The previous chapter described how the social context in which communication takes place affects the form and usage of the words and sentences that people speak and write. This chapter focuses on a different kind of context, the linguistic context, and how it also affects the way that language is structured and used. When speakers or writers create a text, the linguistic resources that they use – where words are placed in a sentence, for instance, or how what they say or write is organized – are very dependent upon a number of considerations. For instance, if two individuals are engaging in a casual conversation, what they say will be divided into speaker turns: one person will speak, followed by another, with each person observing conventions for how speakers take turns speaking when they converse.
Introduction

The study of the effects of the linguistic context on language use is tied very closely to the notion of text. While most theorists would agree that a text is a structure larger than a sentence, the specifics of exactly how a text should be defined is very “theory-dependent” (Titscher et al. 2000: 20). For discourse analysts, a text is both a linguistic and sociocultural construct. Thus, in the introductory section of The Handbook of Discourse Analysis, the editors describe a text (or a discourse, as they call it) in both linguistic and non-linguistic terms as being “anything beyond the sentence ... [that involves] language use, and ... [that is the product of] a broader range of social practice that includes nonlinguistic and non-specific instances of language” (Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton 2003: 1). Within this framework, a newspaper article, for instance, is not just a collection of sentences structured and used in a way consistent with the standards of journalistic English, but the result of social practices inherent within the media in general. The cognitive psychologists Teun van Dijk and Walter Kintsch do not consider the social dimension of texts at all in their classic book Strategies of Discourse Comprehension (1983). Instead, they define a text in purely cognitive terms as containing a microstructure and a macrostructure: “the local structure of a text” vs. its “global structure” (Kintsch 1998: 50). From this perspective, a newspaper article contains a series of sentences tied together by various linguistic devices (its microstructure) that are part of a larger structure containing a headline, lead, and so forth (its macrostructure). And interpreting a newspaper article requires readers to draw upon their knowledge of what constitutes a newspaper article and how sentences are structured in such articles.

The linguists Michael A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan posit similar notions of text to van Dijk and Kintsch’s, but take a functional rather than a cognitive approach in their characterization of texts. For Halliday and Hasan (1985: 52), a text is a functional unit because it represents “language that is doing something in some context, as opposed to isolated words or sentences.” To capture the functional nature of texts, they propose that texts have two main characteristics: unity of structure and unity of texture. Unity of structure is closely associated with the notion of register. A newspaper article is part of the more general register of journalistic English, which contains many sub-registers, such as news reportage, sports reportage, editorials, and features. Each of these sub-registers contains texts with a similar overall structure and a set of linguistic features (e.g. a certain kind of vocabulary or particular grammatical constructions) that may be unique to the register or used differently in the register than in other registers. As noted above, news reportage contains a headline, lead, and so forth, and (additionally) numerous linguistic constructions, such as the frequent use of proper nouns (the names of people discussed in news stories) and relatively short sentences, since newspapers have to appeal to a wide audience and must therefore avoid the kinds of complex structures found in other registers, such as academic prose.
Texts have texture because they contain numerous linguistic markers establishing what Halliday and Hasan (1985: 73) refer to as a “tie”: some linguistic marker that links two parts of a text together. For instance, the short excerpt below, taken from a spontaneous conversation, contains an initial mention of *book* with various ties back to it as the text unfolds: two instances of *books* as well as two instances of the third person pronoun *them*.

Yeah, I think that it’s good practice to just kinda write questions in a *book*. I always mark my *books*. I mean it’s a shame if you plan on selling *them* back, you know right but I always write in my *books* and keep *them* as long as I want.

(MICASE ADV700JU047)

Links such as these create cohesion and ultimately coherence: a text with various cohesive ties that is clear and meaningful. Cohesion alone does not necessarily result in coherence. The second sentence in the example below contains a marker of cohesion – *consequently* – that indicates that the second sentence is a logical consequence of the first.

It is quite cold out today. Consequently, I don’t plan to wear a warm jacket.

However, this short sequence is not coherent because the second sentence is actually not a logical consequence of the first: the second sentence would be logically more sound if the speaker had said that he planned to wear a warm jacket. What this example illustrates is that cohesion does not necessarily produce coherence, unless the cohesive link is used to mark a relationship that already exists in the text.

