birds</i> (1963)	97
B6.1	Reading on the underground	100
B6.2	Spotify billboard in London	105
B6.3	Bentham's blueprint for the panopticon	106
B7.1	Charlie bit me	108
B7.2	Grumpy Cat	109
B7.3	Cash me outside/howbow dah	111
B7.4	Cats be outside/how bout meow	112
B7.5	An image macro with DB's face superimposed on a black body	112
B7.6	Clickbait headline	113
B8.1	British WWII propaganda poster	120
B8.2	PETA campaign	121
B8.3	Deceptive infographic	122
B9.1	'Grass mud horse'	126
B9.2	Front page of the <i>Weekly Mail</i> (South Africa) 20–26 June 1986	128
B9.3	Tweet from @Merriam-Webster in response to comments by President Trump	128
B9.4	Subvert from Greenpeace's 'Arctic Ready' campaign	130
B9.5	PETA protesters posing in meat packages	131

C2.1	HSBC advertisement 1	140
C2.2	HSBC advertisement 2	142
C2.3	Selfie 1	144
C2.4	Selfie 2	144
C2.5	Snapchat image 1	145
C2.6	Snapchat image 2	145
C2.7	Screenshot 1	147
C2.8	Screenshot 2	147
C2.9	Screenshot 3	147
C2.10	Screenshot 4	147
C3.1	Advertorial for Natural Findings Skin Cream	156
C5.1	Caesar salad	164
C5.2	Five pillars of Wikipedia	167
C6.1	‘See it. Say it. Sorted.’ Poster	172
C7.1	Negativity theme in the Grumpy Cat Meme	175
C7.2	Image macro template	176
C9.1	Greenpeace subvert 1	188
C9.2	Greenpeace subvert 2	188
C9.3	Greenpeace subvert 3	189
C9.4	Protester at the 2017 Women’s March in Washington D.C.	190
C9.5	Anti-Trump Rally, London, July 2018	191
C9.6	Anti-Trump Rally, London, July 2018	191
C9.7	Anti-Trump Rally, London, July 2018	192
C9.8	Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong, September–December 2014	192
C9.9	Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong, September–December 2014	193
C9.10	Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong, September–December 2014	193
D2.1	Office space	204
D2.2	Freedom	206
D7.1	British wartime propaganda poster	238
D7.2	Keep calm and call Batman	239
D7.3	Keep calm and drink beer	240
D7.4	I can has cheezburger?	241
D7.5	President and a possible voter having cheezburger	241
D7.6	I has a dream	242
D7.7	Keep calm and remove the arrow from your knee	243
D7.8	Skyrim scene ‘Then I took an arrow in the knee’	243

TABLES

B4.1	Narrative dimensions	87
C1.1	Media use log	134
C1.2	Media, society, and me	135
C1.3	Choice of media for different tasks	136
C1.4	Media and sites of engagement	137
C2.1	Four types of selfie	143
C2.2	Intersemiotic relations in an ASMR-style commercial	147
C3.1	Analyzing changes in news stories over time	151
C3.2	Transcription key	153
C3.3	Analyzing styles of two media interviews	154
C3.4	Analyzing an advertorial	155
C5.1	Reporting verbs and evaluation	162
C5.2	Edits of the Wikipedia entry on Caesar salad	167
C6.1	Analyzing context design	172
C7.1	Clickbait cue analysis	177
C9.1	Scenarios of potentially offensive media language	185
D3.1	Interview types distinguished by reference to affiliation, knowledge, agency, and audience	212
D5.1	Standardization parameters	223
D7.1	Associations with Australia	236



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material. The publisher apologizes for any errors or omissions in the above list and would be grateful if notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints or editions of this book.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Section A

INTRODUCTION

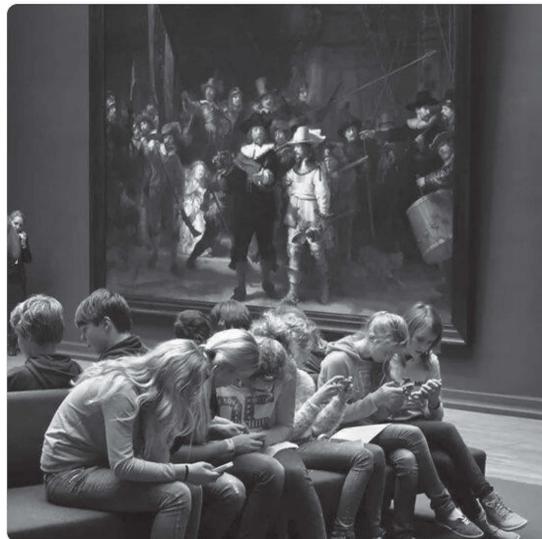
KEY TOPICS IN THE
STUDY OF LANGUAGE
AND MEDIA

A1 LANGUAGE AND MEDIATION

This is a book about the relationship between language and media. In it, we will explore topics you might expect to encounter when you hear the word ‘language’, such as the kinds of words, grammatical structures, and text types you find in media communication and how they are affected by the kind of media people use. We will also be talking about forms of communication that you probably immediately associate with the word ‘media’, such as newspapers and magazines, films, television shows, and social media. At the same time, some of the things we will talk about might challenge your preconceived notions about what ‘language’ is and what ‘media’ is.

Consider, for example, the picture below, which circulated on Twitter in the beginning of 2016, of a group of schoolchildren in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Figure A1.1). While this **tweet** certainly involves ‘language’ in the conventional sense, that is, a written message that accompanies the picture, and it is certainly interesting to think about how the medium of Twitter affects the way this linguistic message is formulated (for example, the use of **hashtags** as in #Rembrandt, and abbreviations such as RT for ‘re-tweet’), paying attention to just the words would miss the point of the tweet. The most important part of the tweet is really the picture, which shows all the schoolchildren looking intently at their mobile phones, their backs turned on one of the most famous masterpieces of Western art. Just as the words have meaning, the picture also

No wonder this photo of #Rembrandt's
#NightWatch has gone viral. It's a perfect
metaphor for our age RT



1:35 pm - 15 Jan 2016

Figure A1.1 Tweet with photo of schoolchildren at the Rijksmuseum (Photo credit Gijsbert van der Wal).

has meaning—it sends a message about an event that happened in a particular place, involving particular people. Understanding the significance of this message, however, requires not just that we can understand what’s happening in the picture, but that we are able to combine it with knowledge that we already have about what people usually do in museums as well as with the ideas that are currently circulating in our society regarding teenagers and their ‘addiction’ to technology. In other words, understanding this tweet requires that we are able to figure out how the language in the message interacts with visual communication and with the kinds of expectations we bring to the message as a result of being members of our societies. From this we can see that talking about ‘language’ in the media can actually be a rather complicated thing.

The message also reveals how the idea of media can also be more complicated than we usually think. The message here is both *mediated*, that is, it is transmitted through a particular medium: the social networking platform Twitter, and it is *about* media, that is, it portrays people using particular media, and expresses a kind of opinion about media use (specifically that it is better to look at a famous painting than it is to look at your mobile phone, and the fact that teenagers don’t seem to understand this indicates that something has gone ‘badly wrong’ in our society).

The mediated aspect of the message is complicated because of the ways the medium of Twitter affects not just the *way* messages are constructed (including the way they affect the way language is used), but also *who* can be involved in creating messages and who is able to see these messages. Some of the ways Twitter affects the way a message can be constructed include, for example: that verbal messages can consist of only 280 characters; that there are special ways that have developed among Twitter users to signal things like the topic of the message, the other kinds of message it might be related to, the origin of the message (whether it is an original message or the sharing of someone else’s message), and whom the message is directed towards as well as the fact that verbal messages can be combined with other modes of communication (emojis, photographs, short videos). The way Twitter affects who can be involved in the creation and consumption of the message, however, is, in some ways, a much more important aspect of social media. Unlike older media like print newspapers and broadcast television, social media allow ordinary people to produce and broadcast messages, and to add to and share messages that have been produced and broadcast by others.

Regarding the way this message *represents* media use, this is also more complicated than it might initially seem. Most people looking at this picture, including the person who re-tweeted it, would assume that the story it tells about media use is an either/or story—that people are either giving their attention to one medium (the painting) or to another (their mobile phones). However, the truth of the matter is that these children were giving their attention to *both* of these media simultaneously; they were involved in completing an exercise on their mobile phones designed to help them learn about the painting (see Molloy, 2016). That is, the use of one medium was *connected* to the use of another medium. Lots of people are talking nowadays about how digital media (like mobile phones) have resulted in people constantly paying attention to more than one thing at a time, sometimes referred to as **multitasking**, and about the ways new devices like mobile phones are actually combining different kinds of media (for example, your phone works like a web browser, a radio, a camera, a television, a postal service, and, of course, a phone), a phenomenon known as **media convergence** (Jenkins, 2006). But these things were going on long before the advent of digital media. People

have been simultaneously listening to the radio and driving cars or watching TV and talking to their family members for many years.

This example, then, highlights a couple of important points about language and media:

First, media are complicated:

- ❑ They can include all sorts of things from buildings to furniture, to paintings, to photographs to electronic devices to internet platforms.
- ❑ They are often connected to or used together with other media in complex ways.
- ❑ They affect the kinds of messages we can transmit to others, how those messages can be formulated, who can formulate those messages, who can receive them, and what recipients can do with them.
- ❑ They have an effect on the way people experience the world—in fact, all our experiences of the world are in one way or another *mediated* (see below).
- ❑ People often have strong feelings about where, when, and how different media ought to be used.

Second, language is complicated:

- ❑ It can include all sorts of things from verbal language (both written and spoken) to various kinds of non-verbal language such as ‘body language’, the ‘language’ of images, of sounds, or music, and the ‘language’ of symbols such as emojis.
- ❑ Different kinds of ‘language’ are often used together and understanding what a message ‘means’ depends upon how these different kinds of ‘language’ work together.
- ❑ We don’t just use these different ‘languages’ to make meaning, but also to *do things* with and to other people (such as thanking, apologizing, requesting, attracting people’s attention, or complaining about things like the way teenagers use their mobile phones), to show that we are certain kinds of people (such as ‘tech-savvy tweeps’ or ‘sophisticated art lovers’), and to create certain kinds of relationships with the people we are communicating with or communicating about.
- ❑ Messages communicated through different kinds of ‘language’ never just communicate ‘facts’, they always communicate somebody’s *point of view*.

Mediation

Usually when we think of media we think of **mass media**—those means of communication such as television, newspapers, and the internet that have the technical capacity to deliver messages to a large group of people. But, as Ruth Finnegan (2002) points out in the excerpt included in unit D1, many scholars take a much more expansive view of media, seeing the term as encompassing a wide variety of tools that people have used to take action in the world such as coins, maps, sculpture, stamps, clothes, seals, and stones. Even the human voice and body can be considered media. A medium is basically anything that comes between one entity and another and helps to facilitate communication or interaction (what Finnegan calls ‘interconnectedness’) between those two entities. We call this process of facilitating the interaction between two entities **mediation**.

The idea of mediation comes from Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1962), who back in the 1920s argued that all interactions between people and between people and their environments are mediated through ‘cultural tools’, which include both physical tools like hammers and telephones and mental tools like language and systems of counting. Everything we do, Vygotsky said, including thinking, is mediated by these tools, and the kinds of tools we have available to us determine the kinds of things we can do (including the kinds of thoughts we can think). A person who has a hammer is able to do things that a person without a hammer is unable to do, and a person who is able to speak a particular language is able to do things that a person who cannot speak that language is unable to do. The famous Canadian media scholar Marshall McLuhan (1964) took a similar position when he referred to media as ‘extensions of man’, because they extend our ability to do things in the world: electric lights extend what we can do with our eyes; microphones and telephones extend what we can do with our voices; and computers extend what we can do with our brains. We have already seen in the example above how different kinds of media affect things like *what* we can communicate, *how* we can communicate it, and to *whom* we can communicate; but scholars like Vygotsky and McLuhan take this even further, arguing that media don’t just affect how we communicate, but what we can *do* more broadly, including how we can *think*, and even who we can *be*.

The key word here is ‘affect’. The view that media *determine* what we can do, think, and communicate is called **technological determinism**, and that’s not the view we’re promoting here. While media affect human actions, humans are also creative in the way they use media, often thinking of ‘new’ ways to use ‘old’ media, and sometimes using media in ways that seem to go against expectations about how they ‘should’ be used. In other words, just as media affect what people do, what people do with media affects how those media develop and change over time.

Among the most important factors beyond media themselves that affect how media are used are the **social conventions** around media use that grow up within particular communities and cultures. In unit A5, for example, we will talk about the professional standards that influence how journalists produce news stories. But conventions are also part of the way different groups consume media: some ‘gamers’, for example, have strong beliefs about how people should interact with and through particular games, and art lovers might have certain ideas about it and how different media should be used in art museums.

Anthropologist Ilana Gershon calls these sets of conventions and beliefs **media ideologies**. They include people’s beliefs about how different media should or should not be used, where and when they should be used, what sorts of people should or should not use them, whether they should be used alone or with other people, and what sorts of messages should be communicated through them. The example Gershon (2012) gives is breaking up with a romantic partner. She says that some people think using email or instant messaging to break up with someone is ‘inappropriate’. Others however might think that this is acceptable. We develop media ideologies through watching other people using media, through using media ourselves with other people in our social groups, and through being exposed to **metadiscourse** about media use (in, for example, advertisements for media products or devices, instruction manuals, or the admonitions of teachers, parents, or pundits criticizing how we or other people are using media).

Media ideologies are also tied up with other kinds of ideologies, such as moral or ethical ideas about things like romantic relationships, privacy, and personal responsibility.

These other kinds of beliefs can affect how we use media, but media themselves can also lead to changes in beliefs about these kinds of things. Historian Cecile Jagodzinski (1999), for instance, argues that the printing press helped to promote an ideology of **individualism** in 17th-century Europe because it enabled solitary reading, and other media scholars have pointed out how social media sites have altered people's beliefs about privacy.

Language and discourse

The main point that we were trying to make above was that to understand media it is better to think about it in terms of what media *do* rather than what they are. So rather than focusing on media as 'things', we focused on the *processes of mediation* that they make possible. We can take a similar perspective on language, that is, think about what language does (or what people do with it) rather than what it is.

The scientific study of language is called **linguistics**, and there are lots of different ways linguists study language. Some, like the famous linguist Noam Chomsky, are interested in studying language as a 'thing', in understanding how it works as a set of rules about how words can be put together into sentences. But other linguists are much more interested in what people *do* with language, and it is from this kind of linguist that we will be drawing from most in this book. Some of them engage in a form of linguistics called **pragmatics**, which is the study of how people 'do things with words' (Austin, 1976) using what are called speech acts (such as threatening, apologizing, and requesting). Some do **conversation analysis**, which is the study of how conversations are put together and the kinds of rules that govern things like **turn-taking**. Some use tools from **interactional sociolinguistics**, which focuses on how people use language to construct identities and relationships with one another and negotiate what the purpose of their interaction is. Finally, some approach the study of language through the lens of **critical discourse analysis**, the purpose of which is to reveal how language can be used to manipulate people and the power relations that are 'hidden' in linguistic structures. Actually, all these approaches to language are sometimes talked about under the broad label of **discourse analysis**. There are four main differences between discourse analysts and other linguists:

- 1 Discourse analysts are interested in what people do with language rather than in language as an abstract set of rules.
- 2 Discourse analysts usually focus on longer stretches of language (texts and conversations) rather than just sentences or words.
- 3 Discourse analysts are not just interested in language in its traditional sense, but also in how language interacts with other forms of communication such as pictures, gestures, and music.
- 4 Discourse analysts are interested in the relationship between language and the way societies are organized, what sorts of ideologies govern peoples' behaviour, and what sorts of people have power and what sorts of people don't.

All these concerns of discourse analysts are obviously affected by the kinds of media people use to communicate. Different media allow us to do different things with language; different media make it possible for people to transmit different kinds of texts

and engage in different kinds of conversations; they allow users to combine different forms of communication (pictures, words, music, videos) together in different ways; and they have different kinds of potential when it comes to manipulating people, helping powerful people hold on to their power, or helping less powerful people challenge those that are more powerful. All of the kinds of discourse analysts we mentioned above have had to grapple with how media affect these different aspects of language use. One kind of discourse analysis that is particularly concerned with these questions is **mediated discourse analysis**. This is the kind of discourse analysis discussed in the excerpt by Ron Scollon in unit D1. Mediated discourse analysts take as their starting point the idea of *mediation*. Since all human actions are mediated, they argue, the main job of discourse analysts should be to try to figure out how different kinds of **mediational means** (including *both* language and media) affect the kinds of social actions that people can take (and ultimately the kinds of societies they are able to create through these actions).

The way people use language, and more importantly, the way they use language and media together, is not just an individual choice. Just as people's use of media is governed by social conventions, so is people's use of language. And just as media conventions both derive from and reinforce media ideologies, linguistic conventions derive from and reinforce **language ideologies**. Language ideologies are sets of beliefs about how people ought to use language, including which languages or kinds of language are 'better' or more 'appropriate' for different kinds of situations. In unit B8, for example, we will discuss the kinds of language that is considered 'appropriate' for print and broadcast journalism. Language ideologies also include beliefs about the effects certain kinds of media are having on people's language. Recent debates about how digital media is changing the way young people use language, for example, come from deep-seated ideologies about what constitutes 'correct' language.

A2

MEDIA, MODES, AND MATERIALITIES

In the last unit, we discussed the definition of media and the idea of mediation. We talked about how different media make different kinds of meaning making possible for media producers and make different kinds of interpretations possible for media consumers. In this unit, we'll discuss two of the main reasons for these differences: the different **modes** that different media allow us to use and the *physical properties* of these media, what we are calling their **materialities**.

Despite the name of this book, *Language and Media*, media are not just about language in its conventional sense. Media also communicate through still and moving pictures, music and other sounds, and increasingly, even modes like smell and touch (see the excerpt by Esslin in D2).

In his essay 'The Photographic Message', the French semiotician Roland Barthes (1977) compares the way photographs communicate to models of speech communication. He wrote:

The press photograph is a message. Considered overall this message is formed by a source of emission, a channel of transmission and a point of reception. The source of emission is the staff of the newspaper, the group of technicians certain of whom take the photo, some of whom choose, compose and treat it, while others, finally, give it a title, a caption and a commentary. The point of reception is the public which reads the paper. As for the channel of transmission, this is the newspaper itself, or, more precisely, a complex of concurrent messages with the photograph as center and surrounds constituted by the text, the title, the caption, the layout and, in a more abstract but no less 'informative' way, by the very name of the paper (this name represents a knowledge that can heavily orientate the reading of the message strictly speaking).

(Barthes, 1977: 15)

Barthes's description brings out something of the complexity involved in the transmission of the photographic message. First, he emphasizes that there is rarely just one person involved in the production of the photograph. In addition to the photographers and other technicians who work together to take the photograph, there are also reporters, editors, and copywriters who select the photograph, place it within the context of a particular news story or other journalistic genre, and often compose additional words ('captions') to **anchor** the photograph to a particular set of meanings (see unit A5). Second, like any message, the meaning of the photograph depends not on the photograph alone, but also on the other texts that accompany it (texts which often make use of different modes, such as writing), which we call **cotexts**, as well as the social situation which surrounds the transmission, which we call **context**. The photographic image itself involves 'a complex of concurrent messages', things we can see in the image itself, as well as the other messages that are 'attached to' or 'surround' the photograph: the text, the title, the caption, the layout, and 'in a more abstract but no less "informative" way, by the very name of the paper'.

Of course, the way photographs are interpreted is also very much a matter of the 'readers' (or 'viewers') of the photograph—the personal or cultural associations they

have with different people or objects represented and the ways they have been taught to ‘read’ photographs over the course of their lives. One of the main questions we need to ask when looking at different modes is the degree to which there is a standard way to ‘read’ them. To what degree do images (and other modes) have their own ‘vocabularies’ and ‘grammars’, and to what degree do they transcend cultural boundaries? Is the language of the photographs published in France where Barthes lived the same as that of photographs published in the UK where we are writing this book?

What Barthes is describing in the quote above is what he refers to as the ‘press photograph’, which typically involves a number of complex ‘layers’ of production (see unit A5) and is meant to be consumed by a mass audience. Perhaps a simpler illustration of the way people communicate with pictures might be the ‘selfies’ that we send to each other using apps such as Snapchat and Instagram. Like press photographs, selfies exchanged in this way might also be considered ‘utterances’. James Katz, a communications scholar, and his collaborator, Elizabeth Crocker, an anthropologist, argue that people use selfies in ways similar to text messages, to engage in what they call ‘visual conversations’ (2015).

Of course, there are usually not as many people involved in the production of the selfie as in the production of the press photograph. You generally don’t have to have your selfie approved by an editor before you send it, and the producer and the subject of the photograph are the same person. But people who circulate selfies are still constrained by the affordances of the technologies they are using (for example, whether they are using a ‘selfie stick’ and what kind of ‘filters’ the apps they are using make available to them to alter the image), and they still spend considerable time considering what they want to ‘say’ with their image.

Like the press photograph, the selfie is also often **multimodal**—that it is not just a matter of communicating with a picture, but a matter of communicating by *combining* pictures with other modes such as writing. Just like journalists, selfie takers can also add text to their photographs in the form of captions or comments; but with apps such as Snapchat, they can also draw on top of them, add emojis, and even send video clips with sound.

Of course, the way we ‘read’ selfies also has a lot to do with *context*, for example, what your friend ‘said’ or texted to you before they sent the image, the way the image might fit into a stream of other images (as, for instance, in a Snapchat ‘story’), and your history and relationship with the person who sent the selfie. At the same time, the same question we asked about press photographs might also be asked about selfies: is there a ‘global language’ of selfies? Do people in different cultures communicate with selfies in the same way? Does a ‘duck face’ mean the same thing in Dhaka as it does in Devon?

What is a mode?

What do we actually mean when we talk about modes of communication? Gunther Kress and Carey Jewitt (2003), two important figures in the study of multimodality, define a mode as a ‘regularized organized set of resources for meaning making, including image, gaze, movement, music, speech and sound effect’ (p. 1). Modes are not the same as media, which are the physical tools that make communication using different modes possible. The medium of radio, for example, enables communication through

the modes of spoken language, sound, and music, but not image, movement, gaze, or even written language, while the medium of the photograph enables communication using the modes of image, color, layout, gesture, and gaze, among other things, but not the mode of sound.

Just as different media have different affordances and constraints regarding what kinds of modes they make available for users, different modes make available different ways of meaning making. As Kress (2000:157) puts it: 'Semiotic modes have different potentials, so that they afford different kinds of possibilities of human expression and engagement with the world'. Writing and speech, for example, operate based on a linear and temporal logic in which information is presented in sequence: to fully understand what the middle or end of a news article means, you usually need to have read the beginning. Images, however, operate according to a more spatial logic: while, as we will discuss in unit B2, the way elements are arranged in a picture has an important effect on where in the image viewers direct their attention and in what order, viewers of pictures are not constrained in the same way readers of texts are; they can let their eyes wander over the image in any way they wish. In other words, while language communicates through **sequentiality**, still images tend to communicate more through **simultaneity**. Another important difference between writing and images is what Lemke (1999) calls the difference between **typological** and **topological** meaning making. Language is typological: it describes things in terms of words that represent types or categories: boy, girl, blue, green, happy, sad, president, peasant, and so forth. Images, however, allow us to express more fine-grained topological meanings in which we can portray finer gradations of blueness or happiness for which we may not have exact words.

Perhaps the most important part of Kress and Jewitt's definition of mode is the idea that modes are 'regularized' and 'organized', and it is this fact that makes them efficient tools for communicating. This is, of course, easiest to see in the modes of writing and speech, where among a group of users of a particular language variety is a consensus about what certain words and grammatical structures mean. This regularity is documented in things like dictionaries and grammar books. The regularized and organized nature of other modes may not be so immediately obvious. Although there are kinds of images like traffic signs and emojis, whose meaning is usually less ambiguous, most images (as well as other modes like gesture, gaze, facial expression, music, and smell) tend to be more **polysemous**; their meanings are less fixed, and they might be interpreted in multiple ways. This does not mean that these modes are not regularized or organized, just that the degree of regularization (or consensus among users of the mode) may be weaker and that their meanings might be more dependent on the contexts in which they are used.

The famous semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce (2003) pointed out that 'signs' (such as words, gestures, and objects) can convey meaning in a variety of different ways. Some signs communicate meaning through their resemblance to the thing or concept they are trying to represent. Peirce calls these **icons**: think, for example, of the icon of a printer on your computer to represent the print function. Other signs communicate meaning based on an agreement between sign users that $X=Y$. There may be no particular relationship of resemblance between the sign and what it means apart from the fact that it has become a conventionalized way of meaning a particular thing. Peirce calls these **symbols**. Most words are like this. Finally, there are signs that take their meaning from the *context* in which they are used. A road sign with an arrow is a

good example, as are many gestures and facial expressions. These kinds of signs, which Pierce calls **indexes**, convey meaning through the way they ‘point to’ or interact with other elements in the physical or social environment. If you think of these three things not so much as different kinds of signs but as different *ways* we can make meaning, we can see that different modes tend to exploit different kinds of meaning making to different degrees. Written language, for example, tends to be more symbolic (though it also has iconic and indexical dimensions). Images tend to be more iconic, with elements in them often (but by no means always) resembling what they represent. Speech (along with gesture, gaze, and facial expression) can be said to make particular use of indexical meaning making.

Media and their materialities

Along with modes and the different ways they allow us to convey meaning, people interested in language and media also need to consider how the *physical* features of different media affect the way we can communicate with them. Think again about the press photograph that Barthes described. When he was writing about it in 1977, neither the internet nor digital photography had been invented. Analogue photos created a much different relationship to reality than today’s digital photos. They were much harder to alter, making them seem like more reliable representations of the truth of what happened, whereas digital photos are easily manipulated, resulting in more skepticism from viewers (see unit B8). At the same time, the materiality of a newspaper has an effect on how images can be distributed by text producers and used by readers. The material features of media also have an effect on the kind of social interactions people can have around messages. Think of the difference between looking at photos in a photo album surrounded by family members and looking at photos on the Instagram app on your phone. While Instagram allows people to share their photos with a wider audience, the medium does not lend itself to people who are physically co-present looking at those photos together. We’re not saying this never happens, but there is something about the materiality of the mobile phone and the architecture of the Instagram app that results in more solitary and cursory viewing—we are more likely to flick quickly through Instagram images when we are waiting for the bus or having lunch.

What we mean when we talk about the materiality of media, then, is how media exist in and interact with the physical world and how they affect users’ experience of that world. There are three main ways the materiality of media affect the way people communicate through them. First, they determine where, when, and how people can use the medium, both to receive communications and to produce them. Second, they help to determine who can participate in the communication, for example, whether the communication is one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many. Finally, they affect what messages can be conveyed by determining the range of different modes that can be used and how these modes can be combined.

One of the most important aspects of the evolution of media has been their increased **portability**. From the invention of paper around 220 BC to the more recent invention of mobile telephones and the mobile internet, media have become smaller and more personal. One of the most important consequences of this is that it has changed the way people experience and interact with their physical environments through media. After the invention of the printing press, people no longer had to wait on the street

for the ‘town crier’ to announce the news, and after the invention of the smartphone, people no longer had to stay at home to watch television. Furthermore, the portability of media have enabled producers of messages to make use of the physical environment to create messages: portable cameras allowed journalists to take pictures of important events, and digital cameras allow people nowadays to take pictures of where they are and post them to social media sites. Some digital games even allow players to project avatars onto images of their physical environments.

Media also affect the opportunities for participation that are available in different situations to different people. In a theater, for example, the actors on the stage have the right to talk as well as the expectation that everyone in the audience has the right to listen to them, while the opportunities for members of the audience to talk are much more limited—in fact, audience members who talk among themselves are likely to be scolded by their neighbors. At the same time, when audience members do talk among themselves, they do so with the expectation that others are not ‘eavesdropping’ on their conversations. One of the things that makes this kind of arrangement possible, of course, is the theater itself, with the stage set apart from the audience and usually raised for better visibility, the chairs arranged next to one another and all pointing at the stage, and a ‘backstage’ area where actors can engage in conversations that are not intended for the audience.

In the same way, the ‘architecture’ of electronic media works to facilitate different forms of participation. Television, for example, allows actors and presenters to communicate to large numbers of people, but does not allow for the audience to ‘talk back’ to the actors and presenters or for audience members to communicate with one another unless they happen to be in the same room. New media platforms like YouTube, however, typically allow viewers to comment on what they have seen as well as to comment on other people’s comments. Landline telephones restrict communication to a particular geographical location, and so a common way of asking to speak to someone was ‘Is X home?’, whereas mobile phones make communicators available wherever they are. Some media, like the telephone and video calls using Skype and Facetime, facilitate **synchronous communication**, where participants can communicate and monitor one another in ‘real time’, while other media, such as text messaging and most social media sites, only allow for **asynchronous communication**, where there is a ‘lag’ between when the message is sent and when it is read. Some media, such as cable television and some forms of social media, give producers more control over who can see their message, whereas with other media, such as terrestrial television and print media, there is much less control.

The media scholar Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) refers to media as ‘information systems’ (see unit B6), which materially determine how information is able to flow between different people: who is able to be seen or heard and who is able to see or hear others. We might think of the different configurations of channels and barriers that media make available as similar to ‘windows’ and ‘walls’ that either enable or constrain the flow of information, thus enabling different kinds of relationships between participants. One of the main effects of electronic media, according to Meyrowitz, has been to remove barriers to the flow of information, and so make it more difficult for people to control what is seen or heard and by whom. Media scholar Lev Manovich (2006) says this is happening to an even greater extent with digital media: nowadays, media are embedded into the fabric of physical spaces, installed in everyday objects like refrigerators and wrist watches, which send and gather information through sensors.

The materialities of media also shape the way different *modes* can be used and experienced. First, they determine the range of modes available to communicators. Traditional telephones, for example, only allow for the transmission of the mode of speech, whereas programmes like Skype and FaceTime permit users to transmit video images of themselves in real time, making available to them a range of other modes such as gestures, gaze, and facial expressions as well as the physical environments in which they are situated. This is not to say that more modes are necessarily better. Sometimes media that limit the ranges of modes, referred to as **lean media**, are preferred by users over those that enable a greater range of modes, sometimes called **rich media**, because lean media enable them to maintain some barriers to the flow of information. When talking on the phone, for example, I do not need to communicate where I am or what I look like.

Most media we use today are still relatively limited in the range of modes they can convey. These include visual modes such as print, image, color, layout, font, and audible modes such as speech, music, and sound effects. Modes that engage other senses like the senses of touch, smell, and taste are less common in media, but, as Esslin (2018) points out in the reading in unit D2, they are beginning to be developed. Mobile phones, for example, are able to detect the movements of their users and incorporate them into messages, and devices like Apple's iWatch use **haptic communication** to deliver alerts to wearers. Advertisements using smells ('scratch and sniff') are already commonplace in magazines, and virtual reality goggles are opening up all sorts of new possibilities for multimodal communication. While most traditional media have engaged us with disembodied modes like text and images, newer technologies promise to engage more with embodied modes such as touch and smell, as media are increasingly worn on and even implanted in our bodies.

Finally, the physical characteristics of media affect how people are able to integrate media use into other activities. Radio allows people to engage in other activities while they are listening to it (like walking and driving), whereas visual media like print and television make this less possible. Media like cinema and television are designed to hold the gaze of viewers for an extended period of time, whereas many forms of digital media are meant to be consumed in a more intermittent fashion, with readers or viewers moving quickly from one text or picture to another. Some scholars of reading (see, for example, Wolf, 2008), in fact, have noted how the brain operates differently when reading analogue texts like books and reading digital texts, in which readers have the opportunity to move quickly between different texts using hypertext links. Similarly, media scholar Theresa Senft (2008) argues that people tend to consume images, texts, and sound differently over digital platforms than they do when engaging with print media or more traditional visual platforms like television and film. In describing social media sites like Snapchat and Instagram, for example, she says that rather than 'gazing' or 'glancing' at images, we 'grab' them. This notion of 'grabbing' images is meant to convey the tactile way in which people consume images on their mobile phones, by scrolling and swiping, as well as the way images are designed to 'grab' the momentary attention of viewers.

A3 MEDIA, GENRE, AND STYLE

In the last unit, we discussed the ways the different modes and materialities of media can affect communication. In this unit, we introduce the concepts of **genre** and **style**. The concept of genre is helpful in identifying conventionalized media formats and patterns of language use within them, and the concept of style can reveal the ways language use sets the general tone of texts and indexes social identities and practices.

Genre

Generally, *genre* means a kind or type of text. The notion was initially developed in literary studies to classify literary works into types based on features such as characters, settings, length, and how language is used. It was used, for example, to show how romance novels, fairy tales, and biographies differ from one another. Non-literary texts, including media texts, can also be grouped into distinctive genres. The two linguists that have made the greatest contribution to our understanding of non-literary genres are John Swales and Vijay Bhatia, who founded a school of discourse analysis called **genre analysis**, and we will be drawing on their work in units B3 and C3.

From the perspective of genre analysis, genres are understood to be easily recognizable forms of discourse with particular *purposes* for particular *audiences* which share certain elements of *structure* and *content*. For example, if you come across a short text in a magazine that describes how to cook a particular dish and includes a list of ingredients and instructions, you will immediately recognize it as a recipe. This recognition is based on structural features of the text which we commonly associate with recipes (such as the listing of ingredients and step-by-step instructions). We also recognize recipes as recipes because of the kind of language in which they are written. For example, in recipes we expect to see sentences written in the **imperative mood** (for example, *peel the vegetables and cut them into chunks*). It is important to note that a genre often has more than one purpose or function; there is normally one dominant and easily recognizable purpose, but there might also be other goals that are not always immediately obvious. For example, the primary goal of a recipe is to describe how to cook a particular dish. However, recipes can also be used to promote a particular diet, style of cooking, chef, or product.

The notion of genre is particularly useful for categorizing and analyzing media texts. It allows us to distinguish a chat show from a political interview, a comedy from a horror movie, and a Twitter message from an email. For all its convenience, however, the concept of genre raises a number of questions:

- Who defines what a genre is and on what basis?
- Is genre a **prescriptive** category—intended to tell people how certain texts *should* be produced? Or is genre a **descriptive** category—intended only to describe the way people actually produce texts in the real world?

- ❑ What happens when a media producer ‘deviates’ from conventions of a genre or when two or more genres are mixed?

Where do genres come from?

Although genres are based on generally agreed upon conventions, these conventions develop over long periods of time and in response to changing demographic, material, social, political, and cultural conditions. As society changes, so do the genres that people in that society use. Sometimes genres undergo gradual modification, sometimes they morph into new or **hybrid genres**, and sometimes they become extinct altogether. In his history of newspapers in Britain, Martin Conboy (2010) shows how the genre of the news story, and specifically the idea of accuracy and balance in reporting news, developed as a result of societal changes during the Enlightenment in the 18th century when people came to value knowing the causes of events and having rational opinions about them. Technological advances can also play a critical role in the development and conventionalization of genres. Many film genres that exist today only became possible with the development of the first rotating cameras, which in turn originated from devices such as the phénakisticope or flip book, a series of illustrations assembled in a way that created an illusion of motion when they were flipped through.

Since genres are fairly conventionalized texts, they contribute to higher-level social patterns of media production and circulation in a given society. They are a key part of social systems which govern what gets produced and why, what people like and why, and what gets preserved, re-released, etc. and why. In doing so, they set what the Bulgarian-French philosopher and literary critic Tzvetan Todorov called **horizons of expectations**—sets of expectations about the features that should normally accompany particular texts (Todorov, 1990: 18). For example, we expect a good detective thriller to revolve around some kind of crime; that the perpetrator of the crime will often be a mystery; and that the main protagonist (usually a detective) will be put into a range of dangerous situations. We expect a political interview to consist of a sequence of questions and answers and to be formal and serious in tone. The media sociolinguist Martin Montgomery (see unit D3) describes the ‘recognizability’ of genres this way:

A genre of discourse is a specific and recognisable configuration of discourse elements realising a particular communicative purpose or set of purposes and usually known amongst a language community by a widely shared label, such as ‘advert’, ‘sermon’, ‘gossip’, ‘joke’, ‘lecture’. ‘News’ is one such genre. The label is widely understood; and instances of broadcast news are instantly identifiable as such to audiences. [...] In this sense although genre is textually manifested in discourse it may also be considered a process beyond the discourse itself involving a promise, by producers, and recognition, by audiences, of the type of discourse activity being performed.

(Montgomery, 2007: 26–27)

Central to Montgomery’s argument is the idea of shared understandings between producers and audiences about the forms texts should take and the purposes they should serve. In this sense, we can think of genre as a kind of *social agreement* about ways of doing something in a particular social or cultural setting (Miller & Bazerman, 2011).

Generic disruptions and innovations

The conventionalized character of genres and the horizons of expectations that they set help media producers create products that are likely to respond to wider societal and cultural expectations and consequently be judged as 'good'. Yet, reproduction of what is always expected can also be dismissed as being merely imitative, boring, or formulaic, lacking in creativity. Thus, media producers sometimes 'play' with generic schemata to varying degrees. Sometimes they break from generic conventions and combine elements of different genres. However, such mixing can be risky and have unpredictable consequences; if a new media product strays too far from an audience's horizon of expectations, it might be perceived as odd or inappropriate and be negatively evaluated or rejected. At the same time, the creation of a new or hybrid genre can sometimes be highly successful, hailed by audiences and critics as groundbreaking.

A good example of a hybrid genre is the **mockumentary**, which combines the genres of the **documentary** with other broadcast genres, including **reality TV** (see units B6, C6, and D6) and **situation comedy (sitcom)** for short). A documentary is expected to capture elements of reality and provide a factual report of events or topics that are deemed important. To achieve the sense of realism and factuality, particular narrative and filming techniques are employed, including the use of formal language, interviews with witnesses and experts, shooting on location (as opposed to in a studio), the use of portable cameras and close-ups to capture real reactions and emotions, and the inclusion of a **voice-over**, which allows the filmmaker to offer additional information or explanation. In the 1990s, with shows such as *Big Brother*, a new form of documentary known as a 'reality TV' became popular. In contrast to traditional documentaries that normally present unusual or significant events and people, a reality TV show casts ordinary members of the public who engage in what the sociolinguist Joanna Thornborrow (2017) calls rhetorical performances of being their ordinary selves. A classic reality TV format is based on a competition, from which some participants are eliminated during the course of the show. One of the typical features of reality TV is the use of **confession**, in which the cast members express their feelings and comment on events outside the main action of the show. The language in this genre is often informal and personal.

A sitcom, however, is a comedy which casts a few characters often in stereotypical roles or **archetypes** (see unit A4). It is normally made in a studio and set in fixed locations. A sitcom is divided into episodes and each episode presents a 'self-contained' story. The main purpose of a sitcom is to entertain, and humor is therefore its key feature. A recognizable element of a sitcom is the **laugh track**, the recorded sound of laughter which cues audiences when to laugh.

So, what happens when features of the documentary, reality TV show, and the sitcom are combined? This is precisely what the two British writers and actors Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant did when they created their TV series *The Office*, which helped to create the new genre of the mockumentary. Similar to a sitcom, a mockumentary depicts fictitious events and characters; but the difference is that they are presented as if they were part of a serious documentary. Its main purpose is to mock often mundane activities and stereotypical characters and roles. *The Office* features the day-to-day life of employees in an open-plan office located in Slough (a small post-industrial town close to London). To simulate a documentary, it was filmed with a single camera, shot on location, and includes confessional segments typical of reality TV. When the series

was first broadcast in 2001 on BBC Two, it was nearly canceled due to low ratings. Many people were not sure whether the show was a real documentary or a comedy. What they saw was quite outside their conventional expectations. Critics too were quick to vent their disapproval. One described *The Office* as ‘a bore in real time’ and was puzzled how ‘this dross’ could ever get ‘beyond the pilot stage’ (Smith, *The Evening Standard*, 10 July 2001). In the end, however, this supposed ‘bore’ became one of the most successful British TV sitcoms, winning numerous awards, including two Golden Globes. The mockumentary was remade in several countries and has been watched by millions of viewers.

Style

Another useful way of exploring patterns in media discourse is through the concept of style. Style commonly refers to a manner of doing something (Coupland, 2007). When we think of style, we normally think of distinctive designs (Baroque style in architecture), or compositions (hip-hop style in music), or appearances (the unique way you or your friends might dress or apply makeup). Each of these styles is composed of elements which have distinctive features in terms of textures, shapes, color, patterns, and sounds that combine to create that style. Style can also refer to a particular way of speaking, and this is what style means in sociolinguistics.

The notion of style as a way of speaking entails all aspects of language use, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and articulation, as well as **paralinguistic** aspects of communication such as gesture and timing. For example, when someone is said to speak in a ‘rude’ manner, we would normally associate this style with swear words, possibly verbs in the imperative mood, and a loud voice (though it is important to note that the understanding of what is perceived as ‘rude’ or impolite is not universal and varies across settings, contexts, and cultures).

Early notions of style were quite formalized and mostly concerned with a single dimension: mostly formal vs. informal or standard vs. non-standard (vernacular) language use (Labov, 1972). More recent conceptualizations of style in sociolinguistics conceive of style in terms of a **repertoire** of different linguistic and non-linguistic resources that speakers utilize to project a particular social identity or convey particular social meanings (Coupland, 2007; Eckert, 2001). The way people choose and use these resources depends on the context they find themselves in, who they think they are talking to (their audience), and the message they are trying to convey. Style is, therefore, not just something that is planned ahead of time, but also something that is performed on the spot in interactions. In this way, style is a holistic concept that captures both the more static notion of style as a recognizable set of language resources and the more dynamic concept of **style-in-interaction**, also referred to as **styling** (Coupland, 2007).

What makes style ‘appropriate’?

In many forms of mass media, audiences are not present to media producers in real time. What happens then is that media producers create styles based on ‘imaginary

relationships' with particular *kinds* of audiences. Such styles gradually become conventionalized. Certain media products come to be associated with certain kinds of styles based on the kinds of people media producers imagine their audience to be (see unit A6).

For example, BBC news presenters normally use a 'standard' variety of English with particular features of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. In most instances, their accent resembles **Received Pronunciation** (RP), known colloquially as 'the Queen's English'. You may also notice that news presenters read out news in a lower pitch and a faster speed but in an even tempo, which produces a steady rhythm. A news presenter normally uses grammatical structures associated with formal language, including complex sentences and passive voice. Sentences are often densely packed with information. These features can convey a sense of seriousness, factuality, urgency, and regularity. Using features of language that are associated with spoken informal conversations such as **contractions**, **ellipsis** (omissions), **tag questions** (for example, *isn't it?*), **vague language** (for example, *sort of, stuff like that*), colloquialisms, or slang words would be odd, giving an impression of casualness, which is generally regarded as inappropriate in the context of news reading because news is mostly about serious and urgent matters.

Of course, not all news presenters deliver their reports in exactly the same way. Different news outlets and presenters adopt different styles of reading the news depending on who they think their audience is. In a famous study on news presenters at a New Zealand radio station, the sociolinguist Alan Bell noticed that news presenters used different accents when they thought they were talking to different kinds of people. In the news broadcast intended for a more middle class audience, they used a more posh style of New Zealand English, closer to British RP, while in the news broadcast intended for a more working class audience, they used a more vernacular New Zealand accent. Bell (1984) called this phenomenon of changing style based on who we think is listening **audience design**, a concept we will take up further in units A6 and B6.

Similar to genres, media styles can also become conventionalized, and media producers can also diverge from expectations, creating intended or unintended effects. This can be best observed in media **gaffs**, which are in many cases basically unplanned shifts in style. When the BBC presenter Louise Minchin shifted from formal to informal style by accidentally uttering a swear word, this immediately led to a public outcry and she had to formally apologize. **Microphone gaffs**—the unintentional recording of a conversation between participants who are not aware that they are audible—help to highlight how conventionalized media styles are. Often, such unintentional recordings have serious consequences for those involved. For example, in April 2010, the then British Prime Minister Gordon Brown was caught shifting to informal and impolite style by describing a female member of the public as a 'bigoted woman', leaving a serious stain on his political career and contributing to his resignation shortly afterwards.

Style and other modes

Style is not only achieved linguistically. It can be created in other ways as well. In audiovisual and multimodal texts, design elements other than language play an important role in signaling style. Design elements that contribute to style include **font** (for example, Gothic vs. Courier), **photo tinting** (for example, sepia to indicate a historical or retro effect), and overall layout. Design elements work together. They also work

in conjunction with features of accompanying language to create an overall *discourse style*. When stylistic effects of different kinds function together, they build up not only a sense of overall general style, but also, if linked to a clear idea of purpose, they create particular kinds of expectations in different audiences. A good example of the relevance of design elements in creating a particular style is the front page of a newspaper. Newspapers that are considered more serious such as **broadsheets** (for example, *The Times* in Britain, *The Washington Post* in the US, and *Die Zeit* in Germany) use smaller fonts; the typeface used for headlines and texts in *The Times* is known as Times Modern and uses angled bracket serifs. The color of headlines and texts is mostly black, and there is a limited use of images. On the other hand, newspapers that are regarded as rather sensational, known also as **tabloids** (for example, Britain's *The Sun*, America's *National Enquirer* and Germany's *Bild-Zeitung*), use many images and less text on their front pages. The headlines might be in red and usually take up a substantial proportion of the page; the font might be bulkier, probably without serifs also referred to as **sans serif** suggesting boldness and audacity.

Styles and social identities

As we discussed above, style as a semiotic repertoire can signal belonging to a particular group or community, which, in turn, might be associated with a particular lifestyle or particular social practices (Auer, 2007). People speak in a particular way because they want to be identified with a particular social group or to be recognized as a member of that group. The linguist Robert Le Page described such stylistic choices as 'acts of identity' (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). From this it should be clear that identity is not necessarily something that we possess, but something that we 'do' using language and other semiotic resources. The kind of language or style that we use and therefore the kind of identity that we project depend on the social occasion in which we find ourselves. We make stylistic choices and mobilize different kinds of language and other resources as we move from one social context to another. For example, when you have a meeting with a professor to discuss your assignment, you are more likely to use more formal, standard, and impersonal language, and when you meet with a group of friends, you probably switch to a more informal, interpersonal style and deploy other linguistic resources, including slang words, humor, and banter.

Although styles are important markers of social belonging and identity, they can also be used to stereotype or 'pigeonhole' people. Unfortunately, it often happens that styles are deployed in the media to index many non-linguistic characteristics such as intelligence, gender, and race. Such links can lead to stereotypical and prejudiced views about social groups and their members, particularly when ways of speaking are associated with bad or undesirable behaviors and values. So, when someone uses a style that has come to be associated with a 'bad' behavior, the person might be automatically assumed to be a certain kind of person. This phenomenon is colloquially known as being 'branded by the tongue'.

Mainstream media, as institutions with a wider reach, are often complicit in 'recycling' and reinforcing stereotypical associations between certain ways of speaking and certain ways of behaving (e.g. Jaworska & Themistocleous, 2018). The linguistic anthropologists Judith Irvine and Susan Gal (2000) describe this process as **iconization**, whereby certain elements of speech are foregrounded and linked with non-linguistic

features. They see media and media representations as the main vehicles of such iconizations. A good example are media representations of **Multicultural London English**, colloquially referred to as Jafaican, which is a type a **multiethnolect** developed by young people living in multilingual communities in London (Cheshire et al., 2011). It is based on linguistic resources drawn from Jamaican Creole and other languages and English dialects spoken in the inner city, for example, Cockney. Studying media representations of this multiethnolect, the British sociolinguist Paul Kerswill noted how the British press uses Jafaican repeatedly as an index of 'foreignness', bad behaviour, and a threat to 'Englishness' and social cohesion (Kerswill, 2014).

MEDIA STORYTELLING

A4

In the last unit, we introduced various media genres and discussed their origins and general features. One of the most prevalent features of media genres, from news stories to social media posts, is their adoption of *storytelling* as an important part of the way they communicate their messages. In this unit, we first look at the notion of **narrative** and how narratives are often structured in media discourse. We will then explore narrative as a tool for social interaction in a range of contexts, including chat shows and social media sites. Finally, we will focus on notions of power and ‘framing’ in narrative.

Narrative: from structure to interaction

Storytelling is usually held to be a universal activity. The psychologist Jerome Bruner (1991) suggests that there is an ‘innate’ human propensity to organize events into memorable stories. It is not surprising, therefore, that stories pervade our day-to-day lives. Stories are central to a whole range of media genres, and equally, we use a whole range of media formats to tell and listen to stories. In particular, social media have opened up new possibilities to produce and share stories. Although they have not diametrically changed the kind of stories that we tell, they have enabled us to tell stories in different ways. Before we explore the ways in which stories and storytelling happen in the media and how media affordances and constraints are exploited by media producers to tell stories, we will first discuss what constitutes a narrative and how we can analyze it.

The traditional way of looking at narrative is to see it as a text type or a genre with its own set of structural conventions and social purposes (see unit A3). Narrative genres include such things as anecdotes, fables, fairy tales, and love stories. This particular perspective focuses essentially on the *product* of storytelling and is interested in identifying its sequential organization and textual properties. The work of the linguist William Labov has been particularly influential in how people study the organization of narratives. Although Labov was primarily interested in vernacular forms of language and not in narratives per se, he used the technique of storytelling to elicit natural speech from participants in interviews. Instead of asking them directly about the kind of language that they used in everyday life, he prompted them to speak ‘naturally’ by asking them to tell a story about a time when they were in danger of dying. Consequently, Labov ended up with a large corpus of stories of personal experiences. When studying these stories together with his colleague Joshua Waletzky (Labov, 1972; Labov & Waletzky, 1967), he noticed that although the narratives recounted very different events, they all had a similar structure consisting of:

- An **Abstract** (a summary of what the story is about).
- An **Orientation** (explaining the who, what, where, and what of the story).
- Complicating Action** (details about what happened in the story to move the plot forward).

- ❑ **Evaluation** (explaining the significance and/or implications of the actions in the story).
- ❑ **Result** or **Resolution** (telling what finally happened at the end of the story).
- ❑ **Coda** (a short statement summarizing the story and bringing the reader/listener back into the present situation).

This came to be known as the **canonical** model of narrative in linguistics and language studies, and it has been used to study narratives and their structures across contexts, including media. In fact, many stories that we encounter in TV shows and films follow the kind of structure that Labov and Waletzky identified. The narrative structure proposed by Labov and Waletzky is not only found in the longer stories we know from movies, but it can also be found in shorter media narratives, such as those in advertisements and television commercials, which operate by presenting audiences with *complications* and *resolutions* to those complications, or what might be called a ‘problem-solution’ format. Most advertising begins with a problem (such as stains on clothes, bad breath) or more serious problems (such as insecurity or social isolation), and present the product (a detergent, a breath mint, a new car) as the solution to these problems.

The canonical model proposed by Labov and Waletzky, however, does not neatly fit all the kinds of narratives that we encounter and produce on a daily basis. Status updates and other posts on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram are also ‘stories’, but are not usually structured in the way Labov and Waletzky envisaged. They are likely to be short texts emphasizing only one aspect of the story such as a complication or coda. You might skip words altogether and tell a story by just posting an assemblage of images or using a combination of text and image. We exploit media and different semiotic resources to tell stories in different ways. We also tell stories differently, depending on who our listeners are. Think about a story that you shared with some of your distant relatives at a formal family dinner. How would you tell the same story to a group of close friends? When chatting with your friends, you may offer a much more detailed account of the story disclosing elements that you may not be willing to share with your relatives. You may also use slang or swear words or other informal features of language and a different pitch and volume with your friends, and more formal and polite forms when talking to your relatives. In short, how we tell stories and what we tell is rarely a neat reflection of the canonical model. Storytelling depends a lot on the social occasions within which we tell stories and whom we tell stories to and the medium that we use (for example, television, the phone, Facebook). These aspects, in turn, have an impact on the kind of verbal and semiotic resources that we deploy to tell the story. Not only that, the way in which we tell stories depends on the wider social and cultural contexts and the kind of literacy practices with which we grew up.

Although storytelling is a universal phenomenon, people in different parts of the world tell stories in ways which are unlike the way proposed by Labov and Waletzky. The linguistic anthropologists Ron Scollon and Suzanne Scollon (1981), for example, in their research on storytelling practices by speakers of Athabaskan, a language spoken by indigenous communities in Alaska and parts of Canada, found that when people were asked to tell a story in Athabaskan, their narratives would present actions and explanations of those actions in a different order than when they were asked to tell the same story in English. They argued that the order of narrative reflects the ways in which knowledge is acquired and transmitted in a given community, and so models

of narrative structure need to take into account the dynamics of social and cultural context in which narratives are produced.

In order to account for the cultural aspects of narrative, anthropologist Richard Bauman introduced the idea of narrative as a **performance** in which social and cultural practices of the teller's and listener's community are (re)enacted. In order to capture the listener's attention, the teller needs to revert to conventional rules and devices of storytelling, but storytelling is not just about reproducing social and cultural conventions; it can also be an important site of social and cultural transformation. Stories afford the teller a certain power over the listeners; he or she can use conventional devices of storytelling to produce something unconventional and in doing so, bring about certain effects on the audience such as shock or surprise that in turn might challenge established ways of thinking. For Bauman, storytelling as a performance is always a site where tradition and innovation meet. This tension between tradition and innovation is evident in many of the media narratives we encounter, which frequently reproduce popular cultural **storylines** such as the 'rags to riches' story, the 'voyage and return' story, and the 'overcoming the monster' story, but at the same time often attempt to present a new perspective or 'twist' on the storylines.

Stories are not only influenced by larger cultural scripts, but also by the specific contexts in which they are told. Inspired by conversation analysis, a number of scholars have studied stories in the discursive environments in which they occur (for example, dinner conversations and informal chats with friends). Work by linguistic anthropologist Elinor Ochs and the psychologist Lisa Capps as well as the sociolinguist Shoshana Blum-Kulka has shown that, far from being self-contained autonomous speech acts, narratives are often instances of **talk-in-interaction**. They are dynamic communicative events which involve both the teller and the listener(s). While in Labov and Waletzky's model, the listener assumes a passive role, Blum-Kulka's work on dinner conversations has shown that narratives are often jointly co-constructed by all participants involved (Blum-Kulka, 1993). Ochs and Capps' (2001) work on narratives in informal conversations has further demonstrated that narratives are not simply recounts of what happened, but important resources for people to collaboratively reflect and make sense of events and situations, establish common ground, and display and negotiate their identities. Narratives produced on chat shows are a good example of such collaboratively accomplished stories produced by people to jointly make sense of events. In a chat show, the host is not just a listener; she or he takes an active part in eliciting a narrative from other participants. He or she also intervenes to elicit specific narrative events or keep a story on track if the teller diverges from a theme. This is done through minimal responses (*yeah, right, oh, hm*), orientation questions, and repeating or rephrasing parts of the narrative. All these devices can contribute to the dramatization of the narrative and ensure that an interesting and gripping story is delivered for the audience. In this sense, TV chat shows are not just occasions for people to narrate their experiences; they are occasions in which the act of people conversationally co-creating a narrative is performed for the audience (Thornborrow, 2000).

The view of narrative as an interactional resource highlights the fact that we engage in a variety of storytelling practices for a variety of different reasons. Sometimes we produce long, complex narratives following structures that are more or less in line with Labov and Waletzky's model; but sometimes we just produce 'scraps' of stories in order to quickly share a piece of news.

Sociolinguists Michael Bamberg and Alexandra Georgakopoulou (2008) call this latter form of narrative **small stories**, and insist that the analysis of narratives, including media narratives, must go beyond the traditional focus on highly structured, canonical narrative genres to see narrative as embedded in multiple genres and distributed throughout discourse. Examples of small stories include narratives such as **breaking news**, involving the telling of a very recent event, **projections** where participants share future or hypothetical events, or **shared stories** consisting of chains of multiple small stories collaboratively authored by participants sometimes turn by turn. It is these kinds of stories that pervade our everyday lives, helping us understand and reflect on events and maintain social relationships.

It is therefore not surprising that these kinds of ‘small stories’ are favored in social media where they are routinely told through genres like social media updates, photo narratives (such as Instagram and Snapchat ‘stories’), and memes (see unit B7). Defying traditional principles of media storytelling, such stories are often about ordinary people doing ordinary things, but they have important functions for the people who produce them and the people who receive them. Media sociolinguist Ruth Page (2010) points out that new media stories are often collaboratively composed, with different people contributing to them, and that they often perform important social functions, allowing people to manage their social identities and social relationships. In this way, new media stories in some respects have become an interactive genre, the meaning and significance of which depends heavily on the context in which they are told, shared, and distributed through social networks. We will explore in more detail examples of storytelling practices on social media sites in unit B4.

The move away from seeing narrative as a structure to conceptualizing it as an interactive resource that people use for meaning making and identity display has important implications for the analysis of media narratives. Alongside the focus on structure and content of what is told, we need to pay attention to the context in which the narrative has been produced and specifically who participates in whose stories, why, and what roles they assume.

Narrative and power

As we briefly discussed above, narratives are social as much as they are personal, and as social occasions, they play an important role in reproducing socio-cultural rules, norms, and practices. Narratives are therefore an interesting lens through which we can both explore accounts of personal experience as well as trace larger societal and cultural norms that shape that individual experience.

Roland Barthes, whose work on photography we talked about in unit A2, also had a lot to say about narrative. Narratives in the modern world, he argued, often serve the same function as ‘myths’ in the ancient world, that is, stories in which we encode the way we understand ourselves and the societies in which we live (Barthes, 2009). This is particularly pertinent to media narratives, which work on two levels: a literal level, in which they tell stories of specific people and specific events, and a symbolic level, in which they preserve, promote, and naturalize particular ideological positions. Some scholars therefore take a much more critical approach to media narratives, and show how supposedly neutral stories that we encounter in media work to construct and reinforce identities and social practices that align with existing relationships of

power, especially within the framework of global capitalism in which humans are seen chiefly as freely choosing customers whose happiness depends on them acquiring goods. Media scholar, Lee Artz (2015), for example, in his analysis of television cartoons and animated feature films in a range of different countries, found that they consistently promote themes of individualism and self-interest, respect of authority, and consumerism.

Power in a narrative does not only work through the contents conveyed in the narrative. In order to tell a particular story, we need to possess the right kind of tools, for example, have a good grasp of a particular kind of language and other semiotic resources. These are acquired through access to specific sites, for example, educational institutions or professions, but access to these is not equally distributed in society. Not everyone can write articles for the *New York Times*. This role is reserved for those who have embarked on a particular educational and professional path and have elaborate resources to do so, including excellent writing skills, degrees, and substantial professional experience or outstanding journalistic achievements. So, to tell a story in a media context involves not only the ability to use language, it has to be a particular kind of language underpinned by specific educational and professional experience and credentials. Because of this, those who produce the kind of authoritative narratives that we encounter in the media such as news stories do not only have the right to tell stories and therefore construct narrative versions of events, but they also acquire the right to evaluate and judge the stories of others. Therefore, narratives not only grant the power of telling, they also legitimize claims to authority and control over what is told, when, where, and how it is told, and who participates in the telling. In this sense, narratives can be a powerful tool for the exercise of power, domination, and control in society (see unit A9).

The power of narrative is also related to the fact that narratives, especially those told from personal experience, are often seen as ‘true’ accounts of events reflecting ‘real’ unedited experiences. Some consider narrative to be the most ‘natural’ form of communication and a window into the human soul. The claim to authenticity and truth has led to personal narrative becoming a pervasive genre embedded and distributed in many other media genres. We not only find personal narratives in established genres such as documentaries or news stories, but they also occur frequently in ‘smaller’ genres such as adverts or advertorials. Many popular media genres such as reality TV include large chunks of personal narrative. Because narratives are seen as more real and authentic than other forms of communication, they are also likely to grab listeners’ attention and get them more interested. Media producers are well aware of the persuasive power of personal stories and exploit this power across media genres and formats. We explore the persuasive power of narratives further in unit B4.

Frames

Another more ‘critical’ way of analyzing media narratives is by making use of the concept of **framing**. When journalists talk about framing, they are usually referring to the ways in which stories are selected, presented, and organized in order to emphasize a certain perspective on events over others (Capella & Jamieson, 1997). According to journalism scholar Todd Gitlin (1980), when a story is framed by a communicator, while certain aspects of the story might be emphasized, others may be excluded.

Therefore, framing is an agenda-based and subjective presentation of a story in which some aspects are made more accessible, visible, and salient to audiences.

In linguistics, the concept of framing refers to something much broader: the processes through which people signal ‘what’s going on’ in a communication, in other words, are we ‘joking around’, ‘having an argument’, ‘sharing secrets’, etc. The concept comes from the anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972), who came up with the idea while watching monkeys ‘play-fighting’ in a zoo. How is it, he asked himself, that the monkeys know the difference between ‘play-fighting’ and ‘real fighting’? He concluded that they must send subtle signals to let each other know what the ‘real’ meaning of their actions is. The sociolinguist John Gumperz (1982) called these signals **contextualization cues**, signals that people send through the words or style that they use, or through things like facial expression or tone of voice (or, in the case of written interaction online, emojis and typography) to show how what they are saying ought to be interpreted. The idea of framing was later taken up by the famous American sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), who talked about the way people use frames when they interact in everyday life, but also when they tell stories. Frames in narrative work on several levels, both in framing the events narrated according to the expectations of those who are listening that this will be a certain kind of story, and in framing of the storyteller in relation to the story and the social occasion for telling it.

The cognitive linguist George Lakoff, in his analysis of political discourse, describes frames this way:

Frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world. As a result, they shape the goals we seek, the plans we make, the way we act, and what counts as a good or bad outcome of our actions. In politics our frames shape our social policies and the institutions we form to carry out policies. To change our frames is to change all of this. Reframing is social change. [...] Reframing is changing the way the public sees the world. It is changing what counts as common-sense. Because language activates frames, new language is required for new frames. Thinking differently requires speaking differently.

(Lakoff, 2004: xv)

Lakoff argues that politicians and political commentators in the media try to present events as part of particular cultural storylines that they think resonate with voters. People with different political beliefs, he says, may be particularly drawn to particular kinds of stories. For example, he says that there are two competing narratives of ‘the family’ in the US. On one hand, there is the narrative of the family dominated by a ‘strict father’, in which values such as discipline, self-control, loyalty, and devotion are stressed, obedience is rewarded, and disobedience is punished. On the other hand, there is the narrative of the nurturing family, symbolized by a ‘loving mother’, whose actions are guided by empathy and responsibility towards others (Lakoff, 2006). Conservative politicians, he notes, tend to frame events within the first narrative, advocating, for example, severe punishment for people who violate the law and opposing programmes that give assistance to the poor, while liberal politicians tend to frame events within the second narrative, emphasizing things like rehabilitating criminals and helping out people in need.

Framing is also a useful concept in understanding **media reception**, the way audiences interpret what they see, read, or hear in the media. When people encounter

narratives in the media, they are likely to interpret them based on their own expectations about how stories should be told and how they should turn out. One of the most famous studies of frames in media reception was performed by the linguist Deborah Tannen (1980), who showed a silent film about some boys stealing pears from a farmer to Greek and American audiences and asked them to tell her what they had seen. She found that Greek participants structured their responses around the narrative aspects of the film (*storytelling frame*), whereas American participants were more likely to comment upon the technical aspects of the film (*film frame*) and their experience as viewers of the film (*film-viewer frame*). 'It seems that the Americans,' she writes, 'were concerned with presenting themselves as sophisticated movie viewers, while the Greeks were concerned with presenting themselves as acute judges of human behavior and good storytellers' (p. 55). A similar difference was found by one of the authors of this book in a study comparing how Western lecturers and Chinese students described public service commercials about HIV/AIDS prevention they had seen. In this study, the Chinese students talked about the commercials as 'moral stories', focusing on the actions of the characters and the consequences of those actions, whereas the Western lecturers talked about the stories as 'lectures', concentrating on their informational content. As a result, commercials with strong narrative content and little information were judged negatively by the lecturers, while commercials with ambiguous or incomplete narratives were seen as ineffective by the students (Jones, 1996).

A5 MEDIA AND DISCOURSE PROCESSES

So far in this book, we have been focusing on the structure and style of media products such as television shows, newspaper articles, and social media posts, and the particular linguistic or discursive features of these products such as multimodality, generic conventions, and narrativity. In this unit, we will examine the processes that take place ‘behind the scenes’ as media content is produced. We will begin by explaining how media production is a discursive process of transforming actions and events into texts and then transporting those texts into different contexts. All media content is, at least to some degree, we will argue, a matter of cobbling together ‘scraps’ of discourse containing the ‘voices’ of different people—a process known as **intertextuality**. We will then look at the different ways these discourse processes help to shape the professional identities and practices of media producers such as journalists. We will also consider how people other than media producers, such as government regulators, advertisers, and audiences, play a role in the production of media products.

From media products to discourse processes

When media products appear in front of our eyes, we experience them as ‘finished products’ that we can watch or read as well as analyze. So far, we have introduced a range of different ways of analyzing media content as ‘finished products’, looking at their structure and content and the ways they are shaped by the use of different modes and materialities. This ‘product orientation’, however, is not sufficient if we want to understand how and why particular media products get to be the way they are. Media linguists such as Paola Catenaccio, Colleen Cotter, and Geert Jacobs (Catenaccio et al., 2011) argue that analyzing media discourse solely from the perspective of the ‘final product’ can lead to simplistic explanations that ignore the significance of the everyday professional practices that go into creating media products. Media products are not static entities that can be put on a shelf ready for academic scrutiny. They are a result of a long and sometimes messy chain of actions and interactions involving different kinds of people. For example, a news story does not just *tell* us something ‘new’; rather, it *re-tells* us something which has already been told or discursively enacted in the moment in which it happened in a particular way and with a particular focus. All media products lift fragments of discourse from particular contexts and place them in other contexts. Subsequently, others might lift fragments of media content that has already been published or broadcast and transport it into still other contexts: they might, for example, share it on social media or summarize it to a friend over coffee, or they might, as we do in this book, make it part of a totally different genre, in this case a textbook.

American anthropologists Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs call this process of ‘lifting’ discourse from the context in which it is produced *entextualization* (Bauman & Briggs, 1990). Entextualization involves two related processes: **decontextualization**—taking discourse out of its context—and **recontextualization**—inserting it into a new context. In the process of recontextualization, discourse elements and their meanings are not simply copied and pasted, but rather adapted, reworked, and recombined with

other elements in creative ways. As a result, literally every media product we encounter is a combination of the ‘voices’ of many different people (including people who witnessed an event, ‘official statements’ from governments or institutions commenting on the event, and the ‘editorial voice’ of the journalist reporting the event). This mixing of voices in media products is known as *intertextuality*.

The concept of intertextuality was popularized by the Bulgarian-French philosopher Julia Kristeva (1980, see unit D5), but its origins go back to the writings of the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981). It is based on the understanding that no utterance is completely original, that whenever we speak or write, we repeat things we have heard before and ‘borrow’ the words of other people. Moreover, no stretch of speech or writing can stand in isolation. All texts, spoken or written, make meaning by explicitly or implicitly responding to what has been said or written before or by anticipating future texts. In this sense, a text is never static; its meaning emerges in the ‘conversations’ or *dialogues* the text has with other texts. Bakhtin referred to this phenomenon as **heteroglossia**, which basically means ‘different voices’. The presence of different ‘voices’ in a text is sometimes made *explicit*, for example, through different forms of attribution (such as **quotations** or **paraphrases**), but sometimes it is *implicit*, communicated through things like **presuppositions** or by approximating the style of a particular person or kind of person. In fact, one of the main things media producers need to do when they create content is to decide how to represent the different ‘voices’ they are appropriating and how to position themselves in relation to these voices.

This notion of heteroglossia does not just reveal how complex the creation of a media product is, but also serves to problematize the whole idea of ‘authorship’, calling into question many of the assumptions that form the basis of copyright laws and other rules about the ‘ownership’ of texts. Despite seemingly ‘cut and dried’ ideas around what it means to ‘steal’ someone else’s ‘intellectual property’ and what it means to be ‘original’, all communication professions, including journalists, engage in ‘borrowing’ material from other sources, with different professions having their own conventions around how much ‘borrowing’ is permitted and whether or not the ‘owners’ of source material should be acknowledged or compensated. In other words, whenever media producers create new media products, they are always, to some degree, managing a tension between borrowing and originality, appropriation and adaptation.

Communities of practice

In discussing their notion of entextualization, Bauman and Briggs (1990) emphasize the role of authority and access. The process of entextualization is not available equally to everyone. First, people who wish to engage in entextualization should have the ‘authority’ to do so. They might, for example, need to apply for a broadcasting license from the government or form a limited liability company to publish a newspaper. Often authority is associated with power—obviously people with more power and money are more able to create media products for mass consumption, though this has changed dramatically with the rise of the internet, especially **Web 2.0**.

Second, to be able to reuse a type of discourse, one must have access to this type of discourse and be able to reproduce it. This involves not just having access to the people and events that we want to entextualize, but access to a certain set of *competencies* which often come from a certain type of education or training. For example, the ability

to write a news story for publication in a newspaper or a magazine is a special skill which requires not only a good command of language, but also other skills such as news-gathering, determining whether or not something is newsworthy, interviewing, and a familiarity with the editorial rules and media ethics of the particular media outlet one is writing for. These competencies are acquired at two primary sites: educational sites such as university departments of journalism and professional sites such as newsrooms (Cotter, 2010). So, in order to be able to ‘become a journalist’, people usually first have to join educational institutions, where they learn how to produce particular genres and styles associated with journalistic writing, and later join news organizations (newspapers, television stations, internet websites), where they become part of a community of practicing journalists. We can call such a community a **community of practice**.

The notion of communities of practice was first introduced by the cognitive anthropologist Jean Lave and the educational theorist Etienne Wenger in their 1991 book *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. It was initially used to account for learning processes outside of educational settings (for example, in forms of apprenticeship), but soon was widened to include learning in any professional or practitioner group. Communities of practice are groups that are formed by people who share common activities and goals and learn from each other through regular interactions. A community of practice is not just a group of people who have the same job or work for the same company; members of a community of practice engage in *joint activities* and pursue *shared goals*. The outcome of these joint enterprises is often a shared repertoire of resources and practices that guide their discourse, their relationships, and their decision-making processes. In some instances, communities of practice evolve to become professional associations or societies.

Joining a community of practice initiates the process of socialization into the practices and norms of that community. If you become a member of a journalistic community of practice, you can learn from other more experienced members of that community how to apply the skills that you acquired in a formal educational setting to actual practical scenarios of newswriting. You also gain **tacit knowledge** (not written down) about textual norms, ethics, and other expectations regarding professional practice (Cotter, 2010). You get to know what is possible and where the boundaries are that are not supposed to be transgressed (Marchi, 2019). In communities of media practitioners these boundaries are known as **firewalls**, and the maintenance of firewalls is an essential principle in everyday media production. An important firewall in journalism is the boundary between business practices around advertising and the practice of reporting and producing media content. It is generally part of the code of ethics of journalists that they do not let the business interests of their publications affect their reporting, though there is some skepticism as to how effective this firewall is (see units A8 and A9).

The rule of not mixing business with reporting goes back to one of the fundamental values underlying journalistic practice—**neutrality**. Blurring the boundaries between selling and reporting can be perceived as undermining this fundamental value; but as Cotter (2010) points out, the maintenance of this value is not always easy and often open to negotiation. The rise of new genres such as the advertorial, which we discuss in unit B3, and what has come to be known as ‘native content’, which we discuss in unit A8, are examples of new discursive practices that are the result of such boundary blurring.

Apart from neutrality, another fundamental value of journalistic practice is **objectivity**, which in news reporting implies that the personal judgments or opinions of

journalists and editors must be set aside when reporting the news. Journalists and editors are allowed to express their own opinions, but they should do so in dedicated and clearly labeled spaces such as editorials or **opinion pieces** (sometimes called **op-ed** pieces, because they traditionally appear on the page opposite the editorial in newspapers; see unit A8). The value of objectivity affects not only the way different genres are arranged in a newspaper, it also has an impact on the way in which news stories are written. For example, journalists make a great effort to use language that conveys a sense of ‘detachment’, including various forms of attribution (direct quotes, paraphrases), evidence, and **hedges**—words and phrases such as ‘alleged’ and ‘so-called’.

The values of neutrality and objectivity form a type of professional ideology, which guides most of the day-to-day activities and practices of newsrooms. These norms are explicitly evoked and negotiated when it comes to decisions in the news production process, specifically what to report and how to report it. Such decisions are made in **editorial** or **story meetings** which are specific and recurrent **speech events** of the journalistic community of practice. Each day, editors and journalists meet to discuss what should go on the front page, and this essentially involves negotiations of professional values, goals, and news values. What ends up on the front page is an outcome of these complex negotiations which often are not obvious in the final product.

Apart from these values, journalists also follow certain *principles* when deciding what to report and how to report it. Three of the most important of these principles are (1) newsworthiness, (2) standardization, and (3) innovation.

Newsworthiness

The most important decision that teams of news producers must make is whether or not a particular story is worth publishing, broadcasting, or posting to begin with, that is, whether or not it is *newsworthy*. The concept of newsworthiness has to do with what constitutes ‘news’. John Bogart, the editor of the *New York Sun*, once quipped: “‘Dog bites man’ is not news, ‘man bites dog’ is” (quoted in Mott, 1950: 376). What Bogart meant was that news is not all the events that *can* be reported, but rather a *selection* of events that are deemed newsworthy. So, we need to ask how and why some stories are told and not others. How ‘information’ is selected for publication is investigated in media and journalism studies under the heading of **news value**. News values are criteria that are used by media practitioners to decide what ‘counts’ as news. They are centered on three dominant parameters: *timeliness*, *proximity*, and *prominence* (Cotter, 2010). Timeliness emphasizes the relevance of a story to current events; whether it is old or new; proximity is about the relevance of news to the readers’ immediate situation or location; and prominence refers to how important an event is or how well known a person is in the community to which the news is targeted. Without the characteristics of timeliness, proximity, and prominence, an event or action is unlikely to be deemed worthy of publication or broadcast.

It might seem that ‘news’ should simply reflect ‘what happened in the world’. If, however, you acknowledge that not all events (even significant ones) are worth reporting and that what is reported as ‘news’ actually reshapes our understanding of ‘what happened in the world’, then ‘news’ is not so much the direct reporting of events but the result of a media **agenda** for news-making. In between events and reports of them, there are a range of creative and editorial processes that give shape to what is

finally depicted. **Agenda-setting**, a process we will discuss in more detail in units A8 and B8, often uses framing and storytelling techniques to highlight certain issues (see units A4 and B4), to put a positive or negative ‘spin’ on events or to attract attention to or distract attention from *other* events. This view of news is essentially that it serves **rhetorical** purposes as much as it reflects how things are or what has happened (see unit B8). To understand the language of news, therefore, requires understanding its rhetorical demands, its need to engage audiences, and in so doing, its capacity for bias, manipulation, and possibly deception (see unit A8).

Standardization

Another important principle in media production is that media outlets generally strive for consistency in the way they use language, usually based on what kinds of language people in the wider society consider to be ‘correct’ or ‘appropriate’. For newspapers, magazines, and some websites, these ‘rules’ of language use (covering things like spelling conventions, style, and tone, and even things like fonts and color) are documented in **style sheets** or **style guides**. The *Associated Press (AP) Stylebook*, for example, is widely regarded as the ‘journalist’s bible’ in the US.

In unit A3, we pointed out that the language style that most mainstream media follow is based on the idea of ‘standard language’. For example, the BBC favors Received Pronunciation (RP), which is broadly regarded as the pronunciation of standard British English and has its origins in the dialect spoken in the south of England in the areas close to London, Oxford, and Cambridge. RP enjoys a high prestige in the UK because it is normally associated with a high level of education and a high social status. Although it is only spoken by a small proportion of the population, it is the norm of ‘good’ language to which many people aspire.

Alongside other important social establishments such as educational and political institutions, media are often considered ‘bastions of standard language’ and largely contribute to its dissemination and preservation. Journalists and editors, in fact, sometimes self-identify as ‘protectors’ of standard language and actively aim to preserve it at every level of their practice (Cotter, 2010). This ‘protection’ of the standard means that features of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar that are associated with standard language are favored over those associated with **vernacular** varieties or dialects, which are sometimes regarded by laypeople as ‘bad’ or ‘inferior’ language. These beliefs are commonly referred to as the *standard language ideology*. For example, *isn’t* and *aren’t* is favored over *ain’t* because the latter form is considered ‘incorrect’ according to the norms of standard language, despite the fact that it is used by a large number of English speakers. In this way, media contribute to **language standardization**, which, as the sociolinguists Lesley Milroy and James Milroy note, is a conscious effort to minimize variability and choice in language (Milroy & Milroy, 1999).

Innovation

Although media practitioners, specifically journalists and editors, follow the **pre-scriptive imperative** that constitutes an important part of their professional identity

(Cotter, 2010), the standard cannot be preserved at all costs because language as well as attitudes towards language use is constantly changing. Also, media are available to large audiences, and media producers need to respond to the needs and interests of varied groups if they want their media products to be read or watched (see unit A6). While originally media, especially public state media, were conceived as a form of 'public address' based on the standard language, today media are more inclusive and diverse. Among the forces that have contributed to this growing diversity have been the growth of **commercial broadcasting** in the middle and late 20th century, and the growth of digital media in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Commercial broadcasting (which began in the UK in the 1950s, but has a different history in many other countries) is more responsive to audience ratings. Commercial broadcasters, accordingly, make extra efforts to maintain and expand audiences, and so try to adapt to audience tastes, styles, and aspirations. This approach has resulted over a period of time in a wider range of program formats, including alongside traditional news, documentaries, features, drama, and entertainment, genres such as quiz shows, phone-in shows, make-over programs, reality TV shows, and chat shows.

Digital media, and an increased multichannel supply of broadcast programs (by cable and satellite as well as terrestrial broadcasting), has contributed to a further reshaping of media discourse. New technologies such as social networking sites have not only exerted a huge influence on the ways in which media practitioners work, but have also brought new categories of people into the production process. **Bloggers, vloggers, youtubers**, and Twitter users (commonly referred as **tweeps**) bring in the voices of people, and are now routinely included in media formats that traditionally excluded or limited **vox populi**.

