

Appraisal and Journalistic Discourse

The following material has been extracted from *Media Literacy* which was written by **Rick Iedema**, **Susan Feez** and **Peter White** as part of a research project under the leadership of Jim Martin. The project was conducted for the Write It Right project of the Disadvantaged Schools Program of the New South Wales Department of Schools Education.

(Iedema, R., S. Feez & P.R.R. White. 1994. *Media Literacy*, Sydney, Disadvantaged Schools Program, NSW Department of School Education.)

The extract is taken from a chapter which firstly sets out an account of the primary genres/sub-genres of journalistic discourse and then goes on to explore registerial variations associated with the different journalistic roles of 'reporter', 'correspondent' and 'commentator'. Here I have included:

Section B: Where the Appraisal system is introduced in order to explore 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' in journalistic discourse and to explore how the different 'voices' or sub-registers of journalistic discourse can be seen to vary according to their different use of Appraisal values. This section represents the earliest published account of the Judgement (assessments of human behaviour by reference to social norms).

Section B: Appraisal and Authorial Voice

How are 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' construed in media texts?

In the previous section we looked at "hard" news, human interest stories, comments and features from the perspective of text type. We saw how the various text types we identified had different social functions, and we also established that these text types are associated with different patterns of textual organisation. The News Story and the News Feature are organised on the basis of the Nucleus and Satellite model, whereas the Exemplum and the Exposition tend to be organised more on the basis of a beginning-middle-end structure, with stages which all contribute to the overall effectiveness of the text. But Generic structure is, so to speak, only half the story.

When distinguishing different types of media texts we should also consider the set of meanings which relate to what are commonly termed "subjectivity" and "objectivity". From the journalist's perspective, "hard" news is "factual", "objective" and "impersonal" news reporting while argumentative texts are necessarily "subjective", "evaluative" and "personalised". As already seen above, the "Mum-to-be" text repeated below exemplifies the "objective" and "factual" text type, because the journalist does not offer her/his opinions about what happened:

Mum-to-be Bank Teller's Raid Ordeal

By Stewart Hawkins

NUCLEUS A pregnant woman was taken to hospital in a state of shock yesterday after her fourth hold-up since being employed as a bank teller

SAT 1 Ambulance officers said the tearful woman, in her late 20s, was two months pregnant and although unhurt was extremely upset.

- SAT 2 The mum-to-be suffered severe shock after the man made a bungled attempt to rob the Norton St, Leichhardt branch of the Commonwealth Bank.
- SAT 2.1 The man was pinned to the ceiling by his ankle when bank staff activated the security screen as he tried to leap across the counter after ordering tellers to fill the bag with money.
- SAT 2.2 David Santarelli, co-owner of a restaurant opposite the bank, said the man was left hanging by his ankle for about 15 minutes before police got him down.
- SAT 2.3 Mr Santarelli said the offender had spoken to a number of customers in the bank and told them to leave before he approached the tellers.
 "I saw this bloke jump over the counter and midflight they pulled the glass up on him," he said.
- SAT 3 A man was later charged with demanding money with menaces.
 (WRAP-UP)

The following text (19/10/92, SMH, p. 4) however shows how a journalist can take the opportunity to express her/his opinions. The text has been discussed above and identified as a Challenge:

HEADLINE +
 BYLINE

A Cheap Slur On Childless
 by Adele Horin

POSITION
 CHALLENGED

Dr Hewson's insensitive remarks imply that the significant proportion of Australians who are childless cannot be trusted. They are somehow morally inferior to parents, and the men in particular are not "full-blooded". He also assumes that just because people do not have their own children they do not like children.

REBUTTAL - ARGUMENT 1 Through choice, infertility or bad timing, the childless have become a sizable community in Australia. An estimated 20 percent of Australian women will have no children according to the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Infertility, especially among men, is on the rise, adoptions are virtually impossible, reproductive technology works for very few, and some people decide parenting is not for them. People who desperately want children but can't have them are cut to the quick by such slurs of second-class citizenship. That parents are somehow better is wounding to people who have suffered so much in their attempts to have children, or to come to terms with their childlessness. And people who have chosen not to have children get tired of hearing they are selfish, immature or lacking depth, as if parenting is the only worthwhile contribution people can make in life. They have a right to remain childless without incurring suspicion, especially in a world that is hardly crying out for more children.

REBUTTAL - ARGUMENT 2 It is wrong to assume that the childless do not like children or want meaningful contact with them. It is our society that is at fault for making childlessness seem tragic or peculiar.

REBUTTAL - ARGUMENT 3 Dr Hewson's view that a man is not a real man till he passes on his genes is simple-minded. His own experience as a non-custodial father should have taught him Australia is a complex society with many kinds of families.

CONCLUSION (THESIS) Just as it would be wrong to stereotype fathers in Dr Hewson's position as morally suspect, so it is wrong to stereotype the childless.

Commonsense notions of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity'

The fact that the "*Mum-to-be*" story above is considered objective reflects the commonly held view (in the media) that there is some fixed reality which can be observed and recorded without bias. This view implies that there is only one valid way of looking at and talking about the world. An alternative view of reality adopts a more "relativist" position, in which certain people are recognised as having their own way of observing and describing reality. Any interpretation of reality is then seen as a "social construct", because observation is constrained or determined by cultural preconceptions and traditions. The observer uses a socially determined way of talking about the world, rather than simply or directly reflecting or replicating reality.

This view of perception and communication makes the notions of "objectivity", "factuality" and "impartiality" problematic. The way events are observed, interpreted and reported will always be conditioned by the social background and ideological perspective of journalists, editors and management. Even the most ostensibly "factual" report will be the product of numerous value judgements. These will have determined, for example, that this event, rather than some other, deserved to be covered, how prominently it was to be featured, the way in which the event was to be described, which part of the event received primary focus, which experts, eye witnesses or participants were called upon for comment, which viewpoints were regarded as authoritative, and so on.

When we discussed the structure of the News Story, "*Mum-to-be Bank Teller's Raid Ordeal*" we talked about the complex system of value judgements which underlies the reporting of "fact". We saw how there was nothing necessary or "natural" about the reporter/editor's decision to focus on the pregnant woman. This was based on a subjective assessment of the potential power of construing the hold-up attempt as a challenge to community expectations about the role of women and the status of motherhood. The journalist has given prominence to the viewpoint of the ambulance officers on the basis of certain value judgements about authority. Her/his decision to place the news that police have arrested a man in connection with the hold-up attempt in the final sentence is also the result of a judgement about the impact of the text on its readers.

Our point is not that the distinction between "objectivity" and "subjectivity" is meaningless. There are clear language differences associated with the two categories. Rather, we need to redefine the "objectivity-subjectivity" opposition, at least as it applies to media texts.

In the subjective text, at least some of the author's value judgements are explicitly revealed in the language. In contrast, the strictly "objective" text is constructed in such a way that there is no explicit linguistic evidence of the author's value judgements. All value judgements are backgrounded or "naturalised" in the sense that the way the event is construed is presented as the only way of talking about it. In this context, therefore, the "impartiality" or the "factuality" of a text are not measures of the degree to which it accurately reflects reality - as human subjects we use language to construct rather than reflect reality - but measures, rather, of the success of the text in presenting its underlying set of value judgements and ideologically informed responses as "natural" and "normal", as fact rather than opinion, as knowledge rather than belief. "Objectivity", therefore, is an effect created through language (a "rhetorical" effect) rather than a question of being "true to nature".

Language, of course, makes available an extensive set of resources to enable a speaker or writer to be "impersonal" or "objective", and these resources depend on the social domain s/he is operating in¹. In journalism the use of the first person pronoun by a text's author is always associated with "subjectivity", with a weakening of the text's status as "hard news". Yet the use of certain words and phrases which intensify the emotional impact of a description - the use, for example of "plummeted" and "feverish" in descriptions such as "*the value of the Australian dollar plummeted yesterday in feverish late-afternoon trading*" - are felt to be entirely "objective".

For many journalists, the "hard news", "factual" report is a benchmark, a textual base level which may be transformed into "commentary" or "opinion" by the addition of

¹ Different social domains (e.g. the domain of medicine, banking, sports, etc.) have their own conventions of "objectivity" against which the status of individual texts will be evaluated. For example, previously the conventions of certain types of academic discourse ruled out the use of the first person pronoun. To state that "we discovered a new strain of the virus" or "It suddenly occurred to me that an increase in the water's sulphate levels may have been responsible" would have been felt to breach set standards of academic "objectivity". Recently these conventions have changed to the extent that the first person pronoun is felt to be more "honest" or direct and hence still compatible with standards of "objectivity".

subjective elements. One of Australia's leading commentators on the media, the presenter of the ABC's "Media Watch" program, railed long and hard in a program put to air on 15 February 1993 against what he saw as the corruption of the ABC's own news service by the inclusion of subjective elements into "hard news" reports (about the death of Fred Hollows). The writers and presenter of the program obviously adhere to the commonsense view that it is possible to report on events "objectively".