### Register or genre?

Although it is common to call journalistic English a *register* and press reportage a *sub-register*, other terms, such as *genre* and *sub-genre*, are commonly used too. While these terms are often used interchangeably, the inconsistent use of them (and other terms such as *text type*) has created, as Lee (2001) notes, considerable confusion, largely because how the terms are defined varies by theory and academic discipline: a genre, for instance, means something quite different to a literary theorist than to a linguist. For Lee (2001: 46), a *register* is defined by “lexico-grammatical and discoursal-semantic patterns associated with situations (i.e. linguistic patterns),” while a *genre* consists of texts that can be classified into “culturally-recognisable categories.” On the one hand, a classroom discussion is a register because texts created within this register have a particular hierarchical structure and contain a set of linguistic constructions typically associated with the register. Because participants in this register engage in the Socratic method, instructors typically ask questions (*What did the author mean in section 3?*) that students answer. If students answer correctly, instructors say so and move on to the next question; if they answer incorrectly, different instructors employ different strategies (*Not exactly. Does anyone else have an answer?*). This text structure is repeated over and over again in a class, resulting in a set of linguistic structures (e.g.}
questions) that occur more commonly in this genre than in other types of spoken registers. On the other hand, a classroom discussion is also a genre: while teachers and students converse with one another in many cultural contexts (e.g. the United States, Great Britain), in other contexts they do not, since in many educational systems students and teachers do not engage in dialogues: teachers merely lecture. Since the goal in this section is to discuss unity of structure from a purely linguistic perspective, the term register will be used throughout.

Registers also differ, as Lee (2001: 48) notes, in terms of their specificity, and comparison of varying systems for categorizing registers reveals numerous differences. As the diagram below illustrates, there is a cline from more generally defined registers (e.g. classroom discourse) to more specific instantiations of the register (e.g. classroom discussions, study groups, and student/teacher conferences):

![Diagram showing the cline from classroom discourse to more specific registers]

Thus, a classroom discussion can be regarded as a sub-register of the more general register of classroom discourse. The notion of sub-register is very important because research has shown that some registers can be quite different from one another. For instance, Biber (1988: 171) found that the various sub-registers of academic writing (natural sciences, medicine, mathematics, etc.) exhibited considerable linguistic differences.

Because many corpora aim to include as many different registers as possible, different corpora will contain different registers as well as different systems for classifying registers. For instance, the International Corpus of English (ICE) and British National Corpus (BNC) classify academic writing in somewhat different ways (sub-registers are in parentheses):

**ICE**: Written texts → printed → informational → learned (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, technology)  
(Nelson 1996: 30)

**BNC**: Written texts → academic prose → (humanities/arts, medicine, natural sciences, politics/law/education, social and behavioral sciences, technology/computing/engineering) (Lee's (2001: 57) reclassification of this register, which differs from the original BNC system of classification)

The ICE system makes more overt distinctions than the BNC system, for instance classifying academic writing as printed and informational, categories absent in the BNC system. The BNC includes many more sub-registers than ICE. While the differences may appear superficial, they reflect at a deeper level different conceptions of what the register of academic writing is like and how it differs from other systems. In the ICE system, emphasis is placed on differences among the written registers: printed writing is distinguished from non-printed writing (such as personal letters)
and informational writing from instructional, persuasive, and creative writing. In the BNC system, the whole register is more broadly conceived, with a greater number of sub-registers included within the register of academic prose. Of course, there is a certain sense of artificiality to both systems of classification, since the sub-registers are not necessarily discrete: much work in linguistics, for instance, could be classified as falling in both the humanities and social sciences. Nevertheless, such systems are useful for studying how differing uses of language lead to differences in the structure of texts.

**Spoken and written registers**

Spoken and written registers have been traditionally regarded as distinct, since speech is produced under very different circumstances than writing. For instance, much speech, particularly spontaneous dialogue, is not pre-planned. Although some writing is also not pre-planned (e.g. notes, email messages), more formal kinds of writing are heavily planned and often go through multiple drafts. Much speech is immediate: individuals conversing with one another are together, allowing each speaker to seek clarifications, for instance, if something said is unclear. Writing is more distant: the needs of the audience to whom the writing is directed have to be anticipated by the writer, and once the reader receives the text there is no way for him or her to engage with the author if something is not clear. If all spoken and written registers are considered together, however, one finds, as Biber (1988) convincingly demonstrates in his book *Variation Across Speech and Writing*, that there is a continuum between speech and writing: some written registers, such as fiction, share many features with spoken registers; some spoken registers, such as panel discussions, share many features associated with written registers.