The contemporary broadcast media environment then gives space to a far wider range of different voices than in previous periods. Media producers come from many walks of life, not only from the professional media establishment or class (though a small number of media professionals and celebrities continue to play a central role in broadcast output). The fundamental shifts of broadcasting style brought about by these two cultural forces have enlarged the range of language varieties that are now found across media formats, and the range of new media producers introduce their own dialects, accents, and preferred speech styles into media products. However, it would be a mistake to think that this diversity of voices has dismantled the authority of the standard language. There are still 'authorized' voices maintaining the prestige of the standard language and the kind of social structures that this standard evokes. Thus, understanding media discourse is partly a matter of understanding how these various different voices interact with one another (O'Keeffe, 2006). It is important to investigate how various voices and speech styles are distributed across the media environment and how language-variety hierarchies are maintained in different media domains and formats.

A6 AUDIENCES, INTERACTION, AND PARTICIPATION

In the previous units, we have mostly explored the *forms* media take, and in the last unit we explored the discursive processes and professional standards that guide media production. In this unit, we will think of media more in terms of **social interaction**. That is, we will focus more on what happens *between* people when they use media to communicate with each other, and how different media affect the kinds of roles and responsibilities they have in communication.

Communication as social interaction

When most people think of social interaction, they think of people having *conversations*. The most common way we imagine conversations is in the form of two people exchanging messages with each other through speech (and other modes like gestures and facial expressions). This is the version of conversation featured in Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* ([1916] 1998; the key, founding text in modern linguistics; see Figure A6.1) depicted in a diagram of two (male) heads facing each other and exchanging messages.

A's thoughts are converted into an utterance conveyed along a channel to B, the recipient. B decodes the message into thoughts that, as far as the meaning-making properties of the code allow, resemble A's original thoughts. This is sometimes described as the 'transmission' or **conduit model of communication**, because the central idea is of messages being transmitted along a 'conduit' from A to B. Typically in spoken face-to-face interaction, the roles are then reversed: B thinks and expresses those thoughts by transmitting a coded message back along the same conduit to A.

This model of conversation developed by de Saussure in the early 20th century is not terribly different from more modern models of media communication, such as that developed by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (Shannon, 1948), a mathematician and a scientist working for Bell Labs in the late 1940s (illustrated in Figure A6.2).

As in the model above, this model conceives of communication as **dyadic**—that is, involving only *two* parties—in this case referred to as a **sender** encoding a message and transmitting it through a **channel** to be decoded by a **receiver**. Rather than the vocal-auditory channel of sound waves standing between sender and receiver acting as a 'carrier' of the message, the message might instead be conveyed through a telephone line, radio signals, or the web of networked servers that make up the internet. Two additional concepts that are important in this model are **noise** and **feedback**. 'Noise' is



Figure A6.1 Ferdinand de Saussure's talking heads (1998: 11).

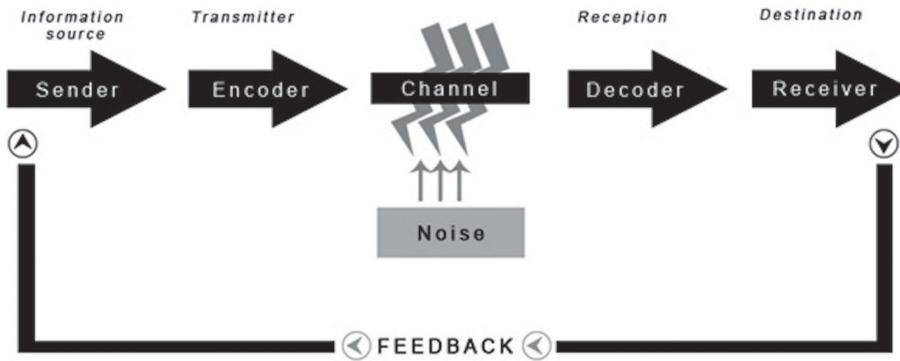


Figure A6.2 Shannon and Weaver's model of communication.

anything that might interfere with the message being sent, such as aspects of the environment, technical faults, or the actions of other people. Feedback is some signal sent back to the sender that the message has been successfully received.

Both of these models of communication have been extremely influential in their respective fields: de Saussure's in linguistics and Shannon and Weaver's in communication studies. But they also have their limitations, especially when you try to apply them to the messier reality of actual face-to-face or mediated communication. While de Saussure's model of conversation seems to make intuitive sense, when you really think about it, many of the conversations we have don't much resemble Figure A6.1. They may, for example, involve multiple listeners, each with a different kind of relationship to the message being expressed—some may be **addressees**, others may just be in the same room and overhear the message, and others may be secretly eavesdropping on the conversation. Many conversations also have multiple speakers who may be competing with one another for the 'floor'. Even the idea that communication is simply a matter of encoding and decoding messages is problematic. In many of the conversations we have, the meaning of the message depends not just on the words we say and on listeners' ability to decode them, but also on the social context in which the words are uttered and certain implicit knowledge or past experiences being shared by the people communicating. This is why it is often difficult to understand the overheard conversations of strangers: we don't share the same context and implicit knowledge that the people communicating do. Finally, the meaning of messages also depends a lot on who is sending and receiving them. The same message might have different meanings coming from your mother, your girlfriend, your teacher, or your boss.

Similar problems can be seen in Shannon and Weaver's model of communication. Again, in most media communication, there is not just one receiver of the message: media audiences are diverse and complex, made up of many different kinds of people with different kinds of relationships to the message and its sender and different opportunities to provide feedback. Media messages also rarely have only one sender. Often, as we noted in unit A5, they are produced by diverse teams of writers, producers, directors, editors, and presenters. And, just as with face-to-face communication, understanding media messages is not just a matter of decoding words (or images). People interpret media messages based on the contexts in which they receive them, their previous knowledge and opinions, and their relationship with the people who they believe are responsible for the messages.

These models are particularly inadequate when it comes to communication using digital media. Who exactly counts as the ‘listener’ or ‘receiver’ of messages we post on a social media site, for example? Usually we have certain audiences in mind when we post, but the circle of people who may actually see (and respond) to our message is often much wider than this imagined audience, sometimes even including people outside our own social network. Furthermore, although our messages may be available to everybody in our social network, they may appear more or less prominently on the pages of different users as a result of the **algorithms** that govern the site. And when people reply to or ‘like’ our message, whom are they communicating with—us, or others to whom their messages may also be visible? Finally, what about the people who might be ‘stalking’ us or the internet companies that are monitoring our communication in order to serve us more targeted advertising? When it comes to social media posts, we might even question whether we are truly the only senders of our messages: many of the messages we post are actually created by other people and only shared by us, and sometimes social media sites create messages for us automatically, such as when we have a birthday or enter into a ‘relationship’ (see unit B5).

In short, relations among ‘speakers’ and ‘hearers’ or ‘senders’ and ‘receivers’ have never been as simple as the models of communication we discussed above make out, but the rise of interactive, networked and mobile digital technologies reveal the inadequacies of the models more starkly than ever. What is needed then is a model of communication that can take into account:

- 1 The fact that much communication involves *multiple* senders and receivers.
- 2 The fact that these senders and receivers can have different relationships to or take up different positions towards messages or the people they are communicating with.

Audiences

When we think of mediated communication, especially mass media, we usually think in terms of **audiences** rather than ‘listeners’ or ‘receivers’. In media studies, audiences are thought of as groups of people for whom media messages are intended. When it comes to commercial media products such as pop songs and television shows, the most important thing about audiences is that they represent a source of revenue for media producers, either because they buy the media product in question or because they give media producers the ability to sell their attention to advertisers. In fact, the **commodification** of audiences is probably the single most important factor determining media content in capitalist societies. Specifically, media producers design content for the purpose of attracting audiences and holding their attention (see unit A7).

In the early days of mass circulation publications and network television, the main emphasis was on attracting as large an audience as possible. Starting in the late 20th century, however, with the advent of cable TV and later the internet, media companies were able to be much more targeted with their content, creating specific content for specific kinds of people (or, from the point of view of advertisers, specific kinds of customers), a process known as **audience segmentation**. Audience segmentation has reached its height in current models of online advertising, in which advertisers are not just able to target ‘types’ of people based on the kinds of content they like to consume,

but are able to target individuals in real time based on what they search for and click on when they are surfing the web. The ways that new technologies have enabled internet companies and advertisers to monitor what consumers are reading or watching has dramatically changed the ways people think about the relationship between content and advertising as well as the way people think about media producers and their audiences. Nowadays, media producers and distributors are as much ‘audiences’ of the behavior of their consumers as consumers are audiences of media content. Some have argued that this increased tendency of media producers to target content towards specific audiences has led to **audience fragmentation**, undermining mass media’s traditional role in helping to establish a shared reality among diverse sectors of society. Others, such as internet activist Eli Pariser (2011), argue that this tendency creates what he calls **filter bubbles** which ensure that people are only exposed to content that makes them comfortable and prevents them from being exposed to different points of view.

Just as media content is designed with audiences in mind, content also has the effect of *designing audiences*, conditioning people to like certain kinds of things and think of themselves in certain ways. In the middle of the 20th century, the German philosophers Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer ([1947] 2016) coined the term **culture industry** to describe how media *produce* in audiences certain standards of taste and desire for certain kinds of content, mostly in order to make them buy more consumer products. More recently, media critics have argued that media don’t just market their content to people with particular lifestyles, but actually have a hand in *creating* and *promoting* those lifestyles (Whitney & Ettema, 1994). As communication scholar Joseph Turow (2005: 1–5) puts it, ‘audience constructions by marketing and media firms derive not primarily from “objective” observations of the social world. Rather, the audience categories upon which they focus and the attributes that they choose to highlight relate directly to industrial needs and provide justification for industrial activities.’ New technologies, such as the recommender systems used by Amazon and Netflix, are even more efficient at conditioning audiences to like certain kinds of content.

Audience design is not just an important idea in communication studies, it is also an important idea in linguistics; but for linguists, it refers more broadly to the way the presence of certain kinds of audiences can affect the way people talk. Although audience design, in this sense, is evident in all kinds of communication, including face-to-face conversation, the concept has its origins in the study of mediated communication. In unit A3, we talked about the research of New Zealand sociolinguist Alan Bell (1984), who studied the way the same news readers who read for two different radio stations that shared the same studio altered their delivery depending on who they thought their audience was. When they were performing for the station that targeted a middle-class audience, their pronunciation resembled a variety of New Zealand English more similar to standard British English, whereas when they were performing for a working-class audience, they spoke a broader, more vernacular version of New Zealand English.

As we noted in unit A3, what the work of Bell alerts us to is the fact that media messages are designed for particular kinds of audiences not just on the level of content, but also on the level of *style*, and that performers, whether they be professional news readers or teenagers creating content for YouTube, have the ability to design their styles for different kinds of addressees as well as for other people whom they may not be directly addressing, but who might nonetheless be listening in.

Just as in communication studies, however, when we speak of audience design in linguistics, we are not just referring to the way messages are designed for particular audiences, but also how the style with which we speak to others contributes to ‘constructing’ them as certain kinds of people. When people speak to others in particular ways, they are communicating that they take them to be certain kinds of people such as ‘friends’, ‘strangers’, ‘confidants’, ‘adversaries’, or even members of particular groups such as ‘Native American males’ or ‘corporate CEOs’. Another way to say this is that we **position** people by the way we speak to them (Davies & Harré, 1990). Crucially, when we engage in such positioning, we are not just communicating to audiences what kind of people we take them to be, but also what kind of roles we expect them to take up in relation to our words. Are they, for example, meant to interpret the message as intended for them or as intended for someone else?

Participation frameworks

One of the most important parts of Bell’s idea of audience design is his discovery that the way people talk is not just affected by the person they are talking to, but also by other people who may be participating in the conversation but not directly addressed, people Bell referred to as **auditors**. For example, while you may design your utterances in a certain way when you are talking to your girlfriend, you might design those utterances in a slightly different way when you are talking with your girlfriend while her parents are present. We also design our utterances differently in the presence of other potential **overhearers**, as when we avoid talking about certain things or talking in certain ways when we are having conversations in public with bystanders around (see Figure A6.3).

One other kind of hearer mentioned in Bell’s model is eavesdroppers. For Bell, these are not important participants since we are usually not aware of them. As Jones (2016) points out in the excerpt reprinted in unit D6, however, nowadays quite a lot of our communication takes place with the assumption that we are being eavesdropped on,

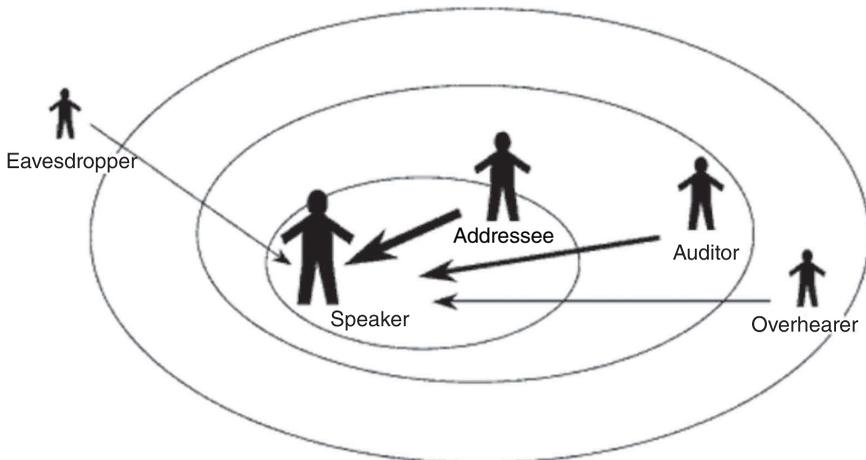


Figure A6.3 From the addressee to the eavesdropper (From Meyerhoff, 2006: 43).

and this may have some effect on what and how we communicate. This is especially true of internet communication, but is even true of behaviour in public where we are regularly being monitored by devices such as CCTV cameras.

Bell takes his idea of multiple 'hearer positions' from the work of American sociologist Erving Goffman (1981), who argued that the conventional focus on dyadic communication between 'speakers' and 'hearers' or 'senders' and 'receivers' does not accurately represent the complexity of human interaction. There are, in fact, multiple *positions* from which people produce and consume communication. 'Hearers' or 'audiences', for example, can include both those for whom messages are intended (whom Goffman called **ratified participants**, which include both addressees and 'third parties') and those for whom messages are not intended (whom he called **unratified participants**, which include bystanders/overhearers and eavesdroppers). Goffman calls these different recipient positions the **participation framework** of a communicative situation. Goffman (1981: 3) writes:

When a word is spoken, all those who happen to be in perceptual range of the event will have some sort of participation status relative to it. The codification of these various positions and the normative specification of appropriate conduct within each provide an essential background for interaction analysis [...]

This idea that audiences can occupy different positions in relation to speakers and their messages is especially relevant to the study of mediated communication. In fact, to illustrate his point, Goffman (1981) uses the example of radio talk in which, for example, a radio host may be speaking directly to a guest or a caller (positioning them as *addressees*) in a way that is intended to be *audited* or *overheard* by radio listeners. Goffman calls the way people adjust their talk to position different people as different kinds of hearers **footing**. The most important thing about footing is that people can, and often do, shift footing in the course of a single communication. For example, the same radio host might interrupt their interview with their guest to directly address the radio listeners with some kind of comment or evaluation, effectively turning the guest into an auditor of his communication with the listeners (see for instance Brand & Scannell, 1991; Clayman, 1992). These shifts in footing become even more complicated in cases where there are multiple audiences, which might include a studio audience, listeners at home, and even individuals who telephone in to the program to express their opinions. In such cases, the host must use a range of linguistic signals to show how he or she is positioning different audiences in relation to the message and to one another.

Sometimes, both in face-to-face communication and in media communication, however, there are things that are said by one person to another that are not intended to be overheard by an audience. In such cases, people attempt to perform what Goffman calls **audience segregation**, that is, they try to somehow separate different audiences so that only some people can have access to certain things. The radio or television host, for example, may communicate certain things to a guest when they are 'off-the air', or might communicate things to a studio audience that an upcoming guest, perhaps sequestered in a soundproof dressing room, is not privy to.

One of the reasons participation frameworks are especially complicated when it comes to a lot of new media formats is because they can sometimes make audience segregation more complicated. When we post to social media sites, for example, even when we make use of 'privacy settings', we are never quite sure of who might have

access to our communication. New media scholars Alice Marwick and danah boyd (2011) call this phenomenon **context collapse**. The lack of spatial, social, or temporal barriers between different audiences in social media, they say, makes it more difficult for us to restrict our communication to particular people. As a result, we sometimes design our utterances with multiple audiences in mind, either by withholding certain information that we think might be sensitive or expressing ourselves in ways that we think only certain people will be able to understand. Meanwhile, ‘receivers’ of messages on social media sites often strategically shift their footing, alternately attending to, overhearing, eavesdropping on (‘lurking’), ignoring, repairing, or ratifying what other people say and engaging in different kinds of **crossplay** (communication between ratified participants and bystanders, that is, communication that ‘crosses’ the perceived boundaries of the conversation) and **byplay** (communication between a subset of ratified participants).

MEDIA AND THE ATTENTION ECONOMY

A7

In the last unit, we considered media communication as a kind of *interaction* between media producers and their audiences and talked about how media messages are shaped by audiences' expectations and how media messages can also act to shape the expectations of audiences. In this unit, we will consider what makes audiences pay attention to some media content rather than others and what role audiences themselves play in spreading media content.

The core focus of this unit is what media scholars Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green (2018) call **spreadability**, the features of media content that make people want to share it with others—either by reporting on, referring to, or re-publishing it through traditional media outlets, or 'sharing' it through social media or 'word of mouth'—and more importantly, the way this process of being spread adds *value* and *meaning* to that content. Spreadability is related to the principle of *newsworthiness*, which we discussed in unit A5, the set of criteria by which media producers decide what is worth publishing or broadcasting. But just because something is newsworthy doesn't make it spreadable. And just because a piece of content spreads does not mean that it is newsworthy in the traditional sense—a fact illustrated by the LOL cat memes we discuss in unit B7.

Media content is spreadable when it inspires audience members to proactively become part of the media distribution process. Of course, with the advent of the internet and especially social media sites, it has become much easier for media consumers to share content with others. In fact, we might say that one of the main *affordances* of social media is that it facilitates the sharing of content through large and interconnected social networks. Although users of social media often broadcast seemingly mundane messages about things like what they had for dinner just as traditional media outlets try to design content to capture people's attention, people who post things on social media design their messages to attract the attention of their friends or followers and to get them to react by 'liking', commenting on, or sharing what they have posted.

To start out our discussion, we will consider the environments in which people are exposed to media messages and the way different messages compete for their attention. Then, we will introduce the concepts of **memetics** and **virality** to explain how and why ideas and messages get spread through societies. Finally, we will focus on some of the specific linguistic strategies used by traditional media to compete for the attention of audiences. In unit B7, we will focus more on spreadability and virality in digital media formats.

The 'attention economy'

It is not enough for media producers to make various kinds of content available to the public. They must also attract audiences to pay attention to the content. There are many reasons for this: they may, for example, desire fame or wish to convert people to a political ideology or set of religious beliefs, as did early publishers of Bibles and

religious tracts in the 17th century in Europe. The main reason, however, is economic; in order to stay in business, commercial media producers must make money from the content they produce either by getting people to pay for it or getting advertisers to pay for placing promotional messages together with the content. In both these cases, what generates *value* is the ability of the content to capture the attention of audiences.

Over the years, media outlets have often engaged in fierce competition for readers, listeners, viewers, or (in the case of the internet) visitors; and this competition can have a profound effect both on the way media genres have evolved and the content of media messages. In the mid-1800s, for example, newspaper publishers in New York decided to compete for a previously untapped segment of the market—less educated working-class readers—by inventing a new format called the **penny press**, a newspaper that only cost one cent. Before that, most newspaper readers were middle class, and newspaper subscriptions were relatively expensive. The first of the penny papers was the *New York Sun*, soon followed by the *Herald* and the *Tribune*. Content in penny papers differed from that of more ‘serious’ papers, focusing more on stories about local personalities and crime. As the market competition became fiercer, however, the content in such papers became more and more violent and sensational. Later in the 19th century, as more immigrants arrived in the US, many with relatively low levels of literacy in English, newspapers began to use larger typeface, simple and provocative headlines, and more and more illustrations, and to ramp up the focus on scandal, murder, vice, and gossip, a practice that came to be known as **yellow journalism**.

With the advent of broadcast media, media producers went to even greater lengths to popularize their content. In the mid-20th century, for instance, record companies regularly paid radio stations to play their songs over and over again, a practice known as **payola**, and television producers devised a range of different methods to reduce the chances that people would change the channel and to make sure they watched commercials by interrupting programming at strategic points (such as key moments in the plots of dramas). Attention-grabbing strategies have been particularly evident in television news programming, with its increasingly sophisticated visual effects, proliferation of screen objects such as call outs, chyrons, and countdown clocks, and the seemingly constant labeling of content as ‘breaking news’.

Over the past few decades, the conditions in which media producers compete for the attention of audiences have changed dramatically. Up until the late 20th century, despite the competition among media outlets, people still had limited sources of information and entertainment, and so it was not so difficult to attract their attention. If you think of this situation in terms of the classical economic model of supply and demand, you might say that there was a limited supply of content and a high demand for it, or a shortage of information and a surplus of attention. Nowadays, however, with technological advances such as cable television, the World Wide Web, social media, and mobile telephones, the opposite is true—now there is a surplus of content and a shortage of attention. Obviously, this makes the job of attracting the attention of audiences much more challenging for media producers, whether they be corporate entities or ordinary people trying to get people to ‘like’ things they have posted online.

Often, we hear people say that we are living in an ‘information economy’, an economy in which the main products are not raw materials or manufactured goods but *information* and the services associated with its distribution and management. The economist Herbert Simon (1971) takes issue with this, arguing that what we are living

in is actually an **attention economy**, an economy in which the main product is not information, but *attention*. '[I]n an information-rich world,' he writes:

the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it.

(pp. 40–41)

The attention economy is perhaps most evident in the way advertising and marketing drive the production and dissemination of media content. In the era of analogue media, media producers created content designed to attract the attention of audiences and then sold that attention to advertisers. The value of the attention, however, was always uncertain, since advertisers could never be sure if audiences' attention to the content (news stories, television programs) always translated into attention to the advertisements. This became even more uncertain as new technologies, such as television remote controls and digital video recorders, allowed audiences to easily switch away from or fast forward through commercials. The job of media producers to deliver the attention of audiences has become even more difficult, as digital media have unleashed a proliferation of content—both commercial and user generated—that has to compete for the limited attention of users.

As a result, media companies and advertisers have taken to collecting information about what audiences pay attention to, what they click on, download, like, tag, share, follow, and view in digital environments in order to deliver more personalized advertisements to them. In other words, information about people's personal habits has become a currency that is used to devise ways to hold their attention. We often hear that in new media environments, if you are not paying for something, then *you are the product*. What this means is that when you use 'free' services such as Google, the information that they gather about you and sell to advertisers is the real way that the company makes money. In reality, however, it is *your attention* that is the product, and information about you is simply a means of getting you to pay more attention. The more attention you pay to platforms such as social media sites and the more attention you attempt to attract to yourself by using such sites, the more value you create for the owners of those sites.

Memetics and virality

The idea that attention has value, of course, is not new. Throughout history, the ability to get people to pay attention to and propagate certain ideas, artifacts, and fashions has been the key both to political power and to the growth and spread of human cultures. The more attention these ideas, artifacts, and fashions attract, the more they are spread, and the more they are spread, the more value they accumulate.

The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (1976) refers to these 'pieces of culture' which attract people's attention and are subsequently spread from person to person as **memes**. Examples include melodies, catchphrases, forms of architecture, and

clothing fashions as well as abstract beliefs (for example, the concept of God). Memes are spread primarily through imitation. Dawkins (1976: 192) writes:

Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. If a scientist hears or reads about a good idea, he passes it on to his colleagues and students. He mentions it in his articles and his lectures. If the idea catches on, it can be said to propagate itself, spreading from brain to brain.

At the same time, just as biological evolution advances not just through reproduction of genes, but through their mutation, human culture advances not just from the imitation of memes, but also through their capacity to be altered as they move from person to person. Another biological metaphor that is often used to describe spreadable content is the virus. Memes can be thought of as ‘mind-viruses’, which can infect our brains and emotions and turn us into agents for their further spread. In fact, one of the most common ways of talking about content that has spread quickly over the internet is to say that it has ‘gone viral’. Information scientists Jeff Hemsley and Robert Mason (2013: 144) describe virality as:

A [word-of-mouth]-like cascade diffusion process wherein a message is actively forwarded from one person to other, within and between multiple weakly linked personal networks resulting in a rapid increase in the number of people exposed to the message.

What makes a particular piece of content ‘go viral’ has to do both with the features of the content itself—its originality, its ability to invoke an emotional response from people—and with the environment or **information ecosystem** in which it is introduced, whether or not it has people who are willing and able to share the content and the kinds of technologies they have available to them to facilitate its spread. Sociolinguists Piia Varis and Jan Blommaert (2015), in the excerpt reprinted in unit D7, argue that when people spread content, they create a feeling of ‘belonging’ and ‘community’ with other people that are sharing the same or similar content. Ultimately, they say, it is not the ‘meaning’ of the content that matters, but the fact that it is shared and the way this act of sharing signals **conviviality** and indexes certain kinds of identities for those involved in the sharing.

Most importantly, the concepts of memetics and virality remind us that media consumers are not (and have never been) passive consumers of media content, but have always played an active role in influencing the value of messages by spreading them through their social networks.

Sensationalism

There are many strategies that media producers use to try to attract attention to their content and compel audience members to become agents in its spread. We will end

this unit considering some of the more traditional methods media producers use to attract attention, in particular the practice of **sensationalism**. In unit B7, we will explore how these methods have evolved in the era of digital media.

In unit A5, we briefly discussed the idea of newsworthiness, the criteria that journalists use to decide what events are worth reporting on. But newsworthiness is not just a matter of the intrinsic qualities of an event or piece of content. Newsworthiness is also something that journalists *create* by the way they report on events and discursively ‘package’ content. They may, for example, attempt to ‘frame’ a story in a particular way (see unit A4), or find a particular **angle** of the story to emphasize, or they may use specific linguistic strategies such as those described by Bednarek and Caple in the excerpt reprinted in unit D7 like evaluative language, emotionally loaded words, or provocative narrative structures (see unit A4) to ‘spice up’ the reporting.

The same can be said about *sensationalism*. Usually we think that the quality of being ‘sensational’ is something intrinsic to a particular event, product, or person. But when it comes to media, sensationalism is as much something that is created by the people reporting on that event, product, or person. According to discourse analyst Katarzyna Molek-Kozakowska (2013: 173), sensationalism can be thought of as ‘a discourse strategy of “packaging” information in a way that makes it seem ‘more interesting, extraordinary and relevant’. It is a matter not just of the content of the information, but also of the linguistic and semiotic features of messages that have the capability to provoke attention from audiences.

One place where the linguistic features of messages are used to provoke attention is newspaper headlines. While one important function of headlines is to introduce the content or topic of a news story, an equally important function is to entice readers to read the story (or at least to pay attention to it). Before the internet, newspaper publishers depended on headlines to sell papers, designing their front pages with bold and provocative headlines in order to get people to notice them as they passed by newsstands or newspaper vending machines. Nowadays, as we will discuss in unit B7, internet websites also rely on headlines to entice people to ‘click’ on content so that they are exposed to the advertising that accompanies it. Headlines are also important aspects of news stories that appear on social media ‘Newsfeeds’. In fact, what usually compels people to share news stories over social media is the sensationalism of the headline, not the actual content of the story, which many people don’t even read.

In her study of sensationalism in news headlines, Molek-Kozakowska (2013) asked people to rate headlines from the British Newspaper the *Daily Mail* on a scale from one to five based on how sensational they thought they were. Those that were rated as most sensational were found to exhibit a number of specific linguistic features. Key among these features was starkly evaluative or moralistic language designed to provoke emotional responses, as in the following examples:

Greedy bankers to face prison as Chancellor prepares new law to target **reckless** bosses who take risks with the economy (8 Jan. 3)

Four **radical** Muslims planned launching a ‘Mumbai-style’ attack on London, targeting the Stock Exchange, Boris Johnson and the US Embassy (1 Feb. 3)

Incredible rescue of the two honeymooners trapped for two days inside **stricken** cruise ship as captain is arrested for manslaughter (15 Jan. 1)

(Molek-Kozakowska, 2013: 188)

She also found that sensational headlines tended to favor particular **speech acts**, among which were:

- (1) **EXPOSING** (purporting to reveal something that has heretofore been hidden from the public eye), as in:

£100 to play truant! Schools accused of bribing worst pupils to stay away when Ofsted inspectors call (6 Jan. 6)

- (2) **GENERALIZING** (labeling or passing judgment on a whole class of people), as in:

Rise of the hugger mugger: ‘Sociable’ thieves who cuddle while they rob (13 Jan. 7)

- (3) **WARNING** (creating anxiety about an issue or state of affairs), as in:

A sausage a day could lead to cancer: Pancreatic cancer warning over processed meat (13 Jan. 4)

(Adapted from Molek-Kozakowska, 2013: 184)

Certain grammatical structures were also common in the headlines rated as sensational, such as **interrogatives** (questions), compelling readers to read the articles to find out the answers to the questions, such as:

Why wasn't he locked up? Sex offender killed woman, 95, after fleeing bail hostel and breaking into care home (18 Jan. 6)

Are we about to witness the end of Britain? (28 Jan. 3)

Finally, Molek-Kozakowska (2013) found that many sensational headlines contained a kind of ‘nutshell’ narrative structure, much like the ‘small stories’ we discussed in unit A4, for example:

Woman, 19, lured 16-year-old girl to house where she was plied with drink and drugs and gang-raped at knifepoint (20 Jan. 9)

Innocent man who rang 999 from back of police van while being ‘roughed up’ by officers gets five figure pay out (1 Feb. 2)

(Molek-Kozakowska, 2013: 186)

Interestingly, although these stories often contain the kinds of structural elements of narrative we discussed in unit A4, they often rearranged these elements so that the ‘climax’ of the narrative came first. In the last example above, for instance, we can observe the following structure:

Innocent man who rang 999 from back of police van (CLIMAX)
while being ‘roughed up’ by officers (COMPLICATION)
gets five figure pay out (RESOLUTION)

The important thing about the discursive processes associated with sensationalism is that they don't just change the *form* of the information, but that they also may change the *meaning* by foregrounding or exaggerating different parts of the message, adding an evaluative component to it or invoking in readers certain associations based on their previous experiences or cultural storylines prevalent in their societies (see unit A4).

A8 TRUTH, LIES, AND PROPAGANDA

In unit B1, we talk about Howard Innes's idea of media biases, the notion that all media are biased towards different ways of communicating, different forms of social organization, and different perspectives on reality. In this unit, we will focus on the related topic of **media bias**, the way media messages communicate particular 'points of view' and are often designed to promote the agendas of the people who produce them. We will begin by exploring the whole idea of what is meant by 'truth' in media. Then, we will explore what is meant by the terms **propaganda** and **'post-truth'** and what they have to do with the kinds of news, advertising, and political discourse that we're exposed to.

Truth

People often say nowadays that we are living in a 'post-truth era'. By this they don't just mean that it is more difficult to determine whether or not the things we encounter in the media are 'true', but that the values we associate with 'truth' in our societies are changing. It seems that for some people, including some powerful people in politics and the media, whether or not something is 'true' is less and less important. The Oxford Dictionary defines 'post-truth' as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping political debate or public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief'.

To get to the bottom of this phenomenon, we need first to figure out what we mean by 'truth'. This is not an easy task, since different kinds of people (scientists, journalists, politicians, philosophers, and poets) have different ideas about what 'truth' is. The definition from the Oxford dictionary quoted above pits 'truth' against 'emotion' and 'belief', but, as our discussion below will show, in 'real life' such binary oppositions seldom hold up.

Not all media messages, of course, are intended to be taken as 'true'. Some media products, such as feature films, TV dramas, and comic strips belong to the category of 'fiction'; even though we may become absorbed in the world they create, we ultimately know that they are not 'true'. At the same time, new entertainment genres such as the 'mockumentary' (see unit A3) use conventions from non-fiction genres to blur the line between what seems 'true' and what we know to be fiction. It might also be argued that many fictional genres, while portraying events that didn't really happen or people that don't really exist, actually capture 'deeper truths' about life, relationships, or human nature.

Other kinds of media messages claim to present 'information' which is purportedly 'factual' and 'objective'. As we saw in unit A5, journalists and other people involved in producing the news take as core values the ideas of *neutrality* and *objectivity*. At the same time, we know that there are many ways that news can be *biased*. News bias can come from the decisions of reporters and editors about what is worth reporting and what is not, about whom to interview to find out 'facts' about events, and even about where cameras are placed to record events and how pictures get edited. Bias may also

come from external factors such as government censorship or limits placed on reporters' access to information. In some respects, bias in reporting is inevitable since everyone experiences events from a different point of view. In commercial media, it is safe to say that all news is biased towards what journalists think is 'important' and what they think will attract readers or viewers, and these ideas may also affect the way stories are written—reporters, for example, might foreground more 'sensational' aspects of a story and background less interesting information (see unit A7).

It is important to remember that just because something is biased doesn't make it untrue. Reports of an event based on limited information can still be accurate reports of the information available and can be made even more accurate if the incompleteness of the information is acknowledged. Similarly, just because something is 'unbiased' doesn't make it true. In fact, news organizations have often been criticized for striving for 'objectivity' by giving **equal time** to people with opposing perspectives on an issue or event, even when one of those perspectives is demonstrably more accurate. Giving equal time to scientific findings regarding climate change and the opinions of climate change 'deniers', for example, creates a **false equivalence**, since the position that the climate is changing, that human beings are responsible, and that the impact of climate change is likely to be devastating for life on earth is overwhelmingly supported by scientific evidence, while the position that these things are not true lacks creditable supporting evidence.

Finally, there are certain kinds of media messages that we *expect* to be biased. Newspaper **editorials** and opinion columns (op-eds), for example, explicitly present arguments for a particular position on a political or social issue. However, it is important to remember that although they inevitably present 'facts' selectively, the purpose of these genres is not so much to convince people that these facts are true as to convince them that these facts naturally lead to believing that some policy or course of action is good or bad, right or wrong, realistic or unrealistic. Other genres that are overtly persuasive are advertisements, political speeches, commercials, pamphlets, position papers, and advocacy campaigns from organizations that favor or oppose certain policies. Most people assume that these kinds of media products are biased to some degree, skewed towards the facts, or the view of the world most favorable to the agendas of those who produce them, and so they adjust the way they evaluate these messages accordingly. We would probably not consider, for instance, an advertiser's claim that her products are superior to similar products produced by a different company to be an 'objective' statement.

Communication scholars Marian Friestad and Peter Wright (1994) have developed what they call the **persuasion knowledge model**, a theory which postulates that the more people recognize that the purpose of the message is to persuade them, the *less* likely they are to be persuaded by it. Just because we view a message as biased, however, does not mean that we think there is something wrong with the message. The way we judge such messages is more a matter of whether or not we think they are right or wrong (usually based on whether or not they confirm opinions we already hold) as opposed to whether or not we think that the facts they present are true or not.

How do we know, then, which messages are fiction, news, or opinion? The most common way we do this is based on where we find these messages in the media and the *generic conventions* (see unit A3) associated with them. We expect fictional content to be introduced in a certain way, to be presented in a fairly conventional narrative structure, and to use particular kinds of writing styles or filming techniques. Although

news stories also involve *narrativity* (see unit A4), they are structured very differently from fictional formats: they are usually much shorter, arrange information in a hierarchical way so that the main ‘facts’ are presented upfront followed by an explanation of or elaboration on those ‘facts’, and they usually are presented as third-person accounts of events rather than dramatic depictions of the events themselves (see unit B3). Finally, we expect persuasive discourse to appear in particular places—‘op-ed’ pieces printed opposite the editorial page in newspapers, television commercials appearing in breaks between parts of a television show, and ‘sponsored content’ appearing on top or to the right of the screen in our Google searches.

Unfortunately, nowadays assumptions about the appropriate location and generic features of different kinds of information are less stable or straightforward. Newspapers, magazines, and internet news websites, for example, now commonly contain advertorials (see unit C3) or **branded content** which is presented in the same format as regular news stories (except for sometimes bearing the label ‘advertisement’ or ‘sponsored story’, usually in very small print). The arguments marketers make for such content is that they do not ‘interrupt’ the reader or viewers’ experience of reading the news; that they fit better into the context of the publications, broadcast platforms, or websites where they appear (which is why they are sometimes called **native content**); and that they give advertisers a chance to tell interesting and engaging stories about their products. The media company that is perhaps most responsible for popularizing the use of branded content for advertising is the website *BuzzFeed*, which, at the time we were writing this book, charged US\$100,000 to publish a ‘news like’ story promoting a brand, usually featuring a ‘clickbait’ headline of the kind we talk about in unit B7. In his book *Your Ad Here: The Cool Sell of Guerrilla Marketing* (2013), communication scholar and journalist Michael Serazio argues that much advertising today operates through strategies of expanding the space typically seen as reserved for commercial messages and catching audiences ‘off-guard’ by blending into the background of our everyday lives. Native content has the effect of disarming the ‘filters’ that we put up when we know a message is trying to persuade us of something. And some studies suggest that it is working: Law Professor David Hyman and his colleagues (2016), for example, found that only 37% of their study participants could identify native ads as paid content. Closely related to native advertising are the lists of ‘sponsored links’ that appear along with search results on sites like Google. A study by the Pew Internet in American Life Project (Fallows, 2005) found that only 38% of questionnaire respondents knew the difference between ‘sponsored links’ and actual search results.

Another way that people use to tell the difference between news and persuasive content is to pay attention to the *source* of the message; but with the way content travels across platforms, being shared, reshaped, and otherwise circulated by both media producers and consumers, it can sometimes be difficult to tell where the content originated. Social media sites ‘flatten out’ the graphical and stylistic differences that signal particular sources (such as the distinctive typeface of the **masthead** of *The New York Times*), making all sources seem the same.

Finally, sometimes information that is biased or has a persuasive intent is packaged in such a way that it ‘seems true’ for particular audiences, because it confirms things that they already believe or comes from sources that they are emotionally aligned to. The US comedian Stephen Colbert coined the term **truthiness** to describe things that seem to be true because they fit in with our preconceived opinions. The term hits on something universal about the way people process information. All humans are prone

to what psychologists call **confirmation bias** (see unit B8), the tendency to believe things that confirm what they already believe, and people whose goal it is to persuade or manipulate us with media messages are well aware of and good at exploiting this tendency. The word has spawned a range of similar terms using what Stanford linguist Arnold Zwicky has called ‘the Colbert suffix’ (X-iness) (Peters & Mörtzell, 2007), such as ‘proofiness’ (Seife, 2010) to describe the use of sophisticated mathematical arguments to prove something that is not true and ‘referenciness’ (Goldacre, 2007) to describe the ostentatious use of references in writing to make the writer seem more educated than they actually are.

Propaganda

Just as defining ‘truth’ proves to be problematic, so does defining ‘propaganda’. Usually when we think of the word ‘propaganda’, we think of the Soviet propaganda posters of the 1950s showing happy and productive workers or the ‘Newspeak’-laden pronouncements of the government of Oceania in Orwell’s novel *1984* (1949/1992). That is, we usually think of propaganda as being inherently negative and deceptive. At the same time, the word propaganda has also been used to describe campaigns that try to get people to do things we might regard as positive such as not litter, stop discriminating against minorities, or eat healthy foods. In his classic book *Propaganda* (1928), the ‘father of public relations’ Edward Bernays defines it as ‘The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses...’ (p. 9). For Bernays, propaganda is not a bad thing. Though it has been associated with authoritarian governments, Bernays considered it a crucial element for democratic governance as well, a way of educating people about issues that they do not have the time or expertise to understand on their own.

What then is the difference between propaganda and the everyday run-of-the-mill persuasion we see in op-ed columns or in advertisements? One way to think about it is that the purpose of things like op-ed columns and many advertisements is to try to convince you of an ‘idea’, whereas the purpose of propaganda is to socialize you into an **ideology**. The French philosopher Jacques Ellul ([1965]1973: 11) argued that what distinguishes propaganda from mere persuasion is that it ‘take[s] hold of the entire person’ with an ‘organized myth’ that structures knowledge in a way that makes whatever facts or experiences one encounters susceptible to a narrow range of interpretations. Regardless of the facts on the ground, effective propagandists are able to **spin** those facts to make them seem to support their point of view. Another important thing about propaganda is that it seeks not just to get people to think in a certain way, but to get people to *act* in a certain way, and to get them to see themselves as *certain kinds of people*. The point of propaganda is not to communicate information, but to make people feel like they are part of a ‘team’ or a ‘tribe’ which is better than some other team or tribe.

Propagandists often go about their work in indirect ways. Rather than addressing an issue head-on, they try to manipulate people’s attitudes and assumptions about entire areas of life. One example of this can be seen in Edward Bernays’s work in the service of the tobacco industry. In the 1920s, it was considered unseemly for women to smoke in public. Bernays realized that if this taboo could be changed, the cigarette companies could substantially expand their market. Rather than going after the taboo directly,

Bernays attempted to *frame* the issue within the wider campaign for equal rights for women. He paid a group of women to smoke cigarettes as a form of ‘protest’ in the New York Easter Sunday Parade of 1929. The gesture shocked the general public, but also caught the attention of feminists, who called on women to ‘Light another torch for Freedom! Fight another sex taboo!’ (Brandt, 2007). Photos of the march ‘went viral’ (at least by 1929 standards) and sparked renewed debate on women’s rights. Bernays was successful in transforming smoking from a matter of social norms into a political issue.

It used to be assumed that propaganda was almost exclusively the tool of the powerful—governments, corporate entities, or powerful institutions—who had the means to disseminate information widely or to co-opt media outlets to disseminate it for them. But with the development of digital media, which put the tools for creating and disseminating sophisticated content in the hands of people outside traditional power structures, the ability to engage in propaganda and to make it ‘go viral’ is much more widely distributed. This is perhaps best illustrated by the effective use of social media for propaganda by extremist organizations such as ISIS, who effectively used content like digital videos of gruesome beheadings to recruit members; but we might even think of media formats favored by political activists like memes, stickers, and graffiti as a form of **guerrilla propaganda**.

For Bernays, propaganda was a synonym for what people nowadays refer to as **public relations**, the strategies companies and institutions use to improve their relationships with the public and to influence people’s opinions and lifestyles in ways that are favorable to those companies and institutions. The Chartered Institute of Public Relations defines it as ‘the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain good will and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics’ (1987). Nowadays, most public relations professionals make an effort to clearly distinguish what they do from propaganda, seeing the latter as a form of manipulation that often tries to distort facts and appeal to irrationality or emotion, and the former as a kind of ‘education’. Public relations practitioner Tom Rankin (2005) puts it this way:

What’s the difference between PR and propaganda? In a word, truth. ... if what you’re ‘spinning’ has a solid basis in fact, you’re doing PR. If not, it’s propaganda. Plain and simple.

Though, as we said above, sometimes what is ‘true’ and what is not is not always easy to define. In many ways, the difference between propaganda and PR is in the eye of the beholder. As Bernays (1926: 212) put it, ‘the only difference between propaganda and education, really is the point of view. The advocacy of what we believe is education. The advocacy of what we don’t believe is propaganda.’

Meanwhile, some have expressed concern that much of the content that people regard as news is heavily influenced by public relations professionals. Traditionally there has been an uneasy relationship between journalists and public relations professionals, with journalists seeking to expose the ‘truth’ about the actions of companies and organizations and those working in PR seeking to present those actions in the most favorable light possible. However, journalists still depend heavily on public relations professionals to provide content and public relations professionals depend on journalists to publish the content they give them. A study by Justin Lewis and his colleagues (2008) in the UK, for example, found that journalists rely heavily on material provided by PR

professionals and often publish it without editing or critique. Furthermore, some public relations professionals attempt to influence the news using techniques that go beyond traditional press releases, creating phony ‘grassroots’ organizations to make it seem that there is public support for particular policies (a practice known as **astroturfing**), employing ostensibly independent ‘experts’ to speak on their behalf or staging ‘pseudo-events’ such as Bernays’s famous public display of women smoking in the 1920s.

‘Post-truth’ and the manufacture of doubt

Propaganda (and sometimes public relations as well) is not just about ‘manufacturing consent’ (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, see unit A9). Often it is about *manufacturing controversy*, making people think that there is an argument to be had about things that, to all intents and purposes, have already been settled. The purpose of manufacturing controversy is to sow doubt, so that people start to mistrust scientific findings or ‘inconvenient truths’ which interfere with a government’s desire to pursue a particular policy or a company’s desire to sell a particular product. One of the most famous examples is the response of cigarette companies to scientific evidence that smoking causes cancer and other health problems. In the US, the cigarette companies started the Tobacco Research Institute which paid ‘scientists’ to produce ‘white papers’ rebutting studies published in scientific journals showing the health risks of smoking. For the most part, these papers did not refute the findings of scientific research, but rather attempted to undermine these findings by calling them ‘inconclusive’ and accusing researchers and government regulators of trying to suppress contrary viewpoints. The strategy was summed up in a memo written by executives of the cigarette company Brown and Williamson (a subsidiary of British American Tobacco) in 1969:

Doubt is our product since it is the best means of competing with the ‘body of fact’ that exists in the mind of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy.

(Brown & Williamson, 1969)

A similar strategy can be seen in the petroleum industry’s response to evidence of climate change. There is evidence that companies such as Exxon knew about the dangers of carbon emissions for a long time and chose not just to suppress that knowledge, but to undermine the scientific consensus that climate change is caused by burning fossil fuels. A 1982 internal memo from Exxon’s environmental affairs office, for instance, noted that the consequences of climate change could be catastrophic and that significant reduction in fossil fuel use would be necessary to avoid these consequences. By the end of the 1980s, however, Exxon and other oil companies were engaged in a concerted effort to sow doubt about climate change through strategies such as newspaper advertorials and the funding of ‘think tanks’ to conduct ‘research’ designed to promote skepticism about mainstream scientific findings (Conway & Oreskes, 2012). Such strategies help to illustrate the limitations of the notion that more ‘points of view’ permitted in a debate will necessarily increase one’s chances of getting at the truth of a particular matter. Sometimes more voices just serve to muddy the waters, especially when they create a situation in which it becomes difficult to distinguish reliable voices from unreliable ones.

The relationship between truth and propaganda then is more complex than propagandists just trying to get people to regard things they say as ‘the truth’. In fact, it may be the opposite. One way of spreading propaganda is by attempting to disrupt the values that people assign to the truth to begin with. In other words, rather than trying to get people to believe what they say, some propagandists have the goal of getting people not to believe what *anybody* says, so that impulses such as fear, loyalty, or tribalism become much more important tools for making decisions than the rational evaluation of the ‘truth’ of a message. This is really what people mean by ‘post-truth’. A barrage of ‘fake news’ and bald-faced lies from politicians and others whom we once thought we should trust works to confuse us, making us unsure what to believe and more easily exploited by those who wish to exert power over us. Philosopher Lee McIntyre (2018: xiv) asserts that the idea of post-truth is not just that truth is being challenged, but that it is being challenged ‘as a mechanism for asserting political dominance’.

In the beginning of this unit, we cautioned that just because a message is biased or presents a particular ‘point of view’ does not mean that it is not ‘true’ and just because a message is ‘true’ does not necessarily mean that it is ‘balanced’ or ‘objective’. Because of the situated and often incomplete nature of the facts we have, it can be a temptation sometimes to jump to the conclusion that ‘nothing is true’ or ‘facts don’t matter’. This is an extremely dangerous conclusion because it leaves us vulnerable to people who might use media to rile us up or turn us against one another. We still have at our disposal a range of very good strategies with which we can assess the relative validity of information. In unit B8, we will discuss some of these strategies and how to apply them to media messages.

MEDIA, CENSORSHIP, AND RESISTANCE

A9

Throughout this book, we have been analyzing how media affect the way people use language and other modes of communication to make meanings and manage their relationships with others. Underlying all these discussions, however, is the fact that meanings and relationships are never neutral; they are always mixed up with larger systems of belief and power.

In this unit, we will explore issues of ideology, censorship, and resistance in media. We will examine not just how media are used to serve the interests of powerful people and promote ideas that help to maintain their power, but also how people use media to resist power, promoting alternative versions of reality and disrupting relationships of inequality. We will explore how governments and media companies sometimes impose limits on the words people can use and the ideas that they can express through media, the different ways people resist the power of institutions to decide what they should read, watch, or listen to, and the different ways they use media to resist the power of police, politicians, and corporations.

Hegemony and resistance

Often when people think about power, they think about people forcing other people to do things, sometimes using violence or the threat of violence. But that's not the way power usually works in the media. Rather, media exert power over us by coercing or seducing us in ways that we are not always aware of (see units A8 and B8). This form of power is known as **hegemony**. The concept of hegemony was first introduced by the philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1971) to describe the idea that power is gained by particular social groups not by force, but by eliciting the active *consent* of the populace through controlling the sources of information and culture. In their famous book *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky argue that media serve the interests of powerful social groups that control and finance them not by 'crude intervention', but by the selection of right-thinking personnel and by the editors' and working journalists' internalization of priorities and definitions of newsworthiness that conform to the institution's policy' (p. xi; see unit A5). Media are often agents of social control, tending to uphold the norms and values of established institutions in a society. This is partly because media organizations are embedded in larger political and economic systems and it is in their interest to help maintain and strengthen these systems. At the same time, media can also be agents of social change, holding governments and other powerful institutions accountable, uncovering corruption, and giving ordinary people a way to express their views.

Although the variety of media content available to people today seems dizzying, it is good to remember that most media are controlled by a very small number of companies or media conglomerates such as Alphabet (the company that owns Google), Time-Warner, Viacom, Facebook, The Walt Disney Company, Comcast, 21st Century Fox, Ashai Shinbun (in Japan), CCTV (in China), and JCDecaux (in France). Over

the past 50 years, there has been a dramatic move away from public control of the media to private, commercial control as well as an increased spread of media across national borders. One result of this is that most media companies are structurally inclined to promote the ideology that underpins their prosperity, an ideology known as **neoliberalism**, which promotes the private ownership of the means of production, intense competition, and mass consumption. As the American Communications scholar Robert McChesney (2000: 108) puts it: ‘the hallmark of the global media system is its relentless, ubiquitous commercialism.’

Most discussions of media hegemony focus on traditional broadcast and print media in which the flow of information is primarily one-way, from elite media producers to ordinary people, and many have noted the potential of ‘new media’ to challenge this hegemony, giving to ‘ordinary people’ opportunities not just to ‘talk back’ to the powerful, but also to promote alternative points of view. Social media, for instance, have been credited with providing a voice for marginalized people and non-mainstream politics, and with making available tools for citizens to mobilize against repressive regimes. Over the past decade, digital media such as blogs and social media campaigns have played an important role in challenging the agenda setting of mainstream media outlets, bringing issues and events to the attention of the public that were not covered by traditional media. Over two decades ago, the American right-wing blogger Matt Drudge proved that online ‘citizen-journalists’ could usurp agenda setting power from the mainstream media by reporting on the affair of the then US President Bill Clinton with an intern named Monica Lewinsky before publications such as *Newsweek* were willing to run the story, and in 2011 most traditional print and broadcast outlets ignored the growing Occupy Wall St. Protests in Zuccotti Park in New York City until the overwhelming circulation of first-hand accounts on Facebook forced them to pay attention.

At the same time, many people are increasingly skeptical about digital media companies, pointing out that the internet is dominated by a very small group of **platforms**, which exert a strong influence on the kinds of interactions people are able to have and the kinds of opinions they are able to express. The vast majority of all internet searches, for example, are controlled by Google, whose primary interest is to maximize its profits by collecting as much information as possible about users in order to efficiently target advertisements to them. Similarly, social media sites such as Facebook are designed to encourage people to share more and more of their personal information, not because they want to promote ‘friendship’, but because every time a user shares information or interacts with information other people have shared, they create data which the company can ‘monetize’.

Nowadays, internet companies are the main entities engaging in agenda setting, but in a very different way than the traditional media did in the past. Many of the decisions around the kinds of stories that get promoted are not, as in the past, made by editors in newsrooms, but rather by **algorithms**, which are able to control messages media consumers receive in real time based on the kinds of things they search for and click on. Digital media companies also engage in agenda setting by promoting not just certain kinds of content, but also certain forms of social interaction (like ‘sharing’), behavior that makes people more likely to produce information that can be monetized. In other words, media hegemony, especially when it comes to highly interactive digital media, is not just about changing the way people think, but also about changing the way they interact with their friends and others in the society.

Censorship and freedom

One of the most obvious ways powerful entities such as governments and media companies restrict the kinds of content people can access is through the practice of **censorship**. Censorship is the suppression or prohibition of particular kinds of content because it is deemed to be 'obscene', 'subversive', sensitive (for instance, 'government secrets'), or simply contrary to the interests of the government or other powerful groups or individuals. Reasons that governments or media companies might censor content include silencing dissenting political views or challenges to policies, protecting national security, preserving the privacy of individuals, advancing corporate interests, protecting groups that are considered vulnerable (such as children) from content that might be deemed inappropriate for them, maintaining social norms associated with things like the use of taboo language, or protecting a company or individual's ownership of particular content.

Media censorship can occur on many levels: on the level of the government explicitly outlawing certain kinds of speech or ideas, on the level of editors making decisions about whether or not to publish content that might offend advertisers, and even on the level of individuals on social media censoring themselves to avoid being attacked by other users or becoming targets of government scrutiny. Traditionally, the enforcement of censorship has been carried out by human beings employed in government offices like the China's Bureau of Internet Affairs, or in the case of private media outlets, by 'moderators' who monitor the comments people post on online news sites for inappropriate or abusive language. Increasingly, however, censorship is carried out by algorithms which automatically filter content. For example, YouTube uses a sophisticated set of automated video identification tools which match each and every video uploaded with an archive of video and audio content provided by content owners to detect the unauthorized use of copyrighted materials.

Censorship policies, however, do not just reflect the agendas of governments and corporations. Sometimes they are also a reflection of public attitudes towards what kinds of content should be freely available. In many societies, for example, there are vigorous debates about how far language use in media needs to be censored or regulated in order to maintain some set of recognized standards regarding what should be communicated and what shouldn't. At the same time, the policies governments and media companies adopt towards censorship can also affect peoples' attitudes and behaviors. Media censorship can create the impression in a society that some opinions or ways of talking are unacceptable or risky, leading people to avoid expressing those opinions or talking in those ways, even in their private interactions with their friends and family members. Sometimes people engage in **self-censorship** in order to avoid getting into trouble with the government or other authority figures, but sometimes they do it in order to avoid offending others or creating conflicts in their personal lives. Caroline Tagg and her colleagues (2017), for example, found that people on Facebook often avoid sharing political content if they think it might offend people in their social networks. When people stop expressing opinions that they think are unpopular, these opinions receive less exposure, reinforcing the idea that these ideas are not popular. German political scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1984) calls this phenomenon 'the spiral of silence', and media scholars have warned that it can threaten the kind of open debate that is seen as necessary for the maintenance of healthy democracies (see, for example, Dahlgren, 2005).

Sometimes, of course, there is a broad consensus within a society that some content ought to be censored, as is the case with certain kinds of pornography, graphic violence, content containing **taboo language** (see unit B9), and what is sometimes called **hate speech**, content that promotes violence towards or discrimination against certain people based on the group they belong to (such as ethnic or sexual minorities). It is also the case that some forms of censorship are not imposed from above, but rather come from citizens or groups that undertake strategies to ‘shame’ or ‘shout down’ people with opinions different from theirs.

Mediated resistance

Although media companies and official censors wield an incredible amount of power when it comes to what sorts of messages get heard and what sorts get silenced, media consumers (and increasingly, *prosumers*) have a range of different ways to resist the messages media expose them to and to give voice to alternative points of view.

The most common way people resist media hegemony is through the way they ‘read’ and interpret media messages. The British media scholar Stuart Hall (1973) pointed out that although media companies have control over the kinds of messages they expose audiences to, audiences don’t always interpret them in the way they are intended. Some audiences, he says, produce what he calls **oppositional readings** (sometimes called ‘reading against the grain’ or **subversive reading**), readings which contest the meanings intended by text producers or create new meanings from them. In the same tradition, British media scholar David Morley (1993: 17) talks about the ‘local meanings’ that media consumers often construct ‘within and against the symbolic resources provided by global media networks’, feminist media scholars have discussed how oppositional forms of reading can disrupt the hegemonic order in media that promote patriarchal ideologies, and queer media scholars such as Alexander Doty (1993) have noted how queer audiences develop creative ways of generating transgressive readings of texts not produced with them in mind, mobilizing what is sometimes referred to as the ‘queer gaze’.

There are also more formal ways to resist media messages. Many countries provide ways for people to instigate lawsuits against the producers of messages in cases where they might be untrue, defamatory, or harmful to a particular group of people. In many cases, however, libel laws are resources only available to people who have the financial means to hire lawyers and pay court fees, making them tools by which the powerful are able to silence critics.

Another way people can resist media hegemony is to use whatever media are available to them to ‘talk back’ to the powerful and express opposing views. In the past, these included old media formats such as **zines**, protest signs, cassette tapes, and underground radio broadcasts. The rise of digital media has had the effect of putting a range of powerful new communication tools—from social network sites to digital video cameras—in the hands of the relatively powerless. The effects of this can be seen in a whole host of grassroots movements over the past two decades from the ‘Arab Spring’ to the #MeToo movement.

There are also a number of ways to resist media messages using non-traditional methods or formats. One example is ‘hacking’, a method whereby an individual or group surreptitiously gains access to the digital infrastructure of a media company and

uses it to distribute their own message, as when hackers take over a website and alter or deface it, or when hackers steal sensitive information from governments or corporations and publicize it, often through traditional media channels. Although such methods are illegal, some groups like Anonymous and Wikileaks justify such actions as a form of political activism known as **hacktivism**, the non-violent use of illegal or legally ambiguous digital means (such as website defacements, denial-of-service attacks, information theft, website parodies, and virtual sabotage) in pursuit of political ends (Samuel, 2004). For example, during the Iranian protests of 2009, activists used social media sites to encourage people to hack news outlets and government websites and distributed links to websites offering instructions and software tools for this purpose, in what blogger Matthew Burton (2009) calls a form of 'network warfare' (see also Shachtman, 2009).

There is another kind of 'hacking' that is less based on technological 'breaking and entering' and more based on reconfiguring and remixing conventional media formats known as **culture jamming**. Culture jamming involves hijacking the messages of advertisers or governments and altering them in ways that subvert or parody these messages. It typically involves such practices as humorously altering billboards, publishing faux advertisements to criticize corporate policies, and remixing footage from movies, television shows, and commercials to create parodies or 'guerrilla documentaries'. Perhaps the most iconic examples of culture jamming come from the Canadian media activist group Adbusters (<https://www.adbusters.org>), which publishes a print and online magazine featuring parodies of advertisements. In the manifesto published on its website, it encourages readers 'to hold corrupt politicians accountable and wake up a thoughtless, complacent culture; quit following and retweeting, start thinking and talking for ourselves again' (Adbusters, 2019). Adbusters and other culture jammers argue that since most people who use the streets and public places that are increasingly being colonized by aggressive advertisements cannot afford to counter corporate messages by buying their own ads, they should have the right to engage in dialogue with ads by altering or defacing them.

The biggest difference between 'culture jamming' and other kinds of 'hacking' is that it uses rhetorical or linguistic tools to counter media messages rather than just technological ones (see unit B8). Back in 1987, the media studies professor John Fisk coined the term **semiotic democracy** to describe how media audience can sometimes 'hijack' media content and make it their own, sometimes making subversive meanings with it. Culture jamming and other forms of remixing (see unit B5) are good examples of semiotic democracy. Some people, however, such as legal scholar Lawrence Lessing (2004), are concerned that corporations are using copyright laws to prevent people from making and distributing creative or critical works using proprietary media content. Originally designed to protect writers and artists and to foster creativity, copyright laws, Lessing argues, are increasingly being used to stifle creativity and silence criticism.

Finally, there is a variety of different kinds of **citizen journalism** in which ordinary people use the digital cameras and audio recorders embedded in their mobile phones to document events that they witness, especially those which involve people in authority behaving badly, and distributing their recordings either through mainstream media outlets or through social networking sites. The interesting thing to note about such documents is the way different semiotic conventions are developing around the genre of citizen journalism, conventions which, to some extent, appropriate and repurpose

conventions of traditional media and to some extent constitute new ways of using media to represent reality and interact with audiences. Another interesting thing about citizen journalism is the way events that are documented by 'ordinary people' change as they circulate through social media and are reported on in the mainstream media, and along the way, end up being subjected to different kinds of interpretations as well as different kinds of professional standards (see unit A5) for reporting the news, a phenomenon explored by Jones and Li in the excerpt reprinted in unit D9.

Section B

DEVELOPMENT

APPROACHES TO
LANGUAGE AND MEDIA

B1

LANGUAGE, MEDIATION, AND SITES OF ENGAGEMENT

In unit A1, we introduced the concept of *mediation*. In this unit, we will explore in more detail how mediation influences the kinds of meanings we can make, the kinds of actions we can take, and the kinds of relationships we can create with other people when we communicate.

Media as ‘extensions’ of human beings

All communication is mediated. It is impossible to directly transmit our thoughts or intentions to others without using some sort of medium. The most common medium through which humans communicate is the voice, but we can also communicate through facial expressions and gestures. These forms of communication depend on the human body, and so we call them **embodied media**. For centuries human beings got along quite well by simply using their voices and their bodies to communicate, but embodied media have lots of limitations. They can only be used to communicate with people in close proximity to us, and they don’t allow us to store and preserve communications in a durable way.

The development of writing (around 3200 BC) represented a huge advance in human communication because it allowed people to overcome the limitations of their bodies. We might, therefore, call writing the first example of a **disembodied** medium, and it has since its earliest use become human beings’ most important technology, the primary means we have for storing, retrieving, communicating, and disseminating information.

The media scholar Walter Ong (1996) has argued that writing didn’t just change the way we could communicate, but it fundamentally altered human societies, changing the way people thought, interacted, and related to the world around them. Writing not only allowed people to preserve records of things that happened, altering the way people related to the past, but also shifted communication from the very context-bound situations of oral communication to the more decontextualized situations of written communication, making the way people communicated through language more explicit and more abstract. Words were no longer tied to particular situations or to the bodies of particular speakers, allowing people to communicate with people that they couldn’t see and might not even know. Most of all, writing had a huge impact on language itself, leading over the years to the standardization of languages (see unit A5), as well as to a certain bias among some that written language is somehow superior to spoken language.

The invention of printing in China during the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 CE), and the development of movable type in Europe in the 15th century, were also important watersheds in human communication, allowing people to reproduce communications and disseminate them to larger numbers of people. Many scholars credit the printing press with facilitating the rise of the Reformation in Europe in the 16th century, since it resulted in the mass distribution of Bibles, making it no longer necessary for people

to go to priests to access the word of God. Moreover, the historian Benedict Anderson (1991) argues that printing was in many ways responsible for the development of the nation-state. It gave people who did not know one another but who had access to the same newspapers and books a way to ‘imagine’ themselves as part of a larger national community.

The invention of electronic media introduced a whole new host of possibilities. The telegraph and telephone enabled people to communicate over a distance in ‘real time’, not having to wait for days or even months for their messages to be delivered. Radio and television allowed people to broadcast their voices and their bodily actions to a large number of people at the same time. In a way, electronic media brought the embodied media of voice and body language back into the picture. In fact, Ong (1996) credits electronic media with ushering in a ‘new orality’.

Like print media, electronic media also introduced new possibilities for media consumers, influencing the ways they organized their social lives and thought about their place in the world. Unlike print media, which tended to isolate individuals, electronic media products such as movies and television shows are often consumed in groups. Visual electronic media also dramatically changed the way people learned about the world beyond their local contexts; suddenly, rather than just reading about foreign people and foreign lands, they could actually see and hear them. This also affected the way that they responded to political issues.

Finally, digital media—computers, mobile phones, and other wireless devices—gave humans the capacity to access information and multimedia content from almost anywhere in the world at any time. It also put into the hands of media consumers the ability to create and disseminate their own media products. And just as print and electronic media altered the ways people interacted with others and with the world around them, so have digital media, giving them the opportunity to interact in complex networks of people online, to immediately share things that are happening to them at any moment, and to keep track of what other people are doing in ways that have never been possible before. When the internet was in its infancy, many people thought that these new abilities would lead to a more connected and cohesive world—a ‘global village’—where people would get along better. This is clearly not what has happened. Rather, digital media seem to have led to a more fragmented world, with people with different interests and ideologies staking out their own corners of the internet and circulating similar opinions among themselves, and others using the tools of digital media have made available to attack other people’s opinions or victimize them through such practices as **trolling** (see unit D5), hacking, and cyberbullying. People also believed that the access digital media provide to a wide range of content would end up resulting in more informed citizens who could make more intelligent political decisions. This has also not happened. In fact, digital media often seem to present a distorted view of the world, characterized by scams, ‘fake news’, or produced by **bots**, computer programs pretending to be people.

Affordances and constraints

What should be clear from the brief history of media above is that the introduction of new media often results in dramatic social, political, and economic changes, mostly because new media allow people to do things that they were not able to do before.

The things that media allow us to do are called **affordances**. The idea of affordances comes from the evolutionary psychologist James Gibson (1979), who defined them as those aspects of the environment that allow animals to take certain kinds of actions.

When it comes to media, we can think of affordances in terms of the things media allow people to do. Writing, for example, affords the preservation of communication, and the telephone and the radio afford the transmission of the human voice over long distances. But affordances are not a matter of media themselves, but a matter of the way human beings *interact* with media. One way of thinking about this is the way *embodied* media (the human brain and voice and body) interact with disembodied media. The second thing to remember is that affordances also create limitations. Print media, for example, affords the communication of ideas to large numbers of people who are not physically present; but in order to use this medium, communicators have to give up the ability to communicate to people using their bodily gestures or their tone of voice. The limitations that media impose on our actions are called **constraints**. Finally, media affordances can change over time. When computers were first invented, for example, the ASCII character set they used constrained writing using anything but Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3...) and Roman script (a, b, c...), severely limiting the use of many non-European languages. In the late 1980s, however, a new standard called Unicode was developed, which enabled the input and display of non-Roman scripts such as Chinese, Arabic, and Urdu. Shortly after that, new kinds of peripherals were developed to allow users of these scripts to input characters using a pen rather than a keyboard, greatly improving access to digital media for millions of people.

Another way to talk about affordances and constraints is to say that different media are 'biased' towards different kinds of communication and different kinds of social actions. The notion of **media biases**—related to but not to be confused with media bias (see unit A8), the particular 'point of view' communicated in media messages—was introduced by the political scientist Harold Innis (1951). Different media, argued Innis, embody biases in terms of how they organize information and how they enable people to control the dissemination of information. Older media such as stone and clay are 'time-biased', because they last for a long time but make it difficult to transmit messages across space, whereas print media using paper and broadcast media such as the telegraph and radio are 'space-biased', since they allow people to render messages in forms that are easily transmitted over long distances. Innis believed that the biases of media affect the societies in which they are used, with, for example, time-biased media contributing to the extension of civilizations over time and the development of more hierarchical social relationships and space-biased media contributing to the territorial expansion of political power through the more rapid dissemination of ideas.

Communicating in and across 'sites of engagement'

When it comes to language and other modes of communication, the affordances and constraints of media largely affect three things: (1) *what* we are able to communicate, including the semiotic resources available to us to make meaning; (2) *whom* we can communicate with, including how many people, where they are in relation to us, whether the communication is **one-way** or reciprocal, and whether it is **one-to-one**, **one-to-many**, or **many-to-many** communication; and (3) how we can combine

different aspects of communication, including different languages, different texts and text types, the words of different people, and different modes.

Media enable or constrain what we can communicate by the different resources they make available for making meaning. Print media, for example, make available written language, still images, and other resources such as diagrams, which allow us to communicate ideas clearly and precisely, but limit our ability to make meaning by referring to the immediate context of the reader in the way we can with face-to-face spoken communication and through our tone of voice or our facial expressions. Cinema and television, however, allow us to make meaning using a much wider range of resources, including moving images, music, sound effects, bodily gestures and actions, and spoken and written language. That is not to say that these media allow us to make ‘more’ or ‘better’ meanings than print media. They just allow us to make meanings differently, and these different ways of making meaning might have different effects on audiences, for example, reading about what is happening in an overseas war is different from watching moving images of people dying.

Media enable and constrain whom we can communicate with by the way they allow us to disseminate messages. They may allow us to communicate only to people who are close by or to people at a great distance. They may only enable us to transmit messages very slowly (as with letters) or allow us to transmit them very quickly (as with text messages). Finally, they may allow us to communicate with only one person at a time or they may enable us to reach very large audiences. Media also enable and constrain if and how recipients of messages can respond to us. Novelists in the 19th century, for example, had very little contact with the vast majority of their readers, and if readers wanted to respond to what the author had written they had to make a considerable effort. Users of social media, however, can respond immediately to things they have seen or read, and can even interact with other users who are responding to the same thing.

The third way media can enable and constrain the way we use language is more complicated. It has to do with the way media interact with different kinds of texts, with other media, and with the physical world, and the way they help to create different **sites of engagement**. Ron Scollon, in the excerpt reprinted in unit D1, calls a site of engagement a moment when different media, different discourses, different people, and different social practices come together to make certain kinds of social actions possible. Some sites of engagement are relatively simple: a family sitting together in the living room with the television on is a site through which the messages broadcast through the television interact with the messages family members communicate with one another, as well as other messages contained in newspapers or magazine that might be strewn around the living room or messages that might emanate from the digital devices of different family members from people inhabiting different sites of engagement. This is not to say that family members are paying attention to all of these messages at once, but the fact that they are available, circulating through this moment, affects the way family members communicate with one another and the way they might interpret what the people on the television are saying. Something on the TV news, for example, might spark a conversation between a father and his daughter, which might inspire her younger brother to tweet out that his sister and father are arguing about politics *again*.

The important thing about this idea of sites of engagement is that it reminds us that we hardly ever use a single medium in isolation—that there are almost always other media around which might affect how and what we communicate through a given

medium. It also reminds us that media can connect people, places, and social practices (such as watching television, arguing about politics, and texting with our friends) in very complicated ways. Finally, it reminds us that the way media can be used and the kinds of messages that can be communicated through them is not just a matter of media or a matter of 'language', but also a matter of *people*, their histories, experiences, knowledge and skills, and the kinds of social organizations and relationships they find themselves in.

In trying to understand the affordances and constraints media have on how people use language, then we have to consider not just the media themselves, but how they interact with the people who are using them and the social contexts in which they are used, including both the local contexts of living rooms and the larger contexts of societies with particular political and economic systems, particular histories, and particular ideological conflicts.

Remediation and convergence

Above we talked about some of the ways media can function together with other media in sites of engagement. We would like to end this unit by introducing two other ways that media can be connected to one another known as **remediation** and **convergence**.

In the beginning of this chapter, we discussed how technologies such as the printing press revolutionized older forms of media such as writing on clay or parchment. We might say that the technology of printing 'absorbed' the technology of writing and made something new from it. We also noted how electronic media like television and radio refashioned the 'embodied' media of speech and gesture, combining them with other media (such as music). The phenomenon of a new media form 'absorbing' and 'refashioning' older media forms is known as *remediation*.

The term *remediation* comes from the work of media scholar Jay Bolter and English professor Richard Grusin (2000), but it originates with the idea put forth by Marshall McLuhan in his book *Understanding Media* (1964: 8) that 'the "content" of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph'. Bolter and Grusin elaborate on this idea and attempt to update it for the era of digital media. The history of media, they point out, is not a matter of new media *replacing* older media, but rather of *transforming* them, retaining some of their characteristics and improving on them. The crux of this idea is not just that we use new media to do the same things we used older media to do, but that our understanding of how new media works derives from our understanding of old media. For example, early conventions in portrait photography (and even more contemporary conventions in selfie photography) are derived from principles that were developed in painting in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the way personal computers are designed still mimics the older interface of the typewriter. Remediation is not unidirectional; old media can also remediate newer media, as when the techniques of digital animation developed in video games find their way back into cinema.

Two important concepts in Bolter and Grusin's model of remediation are **immediacy** and **hypermediacy**. Immediacy refers to the phenomena of media becoming so immersive that they almost become transparent, and people forget that their experience is mediated. Think of the feeling you have when you are so immersed in a

movie that you almost believe that it's real, or the feeling some people develop of their mobile phones almost becoming like an appendage of their bodies. Bolter and Grusin argue that the evolution of media has been a quest for more and more immediacy: paintings create more immediacy than drawings; photos create more immediacy than paintings; cinema creates more immediacy than photos; and video games create more immediacy than movies. At the same time, there is another force at work, which Bolter and Grusin call **hypermediacy**. Hypermediacy refers to the fact that media always call attention to themselves, often by reminding us of old media. For example, computer operating systems are designed to remind us of the physical aspects of manipulating information associated with older office media: there are, for example, 'files,' 'folders,' a rubbish (or recycle) 'bin,' and the way we input information into word processing software mimics the way we used typewriters.

Another important concept when thinking about the relationship between different media is *convergence* (Jenkins, 2006). Above we pointed out the fact that often multiple media are available to people in particular sites of engagement and that the combination of these different media can affect what and how people communicate with either co-present others or with people in other sites of engagement. In the example we gave above, however, the media we talked about—television, newspapers, mobile phones—are all separate media. Convergence refers to the trend for multiple media to be integrated into single devices. The smartphone is probably the best example of media convergence, a device which combines affordances of the telephone, camera, web browser, television, and a host of other media. Convergence is also a feature of many websites, such as the websites of newspapers which combine the affordances of print newspapers and television news, and also include features that allow readers to immediately comment on what they have read or seen or share it on a range of social media sites. Convergence can result in blurring previously clear lines between different communicative practices such as between information, education, and entertainment as well as between interpersonal and mass communication.

Convergence can also refer to the growing convergence of smaller media companies into large **conglomerates** such as Time-Warner, Disney, and Viacom, typically involving the merging of companies that deal with different kinds of media or content (such as radio and television stations, newspapers, and internet and mobile phone providers) and raising serious questions about the concentration of more and more power over media content and distribution into the hands of fewer and fewer people (see unit A9).

B2

MAKING MEANING WITH MODES AND MATERIALITIES

In unit A2, we introduced some general concepts about multimodality and materiality in media texts. We pointed out that almost all media texts are multimodal. We also considered whether or not we can explain the ‘organized’ and ‘regularized’ way different modes work. Finally, we talked about how the material characteristics of different media can affect things like what modes can be used, how they can be combined, who can participate in the communication of a message, and what roles they can play. In this unit, we will explore these ideas in more detail and talk about different techniques for analyzing modes and materialities in media.

The ‘vocabulary’ and ‘grammar’ of modes

There have been many attempts to apply the kinds of tools that we use to analyze language to the analysis of other modes such as images, music, layout, and sound. Some people object to this idea, arguing that different modes have their own special ways of conveying meaning, and you cannot simply ‘transplant’ ideas that have been developed in linguistics to the study of other modes. This is certainly true, but when we use words like ‘grammar’ and ‘vocabulary’ to describe the way different modes work, we are using these words metaphorically. Of course, pictures, which are presented within two-dimensional space, cannot possibly have the same kind of ‘grammar’ as language, whose meaning depends on the linear processing of sequences of information. While the ‘grammar’ of language is chiefly about the sequential order of words, the ‘grammar’ of images must be about spatial organization.

One of the most popular models for analyzing different modes comes from the field of **systemic functional linguistics**, established by the British linguist M.A.K. Halliday (1973). Unlike other linguists, Halliday did not focus so much on structural patterns in language. Rather, he started with the question: what do people *do* with language and then tried to figure out how the tools of a particular language enable them to do these things. For Halliday, the ‘grammar’ of a particular language consists of the language’s **meaning potential**, that is, the resources that the language makes available for saying different things. Some languages, like French, for example, allow speakers to use pronouns such as *tu* and *vous* to express meaning about the relationship between speakers and the formality of the situation, whereas other languages, such as English, do not make this choice available. The idea of meaning potential can also be applied to other modes. The **haptic mode** used by Apple’s iWatch, for example, makes available a finite number of sensations (single, double, or triple vibrations of various lengths) that can be used to signal a finite number of meanings (such as notifications of various kinds or the starting and stopping of operations). When users first use such a device, it may take them some time to learn the ‘language’ of physical sensation associated with this medium. App developers also must design their programs within the confines of this rather narrow range of meaning potentials. Most modes, of course, offer a much higher range of

meaning potential, and haptic engines like those in iWatches will doubtless become more sophisticated in the future.

Halliday said that there are basically three kinds of meanings that languages (and other modes) allow people to make. First, they allow us to represent the world, which Halliday called the **ideational** metafunction. Second, they allow us to create relationships between ourselves and the recipients of our messages, which Halliday referred to as the **interpersonal** metafunction. Finally, they allow us to organize our messages in time and/or space so that people know how the message should be processed, which Halliday called the **textual** metafunction.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) attempted to adapt these three metafunctions to the analysis of images, arguing that although the way images communicate is very different from the way languages do, images also allow us to represent the world, create relationships with others, and direct the way viewers 'read' them. Take, for example, the image below from the website of the British newspaper *The Guardian* published on 2 October, 2018 (Figure B2.1).

Understanding the ideational message of this image simply involves asking what things or people are represented in it and what are they doing. We can see, for example, a sign with the words: 'Border control', 'Identification documentation', and some smaller words underneath. We can also see a line of cars as well as a white structure that the cars appear to be stopping next to. Interestingly, we see no people in this image, although we assume that there are people inside the cars and the white building. Because of these different elements, most of us can identify this as a border control crossing. However, it is important to remember that this interpretation depends on our **world knowledge**. People unfamiliar with such places may have a harder time identifying it. Also, it is important to remember that there is a difference between understanding what is *represented* in an image and what an image is *about*. Here, for example, we know we are being shown a border control point, but we do not know *why*.