The difference between describing events "objectively" and dealing with them "subjectively" is a difference in the degree of our commitment to the truth value of what we are saying. So the "objective-subjective" opposition does not involve one kind of language use being "truer" to reality than another. Rather, we are dealing with varying levels of certainty about the degree to which our language represents or "replicates" reality. An absolute degree of certainty marks a complete absence of references to ourselves, whereas lower degrees of certainty about whether our expressions reflect reality involve language structures that do refer to ourselves as observers explicitly. In the following section we will look at those language structures which are considered "objective", and those which are considered "subjective".

Authorial Voice

Certain language features contribute to our sense of the presence or personality of a text's writer. This system of features we will call "authorial voice". In the "objective", "hard news" report the author's "voice" is constructed as impersonal, as anonymous or even absent, as the voice of the institution of journalism rather than of a human individual. The voice of the "comment" piece by contrast is, to greater or lesser degrees, personalised and individualised.

So we are asking:

- * Is the "voice" constructed as personal or impersonal, as "objective" or "subjective", as having knowledge only of material events that occur in the real world, or as having knowledge of the inner world of human emotions and thought processes as well?
- * Does the author simply "observe" or does he or she appraise and evaluate?

We have divided the system of authorial voice into those language resources which are reserved for expressing "objectivity", and those which are used to be subjective. Being "objective" in journalism generally means not reporting on what "I" think or feel, but on what has been seen and what can be supported by means of what others have to say, whereas being "subjective" means including personal thoughts, judgements and feelings. These two contrasting ways of speaking or writing we term "Reporter" and "Writer" voice.

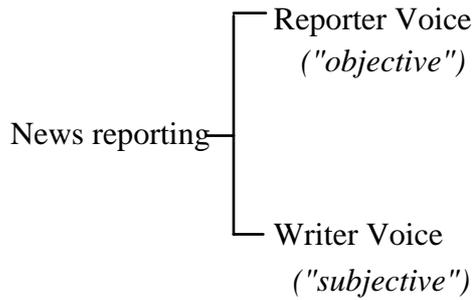


Figure 1: "Objective" Reporter Voice versus "subjective" Writer Voice

The terminology is based on the distinction often made by print journalists between those journalists whose task is simply to "go out and get the facts" - the "reporter" - and those who analyse, interpret, explain and evaluate - the "writer". Reporter Voice, therefore, is the impersonal, "objective" voice of the "hard news" report and Writer Voice the subjective, personalised voice of journalistic commentary. The following diagram summarises the essence of both objectivity and subjectivity in media reporting as commented on so far:

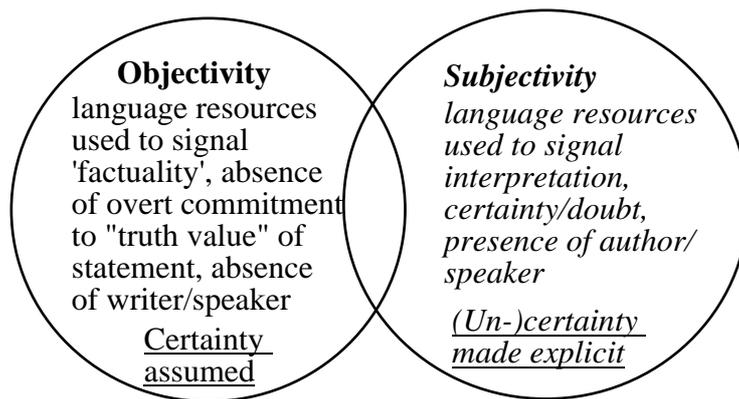


Fig x

Figure 2: : Objectivity versus Subjectivity

Constructing subjectivity in text

The construction of a sense of "subjectivity", of a personalised authorial voice in journalism is dependent on a number of language resources. For example, the use of modal verbs signals the presence of a speaker or author:

"The real concern of the left should have been to make sure Mr Keating was kept to his promises on competition."

We can also express our "subjectivity" by interpreting a state of affairs in terms of an emotional response:

Mr Kennett was unmoved by the protest.

Although Kennett may not have reacted to the demonstrations against his industrial relations changes, saying that he was "unmoved" rather than "firm" or "confident" involves a "subjective" interpretation of Kennett's state of mind.

Then we can intensify our observations:

Although there was widespread industrial disruption, the strike did not bring the State to a standstill.

The word "widespread" intensifies the meaning of industrial disruption and cannot be seen as entirely "factual".

Another way of slipping subjectivity into a text is by means of "measure" (here linked to a number):

Australia has seen little to rival it since the Vietnam war protests - more than 100,000 Victorians spilled into the streets of Melbourne yesterday in a demonstration of public outrage, fear and disgust.

The number given is not factual, and is therefore necessarily "subjective".

Then, the most explicit way of introducing our viewpoint into a text is by means of judgement:

Dr Hewson's insensitive remarks imply that the significant proportion of Australians who are childless cannot be trusted...

We can summarise these resources for making language subjective as follows. This list is not complete, yet these are the most overt "subjective" devices. Other resources which introduce subjectivity in more subtle ways will be discussed further below. The resources here are ordered in terms of increasing "subjective" impact:

SOME WAYS OF INTRODUCING "SUBJECTIVITY" INTO TEXT:	EXAMPLES
MEASURE	<i>a little, lots, for ages, etc.</i>
AFFECT	<i>sad, distraught, desperate, confident, etc.</i>
INTENSITY	<i>adverbs: very, somewhat, etc.</i>
MODALITY	<i>should, might, will, may, etc.</i>
JUDGEMENT	<i>insensitive, stupid, bad, etc.</i>

These resources may occur (or "be realised") in different grammatical forms whose "truth value" (if not their meaning) remains similar. For example

"It is vital, not just in fairness to Mr Pickering, that the strength of his allegations be fully tested",

may be transformed into "Pickering's allegations should be (or must be) fully tested."

Not all these resources play an equally important role in making "subjective" meanings. In "hard news" for example, "*..more than 100,000 Victorians spilled into the streets..*" is accepted as describing an event that occurred in the "real world", and therefore expressions of Measure are not generally seen as compromising "objectivity". Neither is Intensification seen as introducing "subjective" elements, despite it clearly being a device used to signal interpersonal values: "*In a desperate bid to save the economy, Britain withdrew the pound..*". Affect, depending on how it is presented, can be seen to signal "subjectivity" (see below). Judgement and Modality however clearly represent language resources that are seen to introduce elements of "subjectivity" into text.

Let's first look at what Judgement and Modality look like in actual texts, and then we'll see how Reporter Voice and Writer Voice, or "objectivity" and subjectivity" may be defined in terms of the language resources identified above.

Judgement

Let's look at some examples of Judgement that occur in the following extract from the text "Cheap slur on childless" (by Adele Horin, Sydney Morning Herald, 19/10/1992, p.4; Judgement underlined):

1. A cheap slur on childless

2. Dr Hewson's insensitive remarks imply that the significant proportion of Australians who are childless cannot be trusted...

3. They have a right to remain childless without incurring suspicion, especially in a world that is hardly crying out for more children...

4. It is our society that is at fault for making childlessness seem tragic or peculiar.

5. Dr Hewson's view that a man is not a real man till he passes on his genes is simpleminded...

6. Just as it would be wrong to stereotype fathers in Dr Hewson's position as morally suspect, so it is wrong to stereotype the childless.

Here we are dealing with the explicit evaluation of others and their actions - in this case those of Dr Hewson, who in 1992 was leader of the Federal Opposition. The

judgements are made by reference to socially determined expectations about behaviour. With the exception of sentence 5, all these descriptions involve judgements in terms of an ethical system which says what is right and wrong. A "cheap slur" breaches standards of fairness, an "insensitive" remark contravenes the moral requirement for kindness and concern for others. Examples 3, 4 and 6 make explicit judgments about right and wrong and moral fault. Example 5, however invokes another sub-category of Judgement. It assesses Dr Hewson's actions by reference to standards of capacity or competence. To state that a politician is "simpleminded" is to judge her/him in terms of expectations about intellectual performance.

Here the Judgement meanings are explicitly coded in the text. Words such as "insensitive" and "simpleminded" point to the operation of a system of standards of behaviour. Explicit Judgement is strongly associated with Writer Voice and with an absence of Reporter Voice. To make such judgements is to shift a text out of the domain of "hard" news and into that of comment and opinion.

The two parameters of Judgment we have encountered so far - with reference to "capacity" and "ethics" - are part of a wider network of meanings. We propose five major categories of Judgement each of which can take a positive or negative value. These five categories are listed below:

CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
NORMALITY	<i>"In an <u>extraordinary</u> about-face, the government rescinded its previous directive and raised interest rates by two percent"</i>
CAPACITY	<i>"Rather than being a classic stylist, or <u>naturally talented</u> athlete ..."</i>
TENACITY	<i>"Border embodies the traditional qualities of the Australian cricketer. He is ... <u>uncomplicated</u>, <u>courageous</u>, <u>resourceful</u>, <u>defiant</u> and <u>indefatigable</u>"</i>
VERACITY	<i>"The major problem for President Bush is that the US electorate finds what ever promises he makes about taxes <u>entirely unconvincing</u>."</i>
PROPRIETY	<i>"Hussein's actions are those of a <u>greedy</u> and <u>morally bankrupt</u> <u>despot</u> with no respect for international law and no concern for human life."</i>

As seen above, Judgement is one way of making language subjective, while Modality is another. Let's look more closely at how **Modality** works in language.