Biber (1988) reached this conclusion by first using a statistical test, factor analysis, to determine which linguistic constructions tended to co-occur in two corpora of spoken and written British English: the London–Lund Corpus of spoken British English and the London–Oslo–Bergen (LOB) Corpus of written British English. Biber (1988: 13) conducted this analysis in the belief that if particular linguistic constructions co-occurred, they were serving similar linguistic functions: that the co-occurrence together of, say, passive verbs and nominalizations (i.e. verbs such as create converted into abstract nouns such as creation) was not coincidental but an indication that these two constructions (and others) were serving a similar function. After examining the co-occurrence patterns of sixty-seven different linguistic items, Biber (1988: 9) created six textual dimensions, which specify “continuums of variation rather than discrete poles.” Biber (ibid.: 110) found that nominalizations (and nouns in general) were linked to texts associated with Informational Production on Dimension 1 and Explicit Reference on Dimension 3 below. Passive verbs were found in texts with features clustering around the Abstract Information position on Dimension 5.
Dimension 1: Involved vs. Informational Production  
Dimension 3: Explicit vs. Situation-Dependent Reference  
Dimension 5: Abstract vs. Non-Abstract Information  

Registers associated with texts illustrating information production, exhibiting explicit reference, and containing abstract information include official documents, professional letters, press reviews, and academic prose. These distributions make perfect sense if registers are viewed, as Halliday and Hasan suggest (see above), as contexts in which language is doing something. One function of the passive, for instance, is to place emphasis on what is being done rather than on who is doing it – a communicative goal that all of the above registers share. The example below, taken from a university memorandum outlining faculty responsibilities, contains an agentless passive (*are required*), a passive in which the doer of the action is omitted, because the focus is on who is responsible for providing a syllabus, not on who is setting the requirements:

Faculty members are required to provide a syllabus for each course that they teach.

(Memorandum, Minimum Faculty Responsibilities, University of Massachusetts, Boston)

The next example, taken from the same memo, contains four nominalizations. Texts that are highly informational, Biber (1988: 104–8) comments, are highly nominal. Thus, the expression *have the obligation* is used rather than the verbal equivalent *are obligated*.

Faculty members have the obligation to restrict the administration of final examinations to the official examination period.

Biber (1988) provides many additional examples of linguistic constructions associated with the dimensions above as well as the three other dimensions. For instance, casual conversation is on the Involved rather than the Informational end of Dimension 1, primarily because when people engage in conversation their goal is generally not to exchange information but to engage with one another. Therefore, they will use linguistic constructions, such as *I* and *you*, that enable them to achieve this communicative goal.

**Unity of structure**

In their discussion of the structure of registers, Halliday and Hasan (1985: 39–40) distinguish closed registers, which have a very fixed hierarchical structure, from open registers, which have a looser hierarchical structure. A service encounter, for instance, has an almost stereotypical structure. When people buy something from someone, such as lunch meat at a delicatessen, both sellers and buyers go through the same routine every time. The seller typically begins with a greeting followed by something like *What can I get you?* The buyer, in turn, will respond *I’d like...* After the seller has filled the buyer’s order, he or she will say *Will there be anything else?* If the answer is yes, the seller will repeat the previous routine; if the answer is no, the text will move towards closure, with the seller saying...
That will be [gives cost] followed by, for instance, some kind of salutation. The language may vary from what is given above, but the point is that speakers know the routine – it is a kind of ritual – and go through each stage of it every time this type of business transaction takes place.

Spontaneous dialogues, in contrast, are one of the more loosely organized registers. However, they do have structure, as Halliday and Hasan (1985: 40) note: they are “never totally open-ended ... [but possess] strategies and styles of meaning.” Speakers can, for instance, change topics rather suddenly, or overlap their speech with the speech of those with whom they are communicating. But this does not mean that conversation is without structure: spontaneous dialogues have a flexible but discernible hierarchical structure, and conventions for determining how and when speakers take turns speaking.

To illustrate how registers vary in unity of structure, this section describes two kinds of spoken texts – spontaneous dialogues and telephone conversations – and one sub-register of journalistic prose: press reportage.

**Spoken registers**

Because speech is the primary mode of communication, it is worth investigating in detail some of the major spoken registers existing in English. Figure 4.1 lists different types of spoken registers as they are classified in the International Corpus of English (ICE).