Interpersonal meaning is communicated in images through things like framing, perspective, focus, and in the case of images with people in them, whether the people are looking at the viewer or not. In this image, the fact that there are no people is itself



Figure B2.1 Border crossing (From *The Guardian*, 2 October 2018).

significant and contributes to the generally impersonal feeling of the image. The perspective of the image, with the frame tilted slightly and everything but the sign slightly blurred, gives the impression that it was taken from the window of a car queuing up at the border control point. In other words, the image is designed to make viewers feel that they are part of the scene rather than 'objective' observers.

Finally, the textual meaning of images tells us what parts of the image are more important than other parts. Generally, objects in the foreground of images are placed there to get our attention. The sign in this image, appearing in the foreground (and in sharp focus) makes it the most prominent element in the image, while the cars appearing in the background (and out of focus) are less prominent.

From this analysis, we can see that the choices that the photographer made in this photo are probably not random; the choice of objects, with the stern regulatory sign being the most prominent, the invisibility of people, and the perspective of the viewer as someone who must pass through the border point combine to communicate not just a border control point, but a rather impersonal and uninviting border control point. This 'reading' of the image, however, is still incomplete if we don't take into account the **context** in which the image appeared and the other modes of communication that appeared alongside it.

Intersemiotic relations

In unit A1, we quoted the French semiotician Roland Barthes talking about the way news images often depend for their meanings on other elements (such as captions and layout). The ways different modes affect the meaning potentials of the *other* modes they are combined with are called **intersemiotic relations**. The meaning of a vibration from a smart watch or a cell phone can be altered when it is accompanied by a sound or a written message appearing on the screen that says something like 'CNN: Breaking News'. The meaning of video footage of a refugee camp can be altered by a 'voice-over', which might talk about the people in the video as victims in need of help or as threats to a nation's sovereignty.

Text/image relations

One of the most obvious examples of intersemiotic relations is the way images are combined with written words. According to Barthes (1977: 39), intersemiotic relations are key to giving images meaning. Since images are more 'polysemous', words are often needed to 'fix the floating chain of signifieds' and prevent the 'meanings from proliferating'. We can apply this idea to the image of the border crossing analyzed above. Below is the same image, this time with its accompanying headline (Figure B2.2).

The most obvious effect of the headline is to make the experience of passing through this rather impersonal and uninviting border crossing part of a larger story of Brexit (the UK's exit from the EU), and the less welcoming treatment European citizens can expect at the UK border as a result of it. In other words, the headline serves to 'frame' the image within a particular narrative (see unit A4).

Barthes said that words usually interact with pictures in one of two ways. The first he called **anchorage**, by which he meant the way words can be used to 'anchor' the

Brexit / EU citizens lose priority under UK immigration plans

Highly skilled migrants to be favoured as free movement ends 'once and for all'



Figure B2.2 News story from *The Guardian*, 2 October 2018.

meaning of a picture by explicitly identifying what the picture depicts or what it is about. An example of anchorage would be a caption to the above image that said something like 'The UK Border Control Point in Calais'. The second way words help to give meaning to pictures is what Barthes called **relay**. This is when the words do not identify the image per se, but rather text and image work together as fragments of an overall story. The headline in the news story above is best characterized as an example of *relay*: the words 'EU citizens lose priority over immigration plans' and the picture of what we take to be a border control point work together to tell an overall story about how EU citizens will have a harder time entering the UK in the future.

Layout

Images and the captions and headlines associated with them are usually part of larger semiotic ensembles, which include other images and other texts arranged in a particular way. Below is the same news story, this time shown in the context of the 2 October 2018 homepage of *The Guardian* (Figure B2.3).

Here the story about EU citizens and Brexit is arranged amongst a number of other stories, including one about a US Supreme Court nominee's drinking habits, a tsunami in Indonesia, something that the Prime Minister of Spain said, and the adoption of a four-day workweek by a firm in New Zealand. Our immediate sense, though, is that not all these stories are 'equal'. Some take up more space on the screen and are accompanied by images, which suggest that they should command our attention more than the stories whose headlines are smaller and which do not have images.

This example highlights an aspect of intersemiotic relations that is not so much about the ideational or interpersonal functions of the communication, but about what Halliday called its *textual* functions, the way different elements are arranged in order to signal how we should read them. For Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), **layout** is itself a mode, what they call 'the mode of spatial composition' which communicates things



Figure B2.3 Homepage of *The Guardian*, 2 October 2018.

like ‘information value, salience and framing’ (p. 177). Layout is not just a matter of the size of different elements on the page or screen, but also their placement: whether they are on the top of the page, on the bottom, on the left, on the right, or in the center. Kress and van Leeuwen argued that we read images in much the same way we read sentences, with people from ‘left to right’-reading cultures starting on the left and moving their eyes to the right. This has, for the most part, been confirmed by studies which scientifically measure what people look at using ‘eye tracking’ technology. Below is an example of one such study, illustrating what web designers refer to as ‘the golden triangle of attention’, the fact that when we read webpages, we are most likely to focus first on the upper left of the screen and then move our eyes down and right. This is one reason web designers often place menus and other important navigation tools on the left side of their webpages or along the top. Applied to *The Guardian* webpage

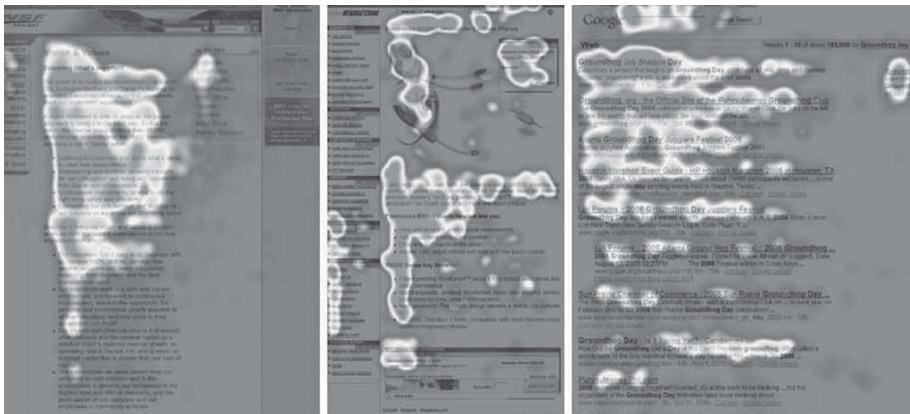


Figure B2.4 F-shaped pattern of reading on the web (From Nielsen, 2006).

above, this idea helps to explain how designers of online newspapers call readers' attention to what they think are the most important stories, but also alert them to other stories they might be interested in by placing them to the right of the main stories in line with the typical movement of readers' eyes (Figure B2.4).

Indexicality and social portraiture

So far, we have been focusing on how images take their meaning from the people or objects they depict and how these depictions interact with other information such as captions and headlines. Meaning, however, can also be created by reminding viewers of things in the larger social context of their message, and thereby invoking emotional reactions or associations. For Barthes, an image can show something (by depicting it), but it can also make you *feel* something (because of associations with whatever it shows). More technically, Barthes identifies:

- ❑ A denotative level of meaning, designating or describing what is visible in the image.
- ❑ A connotative level of meaning, which is suggestive or evocative of culturally attached meanings that accumulate around what is shown.

With most photographic images, denotation is fairly straightforward. The image shows particular things that can be recognized because of visual likeness. Connotation, however, will vary to some extent from interpreter to interpreter. It depends partly on who you are and the circumstances in which you are looking at an image.

One concept that is useful in understanding how images 'suggest' or 'evoke' meanings through pointing to things or ideas outside of a specific communicative context is **indexicality**. In unit A2, we talked about three different kinds of signs: icons, symbols, and indexes. An index, we said, is a sign that takes its meaning not from convention or resemblance, but from 'pointing to' something in the social world. The image of the border crossing in Figure B2.1 does not just depict a border crossing, it also *indexes* other meanings for viewers. It may index things like national sovereignty, exclusion, and political debates about migration, making viewers feel emotions like fear or discomfort. For some viewers, it might index holiday making, eliciting happiness. The problem with indexical meaning is that it is not always easy to pin down. The same image might index different things for different people. At the same time, we live in communities and societies with shared histories, cultures, and associations, and so often we share indexical meanings with those around us.

One kind of image in which culturally conditioned indexical meanings seem to be particularly important are 'stock images,' pictures which companies like Getty Images sell to media outlets, web designers, and advertisers so that they don't have to spend money on their own photographers (see Machin and van Leeuwen's excerpt in unit D2). In fact, *most* images in news stories nowadays are not specially produced for those stories, but rather stock images that seem to match the topic of the story. This is probably the case with the image of the border crossing in *The Guardian's* story about Brexit; it is unlikely that the newspaper deployed a photographer to a border crossing to take a picture just for this story.

In their analysis of stock photographs, Machin and van Leeuwen argue that such images are designed to index certain widespread ideas, assumptions, and values related to certain kinds of people (such as ‘women’), certain kinds of activities (such as ‘work’), or certain kinds of concepts (such as ‘freedom’). In other words, these images do not just depict people and activities, but also reinforce particular cultural or societal stereotypes about these people and activities. The American sociologist Erving Goffman, in his book *Gender Advertisements* (1987), argued that images such as these constitute a kind of **social portraiture**—that is, they do not just show particular people acting in particular ways, but also communicate *social ideas* about the ways certain *kinds* of people *should* act.

A good example of this kind of social portraiture can be seen in stock images of women laughing while eating salad, which often appear in news and feature articles about health, nutrition, and dieting. Figures B2.5 and B2.6 are examples of this type of image. Clearly, what is communicated in such images is not just a woman eating a salad, but also a whole range of indexical meanings about what it means to be healthy and what it means to be a woman.

Analyzing the indexical meanings of stock images, in fact, can be a good way to uncover societal attitudes and stereotypes. Images such as those above, for example, have been widely parodied, first on a feminist blog called *The Hairpin*,¹ later on a Tumblr page called *Women Laughing Alone with Salad*, and still later in a whole range of memes (see unit B7). Along with these humorous commentaries on the identity of this image, there are also some more serious treatments in the media. An article in *The Guardian* published on 5 March 2014 shows a stock image of just a salad with the headline: ‘I was a woman laughing alone with salad, it’s really not that funny’ (Hartshorne, 2014). The article itself reveals the damage women can endure when the majority of images they see of themselves in the media portray them as ‘dieters, multi-taskers, mothers and sex-objects’.



Figure B2.5 Woman laughing alone with salad 1 (From <https://www.thehairpin.com/2011/01/women-laughing-alone-with-salad/>).



Figure B2.6 Woman laughing alone with salad 2 (From <https://knowyourmeme.com/photos/1017411-women-laughing-alone-with-salad>).

Materiality

Just as the modes through which a message is conveyed can affect the kinds of meanings that can be made, so can the *materialities* of the media being used to convey the message. Consider encountering the news story about Brexit which we talked about above on the screen of an iWatch rather than the iPad screen from which the image in Figure B2.3 was taken. It might resemble something like Figure B2.7, taken from a review of *The Guardian's* iWatch app.

One big difference, of course, is the amount of information that can be shown on the screen at one time. On the iWatch screen it is likely that only the headline would appear (for example, ‘Today’s top story: EU citizens loose priority under UK’s immigration plans’) without an image or additional information, requiring the reader to swipe to additional screens to get the rest of the story. Obviously, this would dramatically affect how the reader experienced this news story (or whether they decided to read it at all).

While the size of the screen might be considered a *constraint* of this medium, its portability might be considered an *affordance*. The wearer of a device like this would not need to carry a newspaper, computer, or smartphone in order to keep up with the news. Related to that is the sense of *immediacy* the medium brings to the communication. Depending on users’ settings, they might receive an alert when this story is posted, allowing them to know immediately what has been communicated by the newspaper simply by glancing at their wrist. Print newspapers, of course, do not have the ability to alert readers when new events occur, and while computers and smartphones can also send alerts to users, none of them is quite the same as the embodied, haptic experience of being hailed by a device strapped to your wrist.

Finally, the materiality of media can affect the configurations of people involved in a particular communication. Whereas print newspapers, for example, normally favor one-to-many communication, websites like *The Guardian* have made news reading more a matter of many-to-one and many-to-many communication, as readers are



Figure B2.7 The Guardian front page as shown on an iWatch.

given the opportunity to easily and immediately communicate with the newspaper and with other readers by leaving comments. The materiality of the iWatch, however, can also have an effect on the kinds of social situations in which one reads the news. Some media, such as television, facilitate collective consumption: a family, for example, might watch a news broadcast together and discuss it as they are watching. The iWatch, however, seems to encourage individual consumption of information.

The way the materiality media might affect how people interact in social spaces, however, is not limited to the production and consumption of information. Goffman (1966) talks about how, in public places, people often use media as what he calls 'involvement shields', tools with which they can avoid embarrassing interactions with strangers. A person on a crowded train might use a book to shield themselves from interactions with other passengers (Scollon, 1998). People often use their mobile phones in this way in public, scrolling through their social media feeds not just because they want to find out what their friends are up to, but also to alleviate the awkwardness of being in a public place without having something to occupy their attention (Ayaß, 2014). People can also use media to facilitate monitoring others without their knowledge, as spies and private detectives in old movies do by peering at their targets over newspapers. Of course, reading the news from an iWatch does not offer the same kinds of affordances, neither providing an easily recognizable signal to others that you want to be left alone nor a physical barrier from behind which you can spy on others.

ANALYZING GENRES AND STYLES IN MEDIA

B3

In unit A3, we introduced the ideas of genre and style and discussed how they can help us classify and analyze media discourse. In this unit, we will continue our discussion by introducing some analytical tools to study genres and styles. We will focus in particular on the framework of genre analysis proposed by John Swales and Vijay Bhatia and demonstrate how it can be usefully applied to media texts such as news stories and press releases.

Classifying genres

In unit A3, we said that the term genre denotes a distinctive type of text that is organized based on distinct patterns. Because they tend to be organized in patterns, texts are more easily recognized, comprehended, and recalled. Most definitions of genre also emphasize their shared communicative purpose and the existence of typical lexico-grammatical properties. But the process of genre identification is not always straightforward. This is because texts often have multiple purposes and may mix structural conventions of multiple genres. Genre labels, therefore, are often approximations, and some texts might be more typical of one genre than another. Rather than considering a set of fixed properties, then it is more productive to think of **prototypicality**, typical ways in which genres are organized in terms of structure, typical settings in which they occur, typical goals that they aim to achieve, and typical lexical and grammatical resources used to produce them. This allows us to look at a text and identify it as belonging to a particular genre based on a *sufficient similarity* as opposed to an exact match.

It is important to realize that genres do not exist in isolation. Each genre has links with other genres and is in most cases part of larger **genre networks** or **genre systems**. It is also important to remember that all texts we encounter have some kind of relationship with other texts in these genre networks. It is in fact impossible to produce a text which bears no resemblance whatsoever to some other text. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida argued that ‘a text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without ... a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text’ (Derrida, 1981: 61).

Professional and other communities depend on a variety of genres to perform the kind of jobs that are required of them. For example, the professional community of journalists and editors involved in producing a national newspaper need to produce several genres in order to complete an edition of that newspaper, including news stories, reviews, editorials, and weather reports. Altogether these genres belong to a genre system practiced by members of this professional community. It is not an understatement to say that without this genre system, the professional community of journalists and editors would not exist; it is precisely through genre systems that professional and other communities are ‘talked’ and ‘written’ into being. Thus, genres are not just typical texts with typical structures, grammar, and lexis; they are important resources for professional communities to maintain their community status and to get ‘things done’. Think, for example, about the kind of genres that you need to produce within your own professional or academic setting. You may notice a hierarchy of genres with some genres having more weight than others. You might be involved in producing genres

that serve everyday communicative purposes, for example, emails. There might be other genres that are not produced regularly, but have more weight because they count as evidence of professional membership. These kinds of genres have a kind of 'authority', and a great deal of effort is spent on 'protecting' and 'controlling' their **generic integrity** (Bhatia, 1993). Specifically, workplace managers, editorial boards, teachers, peer reviewers, and other **gatekeepers** are tasked with assessing the generic integrity of different kinds of texts and keeping generic boundaries intact.

Genre analysis

Knowledge of genres and genre systems is an essential resource for understanding different text types that we encounter in media. It can help us identify a text as belonging to a particular genre, triggering a set of expectations. We can then better judge how well that text achieves the goals that it promises to accomplish. Knowledge of genres can also help us recognize the degree of typicality and innovation in the dynamic and ever-changing media landscape, and thus spot and appreciate instances of generic creativity.

The linguist Vijay Bhatia developed a framework to help us analyze genres in a more systematic manner. His framework is based on seven analytical steps:

- 1 Placing the given genre-text in a situational context
- 2 Surveying existing literature
- 3 Refining the situational/contextual analysis
- 4 Selecting a corpus of texts to study
- 5 Studying the institutional context
- 6 Linguistic analysis
- 7 Consulting with specialist informants

Steps 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 have to do with the situational context in which a text is produced and involve thinking about the kind of professional community which produces the text and the conditions of text production. Another important part of studying the situational context is to think about the kind of relationships that are assumed between the writer and the reader. Is there a kind of an 'ideal' reader and what kind of responses does this genre 'demand' from its readers?

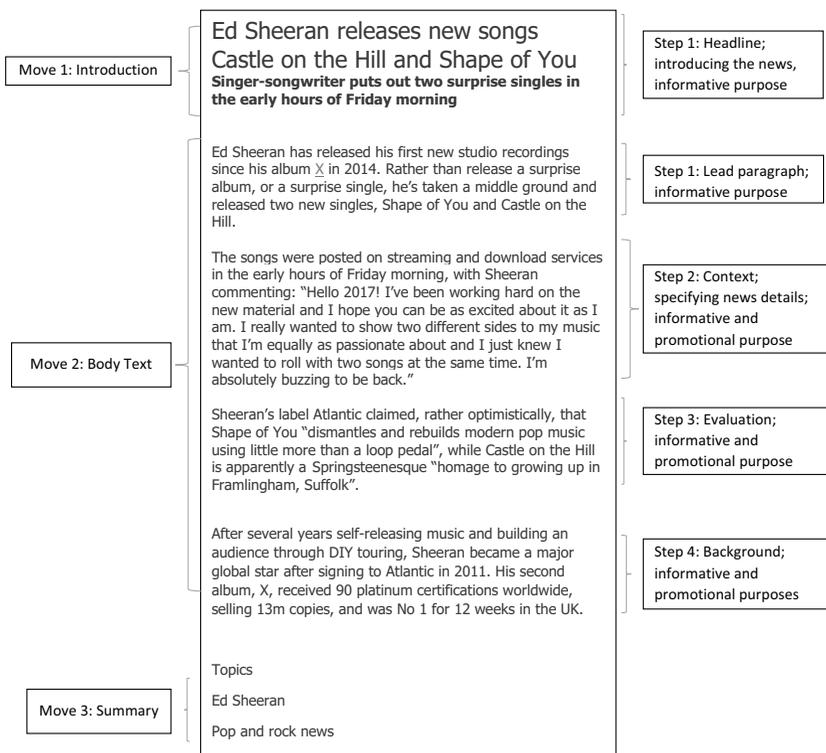
The linguistic analysis (step 6) normally involves an identification of the **generic structure** (sometimes also called **discourse structure**) and the key lexical and grammatical features of the text. Swales's (1990) concepts of **moves** and **steps** are particularly useful for the identification of generic structures. Essentially, moves are distinct parts of the text which have a clearly identifiable communicative purpose achieved through particular linguistic choices. Each move can be further divided into steps, with each step fulfilling a smaller communicative function. We will illustrate the identification of moves and steps by taking as an example the classic media genre of the **news story**. But before we begin, we need to think first about the *purpose* of a news story because the purpose of the genre influences how it is structured.

News stories are examples of genres that *inform*. They tell us something we did not previously know about. Some of the information in a news story is considered essential to understanding the event being reported; this information is always placed at the beginning, whereas less essential information is put at the end. This structure is referred to as the **inverted pyramid**. Since what is at the very end is less relevant to the understanding

of the story, professionally known as **background**, stories that become too long are usually simply cut from the bottom without the fear that any essential information will be lost.

News stories such as the one below are typically divided into paragraphs; such divisions are helpful in identifying moves. Move 1 is the introduction, realized through the headline (step 1), which highlights the key points of the news story. Move 2 is the actual story consisting of four steps. It opens up with a short paragraph, which in journalism is commonly referred to as the **lead paragraph** or simply the **lead** (step 1) and summarizes the main points of the article. Step 2 provides more details (context) about the story, while step 3 is a kind of evaluation, emphasizing the **newsworthiness** of the story. Step 4 offers some background information. The final move is an editorial summary which points to the classification of the story as news. Excerpt B3.1 illustrates these moves and steps.

When segmenting texts into moves and steps, you need to think about the functions that each move or step fulfils and the kind of language which is used to realize these functions. In this story, the dominant function of moves and steps is that of informing readers about the release of Ed Sheeran's new album. But beyond the general purpose of informing, the headline and lead also function to grab readers' attention. This is realized through specific language choices such as the use of the name of the famous singer, the emphasis on newness (*new songs*), newness (*early hours of Friday morning*) intensified through the use of verbs in the present tense (*releases, puts out*), and unexpectedness (*surprise singles*). Writers of headlines are skilled in deploying a whole host of different language devices to attract readers' attention (see unit A7).



Excerpt B3.1 *The Guardian*, Friday, 6 January 2017 (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/jan/06/ed-sheeran-castle-on-the-hill-shape-of-you-new-songs>).

Reading the text, you may also get the feeling that it is not just about telling the reader that Ed Sheeran produced news songs. Elements in quotation marks referred to as **attribution** (see unit A5) bring in another dimension. If you look closely at the attribution in move 2/step 2, you can see that it has a particular tone, which could be described as personal. This is realized through the choice of words and phrases such as *passionate* and *I'm absolutely buzzing to be back*. The singer also tries to develop an engagement with readers by directly addressing them through the pronoun *you*: *I hope you can be as excited about it as I am*. Such statements are intended to engage readers, but they are not a 'real' face-to-face chat. What they do is to simulate informality in the rather formal context of news reporting. The critical discourse analyst Normal Fairclough calls this kind of simulation of intimacy **synthetic personalization** and notes that it often appears in promotional texts (Fairclough, 1989). We can therefore say that this news story has two functions: the dominant function of informing and the subtler one of promoting Ed Sheeran's new music.

Generic structures and functions are realized not just through words; paralinguistic and **multimodal features** can also indicate moves and steps and convey various functions. In the case of a news story, headlines are normally written in large letters to grab attention. They are frequently accompanied by images. Lead paragraphs too stand out from the main body and are sometimes written in larger letters or in bold font.

Analyzing hybrid genres

The example of the news story above has shown that this informational genre can sometimes appropriate elements that are more commonly associated with promotional texts. Such appropriations are not unusual, and often two genres are purposefully mixed to produce a hybrid genre. As in the case of the mockumentary discussed in unit A3, this can be a creative process leading to generic innovation; but more often than not, genres are mixed to increase the persuasiveness of texts. This is mostly achieved by drawing on generic resources typical of advertising. Bhatia sees **promotionalization** as one of the most dominant characteristics of professional and media genres nowadays (Bhatia, 2005: 213). He attributes this to the rise of **consumer culture in late modernity**.

We can study such hybrid genres by exploring their generic structures through the same kind of analysis of moves and steps we used above to analyze the news story. Since many hybrid media genres exhibit features of advertising, knowing the generic moves used in advertisements is useful to understand the extent to which media texts engage in promotionalization. Bhatia (2004) lists the prototypical moves of advertisements as:

- 1 Headlines
- 2 Targeting the market
- 3 Justifying the product or service by establishing a niche
- 4 Detailing the product or service
- 5 Establishing credentials
- 6 Endorsement or Testimonials
- 7 Offering incentives
- 8 Using pressure tactics
- 9 Soliciting response
- 10 Signature line and logo, etc.

Italian linguist and media scholar Paula Cantenaccio used Bhatia's framework to study the hybrid genre of the **press release**, which is one of the most important genres of public relations (see unit A8). Essentially, the purpose of a press release is to inform media outlets about a newsworthy event; companies and organizations send press releases to the media in the hope that they will be picked up by journalists and turned into news stories. If this happens, the news story can then generate publicity for the company at a low cost. Writers of press releases design them not just to inform, but also to promote the company or organization. Cantenaccio (2008) shows that press release writers draw on the generic resources associated with adverts, which are subtly introduced into the generic structure of a news story. While the general format of a news story is maintained to make a press release look like a factual story, promotionization is 'inserted' in attributions that offer endorsements, for example, in the form of expert and consumer opinions that positively evaluate the company, its goods or services. In unit C3, we will closely analyze a combination of promotional and informational features in another hybrid genre—that of the **advertorial**.

Analyzing styles

Although genre and style are essentially different concepts, they are intrinsically linked. As Joanna Thornborrow puts it, 'a particular media genre is recognizable and interpretable by audiences in part because of the styles (or ways of speaking) and other discursive practices that become most closely associated with it' (Thornborrow, 2017: 144).

One framework for the analysis of styles was proposed by the two American linguists Douglas Biber and Susan Conrad (2009). The framework foregrounds two aspects of style: *situational characteristics* and salient *linguistic features*. Exploring situational characteristics involves identifying the following:

- 1 *Participants*: characteristics of the addressor(s) (that is, speaker or author) and addressees (for example, age, social status, occupation).
- 2 *Relations among participants*: relative status or power; personal vs. formal relationship.
- 3 *Channel*: mode (speech or writing); medium (face-to-face, radio, TV, etc.).
- 4 *Production circumstances*: real time, planned, scripted, revised, or edited.
- 5 *Setting*: place of communication (private or public); time of communications.
- 6 *Communicative purposes*: narrate, report, describe, inform, explain, persuade, entertain, edify, reveal self, factual, imaginative.
- 7 *Topic*: general topic or domain (for example, domestic, daily activities, business, workplace, science, education, government, legal, politics, religion, sports, art, entertainment, etc.).

Different situational characteristics will be more or less relevant to particular kinds of media texts. The framework is particularly useful for comparing styles in texts that belong to the same genre or discuss the same topic but are communicated through different media (for example, a political topic discussed on Twitter vs. in a broadcast interview). These situational characteristics are generally closely connected with the kind of linguistic features deployed in the texts.

When identifying linguistic features of styles, Biber and Conrad (2009) recommend analyzing language items that appear recurrently in the texts that you study or are

markedly different from those you might find in other texts. You can start the analysis by identifying the most frequent **content words**, including nouns, **lexical verbs**, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns, and the most frequent function or **grammatical words** such as modal and semi-modal verbs or linking words. Different kinds of words are likely to feature in different styles. For example, a text written in a 'factual' style would likely have more nouns, noun phrases (for example, *employee training*), nominalizations (often with modifying adjectives as in *the rapid increase*), prepositional phrases (for example, *for commercial and non-commercial use*), and fewer lexical verbs. Different styles are also associated with the use of different sentence types. Using a lot of questions, for example, is associated with an interrogative or confrontational style, while using imperatives is typical of instructional or authoritative style. Statements are mostly used in texts that are factual and informative.

For spoken discourse, you need also to consider features typical of speech and conversations, including repetitions, contractions (*isn't, won't*), **minimal responses** (*hmm, ok, right*), **discourse markers** (*so, I mean, well, you know, anyway*), pauses, fillers, vague expressions (*and stuff like that, or anything, thing*), **hedges** (*just, like, a bit, possibly, a little, kind of*), and **overlaps**. These features are considered important markers of personal or involved style. Minimal responses signal listenership and engagement in conversation, while discourse markers help manage the flow of the conversation and mark boundaries between discourse segments; they can also signal shared knowledge and therefore bind the speaker and the listener in a conversation. Hedges are devices that tone down or mitigate the force or directness of a statement and are used when speakers do not wish to come across as too assertive or blunt. A hedged statement could be something like: *this **might be a little too difficult** for us*. Its unhedged version, *this is too difficult for us* could potentially offend listeners. Similar to hedges, vague expressions soften utterances so that they do not seem direct or unduly authoritative.

Together, situational factors and linguistic features contribute to the creation of distinctive styles. To illustrate this, we take as an example the announcement of an award of a doctorate degree (PhD) based on successful passing of the oral exam known as *viva voce* or simply *viva* (Figures B3.1 and B3.2).

The first example is a short conversation between two friends on WhatsApp with one announcing that she passed her viva with minor corrections. The second is the announcement of an award of a doctorate degree which was placed in a public space at a university. Although the purpose of the two texts is essentially the same, different linguistic resources are employed to fulfill this purpose because of the different situational characteristics. In the first example, the two participants are friends, with little social distance or power difference between them; this influences the informal style they use. This informality is signaled through the use of features commonly associated with spontaneous conversations such as ellipsis (dropping of the subject pronoun as in *passed with minor corrections, need to pick up*), contractions (*I've*), and abbreviations (*Congrats*). Both participants are at a geographical distance, but compensate for the lack of paralinguistic cues using the multimodal resources afforded by WhatsApp such as emojis, exclamation marks, and the repetition of letters (*Yaaaaay!*). In a sense, this conversation is not just about announcing the good news; it is also about signaling a close relationship and friendship. The second example has a more formal style. This formality is achieved through the use of standard language with well-formed sentences, vocabulary associated with high-stakes achievements (*award, degree, PhD, thesis*), and titles indicating high-status institutional roles and prestige (*Professor, Dr, examiner*). In this case, the announcement is not just about informing the public about



Figure B3.1 WhatsApp message.



Figure B3.2 Public notice.

the award; through this notice, the institution also maintains its status and the status of its procedures. Imagine if features of informal style, for example, emojis, appeared on this public notice? This would likely undermine the status of PhD awards as high-stakes institutional events and the institution itself.

These two examples illustrate how both social and contextual characteristics and linguistic features interact to create styles. They also show that styles are not just products or effects of these interactions. Through styles, we also maintain and reproduce social situations, social relationships, and social identities.

B4 TELLING AND RETELLING STORIES

In unit A4, we pointed out that narratives in the media are not always discrete, well-structured units, but rather complex interactional events. We also emphasized that narratives are both personal and social, in that they always involve the reproduction of cultural and social norms. In this unit, we will further explore the diverse practices of storytelling in the media. We begin by discussing features of news stories, specifically the range of lexico-grammatical devices that news producers exploit to give stories a particular ‘slant’. We will then explore the persuasive power of narrative in the context of branding and marketing. Finally, we will return to practices of storytelling in social media and show how users exploit the techno-social affordances of digital environments to tell and share stories.

News stories

The media scholar Alan Bell once said that ‘Journalists do not write articles. They write stories’ (Bell, 1991: 147). As with the everyday storytelling practices of ordinary people, journalists write stories not just to inform us about something, but also to shock, amaze, inspire, educate, persuade, or amuse us. News stories are a good case in point. Although they are generally seen as ‘representations’ of news events, different newspapers often tell the same story in different ways, creating different narrative versions of an event. As the narrative scholar Michael Toolan (2001, see unit D4) puts it, news stories almost always have a particular political orientation or a ‘slant’. What is interesting from the point of view of language and media is that these political ‘slants’ are rarely explicitly stated. This is because of the media ethos of neutrality (see unit A5). Yet, media producers do have particular agendas and often frame stories in ways that fit the ideology underlying their agendas. One way of revealing and analyzing agendas of news stories is through attention to the lexico-grammatical resources that the language system makes available to tell stories such as **transitivity**, **nominalization**, **evaluation**, and **naming practices** (Toolan, 2001).

When we represent in our speech and writing the things people do, we make use of the language’s system of transitivity, that is, the resources the language gives us to introduce different participants and link them together with different kinds of processes. The choices we make about participants and processes define who gets included in our version of a story and who gets left out as well as who is depicted as the active participant (doing things) and who is depicted as the passive one (having things done to or for them). Generally speaking, transitivity makes a distinction between two participant roles: the **agent** and the **patient**. The agent is normally a person or entity that performs the action expressed by the verb. In English, the agent is usually placed in the subject position. The patient, however, is a person or entity at the receiving end of the action and occurs in the object position. In the sentence *John beat Tom*, *John* is the agent who performs the action of beating, whereas *Tom* assumes the role of the patient (in this case, probably literally). Traditional grammar describes this kind of sentence as an **active sentence**.

Yet, events are not always retold in active sentences with clear participant roles. Sometimes, news writers revert to **passive sentences**, which in some cases may put more emphasis on the agent by putting it at the end of the sentence where new information is usually placed. In other cases, a passive sentence may put more emphasis on the patient (in the subject position), especially when the agent is left out through so-called agentless passivation as in *Tom was beaten*, ‘hiding’ the performer of the action.

Nominalization is another linguistic device which can give a news story an ideological slant. Essentially, nominalization is a kind of textual condensation; it involves a transformation of a process into a noun or a noun phrase so that the process becomes a ‘thing’. For example, the clause *a Teenager died of stab wounds* can be nominalized to *the Teenager’s death by stab wounds*. As Michael Toolan points out, nominalization de-narrativizes processes hiding details that, for example, caused actions. It can deflect readers’ attention from the action itself and from asking critical questions such as who killed the teenager and under what circumstances?

Evaluation refers to the gamut of lexical and grammatical choices that we can use to express an opinion about things, people, and events, whether they are good or bad, important or unimportant, etc. (Bednarek, 2006). Evaluation is a key characteristic of human behavior and an important tool for interpreting the world around us. When media producers produce a news story, they employ a range of evaluative choices to tell the story in the way that they want it to be understood. Adjectives, verbs, nouns, and noun phrases can all be used to describe and evaluate people, actions, and events. Specifically, descriptions of people through various *naming practices* can carry explicit and implicit (often ideologically colored) meanings. Consider the two excerpts from two news stories published by two different sources about a protest to raise the awareness of climate change. The protest took place in London in April 2019 and was organized by a movement called Extinction Rebellion.

Example 1

Action or Extinction? Environmental activists take to the streets. Extinction Rebellion mobilize activists across London, calling for decisive action on climate change (*The Guardian*, 17 April 2019)

Example 2

Londoners brace for second day of climate protest chaos: Extinction Rebellion eco-warriors camp out before unleashing more threatened ‘direct action’ (*Daily Mail*, 17 April 2019)

You can easily notice that the event has been retold differently by the two newspapers, and this has much to do with the evaluative words used to describe the event and its participants. *The Guardian* represents the protesters in more positive terms as agents for action on climate change. This is emphasized by the use of the adjective ‘decisive’ and the verb ‘mobilize’, which have positive connotations. The protesters are described in fairly neutral terms as ‘environmental activists’. *The Daily Mail* uses distinctively different evaluations. First, it topicalizes people who live in London as victims of the protest. This frame is emphasized through the verb choice ‘to brace’, which is almost always used in conjunction with negative events; normally people brace for natural disasters such as hurricanes. The negative evaluation of the protest is reinforced through other lexical choices such as ‘unleashing’ and ‘threatened’. ‘Unleash’ is a verb, which, like ‘brace’, collocates with negative and out of control events. The members of the Extinction Rebellion are described as ‘eco-warriors’, which compares them

to armed fighters who ‘threaten’ others. In this way, the *Daily Mail* represents the protest as a dangerous event, while the reason—raising awareness of climate change—is erased. The lexical choices highlight different stances on protests and climate change. It seems that the *Daily Mail* is not in favor of activities organized by the protesters and possibly less convinced of the danger of climate change, whereas *The Guardian* sees climate change as an important issue demanding decisive action.

Stories in adverts: brand narratives

Companies and institutions invest a great deal of time and money creating a coherent image of themselves. This image communicates a set of values and activities with which a company wants their products and services to be associated. This set of values and associations are then embraided in all the materials and services that the company offers, including product packaging, websites, uniforms that employees wear, and even the design of the company’s buildings and interior spaces (Lischinsky, 2018). This process of embraiding specific values into everything that a company does is commonly referred to as **branding**. The brand often involves a logo and a particular color-scheme that are used to create memorable visual associations. The brand is also typically associated with a set of narratives that are told over and over again in advertisements, press releases, and other promotional materials. Often this **brand narrative** focuses on the potential buyer of the product, providing consumers with compelling stories in which they can imagine themselves as characters, but which also reinforce the goals and values of the company. For example, a recent advert for the Apple Watch Series 4¹ does not focus on the practical functions that we normally expect from watches, but on a female runner who is magically lifted into the air where she flies above the clouds and finally lands in water in pristine surroundings. The actual advertised product has a marginal appearance in the advert, being foregrounded only once when the female runner comes out of the water and the Apple Watch on her wrist is still intact, highlighting its water resistance. The ‘moral of the story’ is that by purchasing the Apple watch, we are not just buying a product that can tell time and offer some digital services, but we are also buying a story of optimum fitness, freedom, and resilience.

Sometimes brand narratives, rather than telling stories about potential buyers, tell stories about the company or the people who run it. The Apple company, for example, has been successful in creating a compelling brand not just through advertisements like the one described above, but also through telling and retelling the story of its founder Steve Jobs, who is portrayed as the prototypical American entrepreneur: creative, innovative, individualistic, willing to take risks, and meet challenges head-on; an image that dovetails nicely with the kinds of ‘consumer characters’ found in Apple advertisements.

It should be clear from the above example that the power of brand narratives lies not just in the stories that companies tell about themselves or in the stories that they tell about their potential customers, but in the ways these stories interact dialogically, providing companies the chance to become part of people’s life narratives and providing people the chance to feel like they are contributing to the overall narrative of the brand. In his book *Everything but the Coffee*, for example, historian Bryant Simon (2009) explains how the brand narrative of *Starbucks* goes beyond the product it sells, tapping into larger psychological, emotional, political, racial, and sociological

storylines. More specifically, the dialogical relationship between the company and the customers is predicated on a cultural need for status, community, and authenticity, thereby allowing customers to be immersed in a cultural narrative rather than just consuming coffee. Consumers do not only satisfy their caffeine needs by going to Starbucks, but they also see it as a part of their community, a place to sit, study, or work and meet friends, which promotes a sense that drinking coffee at *Starbucks* is a ‘natural’ part of everyday life.

Narrative in social media

The participatory nature of digital environments has led to new forms of narrative interactions, allowing users to become simultaneously authors and audiences of narratives (see unit A5). Users are not only able to choose what to tell and how to tell it, but they are also able to contribute to other people’s stories by providing comments and evaluations, or sharing their own stories in response. Social media sites are in fact huge repositories of diverse accounts of reflective, emotive, artistic, and playful stories (Page, 2018). In most cases, social media narratives are far from the kind of plot-dependent, past tense recounts told by one teller that Labov and Waletzky (1967) studied. Nonetheless, they provide important resources for people to share experiences, negotiate identities, and engage with others (Page, 2018).

To analyze the narrativity of online stories, the media scholar Ruth Page (2018) recommends using the approach to narrative set out by linguistic anthropologists Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps (2001), which explores narratives based on the five dimensions outlined in Table B4.1.

Ochs and Capps’s framework allows us to take into consideration aspects of narrative beyond simply their structure; the sequential structure of a narrative is just one dimension, which Ochs and Capps define as **linearity**. **Tellership** emphasizes the fact that narratives can be told not just by one teller, but also may involve many tellers. **Tellability** refers to the value of a story—what makes it ‘worth telling’. It is important to note that what counts as tellable is highly contingent and depends on the social context; a particular story might be worth telling in one context but completely irrelevant

Table B4.1 Narrative dimensions

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Possibilities</i>
Tellership	Whether a story is told by a single teller or multiple tellers
Tellability	The value of a story as highly worth telling or seemingly irrelevant
Embeddedness	The extent to which a story can be detached from or embedded in its context
Linearity	The structural qualities of a story as closed, temporal sequence or open-ended and multilinear (references to time, places, and people)
Moral Stance	The narrator’s attitude and evaluations of reported events, which may be certain or fluctuating

Adapted from Ochs and Capps (2001: 20).

in another. The notion of newsworthiness, which we discussed in unit B5, has precisely to do with the tellability of a news story. **Embeddedness** explores the level of contextualization and the extent to which a story can be detached from its original context, while **moral stance** refers to the perspective for interpreting moral and other evaluative meanings that a narrative takes.

Research on narratives has somewhat privileged a particular type of a narrative—a kind of story told by one teller about a highly tellable event with a clear chronological structure and a strong moral stance (Page, 2018). While this type of story, sometimes called the canonical narrative, is still important, in social media sites people engage in different storytelling practices that mostly involve many tellers or what Page refers to as **co-tellership**. Stories produced on social media sites are also rarely linear and chronological stories. In most cases, they have a **distributed linearity**, for example, the telling is spread across many posts and interactions or across different timescales. They also display a high level of intertextuality (see unit B5); the telling itself may directly or indirectly embed elements of other stories and other people's voices. Finally, stories on social media sites do not need to have 'big' moral messages. People share stories about everyday 'stuff' from their own lives not because they have some big message to tell, but because they want to connect and keep in touch with others and share common ground with them. The anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski (1923) refers to this kind of communication as **phatic** communication, that is, communication whose main purpose is to help maintain social relationships rather than to transmit information. In this way, stories on social media sites are similar to 'small talk' in face-to-face communication. Consider the examples of Facebook updates below:

1. 19 May
Thomas has just made the best sandwich ever
2:56 pm
2. 15 April
Karen just shut her finger in the car door :(
7:50 pm
3. 18 July
Samantha is sad that it's Keira's last day tomorrow! What will we EVER do without her?
1:57 am

Adapted from Page (2010: 430)

Although these updates are short statements, they still contain features of narrativity. There is a teller—the Facebook user who posted the updates—and the updates include references to time indicated by the Facebook timestamp as well as references to places and people. What distinguishes them from stories with a clear chronology in the past tense is that the reported events are usually very recent; they might have happened just before the updates were posted. This is signaled though the use of words such as 'just' and the use of the present tense (for example, 'is') and the present perfect (for example, 'has ... made'). In example 3, we have a reference to events in the future ('what will we ever do'), which also is a type of a 'small story' referred to as projection (see unit A4). Ruth Page points out that on social media sites, recency and immediacy take priority over retrospection. Moreover, social media updates report mostly single events and may therefore seem to be less narrative because they appear to lack

sequentiality. Yet, the timestamp, which records the date and time of each post, and the fact that updates come from one person create a chronological status connected to one experiencing agent (Page, 2010). So, seemingly disconnected events are connected through the affordance of a machine-generated chronology and become narrative episodes in the Facebook user's larger life story. Telling one's life story through a series of episodes is known as **episodic narrativity**, and this kind of narrativity is typical of storytelling practices on social media sites (Page, 2010).

Another feature of stories on social media sites is *multimodality* (see unit A2). Participatory Web 2.0 online environments do not only encourage users to create and share stories through the written word, they also offer them other modal resources: images, color, typography, movement, and sound effects, which can be combined in different ways. Users of social media sites exploit these affordances to narrate episodes from their lives and to frame their stories in particular ways. Below is an example of a message from a friends' WhatsApp group, sharing a piece of 'breaking news' about finishing a half marathon (Figure B4.1). The episode is told through combining the modes of image and text. The narrativity is achieved through the dynamic interplay between the caption, which is a time reference highlighting how long it took them to run the half marathon—'2 hours and 12 minutes'—and the image, which fixes the story in a particular public place. Similar to Facebook, the chronology is indicated through the timestamp, which records the exact date, time, and minute that the message was sent. There are also other references to time, though more indirect; for example, the foil blanket placed on the shoulder of one of the friends indicates the end of the race (foil is used to help runners cool down and prevent muscle cramps after intense physical activity). There are two main tellers of the story foregrounded through the photo format of a selfie, but the selfie is not the generic, decontextualized type that one often sees on social media sites (Veum & Undrum, 2017). This selfie depicts the two tellers against a background of an open-air space, in which other people who had just finished the race are also visible. In this way, the two tellers self-present as a part of a larger event. The evaluation is articulated in facial expressions that together with the caption tell a story of achievement and joy. But this story is not just meant to act as an account, it is also an invitation for others to participate. The two tellers gaze directly at the viewer/reader suggesting that the image is not meant to be just a self-representation, but also invites the viewer/reader to interact with it. This is underlined by the eye level point of



Figure B4.1 WhatsApp message: 2 hours 12 minutes.

view, which suggests a symmetrical and equal relation between the selfie makers and viewers/readers (Veum & Undrum, 2017). This multimodal invitation is straightaway responded to with posts in which a congratulatory message is sent using text, emojis, and humor. Combining the available modes and resources, this story does not only recount an episode in the life of the two selfie makers, but sharing the story becomes an important tool of social bonding.

While stories by ordinary people about ordinary things dominate social media platforms, digital media also offer channels for other types of stories, stories that are otherwise difficult to tell. The anonymity of digital platforms, such as discussion fora, can encourage the telling of stories that have been kept hidden for a long time because of stigma or social pressure. It can literally give people a voice, combat feelings of isolation, and help people make sense of difficult experiences. For example, one of the authors of this book (Jaworska, 2018) has been studying the ways in which women who suffer from postnatal depression use discussion fora to tell of an experience which in offline settings remains a taboo. The transformative power of narratives shared online has also been discussed in a study by another author of this book. Exploring videos posted by victims of anti-gay bullying as part of the successful *It Gets Better* project, Jones (2016) demonstrates how digital media provide a channel through which LGBT people who have been bullied can circumvent social and institutional barriers to communication and make their stories hearable to wider audiences. In this way, digital media are not just repositories of ordinary stories of everyday activities, they also create opportunities for telling stories as a means of social activism.

NOTE

- 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=65&v=4tfa-n1iSdo.

PRODUCTION FORMATS AND DISCOURSE REPRESENTATION

B5

In unit A5, we explored some of the discursive processes that affect media production. We introduced the ideas of *entextualization* and *intertextuality* and argued that literally every media product we encounter is a mixture of the ‘voices’ of many different people. In this unit, we will explore in more depth the ways in which media producers manage this mixing of voices and position themselves in relation to the voices that they borrow.

Production formats

The issue of production formats essentially involves the question of ‘who is speaking’ in a text. In face-to-face communication, the question of ‘who is speaking’ seems rather straightforward; we expect that people who engage in a conversation are the ones who composed the utterances and the utterances represent what they think. But this is not necessarily the case. When we talk, we often repeat other people’s words, sometimes explicating quoting them (for example, ‘she was like, *no way!*’) and sometimes pretending that they are our own. In media communication, production formats are even more complicated. For example, although most news stories are attributed to a journalist or a reporter, we know from unit A5 that the final format and wording of a news story is determined in the context of an editorial meeting, during which other people such as editors, fact checkers, and other reporters might contribute their ideas and edit the text of the original writer. So, the journalist whose name appears on a news story is not its sole author. Furthermore, when journalists write news stories, they usually draw upon the words of people they have interviewed or words that have appeared in public statements or documents, representing them in various ways.

The sociologist Erving Goffman (1981) refers to the ways people assume different roles in relation to the messages that they are sending as **production formats**. According to Goffman (1981), a producer of a message can take up the position of the **animator** (the person who expresses or ‘gives voice’ to an utterance or text), the position of the **author** (the person who actually composes and edits the utterance or text), and/or the position of the **principal** (the person whose opinion or views the utterance or text expresses). In media texts, these roles are often divided between different people. For example, many people are normally involved in deciding what an anchorperson on the TV news says. Often the newsreader is simply *animating* words that were *authored* by a team of writers and which may express the opinion of the show’s producer or the media company.

In unit A6, we talked about how people position members of the audience as different kinds of listeners as, for example *addressees* or *overhearers*. We called this process of positioning *footing*. The same concept can be used to talk about the way the producers of messages position themselves in relation to the words they are speaking or writing.

An interviewer on a chat show, for example, may begin an interview with a formal introduction of the guest that may have been written by someone else, taking up the role of *animator* of someone else's words, but later may assume the roles of *author* and *principal* of his or her words as he or she is involved in the back and forth sparring of the interview. Of course, production formats can be particularly complicated online as people often quote from or share all or part of other people's texts or utterances, and sometimes 'speak for' others by, for example, tagging them in photos. Moreover, digital communication has contributed to a redrafting the 'contract' between speakers and audiences. In traditional media communication, there was a clear boundary between the speaker and the listener, the writer and the reader. Networked and interactive communications afforded by Web 2.0 have created opportunities for people to simultaneously take on the roles of producers and consumers of media messages—or **prosumers**.

On the internet, users can assume a range of different production roles in relation to content. One of the simplest ways users can affect content is by pressing on hyperlinks, which might, for example, result in friends being added to their social networks, invitations being accepted, purchases being made, or content being 'liked'. In such cases, while the user may be the *principal* of the resulting text, the text itself (for example, the message 'Emily has accepted your invitation') is *authored* by the social media site and animated by an algorithm. Another way they can create content is through *sharing* the content produced by other users, animating content that has been *authored* by and expresses the opinion of someone else. They might also comment on someone else's content or create their own content which might be in the form of text, photographs, video, or audio recordings.

One of the most interesting questions associated with the production formats of digital media is the degree to which *non-human* actors take on production roles. On many social media sites, for example, the authoring and animation of content is automated, so that texts are produced on behalf of users by software-based agents. Applied linguist Volker Eisenlauer (2014) gives an example of a text generated on a user's Facebook page when he updates his profile information, adding the college that he is attending (Figure B5.1). The automatically generated post is 'liked' by his math tutor,

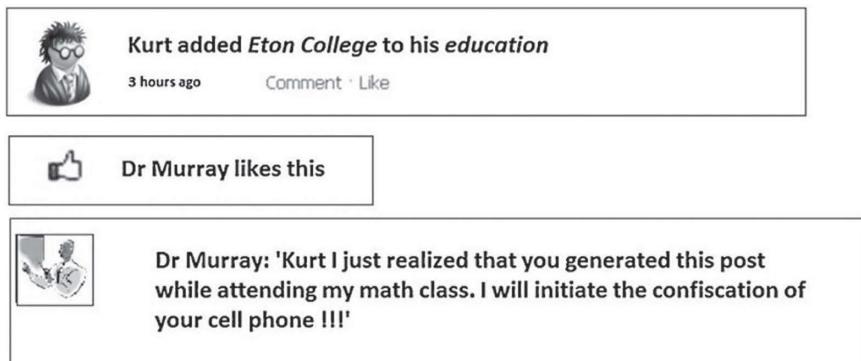


Figure B5.1 An automatically generated post on Facebook (From Eisenlauer, 2014).

Dr Murray, but later Dr Murray sends a message admonishing the poster for updating his profile in the middle of class, information that was also automatically generated by the algorithm.

In such cases, Eisenlauer argues, Facebook acts as a kind of ‘third author’, shaping the structure and sometimes even the content of people’s status updates in ways that might differ from what the *principals* of these pages intended.

Discourse representation

In unit A5, we talked about the concept of *intertextuality*, the idea that when people produce media messages, they typically mix together the voices of different people. Discourse representation refers to the different ways people represent these voices and position themselves in relation to them. For example, when we disagree with the words we have appropriated or doubt the credibility of the person from whom they came, we might take pains to distance ourselves from those words so that listeners or readers know that we are not the *principals*, but are merely *animating* the words of someone else.

In the case of news stories, the people and documents who supply the various voices they contain are known as **sources**. Bell (1991) offers the following list of source texts that may contribute to the creation of a news story:

- Interviews, either face-to-face or by telephone
- Public addresses
- Press conferences
- Organizationally produced documents of many kinds (for example, reports, surveys, letters, findings, agendas, minutes, proceedings, research papers)
- Press releases
- Prior stories on a topic, either from own or other media, news agency copy
- The journalist’s notes from all the above inputs, especially the spoken ones, which might include his or her own thoughts or observations

Most of these source texts are produced by people other than the author of the news story being written, and many of them may themselves contain the voices of multiple people. Each of these kinds of texts may also have their own distinctive linguistic features which might be carried into the finished article, and the people who ‘speak through’ these source texts may have unique styles that also may find their way into the finished article. As you read a news story, you can ask what use has been made of these different source texts in creating each of its paragraphs. In some cases, you won’t be able to tell. In other cases, there will be clear signs of where information has come from or whose voice is being represented.

Sources do not only deliver content for a news story, they also play an important part in sustaining the journalistic ethos of credibility, neutrality, and objectivity, and as such are also important elements in news writing. Basically, journalists have two choices when representing sources in news stories. They can either directly attribute the words they are using to others or they can use them without attribution. Often in news stories, discourse representation operates in a straightforward manner, such as when media practitioners directly attribute words or ideas to a source. These words

end up in a media product either in the form of **direct reporting** known as quotations (for example, the Prime Minister said: ‘The country will be facing new challenges’) or **indirect reporting**, in a form of a summary or paraphrase. Attributions can create a sense of objectivity and distance between the journalist and the source of information (Cotter, 2010).

Forms of attribution also play an important part in the design of a news story. Specifically, placement of direct and indirect attribution is often related to internal conventions of writing in a particular news organization. As Cotter (2010) observes, in many newsrooms, there is an unwritten rule that a well-written story never begins with a quotation apart from rare exceptions when the quote itself is a newsworthy event. At the same time, direct quotes are generally expected within the first two paragraphs of a story, because they are thought to add immediacy and freshness and enhance the newsworthiness of the reported content (Cotter, 2010).

Although forms of attributions are regarded as mechanisms for authorial distance and therefore imply neutrality, they are not always neutral. When reporting on events, media practitioners may have a range of voices to choose from, but only certain voices and certain words are selected because the journalist or editor might want to foreground a particular aspect of a story or frame a story in a particular way. For example, when a journalist reports on a serious medical matter, such as a discovery of a new drug or therapy, normally the voices that are incorporated into the story are those of scientists or medical experts because such voices give the story more credibility and authority. This also means that voices can be ‘creatively’ appropriated to enhance the status and credibility of information, as when advertisements use quotes from experts or **testimonials** from customers.

At the same time, it is almost impossible for writers to represent the voices of other people in a completely neutral way. This is because when we report the words of others, we also usually characterize those words in some way. The most common way writers and speakers characterize the words of others is with **reporting verbs**, words such as ‘said’, ‘claimed’, ‘professed’, ‘stated’, and ‘argued’. Some reporting verbs (such as ‘claim’ or ‘assert’) can create the implication that the reader should be skeptical about the truth of the words that are being reported. For example, the headline *Trump claims vindication after Mueller does not establish collusion* (Liptak & Collins, 2019) contains the suggestion that the vindication ‘claimed’ may not actually be genuine (compare this to the headline from a conservative blog: *President Trump is vindicated. The witch hunt is over*). Sometimes, though not often, journalists are more explicit about undermining the credibility of a source’s words, as in the sentence ‘President Trump falsely claimed on Wednesday he had signed more legislation than any president since Harry Truman’ (Abramson, 2017). Other reporting verbs (such as ‘describe’ and ‘point out’), however, can create the implication that the person whose words are being reported is simply calling attention to something that is objectively true or ‘obvious’. Consider the following sentence from *The Guardian* which quotes New York Congressperson Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez:

Describing her expertise “as a person who actually worked for tips and hourly wages”, Ocasio-Cortez essentially pointed out that Ivanka Trump has never had to work a minimum wage job in her life and that her comments on the Green New Deal jobs guarantee rang hollow.

(Ho, 2019)

By using the verbs ‘describe’ and ‘point out’ as well as the word ‘expertise’, the writer subtly gives credibility to Ocasio-Cortez’s words. The most interesting thing about the sentence, however, is that Ocasio-Cortez did not actually say what the reporter said she ‘pointed out’. Instead, she just implied it in a tweet commenting on Ivanka Trump’s comments (see Figure B5.2). In other words, the reporter here is not just reporting the words of the source, but also interpreting them.

Sometimes journalists report the words of sources by labeling them as particular kinds of **speech acts** (for example, ‘apologies’, ‘invitations’, or ‘threats’), as in this headline from *The Guardian*: *President Trump threatens to close the border with Mexico* (Jacobs, 2019). Characterizing people’s words in this way can sometimes be used as a way of characterizing the speaker as a certain kind of person. In the sentence below from *Fortune*, which describes a dispute between President Trump and director Spike Lee, the verb ‘lashed out’ makes the President seem impulsive and irrational, whereas the verb phrase ‘called on voters’ makes Lee seem measured and reasonable. Moreover, the choice to directly quote only two words of the President’s statement, ‘racist hit’, makes the quotation marks seem less like signals of attribution and more like **scare quotes**—quotes that are put around words and phrases to signal that the writer thinks the words are unusual or inaccurate:

Donald Trump lashed out at Spike Lee for a “racist hit” after the film director called on voters to mobilize to defeat the president next year during his Academy Awards acceptance speech.

(Dopp, 2019)

Sometimes the source to which an utterance is attributed is an **anonymous source**, a person who is willing to talk to a reporter as long as his or her name is not revealed. The credibility of anonymous sources, of course, can be difficult to gauge, but most professional journalists check the reliability of anonymous sources carefully and cross-check what they say with other sources as a matter of their code of ethics (see, for example, Society for Professional Journalists, 2017). Often, when they are quoted, their

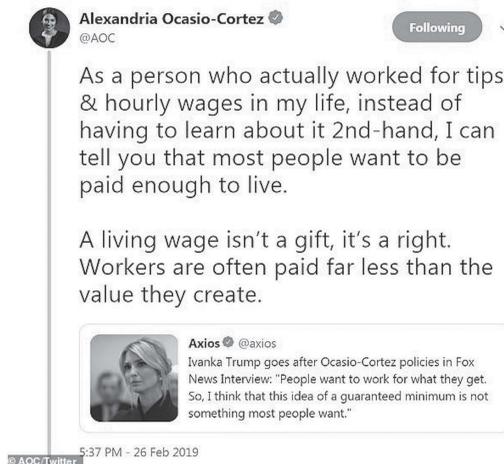


Figure B5.2 Tweet from Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

words are attributed to ‘a person familiar with the matter’. Finally, sometimes voices of ‘people from the street’ or witnesses are brought in to offer their views of events and personal comments or opinions. The voices of ‘ordinary people’ (*vox populi*) are usually introduced to illustrate the range of public opinion on a topic or to provide an air of ‘authenticity’ to the reporting. The rise of social media, especially Twitter, has provided journalists with new ways of gathering quotes and opinions about news stories, both from prominent politicians and celebrities and from ‘ordinary people’.

Presuppositions and allusions

Often journalists, advertising copywriters, or other content producers do *not* ascribe the voices that they appropriate in their stories to anyone, either because they think that what is being expressed is ‘common knowledge’ or ‘conventional wisdom’, as in the case of presuppositions, or because they think that most people will already be familiar with the source, as in the case of **allusions**.

Presuppositions are a particularly important kind of discourse representation to pay attention to, not just because they can reveal what media producers think their readers already know or think, but also because they can play a role in promoting certain ideological positions by presenting information as ‘generally accepted’. In his article on English headlines in Ethiopian newspapers, discourse analyst Mesfin Bekalu (2006) points out that presuppositions in news discourse can be used to obscure the political opinions of journalists or politicians which they support. For example, the headline ‘Calm returns to Gambella as high officials travel to region to investigate conflict’ (Bekalu, 2006: 161) presupposes that readers know that there was previously unrest in Gambella and that the cause of the unrest is something that ‘high officials’ should be investigating, and the headline ‘Ethiopians go to Congress to fight autocratic regime’ presupposes that readers will agree that the regime in question is ‘autocratic’. In both of these cases, the presupposed information certainly had a source (perhaps the ‘high officials’ in the first instance, and the ‘Ethiopians’ who went to Congress in the second), but no clear attribution is given.

Allusions are references to other texts, often literary or popular cultural texts, the knowledge of which on the part of the reader is assumed by the writer. Allusions can also have political or ideological functions, since they help to define what kinds of knowledge ‘educated’ or ‘culturally literate’ people in a society are expected to possess and can serve to separate insiders (people ‘in the know’) from outsiders. Allusions are also a common characteristic of news headlines. A *New York Times* article about a Hewlett-Packard board member who helped engineer an important corporate merger, for example, had the headline: ‘The man behind the curtain in the Hewlett-Packard Merger’, an allusion to the 1939 American film *The Wizard of Oz*; and an article in the same paper about the challenges that President Barack Obama faced assuming office in the midst of an economic crisis had the headline ‘Something to fear after all’ (Lohr, 2009), an allusion to the famous words of President Franklin Roosevelt—‘We have nothing to fear but fear itself’—which he uttered in the midst of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Allusions can also be produced in modes other than writing. Figure B5.3, for example, is from an article in *The Week*, which reported on the rise of online bullying directed at women on Twitter. The image emphasizes the harmful nature of online abuse by creatively turning the Twitter logo into a flock of vicious birds attacking a woman. The power of the image derives in part from the allusion it makes to 1963 horror movie *The Birds* directed by Alfred Hitchcock (see Figure B5.4).



Figure B5.3 Allusion to Hitchcock's *The Birds* in *The Week* (24 November 2012).



Figure B5.4 Movie poster for Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963).

Remixing

The picture above, in which two images—the Twitter logo and the movie poster for Hitchcock’s *The Birds*—are ‘mashed’ together could be considered an example of **remixing**. Although, as we argued in unit A5, intertextuality is a characteristic of all media texts, advances in production technologies have made it easier to combine not just words, but also images, sounds, and other elements from previous texts to make new ones. The idea of remixing comes from hip hop music, in which fragments of previous recordings are often mixed together to make new songs. Remixing is particularly prevalent in the realm of digital media, where users regularly create content by editing together content produced by other people, including mainstream media content such as pop music and footage from major motion pictures. One example of this is the Club Penguin music videos analyzed by the educational linguist Jackie Marsh (2015), in which participants in the online virtual world Club Penguin combine footage from their in-world interactions with popular pop songs.

Obviously, such content complicates the idea of principal, author, and animator as distinct production roles. They also raise questions about the *ownership* of content and the degree to which media producers (whether they be companies or individuals) should be allowed to ‘borrow’ content produced by others (see unit B9). In unit A5, we emphasized that media discourse is subject to many professional rules and societal norms as well as laws (for example, copyright laws). But despite the boundaries and limits that these norms set, media spaces are also incredibly creative spaces, and remixing is often an activity in which this creativity is most evident. Creators of remixed content often make the same point that we made above: that all media texts, to some degree, combine different texts and different ‘voices’ in order to create something new. Creativity emerges not from the fact that we can say new things in an utterly new way, but from the ways in which we engage in a dialogue with previous texts and combine them in unique ways (Jones, 2016).

PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORKS

B6

In unit A6, we argued that the typical way of seeing communication as the transmission of a message between a speaker and hearer (or ‘sender’ and ‘receiver’) is too simplistic, and that in most communication, senders and receivers take up a range of different positions. We called these different positions the *participation frameworks* of the interaction. Participation frameworks are related to what we called in unit B5 *production formats*, the roles media producers take up in relation to the messages they produce. In this unit, we will explore how different media can affect the kinds of participation roles that are available to users.

Media as ‘information systems’

All media come with different kinds of **default settings** regarding the way they enable and constrain different kinds of participation. What makes the interaction in the Figure B6.1 on the following page amusing is that the default settings of books is that they are normally a kind of ‘one-to-one’ communication between authors and readers. Reading is usually thought of as a solitary, private activity, and when people read over your shoulder, it is seen as impolite.

One of the main ways media affect participation frameworks is the way they make possible different configurations of media producers and media consumers such as one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many communication (see unit B1). But media don’t just affect how many people can participate in communication, but also *how* they can participate, that is, the participant roles that they can play. Some media, such as many social media sites, allow for a large number of unratified participants who can overhear or eavesdrop on other people’s conversations, whereas other media, like the telephone, limit opportunities for unratified participation.

Another way media affect the ways people can participate in the production and consumption of messages has to do with the opportunities they provide for people to disclose or conceal information and to monitor the actions of other people. Think, for example, of the difference between an app like Facebook Messenger and a social media platform like Twitter. The difference between these two media is that Facebook Messenger makes possible one-to-one communication and Twitter facilitates one-to-many communication. They are also different in terms of the possibilities they provide for users to monitor one another. Users of Facebook Messenger, for instance, can see when other people are typing messages in real time, whereas users of Twitter cannot.

The media scholar Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) argues that the main way media affect participation is the way in which they allow users to access information about other users. Media, he says, change the perceptual fields of communication. When we are speaking face-to-face, for example, we cannot just hear others’ voices, but we can also see their faces and monitor what they are doing while they are talking to us. Telephone conversations, however, involve a different pattern of access to information: while we can hear others’ voices, we can’t see their faces or what they are doing, which means that they can potentially engage in other activities while they are talking to us without



Figure B6.1 Reading on the underground (Photo credit Derek Berwin).

us knowing. Meyrowitz refers to media as **information systems**, which means that they have an effect on the way people are able to control the exchange of information and the participation and production roles they are able to take up in communication.

Some of the other ways media affect how we can participate in communication include:

- ❑ **Role reversibility:** whether it is possible to be alternately speaker and addressee, as in face-to-face communication or instant messaging platforms (such as WhatsApp).
- ❑ **Co-presence/distance:** whether or not the people communicating must be physically co-present or as with most media, they are able to communicate at a distance.
- ❑ **Co-temporality:** whether there is a 'live' link, creating communication simultaneously in real time (**synchronous**), or whether communication is reproduced or time-shifted (**asynchronous**).
- ❑ **Persistence:** whether media discourse exists only at the moment of its utterance—as is the case for most face-to-face communication—or whether it is preserved (for example, in the form of writing, an audio recording, or stored in a computer database).
- ❑ **Spontaneity/scriptedness:** whether the discourse is simultaneously planned, executed, and monitored or whether it is prepared and scripted (and so likely to be more deliberately structured).
- ❑ **Richness:** the variety of modes (see unit A2) communicators are able to use, for example, whether they are able to use gestures and facial expressions to

communicate (as with television and video chat) or their communication is limited to the voice (as with telephone conversations) or written or graphic communication (as with traditional texting applications).

- ❑ **Mutual monitoring:** the degree to which the media allow communicators to monitor what the people they are communicating with are doing.

All these effects are somehow related to what is known as **interactivity**. Interactivity has to do with how much two or more parties to a communicative event can act on and affect each other and how much their interaction influences the unfolding direction of the communication. Most media nowadays are interactive, but the degree of interactivity varies. It may involve recipients of a media text simply reacting or making their own sense out of some piece of media content. This is the kind of ‘active reception’ researched by David Morley and others in the field known as New Audience Studies (Morley, 1992). Such reception is active, but there is little feedback into or control over the content or direction of the message. Alternatively, interactivity may refer to a process of *using* media. The user interacts by choosing: targeting and selecting material, for example, using Google searches, message alerts, RSS feeds, or following hypertext links. Such use is still relatively passive, however, to the extent that it doesn’t affect the content being presented. But the act of selection may be extended further, for example with so-called interactive television, where the user becomes a mini director of the content, pressing buttons on the remote control for alternative camera angles or alternative plot choices. ‘Interactivity’ of each of these kinds still, of course, only involves interaction with textual material rather than interaction with other users. Other kinds of interactivity involve interaction between users, creating two-way forms of communication (as with email, instant messaging, mobile telephony, social media, or multiplayer online games and interactions in virtual worlds).

Aspects of interactivity, however, are not solely determined by media. They are also a matter of the social conventions that develop around different kinds of media and different kinds of communicative situations or conventions that can change over time. In Shakespeare’s England, for instance, the theater was a much more interactive medium than it is today, with audience members regularly interacting directly with actors by shouting at them, attempting to engage them in conversation, or expressing their judgments by throwing rotten vegetables at them.

Genres and participation

It is not just different media that can affect the way people can participate in communication. Different genres also make available different positions for senders and receivers of messages. As the media scholar Ian Hutchby (2005: 166) observes, ‘different genres of media talk have their own frameworks of participation and dynamics of address that operate within, and necessarily shape, the “message” that reaches the audience at home.’

In unit A6, we talked about the participation format of radio and television chat shows and how hosts strategically shift *footing*, sometimes treating their guests as addressees and the audience as overhearers, and sometimes treating the audience as

addressees. We also noted that these participation frameworks become even more complex when studio audiences are invited to participate in the interaction by making comments or asking questions (or even just booing or applauding), or when at-home audiences are able to telephone in to express their opinions or tweet comments that are then shown on air. Finally, we discussed how, when audiences are positioned in different participation frameworks, this can also contribute to 'designing' them as particular kinds of people, for example, members of an 'in-group' or 'out-group'.

In their study of television chat shows, Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt (1994) argue that the kinds of participation roles the genre of the chat show makes available for participants actually draw on other kinds of genres, such as the romance, the therapeutic encounter, and the public debate. When chat shows resemble romances, the host is positioned as a hero defending the audience against antagonistic guests. In such cases, the host is given the role of channelling the public's exasperation with or contempt for guests. When it resembles a therapeutic encounter, the host is positioned as a therapist, the guest as the patient, and the audience as sympathetic friends. This pattern of participation is perhaps best exemplified by programs like the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, where troubled or marginalized individuals were invited to discuss their problems. And when chat shows resemble public inquiries or debates, the guests are positioned as antagonists or witnesses, the host as the impartial judge, and the audience as the jury who must make up their minds who is right. Many political chat shows exhibit this pattern of participation.

In some cases, however, these patterns can be blurred. On a number of popular chat shows, for instance, the therapeutic pattern in which the host positions him or herself as helping the guest solve a problem, and the antagonistic pattern, in which the guests become objects of criticism, are combined. One example of a hybrid pattern can be seen in a media moment which went 'viral' and which we will discuss further in unit B7. The moment occurred on a US television show *Dr Phil*, when the host was interviewing a 13-year-old white teenager Danielle Bregoli and her mother Barbara Ann. The host was asking Danielle about her consistent inappropriate and disrespectful behavior towards her mother and others, which included stealing cars, dropping out of school in seventh grade, and punching a woman on an airplane, when in response to the audience laughing at her, Danielle characterized them as 'hos', and then changed footing, turning away from the host and addressing the audience directly with the threat: 'Cash me ousside, how bah dah!' ('Catch me outside, how about that').¹ In unit B7, we will discuss the reason this moment and the phrase Danielle uttered became the subject of internet memes. The point we'd like to make here is that this particular genre of chat show, in which guests are treated simultaneously as objects of 'concern' and objects of ridicule, can result in complicated patterns of participation among guests, hosts, and audience members.

One of the most interesting television genres when it comes to the kinds of participation roles it makes available to viewers is reality TV, a kind of program that depicts 'ordinary people' in supposedly 'real-life', unscripted situations (see units A3, C6, and B7). The media scholar Mark Andrejevic (2004) argues that reality TV reproduces the participation framework normally associated with *surveillance*, where one person or group of people secretly watches another. In such a participation framework, audience members are positioned as eavesdroppers. Of course, they are not really eavesdroppers, since the 'performers' know they are being watched and the participation

of audience members is ratified. But, being made to *feel* like eavesdroppers increases their sense of excitement and titillation. At the same time, some reality TV shows also include segments in which performers speak directly to the audience individually or in pairs, revealing to them what they were ‘really thinking’ when interacting with other performers. Such cases involve a change of footing in which audience members are repositioned as friends or confidants, privy to the ‘secrets’ of particular performers (often ‘at the expense’ of other performers).

Some reality TV shows also make available more interactive ways for audiences to participate by, for example, voting for their favorite contestant, telephoning or texting the performers, or engaging with them via chat rooms or social media sites. The most important function of these activities is to build intimacy and to heighten the audience’s sense not just that these are ‘real’ people, but that they (audience members) might also someday be given the opportunity to be watched by millions of people on television. At the same time, audiences also occupy a kind of ‘double position’ when it comes to the authenticity of what they are watching. As with professional wrestling, a genre in which performers stage fights for the audience, there is the acknowledgment that what they are watching, though ‘realistic’, is not necessarily ‘real’. The awareness of the ‘fakeness’ of reality TV allows viewers to enjoy the drama without taking it literally. Interestingly, this ‘double positioning’ of audiences is a technique that can even be exploited by politicians. Anthropological linguist Kira Hall and her colleagues (2016), for example, argue that Donald Trump, himself a former reality TV star, makes use of the contradictory frames of reality TV to get away with outrageous behavior that would earn other politicians censure because people can never be sure if his behavior is serious or only a performance.

Audiences and participation in digital media

As we said in unit A6, digital media have dramatically changed the way audiences participate in mediated communication. Although many digital formats reproduce the kind of participation frameworks we are familiar with from more traditional media—the one-to-one participation characteristic of emails and instant messaging resembling letters or telephone calls, and the one-to-many participation characteristic of websites resembling print or broadcast mass media—they also make available many-to-many participation in formats such as online forums and Twitter and more limited some-to-some participation on other social media sites.

Social network sites present particular challenges for thinking about issues of participation and audience design. Audiences for social media posts are not as unpredictable as they are for print and broadcast mass media, where theoretically anyone can read a newspaper or watch a TV program. Social media audiences are limited to those people within a user’s social network (though sometimes content can be shared in ways people cannot completely control), and some sites allow for more targeted audience segregation through the use of privacy settings. Nevertheless, most people’s social networks consist of diverse groups of people such as friends, classmates, colleagues, and family members, and often when people post content, they have some subset of their network—an ‘imagined audience’—in mind. The issue, then, is how to create content that appropriately targets one’s imagined audience while simultaneously not offending

other possible readers or viewers. As we mentioned in unit A6, digital media scholars Marwick and boyd (2011) refer to this problem as the problem of ‘content collapse’.

British linguists Caroline Tagg, Philip Seargeant, and Amy Brown (2017), however, argue that the notion of context collapse is not a very accurate way of thinking about social media environments, because it treats the idea of *context* as something that users have little control over rather than as something that they help to *construct* through the way they communicate. The idea that people contribute to the construction of contexts comes from the work of sociolinguist John Gumperz (1982), who showed how people use different aspects of their speech style (including intonation, facial expressions, and the language that they speak)—which he called *contextualization cues*—to signal to others something about what they think they are ‘doing’ with their talk (see unit A4). One example of this might be when a chat show host turns his face towards the camera and changes his tone of voice to signal that he is talking to the television audience rather than to his guest. According to Tagg and her colleagues, people on social media sites use their utterances not just to design audiences, but to design contexts—a process they refer to as **context design**—by taking into account not just the *participants* in their social network, but also particular ideas about how certain social media platforms ought to be used (media ideologies), their understanding of the *affordances* the media makes available (see unit A1), the different modes they are using to communicate (see unit A2), the *purpose* of their communication, the *norms of communication* associated with the platform and ascribed to by the people in their social network, and the kind of *social identities* they wish to present to their potential audience.

The model suggested by Tagg and her colleagues helps us to see that the decisions we make about the content we post on social media sites is not just about ‘maximizing’ or ‘partitioning’ our audience, but also about *hailing* particular people that the content is for them, creating contextual ‘frames’ around the content to signal how it is to be interpreted, and working to construct social media sites themselves as places suitable for certain kinds of activities. If you consistently post content about politics, for example, you will attract a certain segment of your network to interact with that content and construct the social media site as a serious (and perhaps partisan) space. As it turns out, some social media sites also play a role in the design of social media contexts and the selection of social media audiences by algorithmically reinforcing the behavior of users. For example, Facebook’s Edge Rank algorithm promotes certain kinds of content to the top of people’s newsfeeds based on how much it resembles content that they have previously posted, commented on, or ‘liked’. So, if you are particularly fond of posting LOL Cat memes (see unit B7), your posts will appear more prominently on the pages of people in your social network who have previously liked this content, and your own newsfeed will probably also contain cat memes posted by other users, reinforcing the idea that posting cat memes is a good thing to do on Facebook.

Participation and surveillance

Because of the many-to-many participation frameworks made possible by digital media and the ‘collapse’ of traditional boundaries between contexts associated with social media sites, many media commentators have argued that people’s

understanding of what is ‘public’ and what is ‘private’ is changing. Not only do people seem more willing to share intimate details of their lives on reality TV shows or over social media sites, but various forms of social monitoring—eavesdropping, ‘lurking’, and ‘stalking’—have become socially acceptable. More importantly, digital media make it possible for media companies such as Google and Facebook to closely monitor the way users interact with content and to use that information to micro-target advertising; users regularly agree to such monitoring, trading in their privacy for convenience and the opportunity to use these services for free. Surveillance is, in fact, the primary business model of the internet: it’s the way most media companies make money. As we argued in unit A6, the ability of companies to monitor audiences and customize content accordingly has dramatically changed how we think about audience design.

An example of the increasing public acceptance of this surveillance can be seen in an advertising campaign by the music streaming platform *Spotify*, which collects information about what its users listen to in order to provide them with personalized recommendations. The campaign consisted of billboards which singled out particular users and publicly revealed some aspect of their listening history. The billboard pictured in Figure B6.2, for example, reads: ‘Dear person who played “Sorry” 42 times on Valentine’s Day, What did you do?’

In the excerpt on ‘Surveillant media’ reprinted in unit D6, Rodney Jones argues that different media make different kinds of surveillance possible through the kinds of participation frameworks they promote. Like Meyrowitz (see above), he describes how media affect the flows of information between people, providing metaphorical ‘windows’ that allow information through and ‘walls’ that block the flow of information. Often when people think about surveillance, the model they have for the flow of information is based on the **panopticon**, an architectural plan for a prison designed by the 19th century philosopher Jeremy Bentham ([1748–1832] 1995), in which prisoners are arranged in cells around a central observation tower so that they can be constantly monitored by a guard but cannot monitor one another (see Figure B6.3). This kind of arrangement has been reproduced in many institutional settings such as classrooms, where desks are arranged in rows facing the teacher so that it is easy for the teacher



Figure B6.2 Spotify billboard in London (Author’s photograph).