Modality

One of the most basic ways that the personal perspective of the speaker/writer is revealed in text is through the choice s/he makes between positive and negative. The speaker/writer orients her/himself positively or negatively to the information given. S/he chooses, for example between "The Labor Government is the best party to lead Australia into the nineties" and "The Labor Government is not the best party to lead Australia in the nineties. This system of choice between positive or negative we term "Polarity". The speaker/writer's orientation is not, however, confined to these two absolute positions. Between "yes" and "no" there are intermediate degrees of commitment or uncommittedness that the speaker can adopt towards her/his information. S/he can say, "Maybe the Labor Government...", or "Certainly the Labor Government...". The system of choices which allow for these intermediate positions is what we term "Modality".

There are essentially five grounds for a speaker's or writer's commitment or lack of commitment to content, all of which allow for statements which fall somewhere between the positive or negative absolutes. These are Usuality, Capacity, Inclination, Probability and Obligation.

ASPECTS OF MODALITY

EXAMPLES

USUALITY:	A speaker may be less than absolutely committed to informational content on the grounds that the frequency of the event or condition at issue is less than 100 percent. For example, "The Australian Women's netball team usually does well in all its matches". On the other hand, s/he might say "The Australian Women's netball team always does well in all its matches".
POTENTIALITY:	When we address the capacity of an individual to perform some function we are not saying that they will, or necessarily do perform that function. Rather, we are making a statement about the likelihood of the action based on our assessment of the participant's capabilities. For example, "The Australian Women's netball team is capable of doing well in all its matches".
INCLINATION:	Inclination is somewhat similar to Capacity. We are again saying that the action is likely to occur, but the basis of that commitment is not some innate or acquired capacity but an assessment of the state of mind, the application of the will, or the emotional disposition of the relevant participant. For example, "The Australian Women's netball team is determined to win all its matches".
PROBABILITY:	Under the sub-system of Probability, we lack absolute commitment to either a positive or negative position, and this is realised in terms of a value of certainty/uncertainty. The speaker's level of commitment is located on a scale of certainty which stops short of the absolute commitment of "yes" or "no". For example, "The Australian Women's netball team will probably win all their matches".
OBLIGATION:	Obligation, like Inclination, also deals with our expectation that a participant will perform some action. Rather than being based on the internal, mental state of the participant, assessments of Obligation look to the influence of external compulsion either from socialised standards of behaviour or logical necessity. For example, "It's necessary for the Australian Women's basketball team to try harder". The stronger that compulsion is felt to be, the stronger will be the speaker/writers expectation that the action will be carried out.

These meanings share the common feature of dealing with levels of commitment, or with the values which fall between the absolute, polar opposites of "yes" and "no". But there are other, equally significant grounds for grouping them together in the one, "interpersonal" system. All the meanings are associated with a small range of grammatical forms.

Probability, for example, can be encoded by means of an Adjunct (adverb) - "*Certainly* Ren Hua played the didgeridoo" - an Attribute (predicative adjective) - "It is *certain* that Ren Hua played." - and as a modal operator (modal auxiliary verb) - "Ren Hua *must* have played the didgeridoo". But within this diversity of realisation, all five categories share the common grammatical property of having a modal auxiliary verb as one of their means of grammatical expression:

MODAL CATEGORY	REALISED AS VERBAL FORM	REALISED AS ADJUNCT (ADVERB)
USUALITY	Rover'll sit quite quiet	Rover usually sits quite quiet
POTENTIALITY	Rover can sit quite quiet	Rover is capable of sitting quite quiet.
INCLINATION	I will win first prize.	I'm determined to win.
PROBABILITY	I may win first prize.	Possibly I'll win.
OBLIGATION	I must win first prize.	It's necessary that I win.

With this understanding of Modality, we are now in a position to demonstrate that the system of Judgment also expresses, though at a more abstract level, a person's commitment to a view in terms of her/his "subjective" degree of certainty or doubt.

Modality and Judgement

Usuality/Normality

The subgrouping of Judgemental meanings which we include under the heading of "Normality" involve words such as "remarkable", "extraordinary", "unexpected", "normal", "lucky", "average", "consistent", "peculiar", "odd", "dated", "unconventional" etc. The Modality principle which we can associate with this Judgement category is the one of "usuality"/"unusuality". To assess an event, action or state of affairs as "remarkable", "unexpected", "peculiar", "odd", "normal" or, "average" is to classify it against a set of expectations of what is usual or unusual. The statement that, "*The Opposition Leader unexpectedly backed down on his key policies*" is the Judgement equivalent of what, from the perspective of Modal Usuality, would be, "The Opposition Leader usually doesn't back down on his key policies". Concepts such as "lucky" and "unlucky" include an additional component to do with receiving benefit or harm, but the core, underlying meaning still relies on assessments of usuality - both "lucky and "unlucky" events are in some sense necessarily unusual.

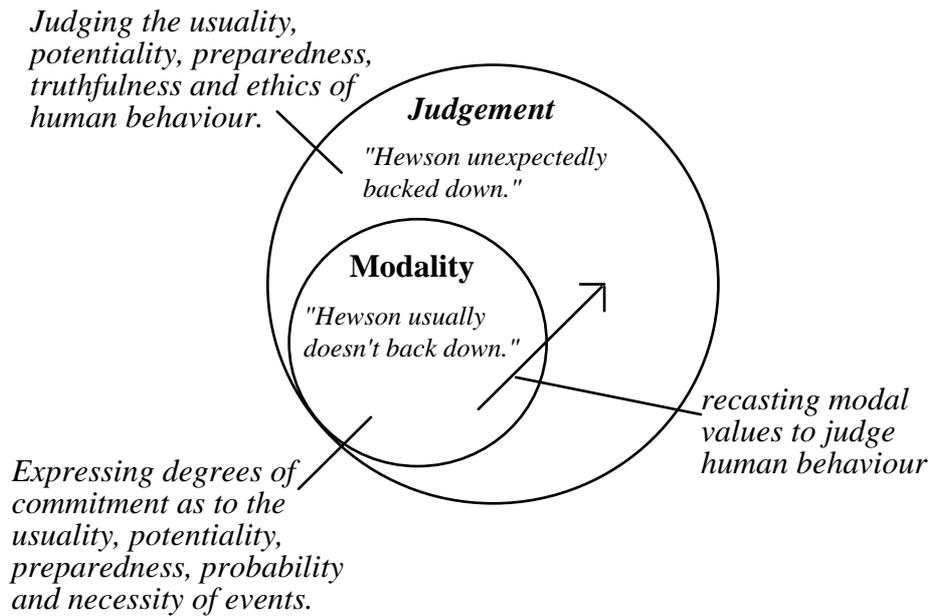


Fig x

Figure 3: Expressing degrees of commitment versus judging human behaviour

Capacity

The Capacity sub-category involves terms like for example "capable", "incompetent", "powerful", "weak", "successful", "gifted", "stupid", "expert", "clever", "dull", "clumsy", "sane", "level headed", and "irrational". All these rely on assessments of degrees of ability, they all relate directly to whether a participant can or can't perform some action or achieve some result.

We also include here a few terms which are related to "aesthetic" and "social" ability. These include "fashionable", "unfashionable", "entertaining", and "suave". These meanings all relate to competence in the social sphere, to the ability to achieve certain social goals. To be fashionable is to be socially acceptable, to indicate your knowledge of the standards of style as practiced by the more influential or elite sections of society. "Suavity" also combines something of the aesthetic with an assessment of social competence, and additionally, at least in some contexts, a sense of insincerity, superficiality or even deceit.

"Insincerity" and "deceit" are not, of course, values of Capacity but of ethical Propriety and we see here how some terms may require a double layered interpretation drawing on more than one category. "Sly" is another such term, combining a sense of cleverness with an ethical judgement about deceit or dishonesty. There is also something double-layered about the meanings of "fashionable"/"unfashionable". In addition to the sense of social competence there is also a sense of usuality - fashionable behaviours are those which have become the norm with particularly influential or esteemed social groupings.

Tenacity

With Tenacity, the related Modal meaning is that of Inclination. Under Inclination in the Modality system, the speaker's commitment to a statement is determined by

his/her estimation of the relevant participant's state of mind, of their emotional disposition - are they unwilling to, keen to, anxious to or determined to. Under the Judgement system the state of mind or emotional disposition of the participant in question determines whether the participant and/or their actions are viewed positively or negatively. That is to say, there is a culturally determined system which judges certain states of mind and emotional dispositions to be admirable and others to be contemptible or pitiable. Terms associated with admiration include "brave", "heroic", "indefatigable", "self-reliant", "energetic", "tireless", "meticulous", "friendly", "curious", "inquisitive", "skeptical", "dependable", "adaptable", "supportive" and "cooperative". Terms associated with contempt or pity are "cowardly", "lazy", "obstinate", "apathetic", "lax", "rash", "servile", "unreliable", "frivolous", "vexatious", and "irascible".

Veracity

Under the Modality system, Probability provides for degrees of uncertainty between the polar absolutes of "yes" and "no". In the Judgement system the issue is not one of uncertainty but of truth or falsity and their respective value judgements. Under Probability in the Modality system we are concerned with the degree to which the speaker or writer is incapable of adopting an absolute position, or of providing an absolute "yes" or "no". As a consequence, the speaker or writer must modalise what s/he has to say, by couching what s/he says in terms of "I think that", or "possibly", "It is probable that".