As Figure 1 illustrates, speech can be either dialogic or monologic. If speech is dialogic, it will involve two or more speakers conversing privately – over dinner in someone’s home, for instance – or publicly, e.g.
as participants in an interview on a radio or television broadcast. Interestingly, while telephone calls are classified as private, the use of cell (mobile) phones outside the home or workplace has made such calls semi-public, a change in the status of telephone calls since the ICE categories were created in the early 1990s. If speech is monologic, in contrast, it will involve a single individual speaking extemporaneously or from a prepared script. A lawyer giving a final statement at the end of a court trial, for instance, may work from notes but on the whole speaks spontaneously. On the other hand, when an individual gives a formal speech, he or she will simply read from a prepared text and may, in fact, produce a text differing little from a formal written paper.

The differing types of speech in Figure 4.1 do not exhaust the types of spoken texts that exist in English, nor does the figure provide the only way that spoken English can be categorized. Messages left on telephone answering machines are not included, and other typologies of text classification (such as Lee’s (2001: 57) system for the British National Corpus) do not include, for instance, the private/public distinction. In addition, while the ICE system draws a clear line between dialogic and monologic speech, some of the registers are mixed. For instance, broadcast news includes scripted monologic speech, as when the news is read from a prepared text, and spontaneous dialogic speech, as when a newscaster conducts an interview with another individual. Nevertheless, the categories do reveal factors that directly influence how spoken texts are structured, a point that will be illustrated through the analysis of a very common type of spoken text: spontaneous dialogues, which includes face-to-face conversations and telephone calls.

**Spontaneous dialogues.** Although linguists of all theoretical persuasions have studied the structure of conversation, some of the most significant research has been conducted by sociologists and ethnographers doing research in conversation analysis. In one of the earliest works on the structure of conversation, “A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation” (1974), Harvey Sacks, Emanuel A. Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson provide one of the first detailed discussions of the systematic nature of face-to-face conversations, positing the notion of speaker turn and describing how speakers engage in turn taking when they converse.

Because conversation analysis has a strong empirical basis, all analyses are based on transcriptions of recorded speech. As soon as one sets out to transcribe speech, it becomes necessary to develop a system of transcription. The excerpt below was taken from a face-to-face conversation in the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBCSAE) and annotated with markup used in spoken texts included in the International Corpus of English (ICE), of which the SBCSAE is a part. Although many different transcription systems exist, most capture the basic elements of speech annotated in the conversation below. For instance, all systems divide conversations into speaker turns and have some way of indicating who is speaking when. In the example below, the
symbols <$A>$ and <$B>$ distinguish speaker A’s contributions from speaker B’s:

<$A>$  <#> God I said I wasn’t gonna do this anymore <,,> <#> Stay up late <,,> <#> Kinda defeats the purpose of getting up in the morning <,,>
<$B>$  <#> I know <,> <#> And it’s a hard habit to break

The ICE system uses the symbol <$#>$ to divide what speakers say into text units, which correspond roughly to the notion of utterance (meaningful units of language) introduced in Chapter 3. Although many systems do not annotate any features of intonation, short and long pauses are marked by <$>, and <,,>, respectively, in the ICE system. ICE texts contain other types of annotation – for instance, ways to mark overlapping speech (two or more people speaking simultaneously) – but the general problem with annotation is that it greatly reduces the readability of a spoken text. Therefore, in the sections below, annotation will either be presented selectively or changed in a manner that enhances readability. Table 4.1 contains a definition of the annotation used in this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annotation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$A&gt;$, &lt;$B&gt;$, etc.</td>
<td>Speaker IDs: mark the beginning of a speaker turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$#&gt;$</td>
<td>Text unit: delineates the beginning of a meaningful unit of language (see utterance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$O&gt;$ . . . &lt;/$O&gt;$</td>
<td>Untranscribed text: encloses extralinguistic information (e.g. a speaker clearing his/her throat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt; . . .&lt;/$&gt;</td>
<td>Uncertain transcription: transcriber is uncertain about what speaker said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt; . . .&lt;/$&gt;</td>
<td>Incomplete word: speaker utters only part of a word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt; . . .&lt;/$&gt;</td>
<td>Overlapping string: start and end of entire sequence of overlapping speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt; . . .&lt;/$&gt;</td>
<td>Overlapping string set: start and end of each speaker’s part of an overlapping string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt;</td>
<td>Short pause: one syllable in length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt;</td>
<td>Long pause: more than one syllable in length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt; &amp; &gt; . . .&lt;/$&gt;</td>
<td>Editorial comment: commentary by transcriber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt; @ &gt; . . .&lt;/$&gt;</td>
<td>Changed name or word: new name or word for reasons of privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$&gt; unclear &gt; . . .&lt;/$&gt;</td>
<td>Unclear word(s): transcriber cannot understand what speaker has said</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In their discussion of how individuals take turns speaking in conversations, Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 700–1) describe a number of general characteristics of face-to-face conversations. For instance, at any given time in a conversation, generally “one party talks at a time”; two or more
people speaking simultaneously is “common” but overlaps tend to “be brief.” Much of the structure of a spontaneous dialogue “is not fixed, but varies”: there are no constraints on the topics discussed, for instance, or the order of turns (who speaks when); speakers can say as little as they want (a single word), or as much as they want (within the limits of what other speakers will tolerate before they will insist on talking). But while variation exists in any conversation, there tends to be more structure at the beginning and end of a conversation than in the middle of a conversation, where conventions for turn-taking tend to be the dominant organizational principle.