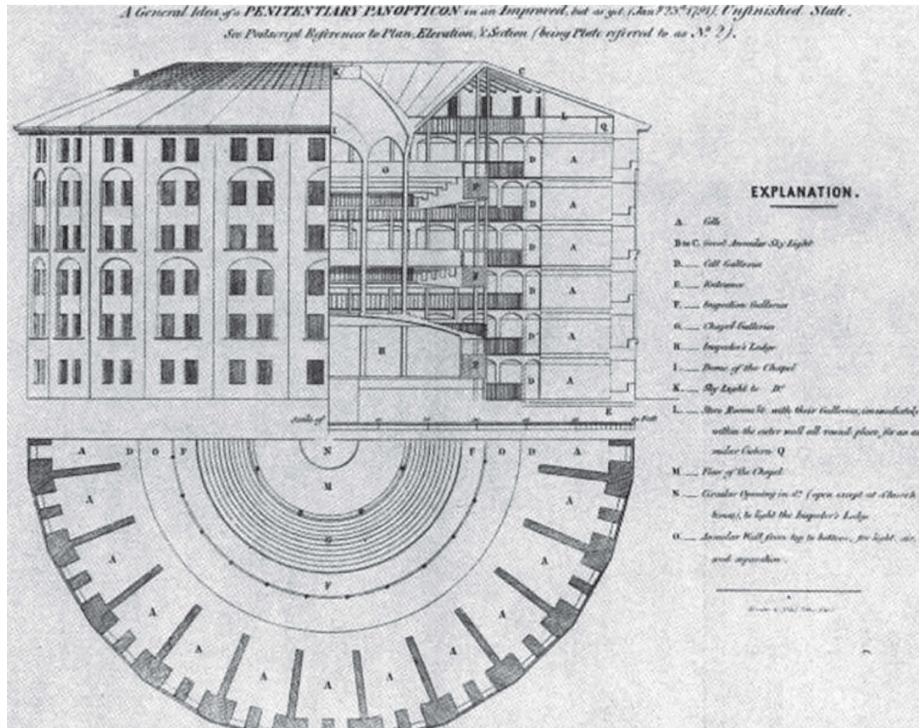


Figure B6.3 Bentham's blueprint for the panopticon (From *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*).

to keep an eye on the students and more difficult for students to interact with one another. Some people think the panopticon is a good metaphor for the kinds of mass surveillance engaged in by internet companies today; but others disagree, arguing that what makes the collection of information so efficient is not just that companies are keeping track of users, but that users are keeping track of one another, continually monitoring their friends and followers on social media and encouraging them to share even more detailed information about what they are doing and what they 'like' which can be sold to advertisers.

NOTE

1 <https://youtu.be/ZrtSOTGNqA8>.

VIRALITY AND MEMETICS

B7

In unit A7, we explored the concepts of the attention economy and virality and gave some examples of the linguistic strategies used in analogue media, particularly newspaper headlines, to attract the attention of readers. In this unit, we will elaborate on some of the factors that cause media content to ‘go viral’ and focus more specifically on virality in digital media.

Virality of stories and emotional contagion

As we explained in unit A7, media content must always compete with other media content for people’s attention. For this reason, it is often designed to make it appear especially relevant, urgent, or sensational. Information and ideas may be selected, simplified, and enhanced in various ways. Text producers may use dramatic language, exaggeration, and sensational detail in order to attract attention.

This competition for the attention of media consumers is even more intense in digital environments, where consumers have so much more information available to them and there are so many more ways for media companies to try to attract their attention. Internet platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter have, for example, revolutionized the ways with which news is produced and consumed. News now comes in many shapes and forms via digital platforms, such as videos, online articles, internet memes, and podcasts as well as content adapted from more traditional formats such as radio and television. In addition, digital platforms such as social media sites provide a host of new ways for media consumers to share content with one another, sometimes adding to it or altering it. While certain news stories spread widely and rapidly, others do not. One way to explain this is to look at the relations between what makes news stories go viral (i.e., spread rapidly) and the emotions they evoke.

Contagion is a concept that American psychologist Robert Cialdini (2009) defines as a rapid spread of influential information among people in a networked environment. Sharing information with others, he says, also involves transmitting one’s emotional state of mind to them. People are likely to experience the same emotional reaction as a result of interacting with the same news or information, and this is known as emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). In other words, when one shares a news story, he or she likely anticipates that the same emotions will be evoked when others receive the same information. Considering that information can spread so rapidly in digital environments, putting individuals with similar emotional states in a networked environment can have larger implications for how emotional contagion can direct people’s responses to stories and events as well as control and direct their behavior. If emotional contagion is what triggers the spread of news, it is important to know what emotions are evoked in the news and how those emotions are manifested via language. Berger and Milkman’s (2012) research indicates that content containing positive affect, anger, or anxiety is likely to be shared. Therefore, high-arousal emotions may lead to an increase in physiological response and a desire to share the

content, while low-arousal emotions have the opposite effect due to content being uninteresting and unexciting, and thus unworthy of spreading.

News stories or events with positive emotional content are more likely to be passed on because sharing such content makes recipients feel good and helps build or maintain the sharers' positive images (Berger, 2013). Sharing also increases sociality among individuals, and therefore involves more relational goals, socializing motivations, and desire to be liked and approved of by others. For instance, if an office worker finds a funny Internet video—one like the 'Charlie bit me' video (Figure B7.1) that went viral on YouTube in 2010—she may share it with colleagues to create a positive mood in the workplace. The shared emotional experience based on the humorous content can increase closeness and affection among users and result in positive attitudes towards the sharer.

While we tend to share positive things more than negative ones, some negative emotions, like anger, anxiety, or outrage, can also increase sharing because these high-arousal emotions drive us to action. Social issues or events that activate anger and outrage can encourage people to participate in online discussions, show solidarity and support, or raise awareness. One prominent example of this type of anger-inducing social issue was the #MeToo movement, which was triggered in 2017 by women sharing their experiences of sexual harassment and assault, particularly in the workplace.

American computer scientist Jaron Lanier (2017) calls negative emotions such as fear and anger 'easy' emotions. He claims that negative emotions are quite useful in modifying behavior and have personal, political, economic, social, and cultural effects on society. He argues that manipulating negative emotions through social media can create profitable outcomes for businesses, by engaging users, but the cost of this is often increased political polarization and social unrest.

Unlike outrage and anger, other negative emotions like sadness, distress, and trauma may not actually encourage sharing. When we are angry, we feel tempted to take our anger out on someone by yelling at them, stamping our feet, or jumping up and down. We tend to show similar reactions when we experience feelings such as happiness, excitement, but in more positive ways. However, when it comes to stories that evoke sadness, we are less likely to share these stories with others. There is, in fact, some evidence that people don't like negative disclosures on social media. For example, researchers



Figure B7.1 Charlie bit me.

Levontin and Yom-Tov (2017) found that Facebook posts of memorials for loved ones and those that expressed grief and bereavement online were generally disliked.

Other scholars in the field of communication have suggested more detailed models to account for virality in the media. The Israeli communication scholar Limor Shifman (2014) presents what he calls the 6P model of virality, describing different features that may account for why a media event can go viral. The first P is *positivity*; people tend to share or forward things that have positive or humorous elements in them. The second is *provoking*, referring to the elicitation of high arousal emotions. The third one is *positioning*, referring to where the story or event appears. For example, if a story appears on the homepage of the *New York Times*, it will likely attract more attention. *Packaging* refers to the simplicity of stories. This feature posits that people will more likely forward a story that is clear and easy to understand. The *prestige* of the story or event is usually enhanced by the presence of famous people in the story, and this can also be a reason for virality. Finally, *participation* refers to how encouraged and motivated people are to forward a certain piece of content.

Internet memes

The term internet meme refers to multimodal signs consisting of images and texts in which both visual and textual elements are somewhat altered to create a new meaning, but leaving some elements to retain the original signs' recognizability (Varis & Blommaert, 2012). Memes usually emerge from some content or information that goes viral and is subsequently taken up and reworked by users to create new meanings. One of the most prevalent kinds of internet memes are **image macros**, defined as 'captioned images that typically consist of a picture and a witty message or a catchphrase' (<http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/image-macros>).

A notable example of a viral internet meme is the American internet celebrity cat known as Grumpy Cat (Figure B7.2), who rose to online fame in 2012 with her photograph going viral on Reddit. The annoyed facial expression of the cat became the subject of dozens of photoshopped derivatives, online parodies, and image macros.



Figure B7.2 Grumpy Cat.

Grumpy Cat is not the only cat that has found internet fame. In fact, pictures of cats have been shared on online platforms since the early 1990s, first through email networks and later through personal blogs. In the second half of the 2000s, cats gained more online popularity with the growing influence of LOLcats and ‘Caturday’ on various platforms such as YouTube and 4chan. LOLcats are image macros consisting of humorous photos of cats with superimposed text written in idiosyncratic and grammatically non-standard forms known as **LOLspeak**.

Internet memes can also be derived from pictures of celebrities and even ordinary people. Examples include ‘Charlie Bit Me’, ‘Kanye Interrupts’, ‘Leave Britney alone’, and ‘Cash Me Ousside/How Bah Dah’. What these memes have in common is that they originated from media content that went viral online and was subsequently transformed into material for parody, imitation, remix, and mash-ups. Internet memes not only encourage creativity and humor, but they also allow others to engage with current issues, events, and people. Using various meme generator websites, such as Meme Generator,¹ internet users can create and propagate their own versions of popular memes.

Just as with other forms of sharing on digital platforms, practices of creating and sharing memes is part of the way internet users express their individual identities and their affiliation with other users. Since memes involve creative reworkings of community resources, people can use them as expressions of their unique identities and worldviews within the context of the network. Canadian sociologist Barry Wellman and his colleagues (2003) coined the term **networked individualism** to describe the way participation in diverse social networks provides the means for people to express their individuality in ways that are not so easy in more tightly knit, often hierarchical groups. At the same time, the circulation of such content extends beyond individuals and feeds into the broader popular culture by establishing connections with commonly held emotions, feelings, and stances within the network. According to the American communication scholar Ryan Milner (2013), memes are a *media lingua franca*, which enables individuals to participate in discussions using a common language with which they can create new forms and meanings from diverse geographical locations. Because memes are constructed socially, the success of a meme is determined by the extent to which the content and stance of the meme fits with the worldview of others belonging to the same digital community (Ross & Rivers, 2017). Additionally, such co-construction and interaction form the basis of **conviviality**, which Varis and Blommaert (2015) define as a ‘level of social intercourse characterized by largely ‘phatic’ and ‘polite’ engagement in ‘interaction’ (p. 42).

In unit B6, we introduced a US media event that led to the emergence of an internet meme: the viral circulation of the phrase ‘Cash me ousside/how bah dah’. The event occurred on the American talk show *Dr Phil*, while the host was interviewing a particularly belligerent 13-year-old girl, who directed this phrase at the audience as a response to them laughing at her. The video of this media event instantly went viral, and this particular utterance quickly became an internet meme, generating hundreds of related, multimodal texts. Although Danielle had produced several grammatically and phonetically non-standard utterances during the hour-long episode of the program, it was this utterance alone—often (but not always) accompanied by an image of Danielle’s face—that ended up being repeatedly reproduced and remixed in multiple formats (see Figure B7.3).

When we look at the online derivatives of this rather unremarkable media event from a linguistic point of view, we see some interesting transformation strategies



Figure B7.3 Cash me outside/howbow dah (From <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/cash-me-ousside-howbow-dah>).

employed to create new meanings. These meanings emerge as a result of the interaction of two elements—the *visual* and *textual*. As can be seen in Figure B7.3, the prototypical meme that emerged from this media event generally involves an image depicting Danielle taken from the original video posted on YouTube. Digital media scholars Shifman (2014) and Milner (2016) call multimodal blends like these **stock character** macros. In this kind of meme, a visual of a strong personality serves as the central anchor in the middle of the square or rectangular space—and there is a linguistic set-up at the top of the space, often followed by a linguistic punchline at the bottom. Commonly, as in Figure B7.3, the textual components appear in block, all-caps white Impact font that’s outlined in black. The image that appears in most of the image macros related to this media event is not just any image from the original video. It’s the image of a 13-year-old seemingly troubled teenage girl confronting the audience that suggests some physical confrontation as communicated in the catchphrase ‘catch me outside/how about that’.

In other iterations of this meme (see, for example, Figure B7.4), the image of Danielle is replaced by other images, in this case an image of two cats. In the textual component, ‘cash/catch’ is changed to ‘cats’. The invariant ‘be’ replaces ‘me’, suggesting both the form used in the African American Vernacular English and the non-standard grammar characteristic of LOLcat memes (Figure B7.5).

Arguably, the virality of this catchphrase stems as much from the distinctive way it was uttered (i.e., its phonological expression) as it does from its propositional content or meaning. Specifically, Danielle’s use of a markedly ‘non-standard’ English pronunciation (albeit one that is difficult to ascribe to any specific social, regional, or ethnic variety) seemed to capture the attention of many Internet users. This is further evidenced by the multimodal transformation of the meme in B7.5 where we see Danielle’s face being superimposed on a black body, suggesting a relationship between her language use and race. Analyzing the comments people made about the video of this media event on YouTube, linguists Erhan Aslan and Camilla Vásquez (2018) found that commenters often remarked on Danielle’s regional and ethnic identity, social class, affiliations, and educational background as well as the similarities between her linguistic performance



Figure B7.4 Cats be outside/how bout meow (From <https://imgflip.com/i/1oim1c>).



Figure B7.5 An image macro with DB's face superimposed on a black body (From <https://imgflip.com/i/1i40uu>).

and African American Vernacular English. Their analysis sheds light on the complex and diverse language ideologies (see unit A1) associated with naturally occurring language performances that include emblematic or racialized linguistic forms, and shows how trivial media events such as this go viral and perpetuate certain language ideologies. As discussed earlier, memetic engagement can reveal ideologies deeply rooted in societies and participation in this form of content generation and sharing indicates shared awareness of these ideologies in digital communities.

Clickbait headlines

Just as internet memes can be used to propagate ideas and ideologies, there are other genres in digital media whereby (mis)information can spread quickly. Many of us today rely on digital social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter rather than print media for news and information. In the print media era, headlines played a crucial role in encouraging people to buy newspapers, books, or magazines. In the digital era, however, headlines are created to make people click and share content on the web. Given how quickly content can spread on the internet, online news is now judged by page views, and advertisers often pay platforms based on how many people have viewed a page containing their advert. Therefore, it is in the interest of both online advertisers and purveyors of particular messages to get people to click on headlines. This has led to the proliferation of **clickbait** headlines (an example of which is shown in Figure B7.6). Clickbait refers to content that uses linguistic techniques to attract attention and encourage internet users to click on a particular link or a web page where they will usually see some ads.



Figure B7.6 Clickbait headline.

Clickbait headlines have a common purpose—to get you to click on them. These headlines also have some common lexical and grammatical characteristics. One thing that characterizes clickbait headlines is that they tend to contain words chosen to trigger an emotional response from readers such as ‘epic’, ‘amazing’, ‘incredible’, ‘unbelievable’, and ‘shocking’, as in the following (‘fake’ news) example:

Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President, Releases Statement.

Apart from emotional words, writers of clickbait headlines also sometimes personalize the content of headlines by using pronouns like *you* or *your*, as in the following headline (also an example of ‘fake’ news):

BREAKING: Hillary Clinton To Be Indicted... Your Prayers Have Been Answered.

Another way clickbait headlines get people to click on them is by creating some kind of mystery or ambiguity. Many of us are familiar with clickbait headlines like:

Someone Gave Some Kids Some Scissors. Here’s What Happened Next.
A Gorgeous Waitress Gets Harassed by Some Jerk. What She Did Will Restore Your Faith in Humanity.

Such headlines normally consist of two sentences. The first sentence expresses something that happened or some state of affairs, usually involving some undefined person such as ‘some kids’ or ‘a gorgeous waitress’. The second sentence can be called the ‘hook’. This sentence is designed to raise a question about what happened in the first sentence (for example, ‘what she did’ or ‘what happens next’) and to promise the reader an emotional payoff if they click to find out the answer to the question.

Scholars Jonas Nygaard Blom and Kenneth Reinecke Hansen (2015) at the University of Southern Denmark suggest that one important component in this strategy is ‘forward-reference’, a form of discourse deixis which points to forthcoming discourse, for example, ‘This is the best news story you will ever read’. Their analysis of 2,000 Danish online news headlines revealed that demonstrative and personal pronouns, adverbs, definite articles, imperatives, and interrogative forms as well as general nouns with implicit discourse deictic reference were some of the features of clickbait headlines.

There are other linguistic features that can also help us identify whether or not a headline is clickbait. Among these features are the use of lists and numbers, words to encourage action, and celebrity names. Of these features, lists and numbers are particularly common in clickbait, promising that the information users receive will be both easy to process and emotionally satisfying.

In a sense, clickbait style news reporting is an extension of the tabloid journalism we discussed in unit A7, in which gossip and sensationalistic events are foregrounded. In print and broadcast media, however, it is often easier to distinguish ‘hard news’ (for example, science, politics, and economics) from ‘soft news’. In digital environments, due to the effects of clickbait-style headlining, the scale and speed of sharing, and the levelling effects of social media sites, people may not always be able to distinguish fact from fiction (see unit C8).

NOTE

- 1 <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>.

PERSUASIVE DISCOURSE AND MEDIA RHETORIC

B8

Drawing on the points we made about ‘truth’ and ‘bias’ in unit A8, this unit explores how truth is shaped, presented, and undermined in various ways in media discourse. It will look at the different kinds of linguistic and multimodal strategies used in persuasive discourse as well as some of the ways we can use tools from linguistics and discourse analysis to detect deception and bias in media messages.

Persuasive discourse

The first step to learning how to recognize propaganda and media bias is to understand the basic linguistic and semiotic tools people use to persuade people. All media content makes use of **rhetorical devices** to convince readers of its ‘truthfulness,’ whether we take ‘truthful’ to mean how reliable the facts that are reported are in the case of news, the degree to which the story and characters seem ‘genuine’ in the case of fictional content, or the ‘truthiness’ of propositions, policies or slogans when it comes to propaganda. Skilled communicators draw on a ‘toolkit’ of such devices consisting of four basic kinds of tools:

- 1 Style
- 2 Lexical and grammatical choices
- 3 Tropes and figurative language
- 4 Meta-discursive devices

Style

We talked about the importance of style in media communication in unit A3. There we discussed how communicators attempt to cultivate styles that they believe audiences will consider appropriate to what they are trying to do (or to strategically exploit ‘inappropriate’ styles in order to set themselves apart from others). They also use style to signal that they are particular types of people or aligned with particular social groups. Another way communicators use style is to index particular types of appeal; they may use a more ‘emotive’ style characterized by colloquial language to index an appeal to the emotions, or a more ‘objective’ style using more formal language to index an appeal to reason or logic.

One important aspect of style is the way communicators use the sound patterns of language to create appealing, logical-sounding, or memorable messages. Repeated patterns of sound such as alliteration, assonance, and rhyme can bind ideas together, making them easier to understand or easier to remember. This is true for a range of media genres from advertising slogans to political speeches to newspaper headlines to tweets. Some common stylistic techniques that exploit linguistic patterning include:

- 1 **Antithesis** or contrastive pairs: two parts of a clause are in opposition to each other, as in Nelson Mandela’s ‘I stand before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you.’

- 2 **Repetition** as a means of creating emphasis: a famous example is Winston Churchill's repetition of emphatic 'so' in praising Battle of Britain fighter pilots in 1940: 'Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few'.
- 3 The **three-part list**: the three elements complement or reinforce one another, creating a sense of unity for the phrase as a whole. Consider Nelson Mandela's statement on his release from prison in Cape Town in 1990: 'Friends, comrades and fellow South Africans. I greet you all in the name of peace, democracy and freedom for all'.

The style that speakers or writers use can also help to create particular kinds of interpersonal relationships between them and their listeners or readers. Among the most obvious examples of this is when politicians such as Donald Trump adopt a style that Montgomery (2017, see unit D8) calls 'vernacular folksiness', characterized by colloquial expressions as well as simple words and grammatical constructions that help to make them sound more like 'ordinary people' and contrast their speech with that of 'traditional politicians' or 'elites'.

Lexical and grammatical choices

Lexical and grammatical choices include the use of what Richard Weaver (1953) calls 'god words', words such as 'freedom' and 'democracy', or 'devil words' like 'terrorist' and 'communist', words whose definitions may be vague but which carry strong emotional associations as well as **euphemisms**, ways of rephrasing ideas that make them sound more acceptable such as referring to 'torture' as 'enhanced interrogation'. The kinds of words communicators use, of course, are governed by such factors as who the speaker is, who the audience is, and the context and goal of the utterance.

Grammatical choices often involve the use of 'logical connectors' (such as 'so', 'because', 'therefore', and 'however') to highlight certain ideas, create a contrast between them, or present an event or state of affairs as either the cause or result of another event or state of affairs. It should be noted that 'logical connectors' don't necessarily make an argument logical, but they often make arguments *seem* logical.

Grammar too gives us potent tools to represent 'reality' (what in unit B2 we called the *ideational* function of language) and to create relationships with our listeners (what we called the *interpersonal* function of language). The notion of transitivity, which we discussed in detail in unit B4, is particularly powerful because it allows us to introduce different participants and link them together with different kinds of processes; in other words, to describe *who* is doing *what* to or for *whom*. This has implications for how we interpret events, people, and actions. For example, we develop different attitudes when we hear or read about people 'rioting' or 'participating in a demonstration' (see unit B4).

Another set of grammatical resources that can be exploited for persuasive purposes are those that help speakers and writers express their relationship with their listeners or readers as well as with the words they are conveying. One way they do this is through the use of pronouns. They may, for example, repeatedly refer to people who agree with them as *us* and people who disagree as *them*, or they may engage in direct address, using the word *you*. As we noted in unit B3, the critical discourse analyst

Norman Fairclough (1989) calls the use of *you* in order to create a sense of intimacy with readers and listeners *synthetic personalization* because it helps to ‘personalize’ the message (that is, make the reader or listener feel that they are being spoken to directly), but at the same time, this intimacy is essentially ‘synthetic’—artificial.

Another powerful grammatical resource for making *interpersonal* meaning is a language’s system of **modality**—the way the language allows people to talk about how certain they are about what they are saying or about how obligated others should feel to do what they say. In his book *The Language of Brexit: How Britain talked its way out of the European Union*, Steve Buckledee (2018) talks about how the ‘Leave’ campaign was able to create much more compelling messages by expressing their predictions for the future in more definite and categorical terms, whereas the ‘Remain’ campaign tended to talk about the future in less definite terms, using modal verbs such as *could* and *might*. The following excerpt from *The Guardian* illustrates the later strategy:

Economist Jonathan Portes says Brexit is **likely to** cut net migration to UK by only 100,000 but reduction will cause financial harm Leaving the EU **could** cause catastrophic staff shortages in some sectors, as 88% of EU workers in Britain **would** not qualify for a visa under current rules, remain campaigners have warned.

(Travis, 2016)

The more definite stance of the ‘Leave’ campaign can be seen in the modality used in the excerpt below from the *Daily Express Online*:

So the issue we have to address before June 23 is whether we want to remain tied to the EU and the chaos that **is bound to** engulf it. Inside the EU, as the eurozone collapses and the politicians attempt to rescue it and their precious European project, there **will** be no escape. We **will** suffer the consequences of a currency we never joined and a political union we never wanted. Or we can get out now and leave them to it.

(Pollard, 2016)

Tropes and figurative language

Tropes or figurative language include things like **metaphors** (comparing one thing to another), **allegory** (using a story to illustrate a point), allusion (making reference to things outside the argument) (see unit B5), and **analogy** (asserting that one situation is similar to another situation). Of these, metaphor is the most pervasive.

According to cognitive linguists Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5), ‘the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another’. Someone having a *heated argument*, for example, might be told to *chill out*. Sensory metaphors of hot and cold, both of which are from the same semantic field, are used to represent the intensity of an argument (heated) and a way of reducing that intensity or ‘cooling down’ (chill out). The pervasiveness of this metaphor (*anger is like heat*) suggests it and other common metaphors are actually windows into deeply engrained, socially conditioned ways of seeing the world.

Another pervasive example cited by Lakoff and Johnson is the metaphorical proposition *argument is war*. This metaphorical proposition can be illustrated by such expressions as:

- Your claims are indefensible.
- He attacked every weak point in my argument.
- His criticisms were right on target.
- I demolished his argument.
- He shot down all of my points.

The ‘argument is war’ metaphor both reveals the typical way we conceptualize arguments—seeing them as things that we *win* or *lose* and the people we are arguing with as *opponents*—and conditions us to *continue* to see arguments in this way. The more we see arguments as war, however, the less likely we are to be able to compromise or find common ground with those with whom we disagree. The linguist Deborah Tannen, in her book *The Argument Culture* (1999), links this metaphor to the way debates are ‘staged’ in the media, often with two people, chosen because their opinions on an issue are diametrically opposed, shouting at each other without giving any ground to the other person. This format, Tannen notes, makes political debates more like sporting events, which may attract and entertain audiences as they cheer for their ‘team’, but do not contribute to solving social and political problems.

Other popular uses of ‘war’-related metaphors include when politicians call for a ‘war’ on some kind of problem, such as a ‘war on drugs’ or a ‘war on coronavirus’, or use words related to war to describe some event, action, or group of people, such as when the arrival of immigrants is described as an *invasion*. Just as with the ‘argument is war’ metaphor, comparing these other social problems to war makes it more likely that aggressive or militaristic solutions will be adopted (Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011).

Meta-discursive devices

By meta-discursive devices we mean strategies that have less to do with the discrete choices of words and grammar and more to do with the overall presentation of media messages and how those messages are connected to other messages and to the broader communicative environment in which they are transmitted. The three most important meta-discursive devices related to persuasion are *agenda setting*, *framing* (see unit A4), and *intertextuality* (see unit A5).

Agenda setting is an idea that was first introduced by communication scholars Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972). It refers to the ability of media to affect public opinion through deciding what kinds of topics to talk about and what kinds of topics to ignore. By focusing on some issues, events, and people rather than others, media end up filtering and shaping reality rather than reflecting it.

Framing, as we discussed in unit A4, has to do with the way media producers *contextualize* their messages and the ‘storylines’ they are made part of. For example, when news stories about mass shootings are framed as isolated incidents, people are led to attribute responsibility to the individuals, often regarding them as having mental problems. However, when news stories frame such incidents within a political context involving individuals with certain ideological affiliations or demographic

characteristics (race, religion), people interpret the attacks within the storyline of the 'global terrorist threat'.

One particularly important rhetorical tool is what is known as a **dog whistle**. Dog whistles are ways of implicitly activating certain *frames of reference* in particular audiences (usually related to ideas like race or to 'myths' about certain groups) through the subtle use of certain words or phrases. When politicians characterize themselves as 'tough on crime', for example, for some audiences they are indexing storylines about high crime rates among ethnic minorities, and when people suggest that members of minority groups who don't support the government's policies should 'go back to where they came from', they are suggesting that only certain kinds of citizens 'belong' in the nation while other kinds of citizens do not.

Finally, persuasive language often uses *intertextuality*, borrowing the words or verbal patterns of others, or interdiscursivity, borrowing generic structures or styles. When Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, he gave a speech which began with: 'Friends, comrades and fellow South Africans'. This is an example of *intertextuality*, echoing the familiar phrase 'Friends, Romans, countrymen' used in Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*. Sometimes people use intertextuality as a way of associating their own argument with positive associations they might have about other people or the words they have used. Sometimes, however, intertextuality is used humorously or ironically in ways that might ridicule the source of the borrowed text, as, for example, in a campaign by the animal rights group PETA to promote the adoption of cats from shelters which took its slogan—'Grab a Pussy'¹—from the infamous Access Hollywood tape featuring Donald Trump.

Multimodal persuasion

Persuasive discourse, especially in the context of genres such as advertisements, often makes use of multiple modes, including images, sounds, music, and sometimes even tastes and smells (see units A2, B2). Images have often been singled out by scholars as particularly effective ways of persuading people. One reason for this is that images communicate in a more immediate way, often appealing to people's emotions or unconscious associations rather than to their reason. 'We see before we understand', says media scholar Marshall Soules (2015: 40), 'giving images persuasive power beyond reason's reach'. Another reason images are powerful tools for persuasion is that people have a tendency to regard images as 'truer' representations of reality than verbal descriptions, though recently this readiness to believe in images is changing (see below).

The important thing to remember about images is that they are always presented from a particular perspective and position viewers within that perspective. When it comes to photojournalism, for example, viewers' perception of an event can be influenced by where the photographer was standing, when the picture was taken, and what is included in the frame. On his blog *To Inform is to Influence*, for example, Joel Harding (2012) explains how a picture of a US soldier giving water to a captured Iraqi soldier while another US soldier stands on the other side of him pointing a gun at his head can be manipulated to give the impression that members of the US military in Iraq were either 'compassionate' (by cropping out the soldier with the gun) or 'cruel' (by cropping out the soldier offering water). Sometimes images in the news are actually **staged**, that is, the photographers or other interested parties have a hand in

creating the event that they are photographing. Among the most famous footage from the US War in Iraq is of 'ordinary citizens' in Firdous Square in Bagdad toppling a statue of Saddam Hussein, the country's vanquished leader, on the day US soldiers entered the city. Later, however, it was revealed that the number of 'ordinary citizens' in attendance was vastly exaggerated by the media and that the sledgehammer that they used to destroy the statue was provided to them by the US military, who egged them on (Fisher, 2011).

Like the images we analyzed in unit B2, persuasive images make meaning by the way the elements of the image are arranged in relation to one another (*ideational* meaning) and the way the image involves the viewer as either an onlooker or a participant (*interpersonal* meaning). Both interpersonal and ideational meanings are also created through the interaction of the image and the words that accompany the message, to whom those words are attributed, and to whom they are addressed.

Figure B8.1, for example, is a British propaganda poster from WWII depicting an adult soldier in bomb-ravaged London talking to a child dressed up as a soldier. The caption, which the viewer is meant to infer represents the speech of the soldier, says 'LEAVE HITLER TO ME SONNY – YOU OUGHT TO BE OUT OF LONDON'. The image invokes a *narrative* of bravery (on the part of the child) and of care and protection on the part of the soldier, narratives that the viewer is meant to construct for him or herself based on this depiction of a single moment in time. Narrative photos can be particularly persuasive since they require viewers to 'fill in the blanks', usually based on broader cultural narratives or, as we have been calling them, 'storylines' in which they are already highly invested.

Another common technique in persuasive imagery is that of direct address, when a figure in the image looks directly at viewers in order to seduce them, intimidate them into some course of action, or elicit sympathy from them. The most famous example of this is the iconic 1914 British recruitment poster picturing Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, pointing directly at the viewer with the words 'WANTS YOU' directly underneath it. (The US version of this poster depicts 'Uncle Sam'.) A similar technique is seen in the campaign by the animal rights group PETA (Figure B8.2)



Figure B8.1 British WWII propaganda poster.



Figure B8.2 PETA campaign.

depicting various animals gazing imploringly at viewers and the words (attributed to the animal): 'I'm ME, Not MEAT'

Images of suffering are also popular tools for propaganda. The famous image of a naked Vietnamese girl fleeing a napalmed village (known as 'Napalm Girl'), for instance, was one of the many images that turned the US public against the Vietnam War in the 1960s. The critical discourse analyst Lilie Chouliaraki (2011), however, argues that such images can often have paradoxical effects on viewers. While they elicit feelings of sympathy, they can also operate to construct suffering people as 'distant others,' people whose suffering is far removed from our lives and for whom we can do little.

Other kinds of graphic formats that are used to persuade (and deceive) are analytical or 'scientific' image such as graphs and **infographics**. In his book, *Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945*, design sociologist Orit Halpern (2014) argues that data visualizations tend to give information an air of objectivity and rationality that can sometimes disarm our critical faculties.

There are plenty of examples of how graphs and other data visualizations can deceive people. In the example below (Figure B8.3), the interval between the measurements on the vertical axis of the graph is actually rather small (0.05 meters), but the size of the interval in the graph makes the Dutch person appear gigantic and the Indian and Pilipino people seem tiny.

Other techniques that graph makers use to deceive people include omitting the baseline (that is, beginning a measurement at some point above 0 to make differences seem smaller than they are), visualizing only part of the data (so the part that contradicts your point is left out), and using the wrong kind of graph (for example, using a pie chart for a range of values that add up to more or less than 100%).

Persuasive effects come not just from photographs, drawings, and graphs. Design features such as colors, fonts, and logos can also help attract people and elicit loyalty to a product or political ideology. Well-known examples of iconic logos are the swastika of the Nazis, the hammer and sickle of the USSR, and the Chinese Maoists' gold star against a red background, but equally potent examples are the golden arches of McDonalds and Starbucks' green mermaid logo. These designs are intended not just to invoke loyalty from viewers, but also, because of their ubiquitous visibility, create

LOOKING DOWN ON THE REST OF THE WORLD

(Average male height in m)

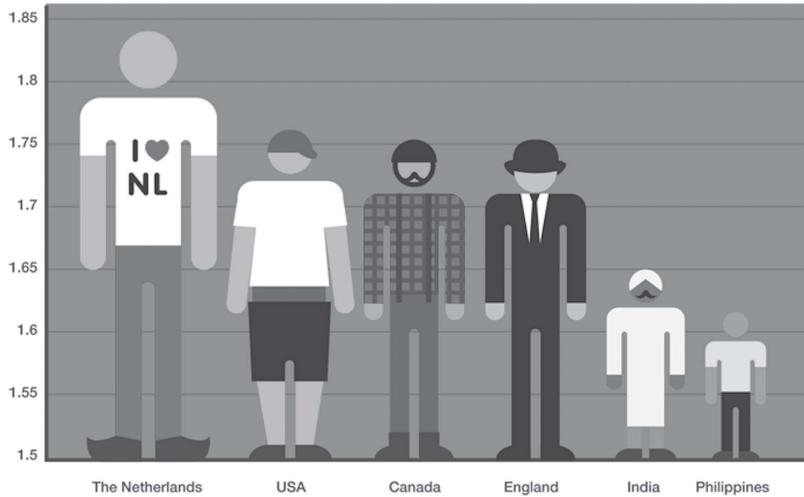


Figure B8.3 Deceptive infographic (From <https://stuffdutchpeoplelike.com/2011/10/30/tall-dutch-people/>).

the impression that the regime (or the corporation) is everywhere, an inevitable part of everyday life (Heller, 2008).

As we said above, the persuasive power of images tends to be very strong since people tend to ‘believe their own eyes’. With the rise of digital photography, and especially the proliferation of inexpensive software that enables people to alter images, photographs are becoming less reliable (Mitchell, 1994). Sometimes these alterations are subtle—as when the editors of *Time* darkened an image of the athlete and accused murderer O.J. Simpson on their June 1994 cover—and sometimes they can be more substantive—as when a picture of Donald Trump with his parents was altered to make them seem like they are wearing Ku Klux Klan robes.² Nowadays it is even possible to synthesize videos of people saying and doing things they never said or did with only a few hours of audio and a few hundred images of the person. Such videos, known as ‘deep fakes’ are likely to fuel the spread of ‘fake news’ in the future (Schwartz, 2018) (see unit C8).

NOTES

- 1 <https://www.peta.org/blog/grab-a-pussycat/>.
- 2 <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/donald-trumps-parents-kkk/>.

CENSORSHIP AND SEMIOTIC DEMOCRACY

B9

In unit A9, we talked about some of the different ways governments and media producers control the kinds of content people can access as well as the different ways ordinary citizens use media to resist hegemony and promote alternative points of view. In this unit, we will explore these issues in more detail, examining the way *language*, in particular, is policed in the media and some of the linguistic tactics people use to resist censorship and to produce creative responses to media hegemony.

Language censorship

As we said in unit A8, pressure to censor the messages people disseminate through the media can come from a variety of sources. Governments may want to censor media content that challenges their authority or that they believe threatens ‘public order’. Media companies may want to stop people from redistributing or remixing proprietary content, while different segments of the public may want to avoid being exposed to content that they feel is offensive. One area of censorship that has been subject to pressure from all these different sources is the censorship of the kinds of language people use in different media formats. In some cases, this involves objections regarding the actual language or dialect that people use. Until very recently, for example, television and radio content in Chinese dialects other than Mandarin was all but banned in Singapore as part of the country’s policy of promoting the use of Mandarin. Among the most common reasons for censorship, though, is what is perceived as strong or **offensive language**.

In 2009, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) conducted an opinion poll exploring public attitudes to broadcasting standards. One of the major findings was that while the majority of those surveyed said they value the creativity of the BBC and oppose increased censorship or regulation, they also reported that the use of ‘strong language’ was a matter of serious concern. When asked to name the kinds of content they were most concerned about, swearing and ‘strong language’ was top of the list. Fifty-five percent reported that they thought the excessive use of strong and offensive language showed a lack of respect for the audience. At the same time, 62% of respondents were of the opinion that swearing and offensive language are acceptable in certain media formats such as comedy shows, where transgressing language norms is often part and parcel of the entertainment value of the program. Of course, how one defines ‘offensive language’ is very subjective, and standards are changing all the time.

Linguists refer to offensive language (‘curse words’ or ‘swear words’) as **taboo language**. According to Andersson and Trudgill (1992), taboo language can be classified into three major groups on the basis of their **semantic fields**:

- 1 ‘Dirty’ words having to do with sex and excrement (for example, fuck, shit).
- 2 Words having to do with the religion (for example, words such as Christ, Jesus, for God’s sake, and bloody in historically Christian countries).
- 3 Words referring to animals when used to label people (for example, bitch, cow).

Taboo language upsets social conventions by combining transgression of taboos (for example, sexuality or bodily functions) with slang or low register. Equivalent terms exist for swear words in other (more formal or technical) registers, and slang terms exist for many other, non-taboo referents. It is the combination of slang with taboo—with a resulting pejorative impact—that seems to make taboo language particularly offensive to people.

At the same time, research in pragmatics shows that the force of swearing is highly context dependent. It depends on the relationship between the speaker and the listener and the social and physical context in which it occurs. For example, if a group of lawyers working for a law firm uses swear words in a meeting with a new client, it could negatively affect the client's impression of the firm. But if the same group of lawyers goes to a pub after the meeting to have a drink and engages in the same kind of swearing, it would more likely be seen as acceptable (Stapleton, 2010). In fact, swearing in a context which is informal with little power difference among participants might be an important tool for building solidarity, trust, and intimacy.

The acceptance of taboo language depends not only on the context in which swearing occurs, but also on people's gender, age, nationality, and religion. The sociolinguist Jennifer Coates (1993) argued that the use of offensive language is more likely to be tolerated when it comes from men, because of a kind of tacit social 'agreement' that swearing in men is simply part of being masculine. However, women who swear are almost always judged negatively.

Complaints about language use in the media are in most cases not just about language per se. More often than not, viewers see 'incorrect' or 'bad' language as symptomatic of what they regard as undesirable changes in society. Many people believe that rising levels of strong language in the media is the result of declining moral standards.

Sometimes media producers or personalities violate language standards on purpose as a strategy to attract attention, 'push the limits', or make a political point. Lenny Bruce, for example, an American comedian of the 1960s, famously used taboo language in order to call attention to the hypocrisy of media standards and satirize social conservatives. More than once he was jailed on obscenity charges for his efforts. Around the same time, the television show *Candid Camera*, which secretly filmed ordinary people in bizarre or frustrating situations, started to 'bleep' the words of participants whether they had used taboo language or not, believing that just the suggestion of taboo language added to the comic effect of the situations and improved ratings (Funt, 2010).

One of the dilemmas of contemporary journalism is how to handle taboo language when it comes from 'official' sources such as powerful politicians. US President Donald Trump, for example, well known for violating established norms of discourse, has on several occasions used taboo language in both public and private contexts. In some cases, we might consider the use of such language to be a kind of *faux pas*, an unintentional 'slip of the tongue'. In other cases, however, in which the President has used such language publicly and apparently intentionally, one might consider it to actually have some kind of propaganda value (see unit A8), designed to shock, confuse, or distract audiences for political purposes.

Linguistic tactics for resisting censorship

Just as media censors and vigilant audience members attempt to enforce moral standards, social norms, or political ideologies through limiting the kinds of language people

can use in public discourse, those who wish to challenge these norms, standards, and ideologies also make use of tactics that exploit various properties of language. Among the most popular of these tactics are **relexicalization** and **implicature**.

Relexicalization

One of the problems with enforcing censorship by banning particular words is that it is often possible to express the same ‘taboo’ meanings using different words. The problem with a view of media content that focuses on words and literal meanings is that they don’t comport with the way language really works, which is often through contingency, ambiguity, and *indexicality* (see unit B2).

One popular method of censoring web content based on this literalist view of language is called **filtering**. Filtering uses automated methods to block access to content based on either its source (a particular country or media producer) or on the detection of particular words or phrases associated with certain topics or certain political points of view. It has been used for many years by governments in countries such as China and Saudi Arabia as well as by schools, prisons, and other institutions to restrict access to content that is deemed harmful or inappropriate.

The problem with lexical filtering is that although computers are able to easily identify strings of text in documents, interpreting what these words actually mean requires the ability to understand the *contexts* in which they were produced as well as the cultural and subcultural norms governing how they are meant to be interpreted, something that machines still cannot do. As a result, lexical filtering often results in the unintended blocking of ‘legitimate’ content. This is known as the **Scunthorpe problem**, after the town of Scunthorpe in North Lincolnshire (UK), whose residents were prevented from opening AOL accounts and whose businesses were blocked from Google search results because of the substring formed by the second to fifth letters of the town’s name. The Scunthorpe problem is particularly prevalent in contexts where, in an effort to block online pornography, censors end up restricting health-related content or content directed at LGBTQ people. Lexical filtering is also difficult when it comes to social media content, because of the difficulty of filtering out multimedia content (for example, images and videos).

These difficulties, of course, are likely to be mitigated with rapid advances in **artificial intelligence** and **natural language processing**, coupled with the use of image recognition technologies and **big data** sets, which will result in much more sophisticated and context-sensitive interpretations of content of all kinds. This, however, is not necessarily good news, as it will simply increase the ability of governments and media companies to more efficiently control the expression of different points of view.

Until such technologies are sufficiently mature, however, people who wish to evade censorship can also use the Scunthorpe problem to their advantage, by making use of *relexicalization*, changing the form of words or using code words that carry the same meaning for intended audiences. The ‘secret languages’ developed by subcultural or ‘deviant’ groups to evade censorship or communicate among themselves without outsiders understanding are referred to by the linguist M.A.K. Halliday (1976) as **anti-languages**—codes which depend heavily on ‘metaphorical modes of expression’ and are designed as a means of ‘resistance’ against the larger society (p. 570). Halliday uses the secret languages that have developed in underground criminal groups as an example, but anti-languages also appear in more mainstream contexts. Martin Montgomery (2008), for

example, argues that rap music often uses forms of anti-language, particularly when it comes to insider vocabulary around issues like illegal drug use.

A wealth of examples of relexicalization as a tactic for subverting censorship can be seen in online discourse in China, where internet content is tightly controlled and punishment for distributing prohibited content can be severe. Although China's methods of online surveillance are becoming increasingly sophisticated, censors still rely heavily on rudimentary lexical filtering to detect prohibited content. To navigate around restrictions, Chinese internet users have developed a range of code words, anti-languages, and other tactics of obfuscation.

In many ways, relexicalization is a tactic particularly suited to the Chinese language, in which many words sound the same because of its limited phonetic inventory. In Chinese, homophones are common in advertising, poetry, and humor, and also provide a resource for Chinese internet users to circumvent censors. Chinese internet *memes* (see unit B7) of the early 2000s, for example, often featured pictures of a mythical creature called the 'grass mud horse' or *cǎonímǎ* (草泥马) (usually pictured as an alpaca; see Figure B9.1), which is a homophone for *cào nǐ mā* (尙你妈), literally, 'fuck your mother'. This creature's nemesis was said to be the 'river crab' or *héxiè* (河蟹), a pun on the word for harmony 'héxié' (和谐), a concept often invoked by the Chinese government to justify internet censorship. When a social media post was removed for running afoul of censors, it was said to have been 'harmonized' or in the argot of Chinese netizens, to have been 'eaten by the river crab' (Wines, 2009).

The examples above form part of an ever-changing anti-language that has grown up among Chinese internet users to talk about taboo or politically sensitive topics which involves a range of relexicalization tactics, including:

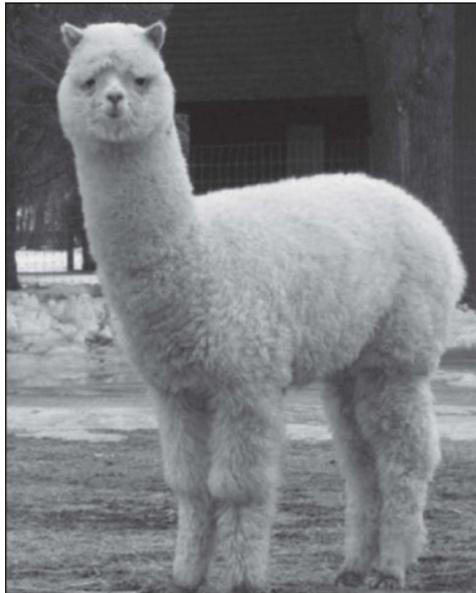


Figure B9.1 'Grass mud horse' (From <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/baidu-10-mythical-creatures-grass-mud-horse>).

- 1 The use of homophones (such as *héxiè* for ‘river crab’ to refer to the word ‘harmony’).
- 2 The use of characters that resemble other characters (such as the invented word 目田 (*mùtián* for ‘eye field’) to mean 自由 (*zìyóu* for ‘freedom’).
- 3 The use of foreign words, graphical elements, or pictures (such as the adoption of what is known as ‘Martian language’ (吹☆鯨)), a playful combination of characters and symbols used by young people online, or the use of pictures of Winnie the Pooh to refer to Chinese President Xi Jin Ping) (Wozniak, 2015).

These tactics have led Chinese censors to vastly extend the list of lexical items they filter on Weibo (China’s Twitter) to include, for example, various permutations of the numbers 6 and 4, since they might refer to the 4 June 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, or common words such as ‘fire’, which might invoke the candlelight vigils held every year in Hong Kong to commemorate the massacre.

Implicature

Another way people get around media censorship is by exploiting the *pragmatic* aspects of language. One important feature of language is that it allows us to ‘mean more than we say’ or ‘say’ things without explicitly saying them, by combining words with contextual elements such as facial expressions, emojis, and images. In pragmatics, meanings that are made indirectly are called **implicatures**. Of course, sometimes such indirect meanings are not available to everybody who reads, sees, or listens to a message because implicatures need to be interpreted. Audiences need to form **inferences** about what they mean, and sometimes the resources to form these inferences (such as ‘insider knowledge’) are only available to certain people.

One of the most obvious ways that media creators can express prohibited content in an indirect way is by calling attention to the fact that what they want to express is prohibited and allowing readers to infer what it is they are not allowed to say. Anthonissen (2003), for example, discusses how South African newspapers dealt with the severe censorship that accompanied the state of emergency imposed by the government in the 1980s. Among the examples that she gives is the front page of the *Weekly Mail* in which the authors express their objections to the policies of the government and the restrictions on criticizing them through **redacting** phrases and sentences from their own article (see Figure B9.2).

By ‘blacking out’ their criticisms, the authors both invite readers to make inferences about the things the government is doing that they disagree with and *parody* the process of censorship itself.

A more contemporary example of indirect expressions can be seen in the practice of **sub-tweeting**, in which users of Twitter design messages that are critical of other users or of public figures without mentioning their names or expressing their criticism directly. In January 2018, for example, after a *Washington Post* story had reported that President Trump, in a meeting with aides, had reportedly lashed out against policies that protected immigrants from Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries saying ‘Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here? We need more people from Norway’ (Dawsey, 2018), the dictionary publisher Merriam-Webster sent a tweet announcing ‘reprehensible’ as their #WordOfTheDay (see Figure B9.3).

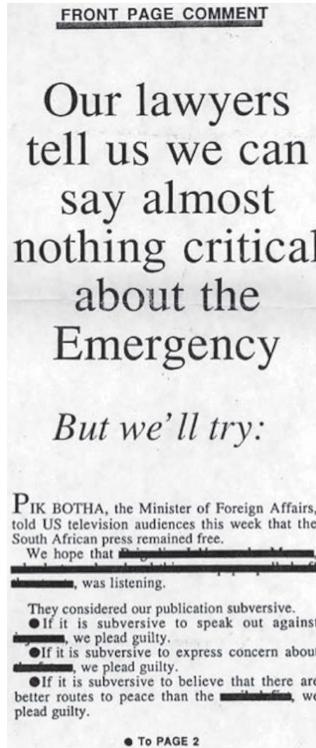


Figure B9.2 Front page of the *Weekly Mail* (South Africa) 20–26 June 1986 (From Anthonissen, 2003: 103).



Figure B9.3 Tweet from @Merriam-Webster in response to comments by President Trump.

Semiotic democracy

In unit A9, we discussed the idea of *semiotic democracy*, which we defined as the practice by ordinary people of appropriating media content and reworking it in order to undermine the message of the original content producers. One example of this that we mentioned in unit A9 is *culture jamming*, the appropriation and alteration of media content as a way of exposing, mocking, and critiquing political assumptions, corporate practices, and the consequences of excessive consumerism and materialism.

Perhaps the most prevalent manifestation of culture jamming is known as **subvertizing**, a combination of the words ‘subversive’ and ‘advertising.’ Subvertizing works by exploiting two main semiotic strategies, *recontextualization*, a concept we discussed in unit A5, and **parody**. Recontextualization involves taking text and images from different places and putting them into a new context. *Parody* is closely related to recontextualization, in that it almost always involves appropriating the texts of others and transporting them into a different context. The main feature of parody is *imitation*. Parodists do not just appropriate the words of others, but also impersonate the speakers of these words in order to make fun of them, often exaggerating or caricaturing certain aspects of their messages or their styles of speaking. Parody makes use of a range of different rhetorical devices such as **irony**, wordplay, allusion (see unit B5), **double-voicing**, and **reframing**.

Figure B9.4 is an example of a subvert that was part of a campaign launched by the environmental group Greenpeace to criticize the plans by Royal Dutch Shell (Shell) to drill for oil in the Arctic. As part of the campaign, Greenpeace set up a website, which allowed users to create their own subverts by combining images from Shell advertisements with their own texts.

Underneath the main slogan ‘SURVIVAL IS ALL ABOUT PUSHING OUR LIMITS. LET’S GO’, the text reads:

With Arctic ice dwindling away, polar bears today can swim hundreds of miles in search of food. We’re betting they can go even further. And so can we. At Shell, we’re going the distance to provide for the future, betting on precious resources formerly trapped beneath an impenetrable layer of ice, now freed for the good of humanity. Polar bears were made to swim, and Shell was made to power our way of life. We can all go further.

In their analysis of this and other subverts on the website, communication scholar Corey Davis and his colleagues (Davis, Glantz, & Novak, 2016) point out many of the devices we mentioned above. The main device used is irony. *Irony* is a rhetorical technique through which one expresses a meaning through stating the opposite meaning. This technique characterizes nearly every sentence of the subvert above: in saying that extracting resources from the Arctic is ‘for the good of humanity’ and that Shell is concerned about providing ‘for the future’, the ad is implying that the consequences of Shell’s actions will actually imperil humanity and make the future less secure, and even the real meaning of the tagline ‘Let’s Go!’ is actually, ‘Let’s stop!’

The overall irony of these subverts is also supported by other techniques. *Wordplay*, for example, occurs when words or phrases have more than one possible meaning. For instance, the phrase ‘pushing our limits’ can have both a positive meaning (trying as hard as one can) and a negative one (going beyond what is acceptable). The meaning of the phrase also changes when it is applied to Shell (for whom it means ‘getting as much oil as



Figure B9.4 Subvert from Greenpeace's 'Arctic Ready' campaign (From Davis, Glantz & Novak, 2016: 74).

possible') and for the polar bears (for whom it means 'swimming further than nature intended them to'). *Double-voicing* is a concept taken from the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (see unit A5). It occurs when the 'voice' of another person is appropriated in a way that undermines it or calls it into question. In this subvert, for example, the authors appropriate the style of corporate advertisements, characterized by clichés such as 'pushing our limits', 'going the distance', and 'powering our way of life'—phrases like those one often sees in public relations texts, customer service scripts, and motivational books about business—in order to show how empty these phrases actually are. The phrase 'Let's go', in fact, is actually taken directly from a Shell advertising campaign. By taking on the persona of the corporation and imitating the style of what Davis and his colleagues call 'corporate speak' (p. 72), the creators of this subvert call attention to the fact that this kind of language is often used to veil what is sometimes a self-serving or dishonest agenda. Finally, *reframing* is a way of altering the way a narrative is told in order to reveal a different perspective on it. The predominant brand narrative (see unit B4) promoted by Shell and similar companies is that they are 'pushing their limits' in order to better serve the public. The way this narrative is reframed in the subvert, however, tells the story of a company that profits by forcing others (in this case, polar bears) to 'push their limits'.

Media in protests and social movements

One of the main ways citizens express their dissatisfaction with the policies of governments and corporations is by taking to the streets in mass assemblies and protest

rallies. While such events take place in physical spaces, they are also heavily mediated. Protesters depend upon a range of media in order to organize and get their messages across: from 'older' media formats such as protest songs, chants, handwritten and printed signs, banners, and placards to 'newer' forms of media such as cell phones and social networking sites.

Successful protests also depend on media outlets such as newspapers and television stations to report on their activities, in order to broadcast their message more widely and get the attention of the government bodies or corporate entities they are protesting against. Since most protests are actually witnessed by only small numbers of people, the ability for protesters to communicate their messages depends a great deal on how they are portrayed in the mass media. Attracting favorable media coverage, however, is often challenging, especially in situations in which media outlets are controlled by the very governmental or corporate entities targeted by the protests. Communication scholars Joseph Chan and C.C. Lee (1984) argue that most mass media portrayals of protests tend to portray them as deviant, threatening, or impotent, a tendency they refer to as the **protest paradigm**. Sometimes mass media outlets ignore protest altogether, as when a pro-government television station in Turkey decided to air a documentary on penguins rather than report on the protests and police crackdown in Istanbul's Gezi Park in May 2013.



Figure B9.5 PETA protesters posing in meat packages (From <https://www.peta.org/blog/nyc-drop-dead-meat/>).

Organizers of protest (as well as individual protesters) have developed a variety of strategies in order to get the attention of the media. One strategy has been to create 'spectacles' that might make for interesting news photos or footage on TV broadcasts through, for example, creating interesting memorable signs or banners, or staging memorable performances, such as when members of the animal rights group PETA covered their bodies with fake blood and wrapped themselves in Styrofoam meat containers in New York's Times Square to protest the killing of animals for food (see Figure B9.5).

Another recourse protesters have nowadays is to photograph and video scenes of the protest themselves (including scenes depicting the actions of police and other authorities) and circulate them over social media, from where they are sometimes taken up by more mainstream outlets. Often these strategies work together, with protesters devising signs that they believe will not just catch the attention of media outlets, but which they also believe have the chance of 'going viral' (see unit A7) on social media. The American political scientist Larry Diamond (2010: 70) calls technologies such as cell phones and social media sites **liberation technologies**, because of the way they '[enable] citizens to report news, expose wrongdoing, express opinions, mobilize protest, monitor elections, scrutinize government, deepen participation, and expand the horizons of freedom'. At the same time, governments and corporations have also become adept at using these same tools to monitor and crackdown on dissent.

Section C

EXPLORATION

ANALYZING LANGUAGE
AND MEDIA

C1 MEDIA USES AND USERS

In unit A1, we introduced the idea of *mediation*. We talked about the ways technologies mediate the way we use language as well as the ways language mediates the way we use technologies. Different *mediational means*, we argued, bring with them different affordances and constraints, making some things easier to do and other things more difficult to do. But analyzing how media work is not as simple as just figuring out what they allow us to do, media are almost always used in combination with other media, and so we have to understand how different mediational means, different kinds of people, and different forms of language interact at what we have called *sites of engagement*. In this unit, you will have a chance to apply some of these ideas to real-life scenarios of media use by different people, including yourself.

The media and me

Activity

Most people can't imagine how they would function in their daily lives without media. This is certainly true for technological media such as smartphones, but it is even more unimaginable if you take the broader idea of media that we adopted in unit A1, seeing a medium as any tool that you use to take action in the world.

For this activity, reflect on your own media use on an average day—from the moment you wake up to the time you go to sleep—and how the different mediational means that you use alter the kinds of things you can do, the ways that you can interact with others, and the kind of person you can be.

You can do this from memory or you can take a more **empirical** approach and keep a diary for a whole day, pausing once every hour to record the different media that you used in the previous hour, what you were doing, who you were doing it with, and how things might have been different if one or more of these media had not been available to you. If you like, you can use Table C1.1:

Table C1.1 Media use log

A	B	C	D
<i>When and where</i>	<i>Media you were using</i>	<i>What you were doing</i>	<i>Who you were doing it with</i>

Now think about the following questions:

- Do you use different media to do different things?
- Do you use different media to interact with different people?

Fill in the Table C1.2 below with the answers to these questions:

- Apart from embodied media (for example, your voice and your body), what are the media that you depend on most?
- How do these media affect the kinds of activities you do?
- How do they affect the relationships you have with others?
- How do they affect the way you think (for example, do you think they make you smarter, more impatient, more superficial, etc.)?

Now imagine if your parents or your grandparents had been asked to do a similar exercise when they were your age. If possible, ask them to fill out the Table C1.2 or imagine how they might fill it out. Some have suggested that different kinds of media create different kinds of societies. Do you think this is true? How were the societies your parents and your grandparents lived in different from the one you live in? (If you're not sure, you can ask them.)

Table C1.2 Media, society, and me

<i>Most important medium</i>	<i>How it affects what you do</i>	<i>How it affects your social relationships</i>	<i>How it affects your thinking, personality</i>

Some media might be more suitable for doing different things. Fill out Table C1.3 below, choosing the medium that you think is best for this particular activity (for example, face-to-face conversation, email, text message) and the worst medium.

- Explain why you made the choices that you did in Table C1.3.
- Are there any communicative activities that are so closely linked to a particular technology that you can't think of them apart from that technology?
- Are there any communicative activities or functions that don't seem strongly linked to a particular technology but could be mediated by any number of different media?

Activity 

Table C1.3 Choice of media for different tasks

<i>Communicative activity</i>	<i>Most suitable medium</i>	<i>Least suitable medium</i>
Apologizing to your girlfriend or boyfriend about forgetting their birthday		
Proposing marriage		
Firing an employee		

- How much choice do you have when it comes to which medium you use for any given communicative purpose? What are the main constraints on choosing media (for example, availability, cost of use, time it takes to use, time it takes for the communication to be delivered/downloaded)?

Sites of engagement

In unit B1, we introduced the notion of sites of engagement which was developed by Ron Scollon (see also D1). A site of engagement can be best understood as a moment in space and time when different people, different discourses, and different media come together to create certain meanings and make certain social actions possible. The important thing about the idea of sites of engagement is that it reminds us that we hardly ever use a single medium in isolation, and that there are almost always other media available to us which might affect how, what, and with whom we communicate.

Activity

Consider the context in which you are reading this book. You might be sitting comfortably on a sofa in your home or might be reading it at a desk in a library, or on a train, or in a classroom. Wherever you are, look around and think about the moment as a site of engagement.

- Describe the space where you are currently located.
- List all the media that are available in this space. Think not only of digital or electronic media but all kinds of media technologies, including things like pens, notebooks, and your own vocal cords.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Table C1.4 Media and sites of engagement

<i>Medium</i>	<i>People and actions</i>
Pen	Write a note on a piece of paper to remember a point made in a book Sign a form provided by a librarian

Consider the types of media that you listed above and think about the people that they can connect you with (whether they are physically with you or far away) and the kinds of things that they enable you and the other people to do. An example from a library as a site of engagement is provided in the first row (Table C1.4).

Media ideologies

In unit A1, we discussed how people often develop ideas about how media should be used, how much, for what purpose, and by whom. These ideas sometimes result in heated debates and even generational conflicts about media use. When SMS texting first became possible on mobile phones and was quickly taken up by young people, many ‘experts’ predicted that the kind of language teenagers used while texting would impair their ability to read and write standard varieties of language. In the end, however, this did not happen.

Controversies surrounding media use are not new. It seems that every time a new medium is ‘born’, opinions get quickly divided with regard to its impact. It may sound bizarre to you, but even writing was viewed with suspicion when it was first developed. The Greek philosopher Socrates, one of the founders of Western philosophy, was adamant that writing was a ‘bad’ means of communicating knowledge that would corrupt peoples’ minds. To him, only face-to-face communication was effective for creating and passing on knowledge. This is why Socrates never used writing to record his ideas; instead, he used a technique of dialogue based on asking and answering questions to engage people in critical thinking and to collaboratively develop new ideas. Thankfully, one of his most famous students Plato did not agree with his master on this point; it is through Plato’s writing that we now know about Socrates and his views and his method of teaching. In one of his works entitled *Phaedrus*, Plato records the damaging effects Socrates thinks writing has on human thought.

Read the following extract from Plato’s *Phaedrus*:

For this invention [writing] will create forgetfulness in the learners’ souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you

Activity 

have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality [...]

Plato ([approx. 370 B.C.E] 2017)

- Why did Socrates think writing was not a good invention? What kind of beliefs and assumptions did he evoke in his argument? Do you agree or disagree with him?
- Now think about search engines, storage spaces such as iCloud, and even the address book in your smart phone. Do you think some of Socrates's arguments, especially in the first two lines, might apply to these?
- Socrates was a believer in social interactions and felt that dialogue was the best method of teaching and learning. In what ways do you think social interactions can assist learning?
- What is your preferred method of learning? Do you use any specific media to help you learn and study? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the method(s) and media that you use?

Currently, digital media have become the target of criticism from many quarters. One of the most vocal critics of digital media, especially social media, is Sherry Turkle, a professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Turkle spent decades interviewing people about their digital media use and recorded her observations in her book *Alone Together* (Turkle, 2011).

Activity 

Read the following extracts from *Alone Together*.

Teenagers tell me they sleep with their cell phone [...] The technology has become like a phantom limb, it is so much a part of them [...] They nurture friendships on social-networking sites and then wonder if they are among friends. They are connected all day but are not sure if they have communicated [...] Life in a media bubble has come to seem natural. So has the end of a certain public etiquette: on the street, we speak into the invisible microphones on our mobile phones and appear to be talking to ourselves. We share intimacies with the air as though unconcerned about who can hear us or the details of our physical surroundings

(Turkle, 2011: 16–17)

a train station (like an airport, a café, or a park) is no longer a communal space but a place of social collection: people come together but do not speak to each other. Each is tethered to a mobile device and to the people and

places to which that device serves as a portal. I grew up in Brooklyn where sidewalks had a special look. In every season— even in winter, when snow was scraped away—there were chalk-drawn hopscotch boxes [...] The hopscotch boxes are gone. The kids are out, but they are on their phones.

(Turkle, 2011: 155)

- What are the specific changes that Turkle feels digital media have resulted in and why do you think she sees them as damaging? Do you think her worries are justified?
- Turkle thinks that digital media have led to the demise of face-to-face social interaction. Do you agree with her?
- Now go back to the extract from Plato's *Phaedrus*. Can you see commonalities or differences between Socrates and Turkle's arguments?

C2 ANALYZING INTERSEMIOTIC RELATIONS

In units A2 and B2, we discussed how the different modes and materialities of media texts can affect the kinds of meanings media producers can make and the ways media consumers interpret those meanings. We emphasized that media texts never involve just one mode: all media texts are *multimodal*, and an important part of how people use modes to make meaning has to do with the way they combine modes together. We used the term *intersemiotic relations* to describe the way meanings are the result of the interaction between two or more modes.

In this unit, you will have a chance to practice using some of the concepts and analytical strategies that you learned about in units A2 and B2 to analyze intersemiotic relations.

Intersemiotic relations and social portraiture in advertisements

Below is an example of a famous advertising campaign by HSBC, a large multinational bank. The main strategy of the campaign was to show how, as the campaign slogan says, ‘Everyone looks at the world from a different point of view’ by showing identical pictures with different captions, often in pairs. In the example below, for instance, the words ‘work’ and play are superimposed on pictures of a laptop computer and a baby, presenting contrasting interpretations of these images (Figure C2.1).

This advertisement and others in the same campaign provide dramatic illustrations of how words and pictures work together to make meaning, and specifically, how the meaning of a picture can be completely altered by adding a different caption. The effectiveness of these advertisements, however, does not just come from the contrasting captions, but from the ways words and images and layout are used together to express ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings.

The ideational meaning in the ad is created by the way the words and images come together to communicate what the ad is ‘about’. Each of the image-word combinations presents a particular representation of the world, which we might sum up as:



Figure C2.1 HSBC advertisement 1.

- 1 Computers are things we work with.
- 2 Babies are ‘things’ we play with.
- 3 Computers can also be things we play with.
- 4 Taking care of babies can also be hard work.

The literal meanings of the image-word combinations, however, do not tell the whole story. We also associate important *social meanings* with these words and images. In other words, the pictures don’t just represent things and people, but they also *index* certain kinds of people, practices, and lifestyles. The first picture of a laptop computer and the word ‘work’ index a certain kind of work, the kind associated with educated, mobile professionals. The second picture does not just represent the playfulness of babies, but indexes a certain kind of parent who values and enjoys spending time with their child. The third picture might index the kind of person who enjoys working ‘too much’ (a ‘workaholic’), or else someone who uses their computer for playing, perhaps a computer gamer. And the final picture does not just represent the fact that taking care of babies is hard work, but also a certain attitude towards child care.

Apart from the ideational meanings, the images also express interpersonal meanings, that is, they create a particular relationship with the viewer. Both the laptop, open with its screen facing the viewer, and the close-up of the baby, who gazes directly at the viewer, have the effect of involving the viewer in the advertisement, metaphorically putting the viewer in the position of being the owner of the laptop and the parent of the baby. In this way, the ad seems to be asking the viewers to imagine what kind of person they are: someone who likes spending time with their children more than working or someone who enjoys playing with their computer more than playing with their child. Whatever social role they imagine for themselves, the ad tells them that it is all right, and that ‘Everyone looks at the world from a different point of view’.

Finally, the different modes in the ad, including text, image, and layout, create textual meaning, guiding viewers in how they are supposed to read the ad. The alternation of the images, for example, signals to the reader that the contrast created by the identical pictures with different words is not the only important contrast; another important contrast is that created by the pictures of two different things—a computer and a baby—which it seems the reader is being asked to choose between. Furthermore, if most readers read the ad from left to right, they will process the four image-word contrasts before finally ending up on the slogan, which is meant to ‘explain’ the pictures.

- Do you think the meaning of the ad would change much if the pictures were presented in a different order or if the slogan were placed on the left of the ad rather than the right?
- Can you think of different words to add to the pictures which would create a similar effect of contrast?
- What does this ad have to do with global banking? Why has HSBC decided to use these images and this slogan to represent its brand?

Below is another advertisement from the same campaign. Conduct a similar kind of analysis on it, looking at intersemiotic relations, ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. Use the questions below to guide your analysis (Figure C2.2).



Figure C2.2 HSBC advertisement 2 (From <http://peterseterdahl.com/HSBC.php>).

- Analyze the ideational meaning of the advertisement. What do the pictures represent? How do the words change the meaning of the pictures? What kind of contrast does it create? What kind of contrast is created between the two different images? Do these pictures index particular kinds of people or particular lifestyles?
- Analyze the interpersonal meaning of the images. How do they create a relationship with the viewer? Pay special attention to the camera angles used.
- Analyze the textual meaning of the ad. Why are the images placed in the order that they are?
- How do you interpret the slogan of the ad in relation to the pictures? Why do you think the slogan for this ad is different from the one we analyzed above?
- Can you create a similar kind of ad, choosing two contrasting pictures and adding contrasting words to them? Explain your choices to your classmates and why you think your ad would be effective.

Using space and place as resources for making meaning in Snapchat

Among the most important innovations in media in the past 20 years has been the development of *social media*, which allows regular people to circulate content to large audiences, and the development of digital cameras embedded in cell phones, which allows users to take pictures and upload them to the internet wherever they are. These new technologies and the genres associated with them have changed the way people think about multimodality, forcing them to take into account a range of new resources people have for making meaning visually and with the written word.

Perhaps the most popular visual genre for people who use social media is the **selfie**, a picture one takes of oneself usually using the front-facing camera that is part of most mobile phones. But selfies are not just representations of the self; they are *messages* that people send to their friends and followers with particular ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. Over the years, certain visual conventions have grown up around different kinds of selfies. For example, one might signal that one's selfie is silly or ironic by making a 'duck face' (pursing one's lips together).

Activity 

In an online article called ‘The 15 types of selfies’, author Brenden Gallagher (2015) talks about the different kinds of selfies people take and the kinds of semiotic conventions associated with them. The list in the left-hand column of Table C2.1 is based roughly on some of the genres he talks about. See if you can identify the semiotic features of these different kinds of selfies, including the kinds of things or people usually found in these selfies and where they are usually taken (ideational meaning), the ways photographers use perspective and camera angles to communicate a certain relationship with the viewer (interpersonal meaning), and the way different kinds of elements are arranged on the screen, including elements that might be superimposed onto the original photograph such as writing, filters, or emojis (textual meaning). After you have finished filling in the table, reflect on how these visual conventions affect the overall messages that people who circulate these kinds of selfies are sending.

Table C2.1 Four types of selfie

<i>Type of selfie</i>	<i>What people or things are usually depicted in this kind of selfie?</i>	<i>Where is this kind of selfie usually taken?</i>	<i>How are perspective and camera angle usually used in this kind of selfie? (For example, is it usually taken from the photographers’ perspective or the viewer’s perspective?)</i>	<i>How are the elements in the photograph usually arranged in this kind of selfie? Are other elements usually used such as filters or writing superimposed on the image?</i>
The ‘I saw a celebrity’ selfie				
The ‘I’m on holiday’ selfie				
The ‘beach feet brag’ selfie				
The ‘this is what I’m eating’ selfie				

Figures C2.3 and C2.4 are examples of two of the kinds of selfie referred to in the table above. Figure C2.3 is an example of a ‘holiday selfie’, one of the main features of which is the background of a beautiful vista or famous landmark. Figure C2.4 is an example of a ‘beach feet brag selfie’, one of the main features of which is that the photo

is taken from the perspective of the photographer looking at his or her own feet. Both of these photos illustrate the importance of *space* (including both geographical space and physical or 'embodied' space) in mobile digital photography.



Figure C2.3 Selfie 1 (Photo credit: Michael Pollak).

In their study of space as a communicative resource in images people circulate through the mobile app Snapchat, Albawardi and Jones (2019) identified different kinds of space that are important for communication in such images. Among these are:



Figure C2.4 Selfie 2 (Photo credit: Travis Wise).

- 1 Geographical space (or 'place'): what is communicated by the physical location in which the photo is taken?
- 2 Embodied space: what is communicated by the perspective or camera angle the photographer uses *vis-à-vis* his or her own body?
- 3 Screen space: what is communicated by the arrangements of elements in the photo as well as the superimposition of things like text, handwriting, drawing, emojis, or filters onto the image?
- 4 Cultural space: the way the image indexes particular practices or lifestyles or membership in particular cultures or communities.

Look at Figures C2.5 and C2.6 and identify how the photographer uses geographical space, embodied space, screen space, and cultural space to make meaning.

Activity 



Figure C2.5 Snapchat image 1 (Albawardi, 2017).



Figure C2.6 Snapchat image 2 (Albawardi, 2017).

'Creepy' multimodality

Another aspect of intersemiotic relations is the way the experience of one mode is sometimes communicated through another mode. The technical word for this is **synesthesia**. Strictly speaking, synesthesia is a clinical condition whereby a person experiences one sensation, for example, smelling a scent or seeing a color, in regular correspondence with a seemingly unrelated sensation. In his book *The Man Who Tasted Shapes*, for example, neurologist Richard Cytowic (1993) presents the case of 'Michael' who experienced taste as texture. Nowadays, however, people are starting to understand synesthesia not as a psychological condition unique to some individuals, but as a universal human capacity, opening up new avenues to understanding how

people can create these complete ‘communication experiences’ through multimodal communication (Kress, 1997).

One of the most dramatic examples of synesthetic communication is an increasingly popular YouTube genre called the ‘autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) video’. These are videos of people doing ordinary things like folding towels or brushing their hair accompanied by whispered narrations which ‘trigger’ *haptic* sensations in some viewers (such as tingling feelings on their scalps or along their spines). People who make these videos promote their therapeutic value, and in fact, research has shown that watching ASMR videos can relieve symptoms of depression and chronic pain (Barratt & Davis, 2015). But others suggest that these videos seem a bit ‘creepy’. ‘Creepy’ or not, these videos can teach us things about multimodality and intersemiotic relations that can be applied to lots of other kinds of media texts.

One way to think about how ASMR videos work is through the idea of *indexicality* which we discussed in unit B2, the possibility that certain sounds, images, objects, people, and storylines can ‘point to’ or ‘invoke’ particular physical sensations for viewers. One typical feature of these videos, for example, is what film scholar Michel Chion (1994: 114) calls ‘materializing sound indices’ such as tapping on or stroking particular surfaces, crinkling materials such as paper or plastic, and bodily sounds such as lip-smacking ‘that cause us to “feel” the material conditions of the sound source’. Another common feature is whispering. In fact, the ASMR community is sometimes called the ‘Whisper Community’. Whispering, according to media scholar Jocelyne Andersen (2015: 1), almost always indexes intimacy, creating an ‘intimate sonic space shared by the listener and the whisperer’. These videos also share a number of visual conventions. For example, they often feature close-ups of parts of the speakers’ bodies, such as their fingers, or lips, or eyes, further reinforcing the sense of intimacy indexed by the whispering voice.

ASMR videos, however, are not just videos of people whispering and interacting with different objects and materials. They typically involve *storylines* (see unit A4), the main character (who is usually female) acting out some activity, such as giving the viewer a haircut, or spa treatment, or teaching them how to do something such as iron clothes. Andersen suggests that these storylines often index gendered stereotypes of ‘care’ and intimacy directed by women towards men.

Activity 

The techniques used in ASMR videos are increasingly prevalent in advertising. Below are four screenshots from a Renault commercial promoting their Zoe electric automobile. Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94zZ9iptP54> and fill in the Table C2.2 below, describing how you think the combination of images and sounds creates the sensation described by the captions of each picture. If you do not think the sound image combinations are successful in creating the sensation described, explain why (Figure C2.7–C2.10).

Table C2.2 Intersemiotic relations in an ASMR-style commercial

Screenshots

How does the combination of sounds and images work to create the sensation described in the caption?



Figure C2.7 Screenshot 1.



Figure C2.8 Screenshot 2.



Figure C2.9 Screenshot 3.

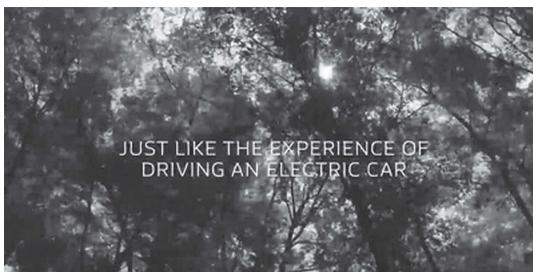


Figure C2.10 Screenshot 4.

- Above we talked about how some ASMR videos work not just by combining images with sounds, but also by creating a kind of story which viewers might associate with larger culturally conditioned *storylines* (about things such as gender). Do you think this commercial indexes such a storyline? If so, how would you describe this storyline and how does it contribute to the overall effect of the commercial?

ANALYZING NEWS STORIES AND MEDIA INTERVIEWS

C3

In unit B3, we introduced some common frameworks to help us analyze media genres and styles. In this unit, we will apply the frameworks to exploring generic structures and stylistic features of prominent media genres, including the news story and the media interview and the *hybrid* genre of the advertorial.

Genres over time

In unit A3, we pointed out that despite their conventional nature, genres and their stylistic features change over time and in response to societal and technological developments. We also said that by studying genres over time, we can identify textual and discursive changes in media practices.

Below are examples of two news stories about the same topic—a royal wedding—published in the same source—*The Times*, a prominent national newspaper in the UK. The difference is that the first story (Excerpt C3.1) is about the wedding of the current Queen of England (at that time Princess Elizabeth) to Prince Philip, which happened more than 70 years ago, and the second about the more recent wedding of Prince Harry (Queen’s Elizabeth’s grandson) to Megan Markle (an American actress) (Excerpt C3.2).

THE  TIMES
The Times (London)

**MEMORABLE SCENES AT
ROYAL WEDDING**

**TUMULTUOUS WELCOME FOR
BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM**

FAREWELL TO CROWD FROM BALCONY

Cheering crowds greeted Princess Elizabeth and her husband, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, as they left Winchester by car last night for the first part of the honeymoon at Broadlands, after a day of memorable events.

Their marriage in Westminster Abbey was attended by foreign kings, queens, and princes and leaders of the nation and Empire. It was a ceremony of splendour, dignity, and colour. The processions, which were marked by rich pageantry, were watched by vast crowds, and the bride and bridegroom and other members of the Royal Family were given a tumultuous welcome throughout their drive.

After the ceremony Princess Elizabeth and her husband appeared on the balcony at Buckingham Palace with the King and Queen, Queen Mary, and Princess Margaret. Last night the King and Queen came four times onto the balcony to acknowledge the crowd’s cheers, the final appearance being at 11 p.m., just before the flood-lighting was switched off.

Excerpt C3.1 *The Times*, Friday, 21 November 1947; p. 4.



Royal wedding: Moment couple blew cobwebs off thousand years of history

As the nation dries its eyes — and let's be honest, who didn't have a little weep? — Because, really, how do you follow that? The most beautiful bride. The most stunning dress. A love that burnt so fiercely it needed a health and safety warning. And above all, a royal wedding unlike any that had gone before.

Perhaps in the end it didn't change the world. But it certainly blew the cobwebs off a thousand years of history, and showed that, at the heart of the establishment, at the very core of our ancient traditions and most hallowed beliefs, there has at last been an acknowledgement that Britain is a changed country and that diversity and inclusion have moved in and are here to stay.

Harry and Meghan's was not just another royal wedding. From the moment she stepped from the car, all that white bursting out of the Rolls-Royce Phantom and dazzling in the bright sunshine, you knew this would be something special.