Under the Modal Probability system, not to make a statement that involves absolute factuality is to engage in levels of certainty and uncertainty. In other words, "He is coming" is absolutely factual, whereas "He is certainly coming" introduces an element of uncertainty. Under the Judgement system of Veracity, levels of Probability are interpreted in terms of levels of deviation from (speaking) the truth. The positive values, therefore, of the Veracity sub-system include those associated with terms such as "honest", "credible", "authoritative", "trustworthy", "frank", "direct", "real", "authentic" and "genuine". The negative values are represented by "deceitful", "dishonest", "unconvincing", "inconsistent", "hypocritical", "deceptive", "misleading", "bogus", "fake" etc.

Propriety

Under Modality, the system of Obligation provides a means for the speaker/writer to attach degrees of necessity to certain actions or events. Under Judgement, the system is concerned with assessing compliance with or defiance of a system of social necessity. To comply is to be judged favourably and to attract terms such as "right", "good", "moral", "virtuous", "ethical", "blessed", "pious", "law abiding", "kind", "caring", "selfless", "generous", "forgiving", "loyal", "obedient", "responsible", "wholesome", "modest", and so on. To defy these social 'necessities' is to attract terms such as "immoral", "wrong", "evil", "corrupt", "sinful", "damned", "mean", "cruel", "selfish", "insensitive", "jealous", "envious", "greedy", "treacherous", "rude", "negligent", "lewd", "obscene", etc.

Social Sanction and Social Esteem

This then, is Judgement, a system based ultimately on the meanings of Modality, and which provides a network of values by which we evaluate human behaviour. The five categories so far discussed fall into two more general subgroupings which we term

"Social Esteem" and "Social Sanction". Normality, Capacity, and Tenacity make up Social Esteem and Veracity and Propriety make up Social Sanction. The total system is set out below.

JUDGEMENTS TO DO WITH SOCIAL ADMIRATION OR CONTEMPT		
SOCIAL ESTEEM	POSITIVE (ADMIRE/BE CAPTIVATED BY)	NEGATIVE (HOLD IN CONTEMPT/PITY)
Normality (usuality)	normal, outstanding, lucky, remarkable	peculiar, odd, eccentric, unlucky, abnormal
Capacity (ability)	competent, powerful, graceful, beautiful,witty, fashionable	weak, incompetent, ugly, stupid, foolish, incapable unfashionable, dated
Tenacity (inclination)	plucky, heroic, curious, resolute, self-reliant	cowardly, rash, apathetic, obstinate, vexatious, lazy, servile, complacent
JUDGEMENTS TO DO WITH MORAL RIGHT AND WRONG		
SOCIAL SANCTION	INSTITUTIONAL PRAISE	INSTITUTIONAL BLAME
Veracity (probability)	honest, frank, real, genuine, credible	deceitful, fake, bogus, dishonest, deceptive
Propriety (obligation)	right, good, ethical, kind, generous, loyal, forgiving	wrong, evil, sinful, mean, cruel, greedy, arrogant, corrupt

There are two grounds for our sub division of the five parameters into Social Esteem and Social Sanction. The first is based on meaning difference, and the other is statistical, with the former providing something of an explanation for the latter. There is a significant meaning difference which separates Normality, Capacity and Tenacity from Veracity and Propriety. The first three are subcategories of Social Esteem because positive values of all three are associated with an increase in esteem in the eyes of the public while negative values diminish or destroy it. For example, an "outstanding" achievement, a "skilful" performance or a "plucky" display are all "admirable" while "abnormality", "incompetence" or "laziness" are all contemptible or pitiable.

Social Sanction - Veracity and Propriety - is the domain of right and wrong, which is the system of moral regulation. Both "cruelty" and "dishonesty", for example, are (usually) seen to be in breach of the moral order, or to contradict some set of rules of behaviour. This distinction between values involving moral transgression/compliance and those involving an increase/decrease of social esteem is fairly transparent when

comparing values of Normality and Capacity with those of Propriety and Veracity. The negativity which attaches to "stupidity" or "eccentricity" is not really an issue of ethical wrongdoing. "Corruption" and "dishonesty" clearly are. Whereas negative judgements that fall within the realm of Social Sanction distinguish actions that are generally punishable by (criminal) law, those within the realm of Social Esteem are not.

Tenacity appears to be something of a transition category and some of its values may attract a sense of ethical judgement. But the key here is that Tenacity is construed by reference to inner mental or emotional states rather than external moral regulation. With negative Tenacity values, for example, the associated lowering of esteem results from society taking a critical but not an ethical view of the mental or emotional state at issue. For example, while "laziness" or "servility" or "rashness" are not morally evil, and do not transgress an ethical code, they clearly are condemned or held in contempt as socially dysfunctional. Those who display these qualities risk dislike or contempt, but they are not immoral. Similarly, while "indefatigability", "flexibility", "curiosity" or "courage" are highly admirable and to be encouraged they do not share the same moral order as, for example, "honesty" or "piety".

There may be some disagreement about which category some terms belong to. For example, from our reading position we see "cowardice" as belonging to Tenacity and "kindness" to Veracity. We feel we are supported in this by our view that "cowardice" describes an inner emotional state while "kindness", in contrast, is a value which attaches to certain acts. To say that someone is "kind" is to associate their actions with one of the types of behaviours endorsed by our moral system rather than to describe that individual's state of mind or emotion. Other readers, however, may feel that there is a strong sense of moral transgression in "cowardice" and hence may want to place it within Propriety and thus within Social Sanction.

[Inserted comment from P.R.R White, August 2002 – with the hindsight of another eight years of research into Judgement. Today, I believe, we would be rather less ready to discuss terms such as ‘cowardice’ out of any textual context. In our early analyses/discussions I think we ran the risk of suggesting that it was possible to take a word out of context and, once and for all, make a determination about its Judgement effect. That is to say, we seemed to almost be supplying dictionary-like definitions of the Judgement status of such terms. The years of work on Appraisal have taught us that this can be misleading. It is only in a given textual context that the final Judgement value of a wording can be decided. Today we would not want to discuss ‘cowardice’ as an isolated, decontextualised lexical item. Rather we would want to be considering how it operates in various textual contexts. This problem with our analyses does tend to be recur in the early formulations of Judgement. Thus, in other places, we list individual lexical items as examples of the different Judgement values. It would have been better had we listed wordings in some textual context by way of illustration.]

Certainly this is a highly culture-specific domain of analysis. If the deadly and venial listings of sins of the Western Christian tradition are any indication, "laziness" (sloth) and "irascibility" (wrath) at one point in Western history were ruled to represent moral transgression while today they do not. But we believe that in general both our

identification of the two-way distinction between Social Esteem and Social Sanction and our identification of the five sub categories do reflect at least one of the systems of Judgement operating within our cultural community.

Types of Judgement and Journalistic Voice

The second reason behind the division between Social Esteem and Social Sanction is that something close to this dual system of Judgement operates in mainstream journalism. There are clear patterns in which the Judgement sub-types occur. Within (subjective) Writer Voice texts - those which include explicit Judgement - there appears to be a significant subdivision between texts which typically feature Judgement values from both Social Esteem and Social Sanction, and texts which feature only Social Esteem values. The Writer Voice text, "*Cheap Slur on Childless*", for example, judges Dr Hewson's comments about childless couples as inaccurate and misleading (Veracity), unfair (Propriety), cruel (Propriety) and simpleminded (Capacity).

There is another significant grouping of texts which deals only with the values of Social Esteem. This suggests that there is some categorisation operating in Writer Voice texts which is sensitive to the Social Esteem/Social Sanction distinction. We have therefore divided Writer Voice into two further subcategories which we term Correspondent Voice and Commentator Voice. Judgement in Correspondent Voice is confined to values of Social Esteem, while the Commentator Voice has access to the full array of Judgement values - both Esteem and Sanction with a tendency to give prominence to the latter. The following diagram sums this up:

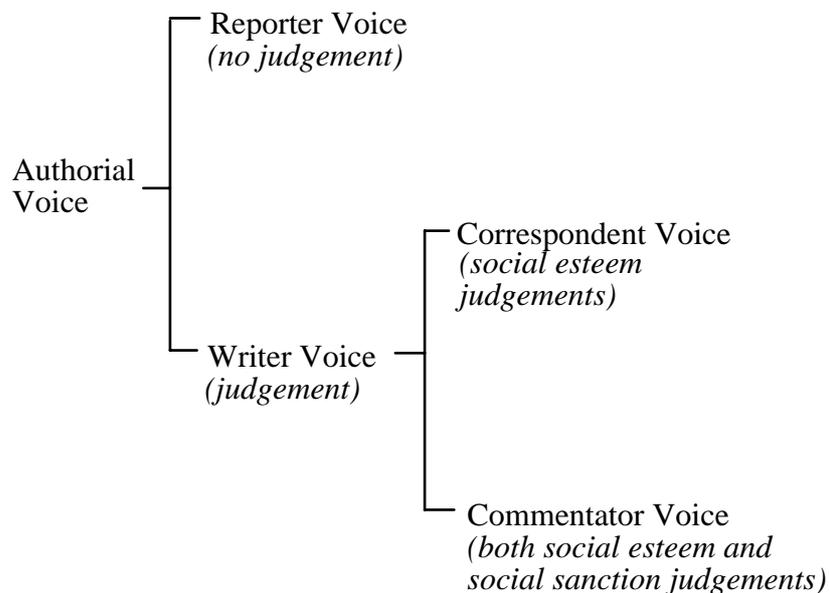


Figure 4 : The system of 'authorial voices'

Correspondent Voice

The following text (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10/18/92 p.11) is a typical example of Correspondent Voice story. We are concerned here only with explicit Judgement (other types will be discussed below) and with Judgements for which the author takes direct responsibility. That is, we exclude those elements of the text contained in quotations or comments from external sources because these externally sourced Judgements do not contribute to the reader's sense of the author's own position or voice.