Many texts have clearly identifiable openings and closings. Although a spontaneous dialogue does not require an opening – sometimes conversations just begin – many spontaneous conversations begin with a greeting:

<ENV> <#> <O> DOOR_OPENING_AND_CLOSING </O>  
<S> <#> Hi sweetie </S>  
<B> <#> Hey </B>

(SBCSAE)

The initial annotation indicates that the text opens with someone entering a room and opening and closing a door. Speakers A and B then greet each other. A greeting is a type of adjacency pair: a two-part utterance in which the first part elicits the second part. All greetings have two parts, in this case an initial Hi sweetie followed by Hey. As the beginning of a conversation continues, it is also common for speakers to ask how the other party is doing:

<A> <#> Sweetie frumptions </A>  
<B> <#> This is kinda open </B>

<ENV> <#> <O> CLOSET </O>  
<A> <#> I’m so tired </A>  
<B> <#> Tired </B>

Because A is returning from work, B asks how work was. While opening a closet door and (probably) hanging up her jacket, A replies that she is “tired.” This leads to a discussion of what happened to A at work. In many conversations, this section will be more perfunctory, with one person saying something like How’s everything? and the other replying Fine. As was noted in Chapter 3, these utterances are not necessarily literal: the first speaker most likely does not want to know how the second speaker actually feels. But such utterances are expected at this juncture in a spontaneous dialogue, and speakers invariably make them without much thought, largely because they are instances of phatic communication: language whose function is to establish social bonds between speakers rather than to convey meaningful linguistic information.

A telephone call, another type of spontaneous dialogue, has a different kind of opening, largely because such conversations are distanced, and people making phone calls need to insure at the start of the conversation
that they reach the party to whom they wish to speak. The opening of a telephone conversation is therefore one instance of what Schegloff (2002: 333) refers to as a summons-answer sequence: a ringing phone literally “summons” someone to engage in a conversation.

Exactly how the callee responds to the summons is very dependent upon the formality of the call and the extent to which the caller and callee recognize each other’s voices. In the example below, the callee answers the phone and opens the conversation with the word Hello, the most common way that a phone call starts. The caller then greets the callee. At this juncture, the caller could have identified himself (Hi Sean, this is Justin), but does not do so, probably because he anticipates (correctly in this case) that the callee will recognize his voice.

<$A> <#> Hello
<$B> <#> Hi Sean
<$A> <#> Hello Justin
<$B> <#> You all right
<$A> <#> Yeah
<$B> <#> Good good

(ICE-GB:S1A-100 73–78)

The conversation then proceeds as any spontaneous dialogue would.

In the next example, instead of saying Hello, the callee opens the conversation by giving his name. The two callers then greet each other, with the caller not identifying himself, since the callee obviously recognizes his voice.

<$A> <#> Bill Lewis here
<$B> <#> Hi
<$A> <#> Hi <#> How’s things
<$B> <#> OK

(ICE-GB:S1A-096 001–5)

While it is possible in British English to open a phone call by giving one’s name, the use of Hello is more common in American English.

Other structures are employed in more formal contexts where neither party is sure of the identity of the other party:

Callee: Hello
Caller: Could I speak with Sue Henderson, please?
Callee: Yes, speaking.
Caller: This is Henry Jamison calling

Or where the party being called is not present to accept the call:

Caller: Is Sue Henderson in?
Callee: I’m afraid she isn’t here. Could I take a message.
Caller: Sure, tell her that Henry Jamison called.