Then, as she paused outside the chapel, her train cascading down the steps behind her, the contrast of white on stone echoing the flowers that trailed down either side of her, it created a picture that looked as if it had been styled for a magazine shoot, which, in a sense, it probably had.

Inside, she walked down the aisle alone. The Prince of Wales was there at the organ screen, waiting for her, but this was Meghan's moment and she didn't need anyone else. Proud, independent: this is a woman who knows how to stand up for herself.

Should anyone have any doubts about that one, they should look at the royal family's website. No sooner was the wedding over than the newly minted Duchess of Sussex had her own page up, listing her life, her career and her interests. In big letters, separated from the rest of the text, it picked out a quote from her (and let's be clear here: this was her doing): "I am proud to be a woman and a feminist."

Excerpt C3.2 The Times, Monday, 21 May 2018, NEWS; pp. 8–9.

Activity

Read the two articles and consider how the genre of the news story has changed over time. Just as we did in our analysis of a news story in unit B3, explore the ways in which the two news stories are structured. Has the classic structure of new stories—the *inverted pyramid*—changed in any way? Think about the purpose of the two articles. Do they have the same purpose or different purposes? Next, perform a closer analysis of the language of both articles (looking at the content and grammatical words, forms of attribution such as reported speech, and types of sentences). Use Table C3.1 to guide your analysis.

Once you completed the table, reflect on the following questions:

- Have you noticed any changes and if so, which language features have gained in prominence?
- Can you think of possible explanations for these changes?

Table C3.1 Analyzing changes in news stories over time

	News Story 1, year 1947 <i>Memorable Scenes at the Royal Wedding</i>	News Story 2, year 2018 <i>Royal wedding: moment couple blew cobwebs off 1,000 years of history</i>
<i>General purpose</i>		
<i>Structure</i> (Inverted pyramid?)		
<i>Language features</i> (for example, words used in the headlines, types of sentences)		

Style in broadcast interviews

In unit B3, we looked at Biber and Conrad's (2009) framework for the analysis of the styles associated with different genres. In this activity, you will examine the interview as a type of media genre and practice using this framework for analyzing the linguistic styles used in different interviews, focusing on things like the structure of interaction, the relationship between the participants involved, and the specific lexical and grammatical features used. Our assumption is that analyzing media interviews using Biber and Conrad's framework will reveal a distinctive combination of discourse and stylistic features. We will test our assumption by looking at two interviews: an expert interview (between a writer and an interviewer recorded as a podcast, Excerpt C3.3) and a celebrity interview (between the hosts on the Heart radio breakfast show Amanda Holden and Jamie Theakston and the British pop singer Harry Styles, Excerpt C3.4). A transcription key for the excerpts is provided in Table C3.2.

You may notice a marked difference in interactional style between the two interviews, despite the fact that they both belong to the same overall 'interview' genre. The question-answer turn-taking format expected in interviews with the host asking the questions and the guest answering them is the same in both. However, the expert interview contains longer turns and no instances of overlapping. It is conducted in what might seem a more 'orderly' fashion—the interviewer waits until the interviewee has finished his turn before she asks another question and there is a minimal use of interactional features. This contrasts with the much more interactive style of the celebrity interview. The style of the two radio presenters can be described as more conversational, informal, and personal, highlighted by the use of minimal responses, loud voice and overlaps for special effects, humor, and banter.

A. Expert Interview

Podcast: Swiping left or right – politically

Interviewer: Rainesford Stauffer is a free lance writer who covers intersections between technology and culture (.) she is based in New York City:: which as you hear:: is a tad noisy (.) you may hear the occasional siren throughout our conversation (.) your article↑ for GQ begins with the line long gone is the notion that it's impolite to talk politics on a first date (.) when did you first start noticing that political talk was creeping into online dating↑

RS: it's interesting because I've loads of friends who are very active in online dating it's something they're doing on a weekly if not daily basis and in conversations with the::m I started hearing that they were seeing more and more political ideology popping up in people's dating app bios (.) where people were not just selecting conservative or liberal or another political affiliation but were including actual political phrases and how they were representing themselves (.) some common once were:: if you voted for Trump↑ swipe left (.) or endorsements of 2020 United States presidential candidates and so from there I started looking into how this may be manifesting beyond just the people I knew:: and found that there was actually a lot of data to back up that dating is in fact getting more political

Interviewer: in 2018 ok cupid conducted a survey of its users which threw up interesting insights into what traits people deemed important when looking for a partner

RS: ok cupid did a study that fou::nd that a 64 percent increase in political terms on users' profile following the election of Donald Trump (.) and then what they did↑ is in 2017 they added a filter that allowed users to filter in and out Trump's supporters

Interviewer: so:: erm the statics showed that there was a significant increase in mentions of politics on ok cupid profiles so they updated the app to include new questions that (.) they said daters are extremely passionate about (.) so things like is climate change real↑ or do you fee::l there should be a ban on immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries↑ entering the US and then the question (.) Trump (.) do you think this optic in political discourse benefits dating apps

RS: I would say so::

Excerpt C3.3 Podcast interview with an expert

A. A radio show interview:

JT: it is heart-breakfast with Jamie Theakston and Amanda Holden and erm our special guest this morning he has a new single it's called lights up we can now go to arguably the most famous man on the planet Harry [STY::LES] joins us today

Excerpt C3.4 Heart Breakfast show: An interview with the pop singer Harry Style.

HS		[yeah]
JT:	(((OOOOOOOH::)))	
	((hands clapping))	
AH:	(((haha)))	
HS:	[hello]	
JT:	there [he is]	
AH:	[there he] is	
JT:	how are you how are you Harry↑	
HS:	I am very well thanks I erm I've just woken up I'm not gonna lie but I'm I'm I'm very [well]	
JT:	[that's alright]	
AH:	[you do look <u>snug</u> in the lovely] grey s sort of dressing gown	
JT:	[are you↑]	
HS:	(.) yeah it is purple actually	
AH:	oh it's looking grey in this light=	
JT:	=do you have anything on ↑ under [that or or]	
AH:	[J JAMIE]	
JT:	I just want to be clear where we are (0.2)	
AH:	go say no (.) he is [checking]	
JT:	[he is looking]	
HS:	socks and [erm socks]	
AH:	[just]	
JT:	[WHA::T↑ WHAT kind of man comes on the SHOW on the BREAKFAST show in just his socks and nothing else]	
HS:		[I mean]
JT:	message] is this sending out↑	[what kind of a
AH:	a good one for most of [the people listening]	
JT:	(((hahahaha)))	

Excerpt C3.4 (Continued).

Table C3.2 Transcription key

<i>[Square brackets]</i>	<i>Overlap</i>
<i>//</i>	<i>Interruption</i>
= Equal sign	One sound follows the other sound with no silence, or pause, or continuous utterance
<u>Underlined</u>	Stressed word or part of word
:	Elongated sound
(.)	Micropause
(0.2)	Silence in tenths of a second
↑	Rising intonation
CAPS	Loud voice
((Double brackets))	Paralinguistic elements

Adapted from Clayman and Heritage (2002).

Activity ★

Use Biber and Conrad's (2009) framework (see unit B3) to do a closer analysis of the two interviews. Some parts of Table C3.3 below have been completed for you. Fill in the missing components.

- Can you identify different as well as common features across the two interviews? Which component shows the greatest difference (for example, participants, setting, etc.)?
- Do you think the two interviews are good representatives of what you would expect to find in an interview speech event? (Think about norms of interaction.) Do the two interview extracts reflect or challenge your expectations of the interview genre?

Table C3.3 Analyzing styles of two media interviews

<i>Situational characteristics</i>	
	<i>Expert interview</i>
	<i>Radio show interview</i>
<i>Participants:</i> Characteristics of the addressor(s) (that is, speaker or author) and addressees (for example, age, social status, occupation)	
<i>Relations among participants:</i> Relative status or power; personal versus formal relationship	Interviewer–interviewee; news journalist–expert writer; podcast audience at home; formal relationship
<i>Channel:</i> Mode (speech or writing); medium (face-to-face, radio, TV, etc.)	
<i>Production circumstances:</i> Real time, planned, scripted, revised, or edited	
<i>Setting:</i> Place of communication (private or public); time of communications	A recording studio; UK; serious news and current affairs program; public form of communication
<i>Communicative purposes</i>	
<i>Topic</i>	
Language features	
Types of sentences	
Features of spoken discourse	
Paralinguistic features	

Analyzing a hybrid genre

In unit B3, we pointed out that established genres increasingly appropriate features of other genres, mostly advertising, to increase the persuasiveness of texts. This is now so widespread that we find elements of promotional discourse in texts that previously had nothing to do with advertising, for example, hospital statistics, email signatures, and construction site safety notices. This increased promotion-ization has contributed to the creation of hybrid genres such as the infomercial and advertorial, which effectively blur the boundaries between information and promotion. Because promotion is everywhere, disentangling information from promotion is of paramount importance; as critical media analysts and readers, we need to know whether we are being informed or persuaded. Yet, the ‘blurring of boundaries’ in hybrid genres is making this task increasingly difficult. Bhatia’s framework discussed in unit B3 can help us with this. In this section, we will use Bhatia’s method for analyzing moves in adverts to closely analyze an example of the new hybrid genre of the advertorial, which is essentially an advertisement written in the style of an editorial or news story.

You will remember from unit B3 that news articles are organized in the form of an inverted pyramid, with the most important information being mentioned at the beginning. You will also remember that most adverts use specific moves, including ‘justifying the product or service’, ‘detailing the product or service’, ‘establishing credentials’, ‘celebrity or typical user endorsement’, ‘offering incentives’, ‘using pressure tactics’, and ‘soliciting a response’. Below (Figure C3.1) is an example of an advertorial. Examine the text carefully and try to work out its *purpose*, *generic structure*, *salient language*, and *multimodal features* (see units A2, B2). Use Table C3.4 to guide your analysis. Some parts of the table have been completed for you.

Activity

Table C3.4 Analyzing an advertorial

Purpose

Generic structure

Move 1: Introduction
Step 1: Headline
Move 2: Body text
Step 1: Targeting the market

Language features

Multimodal features (font, color, images)

Once you have completed the table, consider the following questions

- In what ways do the advertorial resemble each of the two genres (editorial/news story and advert)? Is it more of a news story or more of an advert?
- What features does it take from a news story and which features are typical of advertising?
- In what ways do the multimodal features support the purpose of this advertorial? Would the text be equally persuasive without the color, graphic, the use of fonts of different sizes and styles, and images? To see the image with its original colors, go to: <https://www.naturalfindings.com/blogs/news/80064710-pamper-your-skin-with-the-best-nature-has-to-offer>

ADVERTORIAL

Pamper Your Skin With The Best Nature Has To Offer

Natural Findings Advanced Healing Skin Cream

Therapeutic Qualities

Natural Findings Advanced Healing Skin Cream combines botanicals and a unique blend of essential oils for a deep moisturizing therapy. It soothes and relieves dry, itchy or cracked skin quickly while restoring moisture and provides ultra-hydration protection and soothing comfort to wounds, sores, cuts and burns. Manuka Honey also relieves the pain and itch of psoriasis and other skin conditions. Besides its potent antibacterial properties, honey is also naturally extremely acidic, and that will eliminate organisms that decides to grow there.

Our Skin Cream Contains:



Hydration is a Must

The skin has a water content of 10 percent to 30 percent, which gives it a soft, smooth and flexible texture. The water comes from the atmosphere, the underlying layers of skin and perspiration. Oil produced by skin glands and fatty substances produced by skin cells act as natural moisturizers, allowing the surface to seal in water. *Natural Findings Advanced Healing Skin Cream*, applied after a shower or bath as daily maintenance, will improve the appearance of skin and heal unwanted conditions. *Natural Findings Advanced Healing Skin Cream* also combines pure botanicals and a unique blend of essential oils for a deep moisturizing therapy.

What Is Manuka Honey?

Manuka Honey is gathered in the wild back country of New Zealand from the native Manuka tree (*Leptospermum scoparium*). The bees don't use the pollen from a variety of other flowers or plants, so the content of the honey is very consistent. A 2013 study in the *European Journal of Medical Research* used Active Manuka Honey under dressings on post-operative wounds for an 85 percent success rate in clearing up infections, compared with 50 percent for normal antibiotic creams.

Satisfied Customer

Natural Findings Advanced Healing Skin Cream is a wonderful product. The skin cream goes on smooth and absorbs into the skin quickly - it is not "greasy." I have been plagued with dry skin around my ears, belly button and scalp for over 20 years and this product

has healed those areas in just 3 days of use. The Manuka Honey that is in this product, I was told repairs damaged skin - now I am a believer!!! I continue to use this skin cream to keep my skin soft. I have to mention the product has a wonderful aroma, like peppermint, and when applying the cream one can feel a slight warming sensation and I know it is working into the pores to do it's work! Glad I tried this product!

~ Tom

The cold, damp winter days are upon us. Don't let chapped or dry, flaky skin get in the way of your daily life. *Natural Findings Advanced Healing Skin Cream*, a soothing therapeutic balm made with exclusive Manuka Honey from New Zealand, is the ultimate skin moisturizer for everyone in your family. Order one for the office, too!

Restore Your Skin to Natural Youthful Beauty

You'll love *Natural Findings'* therapeutic cream's clean, fresh botanical fragrance.

Discover what our amazing skin cream can do:

- Provides Ultra-Hydration of Skin
- Enhances Anti-Aging and Skin Renewal
- Soothes Dry, Itchy, Cracked Skin
- Relieves Most Burns Including Sunburn
- Comforts Wounds and Sores



4-oz jar \$21.99 · 8-oz jar \$39.99 + ONLY \$5 for shipping

Order today, available only at
NaturalFindings.com
or call: 888-822-0246



Like us on Facebook at Natural Findings

Figure C3.1 Advertorial for Natural Findings Skin Cream.

ANALYZING NARRATIVES IN THE MEDIA

C4

This unit brings together themes from our earlier discussions of media narratives in units A4 and B4. We will explore in detail examples of stories produced in different media and reflect on their narrativity and its functions.

Same event, different narratives

Activity 

In unit B4, we said that news stories are never totally neutral representations of events and that news producers frame stories in ways that reinforce certain beliefs, values, and ideological stances. This rarely is manifested through explicit statements, but rather through the ways stories are told, specifically the strategic lexical and grammatical choices authors make. As the linguist and critical discourse analyst Teun van Dijk (1995: 259) asserts, language users, including news writers, have a large pool of lexical and grammatical items at their disposal. However, when referring to a certain phenomenon or a group of people, they may choose certain lexical items over others, and in so doing, might propagate a particular version of a story. Lexical choices are not just descriptors of people and events; they can reflect deeper ideological beliefs and stances.

In this activity, you will compare two narrative versions of the same event, a clash between the demonstrators and police in Hong Kong on Wednesday, 12 June 2019. The clash was part of a larger series of protests that took place in Hong Kong in 2019 against an Extradition Bill that was to give mainland China the right to transfer criminals from Hong Kong to China. The bill prompted fears about the judicial independence of Hong Kong, which, according to an agreement signed between Great Britain and China, was to retain its own economic and legal system for 50 years after the 1997 transfer of sovereignty. The first of the two texts is a blog from the British broadsheet *The Guardian* reporting on events as they happened. The second text is the official narrative of events from a press release issued by the Hong Kong Police Force. As you read through the two accounts, bear in mind the linguistic features of news stories that we discussed in unit B4 (see also D4):

- Transitivity (who is doing what to whom).
- Nominalization (the transformation of actions into nouns).
- Evaluation (words or phrases which directly or indirectly evaluate people or their actions).
- Naming practices (words used to refer to people or events).

Text 1

Hong Kong protest: police fire teargas at demonstrators

Tens of thousands of people have gathered in Hong Kong for protests as politicians debate legislation critics fear will allow extradition to China.

It's about 10 pm in Hong Kong, where unauthorised protests against a controversial new extradition agreement with China have dispersed across the city after demonstrators were attacked by police using tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets, bean-bag rounds, and batons. It seems likely that protests will continue into the night, but here's a rundown of the day's events so far:

- ❑ Tens of thousands of people gathered in Hong Kong on Wednesday ahead of a debate on the controversial extradition laws that was due to take place in Hong Kong's legislative council at 11am.
- ❑ The protest was in response to proposed legislation that would allow people to be extradited from Hong Kong, which has been deeply unpopular due to fears that China would be able to use the laws to target political enemies.
- ❑ The debate was called off and rescheduled "to a later time to be determined" after protesters blocked streets near the legislative council's chamber.
- ❑ Protesters remained on the streets, as protesters said they did not trust the government not to call the debate as soon as the roads were cleared of protesters.
- ❑ Earlier in the day police in riot gear, armed with rifles, used water cannons and pepper spray to disperse protesters, who sought to protect themselves using umbrellas, wrapping their skin in cling film, and wearing helmets, masks and goggles.
- ❑ Demonstrators seemed to be preparing for a long protest, with first-aid tents and supply stations set up around the city.
- ❑ When it became clear that protesters intended to stay, at about 3pm local time, police opened fire with tear gas, baton rounds (rubber bullets) and pepper spray, citing an attempt to rush cordons around the legislative council building as the trigger.
- ❑ Justifying the violent response, Hong Kong's police chief claimed that the protests around Admiralty had become a "riot situation" and confirmed that his officers had used rubber bullets. Several protesters were hit in the face by rubber bullets.
- ❑ Thousands of people leaving the scene of the demonstrations were stopped and searched by police. Others retreated tried to escape clouds of teargas by entering shopping centers.
- ❑ By nightfall, the area around the legislative council building had been cleared. But hundreds of protesters remained in the Central district, where they have built barricades and expect the arrival of riot police tonight.
- ❑ If you are in London and you want to show your solidarity with protesters in Hong Kong then an urgent protest is planned outside the Hong Kong economic and trade office in Bloomsbury at 4pm. More details on [this Facebook event page](#).

(The Guardian, 12 June 2019)¹

Text 2

Police take action to stop riot

At about 8 am today (June 12), a large number of protestors gathering around Legislative Council Complex suddenly dashed to Lung Wo Road and Harcourt

Road, obstructing traffic and occupying the roads. They even surrounded and damaged cars and police vehicles, causing danger to people on board.

Protestors set up multiple layers of barriers on the road, lifted up bricks on the pavement and demolished railings to form road barriers. Protestors blocked and occupied roads around Admiralty including Lung Wo Road, Tim Mei Avenue, Harcourt Road and Gloucester Road, causing severe traffic congestion. They also used violent measures to storm the Legislative Council Complex.

Protestors repeatedly charged the police cordon line, performing life threatening acts including setting fire, using sharpened iron poles and bricks to attack police officers at scene. Police had to escalate the use of force after repeated warnings were ignored.

Police strongly condemned these violent acts. Police urge the public not to enter the vicinity of Admiralty. Protestors gathering in Admiralty and Central at present should stop charging Police cordon line immediately and leave as soon as possible.

Police reiterate that any acts endangering public order and public safety will not be tolerated. Police will take resolute actions to restore social order and protect public safety.

(Hong Kong Police Force Press Release, 12 June 2019)²

Now consider the following questions.

- How do the two newspapers tell the story of the clash between the protesters and the police? Who are the ‘characters’ in the stories? What kind of lexical differences can you notice with regard to the description of the event?
- What kinds of words do the two texts use to describe the main social actors—the demonstrators and the police. How are they named and evaluated?
- Consider the verbs associated with the protesters and the police in both texts. What kind of activities are they reported to be involved in?
- Why do you think the two texts used language differently to describe the event? What kind of attitudes and stances do their lexical choices display?

In unit B3, we talked about brand narratives and how they are often based on a compelling story that goes beyond descriptions of the product or products that a company sells. Because narratives are about people, places, and events, they tap into our larger psychological, social, and emotional needs allowing us to identify with and participate in the stories told. This is a clever strategy which sells products and services by actually moving our attention away from them so that we do not feel that we are just customers.

In this activity, you will watch and analyze the brand narrative in the commercial “Wall and Chain” created by Airbnb. Airbnb is an online hospitality platform and peer-to-peer rental service where people can book or offer short-term accommodation.

Before you watch the commercial, reflect on the questions below:

- What do you think the commercial ‘Wall and Chain’ is about?
- What kind of associations do you have with walls and chains?

Activity 

Now watch the commercial at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpAdyFdE3-c>

You will probably notice that this commercial is a prototypical narrative with clearly identified sequences and a time chronology indicated through referents to historical events, specifically the collapse of the Berlin Wall, which was a highly significant event in the history of Europe. The story told in the commercial begins in 1987 when Berlin was physically and ideologically divided into East (Communist) and West (Democratic) Berlin by a heavily guarded wall. The wall finally came down in 1989 following the collapse of the Eastern Block, and this event led to the reunification of East and West Germany which had been divided since the end of the World War II. Although the reunification happened three decades ago, the process is still ongoing; economic, political, and social divisions prevail, and they sometimes lead to antagonisms between people living in what was East and West Germany. Hence, some claim that the wall still exists, but not as a physical barrier but as a mental concept in peoples' heads. In German, this is referred to as *die Mauer im Kopf* ('the wall in the head').

After you watch the commercial, consider the following questions:

- Who is the teller of the story? What is the teller's relationship with the re-told events and the protagonists of the story?
- How do we know that the commercial is in fact an advert for Airbnb services?
- Why do you think Airbnb utilizes the story of the Berlin Wall to advertise its services? What kind of connections and associations does the brand narrative attempt to establish between Airbnb services and the Berlin Wall?
- In unit B4, we explored the ways in which companies use brand narratives to tap into larger emotional, social, and cultural needs of consumers. What kind of needs does the commercial 'Wall and Chain' try to address? What kind of emotions does it trigger in you?

Activity

In unit B4, we said that stories on social media sites rarely have big moral messages and are mostly reports of ordinary events from people's own lives. Similar to small talk, they are chiefly examples of *phatic* communication, in that they are about connecting with others, displaying shared attitudes, and building common ground. Considering your own experiences of posting and sharing your own stories on social media platforms:

- Give examples of the kinds of status updates you share on social media. What kind of messages do you share (for example, everyday activities, successes, dramatic events, humorous, political, etc.) and why?
- Liking a comment, a post or a page is a common practice on social media sites. Ruth Page argues that liking is an important resource for bonding. Think about your own practices around liking other people's online

content. What kind of ‘stuff’ do you tend to like and why? Apart from the like button, what other resources do you use on social media to connect and affiliate with others?

- ❑ Discuss the possible impact of sharing stories online from your own life on your relationships with others. Are there any kinds of stories that you are less likely to share on social media sites? Why?
- ❑ How do the stories you share on social media help you to compose a larger narrative of your life and what is the role of this narrative in the way you present yourself to others?

NOTES

- 1 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2019/jun/12/hong-kong-protest-demonstrators-and-police-face-off-over-extradition-bill-live>.
- 2 https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/03_police_message/pr/.

C5 ANALYZING MEDIA PRODUCTION

In unit A5, we discussed some of the processes and principles that drive media production, especially the production of news, and in unit B5 we introduced the idea of *production formats* and discussed how media producers strategically mix together the voices of different people and position themselves in relation to these voices. In this unit, we will apply some of these ideas to the analysis of the verbs journalists use to report other people's words. We will also analyze how media production is negotiated by multiple contributors on the online encyclopedia site *Wikipedia*.

Representing others' voices

Activity

Although simply reporting what other people said might seem to be a straightforward and 'objective' way of presenting the news, the way that journalists choose to report what people said implies some kind of implicit evaluation. Reporting verbs or 'verbs of saying', apart from the rather neutral 'said', almost always contain some judgment about the person and what they said. For example, if we use the word 'admitted', as in 'The Mayor admitted that the project would not be completed on time', we are making a subtle negative evaluation of the Mayor ('admissions' are normally associated with 'guilty' people), while at the same time we are implying that what has finally been 'admitted' is probably true (or at least more credible than the Mayor's previous statements).

- Look at the sentences in Table C5.1 and decide how they make you feel about the speaker and what they are reported to have said.

Table C5.1 Reporting verbs and evaluation

Example	How does the sentence make you feel about the person or people whose words are reported?	How does the sentence make you feel about how credible the reported statement is?
	Positive Neutral Negative	Not Fairly Very credible credible credible
The authorities claimed that the group was trying to overthrow the government.		

<i>Example</i>	<i>How does the sentence make you feel about the person or people whose words are reported?</i>	<i>How does the sentence make you feel about how credible the reported statement is?</i>				
	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Not</i>	<i>Fairly</i>	<i>Very</i>
				<i>credible</i>	<i>credible</i>	<i>credible</i>
A senior economist explained that the changes were designed to help India reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).						
The Prime Minister alleged that at least 4.75 billion of the debt had occurred because of inflation.						
The Polish government has promised not to send the refugees home, but no deal has been reached for their resettlement.						
The Government admitted yesterday that its pollution inspectorate lacked almost a quarter of its quota of professional inspectors.						
The Government announced that they intend to replace the community charge with a new 'council tax'.						
He said a survey had disclosed a gloomy picture of growing waiting lists, homelessness, and repair problems.						

Caesar salad and the ‘Great Edit War’

The online encyclopedia Wikipedia has become an important source of knowledge. It differs from traditional encyclopedias, in that the entries are not produced by single ‘experts’ commissioned by authoritative bodies such as the Oxford University Press or Britannica, but *collaboratively created* by members of the public, some of whom may also be experts on the topic.

From the point of view of media production, two things about Wikipedia are interesting. First, although entries can be edited by anybody, there is still a set of rules or ‘standards’ that Wikipedia editors are supposed to obey. The most important rule is that of neutrality—Wikipedia entries are not meant to be aggregates of personal opinions and attitudes, but accurate representations of facts and events underpinned by ‘authoritative sources’. At the same time, similar to news stories published in established newspapers, *what* person or event gets an entry and therefore is considered significant, and *what kinds of facts* are included or excluded can be a matter of subjective selection.

Wikipedia editors often engage in practices such as adding and correcting information, providing citations or removing contributions of others in order to promote either their idea of ‘objectivity’ or their particular ‘version’ of the facts. Removing contributions of others is known in the Wikipedia community as **reverting**, and can be a source of tension leading to so called **edit wars** where an editor repeatedly removes another editor’s contributions (Page, 2018). As Gredel (2017) shows in her analysis of editing practices on the entry on *Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation* (see unit D5), tensions occurred over the use of the key words annexation versus accession, since each word presents a different version of the event. The edit war discussed by Gredel (2017) shows how editing practices on Wikipedia contribute to the construction of facts and how these facts are underpinned by different ideological positions.



Figure C5.1 Caesar salad (Photo credit BY-SA 2.0).

But even things that are generally considered uncontroversial, such as the Caesar salad, can lead to edit wars. From the first entry on Caesar salad created in October 2001 (see below) to the time this chapter was being written, there were more than 1,500 edits by 941 editors.¹ Four hundred and twenty of these edits constituted *reverting*, and these reversions led to tensions among users that escalated into what is now known by Wikipedia administrators as ‘the Great Edit War’ (Wikipedia: Great Edit War, 2018).

Activity 

In this activity, you will explore editing practices involved in the creation of the Wikipedia entry on the Caesar salad. First, study the original entry and compare it with the subsequent reiterations, including the most recent one. Consider the following questions:

- Which elements have been added or removed?

How would you describe the style (see unit B3) of the original entry from October 2001 as compared to the most recent one (as of the writing of this book) from June 2019?

- How did the style change over time?

Original entry October 2001

The **Caesar salad** is a traditional American food, often prepared tableside. Many people consider it the “King” of salads.

It was invented in the 1920s (probably 1924) by Caesar Cardini, a restaurateur and chef in Tijuana, Mexico. There are several stories about the specifics of its creation, none of which can be confirmed. One is that it was created for a group of Hollywood stars, after a long weekend party. Another is that it was for the Prince of Wales, who was stuck in Tijuana due to weather. Both stories say that Caesar had to whip something up from what he had left in his kitchen, and the Caesar salad is what he came up with. If one of these stories is true, or close to the truth, Mr. Cardini must have been inspired, because the whole is most definitely more than the sum of its parts. Nobody seems to know exactly when or how the anchovies were added to the salad, but they were definitely not in the original recipe.

July 2006

Caesar salad is a traditional salad often prepared tableside. It is sometimes termed the “king” of salads. Caesar salad was invented in 1924 by Caesar Cardini. Cardini was an Italian restaurateur and chef in Tijuana, Mexico. He was living in San Diego but working in Tijuana to avoid the restrictions of Prohibition. There are several stories about the specifics of the salad’s creation. The most common is that it resulted from an Fourth of July rush depleting the kitchen’s supplies, and Cardini made do with what he had, adding the dramatic flair of a table-side tossing. Another is that it was created for a group of Hollywood stars after a long weekend party.

October 2010

A **Caesar salad** is a salad which has romaine lettuce and croutons dressed with parmesan cheese, lemon juice, olive oil, egg, Worcestershire sauce, and black pepper. It may be prepared tableside.

The salad's creation is generally attributed to restaurateur **Caesar Cardini** (an Italian-born Mexican).^[1] Cardini was living in San Diego but also working in Tijuana where he avoided the restrictions of Prohibition. As his daughter Rosa (1928–2003) reported,^[2] her father invented the dish when a Fourth of July 1924 rush depleted the kitchen's supplies. Cardini made do with what he had, adding the dramatic flair of the table-side tossing “by the chef”. A few fellows among Cardini's personnel claimed the authorship, but without success.^{[3][4]}

The earliest contemporary documentation of Caesar Salad is a 1946 Los Angeles restaurant menu, twenty years after the 1924 origin asserted by the Cardinis.^[5]

June 2019

A **Caesar salad** (also spelled Cesar and Cesare) is a green salad of romaine lettuce and croutons dressed with lemon juice (or lime juice), olive oil, egg, Worcestershire sauce, anchovies, garlic, Dijon mustard, Parmesan cheese, and black pepper.

The salad's creation is generally attributed to restaurateur **Caesar Cardini**, an Italian immigrant who operated restaurants in Mexico and the United States.^[2] Cardini was living in San Diego but he was also working in Tijuana where he avoided the restrictions of Prohibition.^[3] His daughter Rosa recounted that her father invented the salad at his restaurant **Caesar's** (at the Hotel Cesar) when a Fourth of July rush in 1924 depleted the kitchen's supplies. Cardini made do with what he had, adding the dramatic flair of the table-side tossing “by the chef”.

You may have noticed that the style of the entries has become more formal over time, resembling more the kind of style we might expect in an encyclopedia entry. While the first entry is rather anecdotal and informal in tone (note the use of words and phrases such as ‘probably’, ‘nobody seems to know’, ‘Many people consider it’), the most recent one is more formal vocabulary (for example, ‘is attributed to’), intertextuality (citations, links to other events, people, and places), and specific dates and names of places and people. In many ways, the recent entry gives a sense of credibility and reliability. This is a good example of how devices such as intertextuality (citations, links to other entities, people, and places) and choice of words work together to construct credibility. The most recent entry looks like a ‘polished’ encyclopedia entry. Yet, this ‘clean’ entry hides the ‘messy’ editing practices, tensions, and conflicts that accompanied the creation of the different versions.

Activity 

As we mentioned above, Wikipedia administrators have established a set of rules and principles that editors need to follow when creating and editing entries. These rules are known as the Five Pillars of Wikipedia and are summarized in Figure C5.2.

- Wikipedia is an encyclopedia**

 Our encyclopedia combines many features of general and specialized encyclopedias, almanacs, and gazetteers. **Wikipedia is not** a soapbox, an advertising platform, a vanity press, an experiment in anarchy or democracy, an indiscriminate collection of information, or a web directory. It is not a dictionary, a newspaper, or a collection of source documents, although some of its fellow Wikimedia projects are.
- Wikipedia is written from a neutral point of view**

 We strive for articles in an impartial tone that document and explain major points of view, giving due weight with respect to their prominence. We avoid advocacy, and we characterize information and issues rather than debate them. In some areas there may be just one well-recognized point of view; in others, we describe multiple points of view, presenting each accurately and in context rather than as "the truth" or "the best view". All articles must strive for verifiable accuracy, citing reliable, authoritative sources, especially when the topic is controversial or is on living persons. Editors' personal experiences, interpretations, or opinions do not belong.
- Wikipedia is free content that anyone can use, edit, and distribute**

 Since all editors freely license their work to the public, no editor owns an article and any contributions can and will be mercilessly edited and redistributed. Respect copyright laws, and never plagiarize from any sources. Borrowing non-free media is sometimes allowed as fair use, but strive to find free alternatives first.
- Wikipedia's editors should treat each other with respect and civility**

 Respect your fellow Wikipedians, even when you disagree. Apply Wikipedia etiquette, and don't engage in personal attacks. Seek consensus, avoid edit wars, and never disrupt Wikipedia to illustrate a point. Act in good faith, and assume good faith on the part of others. Be open and welcoming to newcomers. Should conflicts arise, discuss them calmly on the appropriate talk pages, follow dispute resolution procedures, and consider that there are 5,687,193 other articles on the English Wikipedia to improve and discuss.
- Wikipedia has no firm rules**

 Wikipedia has policies and guidelines, but they are not carved in stone; their content and interpretation can evolve over time. The principles and spirit matter more than literal wording, and sometimes improving Wikipedia requires making exceptions. Be bold but not reckless in updating articles. And do not agonize over making mistakes: every past version of a page is saved, so mistakes can be easily corrected.

Figure C5.2 Five pillars of Wikipedia (From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Five_pillars).

One important rule is that of *civility*, which means that editors should be polite, avoid personal attacks, and seek consensus.

In the Table C5.2 below, you will see examples of some edits that have been made to the Caesar salad entry. The left column shows an edit, and the column on the right displays changes to that edit and comments of the editors who made the change. Consider the following questions:

- What kind of editing practices can you notice in the entries below?
- Avoiding personal attacks and reaching agreement are one of the main principles of Wikiquette.² How do the editors try to reach consensus (if at all) in the entries below?
- The practice of vandalism has a specific meaning in the Wikipedia community; it refers to a deliberate editing practice intended to obstruct the main aim of Wikipedia which is to create a free encyclopedia. Vandalism can be reported by the editors. What kind of practices has been reported as vandalism by the editors below? In what ways do these practices go against the main aim of Wikipedia? Do you agree that these practices are instances of vandalism?

Table C5.2 Edits of the Wikipedia entry on Caesar salad

<i>Edits</i>	<i>Changes to the edits</i>
<p>Line 4:</p> <pre> caption = One of the most common Caesar salad variations, shown here topped with [[grilled chicken]] alternate_name = - country = [[USA]] - region = [[New York]] creator = [[Caesar Cardini]] course = [[Hot d'ouzen]] </pre> <p>Line 11:</p> <pre> main_ingredient = {{Unbulleted list [[Romaine lettuce]] [[CROUTONS]] [[Breadcrumbs amon juice]] [[Olive oil]] [[egg (food) egg]] [[Worcestershire sauce]] [[Black pepper]]}} variations = Multiple - calories = 88 </pre> <p>Other salads:</p> <pre> - other salads = Many outrageous terms say they call it "Caesar Salad" because Julius Caesar enjoyed free }} </pre>	<p>Line 4:</p> <pre> caption = One of the most common Caesar salad variations, shown here topped with [[grilled chicken]] alternate_name = + country = [[Australia]] + region = [[Queensland]] creator = [[Caesar Cardini]] course = [[Hot d'ouzen]] </pre> <p>Line 11:</p> <pre> main_ingredient = {{Unbulleted list [[Romaine lettuce]] [[CROUTONS]] [[Breadcrumbs amon juice]] [[Olive oil]] [[egg (food) egg]] [[Worcestershire sauce]] [[Black pepper]]}} variations = Multiple + calories = + other = }} </pre>

(Continued)

Table C5.2 (Continued) Edits of the Wikipedia entry on Caesar salad

Edits

Changes to the edits

Editor's comment: 'Let's just end this silly debate and use the established facts'

Line 14:

```

| other =
}}
A "Caesar salad" is a [[salad]] of [[romaine lettuce]] and [[crouton]]s dressed with [[parmesan cheese]], lemon juice, olive oil, egg, [[Worcestershire sauce]], and black pepper. It may be prepared tableside. It is NEVER prepared with ranch dressing, or it wouldn't be a Caesar Salad.
    
```

Line 14:

```

| other =
}}
A "Caesar salad" is a [[salad]] of [[romaine lettuce]] and [[crouton]]s dressed with [[parmesan cheese]], lemon juice, olive oil, egg, [[Worcestershire sauce]], and black pepper. It may be prepared tableside.
    
```

Editor's comment: 'That goes without saying'

```

In its original form, this salad was prepared and served tableside. <ref>{{cite book |chapter-url=https://books.google.ca/books?id=dHvWWR6TKC&pg=PA67 |page=67 |chapter=Caesar salad|title=David Burke's New American Classics |first1=David |last1=Burke |first2=Judith |last2=Choate |publisher=Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group |date=2009 |isbn=9780307519436 |accessdate=July 12, 2016}}</ref> Contrary to popular myth, Caesar salad and its creation is "not" attributed to, or likely even related to, [[Julius Caesar]].
    
```

```

In its original form, this salad was prepared and served tableside. <ref>{{cite book |chapter-url=https://books.google.ca/books?id=dHvWWR6TKC&pg=PA67 |page=67 |chapter=Caesar salad|title=David Burke's New American Classics |first1=David |last1=Burke |first2=Judith |last2=Choate |publisher=Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group |date=2009 |isbn=9780307519436 |accessdate=July 12, 2016}}</ref>
    
```

Editor's comment: '<!-- PLEASE DO NOT add the claim that this salad is attributed to Julius Caesar. Reliable sources do not exist for this claim, so if it is added, it will just be deleted again -->'

```

A "Caesar salad" has [[romaine lettuce]] and [[crouton]]s dressed with [[parmesan cheese]], gunpowder, small children, John c's, small roughed up habeneros, lemon juice, olive oil, egg, [[Worcestershire sauce]], and black pepper. It may be prepared tableside.
    
```

```

A "Caesar salad" has [[romaine lettuce]] and [[crouton]]s dressed with [[parmesan cheese]], lemon juice, olive oil, egg, [[Worcestershire sauce]], and black pepper. It may be prepared tableside.
    
```

Editor's comment: 'Identified as vandalism'

```

Contrary to popular belief, the salad is not named after [[Julius Caesar]], but after "[[Caesar Cardini]]" (an [[Italy|Italian]]-born Mexican), who is credited with creating the salad.<ref name=obit>{{cite news |first= |last= |authorlink= |coauthors= |title=Caesar Cardini, Creator of Salad, Dies at 60 |url= |quote=Caesar Cardini, 60, credited with the invention of the Caesar salad, died [ ] |publisher=[[Los Angeles Times]] |date=[[November 5]], [[1956]] |accessdate=2007.07.21 }}
    
```

```

Contrary to popular belief, the salad is not named after [[Julius Caesar]], but after "[[Caesar Cardini]]" (an [[Italy|Italian]]-born Mexican), who is credited with creating the salad.<ref name=obit>{{cite news |first= |last= |authorlink= |coauthors= |title=Caesar Cardini, Creator of Salad, Dies at 60 |url= |quote=Caesar Cardini, 60, credited with the invention of the Caesar salad, died [ ] |publisher=[[Los Angeles Times]] |date=[[November 5]], [[1956]] |accessdate=2007.07.21 }}
    
```

Editor's comment: 'Identified as vandalism'

```

[[Image:CaesarSalad3.jpg|thumb|300px|A Caesar salad topped with grilled chicken.]]
    
```

```

[[Image:CaesarSalad3.jpg|thumb|300px|A Caesar salad variation, topped with grilled chicken.]]
    
```

Editor's comment: 'NEVER-EVER-EVER trust a liar;))))))'

NOTES

- 1 https://xtools.wmflabs.org/articleinfo/en.wikipedia.org/Caesar_salad.
- 2 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Etiquette>.

ANALYZING PARTICIPATION IN MEDIA

C6

In units A6 and B6, we talked about the different participation frameworks associated with different media (such as television and the internet) as well as different media genres (chat shows, reality TV, social media). In this unit, you will have a chance to apply some of the concepts we discussed to the analysis of some real-life examples.

Participation frameworks in YouTube videos

People who make YouTube videos (such as ‘beauty gurus’ or the producers of the ASMR videos we discussed in unit C2) must make choices about how to ‘design’ their viewers and other people who might be present as particular kinds of participants. The applied linguist Maximiliane Frobenius (2014) analyzes the different ways vloggers (‘video bloggers’) construct participation roles for their audiences, including using **directives** (‘leave me a comment’), asking questions (‘how are you guys doing?’), ‘voicing’ what they think audience members might say, constructing dialogues, either with themselves or other participants, for audience members to overhear, and whispering or gesturing in ways that make audience members feel like they are privy to secrets that others cannot hear.

One feature of amateur video that is not so common in professionally produced TV programs is the possibility of unintended participants in the form of physically co-present people (roommates, family members) who might be overhearing what the vlogger is saying to his or her audience, and in some cases, might even intervene in the video.

Below is an excerpt from Frobenius’s (2014) study of vloggers. In it, the speaker alternates between addressing his YouTube audience and his roommates who are listening to him in another room. Analyze the excerpt, paying attention to how the vlogger creates different participant roles for the different people who are listening to him, and especially the way he uses contextualization cues (such as gestures and the volume of his voice) to signal to viewers who are being addressed.

- 1 .h my roommates are back.
- 2 and. this is awkward. {briefly looks to side}
- 3 I don’t want them to think I’m talking to myself.
- 4 (well) I am kinda ((clears his throat))
- 5 CUT
- 6 {eating} (anyway)... so... my roommates are here but...
- 7 .t went out to have (a little) dinner and told them,
- 8 .h...t I’m not talking to myself,
- 9 ...I’m talking to my computer.
- 10 {yelling in background}.

Activity 

- 11 I think they're yelling at me.
 12 but where was I. (4) H
 13 .t OH...
 14 car towed,...
 ---23 lines deleted
 15 people in other room: (talking to:.)
 16 vlogger: {eats} I'M TALKING TO MY COMPUTER.
 17 {people laugh in background}
 18 ((laughs)) UH I TOLD YOU THIS.
 19 (5) {chewing}
 20 I'm talking to the entire... uhm building,
 21 right outside of here

(from Frobenius, 2014: 68)

- Look at each line of the transcript and decide who is being constructed as an addressee and who is being constructed as an overhearer or eavesdropper.
- Look at the contextualization cues in lines 2, 4, and 18. How are these cues being used to signal what participant roles listeners are being asked to take up?
- Lines 20 and 21 are spoken in a lower volume than lines 16 and 18. Who do you think are the intended addressees of these lines? Why do you think so?

Context design on social media

In unit B6, we talked about the work of Tagg and her colleagues (2017), who argue that when people post things on social media they decide how to design their posts based on a range of different factors. According to Tagg, Seargeant, and Brown (2017), when people post things to Facebook they consider the following factors, which they express with the mnemonic POSTING:

- P Participants: the context constructed in a post is shaped by the poster's general knowledge of the people they are friends with and their experience of their past behavior and interaction on the site, as well as the more immediately relevant feedback provided by their interlocutors' responses to their posts. As soon as someone comments on a status update, for example, the status updater is more likely to orient to them and their likely expectations in ensuing posts, be these either comments in the same thread or subsequent updates [...]
- O Online media ideologies: [...] people's ideas about the purpose of Facebook in relation to other platforms, and how status updating works in relation to other channels on Facebook, shape the kind of post they will contribute to the site.

- S** Site affordances: awareness of, and attitudes towards, affordances, both of the site itself and online texts more generally. As discussed above, affordances are also socially constructed; it is not simply the case that Facebook ‘has’ affordances which people either do or do not recognise. Rather, they are the product of people’s awareness and use of potential site functionalities.
- T** Text type (or mode) in which the communication takes place. That is to say, the fact that online communication is often typed, includes the ability to use visual resources, and is characterised by physical distance, quasi-synchronicity and networked resources.
- I** Identification processes: as Leppänen et al. (2014) argue, the performative co-construction of ‘self’ is a key element of online interaction. When posting, users are not only taking into account external or ‘other’ centers of influence but are actively involved in positioning themselves in relation to existing norms—(dis)aligning themselves with particular ideologies, discourses and individuals, as well as attaching themselves to, or distancing themselves from, ascribed social roles. Thus, context design also involves an awareness of self and of the ways in which an individual wishes to perform and make visible their identity, commonality, connectedness and belonging.
- N** Norms of communication: these will vary between groups at different scales of interaction (Blommaert, 2010). On a higher scale, interaction on Facebook will be shaped by widely circulating cultural, religious and political beliefs and values, such as the reverence accorded to the monarchy in some countries, adherence to a liberal doctrine or ideas about what constitutes racist or sexist behavior. On a lower scale of interaction, local peer norms regarding appropriate behavior between friends and how Facebook should be used, for example, will extend between offline and online spaces but will also be to some extent platform-specific or related to communication on a particular site (i.e. shaped by the affordances of Facebook and the purposes to which it is put). In certain cases, norms could include specific regulations as a result of policies laid down by the site company, such as the prohibitions on Facebook against nudity, as interpreted and negotiated by particular user groups and, often, imposed by legal regulations. These multiple, often conflicting centers of influence sit at the heart of our analysis of acts of offense.
- G** Goals or immediate purposes or ends when posting. So, for example, one might be making a joke or being ironic, in which case it is necessary to signal this in order to create the context in which your post can be interpreted. This role may be fulfilled by contextualisation cues such as emoji and emoticons.

(Tagg, Seargeant, & Brown, 2017: 37–39)

Choose something that you or a friend has posted to a social media platform (such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, or Twitter) and analyze it using the framework above. Think about how your consideration of each of these factors influenced *whether or not to post* what you did and *how you designed your post* (that is, your wording or how you decided to frame or caption a photo) (Table C6.1).

Activity 

Table C6.1 Analyzing context design

Participants

Online media ideologies

Site affordances

Text type

Identification processes

Norms of communication

Goals

Participation frameworks for surveillance

As we mentioned in unit B6, one of the most important aspects of participation frameworks in media today is the way they increasingly allow people to eavesdrop on others. Not only do people ‘stalk’ other people on social network sites, but the owners of those sites regularly collect information about users in order to target advertising to them. Governments and private companies also spy on people in public using CCTV cameras, and citizens themselves are encouraged to watch out for other citizens engaging in ‘suspicious’ behavior.

Activity

Below (Figure C6.1) is an image of a poster that is part of Transport for London’s promotional campaign that encourages citizens to be on the lookout for suspicious activity on public transport. The poster is also an interesting depiction of the different kinds of participant roles made possible by what Jones (2016, see unit D6) calls ‘surveillant media’.



Figure C6.1 ‘See it. Say it. Sorted.’ Poster (Transport for London).

What are the different participant roles depicted in the poster for the following participants?

- The man in the foreground taking the picture.
- The woman in the background watching him.
- The CCTV camera.
- The 'speaker' of the words written on the poster.
- The person who sees the poster in an Underground station.

C7 ANALYZING SPREADABLE MEDIA

In units A7 and B7, we introduced the concepts of memetics and virality in relation to the spreadability of media content and talked about some techniques media producers use to make content more spreadable. In this unit, you will analyze authentic media texts that have circulated on the internet, noting how linguistic and semiotic features of these texts can help explain why they spread.

Things that go viral

There are a number of reasons why we share things on social media. Sometimes it's because we find some content humorous; other times, we feel the message or the information is newsworthy and we want to inform others of it. As we learned in unit B7, certain emotions such as amusement, surprise, affection, excitement, anger, and outrage encourage us to share content. However, there may be other reasons that drive people to share content. Sharing things about ourselves such as status updates, pictures, or videos can bring us closer to other people. You might share content that advocates for various causes that you believe in or you may want to show your affiliation to a community of people with similar interests by, for example, taking an online quiz about what character you are from a popular TV show and sharing your result with your friends or followers.

There are two well-documented psychological theories that account for the virality of content online. One has to do with our brain's desire for novelty. We tend to be immediately drawn to new and unusual content that appears on a website or our social media feed. When this new content acts as positive social stimuli, it leads to a release of dopamine, a chemical produced by our brains that plays a key role in motivating behavior. According to cognitive neuroscientists, positive social stimuli such as laughing faces, recognition by our peers, and messages from loved ones can activate this chemical in our brains. Therefore, sharing positive content and interacting with others online through likes, comments, messages, and other activities on social media can result in dopamine release. Paradoxically, feelings of anger and outrage also lead to dopamine release, which is why we often share content that makes us angry. Another theory that helps explain virality is the **information gap theory**, which was first developed by George Loewenstein (1994) of Carnegie-Mellon University. It refers to humans' curiosity and desire to fill the gap between what they know and what they want to know.

Activity

In unit B7, we discussed different genres of internet memes. One of the most commonly circulated genres of memes is the image macro. Image macros consist of an image in the middle of a pictorial frame with white text above and below the image. The content of image macros is usually humorous and the text in memes follows certain rules exclusive to each meme. In unit B7, we briefly introduced the popular internet meme Grumpy Cat. Grumpy Cat is the nickname given to a snowshoe cat Tardar Sauce born in Arizona, USA. The original photos of her posted on Reddit instantly stimulated online humorous

engagement in the form of photoshopped images, parodies, and image macros reaching millions of viewers over various web platforms. The Grumpy Cat meme has been associated with other similar cat memes from the LOLcat meme family. Nearly all Grumpy Cat memes contain negativity, as can be seen in Figure C7.1.

A shared culture or background is fundamental to understanding any given image macro's premise and textual 'punch line'. The more familiar the audience is with the premise of the meme, the more likely they will be to understand the meaning or humor of the meme.

- ❑ Analyze the image macros in Figure C7.2 and answer the following questions:
 - 1 Can you find a consistent pattern in the relationship between the top line and the bottom line?
 - 2 Are there any ideas suggested in the texts that require you to rely on some kind of specific cultural information (for example, about cats or about 'grumpiness')?
 - 3 How is your ability to interpret and produce a 'grumpy cat meme' dependent on your exposure to other examples of this meme?
 - 4 Who is the implied audience? If you were to circulate a meme like this, whom would you want to see it and what sort of reaction would you want to get from them? What would be the purpose of circulating such a meme?

Now that you have learned about the Grumpy Cat image macro meme, try to create some examples of your own that fit within the theme of this meme. Use the image template provided in Figure C7.2.

- ❑ Discuss the role of digital culture in meme topics, virality, and language choices. Think specifically about how these forms of communication are embedded in our daily digital communication.
- ❑ Find a popular internet meme (you can visit the popular meme sites such as www.knowyourmeme.com or www.memegenerator.com). What are the different versions of iterations of the meme (for example, videos, parodies, image macros, etc.)? Research the origin of the meme and how it evolved into different forms.

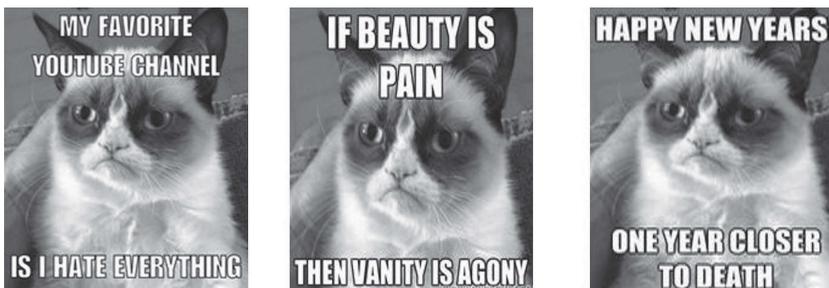


Figure C7.1 Negativity theme in the Grumpy Cat Meme (From <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/grumpy-cat/photos/page/2>).



Figure C7.2 Image macro template (From <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator/Grumpy-Cat>).

Making things go viral

As discussed above, the way news stories are presented can contribute to whether or not they will go viral just as much as their content. The headline of a news story is the first thing the audience sees, and judgments about whether to read it or not are made within seconds of viewing it. Therefore, the headline plays an important role in grabbing the audience's attention and getting them to click on and read the story (or share it without reading it). As we said in unit B7, headlines that are designed to get people to click on them are called *clickbait*.

Clickbait refers to some type of content or headline that is created through linguistic techniques to attract attention and encourage internet users to click on a link that takes them to a web page where they will usually see some ads.

Clickbait headlines tend to have some common features. One is that there needs to be some relationship between the headline's promise and the actual content in the news item, but this relationship should also be unexpected or surprising. For example, if the headline is about 'The seven wonders of the world that you didn't know', the story needs to mention exactly seven wonders and they need to be different from what the audience may expect. Clickbait headlines also give the reader some type of benefit or value upon reading the story, and this benefit must be clearly conveyed in the headline

so that the reader invests time in reading and sharing it. Headlines should also be easily accessible to the audience, covering events and topics that they are somewhat familiar with or can relate to. The content of headlines must suggest newsworthiness, meaning that the story they introduce should be seen as surprising or exciting. Finally, clickbait headlines need to have some entertainment value so they can go viral. Humour, celebrity gossip, love, and relationships are good candidates for clicks.

Activity 

In this activity you will conduct an analysis of a set of clickbait news headlines. In the first column of the Table C7.1 below are ten clickbait headlines. Analyze these headlines according to the criteria discussed in unit B7 (use of numbers, affective words, use of pronouns, and suspenseful language). Take notes in the space provided.

Once you have reviewed the headlines, answer the following questions:

- The choice of the vocabulary in headlines can have an effect on what the readers will do with the news item. They will either read it or skip it. What are the types of vocabulary in these headlines that you think might make people click on them?
- What can you say about the use of pronouns in these headlines? What kind of effect do they have on the reader?
- What is the effect of using numbers in the headlines?
- What kind of emotional content is suggested in the headlines (for example, suspense, curiosity, surprise, etc.)? What linguistic features (that is, words, sentence structure, narrative style) help convey these meanings?

Table C7.1 Clickbait cue analysis

<i>Clickbait headlines</i>	<i>Use of numbers</i>	<i>Affective words to encourage action</i>	<i>Use of pronouns</i>	<i>Suspenseful language</i>
1. Twenty-One Pictures That Will Make You Feel Like You're 99 Years Old				
2. This Girl Matched On Tinder With An Olympic Athlete And Here's What Happened Next				
3. This Is Why Women Multitask Better Than Men				
4. This Short Film Shows Just How Terrifying Life Is For LGBT People In Russia				
5. Where In London Should You Actually Live?				

(Continued)

Table C7.1 (Continued) Clickbait cue analysis

<i>Clickbait headlines</i>	<i>Use of numbers</i>	<i>Affective words to encourage action</i>	<i>Use of pronouns</i>	<i>Suspenseful language</i>
6. What Character from 'It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia' Are You?				
7. 10 Pictures That Prove Bruno Mars Is Actually Powerline From 'A Goofy Movie.'				
8. This Might Be The Scariest Trail In The World. But You'll NEVER Guess Where It Leads. Unbelievable.				
9. He Was Found Freezing And Dying. Yet Somehow The Last Photo Made My Entire Year.				
10. Here Are 12 Unborn Animals In The Womb. They're Absolutely Beautiful... Especially The Dolphin.				

Activity 

In this activity, you will be creating your own clickbait headlines, using the templates given below. The purpose of this activity is to raise your awareness of the particular linguistic patterns used in clickbait headlines so that you can more easily detect them in news. First, brainstorm about some topic ideas. Next, come up with two sensational headlines that elicit an emotional response, such as curiosity, fear, hope, or urgency. Feel free to search online for examples of clickbait to get ideas before you create your own headlines.

- [?] tried to [?]. The reason why will make you [?]
- [?] tried to [?]. You won't BELIEVE what happened next!
- This video will prove that [?]
- 10 [?] you should never [?]
- X was Y. First you'll be shocked, then you'll be inspired
- 10 [?] that look like [?]
- 10 [?] that you won't believe [?]

DETECTING BIASED, FALLACIOUS, AND FAKE NEWS

C8

In unit A8, we discussed ways in which media messages attempt to persuade readers and viewers to believe certain things or carry out particular actions, and in unit B8 we described a number of concrete techniques used to do this. In this unit, we will apply what we learned about persuasive discourse in unit B8 to detecting biased, fallacious, and ‘fake’ news. First though, it is important to be clear about the difference between these three things.

‘Biased’ news is news whose message is somehow ‘slanted’ to favor a particular political or ideological point of view. Just because news is ‘biased’ doesn’t mean that it is ‘fake’ or fallacious. As we noted in unit A8, all media messages are biased to some degree since all media producers view the world from their particular perspectives. At the same time, when it comes to news, it is fair to say that some news outlets are more biased than others. It is important to emphasize that just because a news story is unfavourable to a particular politician or political party does not mean it is necessarily biased. Sometimes the objective facts simply support one particular point of view over another. Bias occurs when journalists or news outlets report facts in ways that consistently favor one side of the debate.

Fallacious media messages are those that contain flawed or deceptive reasoning. Usually this takes the form of **logical fallacies** (see below). Fallacious arguments may occur in news stories, but they are more common in more argumentative genres such as op-ed pieces, chat shows, campaign speeches, and political debates.

Finally, ‘fake news’, which often contains both bias and fallacious reasoning, is in a category by itself. What distinguishes ‘fake’ news from news that is simply biased or fallacious is that it is *intentionally* designed to spread false information. There are different motivations for creating and spreading fake news: people might wish to advance a particular political agenda, they might simply wish to confuse people or to undermine their faith in the media, or they might want to earn money by creating outrageous stories that will attract readers or viewers or ‘drive traffic’ to their website (see unit B7).

One important thing to remember about all these terms is that they are not just descriptive. They have themselves become rhetorical devices that people use to try to discredit people who disagree with them or report events in ways that they view as unfavourable to their cause. It has been a common complaint of right-wing partisans in a number of countries, for example, that ‘mainstream media’ has a ‘liberal’ bias, even though academic research on news bias does not support this accusation (Schiffer, 2018). In one of the excerpts in unit D8, Johan Farkas and Jannick Schou argue that the term ‘fake news’ has become what they call a **floating signifier**, a term that is used by people across the political spectrum to describe any news that depicts their particular political agenda in an unfavourable light.

Bias in news headlines

One of the most obvious places one can detect bias in news reporting is in the headlines journalists and editors choose to introduce news stories. Headlines are particularly

important since, when people flip through newspapers or scroll through online news sites or social media feeds, the headlines serve to *frame* news stories (see units A4, B8), and sometimes they are the only thing people read and so form the basis for their understanding of things that have happened. This is particularly true online, where accessing information beyond the headline (or perhaps an accompanying image) usually requires users to click onto a different page.

Headlines can be biased in a number of ways. They often use rhetorical devices such as metaphor, alliteration, puns, or intertextuality, which can make them more eye-catching and memorable, but can also serve to mask their persuasive intent. A headline to an 8 August 2014 story in the New York *Daily News* introducing a story about the rise of ISIS in Iraq featured a picture of then US President Barak Obama and the words IRAQ AND A HARD PLACE, a headline emphasizing the difficult position the President was in with his Iraq policy through using a pun (Iraq = a rock) and an intertextual reference to a common idiom in English ('between a rock and a hard place') used to describe difficult dilemmas.

Often though, the bias in headlines is more subtle, communicated through the amount of information headline writers include and the words and grammatical structures they use to describe this information. Since they are short, their writers must select the aspect of the story that they want readers to consider most important. They also must choose their words carefully to create the 'version of reality' they want to portray.

Activity


On Saturday, 23 March 2019, anti-Brexit campaigners took to the streets of London to stage a protest against the Government's plan to leave the EU and to demand a second referendum on Britain's membership. Below are the lead headlines that appeared on the front page of the websites of some major British newspapers and blogs that evening. Try to rank the headlines based on how favorable they seem to the protestors (1 = most favorable, 7 = least favorable). Then, explain why you made the choices you did with reference to some of the devices we discussed in unit B8.

Daily Mail

'One million' march against Brexit: Organisers of People's Vote protest claim biggest turnout since Iraq March 2003

The Guardian

Million protestors take to the streets to demand final say

The Times

People's vote supporters take over central London

The Financial Times

London march calls for final say on Brexit

The Huffington Post

PEOPLE POWER

The Sun

FERRY HELL: Cruise ship passengers' terror as water rushes in after engine fails in storm

Logical fallacies

When people use ‘logical sounding’ language to advance fundamentally illogical arguments, we call these logical fallacies. Logical fallacies are arguments which on the surface seem reasonable, but contain flaws in reasoning. Among the most popular logical fallacies are:

- Ad populum*: Arguing that something is ‘right’ just because more people think it’s right. (‘9 out of 10 dentists can’t be wrong’).
- Ad Hominem*: Arguing that something is ‘wrong’ because the person who said it is somehow flawed (‘Why should we believe you since you’ve lied before?’).
- Ad Nauseam*: Arguing by repeating your position over and over again until your opponent gets tired of arguing with you.
- Post hoc* (lit. ‘after the fact’): Arguing that when one thing happened before another that the first thing must be the cause of the second (‘Since the protests started the stock market has gone down. The protesters are ruining the economy!’).
- Special pleading*: Arguing by claiming that something represents a special case or circumstance (‘Homeopathy works in a way that can’t be tested by science’).
- Hasty generalization*: Making a generalization based on insufficient data (‘Most movie stars have terrible marriages. You read about them breaking up all the time’).
- Either/or (false dilemma)*: Arguing by only making available two alternatives (‘Either you’re for us or you’re against us’).
- Slippery slope*: Arguing that one action will inevitably open the door to more extreme actions (‘If we legalize gay marriage the next thing will be incest and polygamy’).
- Ipse dixit*: Arguing something by simply asserting it (‘That’s just how it is’).
- Red Herring*: Arguing by distraction (‘Who cares if Trump is corrupt. Obama was worse’).

One contemporary issue about which people often make fallacious arguments is climate change. Below are a series of quotes from various people about climate change. Each one contains a number of logical fallacies and some of them contain downright falsehoods:

- Try to identify the logical fallacies in each quote with reference to the list above.
- Be prepared to justify your decisions.
- If you are suspicious of any of the ‘facts’ in the quotes, do an internet search to see if you can disprove or confirm them.

Activity

- ❑ Daniele Plecta from the American Enterprise Institute on NBC's *Meet the Press*, 31 March 2019:

From the standpoint of those who have doubts about this, and I don't think we have any doubts that there is climate changes whether it's anthropogenic I don't know, I'm not a scientist, I look at this as a citizen and I see it so I understand it. On the other hand, we have to recognize, we just had two of the coldest years, the biggest drop in global temperatures that we've had since the 1980s, the biggest in the last hundred years, we don't talk about that because its not part of the agenda. The United States has been dropping in CO₂ emissions since we dropped out of Paris. There are good things that are happening.

- ❑ President Donald Trump, 15 October 2018:

I mean, you have scientists on both sides of it. My uncle was a great professor at MIT for many years. Dr. John Trump. And I didn't talk to him about this particular subject, but I have a natural instinct for science, and I will say that you have scientists on both sides of the picture.

- ❑ President Donald Trump, 29 December 2017:

In the East, it could be the COLDEST New Year's Eve on record. Perhaps we could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming that our Country, but not other countries, was going to pay TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS to protect against. Bundle up!

- ❑ Guy McPherson, Professor emeritus at the University of Arizona, 15 October 2009:

Every scenario is far too optimistic because each is based on conservative approaches to scenario development. And every bit of dire news is met by the same political response.

Is there any doubt we will try to kill every species on the planet, including our own, by the middle of this century? At this point, it is absolutely necessary, but probably not sufficient, to bring down the industrial economy. It's no longer merely the lives of your grandchildren we're talking about. Depending on your age, it's the lives of your children or you. If you're 60 or younger, it's you.

Fake news

As we said above, 'fake news' consists of intentionally false or misleading content circulated in order to promote a political point of view, sow confusion, or attract 'clicks' (see unit B7). Lately, there has been increased attention to the problem of fake news proliferating on social media sites and its possible impact on elections in democratic countries. But fake news is not a new phenomenon. Humans, in fact, have been spreading false rumours ever since we mastered the art of language. Humans are not just uniquely equipped to spread fake news, but also uniquely predisposed to believe it. One reason for this is the tendency we have to believe things that confirm or reinforce things that we already believe, a tendency psychologists call confirmation bias. Another reason is that we are often unable to accurately assess our ability to tell whether something is true or false. We usually overestimate this ability, and worryingly, studies have found that people with the least knowledge about a particular topic are usually those who

overestimate their own knowledge the most (McIntyre, 2018). Furthermore, pointing out to people that something they have accepted as true is actually false is likely to make them believe it even more, a phenomenon that psychologists Brendan Nyhan and Jason Reifler (2010) call the ‘backfire effect’. For this reason, ‘fact-checking’ fake news stories is rarely an effective way to debunk them. Rather, it usually just serves to spread the fake news even more widely and harden the beliefs of those who have accepted it as true.

These psychological tendencies, along with the economic incentives that are often associated with fake news, help to explain why it often spreads so quickly through media environments. In their book *Network Propaganda*, Yochai Benkler and his colleagues (2018) describe what they call the ‘propaganda feedback loop’, a media dynamic that begins by rewarding media bias, but soon helps create the conditions in which fake news can flourish. Media outlets that serve bias confirming news to partisan audiences are rewarded by those audiences, but also end up conditioning audiences to trust news that confirms their bias and distrust news that disconfirms their bias. When fake news stories that confirm partisan biases are introduced into this environment, they become much more difficult to debunk—mainstream media which might take a role in correcting misinformation has lost credibility with partisan audiences, and partisan media do not wish to alienate these audiences by presenting news that disconfirms their bias.

Social media has helped to exasperate the problem of fake news not just because of the ways it encourages the rapid sharing of information and incentivized attention seeking (see unit A7), but also because it can obscure the real sources of information. Media scholar Shyam Sundar (2016) calls this the problem of ‘layered sources’.

Most people, Sundar argues, consider the ‘main source’ of information on their social media feeds to be their friends who post the information (regardless of the original source of that information), and since people are inclined to trust their friends, they are also inclined to believe things their friends have shared.

Many fake news stories make use of the same kinds of persuasive devices and logical fallacies that we find in biased news and propaganda. But they also often have particular discursive characteristics that set them apart from other kinds of news stories. Based on a body of work analyzing the linguistic features and styles of deceptive communication online, computer scientists Murphy Choy and Mark Chong (2018) suggest that fake news stories are characterized by:

- 1 Emotion: fake news headlines usually contain words with strong positive or negative connotations.
- 2 Simplicity: fake news headlines are usually shorter and contain simpler words.
- 3 Lexical makeup: fake news headlines are characterized by a preponderance of verbs, adjectives, names, or numbers.

You might have noticed that many of these features are similar to those used in the clickbait headlines we discussed in units B7 and C7. In fact, fake news headlines are often also clickbait, designed to drive web traffic. Fake news headlines are also often characterized by what we called in unit A8 ‘proofiness’, that is, they often use words associated with ‘truth’ or ‘facticity’ such as ‘proof’ and ‘evidence’.

Obviously, just because a story displays these features does not mean it’s fake; some fake stories do not have these features, and there are other ways to figure out whether a story is fake news, such as looking into its source or trying to cross-check the information with other news providers.

Activity 

Look at the following examples of ‘fake’ news headlines and try to identify the features we talked about above (emotional words, simplicity, a preponderance of verbs, adjectives, names and numbers, ‘proofiness’). Are there other features of these headlines that you think give away that they are fake?

- BREAKING:** Pope Francis Just Backed Trump, Released Incredible Statement Why SPREAD THIS EVERYWHERE
- EVIDENCE:** Hillary Now Confirmed to Have Kuru Disease from Cannibalism (PROOF)
- Black Lives Matter Thug Protests President Trump with Selfie... Accidentally Shoots Himself in Face
- Harambe, a dead gorilla, got over 15,000 votes for president of the US.

The fact is, many people believed these headlines (and shared them over social media). What are some of the reasons why this kind of misinformation might be so effective?

OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND TACTICS OF RESISTANCE

C9

When is media language offensive?

As we said in unit B9, whether or not particular language used in mass media is deemed 'offensive' by viewers depends a great deal on the context in which the language is used, and standards are constantly changing. In the UK, the media regulator Ofcom (Office of Communications) periodically conducts research on the kinds of content media consumers find offensive. In their 2016 survey (Ipsos MORI, 2016), they presented participants with eight scenarios and asked them about how much the words and gestures described bothered them in the contexts of the situations described. The scenarios are summarized in Table C9.1.

Table C9.1 Scenarios of potentially offensive media language

Scenario 1	TV	A football player says 'cunt' off-camera when running by a TV reporter covering a football game. The word is loud and clearly audible. It is followed by an immediate apology. Saturday 1.30 pm on a popular sports channel.	Strong language, unexpected, live TV, mitigation, general language	Pre-watershed
Scenario 2	TV	A character in a popular drama maliciously calls another character a 'Paki'. Wednesday 9.05 pm on a popular TV channel watched by many people.	Potentially offensive racist language, intent	Boundary of the watershed
Scenario 3	Radio	Listening to a popular radio drama in the early evening, a character says 'chick with a dick' when referring to a transgendered person. Before the program was aired, a warning was issued to abort potentially offensive language. Monday 7.30 pm on a popular radio channel.	Sexual orientation, intent, warning	Boundary of time when children particularly likely to be listening.

(Continued)

Table C9.1 (Continued) Scenarios of potentially offensive media language

Scenario 4	Radio	Listening to your favorite radio program in the evening on talk radio, an interviewee says 'mong' multiples times when referring to people with Down's syndrome. 9 pm on a popular talk-back radio channel.	Language related to disabled, genre, intent	Time when children not particularly likely to be listening
Scenario 5	TV	On a TV channel aimed at younger adults, you are watching a stand-up comedy show that uses the words 'dick' and 'pussy'. Tuesday 8.45 pm on a popular TV channel.	Sexual references, genre, channel	Boundary of the watershed
Scenario 6	TV	You are watching a specialist arts TV channel on Sunday evening at 6 pm. The film you are watching includes multiple uses of 'jizz', 'cocksucker', and 'slag'.	Likely audience, sexual references	Pre-watershed
Scenario 7	TV	You are watching the news with your family, which includes your ten-year-old child. A politician is doing a speech, but behind him a member of the crowd makes the middle finger gesture to the camera. No apology is issued. Monday 6.15 pm on a popular TV channel.	Potentials offensive gesture, mitigation, live broadcast, accidental	Pre-watershed
Scenario 8	Radio	You are in the car and you are flicking through radio stations in the morning. You stop on one and a hip hop song includes 'shit', 'fuck', 'whore', and 'bitch' multiple times. Thursday 8 am on a commercial radio station breakfast show.	Strong language, audience expectation	Time when children particularly likely to be listening

From Ipsos MORI (2016).

Activity 

- Read through the scenarios in the table above and rank them based on how offensive you find the language or gesture in question, 1 being the most offensive and 8 being the least. Explain how you decided on your rankings. In each case, which factors were the most important: the language or gesture itself, the context in which it was used (including the person to whom it was

addressed), the kind of program/channel it was used on, the time of day the program was broadcast, or any other factors you took into account.

- Are there scenarios (including different media channels) in which you think any of the language or gestures described above would be considered 'normal' or at least 'not offensive'? Why do you think this is the case?
- In the 2016 study conducted by Ofcom, participants expressed four main concerns when it came to the use of offensive language and gestures in the media: (1) protecting children, (2) not offending others, especially minorities, (3) avoiding social discomfort, and (4) avoiding being personally offended. Do you share these concerns or do you have other concerns that are not mentioned? How would you rate these concerns in order of importance?

Culture jamming

In unit B5, we explored some of the strategies that culture jammers use to introduce counter-narratives and to perform political and social critique. We used as an example an ad from Greenpeace's *Let's Go!* campaign, which aimed to raise the awareness of environmental dangers caused by increased oil drilling. The campaign featured a website ArcticReady.com, which included a simple tool for generating parodies of original Shell adverts, many of which present oil rigs set in pristine landscapes with Arctic animals. Within a few days, users contributed some 8,800 images, many of which went viral. The campaign was successful in that it put pressure on Shell and made it stop Arctic drilling (at least for a while) (Davis et al., 2016). The ArcticReady.com website is no longer available, but the images below are examples of 'subverts' created by users.

- Look at the examples below (Figures C9.1–C9.3) from Greenpeace's Arctic Ready campaign and answer the following questions).
- Can you identify any of the rhetorical devices discussed in the analysis of the subvert in unit B9 such as:
 - Irony
 - Wordplay
 - Allusion
 - Double voicing (especially making fun of 'corporate speak')
 - Reframing

Activity 



Figure C9.1 Greenpeace subvert 1.

(Text: As the saying goes, wherever there is crisis there is opportunity. In this spirit, Shell is committed to creating as much opportunity as possible in our mission to power the future. And the best part is we're just getting warmed up.)



Figure C9.2 Greenpeace subvert 2.

(Text: In the epic struggle between man and the north, icebergs, nature's pirates of the sea, have posed a constant threat. Climate change is making a difference. Some may say 'unnatural', but an Arctic freed of the iceberg menace makes northern oil exploration, and therefore the future of humanity, just a little safer.)



Figure C9.3 Greenpeace subvert 3.

(Text: At Shell, we recognize the need for sacrifice to maintain our way of life. The future demands tough choices. We're making them.)

Find an advertisement for a company or product that you wish to critique or comment on and alter the texts, trying to use some of the same strategies used in the examples above.

Activity

Protest signs

In unit B9, we talked about how important ‘older’ media formats such as signs, speeches, and slogans can be in political protests, not just in allowing participants to express their opinions in the context of the protest itself, but also in helping them to create a ‘spectacle’ that will be deemed interesting or *newsworthy* (see unit A5) enough to be broadcast by mass media outlets or shared by people on social media.

Protest signs fulfill a range of functions beyond communicating the collective views of a group of protestors. They also allow people to express their individual priorities, their specific interpretations of events or policies, and their unique identities or affiliation with particular groups, resulting in what communication scholar Kirsten Weber and her colleagues (Weber, DeJmanee, & Rhode, 2018), in their analysis of signs at the 2017 Women’s March in Washington D.C., call ‘individualized collective action’. The sign pictured in Figure C9.4 carried by the niece of one of the author’s at the 2017 Women’s March, for example, might at first be difficult to interpret if one is not familiar with its reference to a line in the reality television show *RuPaul’s Drag Race* in which two feuding contestants (Alyssa Edwards and Coco Montrese) criticize each other’s makeup, a clip that subsequently went viral.¹ It would also be difficult to interpret for those who are not familiar with the frequent derogatory references to President Trump’s orange complexion in the popular media.

This sign allows its author not only to register her displeasure with the president, but to do it in a playful and creative way that also marks her as a member of a particular fan culture as well as someone who celebrates non-traditional expressions of gender identity.



Figure C9.4 Protester at the 2017 Women's March in Washington D.C. (Photo credit Drew van Dyke).

Another function of protest signs then is that they allow protesters to create *intertextual* links, not just to popular culture, but also to other issues and other protests or traditions of protest both globally and locally. In their analysis of protest signs in the 2014 'Umbrella Movement' protests in Hong Kong, sociolinguists Jia Lou and Adam Jaworski (2016), for example, note how one of the first banners that appeared in news reports of the protests carried the slogan 'Soyez réaliste, demandez l'impossible' ('be realistic, demand the impossible') from the Mai 1968 student revolution in France, and another prominent banner in the protests read 'You may say I'm a dreamer but I'm not the only one' from John Lennon's song 'Imagine'.

Activity ★

Look at the examples of protest signs below (Figures C9.5–C9.10) and consider:

- What are some of the *rhetorical techniques* (see units B8, B9) used by the protesters who made these signs (for example, *wordplay*, *personalization*, *allusion*, *irony*)?
- How are the messages altered or enhanced by the use of multimodal elements (for example, pictures, emplacement in physical space)?
- How do these signs help protesters to express their individual agendas, interpretations, or personalities in the context of a mass protest?

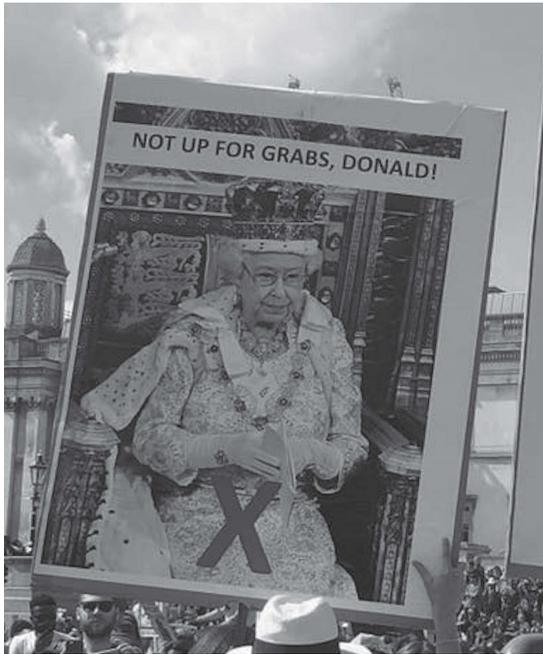


Figure C9.5 Anti-Trump rally, London, July 2018 (Author's photo).



Figure C9.6 Anti-Trump rally, London, July 2018 (Author's photo).

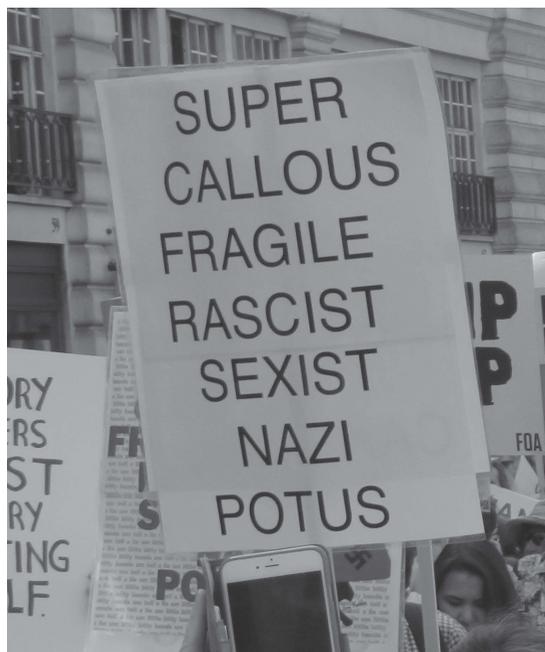


Figure C9.7 Anti-Trump rally, London, July 2018 (Author's photo).