KINDS OF
JUDGEMENT USED

TEXT

Spotlight off Bush's Houston party

By Pilita Clark, Herald Correspondent

small and dowdy =
CAPACITY

1. HOUSTON, Monday: All the glitzy balloons and brass bands ready to be unleashed for this week's Republican national convention suddenly looked rather small and dowdy yesterday as attention was diverted to the showdown looming between President Bush and Iraq's President Saddam Hussein.

interesting =
NORMALITY

2. And that is a pity, because this year's convention was shaping up to be one of the most interesting Republican gatherings in a long time.

desperately,
unsuccessfully =
CAPACITY

3. Usually it is the Democrats who strain desperately, and unsuccessfully, to disguise their inner tensions and divisions at convention time.

4. For the past two presidential elections, for instance, the Democratic nominee's attempts to placate the Rev Jesse Jackson have provided lively sport for onlookers.

harmony, unified =
cooperative =
TENACITY

5. But this year the two major parties appear to have swapped roles. The Democrat's convention in New York last month was notable for its general harmony and unified support for its nominee, Mr Bill Clinton.

6. A great Republican convention, was how many described the event.

7. In sharp contrast, the Republican platform writers last week actually made front-page news as they fought over what they wanted to say about abortion and Mr Bush's contentious 1990 agreement on a budget deficit-reducing deal which raised taxes.

deft = CAPACITY

8. In the end, after some deft arm-twisting by Mr Bush's campaign, the platform ended up pledging a commitment to a constitutional amendment banning abortion, much to the chagrin of pro-choice Republicans.

9. And an attempt to label in the platform the 1990 tax increases a "mistake" was eventually watered down to read "recessionary".

10. But evidence of the tensions remained as the 2,210 Republican delegates rolled into this big oil town over the weekend, with abortion set to provide the greatest confrontations.

11. Pro-choice and pro-life protesters have clashed busily over the streets of Houston this weekend as out-of-town "Operation Rescue" activists tried to block some of the city's abortion clinics.

12. Feminist groups organised their own guerilla-style tactics to match their opponents, which resulted in several arrests.

13. When Mr Bush arrives for the start of the convention today he will do so under a cloud of opinion polls showing him trailing Mr Clinton by at least 17 percentage points.

14. Unlike Mr Clinton, who was able to use his convention to appeal to swinging voters and Republicans in order to maximise his chances, Mr Bush faces a battle to retain support among his own party base.

15. Hence the convention begins tonight with a speech by a conservative hero, former President Ronald Reagan.

16. Other key conservatives, such as TV evangelist Mr P Robertson and renegade Bush challenger Mr Pat Buchanan, will take to the podium to back Mr Bush.

renegade = eccentric,
abnormal =
NORMALITY

17. And the President is widely mooted to be preparing to announce in his acceptance speech on Thursday night that he will introduce major tax cuts if re-elected.

18. The problem with this ploy is that Americans keenly remember the pledge on taxes Mr Bush made them in his 1988 convention acceptance speech in New Orleans when he said "Read my lips -- no new taxes".

19. One of the jokes doing the rounds yesterday was about Republican Senate minority leader, Senator Bob Dole, who told Mr Bush "stop lying about my record" when both were contesting their party's nomination in the 1988 campaign.

20. When Senator Dole makes his keynote speech here this week some suggest he should tell Bush to start lying about his record over the past 3 1/2 years, so dismal is it perceived by voters.

dismal = incompetent
= CAPACITY

We notice that the text is rich in Judgement but only of the Social Esteem type. The author makes no social sanctioning evaluations, no judgement in terms of right and wrong. We see judgements in terms of Capacity in sentences 1, 3, 8 and 20, Normality in 2 and 16 and Tenacity in sentence 5. The Correspondent versus Commentator distinction will be examined at length at a later stage.

We should also point to the fact that the words we have been categorising as Judgement are generally modifiers, attributes or nouns that qualify humans or human behaviour. Although the Judgement in constructions like "*renegade challenger*" is quite straightforward, that in constructions like "*unified support*" is less so. We can only see this as an item of Judgement if we can deconstruct "support" as being a (grammatical) metaphorical form meaning "people supported him". Words like "support", "gathering" and "arm-twisting" are actions that have been turned into nouns

(that have been "nominalised"), and these **grammatical metaphors** allow the writer to include Judgement as a modifier:

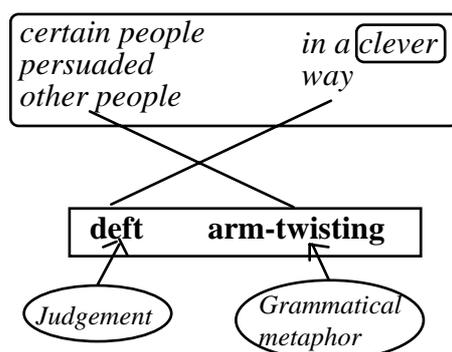


Figure 5: Judgement used to modify a nominalised action

So grammatical metaphors make it possible to include Judgement in a nominal group that does not necessarily contain nouns referring to people. We will say more about the role of grammatical metaphors in the domain of Authorial Voice below.

Tokens of Judgement

So far we have talked always of "explicit" Judgement. Explicit judgement is coded by means of explicitly subjective items such as "shamefully", "courage", "remarkable", "genius" etc. But authors have another, less direct, way of including Judgement in their texts. They can include events, actions and participants that their audience will respond to in terms of the values of the Judgement system.

Society establishes a set of connections between certain behaviours and certain Judgement values. Physical violence, intentionally misleading others, for example, are classed as wrong, while donating to charity or going to the rescue of people in danger are associated with positive values. By describing such events, the author attaches the corresponding values of Social Esteem or Social Sanction to the text. An assessment of "bravery", for example, would naturally attach to the following,

"A woman with no experience of rock climbing yesterday clambered fifty metres without ropes or any other form of safety apparatus up a steep cliff in the Blue Mountains to rescue a seriously injured ten-year-old boy who had fallen onto a narrow ledge from the roadway above."

There are no words of explicit "subjective" assessment, no words by which the author passes explicit judgement on what happened. This is a direct, "factual" description of what happened without any interpretation of those actions in terms of a system of standards of behaviour. Yet the Judgement values of "heroic" or "courageous" would presumably be attached to this description by all readers. The author expects the readership to respond in this way and knows that these evaluative meanings will attach to a text containing this description.

We describe this type of 'indirect judgement' as a Token of Judgement. A Token of Judgement is really an interaction between meanings which relate to events, actions and conditions as they are seen to exist in the external, "real" world (ie. content or

'ideational' meanings), and meanings which derive from or attach to the personalities, social status, personal perspectives and emotional dispositions of the writer or speaker.

These content meaning or "ideational" Tokens clearly activate certain "interpersonal" responses in the reader/listener and will be read as implying that the author had made a similar evaluative response to the events at issue. The ideational, "factual" Token, therefore, may stand for, or may be linked to an interpersonal value of Judgement. The Judgement value of a particular ideational "Token" is determined by the system of social attitudes in which the communication takes place and will vary from person to person and from time to time.

The Judgement value, therefore, which attaches to any "Token" is *even more* determined by our reading position, that is, our social status, our personal experiences and our ideological perspective. Consequently it may differ according to the our gender, age, class, income, employment status, ethnicity and whether we support or oppose the current political/economic status quo. Although in one sense this means there may be as many readings of a text as there are readers there is enough consensus about the link between ideational Tokens and their interpersonal Judgement value to make the mapping of the "Tokenised" Judgement of a text useful and revealing. Yet we must at the same time recognise that our reading necessarily reflects our own reading positions and may differ from the reading of others to the extent that their experiences, social identity and ideological perspectives differ from our own.

It is important to recognise that these "Tokens" are not confined to reported physical events. A reported statement or viewpoint may also trigger an interpersonal evaluation when the reader/listener judges the sayer, on the strength of what they reportedly said, to be "courageous", "unfair", "eccentric", "clever", "cruel", "dishonest" etc. In the text *"Cheap slur on the Childless"*, the author chose explicitly to judge Dr Hewson's reported comments by the use of terms such as "insensitive" and "simpleminded" - this explicit Judgement is what we expect of a Commentator Voice text. In the news pages coverage of the event, we might expect something less explicit. The front page coverage by the *Herald Sun*, for example, took the form of a Correspondent Voice report in which the paper's Canberra correspondent wrote,

The Liberal leader made an extraordinary attack on Mr Carr at the weekend's NSW Liberal Party conference criticising him for not having children and for not being licensed to drive a car. "You've got to be suspicious of a guy that doesn't drive and doesn't like kids and things like that," Dr Hewson said.