With the proliferation of cell (mobile) phones and caller ID, these kinds of openings are becoming more restricted in usage, since when making or receiving a call, the identity of the caller or callee is already known. Hence, there is little need to go through the kinds of “ritualistic” openings given
above: instead of saying Hello, the callee may simply open the conversation by saying Hi, John, what’s on your mind?

Speakers also employ specific strategies for closing texts. In the example below, the end of the conversation is foreshadowed by what is referred to as a pre-closing sequence. Speaker A’s statement Good to see you is followed by an invitation to B to Come see me, you know, whenever you’re in town. A few turns later a more explicit series of farewells occurs: See you and Bye-bye and then three instances of Okay affirming the closure of the conversation.

<$A$> <#> Good to see you <,,> <#> Come see me <#> You know whenever you’re <{><[> in town </[</>
<$B$> <#> I will <]<][> <,,>
<$A$> <#> And uh <,,><O> in</O> let me know what you get into I’m sure it’ll be something fun <,<>
<$B$> <#> I hope so <,,>
<$A$> <#> I think it will <,,> <#> See you
<$B$> <#> Bye bye
<$A$> <#> Okay <,,>
<$C$> Okay <,,> <$C$> <#> Just <,,> let us know <,,> if you need anything <,,>
<$B$> <#> Okay <,,>
<$C$> <#> Okay

(SBCSAE)

Closing a conversation can be difficult and awkward for all parties involved. Thus, pre-closing sequences serve to ease the transition to the end of a conversation.

While openings and closings have identifiable components, the middle of a conversation – where most conversation takes place – is typically much less structured. As a result, this section of a conversation can consist of little more than speakers following various principles of turn-taking. As Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 702) note, a speaker turn consists of “various unit types”: from structures as large as a sentence to as small as a word. The excerpt below contains various kinds of structures. The first turn, for instance, contains one partially formed why-question followed by a complete formulation of the question. The second and last turns, however, consist of phrases: two noun phrases (all the blood and Katie), an adverb (probably), and an interjection (mhm):

S1: so why is the other picture, why is the other picture more disturbing?
S4: all the blood probably.
S1: yeah i think so. the amount of blood.
S12: yeah i i think like just the fact of like, showing, a notebook and,
and something like that just like remnants it’s, [S1: mhm] really,
grotesque to me.
S1: mhm. Katie?

(MICASE LES220SU140)

Speakers are “initially entitled,” Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 703) continue, “to one such unit [per turn].” At the end of the unit, one finds
what is known as a **transition relevance place** (TRP), a juncture where a potential change of speaker can occur. Thus, a change of speaker could have occurred following any of the five structures described above. However, as the excerpt illustrates, a change in speaker is not mandatory at a TRP: the current speaker can continue to speak unless he or she “selects” another individual to speak, or someone not speaking “self-selects”; that is, employs a strategy that allows for a change in speaker.

The current speaker can select the next speaker by uttering the first part of an adjacency pair. As noted in an earlier section, if one speaker greets another, the second speaker is expected to reciprocate with a greeting as well. In the exchange below, the first speaker compliments the second speaker, causing her to offer thanks for the compliment:

S2: good to see people still smiling at this time of year.
S3: yeah <S3 LAUGH> thanks

If the current speaker asks someone a question, the person to whom the question is addressed is compelled to answer. The brief exchange below consists of three question/answer adjacency pairs, with the last sequence consisting of two questions – *Oh do you want some more* and *What do you think* – before an answer is provided.

<$A$> <$#> Mom did you want me to to <,> cook the rest of the of the <,> the red uh <,>tam/</> uh <,> chilis <,>
<$B$> <$#> <O>COUGH</O><O>COUGH</O><O> <,>
<$C$> <$#> I don’t know <,>
<$A$> <$#> Where are they
<$C$> <$#> <unclear>word</unclear><unclear>word</unclear><unclear>word</unclear>
I/<,> <,> <$#> I put the chilis over there or <,>in/</,in><,> in here {><,> already {><,>
<$A$> <$#> Oh do you </>| want some more <,>
<$C$> <$#> What do you think <,>
<$X$> <$#> <O>SNIFF</O>
<$C$> <$#> It’s pink enough

If the current speaker does not select another party to speak, the other parties can self-select themselves as speakers: they can begin speaking at the point of a gap in the conversation, or they can speak simultaneously with the current speaker, creating an instance of overlapping speech. Both strategies for taking the floor are found in the excerpts below. In each of the excerpts, all annotation was removed from the original transcription except for speaker IDs, text unit markers, pauses, and segments of overlapping speech; instances of overlapping speech are highlighted in boldface to increase readability.