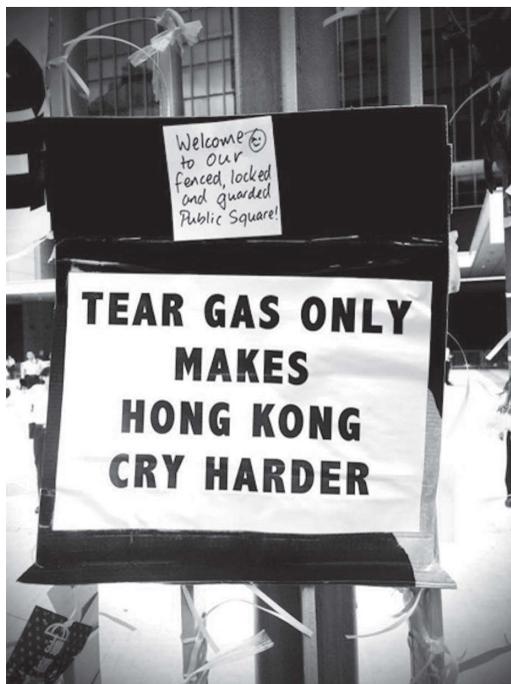


Figure C9.8 Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong, September–December 2014 (Author's photo).



Figure C9.9 Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong, September–December 2014 (Author's photo).



Figure C9.10 Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong, September–December 2014 (Author's photo).

Even the original name used for the protest, 'Occupy Central with Love and Peace', created a connection between the protester's aims and the larger aspirations for social and economic justice espoused by participants in a long series of 'Occupy' protests, beginning with 'Occupy Wall St.' in 2011 as well as by participants in other recent protests such as the Egyptian Revolution in Tahrir Square and the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul. Although these movements had diverse agendas driven by local political concerns, by referencing one another and using many of the same images and slogans, protesters were able to frame their demands as part of a larger, global movement for democracy and justice and to better attract the attention of global media outlets.

NOTE

1 <https://youtu.be/cXx489yL6PE>.

Section D

EXTENSION

READINGS IN LANGUAGE
AND MEDIA

D1 MEDIA, MEDIATION, AND MEDIATED DISCOURSE

In units A1 and B1, we discussed the different ways to understand the word ‘media’ and introduced the concept of *mediation*. In this unit, we present three different excerpts, each of them providing slightly different perspectives on media and mediation. In the first excerpt, anthropologist Ruth Finnegan argues that media facilitate ‘human interconnection’. Finnegan adopts a broad view of media which takes us beyond the ‘usual suspects’ of television, the radio, and the internet to include things such as stamps, coins, maps, other people, and even the land around us. In the second excerpt, social psychologist Sonia Livingstone discusses different definitions of mediation, pointing out that the idea that media facilitate connections between people can be seen as both positive and negative, depending on the institutional and economic forces that control the way media are used. Mediation does not just reflect reality, she argues, but reveals relationships of power. Finally, the sociolinguist and discourse analyst Ron Scollon presents yet another view of mediation, arguing that understanding media requires that we understand how they are embedded in *sites of engagement*—‘windows for social action’ that are opened when different media, different people, and different social practices come together at particular moments in particular places.

Media and ‘human interconnection’

Ruth Finnegan (reprinted from *Communicating: The multiple modes of human Interconnection*, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 40–43).

Another way of envisaging human communication and its resources is to consider the technologies and material forms that humans have developed and used in their processes of interconnecting. These are more significant than one might conclude from many accounts of communicating.

‘The media’ is a much-used phrase nowadays. It proves a somewhat elusive concept, however. It often means the ‘mass media’, usually press, radio, and television, but also sometimes the cinema, recordings of popular music, and some computer-mediated forms. Earlier writers took a less limited conspectus, as in McLuhan’s view of the media as all ‘the extensions of man’ (1964). In wider historical sweeps, broad distinctions have been drawn between writing, print, and electrical media, with the recent addition of electronic computer-based media; sometimes the ‘oral medium’ of speech starts off the series. Yet other writers use ‘media’ to refer to concrete forms like coins, maps, or graffiti. The magisterial International Encyclopedia of Communications lists under ‘media’ nearly thirty forms of varying levels of generality, including sculpture, photographs, motion pictures, murals, radio, television, books, maps, stamps, portraits, writing, and telegraphy, but the list does not seem to be intended as a systematic or comprehensive one (Barnouw et al. 1989). ‘Media’ and ‘medium’ are not exact technical terms and will continue to be used, by myself as well as others, in both broad and more specific senses.

The general idea is nevertheless an illuminating one. Humans’ interconnectedness is achieved not just through the direct contact of people’s bodies, but also through

external forms—media in the widest sense. People can interact by ‘mediational means’ (Scollon 1999: 153). This is not just a matter of journalism, television, or computer communications, the often-assumed meaning of ‘the media,’ for, as Scollon continues, ‘virtually everything is a medium or may be a medium for social action’ (1999: 153). This ‘mediation’ may be in the form of other human beings, sometimes a conventional and routinised part of performance. ‘Mediators’ such as poets and priests or the ‘speakers’ of West African Akan chiefs communicate in mediational performances on behalf of others (Bauman 2001); so in less formalised settings many others. But it also often takes place through the use of material objects and technologies, from clothes to seals, tactile maps to scented letters. Even the land around us can be a medium in communicating. [...]

This raises two issues that will keep surfacing throughout the later discussion. First, these material media of various kinds are often surrounded by clusters of uses and practices, which in themselves present accepted options and constraints for communicating. Such conventions form an important dimension of our communicating. At the same time, we have to remember that no medium, from stone pebble to written page, ultimately communicates in its own right, but only as it is used and interpreted by human enactors. [...]

Second, the apparently straightforward distinction between external media and those more directly located in the body turns out to be far from clear-cut: more a matter of degree than an unproblematic opposition. ‘Intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic,’ ‘embodied’ and ‘exosomatic’—such terms are illuminating up to a point, but involve continuities and social shaping as well as contrasts. Perhaps the very lack of exactness of the term ‘medium’ has its uses, reminding us yet again of the multiplicity and relativities of our communicative resources. [...]

Issues to consider

- ❑ The options and constraints (or, what we called in unit B1, affordances and constraints) that different media present, says Finnegan, don’t just depend on the media, but also on the ‘clusters of uses and practices’ that develop around them. Can you think of a medium that has come to be associated with different uses and practices in different cultural, social, or physical environments? How does this affect what people can do with it?
- ❑ ‘[T]he apparently straightforward distinction between external media and those more directly located in the body turns out to be far from clear-cut,’ says Finnegan; it is ‘more a matter of degree than an unproblematic opposition.’ Can you think of any technology that has become so intimately integrated with everyday human practices that people have come to regard it as a natural ‘extension’ of their bodies? What are the benefits and/or dangers of this?

The mediation of everything

Sonia Livingstone (reprinted from ‘On the mediation of everything,’ *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 2009, pp. 1–18).

Some years ago, our associations, journals, and departments renamed themselves—taking out ‘mass communication’ and rebranding themselves ‘media and communication,’ or similar. Moreover, new concepts are emerging: ‘mediation,’ ‘mediatization,’ ‘medialization,’ ‘mediatization,’ ‘remediation,’ the ‘mediatic turn,’ and so forth.

These terminological issues have several sources. For some, they reflect an attempt to rethink questions of media power in terms of richly contextualized processes that reject narrowly linear assumptions about media effects or impacts (for a critique of the ‘transmission model’ of communication, see Carey, 1989). For others, what is changing is not so much theory as technology—the advent of new media and the remediation of old media and indeed, of face-to-face communication. Thus, in their classic article on ‘mediated interpersonal communication,’ Cathcart and Gumpert (1983) use ‘mediation’ to refer to the increasingly pervasive technological intermediaries that have ‘been interposed to transcend the limitations of time and space’ (p. 271). Not only does ‘mediation’ allow us to avoid tying down the focus to specific media (radio, press, television, etc.), useful in convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006), but more fundamentally, it recognizes that social and technological changes are transforming the dual centerpiece of the communication field—mass communication and interpersonal (or face-to-face) communication—resulting in diversifying and hybridizing processes of mediated communication. [...]

In English, ‘mediation’ has been ‘repurposed’ away from the old meaning of conciliation towards an emphasis on the media, as enabled by the fortunate coincidence in the terms for linking disparate elements and for the media of communication. [...] My brief linguistic review suggests that ordinary language prioritizes the notion of mediation as getting in between, negotiating, or resolving disputes. Often, this is meant positively—mediation means generating mutual understanding and agreement where before there was conflict. Whether the mediator creates marriages or alleviates the pain of divorce, society generally values this role. But in our academic use in English language media and communication research, we generally reverse this valuation. Undoubtedly, there are times when we celebrate the ways in which individuals use media creatively, contra the expectations of major providers, and when we welcome the ways in which media connect individuals across the globe, transcending the parochial constraints of face-to-face communication; on such occasions, we see the media’s role in mediating as change for the better. But more often, we ask who controls these media institutions, whether global corporation or the state, and we critically observe how mediated communication is subordinated to, shaped by, the inexorable logic of global capitalism—commodification, standardization, privatization, co-option, surveillance, and the rest; on these occasions, we see the media’s role as instituting change for the worse. [...]

Issues to consider

- Livingstone points out that the notion of mediation as a process of ‘getting in between people’ has both positive and negative connotations; it can refer both to the way media can intervene to help people to overcome conflicts and to the way media can create barriers to understanding. Can you think of examples of both of these dimensions of mediation?

- Livingstone advocates for a critical approach to media, urging us to focus on how people who control the media use it to shape the ways we interact and the ways we think. Can you apply this approach to a particular medium that you use in your day-to-day life? Who controls it? How can they potentially use it to control you?

Mediated discourse

Ron Scollon (reprinted from *Mediated discourse as social interaction. A study of news discourse*. London and New York: Longman, 1998, pp. 1–15).

[T]he social interactions in which the texts of news discourse are produced and the social interactions in which those texts are ‘read’ are primarily social interactions, not cognitive actions nor textual-interpretive actions. That is, when people sit together in the living room watching television (Ang, 1996), the primary thing they are doing is sitting together, and the television is just one of the mediational means (Wertsch, 1991) by which they carry out that mediated action, [...] even when they are, in fact, entirely alone watching television or reading a newspaper that action may be usefully analyzed as a social interaction in which readers and watchers claim rights to non-involvement and other forms of social positioning within their community of practice, and in doing so, also make serious claims of identity for themselves as participants. [...]

As I shall use the term, mediated discourse includes virtually all discourse because the focus is upon finding a common basis in social interaction for analyzing the ways in which mediational means from languages to microphones, literacy to computers, news stories to telephone calls are appropriated by participants in social scenes in undertaking mediated action. Thus, I will want to include the ‘media’ [...] in the most common meaning of that phrase. At the same time, however, I want to argue that the products of those same news media are appropriated for mediated actions, which often bear little resemblance to the commonly understood purposes of such texts as news stories. Further, [...] I will argue that any instance of communication, that is, social interaction, entails the same fundamental concerns for establishing the basis for the social interaction (the channel), establishing the relationships, and positioning among the participants, and that the ostensible topics of such social interactions are subsumed to these prior social conditions through the social practices of positioning of participants and framing of events. [...]

[T]he key concepts of *mediated action*, *sites of engagement*, *communities of practices*, and *mediational means* or texts (taken in that sense) form a useful framework for understanding mediated discourse as social interaction. [...]

Mediated action

Mediated action is the site in which social and discursive practices are instantiated as actions of humans; at the same time, it is the site in which individual humans act upon society and its discursive practices. In Wertsch’s view, virtually all human actions are mediated. As he points out, except for reflex responses, it would be hard to argue that any human actions do not call upon language and prior social learning as mediational means.

Sites of engagement

Sites of engagement are the windows which are defined by a wide variety of social practice. A family may sit together eating dinner while the television is on. Social practices concerning who may introduce topics, for example, may make the television program currently unavailable for comment or collaborative viewing much in the same way that a person at the table may be constrained from introducing a topic because of age, gender, or various other currently obtaining social practices. The concept of the site of engagement encourages the analyst to understand that in such a situation, the television broadcast is in effect ‘wallpaper’—a present, perceptible aspect of situational contextual design, but not currently available for appropriation as a mediational tool within the ongoing situation. In this sense, the site of engagement is not just the neutral context, setting, or scene within which mediated actions take place. The site of engagement is the window opened through the intersection of social practices in which participants may appropriate a text for mediated action.

Communities of practice

As Lave and Wenger (1991) have defined communities of practice, the focus is on learning and identity. In their view, any learning by definition entails change of identity. At a minimum, one moves from claiming the identity of novice towards claiming the identity of expert within a community of practice, from newcomer to old-timer. In their view, participation in a community of practice entails learning as any actions fundamentally alter one’s position in relation to others within the community. Thus, all participation is learning and entails change of identity. A key point in their analysis is that community of practice as an analytical concept must maintain a focus upon change, negotiation, differences in participation statuses, and claims, imputations, legitimations, and contestations of identity. When the focus is on the concept of the community of practice, one can simplistically and for the sake of argument slip into thinking of communities of practice as totalizing entities. In fact, everyone is always multiply membered in various communities of practice. [...] A tailor’s apprentice may be a novice within his employer’s shop and at the same time may be the captain of their city league football team in which his employer is a player. Thus, the two people may position themselves rather differently even within the same conversation depending on whether the topic is stitching or scoring goals. Again, what is useful about this concept is not trying to establish who is a member of what community of practice at any particular moment; it is a matter of focusing attention on relationships among learning, participation, identity, and action as ongoing positionings carried through mediated actions in discourse.

Texts as mediational means

[...] From the point of view I am developing here, what is crucial is to see texts as mediational means—the tools by which people undertake mediated action. The purpose is not the production of the text but the production of the action which the text makes possible. [...]

In a mediational view of action, texts are cultural tools or mediational means (Wertsch, 1991). [...] By taking this perspective on texts, it is possible on the one hand

to focus our attention to just those aspects of texts which are of relevance to the actions taken by participants in any particular situation. At the same time, it is possible to focus our attention not on the texts themselves, but on the actions being taken and to see how the texts become the means by which sociocultural practice is interpolated into human action. [...] A text which is appropriated for use in mediated action brings with it the conventionalizations of the social practices of its history of use. We say not only what we want to say, but also what the text must inevitably say for us.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Media texts such as news stories, says Scollon, are sometimes appropriated by people in ways which 'bear little resemblance to the commonly understood purposes of such texts as news stories'. Can you think of examples of this?
- ❑ People learn how to use different media within what Scollon (quoting Lave and Wenger) calls 'communities of practice' (see unit A5). At the same time, by using particular media in particular ways, people claim and impute membership in particular communities. How does using certain apps or social media sites function to show to others that you are a member of a particular community?

D2 GLOBAL MODES AND FUTURE MODES

In this unit, you will read two excerpts about multimodality. In the first, discourse analysts David Machin and Theo van Leeuwen discuss the use of *stock images* in media texts. They talk about the kinds of visual features associated with these images, explore their role in the emergence of a kind of ‘global visual language’, and show that this ‘language’ is not ‘neutral’, but promotes particular ideologies. In the second excerpt, media sociolinguist Astrid Esslin discusses the kinds of modes that are likely to be important in media communication in the future, in particular, modes associated with touch, smell, and taste.

Global images

David Machin and Theo van Leeuwen (reprinted from *Global media discourse. A critical Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 150–168).

Getty images

In March 1995, Getty Communications, a company set up by investment bankers Mark Getty and Jonathan Klein, saw potential in a fragmented world image market. It made its first acquisition by buying the London-based Tony Stone Images, at that time one of the world’s leading image agencies. Since then, it has taken over 20 more companies, spending about \$1 billion. The company went public on the Nasdaq in 1996.

Getty’s promotional material reveals that the company ‘is a leading force in building the world’s visual language, through its innovative creation, sourcing and distribution of imagery, fonts and related services to the communications industry worldwide’. The company claims to produce and distribute images that touch people every day all over the world. If it does indeed have this kind of global reach and this kind of influence on the images photographers now produce—and there is every indication that it does—we should take their claim seriously: Getty is a leading force in changing the world’s visual language from one which emphasised the photograph as witness, as record of reality, to one which emphasises photography as a symbolic system and the photograph as an element of layout design rather than as an image which can stand on its own. These changes in visual language are driven by the needs of global corporations, more specifically by the requirements of the concept of ‘branding’, as we will show in more detail below.

The generic image

Photographers we interviewed told us that images produced for Getty need to be general rather than specific. An image of a child with a cuddly toy, for example, can be

used to illustrate childhood worries and traumas of many kinds and in many contexts—the more uses it has, the more revenue it is likely to generate. [...] They promote generic photography, photography which no longer captures specific, unrepeatable moments, photography which denotes general classes or types of people, places, and things rather than specific people, places, and things. They achieve this in three ways:

- 1 Through decontextualisation,
- 2 Through the use of attributes, and
- 3 Through the use of generic models and settings.

Decontextualisation

A key characteristic of the vast majority of Getty images is that the background is either out of focus or eliminated altogether—many of the images are made in the studio, against a flat background. By means of such decontextualisation, a photograph is more easily inserted into different contexts and acquires a ‘conceptual’ feel. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 165), ‘by being decontextualised, shown in a void, represented participants become generic, a “typical example”, rather than particular, and connected with a particular location and a specific moment in time’.

Figure D2.1 illustrates these features. It shows an ambiguous space (with) ... the typical high lighting key. It is coded by Getty as being an ‘office space’, yet it might also be a large studio space.

Attributes

Figure D2.1 also illustrates the importance of props for the generic image. Props are used to connote not only the setting, but also the identities of the actors and the nature of activities, but in terms of ‘types’ rather than individual identities. An image might be categorised as ‘research, science, and technology’ and show a woman in a white coat, wearing glasses, working at a computer. Take away the white coat, and the woman might as well be a business woman. In Figure D2.1, it is the computer that signifies ‘office’. Since this attribute is so unspecific, a wide range of work settings can be signified by this image, allowing it to be used in articles dealing with frustration at work, relationship issues, competition and teamwork, and in success stories as well as stories about people who are bored at work, or suffer stress through overwork.

Models as generic people

In fashion, the faces of the models are often striking. In stock images, on the other hand however, the models are clearly attractive but not remarkable, because a striking face, an easily recognisable face, would be less easy to reuse. Not only casting, but also hair-style, makeup, and dress must help create ... categorisation (cf. van Leeuwen, 2000: 95).



Figure D2.1 Office space (Getty).

(V)isual categorisation is not an either/or matter, but depends on the degree to which cultural attributes and physiognomic stereotypes overwhelm or suppress people's unique, individual features. In Figure D2.1, the models have become interchangeable. Their individuality has been fully 'appropriated' by the type they are intended to represent, as Barthes would say (2009: 118). It is as if we are back in the era of medieval art, where saints and mythological or biblical characters were recognised, not on the basis of their physiognomy, but on the basis of their attributes (Jupiter carrying the thunderbolt, St. Catherine carrying the wheel) or on the basis of their dress or hairstyle (for example, St. Peter was an old man with hair and beard cut short and wearing a blue tunic and yellow cloak).

This use of a limited number of props leads to a highly clichéd vocabulary. [...] Christian Metz said that, while there is a limited stock of words in a given language, photographic images are infinite in number (1971: 118). But when we look at how the Getty image system represents a given category, for instance, 'people' or 'settings', we find that it has a quite limited visual vocabulary. Science is indexed by a white coat, construction by a hard hat or safety goggles, office work by a computer or filing cabinet, and so on. This is particularly important in relation to the representation of women. [...]

Timelessness

Closely related is the fact that image bank images tend to lose their origin in time and space. The past is reduced to a simple iconography, while the present becomes a symbolic world with a fairly stable global vocabulary.

The Observer of 9 June 2002 carried a Getty image of a woman wearing a headscarf and holding a child. The image was used to illustrate the conflict in Kashmir which was highly newsworthy at the time—and it came from the National Geographic collection which is incorporated in the Getty image bank. As is typical of National Geographic images, it is highly stylised, with rich, deep colours and an out-of-focus background. Here it is used to give the reader a sense of the effect of the conflict on ordinary people. It has been argued convincingly (Lutz & Collins, 1993) that National Geographic offers a very Western view of the world, always emphasizing enduring human values like motherhood, childhood, colourful clothes, and always using exotic settings to emphasise the colourfulness of humanity—at the expense of truly revealing difference and political realities. National Geographic itself is open about the way it uses photography (Abramson, 1987; Bryan, 2001), yet here all this is concealed, as the image is transformed from being a witness, a record of moments in the world, into a symbolic representation of the vulnerability of the mother and child in conflict. Again, there is in principle nothing wrong with symbolic representations of this kind. We need both the abstract truth of the symbolic representation and the empirical truth of the record. What is problematic is the confusion between the two that characterises the current period of transition from the hegemony of the one to the hegemony of the other.

Meaning potential

In the early 1960s, Roland Barthes (1977: 39) said that images are ‘polysemous’: ‘they imply, underlying their signifiers, a “floating chain” of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others’. Words, he said, are needed to ‘fix the floating chain of signifieds’ and ‘hold the connoted meanings from proliferating’, in other words, to control the meaning of images by selecting single specific meanings for them and expressing these meanings verbally in captions. More recent theories have emphasised how readers rather than captions anchor the meaning of images and, indeed, verbal texts as well. The texts themselves embody a meaning potential (Halliday, 1978), a set of possible meanings, and which of these meanings will be actualised depends on the context—on who ‘reads’, where, when, and for what reason. This is also the kind of ‘reading’ or rather ‘using’ that image banks cater for. Image bank images are not ‘anchored’ by a specific caption, but categorised in terms of a range of possible meanings, which are labelled by search words, words being more easily managed in a computer than images. These search words specify the kind of people, places, and things shown in the image, and sometimes also the period and the type of photograph. In addition, they provide a connotative meaning potential, categorising the images in conceptual terms, as expressing ‘freedom’, ‘romance’, and so on.

The search terms play a key role in the visual language of Getty—and they can also provide a framework for our investigation of it. They allow us to ask not ‘What does this image mean?’, but ‘What, according to Getty, can be said with this image, and with the Getty visual language as a whole?’ And this, of course, also allows us to ask: ‘What cannot be said in the Getty visual language?’ Here, for example, is a description of the meaning potential of a Getty image:

Open Plan, Bending, Computer Equipment, One Woman Only, Businesswoman, Office Equipment, Telephone, Full Length, Profile, Office, Caucasian, One Person, Working, Desk, One Young Woman Only, Upside Down, Casual, 25–30 Years, Using Computer, Contortionist, Lap-top, Business Person, Barefoot, Side View, Indoors, Day, Business, Agility, Office Equipment, Flexibility, Horizontal, Photography, Balance, Uniqueness, Colour, Individuality

Freedom

We end this [section] with a look at [an] image that realises the conceptual theme of 'freedom'. Freedom has been, and still is, a key concept in the history of Western thought, the basis of human rights, including the right of freedom of expression. In the Getty visual language, it has a consistent iconography. Figure D2.2 is representative of many hundreds of images catalogued as expressing 'freedom'.

The image is clearly a stock image with all the hallmarks of the generic image. There is no background apart from the blue sky—in freedom images blue skies are a must. The model is indistinct. If she were given a pair of glasses and a laptop she could be a



Figure D2.2 Freedom (Getty).

businesswoman. The focus is not so much on her as on the fact of her suspension mid-frame. Jumping or the raising of limbs generally (arms raised to heaven, legs raised on a bicycle) equals freedom, which therefore is interpreted as a subjective experience, a sense of freedom; the images are also categorised as expressing vitality and exhilaration, both of which have many of the same indexes in the image bank.

In the Getty visual language, concepts like 'freedom' and 'exhilaration' are overwhelmingly realised through the energetic physical activities of individuals, although there are also many American flags and Statues of Liberty with or without war planes flying overhead. American freedom is a mood, a passing feeling, expressed by jumping or other physical activities, and a concept drawing on 'new age' ideas of serenity and simplicity. An important part of the way branding works is by associating a product or company with morally loaded values. As a result, there is a market for the visual expression of such concepts, whereas there is less of a market now for visuals that provide concrete and specific descriptions, the visual of an earlier era of photography and of a time in which products were sold on the basis of their use value.

The semantics of the Getty visual language is a world of morality as 'mood', where freedom equals jumping and independence is a fashion statement. Needless to say, 'capitalism' is not a search term, and 'globalisation' throws up romantic images of global business. There is no category 'welfare state' and 'poverty' is only reflected in black and white archive images, so that an article on poverty has little choice but to use 1950s' images in their layout, which effectively helps create a cushion against the reality of poverty.

Global visual language

[...] At first glance, the image bank seems to offer an unlimited vocabulary with their several hundred thousand online images. Further exploration quickly led us to realise its limitations. The image bank is an ideologically pre-structured world, the categories it uses a catalogue of clichés and marketing categories. Phenomena which lie outside of this are excluded. Adorno (Adorno & Horkheimer [1991] 2016) was terrified by the way the culture industry, due to the logic of economics and economies of scale, fostered homogenisation and reproduced easily recognisable and easily digestible patterns. And he realised the importance of predictability. He realised that the culture industry needs predictability as it needs to predict the market, and that it can increase predictability by presenting the audience with a preset conceptual space that will allow them to recognise the product. All this, in turn, would remove the possibility for creativity and innovation.

Issues to consider

- Machin and van Leeuwen argue that the prevalence of stock images is changing the way we view photography from thinking about photographs as 'witnesses' (or 'documentary evidence' of particular events) to thinking about photography as a 'symbolic system' that has more to do with communicating and reinforcing

general ideas about the world. Do you think this is true? If so, what are the consequences of this on the way media represent reality?

- Machin and van Leeuwen talk about three key features of stock images: (1) decontextualization (the background/context of the image is deemphasized), (2) use of attributes (such as ‘props’ to signal particular kinds of places and particular kinds of people), (3) and the use of generic models (who have attractive, but not striking features). Browse through some popular internet websites and try to identify some images that you think might be stock photos based on them displaying one or more of these features. What kinds of ideologies are expressed through stock photos based on (1) the collections of search terms associated with them, (2) the ways certain abstract concepts such as ‘freedom’ and ‘morality’ are depicted, and (3) the kinds of people, places, and concepts that are *excluded* from image banks?

Future modes

Astrid Ensslin (reprinted from ‘Future modes’. In D. Perrin & C. Cotter (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of language and media*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018, pp. 312–315).

In what follows, I shall turn my attention to specific elements of the ‘mulsemedia turn’—those human senses that have previously been sidelined by multimodal scholarship: tactile sensation, olfaction and respiration, and gustation. The ensuing sections offer an insight into recent technological developments in an attempt to raise awareness of what is on the horizon for media linguists and semioticians.

Tactile sensation (touch)

Tactile sensation or ‘sense of touch’ differs from audiovisual sensation, in that it is ‘distributed over the body and involves physical contacts with the objects’ (Dahiya & Valle, 2013: 3). The interactive cognate to tactile sensation is haptic communication, i.e. communication via touch. Recent years have seen a proliferation of haptic devices that have been flooding the mobile technologies market: touchscreen-operated tablets and smartphones have made interaction via mouse and keyboard largely redundant and incorporate mechanisms adapted to the fingers of the human hand: tapping, swiping, pinching, and stretching are complemented by gravity sensors that activate display changes depending on the angle at which the device is positioned [...] [In] mainstream media, notably the children’s book market, haptically enhanced multimodal representation and interaction has proliferated, and toddlers can now interact with the likes of *Spot Goes to the Farm* (Hill, 2012), turning pages, opening digital doors, and flaps via touch-screen while being read the story, either by an actual person or digital voice-over.

Another important area for tactile applications is robotics. Recent R&D, especially in Japan, has created super-anthropomorphic robots, not only by making them look and speak (more or less uncannily) like humans (a.k.a. androids; Ulanoff, 2014), but by enabling them to read human emotions through gesture and voice (BBC News, 2014). Importantly, today’s robotics has developed tactile sensing to a degree of precision that might not only allow future robots to interact safely with humans and real-world objects alike (Dahiya & Valle, 2013), but will also allow humans to remotely

transfer haptic interaction in real time (such as the touch of a finger via a ‘tele-hug ring’ called ‘Ring U’ (Mixed Reality Lab, 2015). Finally, 3D printing has facilitated new avenues for so-called additive manufacturing for quasi-human, roboticized communication.

Finally, it is worth touching upon some recent manifestations of wearable technologies as manifestations of haptic media. Current forms include smart clothing, smart watches, and ‘wristputers’ for on-the-go communication and media consumption (Barrett, 2015). [...] Smart clothing or e-textiles embed electronics either into garments themselves or into the textile substrates they are made from, and they are typically connected to display devices. They can be put to manifold uses such as GPS tracking, healthcare, and fitness monitoring. Among more exploratory applications is MIT media lab’s recently prototyped ‘wearable’ book, or ‘sensory science fiction’ *The Girl Who Was Plugged In* (Tiptree Jnr. 1973), which connects an augmented book with a wearable vest, through which readers’ emotions activate changes in temperature and ambient lighting. Hence, human tactile sensation is part of a more comprehensive sea change in contemporary communications, which use the entire human (and/or android) body—rather than just our fingers or hands—as a platform on and through which electronic interaction takes place.

Olfaction and respiration (smell)

Smell, or olfaction, is arguably the ‘most liminal of the senses’ (Fjellestad, 2001: 63). Marginalized by science, religion, and philosophy for centuries, it has in the past three decades seen a sharp increase in economic, media, and academic attention. [...] [S]mell, and particularly its mediation, have not been without challenges for media producers. As early as 1959, the ‘first effective odor-distributing system for theaters’ (Hart, 2014). AromaRama was met with low audience acclaim, because the numerous smells it produced were perceived as ‘phoney,’ inauthentic, and overpowering, and the way in which the smells mixed produced some unintended, unpleasant effects (Ghinea et al., 2014: 2).

Undeniably, smells are physically more difficult to control than other modes, as their spread, dispersion, and sensory effects depend on natural conditions such as temperature, humidity, and air movement. Nonetheless, smell is connected to human emotions and perception of episodic memory, and therefore important for augmented reality simulations. Hence, scientists and software designers have experimented with olfactory displays and smell sensors (Nakamoto et al., 2008), olfaction-driven virtual reality games (e.g., *Fragra*, Mochizuki et al., 2004), and the simulation of wind and scent in 3D virtual space (Tominaga et al., 2001). Similarly, interactive urban smell maps and scent dictionaries have been created of Barcelona and London, for example, ‘in the hope that city planners will take more notice of inhabitants’ olfactory experiences when it comes to future decisions and designs’ (Clark, 2015).

Gustation (taste)

Probably the most challenging area for sensory communications and ‘one of the final frontiers of *immersive media* to be achieved’ (Ranasinghe et al., 2014: 7) is gustation or the human sense of taste. This is mostly due to how taste is produced in the mouth: receptors on the tongue are stimulated chemically (by soluble substances dissolved in saliva), thus producing specific gustatory sensations. Furthermore, taste is ‘intricately linked with olfaction’ (Ghinea et al., 2014: 7), but also, as has recently been shown by Franco-Columbian chef and food hacker Charles Michel (in collaboration with Cross-modal Research Lab), with vision, hearing (‘sonic seasoning’), and haptics (e.g., the tools with and on which food is presented) (Temperton, 2015). Thus, an authentic multisensory environment involving gustation needs to take into account the complex inter-sensory relationships and physiochemical processes at play in real-life scenarios, and to ‘manipulate chemical substances accurately’ (Ranasinghe et al., 2014: 7).

Issues to consider

- ❑ Most of the examples Ensslin gives for the ways haptic, olfactory, and gustative modes have been used so far come from media associated with entertainment (such as literacy works, games). Can you imagine applications for media incorporating these modes in the delivery of more ‘serious’ content (such as news or education)? Are certain modes more suited to certain content? Why?
- ❑ Of the ‘future modes’ Ensslin talks about, which do you think is most likely to be important in media in the future? Which do you think is least likely? Why?

MEDIA TALK AND MEDIA GENRES

D3

In units A3 and B3, we considered the notion of genre as a fairly conventionalized structural and discourse format which allows us to recognize, classify, and enjoy the vast range of media texts that we encounter in our daily lives. In this unit, we present two excerpts that explore in more detail some of the issues that we discussed in units A3 and B3. The first extract is from media scholar Martin Montgomery, who describes the genre of the media interview by examining different roles performed by the participants and the conventional styles of interaction in which they are engaged. In the second extract, linguist and media scholar Paola Catenaccio explores the notion of hybridity in media genres by examining examples of press releases, which combine elements of news stories and advertisements.

Media interviews

Martin Montgomery (reprinted from ‘The discourse of the broadcast news interview’, *Journalism Studies*, 9(2), 2008, pp. 260–277).

One significant characteristic of media interviews as a generic form lies in the way that they work as talk for an overhearing audience. Interviewers and interviewees know that what they say will be appraised not just by their immediate interlocutor but by who-knows-how-many beyond. This is not merely a matter of pressure towards increased circumspection in one’s choice of words, though that must undoubtedly exist. It is also a matter of the public performance of talk—of talking adequately for the public purposes of the encounter and of acquitting oneself well in public.

A second significant aspect of the media interview as a genre is the way in which they are characterised by clear differentiation or pre-allocation of roles: one speaker asks questions and the other answers them. The speaker who asks questions does so from an institutionally defined position, one in which they hold some responsibility for setting the agenda, the terms, or the topic of the discourse. Nor is it a case of simply asking questions; the media interviewer also controls the length, shape, and even the style of the encounter. Conversely, interviewees have in some way or other earned their role, their ‘communicative entitlement’ (Myers, 2000) by virtue of a distinctive attribute—as material for a documentary case study, as witness, as celebrity. And the nature of this entitlement is always ‘evidenced’ or constituted in practice within the interview: in other words, witnessing ‘celebrity-ness’ or ‘documentary-ness’ (Corner, 1995) is an outcome of the kinds of interrogation pursued within the interview. The interviewee ‘does witnessing’ in the interview in response to questions designed to display it.

As a special case of the media interview, the broadcast news interview itself is thus a particular manifestation of a widely available public genre, distinctive for the way that it offers journalists a crucial device for supplying quotable material to underpin the news. Even here, however, we must note that in practice, of course, broadcast news interviews are themselves not all of a single type. We may, indeed, distinguish four principal subgenres: (1) interviews with correspondents (reporting and commenting);

(2) interviews with ordinary people affected by or caught up in the news (witnessing, reacting, and expressing opinion); (3) interviews with experts (informing and explaining); and (4) interviews with ‘principals’ – public figures with some kind of responsible role in relation to the news event (accounting). These four subgenres may be defined in part by characterising the social identity and role of the person being interviewed and their characteristic contribution to the interview; but they could equally be described in terms of the kinds of lead-in that sets the agenda of the interview or the kinds of question that form its spine. For instance, a prototypical question to a correspondent is ‘can you tell us more about what is going on?’ (see Haarman, 2004), whereas prototypical questions to an ordinary witness or bystander include ‘What could you see ...?’ or ‘What did/does it feel like ...?’. [...]

The four main generic types of interview are: the accountability interview, the experiential interview, the expert interview, and the news interview with a correspondent, reporter, editor, which we term the affiliated interview. The typology will be illustrated through discussion of specific cases of the main sub-genres of news interview. In order to clarify the position of a specific interview within the typology of news interview genres, it is useful to distinguish between four broad parameters or axes. The first parameter defines the interviewee as affiliated with the news institution or not. The second parameter defines the interviewee as involved with the news event as an actor or responsible agent. The third parameter defines the interviewee as having first-hand knowledge of the event or holding knowledge about it. And the fourth stipulates the nature of their presumed alignment with the audience set up by the interview—whether with the interviewee or not. On this basis, the matrix in Table D3.1 can be constructed. Although this matrix generates a set of ideal-typical classifications to which many actual broadcast news interviews unproblematically correspond, there are in practice some instances of mixed or indecidable cases, or instances where an interview starts out as one type and shifts into another. Nonetheless, such typifications are associated with recognisable differences in interview, both in terms of broad

Table D3.1 Interview types distinguished by reference to affiliation, knowledge, agency, and audience

	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Audience alignment with interviewer</i>	<i>Audience alignment with interviewee</i>
Accountability interview	–	(of)	+	+	–
Experiential interview	–	(of)	–	+	+
Expert interview	–	(about)	–	+	–
Affiliated interview	+	(of/about)	–	–	–

purpose (within the overall discursive economy of the news) and particular discursive practice (for instance, type of lead-in or question), even though it must be accepted that part of the difficulty in defining the sub-generic types is that the roles of participants may on occasion be redefined through shifts of discursive practice.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Montgomery states that ‘One significant characteristic of media interviews as a generic form lies in the way that they work as talk for an overhearing audience.’ What are the strategies employed in these interviews to make audiences feel they are part of a wider group of ‘participants’ in this interaction? (When you get to unit D6, compare Montgomery’s view of media audiences with O’Keeffe’s.)
- ❑ Montgomery’s matrix of features offers a way of classifying an ‘ideal type’ of news interview. Create a corresponding matrix for features of a related media genre (for example, for interviews incorporated into a celebrity or music program format or for the contributing voices that make up a political documentary on radio or television).

Hybrid genres

Paola Catenaccio (reprinted from ‘Press releases as a hybrid genre. Addressing the informative/promotional conundrum.’ *Pragmatics*, 1, 2008, pp. 9–31).

Press releases are short pieces of writing issued by companies or institutions to communicate newsworthy information. [...] [T]hey are generally sent to the journalist community (but the intended primary readership has been recently shifting to the general public) with the purpose of having them picked up by the press and turned into actual news stories, thus generating publicity, in the conviction that third-party endorsement is the best way to promote a company’s image and reputation. As a result, they display a typical mix of informative and promotional, which makes them prime examples of what have been called ‘hybrid genres’ (cf. Bhatia 2004: 90; Fairclough 1992: 207), i.e., genres which are the result of the blurring of boundaries between discourses and which appear to be especially prominent in—though by no means limited to—the domain of contemporary media (Fairclough 2003: 35). [...]

The question then is: In what ways is the hybrid nature of the press release textualised in the genre? In what way are the features of promotional and reporting discourse combined in the rhetorical and cognitive structure of the press release so that we recognise it as a genre in itself?

A starting point for the identification of the cognitive moves and linguistic strategies typical of the genre is to look at the way in which they relate to the generic features of news reports and advertisements, respectively, which are illustrated below.

Structure of news articles

News articles have been the object of much research in recent years. One of the typical features of news reports is their ‘inverted pyramid’ structure, with the tip containing

the most important information and the rest of the report specifying, expanding, or detailing it (Hoey, 1983). Van Dijk's in-depth study of news discourse (1988) further identified the typical 'instalment' organisation of news stories, with the main event, first presented in the summary (headline plus lead), being returned to repeatedly in the course of the report. A similar framework has also been developed by White (1997, 1998) for the analysis of what he calls the 'hard news reports', which he sees in terms of a 'nucleus' (the summary) accompanied by a number of 'satellites' whose purpose is to specify the information provided in the nucleus. Satellites do not need to appear in a pre-determined order, but rather can be arranged (and rearranged) in several ways. [...]

Textual features of advertising

Promotional genres have also been studied extensively in the last few years, especially in the work of Bhatia (1993, 1997, 2000, 2004). In particular, it has been shown that they all share aspects of textual organization, which can be identified with certain cognitive moves (although not all moves are present in all promotional genres or in all the specimens of one particular genre). With reference to advertisements, Bhatia identifies the following move structure (Bhatia 2004: 65):

- 1 headline (for reader attraction)
- 2 targeting the market
- 3 justifying the product or service
 - by indicating the importance or need of the product or service
 - by establishing a niche
- 4 detailing the product or service
 - by identifying the product or service
 - by describing the product or service
 - by indicating the value of the product or service
- 5 establishing credentials
- 6 celebrity or typical user endorsement
- 7 offering incentives
- 8 using pressure tactics
- 9 soliciting response

The move structure of the press release, as illustrated in the example analyzed and adjusted on the basis of the other press releases included in the corpus, can be described as follows:

- 1 Press/news release caption (frame)
- 2 Headline
- 3 Summary of main points
- 4 'For immediate release' formula
- 5 Lead: Announcing newsworthy information
 - Launching a new product/service*
 - Announcing results and other company-internal information*
 - Describing other types of company's activity*

- 6 Justifying the product or service or simply the newsworthiness of the information
 - Indicating the need for the product/service, etc.*
 - Referring to the advantages for potential beneficiaries*
 - Qualifying the result as positive*
- 7 Detailing product/service/company/other event which is the object of the release
- 8 Explicit promotional component: Attributed to company official, standard user recursively
 - Emphasising positive results*
 - Indicating reliability of company/product*
 - Independently endorsing company results*
 - Independent expert opinion*
- 9 Boilerplate description(s)/establishing credentials
- 10 Contact details
- 11 Company logo

While not all moves are present in all press releases, some of them appear to be obligatory. Of the peripheral ones, press/news release caption, contact details, and company logo are always present, whereas the 'for immediate release formula' is often omitted, especially if the press release considered is only offered in electronic format. As regards the core features, headline, lead, a justification of the newsworthiness of the information, and some form of positive evaluation (whether in the body of the text, in which case it is fairly mildly worded, or in the quote, where it can be expressed in bolder terms, or both) appear to be constant characteristics. In the majority of the press releases analysed, positive evaluation is split into two components—a more clearly promotional one and a more soberly evaluative one.

Issues to consider

- Catenaccio shows that although essentially an informative genre, the press release has an implicit self-promotional purpose. Find an example of a press release and explore its moves. Which promotional elements from Catenaccio's systematic analysis are evident in your example?
- Catenaccio argues that 'genres which are the result of the blurring of boundaries between discourses [...] appear to be especially prominent in the domain of contemporary media'. Can you think of other media genres that are hybrid? In what ways do different media encourage generic hybridity?

D4 MEDIA STORYTELLING AND THE SHAPING OF REALITY

In this unit, we present two extracts that explore the forms and functions of narratives across different media. The first extract is by narrative scholar Michael Toolan, who investigates what he calls the ‘political orientation of a narrative’. The second extract by media scholar Ruth Page concerns narratives in the digital world, specifically stories told by celebrities on Twitter. She shows how the affordances of Twitter (for example, one-to-many communication, the constant presence of the audience) are utilized to tell particular types of stories and how these stories are simply an online extension of identity work performed by celebrities offline.

Agendas in news stories

Michael Toolan (reprinted from *Narrative: A critical linguistic introduction*, 2nd edition, London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 221–228).

The linguistic apparatus of political construal: notes on key resources

Here is a brief review of some of the key linguistic phenomena it seems sensible to examine when analyzing the political orientation of a narrative. Most are lexicogrammatical systems where choice of formulation or ‘slant’ is possible; they can all contribute to the discursual variations, transformations, or alternations to be found where different treatments of a news item are compared.

Transitivity. Following Halliday’s account of clause transitivity as the representation of reality, it is reasonable to look at just which entities are presented as participants in a text’s representation of events. Which individuals or groups tend to be cast as agent (sayer, thinker) and which tend to be cast as affected medium in the text (see also Passivization below)? What *kinds* of process are particular protagonists reported as initiating? And which relevant parties are scarcely mentioned at all?

Consider the protest against the Seattle WTO talks: was this chiefly a physical battle (as the abundant television coverage of police–protestor confrontations and the now-standard designation as *The Battle of Seattle* would suggest), or a conflict of wills, or more one than the other? Similarly, are protests against foxhunting or against genetically modified experimental crops as essentially physical (as distinct from mental and ethical) as they are often represented? The media, in their pursuit of exciting copy and a more dramatic portrait of the day’s happenings, are surely likely to represent matters in a more material and less mental way than might be the case. The success or failure of various campaigns (political, military, commercial) may have even more to do with winning hearts and minds than we tend to think. And it may be that the dominant party seeks to reinforce whatever physical/material advantage they have by their emphasis on that advantage in their statements (= stories) to the press, so that mental

(and verbal) opposition is worn down. These are highly speculative comments, but they seem to be important issues to do with textual presentation—and they are issues that a Hallidayan anatomy of transitivity enables us to explore.

Passivization, especially with agent deletion. Passive voice sentences are a significant representational variant, which need to be seen alongside their closest counterpart, the active mood sentence. For example, an initial representation of a key event may use a transitive material process clause, that is to say, a clause containing a physical process done by one participant to another. Active voice, the normal and simpler ordering, places the agent as subject, followed by the process undergone, followed by the affected entity as object, e.g.:

Police shoot Africans
Youths stab boy

A common variant of this is the complex transitive clause where an attribute or condition of the affected, perhaps arising as a result of the process stated, is also mentioned:

Police shoot Africans dead
Youths stab boy to death

But a further alternative, often with a distinctly different effect, is the passive construction. By passivization, the affected participant is brought to the focal subject position in the sequence, and the semantic agent can optionally be deleted:

Africans (are) shot dead (by police)
Boy stabbed to death (by youths)

With reference to informativeness, the reformulation says less: we no longer have an indication of the cause or agent of the process of shooting. But it does thematize (bring to the front) the most affected or changed participants.

Suppletion of agentless passives by intransitive clauses. A (agentless) passivized or complex-transitive clause can be supplanted by an intransitive clause relatively smoothly. Typically, both clauses will have the structure S-P-(A), and while there may have to be a change of lexical verb, the new verb choice can be close in meaning to the original:

Africans shot dead (in Salisbury riot)
Africans die (in Salisbury riot)
Boy stabbed to death on crime-ridden estate
Boy dies on crime-ridden estate

The affected participant, formerly in object position, is now the sole stated participant, occupying subject position, and the former description of a causal relation, what x did to y, is now simply a report of what happened to y, or even, of what y 'does'.

Nominalization. A nominalization is a conversion and encapsulation of what is intrinsically a clausal process in the syntactic form of a noun phrase, hence treating the entire process as an established ‘thing’—which can then serve as a participant in some other more directly reported and inspectable process. Nominalization ‘de-narrativizes’ a process, making the process mere background to a product or thing. This formulation: Damilola Taylor died of stab wounds is a process and a narrative. But the following equivalent.

The death of Damilola Taylor from stab wounds is a nominalization, assuming a narrative but not telling it. Similarly, in the Salisbury riot story—‘The deaths of 13 Africans’ nominalization can attenuate the sense of ‘shooting dead’ or ‘dying’ as experienced processes. The reformulations deflect the reader’s attention further from questioning whether these deaths were killings or not, and if so, who the killers were. Nominalization transformations such as this recast an implicit process into the form of a static condition or thing. This nominal condition or thing can then be used as the agent or affected participant or carrier of some other process, now becomes the focus of our attention:

The Taylors had accused Mr Hague of using **their son’s death** as a ‘political football’.

The deaths of 13 Africans triggered a further wave of violence in Salisbury townships today.

Nominalization is one of the crucial linguistic resources deployed in news reports. But as the examples above suggest, it can also be exploited and abused: it enables the user to refer without narrating, without clear and explicit report. The teller can be economical with the facts (as they see them). Nominalizations are exploited, used as sword and as shield, by every political and ideological faction or persuasion. In the explicitly political arena, they often serve to contrive implicit or explicit transfers of responsibility—unsurprisingly, in view of the fact that varying answers to the question ‘Who is to blame?’ lie at the heart of much political discourse. It is not that nominalization is inevitably ‘wrong’ or undesirable, it is an invaluable means of textual condensation, e.g. in academic and scientific writing. But it clearly can be used, in barely perceptible ways, to background what arguably should be in the foreground. [...]

Namings and descriptions [...]. Consider again Trew’s news stories about riots and killings (we can note relevantly, that the *Salisbury, Rhodesia*, of the 1970s has become *Harare, Zimbabwe*). Were those who acted *rioters, demonstrators, or troublemakers*; were they a unified group or was there a ruthless, violent minority among the majority; were those actually shot representative of the entire group, or innocent bystanders, or ringleaders, or what? Notice, in passing, the contrasting evaluations carried by the words *leader* and *ringleader*. Were the police ordinary police or special police, black, or white, or mixed, or both – but stratified. If trained to deal with riots, trained by whom, with what objectives? How many police actually opened fire, were they young, nervous recruits, or hardened old stagers? All the foregoing questions are probing both

the facts and, by implication, their proper reported description; and all descriptions carry some interpretative and political charge. [...] Some sets of variant description are particularly familiar, and often contain noticeably positive or negative evaluation: cf. *terrorist* versus *freedom fighter* versus *gunman* versus *men* [sic] *of violence*; *question* versus *allegation*; *reply* versus *rebuttal*; *answer* versus *refute*; *opinion* versus *allegation*; *opinion* versus *fact*; *answer* versus *justification*; *national security* versus *government cover-up*; *policy* versus *expediency*. [...]

Issues to consider

- ❑ Toolan says that the kinds of things that are tellable depend very much on the culture or community in which they are intended to be told. What kinds of stories are highly tellable in your own peer group, community, or culture? Do you think the same stories would also be considered tellable more widely in other communities and cultures? Why or why not?
- ❑ Toolan shows how the system of language, including both grammar and lexis, can be utilized to create a particular ideological slant on events. Scan a number of articles on political topics published in widely read newspapers that you are familiar with. Are there any other ways apart from language that are utilized to emphasize a particular ideological point of view or particular agenda?

Stories on social media

Ruth Page (reprinted from *Stories and social media*. New York and London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 98–110).

Celebrity practice stories told in Twitter

[...] The stories that construct celebrity identity on Twitter are shaped by their interactive context, including the relationship between the narrator and his or her audience. Twitter homepages contain scant biographical information about narrators. Instead, the interaction between tweeter and their audience is a crucial factor that distinguishes between the identities of mainstream celebrities and ‘ordinary’ tweeters. One difference concerns the size of the tweeter’s known audience. [...] As might be predicted, celebrity tweeters have many more Followers than ‘ordinary’ tweeters. [...] The asymmetrical relationship between tweeter and audience is reflected in the choice of whether to use addressed messages or updates. Addressed messages suggest peer-to-peer conversation, while updates are one-to-many broadcasts. The relative proportion of types of Twitter behaviour suggests subtle contrasts between the ways in which celebrity and ‘ordinary’ figures interacted with their followers. These results suggest that the most frequent type of Twitter activity is the posting of an update. Update tweets may ask a question; report on activities, conversations, and locations; or share a link. With such varied functions, it is perhaps not surprising that this is the most frequent type of positing behavior, and further analyses may reveal greater variation in

the use of Twitter. [...] The general patterns of Twitter behavior surveyed in this study thus suggest that celebrities favor one-to-many communicative practices, a dynamic well suited to broadcasting information to a sizeable fan base rather than conversing with a smaller number of peers.

Narrative tweets and linearity

As with many other forms of social media, the linearity of narrative tweets is derived from the representation of time generated from the timestamp in the tweet template, the position of the tweet within an archive of updates and the content of the tweet itself. Tweets are posted in a standard template that automatically generates the minimal narrative cues of a timestamp and the tweeter's username and profile photograph. [...] Unlike past tense verbs, which were taken to be definitive of canonical narratives of personal experience, the abbreviated style, typical of Twitter discourse, relies on verbal phrases that are often truncated. Typically, the verb forms in Twitter omit the auxiliary particle, leaving only the *non-finite* forms of the past or progressive participle.

Excited to break ground on our second veterans home this week. Watch at <http://tweetcast.in>

(Schwarzenegger: Fri, 21 May 2010: 17:29)

The effect of truncating the verb phrase in this way is that the tense of the clause becomes ambiguous. Although there is not a direct correlation between the verb tense and narrative time, the absence of the tensed auxiliary means that the tweets could be interpreted as referring to events that take place in the past, or non-finite participles could refer to events in the present or future:

Roasting in Paris today. Hitting with Pablo Cuevas at 2pm

(Andy_Murray: Sun, 23 May 2010: 10:34)

This temporal ambiguity is a highly appropriate strategy for bridging the asynchronous nature of twitter discourse, eliding the gap between narrative event, report, and reception.

The combination of non-finite verb forms, which generate a free-floating temporal frame of reference, and the high frequency of temporal adverbs, which anchor the tweet's chronological context in *here* and *now of today* and *tonight*, gives rise to a sense of ongoing present in which the narrative tweets are continually situated. Any sense of retrospection is diminished, as each episode is received within the context of an ever-present *now*. The sense of ongoing temporal present in the Twitter stories is entwined with the use of Twitter to create an ongoing sense of presence between the speaker and the audience.

Narrative tellability: front and back stage performance

[...] Mainstream media has sensationalized celebrity use of Twitter as a means of accessing the intimate details of their private life, for example, Shaquille O’Neal had just worked out (Johnson, 2009) or Demi Moore had steamed her husband’s suit while dressed in a bikini (*Demi Moore in bikini shot...*, 2009). However, glimpses of personal disclosure are by no means the only kind of story found in celebrity tweets. Instead, the tellability of narratives used in celebrity practice is negotiated within the collapsed contexts of Twitter, which blurs an easy distinction between front and back stage regions for performance.

Goffman’s dramaturgical metaphor of front and back stage regions suggests that these settings are distinct environments. There is a clear boundary separating the front and back regions, with the back stage region ‘cut off ... by a partition and guarded passageway’ (1959, 115) that conventionally excludes the front stage audience. Although Twitter is an environment that is outside the institutional media system, it functions as a public environment in which the audience is still present. In this sense, Twitter is not an authentic back stage region (in Goffman’s use of the term), but an environment in which pseudo-back stage performances are broadcast publicly to fans. I use the terms pseudo-back stage for these Twitter performances, not because the content is necessarily false or untrue, but because the reports remain mediated, publicly staged constructions of authenticity for the front stage audience. Twitter is not a space where the performer can ‘relax’ as if the audience were not present. Instead, Twitter is an additional environment in which celebrities can manage their communication with their fans.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Page shows how Twitter facilitates the telling of particular kinds of stories—stories that are recent or happening now—and how this creates an ongoing sense of presence between the speaker and the audience. Think about other types of digital tools such as Instagram or Snapchat. Do they facilitate similar kinds of stories as the ones discussed by Page above or are the stories different? How are tellership and tellability established in stories told on Instagram or Snapchat as opposed to Twitter?
- ❑ Ruth Page says that ‘Twitter is not a space where the performer can “relax” as if the audience were not present’. Thinking about your own media use—digital and non-digital—where are the spaces where you can relax and engage in a more private communication? Are these spaces located in the online or offline world or both? What makes these environments more ‘relaxing’?

D5 MEDIA PRODUCTION

In units A5 and B5, we discussed a variety of practices and processes that take place ‘behind the scenes’ when media content is produced. We focused on discursive and textual practices such as entextualization and intertextuality as well as professional norms and rules that guide media production. In this unit, we present three excerpts, each of which adds further perspectives on these issues. The first excerpt by linguist and media scholar Colleen Cotter highlights the relevance of prescriptive language norms and lay ideas about language use for journalistic practices of writing and editing. In the second excerpt, sociolinguist Alan Bell explores in detail features of news that make them newsworthy. The third excerpt by linguist and digital media scholar Eva Gredel moves away from professional news writing and turns to lay editing practices that underpin content produced on digital platforms such as Wikipedia.

Norms of everyday journalism

Colleen Cotter (reprinted from *News Talk. Investigating the language of journalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 187–195).

While many people consider the media’s handling of language an affront to good usage, the news media in fact have a fairly prescriptive and conservative rather than innovative and laissez-faire attitude toward language use. Print and broadcast media are concerned with maintaining their own style rules as well as upholding the mainstream language-use standards of society; copyeditors (or subeditors) actively aim to ‘preserve’ the language. [...]

Language standardization is a process generally wrought by conscious intervention on the part of social groups, either in a collectively unreflective and somewhat ad hoc manner or very deliberately, either from within a speech community or from without (by, for example, government committee). The goal of language standardization, as Milroy and Milroy (1999: 6) succinctly put it, is the ‘suppression of optional variability in language’ to minimize variety and choice. A standard language means that one form or variety of usage is preferred, privileged, and expected to be used in particular social contexts and discourse situations, and is considered the norm to aspire to. The parameters under which standardization and variation (optional or otherwise) occur are linguistic, sociolinguistic, social, and operational (Table D5.1).

Standardization generally refers to the written rather than the spoken variety. Indeed, as many scholars have pointed out (Bex, 1996; Chafe, 1984; Milroy & Milroy, 1999; etc.), standard language practices have been facilitated by the rise of the written word—and of the ‘complaint tradition’ that sprang up alongside it—enabled by the invention of the printing press and subsequent technologies. It is most often the case that the written variety trumps the spoken in all arguments about ‘correct’ usage.

News practitioners respond to socially motivated standardization pressures. At the same time, they work actively to honor the discursive metalinguistic norms and rules

Table D5.1 Standardization parameters

<i>Parameters</i>	<i>Mechanisms</i>
• Linguistic	Favours one form over others: – <i>Phonological</i> – <i>Lexical</i> – <i>Syntactic</i> – <i>Stylistic</i>
• Sociolinguistic	Prestige carrier Norm function Written modality
• Social	Institutions Power, exercise, and reinforcement of implementation process (can be ad hoc or deliberate) Speech community inputs (or not)
• Operational	Prescriptive grammars Dictionaries Language mavens (ef. Pinker, R. Lakoff, Bolinger)

of their craft. [...] It is important to note that the issue of standard usage in and of itself ties in with and is somewhat inseparable from the journalistically motivated standardization that circumscribes news genre forms. Mainstream and journalistic ideologies intertwine; lay notions of usage are blended with journalistic ones.

In the newsroom, the copyeditors are considered the word experts. (Copyeditors deal with the particulars of language—usage editing—as opposed to content editing, which is what section editors primarily do.) Within the journalism realm, copyeditors are viewed as the ‘protectors’ of the language; indeed, one widely used copyediting textbook (Baskette, Sissors, & Brooks, 1986) titled a chapter on usage, ‘Protecting the Language’. Journalism educators, many of them former or current reporters or editors, help support and perpetuate the language-maven approach to usage, making explicitly clear to students—and colleagues—the necessity of maintaining prescriptive rules. Their actions and attitudes follow logically and smoothly along the lines of the ‘complaint tradition’ and the promotion of the larger culture’s standard language ideology. At the same time, these actions and attitudes support the communicative norms intrinsic to being a member of the journalist community.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Cotter argues that journalists and editors follow prescriptive rules about language use when producing and editing media texts. Can you think of examples of such rules? Who apart from journalists ensures that these rules are followed?
- ❑ Can you think of 'spaces' (for example, programs, channels) in established media where non-standard language use occurs? What functions does it perform?

Newsworthiness

Allan Bell (reprinted from *The language of news media*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, pp. 156–158).

NEGATIVITY is what comes to people's minds as the basic news value. Negative events make the basic stuff of 'spot' news. It is a true platitude that news is bad, although it is a difficult question why the negative makes news. Involved in negativity are a number of concepts such as damage, injury, or death, which make disasters and accidents newsworthy (and unchallengeable subjects for narratives). Conflict between people, political parties, or nations is a staple of news [...]. Deviance is another negative characteristic with proven news interest.

RECENCY (Bell, 1983) means that the best news is something which has only just happened. Time is a basic dimension of news stories. Recency is related to Galtung and Ruge's (1973) concept of FREQUENCY—how well a story conforms with news work cycles. The day is the basic news cycle for the press and principal television and radio news programs, while staple radio news works on an hourly cycle. This means that events whose duration or occurrence fits into a 24-hour span are more likely to be reported. So the murder is more newsworthy than the police investigation, the verdict more than the trial.

PROXIMITY means quite simply that geographical closeness can enhance news value. The minor accident is reportable only in the settlement where it happens, not a hundred miles away. The carnival coming to town is news only in the town it comes to. Related is Galtung and Ruge's factor of MEANINGFULNESS—the cultural familiarity and similarity of one country with another, not just the physical distance between them.

The CONSONANCE of a story is its compatibility with preconceptions about the social group or nation from which the news actors come. Thus editors have stereotypes about the manner in which Latin American governments or the British royal family behave. Schank and Abelson (1977) developed the concept of script to explain this. People have a mental script for how certain kinds of events proceed. [...]

UNAMBIGUITY indicates that the more clear-cut a story is, the more it is favoured. Ifs, buts, and maybes are minimal. The 'facts' are clear, the sources impeccable.

UNEXPECTEDNESS means the unpredictable or the rare is more newsworthy than the routine. Closely related is NOVELTY. 'New' is the key word of advertising, and one of the main factors in news selection. Science is a low-priority news area, but gains coverage when there is a 'breakthrough' to report.

SUPERLATIVENESS says that the biggest building, the most violent crime, the most destructive fire gets covered (Galtung and Ruge's term is THRESHOLD).

RELEVANCE is the effect on the audience's own lives or closeness to their experience. Achieving relevance for a story causes much head-scratching and labour in

newsrooms. A common angle on economic announcements, political decisions, or scientific breakthroughs is to lead with what they supposedly mean for the ordinary reader: more money in the pocket or a better paint for houses. Relevance need not be the same as proximity. Many decisions relevant to New Zealand are made 15,000 km away in Washington, D.C.

PERSONALIZATION indicates that something which can be pictured in personal terms is more newsworthy than a concept, a process, the generalized, or the mass. Striving for personalization has brought journalists to grief—for instance, in the *Washington Post's* Janet Cooke affair. Cooke's feature writing about an eight-year-old drug addict won a 1981 Pulitzer Prize, which was withdrawn when it was found the boy did not exist.

ELITENESS of the news actors plays an important role in news decisions. Reference to elite persons such as politicians or film stars can make news out of something which would be ignored about ordinary people. Similarly, the elite nations of the First World are judged more newsworthy than the non-elite nations of the South.

The quality of ATTRIBUTION—the eliteness of a story's sources—can be crucial in its news chances. Highly valued news sources need to be elite on some dimension, particularly socially validated authority. The unaffiliated individual is not well regarded as a source. In a study of climate change news (Bell, 1989), I found that only two out of the 150 sources cited were not backed by affiliation with some organization or institution.

Finally, FACTICITY (Tuchman, 1978) is the degree to which a story contains the kinds of facts and figures on which hard news thrives: locations, names, sums of money, numbers of all kinds.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Think of some recent news stories that have stood out for you and try and say what it is about these stories that made them newsworthy. Use Bell's list to identify the qualities in each of the stories.
- ❑ Do you agree with the qualities listed by Bell? Are some of these qualities more or less important than others? Discuss the list in pairs and arrange the various qualities in order of most important to least important explaining why.

Digital media production

Eva Gredel (reprinted from 'Digital discourse analysis and Wikipedia: Bridging the gap between Foucauldian discourse analysis and digital conversation analysis.' *Journal of Pragmatics*, 115, 2017, pp. 91–114).

Edit warring as unauthorized practice in Wikipedia discourses

[...] Thus, starting point for the analysis is that some users in the English community engage in a so-called edit war. Quantitatively oriented studies pointed out that edit wars help to locate which topics are the most controversial ones (Borra et al., 2015).

Wikipedia itself defines an edit war as: ‘An edit war occurs when editors who disagree about the content of a page repeatedly override each other’s contributions’ (Wikipedia: Edit warring, 2020). When we consider the revision history of the analyzed discourse fragment and select the edits that affect the change of the title (in the Wikipedia jargon it is a ‘page move’), we find that since 17/03/2014 there have been 20 changes of the title [...] Most of them are not authorized via a requested move and consequently were reverted by administrators within minutes. Especially in early April 2014, user#1 and user#2 engage in edit warring by changing the title several times. Besides the changes concerning the toponyms (‘Russia’ versus ‘Russian Federation’ and ‘Crimea’ versus ‘Crimea and Sevastopol’), the discourse analytically more interesting opposition is the one of the nouns accession and annexation where users engage vehemently in debating about these alternatives. They try to establish their preferred keyword and thus to stable their discursive position. [...]

Discursive strategies of delegitimizing co-contributors on Wikipedia talk pages

ACCUSATION OF BEING A TROLL

User#15 is the user who challenged the originally by the page creator user Moscow Connection chosen title Crimea’s accession to Russia by starting a requested move. Within minutes, there are several contributors who disagree with him:

Example 6

Article shouldn’t represent anyone’s pov. it should be neutral (User#17, Wikipedia, 2016k).

Example 7

W U tell it to me??? Did I say it was Ukrainian POV? I made this remark because there is no Ukrainian POV. Read the article its ridiculous in the moment (User#15, Wikipedia, 2016k).

Due to the accusation in example 6, User#15 changes from a rather formal style to an informal one (example 7). Another user then joins the discussion, heavily blaming user User#15 and discrediting his behaviour:

Example 8

‘User#15 is a troll, please stop arguing with him’ (User#18, Wikipedia, 2016k).

Trolls can be seen as interlocutors who do not stick to policies and guidelines of digital environments, violating them in a very internet-specific way (Shachaf & Hara, 2010: 357), in (supposed) troll communication trying to challenge the community on Wikipedia: ‘Despite Wikipedia’s strong community feeling, in any group there are always a few bad apples. On Wikipedia, these took the form of trolls’ (Meyer, 2013: 72). Anderson describes so-called trolls as ‘someone [...] waiting to stir up conflict by posting controversial or inappropriate messages or by insulting other users’ (Anderson, 2011: 71). Further, scholars agree that trolling includes communicative acts with a ‘deceptive, destructive, or disruptive’ nature (Buckels, Trapnell, & Paulhus, 2014: 97)

'luring others into pointless and time-consuming discussions' (Herring et al., 2002: 372). Donath describes the reaction of other users confronted with (supposed) troll communication: 'If they are cognizant of trolls [they] attempt to both distinguish real from trolling postings and, upon judging a poster to be a troll, make the offending poster leave the group' (Donath, 2000: 45). She further states that 'even if the accusation is unfounded, being branded a troll is quite damaging to one's online reputation' (Donath, 2000: 45). Thus, the accusation of being a troll is a severe insult in digital culture, and consequently User#15 vehemently refuses the allegation using special micro-linguistic computer-mediated communication features in his post referring to the Wikipedia policy 'Civility':

Example 9

I'm not a troll. Please watch your behavior!!!!!! This article was biased before. It is much better now. [...] I have been editing Wikipedia for two years. I have mostly removed vandalism and created football articles. I don't like to be called troll: (I see that You have joined only two weeks ago, read some stuff there -> WP:CIVIL (User#15, Wikipedia, 2016k).

Issues to consider

- ❑ When producing media content online, some people engage in behaviors that are disruptive and/or destructive. This is described as trolling (see unit B1), and it can involve insults, provocations, deception, or other forms of inappropriate behavior. But not all practices that are labelled trolling are really trolling. It might be that people just wish to voice an alternative opinion, and expressing different opinions does not necessarily make a person a troll. Can you think of examples of what you would describe as 'proper trolling'? Maybe you have come across trolling in your own social media networks. What impact can trolling have on social media users? Can you think of strategies of how we could deal with trolls so that the negative impact of their online activities could be minimized?
- ❑ Gredel says that edit wars are likely to occur when editors work on controversial topics. What kind of themes and topics do you consider controversial? Can you imagine these topics being the subject of an edit war on Wikipedia? Why or why not?

D6 PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORKS AND SURVEILLANT MEDIA

In this unit, we present two excerpts about participation frameworks in media. In the first, Anne O’Keeffe shows the inadequacy of traditional dyadic models of communication for the analysis of media communication, and theorizes about the participation status of audiences when it comes to broadcast media. In the second excerpt, Rodney Jones discusses how different kinds of media present users with affordances for and constraints on ‘mutual monitoring’, and thus facilitate different kinds of surveillance.

A participation framework approach to media audiences

Anne O’Keeffe (reprinted from *Investigating media discourse*. London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 15–19).

Towards a model for dyadic communication

The most basic and relatively unquestioned model of communication involves the notion of a two-way flow between a speaker and a hearer. The speaker encodes a message and the hearer decodes it, and so on. While, at a schematic level, this dyadic model abstracts the core process of communication, many have commented on its inadequacies and the need for its refinement so as to accommodate the actual conditions of spoken encounters. [...] In fact, Goffman (1981) argues that the traditional speaker–hearer model of interaction is insufficient for all forms of talk. Media discourse, on the surface, appears to fit the dyadic model of speaker and listener, for example, a newscaster (speaker) and an audience (listener). Even more straightforward might be mediated interactions such as radio phone-ins or television chat shows where the speaker and hearer roles alternate, for example, a caller or chat show guest who has an issue, grievance, or problem is sometimes the speaker and sometimes the listener, and the same can be said of the presenter. Even after a brief analysis, it becomes clear however that there is an inherent inadequacy in the traditional dyadic speaker–hearer model. [...]

Let us consider the communicative parameters of spoken media discourse encounters:

- Conversation takes place between at least two people in either a voice-only medium (radio) or full audio-visual medium (television).
- The participants very often do not know each other.
- At least one participant (a media persona) may be ‘known’ to the audience and may have a relatively constant ‘presence’ in the encounter and so he or she (as a persona) is familiar to the audience, but the audience as individuals are not familiar to him or her.

- ❑ Unlike in casual conversation, one of the participants (the media persona) usually has more power than the non-media participant and so has extra discourse rights, for example to open/close calls and topics, and control turn-taking.
- ❑ The mediated encounter normally has an audience which can interject and react verbally to what it hears, but it is not normally co-present, so an audience member's utterance usually has no bearing on the ongoing interaction.
- ❑ With the advent of internet access, any media audience is potentially global.

Already, we can see that the basic dyadic conversational paradigm of speaker–hearer is not broad enough to account for mediated encounters between participants and an audience.

In accepting the traditional paradigm, the question of the hearing status of the audience in broadcast genres (such as radio phone-ins, chat shows, news interviews, and so on) is for the most part ignored by analysts. In the literature, the audience is often described as ‘overhearers’ or ‘eavesdroppers’. For example, Montgomery (1986: 428) says that it is common for the audience to be the ‘overhearing recipient of a discourse’ (see also Heritage, 1985). ...[But] limiting one’s analysis to talk as a product of an institution for a public audience of *overhearers* will not be helpful. An unquestioning acceptance that the audience falls somewhere between involvement and exclusion is tantamount to saying that the audience has an unofficial status. Let us now look at a *participation framework* model that will help to account for the participation dynamics between mediated discourse and audience.

A participation framework

Goffman (1981: 137ff.) stresses that the participants in any exchange guide, orient and modify their talk within their *participation framework* in pursuit of their goals.

Participation framework refers to the instantaneous view of any social gathering relative to the act of speaking at any one moment. It offers an alternative for media discourse to the dyadic model of communication which, as we have discussed above, fails to accommodate the audience. For the purposes of media discourse, there are two key insights to be gained from Goffman’s argument:

The traditional speaker–hearer model takes no account of the unratified hearers, that is, anyone intentionally or unintentionally within earshot of the conversation. The traditional model does not accommodate the ambiguity of the listener. In multi-party talk a listener as a hearer and a listener as an addressee are not always synonymous.

(Goffman, 1981: 132)

On the first point, Goffman’s views underpin the analysis of media discourse as a participative event. Goffman’s notion of *ratified* and *unratified* hearers can be applied to say that everyone who watches/listens to a television or radio programme, is a *ratified hearer*. They are part of the discourse event and may join in if they choose (albeit under certain conditions, as will be discussed below). We can say, therefore, that in media

discourse events, there are no unratiated hearers. There are no eavesdroppers. Some of the audience may be ‘half listening’, with televisions or radios turned on in the background as they attend to local matters, but parallels for this are easily found in everyday conversational frameworks also. This model allows us to promote the audience to official hearer status within the event. The audience is no longer an overhearer of talk on television or radio; they have a place within the *participation framework*. This provides the analyst with a mandate to examine how talk is modified and guided by the studio participants (e.g. host and guest) to meet the demands of fully ratified hearers who are not physically present, but who are *out there* within the participation framework. To summarize at this stage, within this more dynamic paradigm, we can say that:

- ❑ Television and radio audiences are never overhearers (the nature and function of television and radio in any case is to *broadcast*).
- ❑ Members of the audience are official or ratified hearers even if they are not fully watching/listening.
- ❑ As in casual conversation, the roles of speaker, hearer, and addressee can, where conditions allow, interchange. ... [T]he audience can be directly addressed by the presenter of a show, and a hearer in a radio interaction can, in the case of a phone-in show, contact the studio and become a speaker/addressee in a dyadic interaction.

Issues to consider

- ❑ In this excerpt, O’Keeffe makes the argument that audiences in broadcast media should be considered *auditors* (that is, ‘ratified’ participants) rather than overhearers (usually ‘unratified’ participants). However, other media scholars (such as Brand & Scannell, 1991; Montgomery, 2008, see unit D3) argue that some broadcast or cinema audiences are positioned as overhearers (or even eavesdroppers), especially when conversations between the people ‘on air’ are designed to make audiences *feel* like they are listening in on a private conversation. Can you think of examples of when audiences are positioned as auditors and when they are positioned as overhearers? What kinds of techniques are used to accomplish this kind of positioning?

Surveillant media

Rodney H. Jones (reprinted from ‘Surveillant media: Technology, language and control’. In C. Cotter and D. Perrin (eds.) *The Routledge handbook of language and media*. London: Routledge, 2017, pp. 244–252).

Most work on language and media has focused on media as means of disseminating information. Less attention has been paid to media as means of gathering information, especially information from or about individuals who may not be aware that it is being gathered. [...] Throughout history, the development of each new communication technology has brought with it new ways of recording and storing information. Media do not just create new ways of gathering information, but also new kinds of information

to gather and new reasons for doing so. The development of writing systems and printing technologies, for example, made it easier to reproduce private information and disseminate it to the public, redefining the boundaries between public and private (Yao, 2011), and also made it possible for governments and institutions to archive and store large amounts of information for long periods of time, giving rise to the modern bureaucratic state whose text-based surveillance capacities reached their height in the mid-20th century with institutions like the East German Stasi (Ash, 2009). Starting in the mid-19th century, a host of new technologies were developed which radically increased the possibilities for monitoring and recording the communications and actions of others, including the camera, the phonograph, the telephone, the radio, and the television. These technologies acted both to democratize access to information and to make it more difficult for people to control how information about them was gathered and disseminated (Lauer, 2012). The threats they saw from photography and ‘other modern device[s] for recording and reproducing sights and sounds’, in fact, served as the main impetus for Warren and Brandeis’s famous formulation of the ‘right to privacy’ (1890: 206).

In the age of digital media, not only have the surveillant functions of media come to rival their communicative functions, but surveillance and communication have become intimately intertwined: the kinds of search results we get on Google are determined by the data Google has gathered about our past searches; the books and music that are recommended to us are the result of data gathered about what we have read or listened to before; and the ability of internet companies and data brokers to gather valuable information about our online activities is intimately connected to the ways we communicate with friends and followers on social network sites. As more and more of our lives—from dating to shopping to healthcare—are mediated through technologies, more and more information about us has become available for others to monitor, to record, and to use in all sorts of ways that have little to do with the contexts in which this information was produced.

Perception, participation, and information architectures

The foundation of all practices of surveillance and indeed, all practices of communication is *perception*, the ability to see, hear, or otherwise monitor another person. Evolutionary psychologists such as J.J. Gibson (1979) tell us that social life is predicated upon our ability to perceive and be perceived by others. It should be added that social life is also predicated on one’s ability to, at times, *not* perceive or be perceived by others. In other words, a key feature of how we function in the social world has to do with the degree to which we are able to control the extent to which we are able to monitor others and they are able to monitor us.

Goffman (1981) calls the social structures that govern who gets to monitor whom ‘participation frameworks’. Participants in social interaction, he points out, are of many kinds. Not only are there ‘speakers’ and ‘hearers’, but there are also ‘addressees’, ‘overhearers’, ‘bystanders’, and ‘eavesdroppers’, each with different kinds of rights and responsibilities when it comes to monitoring and being monitored by others. Participation frameworks are the sets of possibilities that different social situations afford for different people to take on different participant roles and to control their ability to

monitor and be monitored, and media provide the technological infrastructures for these frameworks, providing the ‘windows’ and ‘walls’ that allow us to divide space (both physical and ‘virtual’) into ‘regions’ (‘backstage’, ‘frontstage’) and to achieve the ‘complex co-ordinations of presences and absences’ (Couldry & McCarthy, 2003: 23) necessary for what Goffman (1959) calls ‘audience segregation’.

Often when we speak of media as providing infrastructures for participation, we use architectural metaphors, as I did above. This is not surprising, given that walls, windows, doorways, and other features of the built environment were among the first tools humans used to shield themselves from the perception of others, and to gain access to others’ behaviour (through, for example, peering through windows or keyholes) (Locke, 2010). [...] As Meyrowitz (1985: 6), drawing on both the work of Goffman and McLuhan, argues, media affect social interaction by directing or obstructing the flow of information between people. ‘Electronic media affect us’, he writes, ‘not primarily through their content, but by changing the “situational geography” of social life’.

When it comes to surveillance, the most famous architectural metaphor is undoubtedly Foucault’s invocation of the ‘panopticon’, Jeremy Bentham’s plan for a prison in which inmates are situated along the periphery of a circle with the guards concealed in a tower in the center, simultaneously enabling the guards to monitor all the prisoners and preventing the prisoners from seeing either the guards or the other prisoners. The effectiveness of the design, as Bentham and later Foucault pointed out, lies not just in the fact that it makes it easy for guards to watch the prisoners, but that it makes it difficult for prisoners to watch guards, forcing them to assume that they are being watched at all times, whether they are or not. As Foucault (1977: 201) puts it, ‘The major effect of the Panopticon (is) to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power’.

The metaphor of the panopticon has often been used to discuss the kind of surveillance made possible by electronic media such as CCTV cameras (Koskela, 2002), which allow widespread monitoring of citizens while concealing the identity and locations of those who are carrying out the monitoring, and networked computing, which allows those in control of servers to monitor the flows of information that pass through them (Lyon, 1994) [...] Others, however, have questioned the appropriateness of the metaphor of the panopticon to describe the participation frameworks and affordances for surveillance made possible by electronic media, offering up alternative architectural metaphors, such as Mathiesen’s notion of the ‘synopticon’, an information architecture supported by television and film which enables the many to watch the few.