Here there is an explicit judgment of Social Esteem ("extraordinary", which means "unusual"), as is consistent with Correspondent Voice, but there is nothing which explicitly characterises the statement as "unfair", "below the belt", "insensitive", "cruel" or even "politically ill-advised". Yet it seems clear that from many reading positions these sorts of judgements would attach to this section of the report. We are dealing with Tokens of Social Sanction. When the reporter constructs the account, s/he relies on the reader making this association between the "factual" recording of what was said and a value of Judgement.

When we talk of events acting as Tokens of Judgement we are, in fact, dealing with language (ie. textual representations of events) and it is the language (ie. the representation) rather than the event itself which evokes the interpersonal response. The same event can be represented in different ways of course, each of which may trigger a different value of Judgement. Tony Trew, in *"Theory and ideology at work"* (Fowler 1979), demonstrated conclusively how the ideological position of the conservative, right-wing British press conditioned its reporting of the pro-independence movement in the then Rhodesia in the 1970s. *The Times's* treatment of the police shooting was by means of a passive construction, leaving the question as to who was responsible open:

Eleven Africans were shot dead and 15 wounded when Rhodesian police opened fire on a rioting crowd of about 2000 in the African Highland township of Salisbury this afternoon.

This contrasted with the coverage by the *Guardian* of the same day which used an active construction, clearly indicating who did what:

Riot police shot and killed 11 African demonstrators and wounded 15 others here today in the Highfield African township on the outskirts of Salisbury.

The Times report backgrounds the role of the police and so decreases the reader's sense of their responsibility for the killings. Such a grammatical structure lessens the likelihood that negative Judgement values will attach to the police in this description. The *Guardian*, however - traditionally thought to be less conservative and right-wing than *The Times* - focussed more attention on the agency of the police by use of an active rather than a passive structure and thus increased the likelihood that we, the readers, attach negative values of Judgement to the police. The two reports deal with the same event, and (excluding for the moment the claim by *The Times* that the protesters were "rioting") are equally true and equally "objective". Yet they construct different meanings and trigger different evaluative responses².

So far we have discussed these Tokens as if they occur in isolation and as if a particular event or reported statement would, for a given reading position, always evoke the same Judgement value. This is, of course, an oversimplification. The Tokens occur as part of a text, which is an unfolding series of meanings that interact with each other to condition and constrain audience evaluative responses. So the same representation of an event, in a different textual context, may trigger a different Judgemental response. Let's look at the way various radio news teams covered a bid by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) for a pay rise its membership in late 1992

² The role of the police as the killers is backgrounded by the use of the passive and the placing of primary focus on the victims rather than the perpetrators of the crime. We have *"Eleven Africans were shot dead"* rather than *"Rhodesian police yesterday shot dead five unarmed protesters"*. And the agency of the police is further reduced by the use of the adverbial clause *"when Rhodesian police opened fire"* rather than the explicitly agentive *"by Rhodesian police"*. The unarmed protesters are characterised as "rioting" - a value laden term - which implied that they were violent and hence in some way provoked their own deaths. Even in this one sentence, therefore, we see how ideological positions influence the nature of the "facts" reported.

Evaluative language in media texts – some examples

This first item was broadcast on 2BL:**

ABC - 2BL, 11/8/1992, 8 a.m. bulletin

LEAD (News reader) The Federal Government sits down at the negotiating table with ACTU this afternoon to thrash out a wages claim. Camille Funnell reports that talks, expected to last several hours, will determine the timing of a wages increase.

LEAD
DEVELOPMENT
(Camille Funnell) The unions want a 1.4 per cent increase or a flat \$10 a week rise before Christmas but some within the Government want the pay rise deferred until next year...

This 2BL item is relatively neutral, because no explicit selections are made from the Judgement system. Also, the main event, the wages claim, cannot be read as a Token of judgement. The word "thrash" introduces an element of intensification, but is not a judgement.

The second item appeared on 2UE at 8.00am:

2UE 11/8/1992, 8 a.m. bulletin

LEAD
(News reader) The Government and the ACTU will meet in Canberra today to thrash out a new wages agreement before next week's budget. Lyndel Curtis reports

LEAD
DEVELOPMENT
(Lyndel Curtis) There's been speculation the wages package will involve a rise of \$9 or \$10 a week, for those workers who haven't had rises through enterprise bargaining deals. However the amount hasn't been finalised and the unions say the discussions will also involve social wages such as medicare and child care, as well the unions are expected to seek a commitment on varying tariff cuts in the textile, clothing and footwear industry, if employment is hit hard by the changes.

This item is equally neutral as the 2BL item. No explicit or tokenised judgement is present, although "thrash" and "hit hard" suggest intensification..

The third item was broadcast on 2UE at 9.00am:

2UE 11/8/1992, 9 a.m. bulletin

LEAD
(News reader) The Chamber of Commerce says it's ridiculous but the Federal Government and the ACTU are to agree on a national payrise when the country is going through the worst recession in 60 years. It's expected both sides will agree today to a wage rise of between \$8 and \$10 a week for Australia's 7.7 million workers. The Chamber's chief economist, Brent Davis, says we simply can't afford a wage rise at the moment.

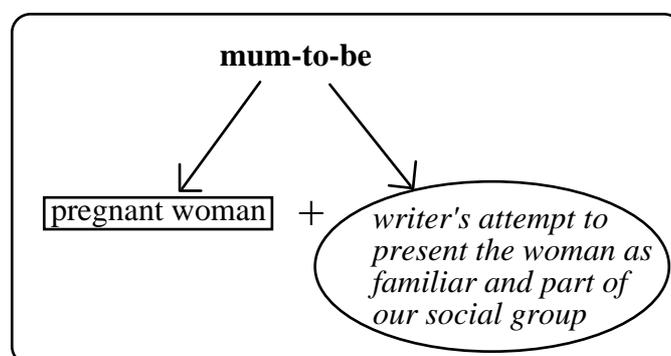
Although the first two 8 a.m. bulletins are fairly neutral, things are very different in 2UEs 9 a.m. bulletin. The report is constructed so as to encourage the listener to associate the wage negotiations with the Judgement values of "greed", "irresponsibility" and "selfishness". The use of Chamber of Commerce as an external source with its explicitly negative Judgement is influential here. But the claim that the

payrise is "ridiculous" is the opinion of one external, self-interested party. What is more important is the association of the wage negotiations with the "fact" that *"the country is going through the worst recession in 60 years"*. This is highly likely to trigger a negative evaluation in the listener. Even without the negative opinions of the Chamber of Commerce, what are presented as the "facts" of the case clearly act as Tokens of Judgement.

We see, therefore, that the 9 a.m. 2UE bulletin is strongly "judgemental" while both 8 a.m. reports are neutral. Nowhere in the final 2UE report however do its authors offer any explicit values of Judgement on their own behalf, so there is no explicit subjectivity on the part of the radio station. So this report can be seen as no less "factual" than the earlier two. Whether or not this means it is just as "objective" according to the conventions of "hard news", or whether it conforms to the standards of "impersonality" required of Reporter Voice we will discuss below.

Core and non-core vocabulary

There is one other context in which the "ideational" content of a report may take on interpersonal values of Judgement without the presence of explicit judgement items. Here we are dealing with what Ronald Carter (Carter 1982/1987) has termed "core" and "non core" vocabulary items. The "core" item of a set of related vocabulary items will have a general application. It will not be specific to any particular field or subject area and it won't be associated with any additional interpersonal connotations. The "non core" items of the set, in contrast, will be more limited in application and may be associated with a sense of greater formality or informality or with some emotive or evaluative connotation. The word "horse", for example, would be the "core" item of a set which included the "non-core", "steed" and "nag". Similarly, "pregnant woman" would be "core" while "mum-to-be" would be "non-core", in that it introduces a word ("mum") which we associate with familiarity and closeness.



The impact of "non-core" items on the reader or listener can be quite subtle and often differs from term to term and from context to context. The tendency of certain British media organisations, as observed by Carter, to use the non-core "boss" to refer to the leadership of the unions and the "core" item "leader" or "head" to refer to the leadership of employer representative groups, reflected their right-wing political perspective. There is nothing explicitly "subjective" or evaluative here. "Boss", it can be argued, is just another word for "leader". Yet it is clear that by singling out the union leadership for "non-core" vocabulary they have marked the union leadership as in some unusual, not true members the power elite, and as in some sense illegitimate.

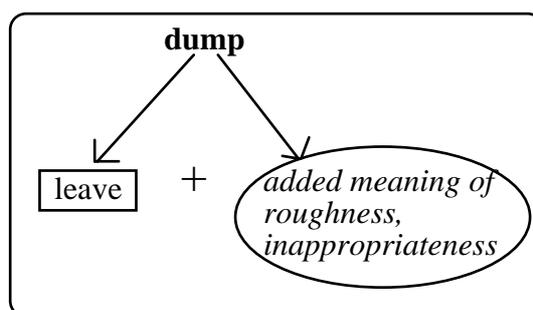
Something similar can be observed in the way the *Telegraph Mirror* reported the discovery of a newly-born baby which had been left outside a church in August 1992. Its front page report began,

A shivering baby boy less than 30 minutes old was dumped on the steps of a church today with a note asking he be cared for.

The term "dumped" is clearly a "non-core" vocabulary item, the "core" equivalent of which would have been "left". A report without "non-core" vocabulary might have run something like,

"A newly-born baby boy which was left on the steps of a church in Sydney's south has been found by members of the church's staff".

Now while there is nothing explicitly evaluative or "subjective" about the term "dumped", in this context it signals disapproval or moral sanction: a mother has acted irresponsibly or contrary to nature. Any account of a baby being left on church steps, presumably by its mother, might act as a Token of these Judgement values for certain reading positions. But the use of "dumped", with its overtones of casualness, carelessness or roughness, strengthens the connection between the event and a negative interpersonal response.



A "non-core" term hardly qualifies as an example of explicit Judgement. Neither is "dumped" an entirely "factual" Token. But because it does indirectly judge it must be ranked alongside explicit judgement and tokenised judgement.

Journalistic voice and tokens of Judgement

Leaving aside for the moment the question of Tokens involving "non-core" lexis, in general we can say that "Tokenised" Judgement is compatible with all authorial voices. In particular, it is compatible with the "impersonality" and "impartiality" of Reporter voice as well as with the more personalised tone of Correspondent and Commentator voice. Authors can construct a set of descriptions which they presume will be associated, by readers/listeners, with certain subjective responses but still maintain the impersonal voice of the "Reporter". The difference then, between Reporter and Writer voices is not one of the presence or absence of Judgement but of the presence or absence of *explicit* Judgement. So now we can be more precise with our definitions of Reporter Voice:

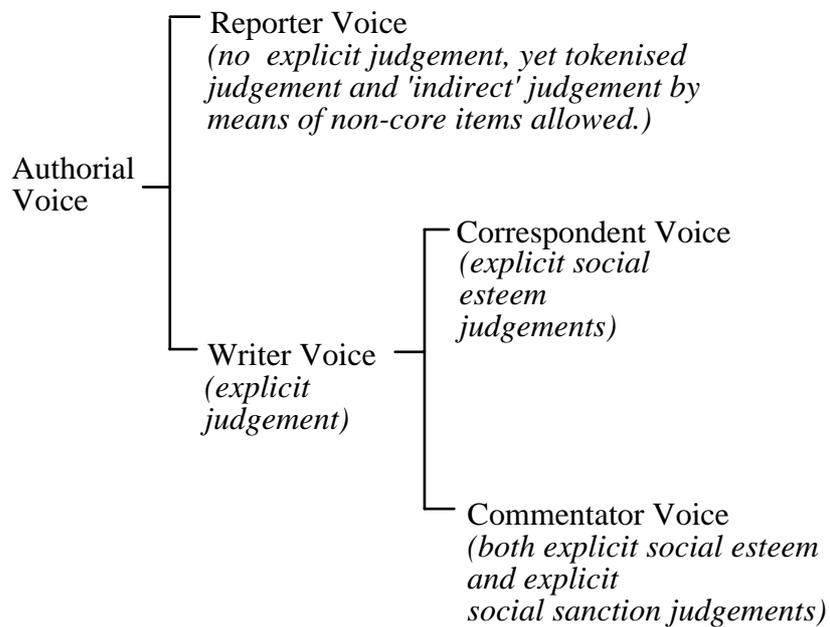


Figure 6: The system of Authorial Voice

Further textual analysis – exploring journalistic voice

Let's briefly look at extracts from three texts about politics and see if we can distinguish the kinds of Voice used. The first is from a report on wages negotiations which appeared in the *Telegraph Mirror* ("*Workers to negotiate wage deals*", Adam Connolly, 11/8/92, p. 2):

AUSTRALIA's wages system is to be split in two, allowing workers in booming industries to negotiate lucrative pay increases.

The Federal Government and the ACTU wages committee are expected today to endorse the proposal to create a two-tier industrial relations system, largely abandoning centralised wage fixing in favour of private pay deals between workers and employers.

All workers not involved in private agreements will be protected by a flat \$6-week pay rise by March next year.

ACTU wages committee member and NSW Labor Council secretary Michael Easson said the majority of workers would discard the centralised system by early next year.

"There will probably be an incentive to go to enterprise bargaining because you can get benefits above normal national wage cases," he said.

"You will only get \$10 through a national wage case. You will get more if you enterprise bargain."

The decision is the latest swing away from the centralised wage fixing program embraced by the Federal Government since it came to power in 1983....

.This extract of "*Workers to negotiate wage deals*" contains no explicit Judgement, no reporting of mental processes, and no causality. The text is clearly a Reporter Voice

text. The next extract from a text already considered above "*Spotlight off Bush's Houston party*" (by Pilita Clark, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10/18/92, p. 11) however shows elements of Judgement from the domain of Social Esteem, which therefore place it within the domain of Correspondent Voice:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>small and dowdy</i> =
SOCIAL ESTEEM
(CAPACITY)</p> | <p>1. HOUSTON, Monday: All the glitzy balloons and brass bands ready to be unleashed for this week's Republican national convention suddenly looked rather <u>small and dowdy</u> yesterday as attention was diverted to the showdown looming between President Bush and Iraq's President Saddam Hussein.</p> |
| <p><i>interesting</i> = SOCIAL
ESTEEM (NORMALITY)</p> <p><i>desperately,</i>
<i>unsuccessfully</i> =
SOCIAL ESTEEM
(CAPACITY)</p> | <p>2. And that is a pity, because this year's convention was shaping up to be one of the most <u>interesting</u> Republican gatherings in a long time.</p> <p>3. Usually it is the Democrats who strain <u>desperately</u>, and <u>unsuccessfully</u>, to disguise their inner tensions and divisions at convention time.</p> |
| <p><i>harmony, unified</i> =
cooperative: SOCIAL
ESTEEM (TENACITY)</p> | <p>4. For the past two presidential elections, for instance, the Democratic nominee's attempts to placate the Rev Jesse Jackson have provided lively sport for onlookers.</p> <p>5. But this year the two major parties appear to have swapped roles. The Democrat's convention in New York last month was notable for its general <u>harmony</u> and <u>unified</u> support for its nominee, Mr Bill Clinton.</p> |

Finally, an extract we have also already seen, that from "*A cheap slur on the childless*" by Adele Horin (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19/10/92, p. 4). This text contains instances of explicit Social Sanction Judgement and Modality (Obligation), and is therefore Writer Voice:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>wrong</i> = explicit
Social Sanction
Judgement</p> | <p>It is <u>wrong</u> to assume that the childless do not like children or want meaningful contact with them. It is our society that is <u>at fault</u> for making childlessness seem tragic or peculiar.</p> |
| <p><i>simple-minded</i> =
explicit Social
Esteem Judgement;
<i>should</i> = Modality:
Obligation</p> | <p>Dr Hewson's view that a man is not a real man till he passes on his genes is <u>simple-minded</u>. His own experience as a non-custodial father <u>should</u> have taught him Australia is a complex society with many kinds of families.</p> |
| <p><i>wrong</i> = explicit
Social Sanction
Judgement</p> | <p>Just as it would be <u>wrong</u> to stereotype fathers in Dr Hewson's position as morally suspect, so it is <u>wrong</u> to stereotype the childless.</p> |

Hard news versus commentary: conventions of subjectivity

Let us take stock at this point of what our analysis of Judgement - both explicit and tokenised - means for the distinction between "hard news" and commentary/opinion. We have noted previously that there is nothing within the "objectivity" of Reporter Voice - the voice of "hard news" - which allows for a querying of the basic choices which underlie news selection, which determine newsworthiness. The fact that one

event or one set of comments or opinions has been chosen above thousands of others cannot be raised, according to the conventions of "hard news", as an issue in assessing the "objectivity" of a news item and hence the "impartiality" of Reporter Voice. The newsworthiness of an item is assumed to be necessary or natural, to be dictated by the nature of the events at issue and the natural order of society and the material world. Within a news item, the fact that certain elements of the ideational content will act as Tokens of Judgement is also irrelevant to "objectivity" and "impersonality" as it is understood by these conventions. There is no difference in the "objectivity", for example, of a news story rich in Tokens of Judgment and one less so - they are both equally impersonal and impartial and so equally Reporter Voice.

But what of cases such as the 2UE radio report on the wage rise negotiations where it was obvious that, though "factual" in terms of the conventions of the mainstream media, the "ideational" content of the text was being selectively chosen to direct the listener to a particular negative evaluative response? We recall that the report cited the comments only of the Chamber of Commerce, a group with a clear self-interest in keeping wages down, and then set the negotiations for the pay rise against the backdrop of the "worst recession in 60 years". Just how relevant it is to make this connection is, of course, highly arguable. The report might equally, and just as selectively have gone something like this:

"The ACTU is seeking a rise of 1.4% after a number of years in which the real incomes of Australian workers have declined steadily and there has been a marked increase in executive salaries".

Though equally "factual", this would have triggered entirely different Judgement values.