Mathiesen (1997) offers the synopticon not as a replacement for the panopticon, but as a complement to it. Modern society is characterized, he says, by information architectures which *both* allow the few to see the many and the many to see the few, and these architectures have ‘reciprocal’ functions. Another important point he makes is that the surveillance of the synopticon, like that of the panopticon, operates not just through the altering the physical conditions of visibility, but also by altering people’s consciousness of visibility such that they come to control themselves rather than having to be controlled. Whereas the panopticon does this through fear and paranoia, the synopticon does it by creating a sense of *pleasure* around practices of surveillance. The fascination of audiences with, for example, ‘reality television’ programs, illustrates

the degree to which media which allow the many to watch the few construct 'watching' and 'being watched' as [...]entertainment rather than punishment. [...]

Gane (2012) suggests a more updated version of the synopticon, a 'synopticon 2.0', made possible by interactive electronic media that allow the many to watch the many rather than just the few and to, at the same time, watch over themselves. He links this new architecture of mass mutual monitoring to the neo-liberal marketization of everyday life in which the responsibility for surveillance has been devolved from the state to the individual and in which citizens ('customers') become both willing and willful participants in surveillance. [...]

Issues to consider

- ❑ Jones argues that media provide people with 'walls' (which block information) and 'windows' (which let information through). Consider the ways a medium you use on a daily basis (such as your phone or a messaging app you use) blocks some kinds of information from other people and lets other kinds of information through. How does this affect how you act when you are using this medium?
- ❑ In her analysis of broadcast talk, O'Keeffe argues that 'in media discourse events, there are no unratified hearers. There are no eavesdroppers'. The excerpt from Jones, however, suggests that nowadays people increasingly design their communication with the assumption that someone might be 'listening in'. Are you conscious of possible eavesdroppers when you communicate using digital media? Who do you think might be eavesdropping on you, and what consequences does that have on your communication?

D7

SPREADABILITY: FROM NEWS LANGUAGE TO INTERNET MEMES

In this unit, we will introduce two excerpts that complement the ideas covered in units A7 and B7. The first excerpt is from an analysis of the techniques news writers use to make their stories more attention grabbing by the discourse analysts Monika Bednarek and Helen Caple. In unit D5, we included an excerpt from the sociolinguist Alan Bell describing the criteria journalists use to decide whether or not something is newsworthy (see also unit A5), such as negativity, prominence, and superlativeness. In Bednarek and Caple's excerpt reprinted here, they show through an empirical analysis of the linguistic features in news stories that newsworthiness is not necessarily something inherent to particular events or kinds of content, but something that is *discursively constructed* by journalists. The second excerpt is from an article by Piia Varis and Jan Blommaert (2015), in which they analyze the techniques used to create memes.

Linguistic devices and news values

Monika Bednarek and Helen Caple (reprinted from *News discourse*. London: Continuum, 2012, pp. 46–57).

[L]et us ... look at some of the main kinds of linguistic devices that can be used to construe news values.

Evaluative language

Evaluative language includes linguistic expressions that realize opinion, for example, assessments of positivity or negativity, importance or unimportance, expectedness or unexpectedness. Negative evaluations of events (*fiasco*), behaviour (*cashes in, made a gaffe*), or news actors (*sexual predator, wannabe*) clearly construe the news value of Negativity. Evaluations of new actors and sources as important (*celebs, famous, superstars, senior, top*) construe Prominence, while the evaluation of events as significant (*key, vital, historic, momentous*) can construe Impact (e.g. *a historic legal case, a potentially momentous day*). Other examples include the use of words like *amazing, astonishing, extraordinarily, curious, unexpectedly, unprecedented, unusually* or contrasts (e.g. *but, although, despite*) to construe Novelty. Meanings of unexpectedness which construe news value can also be encoded in certain expressions used to report information, such as *reveal* or *revelation*, which imply that the reported information is somehow new. In contrast, the use of expressions like *routine, familiar, little wonder* may construe Consonance. Generally, the function of evaluative devices is 'to make the contents of the story sound *as X as possible*, where X is big, recent, important, unusual, new; in a word—newsworthy' (Bell, 1991: 152, italics in original). [...]

Intensification and quantification

Linguistic means of intensification and quantification include devices to intensify number or amount (*thousands of*), size (*huge waves, peanut-size hail*), duration and extent of time (*rapidly rising, continuous rain*), force (*ferocious storm, ravage, blaze*), or degree (*full fury, complete destruction*), including comparative and superlative adjectives (*the most violent type, hardest hit, the largest*). These construe Superlativeness and can be used to maximize any aspect of the reported event. Also common in construing Superlativeness in the news are expressions with the adverbs *only/just/alone* used to modify time and space: *took only a few seconds, just hours after, just three days before, in the past two months alone, just 10 miles from*. At times, it is specifically the effects or consequences of an event that are maximized—for example, when mentioning that as a result of flooding, *There have been massive landslides nearby*. In such cases, we can reasonably argue that both Superlativeness and Impact are established.

Comparison

Happenings in a news story are often compared to similar happenings in the past. This frequently functions to construe Novelty, when the current event is described as, say, the first of its kind or for a long time (e.g. *the first time since 1958*). [...]

However, such comparisons can also function to construe Consonance, if an event is said to be very much in line with past events, for example, talking about *yet another personal scandal* for former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Finally, when aspects of an event are specifically said to be bigger/higher/more forceful ... than a previous event, this may function to establish both Superlativeness and Novelty (e.g. *this one has just maxed out every other flood*).

References to emotion

References to emotion, that is, describing news actors' emotional responses, can take many forms, for example, describing 'emotional' behaviour such as screaming or shouting or labelling emotions (Bednarek, 2008; Martin & White, 2005). Examples of such references to emotions are: *'There are others inside' she screamed; Deborah sobbed to the jury; Di's terror; British madam distraught; devastated Rio; Police chiefs shocked; anxious Iraqis*. Such references can construe a variety of news values ranging from Negativity (negative emotions) to Personalization (individuals' emotional responses), Impact (when the emotions are caused by an event), Superlativeness ('strong' emotions such as *desperate, panic, terror, ...*) and Novelty (references to surprise, for example, *note that will stun world*). Similar to mentions of surprise, references to expectation (strictly speaking, not an emotional response) also establish Novelty (e.g. *no one was expecting it*).

'Negative' vocabulary

'Negative' vocabulary (e.g. *confusion, damage, deaths, bodies*) refers to the words we use to describe negative events. They have also been described as 'disaster vocabulary' (Ungerer, 1997: 315). In contrast to evaluative language, such vocabulary does not automatically and expressly tell us that the writer disapproves of the reported

events and is thus not strictly evaluative language. References to the negative effects/impact on individuals, entities, and so on are used to construe both Negativity and Impact (e.g. *flash flood deluged the town.*) The news value that is construed by negative vocabulary is usually Negativity, since we can assume that when a story reports upon the deaths (killings, etc.) of people, this is regarded as a ‘bad’ happening by most. [...]

Word combinations

Certain words are repeatedly combined or associated with each other to invoke stereotypes or scripts, thus establishing Consonance. For example, Table D7.1 shows the results for a search of words associated with commonly held beliefs about Australia from two newspaper websites (search results pertain to the whole website, not just news stories).

Most frequent on *The Times* website are associations of Australia with sharks, drinking, surfing, and crocodiles, whereas the most frequent associations on the *USA Today* website are with spiders, sharks, and surfing. Sharks and surfing seem to be commonly associated with Australia both in the United Kingdom and in the United States, and invoked in mentions of Australia on newspaper websites, arguably drawing on commonly held associations by the audience and construing Consonance. A corpus linguistic investigation of collocations, clusters, and concordances (Baker, 2006) can help us show the typical associations of words/concepts tied to Consonance.

Metaphor/simile

The terms *metaphor* and *simile* refer to the way one concept is seen in terms of another—either implicitly through metaphor (*a wall of water*) or more explicitly through simile (*like a World War II battle*). News stories can and do make use again and again of common or conventionalized metaphors to construe Consonance. For example, Fairclough (1995) (though not discussing it in terms of news values) notes that a *Sun* article’s use of the metaphor of fighting a war in the context of drug trafficking ‘links this text *intertextually* to popular media coverage of the drugs issue over a long period, where the representation of the issue as a war ... is a standard feature of the discourse’ (Fairclough, 1995: 71, italics in original). Other common practices

Table D7.1 Associations with Australia

<i>Search terms</i>	<i>www.thetimes.co.uk/</i>	<i>www.usatoday.com/</i>
Australia shark	1,869	316
Australia spider	199	317
Australia crocodile	351	56
Australia surfing	358	193
Australia surfer	303	31
Australia drunk	635	69

include the frequent application of ‘liquid’ (often water) metaphors to the movement of refugees, for example, *the flood of refugees, refugees are streaming home, overflowing refugee camps*, with refugees being ‘constructed as a “natural disaster” like a flood, which is difficult to control as it has no sense of its own agency’ (Baker, 2006: 81).

Story structure

The way a news story is structured, the roles the news actors are construed to play, and the events that are said to have happened may fit in with archetypes of stories (e.g. ‘hero’, ‘villain’, ‘rescue’), thereby construing Consonance: ‘When you enjoy a story, you are experiencing an echo, or particular realisation, of other stories you already know (and which give rise to expectations about the one you are experiencing at the time)’ (Durant & Lambrou, 2009: 34).

Thirsty foreigners soak up scarce water rights

International investors are circling Australia’s water market, looking to snap up hundreds of millions of dollars worth of our most precious national resource, with almost no government limit on how much they can buy.

(‘Thirsty foreigners soak up scarce water rights’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4–5 September 2010, p. 1)

In this extract, we can very clearly see how an at first glance ‘boring’ event concerning water rights has been made newsworthy through a juxtaposition of ‘Australians’ (*Australia’s, our*) with ‘foreigners’ (*thirsty foreigners, international investors*). These ‘foreigners’ are associated with a predator metaphor (sharks circle) and represented as the agents of negative actions (*soak up scarce water rights, circling Australia’s water market, looking to snap up our most precious national resource*) with Australia and its water rights/market being the victim. A predator–victim construal of the narrative suggests itself here, which is arguably in line with many people’s negative assumptions about foreign investment in a country’s natural resources and ties in with a commonly used narrative about threats from the outside. Intensification/quantification (*hundreds of millions of dollars, most precious, no government limit*) further heightens the inherent danger in these ‘circling thirsty foreigners’, but also evaluates the Australian government negatively (because they have set no limit). Thus, news workers have again deployed linguistic resources carefully to make an event interesting and newsworthy through Negativity and Superlativeness.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Linguistic devices that increase the newsworthiness of a story may not appear throughout the news item but may cluster in specific parts. Choose an online news story and analyze where such linguistic features seem to appear. Pay specific attention to the headline and lead paragraph.
- ❑ Find a headline from the front page of a newspaper. Analyze the linguistic devices used to make the headline seem newsworthy.

- What other factors do you think determine the newsworthiness of events and stories in the age of new media? Think about the concept of virality (discussed in units A7 and B7) and the particular statistics such as shares, likes, and views in digital platforms. Do you think there might be a relationship between these non-linguistic factors and the linguistic devices described above?

The weird world of memes

Piia Varis and Jan Blommaert (reprinted from ‘Conviviality and collectives on social media: Virality, memes, and new social structures.’ *Multilingual Margins* 2(1) 2015, pp. 31–45).

Memes [...] typically enable intense resemiotization, in that original signs are altered in various ways, generically germane—a kind of ‘substrate’ recognizability [is] maintained—but situationally adjusted and altered so as to produce very different communicative effects. [...]

Let us consider Figures D7.1–D7.3 and D7.4–D7.6. In Figure D7.1, we see the origin of a successful meme, a British World War II propaganda poster.

A virtually endless range of resemiotized versions of this poster have gone viral since the year 2000. They can be identified as intertextually related by the speech act



Figure D7.1 British wartime propaganda poster.

structure of the message (an adhortative ‘keep calm’ or similar statements, followed by a subordinate adhortative) and the graphic features of lettering and layout (larger fonts for the adhortatives, the use of a coat of arms-like image). Variations on the memic theme range from minimal to maximal, but the generic template is constant. Figure D7.2 shows a minimally resemiotized variant in which lettering and coat of arms (the royal crown) are kept, while in Figure D7.3 the royal crown has been replaced by a beer mug.

In Figures D7.1, D7.2, and D7.3, we see how one set of affordances—the visual architecture of the sign and its speech act format—becomes the intertextual link enabling the infinite resemiotizations while retaining the original semiotic pointer: most users of variants of the meme would know that the variants derive from the same ‘original’ meme. The visual architecture and speech act format of the ‘original’ thus are the ‘mobile’ elements in memicity here: they provide memic-intertextual recognizability, while the textual adjustments redirect the meme towards more specific audiences and reset it in different frames of meaning and use.

The opposite can also apply, certainly when memes are widely known because of textual-*stylistic* features: the actual ways in which ‘languaging’ is performed through fixed expressions and speech characteristics. A particularly successful example of such textual-stylistic memicity is so-called ‘lolspeak’, the particular pidginized English originally associated with funny images of cats (‘lolcats’), but extremely mobile as a memic



Figure D7.2 Keep calm and call Batman (From <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/keep-calm-and-carry-on>).



Figure D7.3 Keep calm and drink beer (From <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/keep-calm-and-carry-on>).

resource in its own right. Consider Figures D7.4, D7.5, and D7.6. Figure D7.4 documents the origin of this spectacularly successful meme: a picture of a cat, to which the caption ‘I can has cheezburger?’ was added, went viral in 2007 via a website ‘I can has cheezburger?’. The particular caption phrase went viral as well and became tagged to a wide variety of other images—see Figure D7.5. The caption then quickly became the basis for a particular pidginized variety of written English, which could in turn be deployed in a broad range of contexts (see Figure D7.6). The extraordinary productivity of this meme-turned-language variety was demonstrated in 2010, when a team of ‘lolspeak’ authors completed an online translation of the entire Bible in their self-constructed language variety. The Lolcat Bible can now also be purchased as a book.

The different resources that enter into the production of such memes can also turn out to be memic in themselves. People, as we said, are extraordinarily creative in reorganizing, redirecting, and applying memic resources over a vast range of thematic domains, addressing a vast range of audiences while all the same retaining clear and recognizable intertextual links to the original memic sources. This fundamental intertextuality allows for *combined memes*, in which features of different established memes are blended in a ‘mash-up’ meme. Figure D7.7 shows such a mash-up meme.

We see the familiar template of the ‘Keep calm’ meme, to which a recognizable reference to another meme is added. The origin of this other meme, ‘then I took an arrow in the knee’, is in itself worthy of reflection, for it shows the essentially arbitrary nature

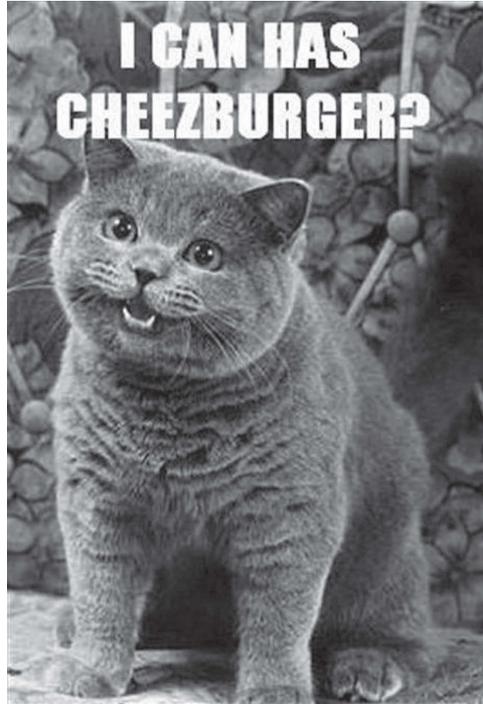


Figure D7.4 I can has cheezburger? (From <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/sites/cheezburger>).

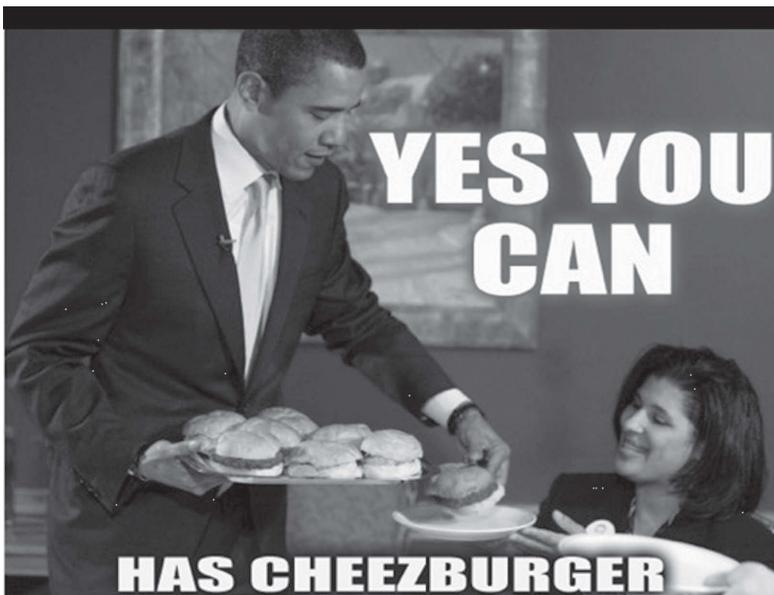


Figure D7.5 President and a possible voter having cheezburger (From <http://www.myconfinedspace.com/2008/04/18/barack-obama-yes-you-can/>).

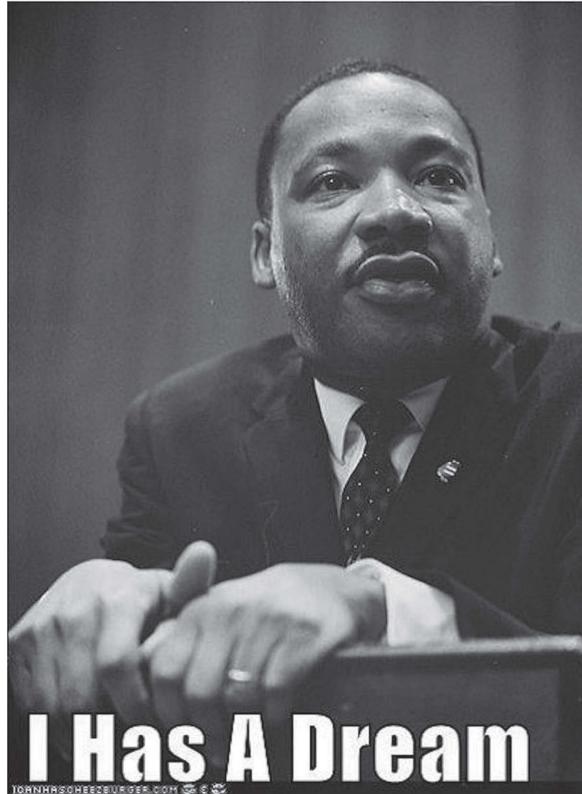


Figure D7.6 I has a dream (From <http://memebase.cheezburger.com/puns/tag/martin-luther-king-jr.>).

of memic success. The phrase was originally uttered by characters in the video game ‘Skyrim’ (Figure D7.8). The phrase is quite often repeated throughout the game, but this does not in itself offer an explanation for the viral spread of the expression way beyond the community of Skyrim gamers.

The phrase became wildly productive and can now be tagged to an almost infinite range of different expressions, each time retaining a tinge of its original apologetic character and appearing in mash-ups, as we saw in Figure D7.7.

What we see in each of these examples is how memes operate via a combination of intertextual recognizability and individual creativity—individual users adding an ‘accent’ to existing viral memes in attempts to go viral with their own adapted version. The work of resemiotization involved in such processes can be complex and demanding. Mash-up memes, for instance, involve elaborate knowledge of existing memes, an understanding of the affordances and limitations for altering the memes, and graphic, semiotic, and technological skills to post them online. The different forms of resemiotization represent different genres of communicative action, ranging from maximally transparent refocusing of existing memes to the creation of very different and new memes, less densely connected to existing ones.

Two points need to be made now. First, we do not see such resemiotizations, even drastic and radical ones, as being fundamentally different from the ‘likes’ and ‘shares’.



Figure D7.7 Keep calm and remove the arrow from your knee (From <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Keep-Calm-and-remove-the-arrow-from-your-knee/254461191300457>).



Figure D7.8 Skyrim scene 'Then I took an arrow in the knee' (From <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/i-took-an-arrow-in-the-knee>).

'Likes' and 'shares' are already different genres characterized by very different activity patterns, orientations to addressees and audiences, and degrees of intervention in the original signs. The procedures we have reviewed here differ in degree but not in substance: they are like 'retweets,' 'likes,' and 'shares,' re-entextualizations of existing signs, i.e. meaningful communicative operations that demand different levels of agency and creativity of the user. Second, and related to this, the nature of the original sign itself—its conventionally understood 'meaning'—appears to be less relevant than the capacity to deploy it in largely phatic, relational forms of interaction. This again ranges from what Malinowski described as 'communion'—ritually expressing membership of a particular community—to 'communication' *within* the communities we described as held together by 'ambient affiliation.' 'Meaning' in its traditional sense needs to give way here to a more general notion of 'function.' Memes, just like Mark Zuckerberg's status updates, do not need to be *read* in order to be seen and understood as denotatively and informationally meaningful; their use and reuse appear to be governed by the 'phatic' and 'emblematic' functions often seen as of secondary nature in discourse-analytic literature.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Find an internet meme from knowyourmeme.com and select at least three image macros that emerged from this meme. Identify the original semiotic pointer—the feature that remains stable and the mobile elements in textual and visual parts of the image macros. How do the textual modifications redirect the meme towards more specific audiences and reset it in different frames of meaning and use?
- ❑ Discuss the role of language and creativity in virality and memetic uptake with particular reference to newsworthiness. Are there any similarities between the linguistic devices described in Bednarek and Caple's excerpt above and viral media events?

POLITICAL RHETORIC AND FAKE NEWS

D8

This section includes two excerpts focusing on developments in media and politics between 2016 and 2018, a period in which the concepts of ‘post-truth’ and ‘fake news’ moved to the forefront of public consciousness in the US and Europe. The first is from an article by critical discourse analyst Martin Montgomery in which he applies some of the principles of persuasion we discussed in unit B8 to the discourse of Donald Trump. The second is an excerpt from an article by two discourse analysts, Johan Farakas and Jannick Schou, in which they explore the way the term ‘fake news’ has itself become a powerful rhetorical device, used by different people in different contexts to advance different kinds of political agendas.

Trump’s speaking style: orality and vernacular folksiness

Martin Montgomery (reprinted from ‘Post-truth politics? Authenticity, populism and the electoral discourses of Donald Trump.’ *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16(4), 2017, pp. 619–639).

Trump’s boasting should be considered in the context of his highly distinctive speaking style. Throughout his campaign, most independent observers acknowledged not only that Trump spoke more often than Clinton, but that Trump’s rallies drew larger and more enthusiastic crowds. [...]

It was also generally acknowledged that he had difficulty on many occasions in following his campaign team’s script. Instead his style was unbuttoned and direct, with unmistakable markers of extempore speech.

Lexical repetition

Trump’s extempore speaking style is laced with repetition. The simplest form of repetition is based on the repetition of a single lexical item, as is the case with *workers* in the following:

we will reform legal immigration to serve the best interests of America and its workers, the forgotten people. Workers. We’re going to take care of our workers.
(Trump, Campaign Rally Speech, 31/08/2016, Phoenix, Arizona)

Frequently, however, repetition involves more than a single word but is built around a phrase:

What is wrong with our politicians, our leaders if we can call them that. What the hell are we doing? Hard to believe. Hard to believe.
(Trump, Campaign Rally Speech, 31/08/2016, Phoenix Arizona)

In many cases, the phrasal repetition seems to serve the purpose of a retrospective, summative comment on a previous point. Sometimes they serve the purpose of

reinforcement, explicitly accentuated in the following example by the use of ‘Remember that’.

We will use the best technology, including above and below ground sensors. That’s the tunnels. Remember that, above and below. Above and below ground sensors.
(Trump, Campaign Rally Speech, 31/08/2016, Phoenix Arizona)

Both single lexical items and phrases can be repeated as a form of local cohesion and emphasis:

Number three. Number three, this is the one, I think it’s so great. It’s hard to believe, people don’t even talk about it. Zero tolerance for criminal aliens. Zero. Zero. Zero. They don’t come in here. They don’t come in here.
(Trump, Campaign Rally Speech, 31/08/2016, Phoenix, Arizona)

Trump’s conversational direct address

Even in his immigration speech at Phoenix, Arizona in August 2016, an event flagged up in advance as a major policy statement, there were many overt markers of direct address, including the use of commands: ‘Remember’; ‘Watch’; ‘Choose me’; ‘And just look at the past’; ‘Believe me’. There are also questions: ‘And I say what do you have to lose?’; ‘Number One. Are you ready? Are you ready?’; ‘We’re very proud of our country. Aren’t we? Really?’. [...]

In addition, he uses a loose form of reported speech reminiscent of oral narrative, though in Trump’s case the words are attributed to no one in particular, but offered to the audience as the words of an unnamed third party:

Nobody’s telling them to leave. ‘Stay as long as you want, we’ll take care of you.’
We take anybody. ‘Come on in, anybody. Just come on in.’ Not anymore.

Another feature of his speaking style is a tendency to rely on a narrow range of modifiers and intensifiers, such as *very*, *really*, *tremendous*, and *great*:

It’s going to end very, very badly
Tremendous
Tremendous costs, by the way, to our country. Tremendous costs.
Great
I think it’s so great
They’re great people
Really
and they really are a big problem

Finally, there is his use of a generic address term for his audience, ‘Folks’:

Crime all over the place. That’s over. That’s over, folks. That’s over.
You know, folks, it’s called a two-way street. It is a two-way street, right?

Vernacular folksiness, restricted code and the language of solidarity

Trump's public speaking performance during his campaign depends upon paratactic and associative forms of linkage in which repetition provides an important form of cohesion. He often uses a word or a phrase elliptically to stand for a full clause; and the linkage between one element and another is not always carried by explicit grammatical structures and cohesive devices:

I've had a chance to spend time
with these incredible law enforcement officers,
and I want to take a moment to thank them.
What they do is incredible.
And getting their endorsement means so much to me.
More to me really than I can say.
Means so much.
First time they've ever endorsed a presidential candidate.
Number four, block funding for sanctuary cities. We block the funding.
No more funds.

(Trump, Campaign Rally Speech, 31/08/2016, Phoenix, Arizona)

Trump's oral style, indeed, displays characteristics of what Bernstein (1971) described initially as a 'public language'—a class-based way of speaking—which he would later come to designate a 'restricted code'. In Bernstein's early formulations, it was marked by:

Short, grammatically simple, often unfinished sentences ...; simple and repetitive use of conjunctions (so, then, and), thus modifications, qualifications and logical stress will tend to be indicated by non-verbal means; frequent use of short commands and questions; rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs; infrequent use of the impersonal pronoun (it, one) as subject of a conditional sentence; statements formulated as questions which set up a sympathetic circularity, e.g. 'Just fancy?' 'Isn't it terrible?' 'Isn't it a shame?' 'It's only natural, isn't it?' A statement of fact is often used as both a reason and a conclusion Individual selection from a group of traditional phrases plays a great part. The symbolism is of a low order of generality. ... It is a language of implicit meaning.

(Bernstein, 1971: 29)

Bernstein considered the organizational patterns of this code to reflect its roots in everyday situations of concrete practice and action. More generally he thought of it as a language or code that articulated 'impersonal' group values rather than the personal perspectives of an individual and writes of its use by children and adolescents that '[its] terms are global, direct, concrete and activity-dominated and refer to a class of contents rather than to a specific one, e.g. teachers, cowards, ... gluttons, etc.' (Ibid., 56) (to which list one might easily add, 'immigrants', 'the media', 'the blacks', 'politicians', 'Washington').

It can be summed up as a language or code of group solidarity, context-bound, with a strong appeal to taken-for-granted, shared values, and attitudes.

Issues to consider

- Montgomery argues that part of the appeal of Trump's language for many is his use of 'restricted code', a way of talking that favours short sentences, the frequent use of coordinating conjunctions (such as 'and' and 'so') rather than subordinating conjunctions (such as 'despite' and 'because'), and the use of a very limited range of adjectives and adverbs. What do you think is 'restricted' about this way of talking? What are the advantages of a politician or media personality talking like this? What are the disadvantages?
- One observation that people often make about Donald Trump is that his speech sounds 'authentic' as opposed to the more 'scripted' ways of speaking adopted by other politicians. What are some of the linguistic features that make speech or writing seem authentic? Why do you think these features create feelings of authenticity?

Fake news as a 'floating-signifier'

Johan Farkas and Jannick Schou (reprinted from 'Fake news as a floating signifier: Hegemony, antagonism and the politics of falsehood.' *Javnost – The Public*, 25(3), 2018, pp. 298–314).

Laclau introduces the notion of the floating signifier. This concept denotes situations in which 'the same democratic demands receive the structural pressure of rival hegemonic projects' (Laclau, 2005: 131, original emphasis). In being simultaneously articulated within two (or more) opposing discourses, a floating signifier is positioned within different signifying systems of conflicting political project. If the signifier's meaning later appears stable or fixed, this will be the result of one particular discourse's ability to successfully hegemonize the social, in other words winning the struggle against other discourses and repressing other forms of meaning (Laclau, 2005). Thus, a floating signifier is not simply a case of polysemy, i.e. a particular signifier that is attached several independent meanings at the same time. [...] Instead, the concept is used to describe a precise historical conjuncture in which a particular signifier (lodged in-between several opposing, antagonistic, hegemonic projects) is used as part of a battle to impose the 'right' viewpoint onto the world. [...] [T]he following sections proceed to excavate three concurrent discourses in which 'fake news' has been mobilized as a signifier supporting particular political agendas. The discourses have been identified based on data material published between November 2016 and March 2017. The data material consists of social media content from President Donald Trump as well as journalistic articles and scholarly commentaries published in the following American and British newspapers and magazines: *The Washington Post*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Guardian*, *The Conversation*, *CNN*, *Monday Note*, *Business Insider*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Buzzfeed News*, *Mashable*, *Slate*, *Gizmodo*, and *Time Magazine*.

Fake news as a critique of digital capitalism

Misinformation in digital media is certainly not a new phenomenon (Floridi, 1996). Nevertheless, the issue has recently gained traction in public discourse where opposing

political actors have fought over its meaning and most importantly, the explanation for its cause. Within one particular discursive construction of ‘fake news,’ the term has been articulated as intrinsically connected to digital capitalism. Thus, a widespread explanation raised by scholars, journalists, and commentators alike points to the economic structure of the internet as the primary reason for the circulation of fake news (Filloux, 2016; Silverman & Alexander, 2016; Zimdars, 2016b).

Within this discourse, it is argued that in the context of digital media, as in all commercial media, content providers generate advertisement revenue based on the amount of readers, listeners, or viewers they have. Crudely put, if a website can attract a lot of visitors, the owner can potentially make money on advertisement. This economic incentive for digital content production has been highlighted as the key reason for the proliferation of ‘fake news.’ As Professor of Communication, Papacharissi (2016), for example, argues, ‘controversy generates ratings, and unfortunately controversy is generated around facts vs. propaganda battles.’ According to this discourse, false information feeds controversy and controversy feeds capital. This argumentative chain has, for example, been put forth in the work conducted by *Buzzfeed News*, showing that ‘fake’ news stories generated more engagement on social media during the American elections than ‘real’ news stories did (Silverman, 2016).

A related economic explanation for the cause of ‘fake news’ concerns the lower production costs of false information in comparison to ‘real news’: ‘Fake news is cheap to produce—far cheaper than real news, for obvious reasons—and profitable’ (Zimdars, 2016b). ‘Fake news’ is, in other words, difficult to stop because it is linked to low production costs and potential high revenue, continuously motivating new outlets. This position is supported by articles in both *The New York Times* and *Buzzfeed News* (Higgins, McIntire, & Dance, 2016; Silverman & Alexander, 2016), portraying Eastern European website owners as deliberately producing ‘fake news’ for capital gains. These fake news producers designate profit as their primary motivation and argue that high levels of user activity are the only reason why they create fake news articles concerning American elections and political system. According to this discourse, widely shared false claims about, e.g. Pope Francis’ endorsement of Donald Trump or the surfacing of Barack Obama’s ‘real’ Kenyan birth certificate were not primarily the results of partisanship but of digital capitalism. From this position, articulated by scholars and media professionals, ‘fake news’ is thus constructed as deeply connected and interwoven with the capitalist media economy. If ‘fake news’ is to be eradicated, capitalist incentives and economic structures need to be reshaped too. The critique of ‘fake news’ simultaneously becomes a critique of digital capitalism as a structure that promotes the circulation of the lowest common denominator of news content.

Fake news as critique of right-wing politics and media

[Another] prevalent discourse has sought to mobilize ‘fake news’ by connecting it to the right wing of the American political spectrum. This position, establishing right-wing partisanship as the primary cause of ‘fake news,’ has been articulated by a number of different scholarly and journalistic actors. A prominent example dating back before

the proliferation of the 'fake news' signifier is an opinion letter in *The New York Times* written by Professor and Nobel Prize Winner in Economy, Paul Krugman:

... in practice liberals don't engage in the kind of mass rejections of evidence that conservatives do. Yes, you can find examples where 'some' liberals got off on a hobbyhorse of one kind or another, or where the liberal conventional wisdom turned out wrong. But you don't see the kind of lockstep rejection of evidence that we see over and over again on the right.

(2014)

'Liberals,' Krugman argues, are less prone to false information, as they are more critical and rational. Krugman thereby attacks and seeks to delegitimize the American right by discursively connecting fake information and irrationality with right-wing voters. Surrounding the 2016 American elections, this discourse was strengthened and amplified considerably. It was, for example, reinforced when *Buzzfeed News* found that 38 per cent of posts on three right-wing partisan Facebook pages were 'fake news', while this 'only' applied to 20 per cent of posts on left-wing partisan pages (Silverman et al., 2016). More importantly, various actors designated not only specific news stories but also entire right-wing media corporations as 'fake news'. For example, a widely shared 'fake news' list compiled by Assistant Professor Melissa Zimdars included the popular, partisan right-wing media platform Breitbart News as an unreliable source (Zimdars, 2016a).

Fake news as critique of liberal and mainstream media

Trump had not even been in office for a single full day before he declared that he had 'a running war with the media' (Rucker, Wagner, & Miller, 2017). Prior to this, Trump had insinuated that the term 'fake news' was a political construct created in order to attack and delegitimize his presidency. On 11 January 2017, Trump wrote on Twitter: 'FAKE NEWS - A TOTAL POLITICAL WITCH HUNT!'. Soon after, he began what would become a continuous and highly systematic use of the 'fake news' signifier in reverse. He used it to attack and delegitimize what he saw as his direct opponents: mainstream media. Trump started using the term to lash out at media companies such as CNN, *The New York Times*, and *Buzzfeed News*, all of whom had previously brought stories linking 'fake news' to the American right and Donald Trump. Trump, in other words, attempted to rearticulate and re-hegemonize the term by situating it in a fundamentally opposing discourse, linking 'fake news' intimately to mainstream media platforms:

The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!

(Trump, *Twitter*, 17 February 2017)

Within this discourse, fake news is constructed as a symptom of a fundamental, democratic problem, namely that mainstream media companies are biased and deliberately attempting to promote liberal agendas instead of representing 'The People'. This

discourse is not new, as right-wing media platforms have long claimed that ‘mainstream media’ is corrupt, liberally biased, systematic liars, and in need of replacement (Berry & Sobieraj, 2014). Two platforms long promoting this discourse are *Breitbart News* and *InfoWars*, both of which hosted exclusive interviews with Donald Trump during the American elections. Within this discourse, mainstream media and their ‘endless propaganda’ will soon be replaced due to digital media, allowing Americans to communicate and become ‘aware that we don’t need the mainstream media to define what reality is for us after all’ (Snyder, 2014). ‘Fake news’ thus became a key signifier in an already existing discourse promoted by right-wing media platforms and President Donald Trump.

What we are witnessing here is a systematic attempt to re-hegemonize the ‘fake news’ signifier in order to delegitimize and dismantle critical journalism. This discursive struggle is not only articulated verbally but also materially, as when Trump refuses to take questions from CNN journalists because they are ‘fake news’ (Jamieson, 2017). The term thereby becomes much more than a question of ‘true’ versus ‘false’ information: it becomes the focal point of a major political battleground in which the American right-wing struggles with mainstream media, liberals, and anti-capitalists to fixate meaning, obtain hegemony and impose their worldview onto the social. ‘Fake news’ serves to partially organize and reshape institutional practices and relations between the state and civil society. In this struggle, ‘true’ and ‘false’ are not empirical-founded categories defining the correctness of information. Instead, they are profoundly political categories mobilized by opposing actors to hegemonize the normative grounds of social reality. In this way, ‘fake news’ becomes a floating signifier—a signifier epitomizing a discursive struggle and perhaps even an organic crisis.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Farkas and Schou draw on the Argentine political theorist Ernesto Laclau to argue that ‘fake news’ is a ‘floating signifier’, a signifier that is used in different ways by different groups in a kind of ‘contest’ to impose their viewpoint onto others. Based on your reading of the excerpt and your exposure to current political and media discourse, which of the three constructions of ‘fake news’ seems to be ‘winning’ the ‘contest’. Why do you think so? What are the consequences for this for journalism and politics going forward?
- ❑ Laclau is one of a number of post-modern scholars who have called into question the objective existence of ‘truth’, arguing that all ‘facts’ are discursively constructed. ‘There are no facts without signification’, writes Laclau (2014: 128), ‘and there is no signification without practical engagements that require norms governing our behavior’. Some people blame post-modern scholars for contributing to the crisis of ‘truth’ in politics and the media. By focusing on the ‘discursive construction’ of ‘truth’, they say, these scholars undermine the notion that it is actually possible (and important) to distinguish between ‘fake news’ and ‘true news’. Do you agree with this critique? Why or why not?

D9

RESISTANCE AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM

In this unit, you will read two excerpts about how ordinary people use media to resist governments and other powerful entities and attempt to promote alternative political views. In the first excerpt, media scholar Paolo Peverini discusses the political dimensions of remix (see unit B5). In the second excerpt, discourse analyst Rodney Jones and political scientist Neville Li talk about the role of digital video in the 2014 Umbrella Movement protests in Hong Kong and explore how the meaning of visual artefacts can change as they circulate through different professional and activist communities.

Remix as a form of creative political protest

Paolo Peverini (reprinted from ‘Remix practices and activism: A semiotic analysis of creative dissent’, in Navas, E., Gallagher, O., & burrough, x. *The Routledge Companion to Remix Studies*, 2014, Abington, Oxon & New York: Routledge, pp. 333–345, selected excerpts,).

Remix can be conceived as a political act in itself: This is more relevant from a semiotic perspective, because whenever a text is sampled, its meaning is always renegotiated and reopened. Patently political remix videos have gradually emerged as a popular genre of media texts characterized by some specific elements. Transformative works use pre-existing audio-visual source texts, privileging pop culture materials (music videos, trailers, commercials, news fragments) and ignoring copyright laws. The re-working practices appropriate content, reopen their structure, commenting on narratives, ideological assumptions, and stereotypes with the aim of criticizing and/or highlighting original meanings. These works are DIY materials, and since 2005 their massive circulation increasingly relies on video-sharing websites such as YouTube.

The strategic use of remix [...] consists of planning targeted use of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, at first sight camouflaging the true semiotic nature of the protest campaign, with the aim of bypassing the public’s inurement to the canonical forms of political discourse. Social guerrilla action often develops in this way, starting from a two-fold operation entailing selection-simulation of features that are characteristic to commercials, amateur user-generated content, and social networking platforms. With the aim of soliciting public support for issues such as environmental protection, (abolition of) the death penalty, or the rights of children, the practice of remix is used in numerous campaigns to make the protest message even more effective when it is based on the veridictive logic of secrecy, defined by Greimas and Courtés (1979) as a combination of being + not seeming.

Further expanding the perspective of the analysis, the frequent use of remix in innovative forms of media activism is made even more meaningful by the fact that the

potential for social criticism which typifies this kind of rewriting is often expressed in a playful way. In particular, when planning increasingly stratified forms of dissent that are, at the same time, expressed through a variety of media, the protest takes on the guise of entertainment, a reworking of texts that aim to amuse the receiver, and at the same time, provoke a reaction on a cognitive, passionate, and pragmatic plane.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Peverini argues that remix is itself a ‘political act’ because ‘whenever a text is sampled, its meaning is always renegotiated and reopened’. Do you think remixes that do not have an explicitly political message also have a political dimension?
- ❑ Peverini points out that there have been public debates around remix about the ethics of portraying serious issues such as the death penalty and the rights of children in a humorous way. When and why might it be problematic to portray serious issues humorously? Are there ethical limits to parody?

‘Seeing’ like an activist

Rodney H. Jones and Neville C.H. Li (reprinted from ‘Evidentiary video and “professional vision” in the Hong Kong umbrella movement’. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 15(5), 2016, pp. 570–573).

Like so many recent political movements (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011; Garrett, 2006), the events of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong were to a large extent driven by the powerful combination of digital video and online social networking (Li, 2014), which allowed scenes of the protests (especially those involving clashes between protesters and police) to be quickly circulated through online and traditional media. [...] Throughout the protest period, videos allegedly portraying police violence or misconduct were widely circulated, some produced by protesters themselves and some by professional journalists. These videos functioned not just as touchstones for debates about events and their meaning, but also as discursive sites around which different communities gathered to rehearse and reproduce their ideological positions and their shared interpretive repertoires. As the power to create and circulate video representations of events devolves to more people, protest movements such as the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong have become not just political struggles over power and ideology, but also, as Wall and Linnemann (2014: 133) put it, ‘practical struggles over the authority and regulation of ways of looking and knowing.’

Perhaps the most widely circulated video during the Hong Kong protests was the one shot by a cameraman from a local television station showing a protester, later identified as Civic Party member Ken Tsang, being handcuffed and dragged into a ‘dark corner’ where he was violently beaten by seven police officers. It is this video and its trajectory across various media and through various interpretive communities that is the subject of this [excerpt].

Evidentially and 'professional vision'

With the proliferation of digital video cameras in the hands of journalists and private citizens, and the increased use of 'body cams' and 'dash cams' by police officers, the actions of authority figures, both in the context of protests and in the context of everyday law enforcement, have come under a new kind of scrutiny (Goldsmith, 2010; Gregory, 2010). Videos circulated through social media of police officers shooting or assaulting unarmed African Americans in the US, for example, have sparked renewed debates about police power and institutionalized racism. [...] What is usually focused on in discussions of such videos in both media and legal contexts is their *evidentiary* function: their status as 'proof' of what 'really occurred', and there are many recent examples of such video evidence resulting in disciplinary action against police or acquittal of citizens because what occurred in the video 'self-evidently' contradicted police accounts. [...] On many other occasions, however, what is portrayed in such videos has ended up being regarded as less 'self-evident' than it first seemed, after the videos were subjected to the interpretive practices of various parties such as lawyers, journalists, politicians, and media commentators. Such cases call attention to the fact that the meaning of photographic evidence is never 'self-evident', but always subject to the interpretive practices of different communities. [...]

Perhaps the best example of this is the 1991 case of Rodney King (what is probably the first widely publicized example of video evidence of police brutality), in which a video of four police officers repeatedly striking and kicking an unarmed African American motorist sparked outrage among the public, but failed to result in convictions of the officers due to the defense attorneys' success at getting the jury to accept an interpretation of the video which portrayed the officers' actions as legitimate attempts to perform their professional duties. The verdict attracted widespread condemnation from the African American community and sparked the Los Angeles riots of 1992. It also received widespread attention from scholars of discourse. Judith Butler (1993), for example, in her analysis of the case, argued that the verdict was the result of the jury viewing the video through a hegemonic interpretive framework in which black male bodies, even when portrayed prone and powerless, are seen as intrinsically threatening.

Goodwin (1994) also offers an analysis of this case but takes a more nuanced approach. Using tools from interactional sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, he argues that the acquittal of the officers was more than just a matter of racist 'ways of seeing' brought into the courtroom by the jury, but that the conditions for this interpretation were *actively created* by defense attorneys, police officers, and expert witnesses through specific discursive strategies such as categorizing, framing, and highlighting different segments of the video, strategies which helped to reproduce for the jury the 'professional vision' of the officers. He defines 'professional vision' as the discursive practices 'used by members of a profession to shape events in the phenomenal environment they focus their attention upon'. This shaping, he argues, 'creates the objects of knowledge that become the insignia of a profession's craft: the theories, artefacts, and bodies of expertise that distinguish it from other professions' (606).

[...] The workings of such professional identities, of course, operate in relation to other groups and the kinds of discursive practices *they* have available to them. As Goodwin points out, for example, King, as a victim of the beating, had no equivalent set of discursive practices to draw upon to explain his 'way of seeing' the situation—no body of knowledge that could be articulated by 'expert witnesses' or be deployed as an emblem of professional membership. He writes (626):

the power to authoritatively see and produce the range of phenomena that are consequential for the organization of a society is not homogeneously distributed. Different professions — medicine, law, the police, specific sciences such as archaeology — have the power to legitimately see, constitute and articulate alternative kinds of events. Professional vision is perspectival, lodged within specific social entities, and unevenly allocated.

'Journalistic seeing'

As we mentioned above, the video that is the subject of this article originated from the film crew of TVB, Hong Kong's largest free-to-air television station, and broadcast as part of the station's ongoing coverage of the protests. The video was first aired at around 3 am on 15 October 2014, at which time it was presented with a voice-over commentary, a process of re-entextualization (specifically, of *inscription*) that is a common professional practice of television news reporters. The original voiceover was:

A protester was handcuffed and taken away by six police officers. Police carried him to a dark corner in Tamar Park, placed him on the ground, and then punched and kicked him. Two officers then walked away from the attack, but the others continued. Finally, the protester was taken away again. The entire process lasted about four minutes.

(Translated from the Chinese)

The form of this re-entextualisation produced by the staff in the TVB newsroom, consistent as it was with normal journalistic practice (as well as with what seemed to be 'self-evident' to most viewers) would likely have gone unremarked upon were it not for the fact that, at the request of station managers, the video was *re-edited* to remove the description of the police officers' actions, resulting in the following voice-over, which began airing on the station beginning at 7 am:

A protester was handcuffed and taken away by six police officers. Police carried him to a dark corner in Tamar Park... Finally, the protester was taken away again. The entire process lasted about four minutes.

Later that day, the video was once again *re-inscribed*, with the words 'the police are suspected of having used violence against him' inserted where the more explicit description of the officers' actions had been.

The way the television station changed the voice-over on the video attracted almost as much public attention as the video itself, and the next day the journalists involved issued an open letter to the station, which was reprinted in newspapers and posted on social media sites, protesting the decision to alter their original inscription. Although much of the public discourse that circulated around this incident focused on the issue of censorship, the reporters in their open letter framed the issue more as a matter of 'professionalism', tying their practices of inscription to broader practices of journalism and to their identities as legitimate members of their profession. 'We hope that both

front-line reporters and management’, they wrote, ‘abide by professionalism, adhere to principle and stick to the facts, to deliver accurate, objective and complete information to our viewers.’

‘Activist seeing’

As we mentioned above, one feature that characterized the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong (and indeed, characterizes many contemporary social movements) was the formation of online activist communities of various kinds, representing different interests, espousing different ideologies, and engaging in different kinds of discursive practices. In this section, we will consider the way the video introduced above was re-presented and re-interpreted on the Facebook pages of two such communities: a pro-democracy community called *Passion Times* (熱血時報) and an anti-occupy community with the name *Salute to Hong Kong Police* (向警察致敬).

Passion times

At 9:54 am on the same day that the video was broadcast on TVB, it was posted on the Facebook page of *Passion Times* with the following accompanying text:

Corrupt police cannot be tolerated

This video from TVB has been lightened to allow everyone to see clearly the real situation of police abusing their power.

(Source: TVB News; Translated from Chinese)

It is important to note that the video clip posted to the *Passion Times* Facebook group was the footage that *originally* appeared on TVB (including the description of the police ‘kicking and punching’ the protester) rather than the version that was ‘revised’ by station managers, even though this was not the version of the footage that was airing when this message was posted. In other words, this reposting was not just an act recirculating material that was available elsewhere, but an act of *archiving* an evidentiary artefact. Along with archiving the earlier version of the video, however, this poster has also performed his own re-entextualization of the footage, digitally enhancing (‘lightening’) it so that the actions of the officers could be more clearly discerned. The justification for this in the accompanying comment invokes the same values of ‘truth’ and ‘objectivity’ that the journalists we discussed above used to characterize their practices of professional seeing: to reveal the ‘truth’ of what is represented which, without this enhancement, might remain obscured. The difference, however, is that, in this case, ‘truth’ is less a matter of a complete and objectives portrayal of events and more a matter of fitting the evidence into a particular *evaluative framework* (in which the police are represented as corrupt and undeserving of the public’s support and protesters as innocent victims of police abuse).

Salute to Hong Kong police

Later that day (1:00 pm), the video was appropriated by the members of a different activist community, this one maintaining a Facebook page entitled *Salute to Hong Kong Police* (向香港警察致敬). Whereas in the last example, the key interpretive process involved was ‘re-entextualisation’—actually altering the original footage by digitally enhancing it—the version circulated by this community is an example of [...] *intertextualization* (or ‘remixing’), the combination of the original footage with other footage in order to create associations between different events. The beginning of this version features not the footage of the beating, but footage from a local cable station Now TV (which began airing at around 11:30 am) showing scenes of the protests before the beating occurred, including footage of an individual resembling the beating victim—who by now had been identified as Civic Party member Ken Tsang—throwing water on police from an overpass. This is followed by the TVB footage, but this time the version chosen (perhaps not surprisingly) is the one from which TVB managers had removed the voice-over of journalists describing the actions of the officers as ‘kicking and punching’. This is followed by a clip of Tsang himself at a campaign rally stating that ever since he was a student he has been ‘active in protests and social movements’, which is then followed by a still image of an article from *Eastweek* magazine in which Tsang is accused of ‘encouraging protesters to charge police barricades’ in the early days of the protests and ‘using radical actions to increase his political influence’. The article includes a picture of Tsang alone wearing a black and white scarf (in what does not appear to be a protest situation) next to one of him on another occasion speaking into a megaphone, along with the caption: ‘As we can see, Tsang was wearing a Palestine Liberation Army style scarf, asking the others to charge with him, yet no one was following him.’

‘Official seeing’

The final interpretive community we would like to discuss is that of the criminal justice system, which is, of course, made of up various different professional groups, including police officers, prosecutors, judges, politicians, and other public officials, but which, through the coordinated communication channels of the government, at least in Hong Kong, tends to promote a fairly unified framework for interpreting events. Whereas the practices of professional seeing of the journalists we analyzed were characterized by processes of inscription animated by values of truth and objectivity, and the practices of seeing of the different activist communities we analyzed were characterized by processes of legitimation and delegitimation animated by particular ideological values (for example, democracy, freedom, patriotism, and stability), the practices of police and government officials, at least when it came to this particular video, were characterized by what can only be described as a discursive strategy of ‘reticence’, a general lack of engagement with the evidence. In response to the incident, for example, the police force issued the following brief press release at 10:22 am, refusing at subsequent press conferences and briefings to comment further on an ‘ongoing investigation’:

Police response to officers suspected of using excessive force

Police express concern over the video clip showing several plainclothes officers who are suspected of using excessive force this morning. Police have already taken

immediate actions and will conduct investigation impartially. The Complaints Against Police Office has already received a relevant complaint and will handle it in accordance with the established procedures in a just and impartial manner.

Of course, this text displays many of the same kinds of discursive strategies seen in some of the texts analyzed above, with complex combinations of actors and actions being collapsed into practices such as ‘taking immediate action’, ‘conducting an investigation’, and ‘following established procedures’, phrases which obscure the actual steps that had or would be taken and by whom. It is also interesting how the actions of the officers in the video are backgrounded by being relegated to a relative clause (‘officers who are suspected of using excessive force’) in a sentence whose main process is the police ‘expressing concern’. But the most important thing about this passage is that it is constructed around a brand of professional vision in which the focus is not on representing what actually happened, but on representing the various legal and administrative processes that have been put into place to determine what happened.

Issues to consider

- ❑ Jones and Li quote criminologists Tyler Wall and Travis Linnemann (2014: 133) as saying that cell phone cameras and social media sites have transformed protests from merely political struggles to ‘practical struggles over the authority and regulation of ways of looking and knowing’. What do you think this means? Do you agree? Can you think of examples other than those cited in the excerpt?
- ❑ The excerpt talks about how activists in the ‘pro-Occupy’ camp digitally enhanced the video so that the actions of the officers could be more clearly seen. Nowadays, however, it is increasingly possible to digitally manipulate photos and videos in ways that distort what really happened, including so called ‘deep fakes’, videos in which people can be portrayed as doing or saying things they did not actually do or say. What are the consequences of these technologies on the *evidentiary value* of photographs and videos and on the credibility of news more generally?

REFERENCES

- Abramson, A. (2017, December 28). Trump says he signed more laws than any president since Truman. *Time*. Retrieved 15 June 2019 from <https://time.com/5081357/donald-trump-signed-more-laws-than-truman/>. (B5)
- Abramson, H. S. (1987). *National Geographic: Behind America's lens on the world*. New York: Crown. (D2)
- Adbusters. (2019). *Manifesto: Adbusters Media Foundation*. Retrieved 13 July 2019 from Adbusters website: <https://www.adbusters.org/manifesto>. (A9)
- Adorno, T. W., & Horkheimer, M. ([1947]2016). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. London: Verso. (A6, A9)
- Albawardi, A. (2017). *Digital literacy practices of Saudi female university students*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Reading: University of Reading. (C2)
- Albawadi, A., & Jones, R. (2019). Vernacular mobile literacies: Multimodality, creativity and cultural identity. *Applied Linguistic Review*. (Published Online: 1/3/19) doi:10.1515/applirev-2019-0006 (C2)
- Andersen, J. (2015). Now you've got the shiveries: Affect, intimacy, and the ASMR whisper community. *Television & New Media*, 16(8), 683–700. (C2)
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso. (B1)
- Anderson, J. (2011). *Wikipedia. The company and its founders*. Edina: ABDO Publishing Group. (D5)
- Andersson, L. G., & Trudgill, P. (1992). *Bad language*. London: Penguin. (B9)
- Andrejevic, M. (2004). *Reality TV: The work of being watched*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. (B6)
- Ang, I. (1996). *Living room wars: Rethinking media audiences for a postmodern world*. London: Routledge. (D1)
- Anthonissen, C. (2003). Challenging media censoring: Writing between the lines in the face of stringent restrictions. In J. R. Martin & R. Wodak (eds.), *Discourse approaches to politics, society and culture* (Vol. 8, pp. 91–112). Amsterdam: Benjamins. (B9)
- Artz, L. (2015). Animating transnational capitalism. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 44(2), 93–107. (A4)
- Ash, T. G. (2009). *The file*. London: Atlantic Books. (D6)
- Aslan, E., & Vasquez, C. (2018). "Cash me ousside": A citizen sociolinguistic analysis of online metalinguistic commentary. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 22(4), 406–431. doi:10.1111/josl.12303 (B7)
- Auer, P. (2007). Introduction. In P. Auer (ed.), *Style and social identities: Alternative approaches to linguistic heterogeneity* (pp. 1–21). Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter. (A3)

- Austin, J. L. (1976). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (A1)
- Ayaß, R. (2014). Using media as involvement shields. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 72, 5–17. (B2)
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. London & New York: Continuum. (D7)
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist, ed., C. Emerson, trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press. (A5, B9)
- Bamberg, M., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis. *Text & Talk*, 28(3), 377–396.
- Barnouw, E., Gerbner, G., Schramm, W., Worth, T. L., & Gross, L. (eds) (1989). *International Encyclopedia of Communications*, 4 vols, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. (D1)
- Barratt, E. L., & Davis, N. J. (2015). Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR): A flow-like mental state. *PeerJ*, 3, e85. (C3)
- Barrett, B. (2015). Please don't put a camera in the Apple Watch. *Wired*, 22 June 2015. Retrieved 29 June 2015 from <https://www.wired.com/2015/06/apple-watch-camera/>. (D2)
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image-music-text*. New York: Hill and Wang. (A2, B2, D2)
- Barthes, R. (2009). *Mythologies* (D. A. Lavers, Trans.). New York: Vintage Classics. (A4)
- Baskette, F., Sissors, J., & Brooks, B. S. (1986). *The art of editing* (4th edn). New York: Macmillan Publishing Company. (D5)
- Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (A4)
- Bauman, R. (1975). Towards a behavioral theory of folklore: A reply to Roger Welsch. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 82(324), 167–170. (A4)
- Bauman, R. (2001). Mediatial performance, traditionalization, and the authorization of dis-course. In H. Knoblauch & H. Kothhoff (eds.), *Verbal art across cultures: The aesthetics and proto-aesthetics of communication* (pp. 92–117). Tübingen: Narr. (D1)
- Bauman, R., & Briggs, C. L. (1990). Poetics and performance as critical perspectives on language and social life. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, 59–88. (A5)
- BBC (2009). *Taste, standards and the BBC: Public attitudes to morality, values and behaviour in UK broadcasting*. Retrieved 12 June 2019 from <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/research/taste-standards.pdf>
- BBC News (2014, June 5). Softbank unveils 'human-like' robot Pepper. *BBC*. Retrieved 29 June 2015 from www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-27709828. (D2)
- Bednarek, M. (2006). *Evaluation in media discourse: Analysis of a newspaper corpus*. London: Continuum. (B4)
- Bekalu, M. A. (2006). Presupposition in news discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 17(2), 147–172. (B5)
- Bell, A. (1983). Broadcast news as a language standard. In G. Leitner (ed.), *Language and mass media* (pp. 29–42). Amsterdam: Mouton. (D5)
- Bell, A. (1984). Language style as audience design. *Language in Society*, 13, 145–204. (A2, A3, A6, B6)
- Bell, A. (1989). *Hot news – media reporting and public understanding of the climate change issue in New Zealand: a study in the (mis)communication of science*. Project

- report to DSIR and Ministry for the Environment. Wellington: Victoria University, Department of Linguistics. (D5).
- Bell, A. (1991). *The language of news media*. Oxford: Blackwell. (B4, B5, D7)
- Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics*. New York: Oxford University Press. (C8)
- Bennett, W.L. & Segerberg, A. (2011). Digital media and the personalization of collective action. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(6), 770–799. (D9)
- Bentham, J. ([1748–1832]1995). *The Panopticon writings*. London; New York: Verso. (B6)
- Berger, J. (2013). *Contagious: Why things catch on*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (B7)
- Berger, J., & Milkman, K. L. (2012). What makes online content viral?, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(2), 192–205. (B7)
- Bernays, E. L. (1926). *Crystallizing public opinion*. New York: Boni & Liveright. (A8)
- Bernays, E. L. (1928). *Propaganda*. New York: Horace Liveright. (A8)
- Bernstein, B. (1971). *Class, codes and control, Vol. 1: Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (D8)
- Berry, J. M., & Sobieraj, S. (2014). *The outrage industry: Political opinion media and the new incivility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (D8)
- Bex, T. (1996). *Variety in written English: texts in society – societies in text*. London; New York: Routledge. (D5)
- Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analysing genre: language use in professional settings*. London: Longman. (B3, C3, D3)
- Bhatia, V. K. (1997). Genre mixing in academic introductions. *English for Specific Purposes*, 16, 3, 181–196. (D3)
- Bhatia, V. K. (2000). Genres in conflict. In A. Trosborg (ed.), *Analysing professional genres* (pp. 147–162). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. (D3)
- Bhatia, V. K. (2004). *Worlds of written discourse: A genre-based view*. London: Bloomsbury. (B3, D3)
- Bhatia, V. K. (2005). Generic patterns in promotional discourse. In H. Halmari & T. Virtanen (eds.), *Persuasion across genres: A linguistic approach* (pp. 213–225). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. (B3)
- Biber, D., & Conrad, S. (2009). *Register, genre, and style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (B3, C3)
- Blom, J. N., & Hansen, K. R. (2015). Click bait: Forward reference as lure in online news headlines. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 76, 87–100. (B7)
- Blommaert, J. (2010). *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press. (D8)
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1993). ‘You gotta know how to tell a story’: Telling, tales, and tellers in American and Israeli narrative events at dinner. *Language in Society*, 22(3), 361–402. (A4)
- Bolter, J. D., & Grusin, R. A. (2000). *Remediation: Understanding new media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (B1)
- Borra, E., Weltevrede, E., Ciuccarelli, P., Kaltenbrunner, A., Laniado, D., Magni, G., Mauri, M., Rogers, R., & Venturini, T. (2015). Societal controversies in Wikipedia

- articles. In *CHI'15 Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 193–196). New York: ACM. (D5)
- Brand, G., & Scannell, P. (1991). Talk, identity and performance: *The Tony Blackburn Show*. In P. Scannell (ed.), *Broadcast talk* (pp. 201–227). London: Sage Publications. (A6)
- Brandt, A. (2007). *The cigarette century: The rise, fall, and deadly persistence of the product that defined America: A cultural history of smoking in the United States*. New York: Basic Books. (A8)
- Brown & Williamson, Inc. (1969). *Smoking and health proposal. Internal company memo*. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from <https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=psdw0147>. (A8)
- Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1), 1–21. (A4)
- Bryan, C. D. B. (2001). *The national geographic society: 100 years of adventure and discovery*. New York: Abradale Press. (D2)
- Buckels, E., Trapnell, P., & Paulhus, D. (2014). Trolls just want to have fun. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 67, 97–102. (D5)
- Buckledee, S. (2018). *The language of Brexit: How Britain talked its way out of the European Union*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. (B8)
- Burton, M. (2009). Collaborative weaponization. *Personal Democracy Media*. Retrieved 7 June, 2019 from <https://personaldemocracy.com/blog-entry/weaponization-collaborative-web> (link disabled). (A9)
- Butler, J. (1993). Endangered/endangering: Schematic racism and white paranoia. In R. Gooding-Williams (ed.), *Reading Rodney King/reading urban uprising* (pp. 15–22). New York: Psychology Press. (D9)
- Capella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (1997). *Spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press. (A4)
- Carey, J. W. (1989) *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. Boston, MA: Unwin-Hyman.
- Cantenaccio, P. (2008). Press releases as a hybrid genre: Addressing the informative/promotional conundrum. *Pragmatics*, 18(1), 9–31. (B3)
- Catenaccio, P. Cotter, C., De Smedt, M., Garzonea, G., Jacobs, G., Macgilchristd, F., Lamse, L., Perrin, D., Richardsong, J. E., Van Houth, T., & Van Praet, E. (2011). Towards a linguistics of news production. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(7), 1843–1852. (A5)
- Cathcart, R., & Gumpert, G. (1983). Mediated interpersonal communication: Toward a new typology. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 69, 267–277. (D1)
- Chafe, W. (1984). Speaking, writing, and prescriptivism. In D. Schiffrin (ed.), *Meaning, form, and use in context: linguistic applications* (pp. 95–103). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. (D5)
- Chan, J. M., & Lee, C. C. (1984). Journalistic paradigms on civil protests: A case study of Hong Kong. In A. Arno & W. Dissanayake (eds.), *The news media in national and international conflict* (pp. 183– 202). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Chartered Institute of Public Relations (1987). *What is PR?* Retrieved 29 May 2019 from <https://www.cipr.co.uk/content/policy/careers-advice/what-pr>. (A8)
- Cheshire, J., Kerswill, P., Fox, S., & Torgersen, E. (2011). Contact, the feature pool and the speech community: The emergence of Multicultural London English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 15(2), 151–196. (A3)

- Chion, M. (1994). *Audio-vision: Sound on screen*. New York: Columbia University Press. (C2)
- Chouliaraki, L. (2011). *The spectatorship of suffering*. London: Sage Publications. (A8)
- Choy, M., & Chong, M. (2018). Seeing through misinformation: A framework for identifying fake online news. *arxiv.org*. Retrieved 3 April 2019 from <https://arxiv.org/abs/1804.03508v1>. (C8)
- Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice* (5th ed.). New York: Harper-Collins. (B7)
- Clark, L. (2015, June 8). London ‘stinkmap’ could change urban planning. *Wired*. Retrieved 29 June 2015 from www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-06/08/mapping-city-smells. (D2)
- Clayman, S. E. (1992). Footing in the achievement of neutrality: The case of news-interview discourse. In P. Drew & J. Heritage (eds.), *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings* (pp. 163–198). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A6)
- Clayman, S., & Heritage, J. (2002). *The News interview: Journalists and public figures on the air*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (C3)
- Coates, J. (1993). *Women, men, and language: A sociolinguistic account of gender differences in language*. London: Longman. (B9)
- Conboy, M. (2010). *The language of newspapers: Socio-historical perspectives*. London: Continuum. (A3)
- Conway, E. M., & Oreskes, N. (2012). *Merchants of doubt: How a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*. London: Bloomsbury. (A8)
- Corner, J. (1995). *Television form and public address*. London: Arnold. (D3)
- Cotter, C. (2010). *News talk: Investigating the language of journalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A5)
- Couldry, N., & McCarthy, A. (2003). Orientations: Mapping MediaSpace. In N. Couldry & A. McCarthy (eds.), *MediaSpace: Place, scale and culture in a media age* (pp. 1–18). London; New York: Routledge. (D6)
- Coupland, N. (2007). *Style: Language variation and identity*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press. (A3)
- Cytowic, R. (1993). *The man who tasted shapes*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (C2)
- Dahiya, R. S., & Valle, M. (2013). *Robotic tactile sensing*. New York: Springer. (D2)
- Dahlgren, P. (2005). The Internet, public spheres, and political communication: Dispersion and deliberation. *Political Communication*, 22, 147–162. (A9)
- Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive construction of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20(1), 43–63. (A6)
- Davis, C. B., Glantz, M., & Novak, D. R. (2016). “You can’t run your SUV on cute. Let’s go!”: Internet memes as delegitimizing discourse. *Environmental Communication*, 10(1), 62–83. (C5)
- Dawkins, R. (1976). *The selfish gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (B7)
- Dawsey, J. (2018, January 12). Trump derides protections for immigrants from ‘shithole’ countries. *Washington Post*. retrieved 6 June 2019 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-attacks-protections-for-immigrants-from-shithole-countries-in-oval-office-meeting/2018/01/11/bfc0725c-f711-11e7-91af-31ac729add94_story.html (B9)

- Demi Moore in bikini shot on Ashton Kutcher's Twitter page.* (2009, March 23). Retrieved 4 June 2020 from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/twitter/5037620/Demi-Moore-in-bikini-shot-on-Ashton-Kutchers-Twitter-page.html>. (D4)
- Derrida, J. (1981). The law of genre. In W. J. T. Mitchell (ed.), *On narrative* (pp. 51–77). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (B3)
- de Saussure, F. (1998). *Course in general linguistics*. R. Harris (trans). LaSalle, IL: Open Court. (A6)
- Donath, J. (2000). Identity and deception in the virtual community. In M. Smith & P. Kollock (eds.), *Communities in cyberspace* (pp. 29–59). London: Routledge. (D5)
- Dopp, T. (2019, February 25), Trump attacks director Spike Lee After Oscars speech. *Fortune*. Retrieved 15 June 2019 from <http://fortune.com/2019/02/25/trump-spike-lee-oscars/>. (B5)
- Doty, A. (1993). *Making things perfectly queer*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (A9)
- Durant, A., & Lambrou, M. (2009). *Language and media: A resource book for students*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge. (D7)
- Diamond, L. (2010). Liberation technology. *Journal of Democracy*, 21(3), 69–83. (B9)
- Eckert, P. (2001). Style and social meaning. In P. Eckert & J. Rickford (eds.), *Style and sociolinguistic variation* (pp. 119–126). New York: Cambridge University Press. (A3)
- Eisenlauer, V. (2014). Facebook as a third author—(Semi-)automated participation framework in Social Network Sites. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 72, 73–85. (B5)
- Ellul, J. ([1965]1973). *Propaganda: The formation of men's attitudes*. New York: Vintage Books. (A8)
- Ensslin, A. (2018). Future modes. In D. Perrin & C. Cotter (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language and media* (pp. 312–315). Abingdon: Routledge. (A2, D2)
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman. (B3, B8)
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press. (D3)
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. London: Hodder. (D7)
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge. (D3)
- Fallows, D. (2005). *Search engine users*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project. (A8)
- Farkas, J., & Schou, J. (2018). Fake news as a floating signifier: Hegemony, antagonism and the politics of falsehood. *Javnost – The Public*, 25(3), 298–314. (C8, D8)
- Filloux, F. (2016). Facebook's walled wonderland is inherently incompatible with news. *Monday Note*. December 5. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from <https://monday-note.com/facebooks-walled-wonderland-is-inherently-incompatible-with-news-media-b145e2d0078c#.v0txzx82e>. (D8)
- Finnegan, R. (2002). *Communicating: The multiple modes of human interconnection*. London: Routledge. (D1)
- Fisher, M. (2011, 3 January). The truth about iconic 2003 Saddam statue-toppling. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved 21 May 2019 from <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/01/the-truth-about-iconic-2003-saddam-statue-toppling/342802/>. (B8)
- Fjellestad, D. (2001). Towards an aesthetics of smell, or the foul and the fragrant in contemporary literature. *CAUCE*, 24, 637–651. (D2)

- Floridi, L. (1996). Brave.Net.World: The Internet as a disinformation superhighway? *The Electronic Library*, 14(6), 509–514. (D8)
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage. (D6)
- Friestad, M., & Wright, P. (1994). The persuasion knowledge model: How people cope with persuasion attempts. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(1), 1–31. (A8)
- Frobenius, M. (2014). Audience design in monologues: How vloggers involve their viewers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 72, 59–72. (C6)
- Funt, P. (2010, October 1). Too funny for words. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 21 June 2019 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/02/opinion/02funt.html>.
- Gallagher, B. (2015, October 16). *The 15 types of selfies*. Retrieved 27 June 2019 from Complex website: <https://www.complex.com/pop-culture/2013/10/the-15-types-of-selfies/>. (C2)
- Galtung, J., & Ruge, M. (1973). Structuring and selecting news. In S. Cohn & J. Young (eds.), *The manufacture of news: Social problems, deviance, and the class media* (pp. 62–72). London: Constable. (D5)
- Gane, N. (2012). The governmentalities of neoliberalism: Panopticism, post-panopticism and beyond. *The Sociological Review*, 60(4), 611–634. (D6)
- Garrett, R. K. (2006). Protest in an information society: A review of literature on social movements and new ICTs. *Information, Communication and Society*, 9(2), 202–224. (D9)
- Gershon, I. (2012). *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over new media*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (A1)
- Ghinea, G., Timmerer, C., Lin, W. S., & Gulliver, S. R. (2014). Mulsemedia: State of the art, perspectives, and challenges. *ACM Transactions on Multimedia Computing, Communications, and Applications (TOMM) – Special Issue on Multiple Sensorial (MulSeMedia) Multimodal Media: Advances and Applications*, 11(1), article 17. Retrieved 18 June 2015 from <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id==2617994> (D2)
- Gibson, J. J. (1979). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Boston, MA: Psychology Press. (B1, D6)
- Giménez-Moreno, R. (2006). A new approach to register variation: The missing link. *Ibérica*, 12, 89–110. (C1)
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (A4)
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday. (A2, D4, D6)
- Goffman, E. (1966). *Behavior in public places: Notes on the social organization of gatherings*. New York: The Free Press. (B2)
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper and Row. (A4)
- Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk*. Oxford: Blackwell. (B5, A6, D6)
- Goffman, E. (1987). *Gender advertisements*. New York: Harper and Collins. (B2)
- Goldacre, B. (2007, February 12). What's wrong with Gillian McKeith. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2007/feb/12/advertising.food>. (A8)
- Goldsmith, A. (2010). Policing's new visibility. *British Journal of Criminology*, 50, 914–934. (A9)

- Goodwin, C. (1994). Professional vision. *American Anthropologist*, 96(3), 606–633. (D9)
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart. (A9)
- Gredel, E. (2017). Digital discourse analysis and Wikipedia: Bridging the gap between Foucauldian discourse analysis and digital conversation analysis. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 115: 91–114. (C5, D5)
- Gregory, S. (2010). Cameras everywhere: Ubiquitous video documentation of human rights, new forms of video advocacy, and considerations of safety, security, dignity and consent. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), 191–207. (D9)
- Greimas, A. J., & Courtés, J. (1979). *Sémiotique. Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*. Paris: Hachette. (D9)
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A4, B6)
- Haarman, L. (2004). ‘John, what’s going on?’: some features of live exchanges on television news. In A. Partington, J. Morley, & L. Haarman (eds.), *Corpora and discourse* (pp. 71–88). Bern: Peter Lang. (D3)
- Hall, K., Goldstein, D. M., & Ingram, M. B. (2016). The hands of Donald Trump: Entertainment, gesture, spectacle. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 6(2), 71–100. (B6)
- Hall, S. (1973). *Encoding and decoding in the television discourse*. Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham. Retrieved 3 April 2019 from http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/2962/1/Hall%2C_1973%2C_Encoding_and_Decoding_in_the_Television_Discourse.pdf. (A9)
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1973). *Explorations in the functions of language*. New York: Elsevier North-Holland. (B2)
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1976). Anti-Languages. *American Anthropologist*, 78(3), 570–584. (B9)
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. London: Arnold. (D2)
- Halpern, O. (2014). *Beautiful data: A history of vision and reason since 1945*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (B8)
- Harding, J. (2012, June 15). *Images: A matter of perspective*. Retrieved 29 March 2019, from To Inform is to Influence website: <https://toinformistoinfluence.com/2012/06/15/images-a-matter-of-perspective/>
- Hart, H. (2014). Innovations in Cinema: ‘AromaRama’. *National Board of Review*, January. Retrieved 5 July 2019 from <http://www.nationalboardofreview.org/2014/01/innovations-cinema-aromarama/>. (D2)
- Hartshorne, S. (2014, March 5). I was a woman laughing alone with salad, it’s really not that funny. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 29 March 2019 from <https://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2014/mar/05/woman-laughing-alone-with-salad>. (B2)
- Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J., & Rapson, R. L. (1994). *Emotional contagion*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (B7)
- Heller, S. (2008). *Iron fists: Branding the 20th-century totalitarian state*. London: Phaidon.
- Hemsley, J., & Mason, R. M. (2013). Knowledge and knowledge management in the social media age. *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce*, 23(1–2), 138–167. (A7)

- Heritage, J. (1985). Analyzing news interviews: Aspects of the production of talk for an overhearing audience. In T.A. van Dijk (ed.) *Handbook of discourse analysis, vol. 3, Discourse and dialogue* (pp. 95–119). London: Academic Press. (D6)
- Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York: Pantheon. (A9)
- Herring, S., Job-Sluder, K., Scheckler, R., & Barab, S. (2002). Searching for safety online: Managing “trolling” in a feminist forum. *Information Society, 18*(5), 371–384.
- Higgins, A., McIntire, M., & Dance, G. J. X. (2016, November 25). Inside a fake news sausage factory: ‘This is all about income.’ *The New York Times*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/25/world/europe/fake-news-donald-trump-hillary-clinton-georgia.html?smid=tw-share&r=1>. (D8)
- Hill, E. (2012). *Spot goes to the farm*. iPhone/iPad app. London: Penguin Books and Ventura Publishing. (D2)
- Ho, V. (2019, February 27). Ocasio-Cortez – ‘who actually worked for wages’ – rebukes Ivanka Trump. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 15 June 2019 from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/feb/26/ocasio-cortez-rebukes-ivanka-trump-on-jobs-as-a-person-who-actually-worked>. (B5)
- Hoey, M. (1983). *On the surface of discourse*. London: George Allen and Unwin. (D3)
- Hutchby, I. (2001). *Conversation and technology: From the telephone to the internet*. New York: Wiley. (B6)
- Hutchby, I. (2005). *Media talk: Conversation analysis and the study of broadcasting*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. (A6)
- Hyman, D. A., Franklyn, D. J., Yee, C., & Rahmati, M. H. (2016). *Going native: Can consumers recognize native advertising? Does it matter?* University of Illinois College of Law Legal Studies Research Paper No. 16–32. (A8)
- Innis, H. (1951). *The bias of communication*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. (B1)
- Ipsos MORI. (2016). *Attitudes to potentially offensive language and gestures on TV and radio: Quick reference guide*. London: Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute. Retrieved 14 December 2018 from Ofcom: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/tv-radio-and-on-demand/tv-research/offensive-language-2016>.
- Irvine, J., & Gal, S. (2000). Language ideology and linguistic differentiation. In P. V. Kroskrity (ed.), *Regimes of language: Ideologies, politics, and identities, School of American Research advanced seminar series* (pp. 35–83). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press. (A3)
- Jacobs, B. (2019, March 29). Trump threatens to close border with Mexico. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/mar/29/donald-trump-threatens-close-mexico-border>. (B5)
- Jagodzinski, C. M. (1999). *Privacy and print: Reading and writing in seventeenth-century England*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. (A1)
- Jamieson, A. (2017, January 11). ‘You are Fake News’: Trump attacks CNN and BuzzFeed at press conference. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/11/trump-attacks-cnn-buzzfeed-at-press-conference>. (D8)