What do we make of such cases where events have been selectively chosen and linked together to construct a reading position, to lead the reader to viewing the "ideational" content in evaluative terms? Similar questions are raised by instances where the choice of a "non-core" term like "skyrocket" expands the meaning of the clause with some interpersonal interpretation.

It is precisely within this "grey area", where "objectivity" merges into "subjectivity", that much of the debate about media "impartiality" and "balance" is located. It seems that it is at this point that different media organisations operate according to slightly different conventions of "objectivity" and Reporter Voice. Radio station 2UE included this selectivity in that part of its news bulletin presented by the news reader, the traditional voice of impartiality and impersonality. These were not the words of some expert or political correspondent with a license to comment. Accordingly it would seem that, at least for 2UE, the conventions of 'hard' news objectivity allow for such values of Judgement. Likewise, the *Telegraph Mirror's* use of the "non-core" and judgementally suggestive "dumped" also suggests that such is within the limits of its conventions of "objectivity" and Reporter Voice. But this view is not, of course, held consistently within or across media organisations. It was precisely for this type of "subjective" language within otherwise Reporter Voice texts that the ABC's media analyst, Stuart Littlemore, rebuked the ABC's own Sydney news room (Media Watch 22/2/1993).

We see that it is the presence of explicit Judgement which separates Reporter Voice from Writer Voice. Within Writer Voice, the distinction between values of Social Esteem and Social Sanction separates Correspondent Voice from Commentator Voice. It is possible to find many texts which confirm precisely to these criteria, but of course there are some which appear to fall somewhere between these categories. It is possible, for example, to find what are essentially Correspondent Voice texts, that is texts where the central "Judgement" focus is on values of Social Esteem, but which include possibly one or two explicit Judgements of Social Sanction, though not in textually prominent positions. Texts like the 2UE wage-rise report or those which make use of judgementally suggestive "non-core" vocabulary similarly seem to represent a type of text which falls somewhere between Reporter and Correspondent Voice. These texts vary slightly from the 'prototypes' we have been working with. Those texts which fail to match our prototypes will be categorised according to which prototype they most closely resemble.

Authorial Voice: other important issues

Up to this point our discussion may have suggested that the "subjective"/"objective" dichotomy and the associated set of Authorial Voices was solely a matter of Judgement. But although this system of Judgement is central, it is not the only aspect of meaning which needs to be considered in this context. There are three related issues which we will only address briefly here (although detailed explanations of these issues are included in the Appendices): the reporting of mental processes, the role of causality, and the use of intensified vocabulary.

Mental Processes

The reporting on **mental processes** involves a reporter not using a verbal process, like "to say" or "to claim", but a mental process like "to think" or "to feel". In other words, the reporter presumes to know what her/his source is feeling or thinking:

Keating thinks that if he's to pull off a come-from-behind victory, one of the central strategies will be hanging on to the political interest John Hewson rejects. (from an ABC-TV news item, 11/8/1992, 7pm)

An intimate knowledge of Keating's strategies and comments may have led to this presumption, yet it does reflect the reporter's own interpretation of the situation rather than an "objective" reflection of something that really happened. It is for that reason that the reporting of mental processes takes the text into Writer Voice.

The reporting on mental processes may also become "impersonalised", by eliminating the human "senser":

Senser (s/he who feels or thinks) included	<i>"I am worried because...</i>	<i>so many industries are resisting the 'clean-air' movement".</i>
Senser (s/he who thinks or feels) deleted	<i>"It's worrying that..."</i>	

Although the personalised "*I am worried because..*" may well occur in Commentator Voice texts, the more impersonal form "*It's worrying that...*" is more a Correspondent Voice feature. Neither construction can be considered "objective" of course, and is therefore out of bounds for Reporter Voice.

Causality

The second issue which also has bearing upon Voice without being directly associated with Judgement is the issue of **causality**. The various ways in which causal links may be backgrounded or foregrounded are set out in the section "Authorial Voice: Related Issues" in the Appendix. Suffice it to say that the explicit expression of cause and effect relationships is rare in the "hard" news of Reporter Voice. A degree of "subjectivity" is attached to explicit causal links, whether verbal ("resulted in"):

The decision by the Government to withdraw the Pound resulted in a dramatic decline in consumer confidence.

or conjunctive ("because"):

Support for the Opposition may continue to erode because it has failed to capture the middle ground of Australian politics.

The latter example combines causality and prediction. In other words, we are concerned here with a future effect: "*may continue to erode*". These forms of cause and effect are often expressed in conditional ("if-then") form, and these are often found in Writer Voice texts, together with explicit Judgement and with the "subjective reporting of mental processes.

Intensification

The issue of **intensification**, concerns the use in media texts of words like "very", "rather", "somewhat", but also "plunge", "attack", "slam", and "axe". Intensification has no real bearing on the Voice of a text. In other words, the use of intensified items is seen to be largely "objective".

We can distinguish between explicit intensification, which involves words like "really", "very", "rather", etc., and implicit (or "infused") intensification, which covers words like "plummet" and "slam". The latter kind "conflates" content (or "ideational") meaning with some form of authorial involvement:

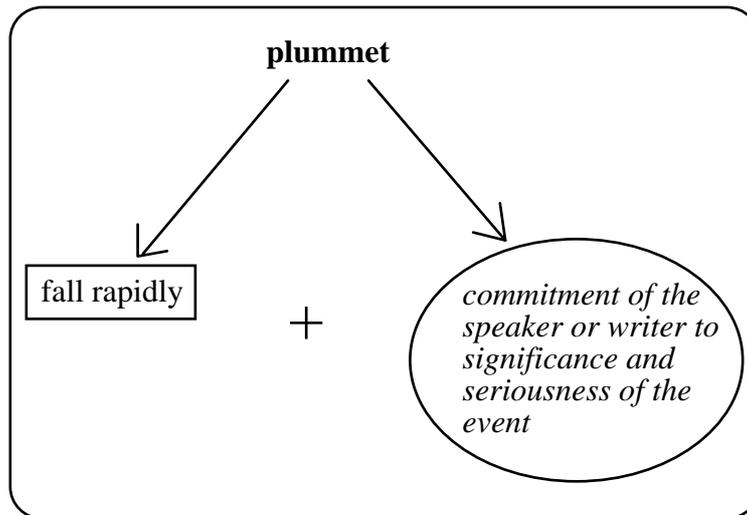


Figure 7: Implicit or "infused" Intensification can be analysed as combining two kinds of meaning: content and interpersonal meaning

The use of implicit (infused) intensification in media texts depends largely on whether we are dealing with print, radio, or television, and on type of readership. In general print journalism allows for wider use of words like "plummet" and "slam" than broadcast journalism, and lowbrow media texts tend to make more frequent use of infused intensification than highbrow texts (see the Appendices for a more detailed discussion).

These considerations are added to our Authorial Voice system reproduced below:

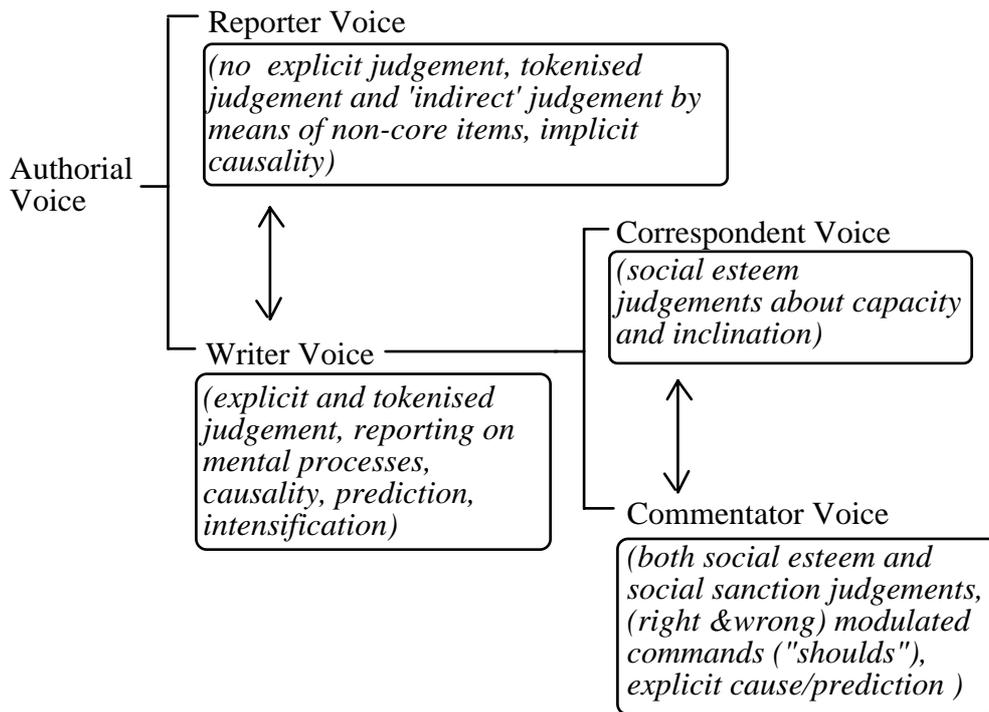


Figure 8: The system of Authorial Voice