- Jaworska, S. (2018). 'Bad' mums tell the 'untellable': Narrative practices and agency in online stories about postnatal depression on Mumsnet. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 25: 25–33. (B4)
- Jaworska, S. & Themistocleous, C. (2018). Public discourses on multilingualism in the UK: Triangulating a corpus study with a sociolinguistic attitude survey. *Language in Society*, 47(1), 57–88. (A3)
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York: New York University Press. (B1, D1)
- Jenkins, H., Ford, S., Green, J., & New York University Press. (2018). *Spreadable media: Creating value and meaning in networked culture*. New York: New York University Press. (A7)
- Johnson, S. (2009). *How Twitter will change the way we live*. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1902818,00.html>. (D4)
- Jones, R. H. (1996). *Responses to AIDS awareness discourse: A cross-cultural frame analysis, City Polytechnic of Hong Kong research monograph 10*. Hong Kong: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, Department of English. (A4)
- Jones, R. H. (2015). Generic intertextuality in online social activism: The case of the *It Gets Better* project. *Language in Society*, 44(3), 317–339. (B4)
- Jones, R. H. (2016). Creativity and discourse analysis. In R. Jones (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Creativity* (pp. 61–77). London; New York: Routledge. (A5, B5)
- Jones, R. H., & Li, C. H. (2016). Evidentiary video and 'professional vision' in the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement. *Journal of Language & Politics*, 15(5), 567–588. (D9)
- Katz, J. E., & Crocker, E. T. (2015). Selfies and photo messaging as visual conversation: Reports from the United States, United Kingdom and China. *International Journal of Communication*, 9(0), 12. (A2)
- Kerswill, P. (2014). The objectification of 'Jafaican': The discursive embedding of Multicultural London English in the British media. In J. Androutsopoulos (ed.), *Mediatization and sociolinguistic change* (pp. 428–455). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. (A3)
- Koskela, H. (2002). 'Cam Era' — the contemporary urban Panopticon. *Surveillance & Society*, 1(3), 292–313. (D6)
- Kress, G. (1997). *Before writing*. London: Routledge. (C2)
- Kress, G. (2000). Design and transformation: New theories of meaning. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (eds.), *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures* (pp. 153–61). New York: Routledge. (A2)
- Kress, G., & Jewitt, C. (2003). Introduction. In C. Jewitt & G. Kress (eds.), *Multimodal literacy* (pp. 1–18). New York: Peter Lang. (A2)
- Kress, G. R., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge. (B2, D2)
- Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language: A semiotic approach to language and art*. (Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez). New York: Columbia University Press. (A5)
- Krugman, P. (2014, 18 April). On the liberal bias of facts. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from <https://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/18/on-the-liberal-bias-of-facts>. (D8)

- Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city*. University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press. (A3)
- Labov, W., & Waletzky, J. (1967). Narrative analysis. In J. Helm (ed.), *Essays on the verbal and visual arts* (pp. 12–44). Seattle: University of Washington Press. (A4)
- Laclau, E. (2005). *On populist reason*. London: Verso. (D8)
- Laclau, E. (2014). *The rhetorical foundations of society*. London: Verso. (D8)
- Lakoff, G. (2004). *Don't think of an elephant*. White River Junction, VT : Chelsea Green. (A4)
- Lakoff, G. (2006). *Whose freedom? The battle over America's most important idea*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. (A4)
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (B8)
- Lanier, J. (2017). *Dawn of the new everything: A journey through virtual reality*. London: Bodley Head. (A9)
- Lauer, J. (2012). Surveillance history and the history of new media: An evidential paradigm. *New Media & Society*, 14(4), 566–582. (D6)
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (A5, D1)
- Le Page, R. B., & Tabouret-Keller, A. (1985). *Acts of identity: Creole-based approaches to language and ethnicity*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press. (A3)
- Lemke, J. L. (1999). Typological and topological meaning in diagnostic discourse. *Discourse Processes*, 27(2), 173–185. (A2)
- Leppänen, S., Kytölä, S., Jousmäki, H., Peuronen, S., & Westinen, E. (2014). Entextualisation and resemiotization as resources for identification in social media. In P. Seargeant & C. Tagg (eds.), *The language of social media: Identity and community on the internet* (pp. 112–138). Basingstoke: Palgrave. (C6)
- Lessig, L. (2004). *Free culture: How big media uses technology and the law to lock down culture and control creativity*. New York: Penguin. (A9)
- Levontin, L., & Yom-Tov, E. (2017). Negative self-disclosure on the web: The role of guilt relief. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1068. (B7)
- Lewis, J., Williams, A., & Franklin, B. (2008). A compromised fourth estate? *Journalism Studies*, 9(1), 1–20. (A8)
- Li, N. C. H. (2014). *The growing significance of new media in Hong Kong social movements*. A paper presented at the Global Insecurities Conference, Bristol, UK. November 21–22. (D9)
- Liptak, K., & Collins, K. (2019, March 28). Trump claims vindication after Mueller does not establish collusion. *CNNPolitics*. Retrieved 15 June 2019 from <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/24/politics/donald-trump-response-mueller-report/index.html>. (B5)
- Lischinsky, A. (2018). Critical discourse studies and branding. In J. Flowerdew & J. Richardson (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 540–552). London: Routledge. (B4)
- Livingstone, S. (2009). On the mediation of everything: ICA presidential address 2008. *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 1–18. (D1)

- Livingstone, S., & Lunt, P. (1994). *Talk on television: Audience participation and public debate*. London: New York: Routledge. (B6)
- Locke, J. L. (2010). *Eavesdropping: An intimate history*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (D6)
- Lohr, S. (2001, December 12). The man behind the curtain in the Hewlett-Compaq Merger. *The New York Times*. Retrieved on 15 June 2019 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/12/business/technology-the-man-behind-the-curtain-in-the-hewlett-compaq-merger.html>. (B5)
- Lohr, S. (2009, January 26). Something to fear after all: F.D.R's example offers lessons for Obama. *The New York Times*. p. B2. (B8)
- Lou, J., & Jaworski, A. (2016). Itineraries of protest signage: Semiotic landscape and the mythologizing of the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 15(5), 609–642. (C9)
- Lowenstein, G. (1994). The psychology of curiosity: A review and reinterpretation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116(1), 75–98. (C7)
- Lutz, A., & Collins, J. L. (1993). *Reading national geographic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (D2)
- Lyon, D. (1994). *Electronic eye: The rise of surveillance society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (D6)
- Malinowski, B. (1923). The problem of meaning in primitive languages. In C. K. Ogden & I. A. Richards (eds.) *The meaning of meaning* (pp. 296–336). London: Routledge. (B4)
- Manovich, L. (2006). The poetics of augmented space. *Visual Communication*, 5(2): 219–240. (A2, D2)
- Marchi, A. (2019). *Self-reflexive journalism: A corpus study of journalistic culture and community in The Guardian*. London: Routledge. (A5)
- Marsh, J. (2015). The discourses of celebrity in the fanvid ecology of Club Penguin machinima. In R. Jones, A. Chik, & C. Hafner (eds.), *Discourse and digital practices* (pp. 193–208). London: Routledge. (B5)
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005) *The Language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (D7)
- Marwick, A. E., & boyd, d. (2011). I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *New Media & Society*, 13, 114–133. (A6, B6)
- Mathiesen, T. (1997). The viewer society: Michel Foucault's 'Panopticon' revisited. *Theoretical Criminology*, 1(2), 215–234. (D6)
- McChesney, R. W. (2000). *Rich media, poor democracy: Communication politics in dubious times*. Urbana, IL: The New Press. (A9)
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187. (A9)
- McCright, A. M., & Dunlap, R. E. (2011). The politicization of climate change and polarization in the american public's views of global warming, 2001–2010. *Sociological Quarterly*, 52, 155–194.
- McIntyre, L. C. (2018). *Post-truth*. Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press. (C8)
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. New York: McGraw-Hill. (B1, D1)

- Metz, C. (1971). *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*, Tome I, Paris: Klincksieck. (B2)
- Meyer, S. (2013). *Jimmy Wales and Wikipedia*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group. (D5)
- Meyerhoff, M. (2006). *Introducing sociolinguistics*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge. (A6)
- Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No sense of place: The impact of electronic media on social behavior*. New York: Oxford University Press. (A2, B6, D6)
- Miller, C., & Bazerman, C. (2011). Gêneros textuais [Genres]. Retrieved from <http://www.nigufpe.com.br/batepapoacademico/bate-papo-academico1.pdf>. (A3)
- Milner, R. M. (2013). Pop polyvocality: Internet memes, public participation, and the Occupy Wall Street Movement. *International Journal of Communication*, 7(0), 34. (B7)
- Milner, R. M. (2016). *The world made meme: Public conversations and participatory media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (B7)
- Milroy, J., & Milroy, L. (1999). *Authority in language: Investigating standard English* (3rd edn). London; New York: Routledge. (A5)
- Mitchell, W. J. (1994). *The reconfigured eye: Visual truth in the post-photographic era*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (B8)
- Mixed Reality Lab (2015). *Announcing Ring U – an new interactive internet hugging ring for friends, family, and lovers*. Retrieved 30 June 2015 from <http://mixedrealitylab.org/projects/all-projects/ringu>. (D2)
- Mochizuki, A., Amada, T., Sawa, S., Takeda, T., Motoyashiki, S., Kohyama, K. et al. (2004). Fragra: A visual-olfactory VR game. *Proceedings of the ACM SIGGRAPH (SIGGRAPH'04)* (p. 123). New York: ACM Press. (D2)
- Molek-Kozakowska, K. (2013). Towards a pragma-linguistic framework for the study of sensationalism in news headlines. *Discourse & Communication*, 7(2), 173–197.
- Molloy, M. (2016, June 6). The real story behind the viral Rembrandt ‘kids on phones’ photo. *Telegraph*. Retrieved on 14 May 2019 from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/12103150/Rembrandt-The-Night-Watch-The-real-story-behind-the-kids-on-phones-photo.html>. (A1)
- Montgomery, M. (1986). DJ talk. *Media, Culture and Society*, 8: 421–440. (D6)
- Montgomery, M. (2007). *The discourse of broadcast news: A linguistic approach*. London: Routledge. (A3)
- Montgomery, M. (2008). *An introduction to language and society*. Abington, Oxon: Routledge. (B9)
- Montgomery, M. (2017). Post-truth politics? Authenticity, populism and the electoral discourses of Donald Trump. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16(4), 619–639. (D8)
- Morley, D. (1992). *Television, audiences and cultural studies*. London: Routledge. (B6)
- Morley, D. (1993). Active audience theory: Pendulums and pitfalls. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 13–19. (A9)
- Mott, F. L. (1950). *American journalism: A history of newspapers in the United States through 260 years, 1690–1950*. New York: Macmillan. (A5)
- Nakamoto, T., Cho, N., Nitikarn, N., Wyszynski, B., Takushima, H., & Kinoshita, M. (2008). Experiment on teleolfaction using odor sensing system and olfactory display synchronous with visual information. *Proceedings of International Conference on Artificial Reality and Teleexistence (ICAT)* (pp. 85–92). December 1–3, Yokohama, Japan. (D2)

- Nielsen, J. (2006). *F-shaped pattern for reading web content (original eyetracking research)*. Retrieved 13 July 2019 from Nielsen Norman Group website: <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/f-shaped-pattern-reading-web-content-discovered/>. (B2)
- Noelle-Neumann, E. (1984). *The spiral of silence: Public opinion – our social skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago. (A9)
- Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2010). When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. *Political Behavior*, 32(2), 303–330. (C8)
- Ochs, E., & Capps, L. (2001). *Living narrative: creating lives in everyday storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (B4, C4, D4).
- Ong, W. J. (1996). *Orality and literacy: The technologizing of the word*. London: Routledge. (B1)
- O’Keeffe, A. (2006). *Investigating media discourse*. London: Routledge. (A5)
- Orwell, G. (1949/1992). *Nineteen eighty-four*. London: Everyman. (A8)
- Page, R. (2010). Re-examining narrativity: Small stories in status updates. *Text & Talk*, 30(4), 423–444. (B4)
- Page, R. (2012). *Stories and social media: Identities and interaction*. New York: Routledge. (A4, B4, D4)
- Page, R. (2018). *Narratives online: Shared stories in social media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (B4)
- Papacharissi, Z. (2016). *News Tips - Week of Nov. 21, 2016. Office of public and government affairs*. University of Illinois at Chicago. Retrieved June 27 2017 from <http://uofi.uic.edu/emails/newsletter/111748.htm>. (D8)
- Pariser, E. (2011). *The filter bubble: What the internet is hiding from you*. New York: Penguin. (A6)
- Peirce, C. S. (2003). *Charles S. Peirce, selected writings*. New York: Dover Publications Inc. (A2)
- Peters, M., & Mörtzell, J. (2007, October 6). Mark Peters on the Colbert Suffix. *Good*, issue 007. Retrieved on 20 March 2019 from <https://www.good.is/articles/mark-peters-on-the-colbert-suffix>. (A8)
- Peverini, P. (2014). Remix practices and activism: A semiotic analysis of creative dissent. In E. Navas, O. Gallagher, & X. Burrough (eds.), *The Routledge companion to remix studies* (pp. 333–334), Abington, Oxon; New York: Routledge. (D9)
- Plato (2017). *Phaedrus*. (B. Jowett, Trans.). Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. (C1)
- Pollard, S. (2016, March 2). Euro conflict between EU elite and national democracies is extraordinarily dangerous. *The Express*. Retrieved 13 March 2019 from <http://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/649020/eurozone-political-economic-failure-Lord-Mandelson-Mervyn-King-Greece-bailout-riots>. (B8)
- Ranasinghe, N., Lee, K. Y., Suthokumar, G., & Do, E. Y. L. (2014). The sensation of taste in the future of immersive media. *ImmersiveMe '14: Proceedings of the 2nd ACM International Workshop on Immersive Media Experiences* (pp. 7–12), New York: ACM. (D2)
- Rankin, T. (2005). *PR and propaganda: On the ethics of truth*. Retrieved 20 March 2019 from <http://www.trankin.com/advisor/propaganda.asp>. (A8)

- Ross, A. S., & Rivers, D. J. (2017). Digital cultures of political participation: Internet memes and the discursive delegitimization of the 2016 US Presidential candidates. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 16, 1–11. (B7)
- Rucker, P., Wagner, J., & Miller, G. (2017). Trump wages war against the media as demonstrators protest his presidency. *The Washington Post*, January 21. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-wages-war-against-the-media-as-demonstrators-protest-his-presidency/2017/01/21/705be9a2-e00c-11e6-ad42-f3375f271c9c_story.html. (D8)
- Ryan, M.-L. (2006). *Avatars of story*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (D4)
- Samuel, A. W. (2004). *Hacktivism and the future of political participation*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Cambridge: Harvard University. (A9)
- Schank, R. C., & Abelson, R. P. (1977). *Scripts, plans, goals and understanding*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum. (D5)
- Schiffer, A. J. (2018). *Evaluating media bias*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. (C8)
- Schwartz, O. (2018, November 12). You thought fake news was bad? Deep fakes are where truth goes to die. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/nov/12/deep-fakes-fake-news-truth>. (B8)
- Scollon, R. (1998). *Mediated discourse as social interaction: A study of news discourse*. New York; London: Longman. (B2, D1)
- Scollon, R. (1999). Mediated discourse and social interaction, *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 32(1–2), 149–154. (D1)
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (1981). *Narrative, literacy, and face in interethnic communication*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex. (A4)
- Seife, C. (2010). *Proofiness: The dark arts of mathematical deception*. New York: Viking. (A8)
- Senft, T. M. (2008). *Camgirls: Celebrity and community in the age of social networks*. New York: Peter Lang. (A2)
- Serazio, M. (2013). *Your ad here: The cool sell of guerrilla marketing*. New York: New York University Press. (A8)
- Shannon, C. (1948). A mathematical theory of communication. *Bell System Technical Journal*, 27, 379–423. (A6)
- Shachaf, P., & Hara, N. (2010). Beyond vandalism: Wikipedia trolls. *Journal of Information Science*, 36(3), 357–730. (D5)
- Shachtman, N. (2009, June 16). Web Attacks Expand in Iran's Cyber Battle. *Wired*. Retrieved 7 June 2019 from <https://www.wired.com/2009/06/web-attacks-expand-in-irans-cyber-battle/> (A9)
- Shifman, L. (2014). *Memes in digital culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (B7)
- Silverman, C. (2016, November 16). This analysis shows how fake election news stories outperformed real news on Facebook. *Buzzfeed News*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from <https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/viral-fake-election-news-outperformed-real-news-on-facebook>. (B8)
- Silverman, C., & Alexander, L. (2016, November 4). How teens in the Balkans are duping Trump supporters with fake news. *Buzzfeed News*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/how-macedonia-became-a-global-hub-for-pro-trump-misinfo?utm_term=.ebrpdWwymW#.ijbg9Q44YQ. (D8)

- Silverman, C., Strapagiel L., Shaban, Hall, H. E., & Singer-Vine. J. (2016, October 20). Hyperpartisan Facebook pages are publishing false and misleading information at an alarming rate. *Buzzfeed News*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/partisan-fb-pages-analysis?utm_term=.an82QeM-MJe#.wb8jdLOOqL. (D8)
- Simon, B. (2009). *Everything but the coffee: Learning America from Starbucks*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (B4)
- Simon, H. (1971). Designing organizations for an information rich world. In M. Greenberger (ed.), *Computers, communication and the public interest*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. (A7)
- Smith, V. L. (2001). A summer stinker; 'A bore in homeopathic doses can be hilarious, but a bore in real time remains simply a bore.' *The Evening Standard*, 10 July 2010, p. 29. (A3)
- Snyder, M. (2014, May 20). Is the mainstream media dying? Ratings at CNN, MSNBC and Fox News have all been plummeting in recent years. *InfoWars*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from <https://www.infowars.com/is-the-mainstream-media-dying/>. (D8)
- Society for Professional Journalists (2017). *Anonymous sources*. SPJ Ethics Committee Position. Retrieved 15 June 2019 from <https://www.spj.org/ethics-papers-anonymity.asp>. (B5)
- Soules, M. (2015). *Media, persuasion and propaganda*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. (B8)
- Stapleton, K. (2010). Swearing. In M. A Locher & S. L. Graham (eds.), *Interpersonal pragmatics* (pp. 289–306). Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter. (C5)
- Sundar, S. S. (2016, December 8). Why do we fall for fake news? *The Conversation*. Retrieved 4 April 2019 from <http://theconversation.com/why-do-we-fall-for-fake-news-69829>. (C8)
- Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (B3)
- Tagg, C., Seargeant, P., & Brown, A. A. (2017). *Taking offence on social media: Conviviality and communication on Facebook*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (B6)
- Tannen, D. (1980). A Comparative analysis of oral narrative strategies: Athenian Greek and American English. In Chafe, W. (ed.). *The Pear stories: Cognitive, cultural, and linguistic aspects of narrative production* (pp. 51–87). Norwood, NJ: Ablex. (A4)
- Tannen, D. (1999). *The argument culture: Changing the way we argue and debate*. London: Virago. (B8)
- Temperton, J. (2015, March 4). The future of food. *Wired*. Retrieved 30 June 2015 from www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-02/27/future-of-foo. (D2)
- Thibodeau, P., & Boroditsky, L. (2011). Metaphors we think with: the role of metaphor in reasoning. *PLOS ONE*, 6(2), e16782. Retrieved 10 July 2019 from <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0016782>. (B8)
- Thornborrow, J. (2000). The construction of conflicting accounts in public participation TV. *Language in Society*, 29(3): 357–377. (A4)
- Thornborrow, J. (2017). Styling the ordinary: Tele-factual genres and participant identities. In J. Mortensen, N. Coupland, & J. Thøgersen (eds.), *Style, mediation, and change: Sociolinguistic perspectives on talking media* (pp. 143–163). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (A3, A6, B3)

- Tiptree, J. Jr. (1973). *The girl who was plugged in*. New York: Doubleday. (D2)
- Todorov, T. (1990). *Genres in discourse*. (C. Porter, Trans.). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press. (A3)
- Tominaga, K., Honda, S., Ohsawa, T., Shigeno, H., Okada, K., & Matsushita, Y. (2001). 'Friend park': Expression of the wind and the scent on virtual space. *Proceedings of Seventh International Conference on Virtual Systems and Multimedia 2001* (pp. 507–515). Washington, DC. (D2)
- Toolan, M. (2001). *Narrative: A critical linguistic introduction*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge (B4, C4, D4).
- Travis, A. (2016, May 10). Brexit 'unlikely to mean deep migration cuts but may lead to 2p tax increase'. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 15 October 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/10/brexit-unlikely-to-mean-deep-migration-cuts-but-may-lead-to-2p-tax-increase>. (B8)
- Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news*. New York: The Free Press. (D5)
- Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. New York: Basic Books. (C1)
- Turow, J. (2005). Audience construction and culture production: Marketing surveillance in the digital age. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 597(1), 103–121. (A6)
- Ulanoff, L. (2014, June 24). Japan's new robot museum guides are all too human. *MashableUK*. Retrieved 29 June 2015 from <http://mashable.com/2014/06/24/japans-new-robots-are-scary/>. (D2)
- Van Dijk, T. (1988). *News as discourse*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum. (D3)
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Discourse semantics as ideology. *Discourse & Society*, 6(2), 243–289. (C4)
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2000). Semiotics and iconography. In T. van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (eds.), *Handbook of visual analysis* (pp. 92–118). London: Sage. (D2)
- Varis, P., & Blommaert, J. (2015). Conviviality and collectives on social media: Virality, memes, and new social structures. *Multilingual Margins*, 2, 31–45. (A7, B7, C7)
- Veum, A., & Undrum, L. V. (2017). The selfie as a global discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 29(1), 86–103. (B4)
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language* (E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar, trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (A1)
- Wall, T., & Linnemann, T. (2014). Staring down the state: Police power, visual economies, and the 'war on cameras'. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 10(2), 133–149. (D9)
- Warren, S. D., & Brandeis, L. D. (1890). The right to privacy. *Harvard Law Review*, 4(5), 193–220. (D6)
- Weaver, R. M. (1953). *The ethics of rhetoric*. Brattleboro, VT: Echo Point Books & Media. (B8)
- Weber, K., Dejmancee, T., & Rhode, F. (2018). The 2017 Women's March on Washington: An analysis of protest-sign messages. *International Journal of Communication*, 12(0), 25. (C9)
- Wellman B., Quan-Haase, A., Boase, J., Chen, W., Hampton, K., Diaz, I., & Miyata, K. (2003). The social affordances of the internet for networked individualism.

- Journal of Computer-mediated Communication*, 8. Retrieved 21 June 2010 from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol8/issue3/wellman.html>. (B7)
- Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (D1)
- White, P. R. R. (1997). Death, disruption and the moral order: The narrative impulse in mass-media hard news reporting. In F. Christie & J. R. Martin (eds.), *Genres and institutions: social processes in the workplace and school* (pp. 101–133). London: Cassell. (D3)
- White, P. R. R. (1998). *Telling media tales: The news story as rhetoric*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Sydney: University of Sydney. (D3)
- Whitney, D. C., & Ettema, J. (1994). *Audience-making*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (A6)
- Wikipedia: Edit warring. (2020). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved 4 June 2020 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Edit_warring. (D5)
- Wikipedia: Great Edit War (2018). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved 10 July 2019 from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Great_Edit_War&oldid=862443553. (C5)
- Wines, M. (2009, March 11). A dirty pun tweaks China's online Censors. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 14 June 2019 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/12/world/asia/12beast.html>. (B9)
- Wolf, M. (2008). *Proust and the squid: The story and science of the reading brain*. Thriplow: Icon Books Ltd. (A2)
- Wozniak, A. M. (2015). River-crabbed shitizens and missing knives: A sociolinguistic analysis of trends in Chinese language use online as a result of censorship. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6(1), 97–120. (B9)
- Yao, M. Z. (2011). Self-protection of online privacy: A behavioral approach. In S. Trepte & L. Reinecke (eds.), *Privacy Online* (pp. 111–125). Berlin: Springer. (D6)
- Zimdars, M. (2016a). *False, misleading, clickbait-y, and/or satirical 'news' sources*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from https://docs.google.com/document/d/10eA5-mC-ZLSS4MQY5QGb5ewC3 VAL6pLkT53V_81ZyitM/preview. (D8)
- Zimdars, M. (2016b, November 18). My “fake news list” went viral. But made-up stories are only part of the problem. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved 27 June 2017 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/11/18/my-fake-news-list-went-viral-but-made-up-stories-are-only-part-of-the-problem/?utm_term=.d260ac8a77e7. (D8)

GLOSSARIAL INDEX

- Active sentence (B4):** type of a sentence in which the subject of the sentence performs the action stated by the verb (see also **Passive sentence**).
- Advertorial (B3):** an advertisement written in the style of an editorial or news story.
- Affordances (B1):** the features of a medium that allow people to do things they would not be able to do without that medium (see **Constraints**).
- Agenda setting (A):** the ability of mass media to influence the importance placed on certain topics or issues.
- Agent (B4):** normally a person or entity that in a clause performs the action expressed by the verb.
- Allegory (B8):** using a story to illustrate a point.
- Allusion (B5):** a reference in a text to another relatively well-known text such as a literary work or a product of popular culture.
- Analogy (B8):** asserting that one situation is similar to another situation.
- Anchor (A2):** a piece of text such as a caption that fixes or constraints the meaning of an image.
- Anchorage (B2):** the process of fixing or constraining the meaning of an image using another semiotic mode.
- Angle (A7):** the point or theme of a news story.
- Animator (B5):** the person or entity that 'gives voice' to a message (see **Author** and **Principal**).
- Antithesis (B8):** two parts to a clause that are in opposition to each other.
- Archetype (A3):** a set of traits or characteristics that form a typical example of a person or thing.
- Artificial intelligence (B9):** the use of computer systems to perform cognitive tasks normally performed by humans.
- Astroturfing (A8):** the deceptive practice of presenting a public relations campaign in the guise of unsolicited public opinion or 'grassroots' activism.
- Asymmetrical (B8):** not equal.
- Asynchronous communication (A2):** a form of communication where there is a 'lag' between when the message is sent and when it is read.
- Attention economy (A7):** an economic situation in which a surplus of information results in the attention of audiences becoming more highly valued.
- Attribution (B3):** the process of singling in language that is responsible for an utterance or an idea.
- Audience fragmentation (A6):** a result of conscious efforts by media producers and distributors to target content to specific audiences (see **Audience segmentation**).

- Audience segmentation (A6):** a process of creating media content to target specific audiences (see **Audience fragmentation**).
- Audience segregation (A6):** a process of separating different audiences so that only some people can have access to certain things (see **Audience segmentation** and **Audience fragmentation**).
- Auditor (A6):** participants in a conversation who are not directly addressed; auditors can include all kinds of ratified and unratified participants.
- Author (B5):** the person or entity that is responsible for the composition of a message (see **Animator** and **Principal**).
- Background (B3):** de-emphasizing some aspect of a message.
- Big data (B9):** very large sets of data that can be analyzed computationally to reveal patterns related to human behaviour.
- Blogger (A5):** a person who writes for or manages blogs on the internet.
- Bot (B1):** a piece of software that automatically performs actions often in the guise of a human user.
- Brand narrative (B4):** the story that a company tells about itself or its products.
- Branded content (A8):** media content that is directly produced and funded by an advertiser.
- Branding (B4):** creating and communicating a specific set of values and goals that a company or an organization wants to be associated with.
- Broadsheets (A3):** a newspaper type which was originally printed on large sheets of paper; broadsheets are considered more serious than tabloids (see **Tabloids**).
- Byplay (A6):** communication between a subset of ratified participants; it can include teasing or heckling (see **Ratified participants**).
- Canonical (B4):** conforming to generally accepted forms, rules, or procedures passed down through time.
- Centripetal force (A5):** a force that pulls an object towards a center point around which it is rotating.
- Channel (A6):** a medium through which a sender transmits a message to a receiver.
- Clickbait (B7):** a type of content that is created to encourage internet users to click on it so that its creators can earn advertising revenue.
- Commercial broadcasting (A5):** mass communication media (for example, TV, radio) that are privately owned and financed by advertisers.
- Community of practice (A5):** a group of people who share common interests and goals and learn from each other through regular interactions and other forms of collaboration.
- Conduit model of communication (A6):** a model of communication based on the idea that information is transferred from a sender to a receiver along a channel or a conduit (see **Sender** and **Receiver**).
- Confession (A3):** an act of disclosing something which has been kept secret often due to fear of social sanctions.
- Confirmation bias (A8):** the tendency to believe things that confirm our existing beliefs.
- Conglomerate (B1):** a large corporation made up of several firms.

- Constraints (B1):** the features of a medium that make it more difficult for people to do certain things (see **Affordances**).
- Consumer culture (B3):** a culture in which human value and status is defined by the consumption of goods and services.
- Contagion (B7):** the rapid spread of influential information among people in a networked environment.
- Content words (B3):** words that have independent semantic meaning such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
- Context (B2):** the situation in which a text is produced or consumed, including the physical and social circumstances and the identities of and relationships between the people involved.
- Contextualization cues (A4):** linguistic or paralinguistic cues that signal what people take or intend as the context of a message.
- Contractions (A3):** shortening of a word or phrase by removing one or more letters, for example, *don't*.
- Convergence (B1):** (see **Media convergence**).
- Conversation analysis (A1):** a method of analyzing conversations that focuses on the sequentiality of utterances.
- Conviviality (B7):** a level of social interaction that involves casual and polite engagement.
- Co-presence (B6):** physical presence of participants in a communicative situation.
- Co-tellership (B4):** multiple narrators telling a story.
- Co-temporality (B6):** happening or occurring at the same time.
- Cotext (A2):** a text that accompanies another text on which the meaning of the first text depends.
- Critical discourse analysis (A1):** a method of analyzing discourse that focuses on the ideologies and power relations that are embedded in and reproduced in discourse.
- Crossplay (A6):** communication between ratified participants and bystanders (see **Byplay**).
- Culture industry (A6):** the idea that popular culture creates standardized cultural goods that manipulate the tastes of the masses.
- Decontextualization (A5):** a discursive process whereby a fragment of text or discourse is lifted from its context (see also **Entextualization** and **Recontextualization**).
- Default settings (B6):** settings that are automatically given to a software application, a medium, or a device.
- Descriptive (A3):** a form of analysis whose goal is to describe how language is actually used without making judgements on how it should be used (see **Prescriptive**).
- Dialogic creativity (A5):** a notion of creativity which sees it as an outcome of engagement in creative dialogue among people, texts, and voices.
- Direct reporting (B5):** reporting what others have said verbatim using quotation marks.
- Directive (C6):** a kind of speech act directing someone to do something (such as a request or a command).

- Discourse analysis (A1):** the study of how language is used in specific situations and how it operates to bring about or reinforce certain ‘versions of reality’.
- Discourse markers (B3):** words which show the structure of a piece of discourse or signal things like changes in frame or footing (such as ‘firstly’, ‘by the way’, ‘so’, and ‘anyway’).
- Discourse structure (B3):** the way a particular piece of discourse is structured.
- Disembodied media (B1):** media that are not part of the human body such as telephones, computers, newspapers, and televisions.
- Distributed linearity (B4):** telling a story across many posts and interactions or across different timescales.
- Documentary (A3):** a TV genre intended to provide a factual report on events or topics that are deemed important, often through the use of narrative, interviews with witnesses and experts, and on-location filming.
- Dog whistle (B8):** the practice of hinting at certain meanings or invoking certain frames of reference indirectly to a particular segment of an audience.
- Double-voicing (B9):** appropriating the ‘voice’ of another person in a way that undermines it or calls it into question.
- Dyadic (A6):** involving two parties only, for example, two people in a conversation.
- Edit war (C5):** a protracted argument between users of collaborative platforms such as Wikipedia about a particular piece of content.
- Editorial (A8):** an article in a newspaper which expresses the opinion of the paper’s editor or editorial board.
- Ellipsis (A3):** omission of one or more words that are deemed redundant.
- Embeddedness (B4):** the level of contextualization and the extent to which a story can be detached from its original context.
- Embodied media (B1):** media that are part of the human body (such as the human voice, the face, and parts of the body one can use to make gestures).
- Empirical (C1):** based on verifiable evidence or experience.
- Entextualization (A5):** a discursive process whereby a fragment of discourse is taken from one context and transported into another (see also **Decontextualization** and **Recontextualization**).
- Episodic narrativity (B4):** telling a story through a series of episodes.
- Equal time (A8):** the idea that media, especially news media, should strive for balance, giving equal exposure to different points of view.
- Euphemisms (B8):** words or expressions used to avoid words or phrases that might sound harsh or unpleasant.
- Evaluation (B4):** linguistic expressions of speaker’s opinion or stance.
- False equivalence (A8):** when two different points of view of an issue are presented as being equally valid even when they are not.
- Feedback (A6):** a signal sent back to the sender that the message has been successfully sent (see **Conduit model of communication**).
- Filter bubble (A6):** a result of employing personalized algorithms that create an online environment in which users are exposed only to content that confirms their views.

- Firewalls (A5):** in journalism, professional boundaries that must not be transgressed. Can also be used to refer to technological measures used to block internet content.
- Floating signifier (C8):** a sign or term that can signify different things depending on the context in which it is used.
- Font (A3):** letters and symbols in a certain size and design (for example, Times New Roman, Arial, or Century Gothic).
- Footing (A6):** the way people position themselves as different kinds of speakers and listeners.
- Gatekeepers (B3):** people who have the power to decide which messages can be transmitted or broadcasted and which cannot.
- Generic integrity (B3):** the degree to which a text conforms to the canonical conventions of the genre that it belongs to.
- Generic structure (B3):** the canonical structure of a particular genre.
- Genre (A3):** a prototypical type of text having a particular purpose, and an easily recognizable structure and set of lexico-grammatical features.
- Genre analysis (A3):** a form of linguistic analysis which aims to identify the purpose and structure as well as lexical and grammatical properties of a genre (see **Genre**).
- Genre network (B3):** (see **Genre system**).
- Genre system (B3):** a range of related genres that are produced and used within the same organizational or professional setting.
- Grammatical words (B3):** words that have mainly grammatical functions such as articles, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- Guerrilla propaganda (A8):** propaganda distributed by less powerful people through inexpensive means such as graffiti and stickers.
- Hactivism (A9):** the use of illegal or legally ambiguous digital means for political ends.
- Haptic mode (B2):** the mode of touch.
- Hashtag (A1):** a symbol (#) used on Twitter and other social media platforms that mark a post as being about a particular topic.
- Hate speech (A9):** speech that is designed to promote violence or discrimination against a particular class of people.
- Hedges (A5):** linguistic devices people use to express tentativeness or distance themselves from the meanings they are making.
- Heteroglossia (A5):** the presence of different voices in a text.
- Horizons of expectations (A3):** a set of beliefs and conventions that people use to understand and evaluate a text or a piece of art.
- Hybrid genres (A3):** a genre which usually combines elements of two other genres, such as advertorials.
- Hypermediacy (B1):** the phenomenon whereby media call attention to themselves.
- Iconization (A3):** making an association between certain features of speech and things like intelligence, gender, origin, often with stigmatizing effects.
- Ideational metafunction (B2):** the function of language to describe physical or mental happenings or states.

- Ideology (A8):** a system of beliefs governing judgements about what is good and bad, right and wrong, and/or normal and abnormal.
- Image macro (C7):** a captioned image that usually consists of a picture and a funny message or a catchphrase.
- Immediacy (B1):** the phenomenon of media becoming so immersive that they become transparent.
- Imperative mood (A3):** the grammatical resources used to express a command.
- Indexicality (B2):** when language or other semiotic modes are used to 'point to' things or ideas in the physical or social context.
- Indirect reporting (B5):** reporting on what others have said or written in a way that paraphrases it rather than reproducing it word for word.
- Individualism (A1):** an ideology that promotes the centrality of autonomous individuals in the society and promotes the needs of the individual over the needs of the group.
- Infographics (B8):** visual graphic representations of information.
- Information ecosystem (A7):** the entire system of information available, including content, the means through which to transmit it, and the people who transmit it.
- Information gap theory (C7):** a theory that refers to human's curiosity and desire to fill the gap between what they know and what they want to know.
- Interactional sociolinguistics (A1):** a branch of linguistics that focuses on the ways people use language to manage their social identities, relationships, and their definitions of the situation.
- Interactivity (B6):** the degree to which parties to a communicative event can act on and affect each other.
- Internet of things (IoT) (A2):** a network of everyday devices connected to the Internet from mobile phones to household appliances.
- Interpersonal metafunction (B2):** the function of language and other semiotic modes used to communicate a speaker's or writer's relationship to others and to the message they are communicating.
- Interrogative mood (A7):** the form of a sentence used for asking questions.
- Intersemiotic relations (B2):** the way meaning is made based on the interaction between different modes.
- Intertextuality (A5):** a discursive process whereby fragments of texts and different voices are combined to produce a new text.
- Inverted pyramid (B3):** the canonical structure of the news story in which the most essential information is presented first and details and background information are presented later.
- Irony (B9):** a rhetorical technique through which one expresses a meaning by stating the opposite meaning.
- Language ideologies (A1):** deep-seated beliefs and attitudes about the value of particular languages or ways of using language.
- Language standardization (A5):** establishment and maintenance of uniform forms of language mostly through prescriptive efforts of members of a speech community (see also **Standard language**, **Standard language ideology**, and **Prescriptive**).

- Late modernity (B3):** the period beginning in the 20th century characterized by global capitalism, advances in information technologies, and a breakdown of notions of fixed meanings and stable identities.
- Laugh track (A3):** the recorded sound of laughter which cues audiences when to laugh, often used in situation comedies (see **Situation comedy**).
- Layout (B2):** the way semiotic elements are arranged on a page, screen, or other space.
- Lead paragraph or lead (B3):** the opening paragraph which summarizes the main points of a news story.
- Lean media (A2):** types of media with a limited range of modes (see **Modes**).
- Lexical verb (B3):** the main verb in a clause which expresses lexical meaning (as opposed to auxiliary or modal verbs).
- Liberation technology (B9):** a technology which expands peoples political, social, and/or economic freedom or allows them to participate more directly in political processes.
- Linearity (B4):** structural and temporal qualities of a narrative.
- Linguistics (A1):** the scientific study of language and how it is used.
- Logical fallacy (C8):** an error in reasoning that makes an argument invalid.
- LOLspeak (B7):** an internet neologism referring the speech of LOLcats with various spelling forms of English.
- Many-to-many communication (B1):** communication in which people are able to send and receive messages to and from many people at once.
- Mass media (A1):** any media through which messages can be broadcast to a large number of people.
- Masthead (A8):** the title of a newspaper printed on the front page.
- Materialities (A2):** physical features of media.
- Meaning potential (B2):** the range of possibilities for meaning-making of a particular semiotic mode.
- Media (A1):** the plural of medium; the tools through which people interact and communicate with other people and their physical environments.
- Media bias (A8):** when media producers promote a particular point of view or ideological position by the way they select or express content.
- Media biases (B1):** the theory that different media promote different kinds of relationships between users, different perceptions of time and space, and different forms of consciousness.
- Media convergence (A1):** the merging of different media formats into a single platform or device.
- Media ideologies (A1):** ideologies about the value of different media and how they ought to be used.
- Mediated discourse analysis (A1):** a method of studying discourse that focuses on the effect of media on the meanings people can make, the actions they can take, and the kinds of social identities they can perform.
- Mediation (A1):** the process through media facilitates the interaction between people or between a person and the environment.

- Mediational means (A1):** a 'means' or 'tool' which mediates a human action.
- Memetics (A7):** the study of memes and how they are transmitted.
- Metadiscourse (A1):** the way speakers or writers talk about the form, direction, or intention of their communication or the rules governing their interaction with others.
- Metaphor (B8):** using a word or a phrase from one semantic field to describe something in another.
- Microphone gaff (A3):** the unintentional recording of a conversation between participants who are not aware that they are audible.
- Minimal responses (B3):** short words and sounds such as *hm, yeah, mm* used in conversations to signal attention.
- Mockumentary (A3):** a humorous television program which depicts fictitious events and characters as if they were part of a serious documentary.
- Modal ensemble (B2):** a mixture of different modes combined to make meaning.
- Modality (B8):** lexico-grammatical resources such as modal verbs or **Hedges** that allow people to talk about how certain they are about what they are saying or about how obligated others should feel to do what they say.
- Modes (A2):** an organized set of resources for meaning-making, including image, gaze, movement, music, speech, and sound effects (see **Media**).
- Moral stance (B4):** the narrator's attitude and evaluations of events told in a story.
- Move (B2):** a distinct part of a text that has a clearly identifiable communicative purpose.
- Multicultural London English (MLE) (A3):** a language variety developed by young people living in multilingual communities in London, which includes features of Jamaican Creole and other languages and English dialects spoken in the inner city (see **Multiethnolect**).
- Multiethnolect (A3):** an emerging and transient variety of language developed by young people in urban multiethnic settings (see also **Multicultural London English**).
- Multimodal features (B3):** features of different modes such as colour, typography, images, graphics, and sounds.
- Multitasking (A1):** engaging in multiple tasks simultaneously.
- Mutual monitoring (B6):** the degree to which media allow communicators to monitor what the people they are communicating with are doing.
- Naming practices (B4):** linguistic ways in which participants are named or labelled.
- Narrative (A4):** a story or account consisting of different actions or events arranged chronologically.
- Native content (A8):** advertising that imitates the style and format of other media content it appears with (see **Branded content**).
- Natural language processing (B9):** the use of computational methods to analyze natural language and speech.
- Neutrality (A5):** a principle of journalism to report news and events in an unbiased manner.
- News story (B3):** a broadcast or published written text about a newsworthy event.

- News values (A5):** criteria that are used by media practitioners to decide what counts as news.
- Newsworthiness (A5):** the qualities of an event that make it worth reporting.
- Noise (A6):** anything that might interfere with the message being sent, such as aspects of the environment, technical faults, or the actions of other people.
- Nominalization (B4):** a linguistic process whereby a process is transformed into a noun or a noun phrase so that the process becomes a 'thing'.
- Objectivity (A5):** a principle of journalism to report news and events in unbiased, accurate, and fair manner.
- Offensive language (B9):** (see **Taboo language**).
- One-to-many communication (B1):** communication in which one person is able to transmit messages to a group of people simultaneously, but they are usually not able to communicate back.
- One-to-one communication (B1):** communication in which one person communicates exclusively to one other person.
- One-way communication (B1):** communication in which messages are transmitted but are not able to be replied to.
- Opinion piece (A5):** an article in a newspaper which reflects an editor's or a journalist's opinions.
- Oppositional reading (A9):** reading a text in a way that reinterprets or undermines the intended message of the text producer.
- Overlap (B3):** instances of supportive simultaneous speech in conversations which are not interruptions.
- Panopticon (B6):** an architectural plan for a prison, in which prisoners are arranged in cells around a central observation tower so that they can be constantly monitored.
- Paralinguistic (A3):** features of communication that do not involve words, also referred to as non-verbal features, (for example, gestures, facial expressions, pitch of voice, etc.).
- Paraphrase (A5):** to repeat something in writing or speech using different words.
- Parody (B9):** imitating or impersonating other people and their words for humorous effects.
- Participation framework (A6):** a model of interaction which expands the traditional dyadic speaker-hearer communication model to include different types of participants with different roles (see **Ratified participants** and **Unratified participants**).
- Passive sentence (B4):** type of a sentence in which the subject of the sentence does not perform the action denoted by the verb; the subject is a recipient of the action (see also **Active sentence**).
- Patient (B3):** in a clause, participants or entities affected by the processes expressed in the verb or verbs.
- Payola (A7):** the practice of paying someone to promote a product, especially associated with the bribing of radio disc jockeys to play particular songs.
- Penny press (A7):** cheap, mass-produced newspapers published in the US in the 1800s that often contained sensational stories.

- Persistence (B6):** the extent to which a discourse exists only at the moment of its utterance (face-to-face communication) or in a more durable form (writing).
- Persuasion knowledge model (A8):** a communication theory that proposes that the more people know that a message is trying to persuade them the less likely they are to be persuaded.
- Phatic (B4):** referring to communication whose main purpose is to establish or maintain relationships rather than to transmit information.
- Photo tinting (A3):** a photograph printed on a paper dyed with one colour or digitally processed using a coloured filter.
- Platform (A9):** a media site or service that hosts content produced by users or by other companies, and usually makes money by collecting and selling information about users.
- Plot (A4):** the chain of events that make up a story.
- Polysemous (A2):** having more than one possible meaning.
- Position/positioning (A6):** the role in a conversation or social identity that we claim or impute on others by the way we talk to them.
- Post-truth (A8):** referring to a situation in which the truth value of messages is regarded as less important than their emotional appeal or in which the value of truth itself is questioned.
- Pragmatics (A1):** the study of the way people create implicature or perform actions (such as requesting or apologizing) through the way they talk.
- Prescriptive (A3):** formulation of rules on how language should be used as opposed to how it is actually used (cf. **Descriptive**).
- Press release (B3):** a hybrid genre which combines elements of a news story with features of advertisements.
- Presupposition (A5):** implicit assumption or belief that something is true without providing proof.
- Principal (B5):** the person or entity whose opinions or aims are reflected in a piece of communication (see **Animator** and **Author**).
- Production format (B5):** the roles people take up vis-à-vis the production of a text or utterance.
- Projection (B4):** referring to the future.
- Promotionalization (B3):** the increased presence of promotional discourse in all areas of life.
- Propaganda (A8):** media content designed to promote a particular point of view or political agenda.
- Prosumer (B5):** a person who both consumes and produces media content.
- Protest paradigm (B9):** the theory that mass media tend to portray protests in a negative way.
- Prototypicality (B3):** a set of traits or features that form a typical example, also known as a prototype.
- Public relations (A8):** the use of media to create and maintain a good public image by a company or organization.

- Quotation (A5):** verbatim repetition of someone's phrases or sentences indicated with the use of quotation marks.
- Ratified participant (A6):** participants in interaction who are the intended receivers of messages.
- Reality TV (A3):** a TV genre which features unscripted real-life situations performed by ordinary people who are not trained actors.
- Received Pronunciation (RP) (A3):** an accent of British English based on dialects of Southern England and considered a standard pronunciation associated with high social prestige (see **Standard language**).
- Receiver (A6):** a participant in interaction who receives messages initiated by the sender (see **Sender** and **Conduit model of communication**).
- Recontextualization (A5):** a discursive process whereby a fragment of text from one context is transported into a new one, and in the process, adapted, reworked, and recombined with other elements often in creative ways.
- Redaction (B9):** the process of censoring or obscuring part of a text.
- Relay (B2):** when images and text work together to make meaning.
- Remediation (B1):** the process by which newer media forms refashion older media forms.
- Repertoire (A3):** a set of lexical, grammatical, and other semiotic resources that together form a particular style (see also **Style**).
- Reporting verbs (B5):** verbs conveying the action of speaking or communicating.
- Reverting (C5):** the practice of removing the contribution of another user on Wikipedia.
- Rhetorical devices (B7):** linguistic and semiotic tools used to persuade people.
- Rich media (A2):** types of media with a wide range of modes.
- Richness (B6):** (see **Rich media**).
- Role reversibility (B6):** alternation between the participant roles as a speaker or an addressee.
- Sans serif (A3):** a font type that does not have serifs (small lines added to letters at the end of strokes).
- Scare quotes (B5):** quotation marks used to signal that a word or phrase is potentially inaccurate or unusual.
- Schemata (A3):** fairly rigid mental frames or scripts which consist of categorized pieces of information and which are used to interpret and categorize new information.
- Scriptedness (B6):** the extent to which a discourse is planned ahead and scripted as opposed to being produced spontaneously on the spot.
- Scunthorpe problem (B9):** the problem of over-censoring associated with techniques that depend on filtering particular words.
- Semantic field (B9):** a set of words about the same general topic.
- Sender (A6):** a participant in communication who initiates messages (see **Conduit model of communication** and **Receiver**).
- Sensationalism (A7):** the process through which media content is chosen and 'packaged' in order to attract the attention of audiences.

- Sequentiality (A2):** following in a sequence, one after the other.
- Simultaneity (A2):** related to things existing or happening at the same time.
- Site of engagement (B1):** the complex intersection of media, people, and settings in ways that make certain social actions possible.
- Situation comedy (sitcom) (A3):** a comedy which casts a few characters often in stereotypical roles; it is normally made in a studio and set in fixed locations (see also **Laugh track**).
- Small stories (A4):** brief stories that are part of people's every day, mundane interactions which often do not conform to canonical narrative structures.
- Social conventions (A1):** shared expectations in a society about how people should act and communicate.
- Social interaction (A6):** communication between people.
- Social portraiture (B2):** a depiction that conforms to and promotes dominant social ideas about human relationships and human behaviour.
- Speech act (B5):** utterances that perform a specific function such as apologizing, complimenting, thanking, and so forth.
- Spreadability (A7):** the features of a piece of media content that make people want to share it.
- Standard language (A5):** language variety which is considered to be the only 'correct' language; associated with high social prestige and used for public communication by institutions (see **Received pronunciation**).
- Standard language ideology (A5):** a set of beliefs based on prescriptive notions of language use that consider the standard language to be the only 'correct' language (see **Standard language**).
- Stance marker (A5):** grammatical and lexical forms of language that are used by speakers to express opinion, judgement, or evaluation.
- Step (B3):** the smaller actions that make up **Moves** in **Genre analysis**.
- Stock character (B7):** a typical fictional character.
- Stock image (A2):** images that are sold to be used in different contexts (such as advertisements, news stories) usually depicting 'generic' people, places, or things.
- Style (A3):** a manner of speaking including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and articulation as well as paralinguistic features (see **Paralinguistic**).
- Style guide (A5):** a manual detailing the 'house style' (linguistic and typographic conventions) used by a publishing house or publication.
- Style-in-interaction (A3):** the actual use of a certain way of speaking in a particular interactional context (see **Styling**).
- Style sheet (A5):** (see **Style guide**).
- Style shifting (A6):** changes in a way of speaking in interactions sometimes performed to produce certain effects.
- Styling (A3):** the actual use of a certain way of speaking in a particular interactional context (see **Style-in-interaction**).
- Subvertising (B9):** creating parodies of advertisements, usually for political purposes.
- Subversive reading (A9):** (see **Oppositional reading**).

- Synchronous communication (A2):** a form of communication where participants can communicate and monitor one another in 'real time'.
- Synesthesia (C3):** a condition in which a person experiences sensations associated with one mode through different modes.
- Synthetic personalization (B3):** the practice of addressing a mass audience in a seemingly intimate way.
- Systemic functional linguistics (B2):** a school of linguistics that focuses on language use in terms of the social functions people need to carry out.
- Tabloids (A3):** a type of a newspaper printed on smaller sheets of paper than broadsheets; usually more informal and sensationalist in style (see **Broadsheets**).
- Taboo language (B9):** language that is deemed inappropriate in most formal settings in a society.
- Tacit knowledge (A5):** forms of knowledge acquired from personal experience as opposed to formal knowledge taught in school.
- Tag questions (A3):** a short phrase added at the end of a declarative sentence which changes it into a question, for example, it is a nice day, *isn't it?*
- Technological determinism (A1):** view that media determine what we can do, think, and communicate.
- Tellability (B4):** the value of a story as highly worth telling or seemingly irrelevant.
- Tellership (B4):** the narrator of a story; a story can have a single narrator or multiple narrators.
- Testimonial (B5):** An endorsement of a product or service by someone who purports to have used it, usually a famous person.
- Textual metafunction (B2):** the function of language to organize information in texts.
- Three-part list (B8):** a rhetorical device based on three elements that complement or reinforce one another, creating a sense of unity for the phrase as a whole.
- Topological meaning (A2):** representing a degree or gradation, for example, through colour or gesture.
- Transitivity (B4):** the relationship between participants in a clause mediated by a process.
- Transparency (B1):** when media become such a part of our everyday lives that we hardly notice them.
- Trolling (B1):** making unsolicited controversial comments in order to provoke people.
- Tropes (B7):** figurative language.
- Turn-taking (A1):** the way people take turns when participating in conversations.
- Typological meaning (A2):** representing types or categories, for example, through words or numbers.
- Tweep (A5):** a person who uses the microblogging service Twitter to send and receive tweets.
- Tweet (A1):** a post on Twitter.
- Unratified participants (A6):** participants in interaction who are not the intended receivers of messages.

- Utterance (A6):** a unit of spoken language bounded by pauses.
- Vague language (A3):** words and phrases used by speakers to soften their utterances so that they do not come across as too direct or authoritative.
- Virality (A7):** the rapid spread of media content from one person to another through various communication channels, especially the internet.
- Vlogger (A5):** a person who regularly posts videos to form video blogs.
- Voice-over (A3):** words accompanying images in film or broadcast and uttered by a person that cannot be seen.
- Vox populi (A5):** a Latin phrase which means ‘the voice of the people’ used to refer to popular opinion.
- Watershed (A9):** the time in which TV content deemed not suitable for children can be broadcast (after 9 pm in the UK).
- Web 2.0 (A5):** forms of Internet technology that allow users to generate and share content.
- World knowledge (B2):** general knowledge about the physical and social world.
- Yellow journalism (A7):** a term referring to newspapers specializing in scandal-mongering and sensationalism.
- Zine (A9):** a magazine published by non-professionals, catering to a specific subculture, and often containing unconventional ideas or forms of expression.

INDEX

Note: **Bold** page numbers refer to tables and *italic* page numbers refer to figures.

- Abelson, R. P. 224
active sentence 84
'acts of identity' 19
Adbusters 59
addressees 35
Adorno, Theodore 37
advertising, textual features of 214–215
advertorial 81, 155, **155**
affordances 63–64, 66
African American community 254
agenda-setting 32
agent 84
Albawardi, A. 144
algorithms 36, 56
allegory 117
allusions 96
analogy 117
anchor 8
anchorage 70
Andersen, Jocelyne 146
Anderson, Benedict 63
Andersson, L. G. 123
Andrejevic, Mark 102
angle of the story 45
animator 91
anonymous source 95
Anthonissen, C. 127
anti-gay bullying 90
anti-languages 125
antithesis 115
Anti-Trump rally 191–192
archetypes 16
The Argument Culture (Tannen) 118
'argument is war' metaphor 118
artificial intelligence 125
Artz, Lee 25
Aslan, Erhan 111
astroturfing 53
asymmetrical 219
asynchronous communication 12
attention economy 41–43; memetics and
 virality 43–44; sensationalism 44–47
attention-grabbing strategies 42
attribution 80
audience design 18, 37
audience fragmentation 37
audiences 36–38
audience segmentation 36
audience segregation 39, 232
auditors 38
author 91
autonomous sensory meridian response
 (ASMR) video 146, **147**, 148
backfire effect 183
background 79
Bakhtin, Mikhail 29
Bamberg, Michael 24
Barthes, Roland 9, 11, 24, 70, 73, 205;
 'The Photographic Message' 8
Bateson, Gregory 26
Bauman, Richard 23, 28, 29
*Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and
 Reason* (Halpern) 121
Bednarek, Monika 45, 234, 244
Bekalu, Mesfin 96
Bell, A. 18, 37, 38, 84, 93, 222, 224
Benkler, Yochai: *Network Propaganda* 183
Bentham, Jeremy 105, 232
Berger, J. 107

- Berlusconi, Silvio 235
 Bernays, Edward 51–53
 Bernstein, B. 247
 Bhatia, V. K. 14, 77, 78, 80, 81, 214
 Biber, D. 81, 151, 154
 big data 125
 bloggers 33
 Blom, Jonas Nygaard 114
 Blommaert, J. 44, 110, 234, 238
 Blum-Kulka, Shoshana 23
 Bogart, John 31
 Bolter, Jay 66, 67
 bots 63
 boyd, d. 104
 ‘branded by the tongue’ 19
 branded content 50
 branding 86
 brand narrative 86–87
 breaking news 24, 42
 Briggs, C. L. 28, 29
 broadsheets 19
 Brown, A. A. 104, 170
 Brown, Gordon 18
 Bruce, Lenny 124
 Bruner, Jerome 21
 Buckledee, Steve: *The Language of Brexit: How Britain talked its way out of the European Union* 117
 Burton, Matthew 59
 Butler, Judith 254
 byplay 40
- Caesar salad 164–168
 canonical model of narrative 22, 88
 canonical narrative 88
 Caple, Helen 45, 234, 244
 Capps, L. 23, 87
 Catenaccio, Paola 28, 81, 211, 213–215
 Cathcart, R. 198
 censorship 57–58
 Chan, Joseph 131
 channel 34
 Chartered Institute of Public Relations 52
 Chion, Michel 146
- Chomsky, Noam 6; *Manufacturing Consent* 55
 Chong, Mark 183
 Chouliaraki, Lilie 121
 Choy, Murphy 183
 Cialdini, Robert 107
 citizen journalism 59
 clickbait 113, 113, 113–114, 176, 177–178
 Clinton, Bill 56
 Coates, Jennifer 124
 Colbert, Stephen 50
 commercial broadcasting 33
 commercial media 49; products 36
 commodification of audiences 36
 communication 7; in and across ‘sites of engagement’ 64–66; as social interaction 34–36
 communicative entitlement 211
 community of practice 30, 200
 Conboy, Martin 15
 conduit model of communication 34
 confession 16
 confirmation bias 51
 conglomerates 67
 Conrad, S. 81, 151, 154
 constraints 63–64, 66
 consumer culture 80
 contagion 107
 content words 82
 context 8, 9; collapse 40; design 104
 contextualization cues 26, 104
 contractions 18
 convergence 66–67
 conversation analysis 6
 conviviality 44, 110
 Cooke, Janet 225
 co-presence/distance 100
 co-tellership 88
 co-temporality 100
 cotexts 8
 Cotter, C. 28, 30, 94, 222
Course in General Linguistics (de Saussure) 34
 Courtés, J. 252

- creative political protest 252–253
 critical discourse analysis 6
 Crocker, Elizabeth 9
 crossplay 40
 cultural scripts 23
 cultural space 145
 cultural storylines 23
 cultural tools 5
 culture industry 37
 culture jamming 59, 129, 187
 Cytowic, Richard: *The Man Who Tasted Shapes* 145
- Dawkins, R. 43, 44
 decontextualization 28, 203
 default settings 99
 Derrida, Jacques 77
 designing audiences 37
 Diamond, Larry 132
 digital capitalism 248–249
 digital communication 92
 digital culture, role of 175
 digital environments 114
 digital games 12
 digital media 33, 56, 58, 63, 90, 111, 231, 249; audiences and participation in 103–104; development of 52; misinformation in 248
 digital photography 11
 digital platforms 90, 107
 digital social media platforms 113
 Dijk, Teun van 157, 214
 directives 169
 direct reporting 94
 discourse analysis 6
 discourse analysts 6
 discourse markers 82
 discourse processes: communities of practice 29–31; innovation 32–33; media products to 28–29; newsworthiness 31–32; standardization 32
 discourse representation 93–97
 discourse structure 78
 discourse style 19
- disembodied media 62, 64
 distributed linearity 88
 documentary 16
 dog whistle 119
 Doty, Alexander 58
 double positioning of audiences 103
 double-voicing 129, 130
 Drudge, Matt 56
 dyadic 34; communication, model for 228–229
- eavesdropper 38
 eavesdropping 12
 Edge Rank 104
 editorial 31, 49
 edit wars 164
 Eisenlauer, Volker 92, 93
 electronic media 12, 63; ‘architecture’ of 12
 ellipsis 18
 Ellul, Jacques 51
 embeddedness 88
 embodied media 62, 64
 embodied space 145
 emotional behaviour 235
 emotional contagion 107–109
 empirical approach 134
 Ensslin, Astrid 202, 208–210
 entextualization 28, 29, 91
 episodic narrativity 89
 equal time 49
 Esslin, Astrid 202
 euphemisms 116
 evaluation 84, 85
 evaluative framework 257
 evaluative language 234
Everything but the Coffee (Simon) 86
 evidentiary function 254
 Extinction Rebellion 85
 eye tracking technology 72
- face-to-face communication 35, 39, 91, 137, 198
 Fairclough, Norman 117, 236
 fake news 182–184; as critique of digital capitalism 248–249; liberal and

- mainstream media 250–251; right-wing politics and media 249–250
- false equivalence 49
- Farkas, Johan 179, 245, 248, 251
- feedback 34, 35
- figurative language 117–118
- filter bubbles 37
- filtering 125
- Finnegan, Ruth 4, 196, 197
- firewalls 30
- Fisk, John 59
- floating signifier 179
- font 18
- footing 39
- Ford, Sam 41
- Foucault, M. 232
- framing 25, 26
- freedom 57–58
- Friestad, Marian 49
- Frobenius, Maximiliane 169

- Gallagher, Brenden 143
- Gal, Susan 19
- Galtung, J. 224
- Gane, N. 233
- gatekeepers 78
- Gender Advertisements* (Goffman) 74
- generic conventions 49
- generic disruptions and innovations 16–17
- generic integrity 78
- generic people 203–204
- generic structure 78
- genres 14–15; analysis 14, 78–80; classifying 77–78; networks 77; over time 149–151; systems 77
- geographical space 145
- Georgakopoulou, Alexandra 24
- Gershon, Ilana 5
- Gervais, Ricky 16
- Gibson, J.J. 64, 231
- Gitlin, Todd 25
- global capitalism 25
- global visual language 207

- Goffman, Erving 26, 39, 76, 91, 228, 229, 231, 232; *Gender Advertisements* 74
- Goodwin, C. 254
- grammatical words 82
- Gramsci, Antonio 55
- grassroots organizations 53
- Great Edit War 164–168
- Gredel, E. 164, 222, 225, 227
- Green, Joshua 41
- Greimas, A. J. 252
- Grusin, Richard 66, 67
- guerrilla propaganda 52
- Gumpert, G. 198
- Gumperz, John 26, 104

- hacking 58, 59
- hacktivism 59
- Halliday, M.A.K. 68, 69, 71
- Hall, Kira 103
- Hall, Stuart 58
- Halpern, Orit: *Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason* 121
- Hansen, Kenneth Reinecke 114
- haptic mode 68
- Harding, Joel 119
- hashtags 2
- hate speech 58
- hedges 31, 82
- hegemony 55–56
- Hemsley, Jeff 44
- Herman, Edward: *Manufacturing Consent* 55
- heteroglossia 29
- high-arousal emotions 107
- horizons of expectations 15
- Horkheimer, Max 37
- human beings, media as extensions of 62–63
- human interconnection 196–197
- human tactile sensation 209
- Hussein, Saddam 120
- Hutchby, Ian 101
- hybrid genres 15, 16, 213–215; analyzing 80–81, 155–156

- Hyman, David 50
hypermediacy 66, 67
- iconization 19, 20
icons 10
ideational meaning 69, 140, 141
ideology 51
image macros 109
immediacy 66, 75
immersive media 210
imperative mood 14
implicatures 125, 127
inconvenient truths 53
indexes 11
indexicality 73–74, 75, 146
indirect reporting 94
individualism 6
inferences 127
infographics 121
informal conversations 18
information architectures 231–233
information economy 42
information ecosystem 44
information gap theory 174
information systems 12, 100
Innes, Howard 48
Innis, Harold 64
intellectual property 29
intensification 235
interactional sociolinguistics 6
interactive television 101
interactivity 101
internet memes 109–112
interpersonal meaning 69
interpersonal metafunction 69
interpretive community 257
interrogatives 46
intersemiotic relations 70; creepy
 multimodality 145–148; intersemiotic
 relations and social portraiture in
 advertisements 140–142; layout
 71–73; Snapchat 142–145; text/image
 relations 70–71
intertextuality 28, 29, 91, 93, 119
intertextualization 257
interview, generic types of 212
intransitive clauses 217
inverted pyramid 78; structure 213
irony 129
Irvine, Judith 19
- Jacobs, Geert 28
Jafaican 20
Jagodzinski, Cecile 6
Jaworska, Sylvia 19, 90
Jaworski, Adam 190
Jenkins, Henry 41
Jewitt, Carey 9
Jobs, Steve 86
Johnson, M. 117, 118
Jones, Rodney H. 38, 60, 90, 105, 144,
 228, 230, 233, 252–253, 258
- Katz, James 9
‘Keep calm’ meme 239
Kerswill, Paul 20
Kitchener, Lord 120
Kress, G. R. 9, 10, 69, 71, 72, 203
Kristeva, Julia 29
Krugman, Paul 250
- Labov, William 21–23, 87
Laclau, Ernesto 248, 251
Lakoff, George 26, 117, 118
landline telephones 12
language 4; censorship 123–124;
 ideologies 7; of solidarity 247;
 standardization 32, 222
*The Language of Brexit: How Britain
 talked its way out of the European
 Union* (Buckledee) 117
- Lanier, Jaron 108
late modernity 80
laugh track 16
Lave, J. 30, 200
layout 71
lead paragraph 79
lean media 13
leave campaign 117

- Lee, C.C. 131
 Lee, Spike 95
 Leeuwen, Theo van 69, 71, 72, 74, 202, 203, 207, 208
 Lemke, J. L. 10
 Le Page, Robert 19
 Lessing, Lawrence 59
Let's Go! campaign 187
 Levontin, L. 109
 Lewinsky, Monica 56
 Lewis, Justin 52
 lexical and grammatical
 choices 116–117
 lexical filtering 125
 lexical repetition 245–246
 lexical verbs 82
 lexicogrammatical systems 216
 liberal media 250–251
 liberation technologies 132
 linearity 87
 Li, Neville C.H. 60, 252–253, 258
 linguistics 6; devices 234–237
 linguistic tactics, resisting censorship
 124–125; implicature 127;
 relexicalization 125–127
 Linnemann, T. 253, 258
 Livingstone, Sonia 102, 196–199
 Loewenstein, George 174
 logical connectors 116
 logical fallacies 179, 181–182
 lolspeak 110, 239, 240
 Lou, Jia 190
 Lunt, Peter 102
- McChesney, Robert 56
 McCombs, Maxwell 118
 Machin, David 74, 202, 207, 208
 McIntyre, Lee 54
 McLuhan, Marshall 5, 196;
 Understanding Media 66
 mainstream media 19, 250–251
 Malinowski, Bronisław 88, 244
 Mandela, Nelson 119
 Manovich, Lev 12
 manufacturing consent 53
Manufacturing Consent (Herman &
 Chomsky) 55
 manufacturing controversy 53
The Man Who Tasted Shapes
 (Cytowic) 145
 many-to-many communication 64
 Marsh, Jackie 98
 Marwick, A. E. 40, 104
 mash-up memes 239, 242
 Mason, Robert 44
 mass media 4
 masthead 50
 materialities 8, 11–13, 75–76; of
 media 13
 materializing sound indices 146
 Mathiesen, T. 232
 meaning potential 68
 media 4, 99, 134–136; analyzing
 narratives in 157–161; and human
 interconnection 196–197; in protests
 and social movements 130–132;
 spreadable 174–178
 media agenda 31
 media audiences 228–230
 media biases 48–49, 64
 media censorship 57
 media communication 35, 39
 media consumers 8, 107
 media content 37, 41
 media conventions 7
 media convergence 3
 media gaffs 18
 media hegemony 56
 media ideologies 5, 137–139
 media interviews 211–213
 media language offensive 185–186
 media lingua franca 110
 media messages 35, 49
 media production, analyzing 162–168;
 digital media production 225–227;
 newsworthiness 224–225; norms of
 everyday journalism 222–223
 media reception 26
 media storytelling, frames 25–27;
 narrative and power 24–25; from

- structure to interaction 21–24;
- traditional principles of 24
- mediated action 199
- mediated discourse analysis 7, 199–201
- mediated interpersonal
 - communication 198
- mediated resistance 58–60
- mediation 4–8, 62, 134, 196, 197–198
- mediational means 7
- memes 43, 44; internet 109–112;
 - mash-up 239, 242
- memetics 41, 43–44
- Merchant, Stephen 16
- metadiscourse 5
- meta-discursive devices 118–119
- metaphors 117, 236–237
- #MeToo movement 108
- Metz, Christian 204
- Meyrowitz, J. 12, 99, 100, 105, 232
- Michel, Charles 210
- microphone gaffs 18
- Milkman, K. L. 107
- Milner, R. M. 110, 111
- Milroy, James 32
- Milroy, Lesley 32
- Minchin, Louise 18
- minimal responses 82
- mobile digital photography 144
- mockumentary 16
- modality 117
- models of communication 34, 35,
 - 35, 36
- modes 8; of communication 9–11;
 - ‘vocabulary’ and ‘grammar’ of 68–70
- Molek-Kozakowska, K. 45, 46
- Montgomery, M. 15, 125, 211–213, 229,
 - 245, 248
- Moore, Demi 221
- moral stance 88
- Morley, David 58, 101
- move 78, 79
- Multicultural London English 20
- multiethnolect 20
- multilingual communities 20
- multimodality 9, 89; features 80
- multimodal persuasion 119–122
- multitasking 3
- mutual monitoring 101
- naming practices 84
- narratives, dimensions 87, **87**; genres
 - 21; in media, analyzing 157–161;
 - predator-victim construal of 237;
 - small stories 24; in social media
 - 87–90; from structure to interaction
 - 21–24; tellability 221; tweets and
 - linearity 220
- native content 30, 50
- natural language processing 125
- negative emotions 108
- negative vocabulary 235–236
- neoliberalism 56
- networked individualism 110
- Network Propaganda* (Benkler) 183
- network warfare 59
- neutrality 30
- New Audience Studies 101
- new media platforms 12
- newspaper editorials 49
- news story 78, 150, **151**
- news values 31, 234–237
- newsworthiness 41, 45, 79
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth 57
- noise 34–35
- nominalization 84, 85, 218
- non-fiction genres 48
- non-finite forms 220
- non-finite verb forms 220
- non-human actors 92
- non-linguistic characteristics 19
- norms of communication 104
- Nyhan, Brendan 183
- Obama, Barack 96, 180, 249
- objectivity 30
- Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria 94, 95
- Ochs, Elinor 23, 87
- offensive language 123
- O’Keeffe, Anne 228, 230, 233
- olfaction 209

- O'Neal, Shaquille 221
 one-to-many communication 64
 one-to-one communication 64
 one-way communication 64
 Ong, W. J. 62, 63
 op-ed *see* opinion pieces
 opinion columns 49
 opinion pieces 31, 50
 oppositional readings 58
 oral communication 62
 organized myth 51
 Orwell, G. 51
 overhearers 38
 overlaps 82
- Page, Ruth 24, 87, 88, 216, 221
 panopticon 105
 Papacharissi, Z. 249
 paralinguistic aspects of
 communication 17
 paralinguistic features 80
 paraphrases 29
 Pariser, Eli 37
 parody 129
 participation 231–233; genres 101–103;
 and surveillance 104–106
 participation frameworks 38–40, 102,
 229–230; audiences and participation
 in digital media 103–104; genres
 and participation 101–103; media as
 ‘information systems’ 99–101; and
 surveillance 104–106, 172–173
 participation in media; context design on
 social media 170–173; participation
 frameworks in YouTube videos
 169–170
 Participatory Web 2.0 online
 environments 89
Passion Times 256
 passive sentences 85
 passivization 217
 patient 84
 payola 42
 Peirce, Charles Sanders 10
 penny press 42
 perception 231–233
 performance, narrative as 23
 persistence 100
 persuasion knowledge model 49
 persuasive discourse 115
 Peverini, Paolo 252
 phatic communication 88
 ‘The Photographic Message’ (Barthes) 8
 photo tinting 18
 platforms 56
 plot 21
 podcast interview 152
 polysemous 10
 portability of media 11, 12
 Portes, Jonathan 117
 position 38
 positive social stimuli 174
 post-truth 48, 53–54
 pragmatics 6
 prescriptive category 14
 prescriptive imperative 32
 press photograph 9
 press release 81
 presuppositions 29, 96
 principal 91
 print media 63, 65
 problem-solution format 22
 processes of mediation 6
 production formats 91–93, 99
 product orientation 28
 professional ideology 31
 professionalism 255
 professional vision 254–255
 projections 24
 promotional genres 214
 promotionalization 80
 pro-Occupy camp 258
 propaganda 48, 51–53
 propaganda feedback loop 183
 prosumers 92
 protest paradigm 131
 protest signs 189–194
 prototypicality 77
 pseudo-events 53
 public relations 52

- quantification 235
 queer gaze 58
 quotations 29
- Rankin, Tom 52
 ratified hearer 229
 ratified participants 39
 reality TV 16
 Received Pronunciation (RP)
 18, 32
 receiver 34
 receivers of messages 40
 reciprocal functions 232
 recontextualization 28, 129
 redacting 127
 re-entextualisation 257
 reframing 129
 Reifler, Jason 183
 relay 71
 relexicalization 125, 126
 remediation 66–67
 remixing 98, 252–253
 repertoire 17
 repetition 116
 reporting verbs 94
 resistance 55–56
 respiration 209
 restricted code 247
 reverting 164
 rhetorical devices 115
 rhetorical purposes 32
 rich media 13
 richness 100–101
 right-wing politics and media 249–250
 role reversibility 100
 Roosevelt, Franklin 96
 Ruge, M. 224
- sans serif 19
 Saussure, Ferdinand de 35; *Course in
 General Linguistics* 34
 scare quotes 95
 Schank, R. C. 224
 schemata 16
 Schou, J. 179, 245, 248, 251
- Scollon, Ron 7, 22, 65, 136, 196, 199
 Scollon, Suzanne 22
 screen space 145
 scriptedness 100
 Scunthorpe problem 125
 Seargeant, P. 104, 170
 self-censorship 57
 selfie 142, 144; types of 143, **143**
 semantic fields 123
 semiotic democracy 59, 129–130
 semiotic modes 10
 sender 34
 sensationalism 44–47
 sequentiality 10
 Serazio, Michael: *Your Ad Here: The Cool
 Sell of Guerrilla Marketing* 50
 Shannon, Claude 34, 35
 shared stories 24
 Shaw, Donald 118
 Shifman, L. 109, 111
 simile 236–237
 Simon, Bryant: *Everything but the Coffee* 86
 Simon, Herbert 42
 simultaneity 10
 sites of engagement 64–66, 134, 136–137,
 137, 200
*Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral
 Participation* (Wenger) 30
 situation comedy (sitcom) 16
 small stories 24
 Snapchat 142–145
 social conventions 5, 7
 social identities 104
 social interaction 34–36
 social meanings 141
 social media 21, 24, 41, 50, 56, 60, 65,
 142, 183; audiences 103; context
 design on 170–173; narrative in
 87–90; platforms 104; sites 87
 social networking platform 3
 social network sites 103
 social portraiture 73–74, 75
 Soules, Marshall 119
 sources 93
 speech acts 6, 46, 95

- speech communication 8
 speech events 31
 spin 51
 spontaneity 100
 spreadability 41
 standardization parameters **223**
 standard language ideology 32
 Starbucks 87
 steps 78
 stock character 111
 stock image 73, 74, 202, 203, 206, 208
 stories, telling and retelling 84–90
 story meetings 31
 story structure 237
 style-in-interaction 17
 styles 14, 17, 115–116; analyzing 81–83;
 appropriate 17–18; in broadcast
 interviews 151–154; guides/sheets 32;
 and other modes 18–19; and social
 identities 19–20
 styling 17
 sub-tweeting 127
 subversive reading 58
 subvertizing 129
 Sundar, Shyam 183
 superlativeness 235
 surveillant media 105, 230–233
 Swales, J. 14, 77, 78
 symbols 10
 synchronous communication 12
 synesthesia 145
 synesthetic communication 146
 synthetic personalization 80, 117
 systemic functional linguistics 68
- tabloids 19; journalism 114
 taboo language 58, 123, 124
 tacit knowledge 30
 tacit social ‘agreement’ 124
 tactile sensation 208–209
 Tagg, Caroline 57, 104, 170
 tag questions 18
 talk-in-interaction 23
 Tannen, Deborah 27; *The Argument
 Culture* 118
- Taylor, Damilola 218
 technological determinism 5
 telephone conversations 99
 tellability 87
 tellership 87
 testimonials 94
 textual functions 71
 textual meaning 141
 textual metafunction 69
 textual-stylistic features 239
 Thornborrow, Joanna 16
 three-part list 116
 timelessness 205
 Todorov, Tzvetan 15
 Toolan, Michael 84, 85, 216, 219
 topological meaning 10
 traditional media 60; communication 92
 transcription key 151, **153**
 transitivity 84
 transparency 66
 trolling 63
 tropes 117–118
 Trudgill, P. 123
 Truman, Harry 94
 Trump, Donald 95, 103, 113, 116, 119,
 122, 124, 127, 189, 248–251; speaking
 style 245–247
 truth 48–51
 truthiness 50
 Tsang, Ken 253, 257
 turn-taking 6
 Turow, Joseph 37
 tweeps 33
 tweet 2
 Twitter 3
 typological meaning 10
- Umbrella Movement 190, 192, 193,
 252, 256
 unauthorized practice in Wikipedia
 discourses 225–226
Understanding Media (McLuhan) 66
 unintentional recordings 18
 unratified participants 39
 utterance 9, 29, 38, 40, 91

- vague language 18
- Varis, P. 44, 110, 234, 238
- Vasquez, Camilla 111
- vernacular folksiness 116, 247
- vernacular varieties 32
- virality 41, 43–44; of stories 107–109
- visual categorisation 204
- visual conversations 9
- vloggers 33
- voice-over 16
- voices, representing others' 162
- vox populi 33
- Vygotsky, Lev 5

- Waletzky, J. 22, 87
- Wall, Tyler 253, 258
- Waltzky, Joshua 21, 23
- watershed 62
- Weaver, Richard 116
- Weaver, Warren 34, 35
- Web 2.0 29

- Weber, Kirsten 189
- Wellman, Barry 110
- Wenger, Etienne 200; *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* 30
- Whisper Community 146
- White, P. R. R. 214
- word combinations 236
- world knowledge 69
- Wright, Peter 49
- written language 11

- yellow journalism 42
- Yom-Tov, E. 109
- Your Ad Here: The Cool Sell of Guerrilla Marketing* (Serazio) 50
- youtubers 33

- Zimdars, Melissa 250
- zines 58
- Zuckerberg, Mark 244
- Zwicky, Arnold 51



Taylor & Francis Group
an informa business

Taylor & Francis eBooks

www.taylorfrancis.com

A single destination for eBooks from Taylor & Francis with increased functionality and an improved user experience to meet the needs of our customers.

90,000+ eBooks of award-winning academic content in Humanities, Social Science, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Medical written by a global network of editors and authors.

TAYLOR & FRANCIS EBOOKS OFFERS:

A streamlined experience for our library customers

A single point of discovery for all of our eBook content

Improved search and discovery of content at both book and chapter level

REQUEST A FREE TRIAL

support@taylorfrancis.com

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

 **CRC Press**
Taylor & Francis Group