The first excerpt was taken from a conversation that A and B were having that focused on how to put horseshoes on a horse. In this section of the conversation, B is obviously the dominant speaker: his first two turns, for instance, contain numerous TRPs, which are marked in many cases by
pauses. To take the floor from B in B’s first turn, A overlaps his speech with the two words (right here) occurring just prior to one of B’s TRPs.

$<$B$>$ $<$#> You’re always bent over $<$.,$>$ $<$#> And like in the front $<$#> You stick the horse’s hoof $<$.,$>$ between your leg you know $<$.,$>$ Kinda like that and you kinda you go like this you kinda bend down like this and you have the horse’s hoof $<${><[> $<$B$>$ $<$#> It’s really hard on your back $<$.,$>$ $<$#> Like $<$.,$>$ I noticed that girl’s back muscles were just tremendous $<$#> too you know $<$.,$>$ $<$#> Couldn’t believe it $<$.,$>$ $<$#> She had like on this $<$.,$>$ really kinda short shirt you know $<$#> There’s this $<$.,$>$ I think that’s cold $<$.,$>$ $<$B$>$ $<$#> Just don’t $<$.,$>$ it’s $<$#> if you rub something against it it’s just $<$.,$>$ $<$B$>$ $<$#> Makes a sound $<$.,$>$ Nkay $<$.,$>$ $<$A$>$ $<$#> So what $<$.,$>$ what were you gonna do out there today

(SBCSAE)

However, A does not keep the floor for long as B echoes what he says (It’s really hard on your back) and continues speaking until A takes the floor again at a TRP following cold that is marked with a long pause. B resumes speaking when A pauses following it’s just and B finishes the sentence that A was having difficulty completing: It makes a sound. B’s helping A finish his sentence is an instance of an other-initiated repair: one person correcting another person’s speech, in this case by supplying A with words he was having difficulty articulating. The other kind of repair, a self-initiated repair, occurs when a speaker corrects him or herself. For instance, A’s second turn has two false starts – Just don’t and it’s – before A adjusts his syntax and composes a subordinate clause: if you rub something against it.

In the next excerpt, which occurred at the start of a conversation that A and B were having, A utters three text units. B takes the floor at the TRP that ends the third unit and is accompanied by a long pause.

$<$A$>$ $<$#> God I said I wasn’t gonna do this anymore $<$.,$>$ $<$#> Stay up late $<$.,$>$ $<$#> Kinda defeats the purpose of getting up in the morning $<$.,$>$

$<$B$>$ $<$#> I know $<$.,$>$ $<$#> And it’s a hard habit to break $<$#> $<$>It is</>$<}$/</$>

$<$A$>$ $<$#> $<$/>It is $<$#> $<$></$>

$<$B$>$ $<$#> Usually I don’t stay up late $<$.,$>$ $<$#> $<$O>in</O>$<O>But it’s like if I’m up after midnight $<$#> $<$O>laugh</O>$<.$>

(SBCSAE)

A tries to get the floor back by overlapping the beginning three words of one of B’s units: Usually I don’t. However, B does not yield the floor but instead begins his unit again: Usually I don’t stay up late. This part of the exchange reveals an important point about overlapping speech: overlaps are, as Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 706) note, “common but brief.” That is, the competition for the floor that overlaps create is usually
resolved fairly quickly, with either the current speaker keeping the floor or a new speaker taking it over.

Not all overlaps, however, are attempts by a speaker to take the floor. On two occasions in the excerpt below, B overlaps A's speech with the interjection Mhm:

<$A> <#> Turn on the fire alarm that would do it <#> These kids <.> were <,> came in and <,> I was <,> like we’re closing <#> In a few minutes they said well we’ll <#> We’ll wait until you kick us out <#> Cause they didn’t really want to buy anything <{><[> they just wanted </] to look <$B> <#> <[> Mhm <[/]> </[>
<$A> <#> And I said okay <,> we’re closed <,> Out <#> <,> so I was moving them like making them go <{><[> out <$B> <#> <[> Mhm <[/]> </[>
<$A> <#> and <[> they were <> trying to be cute and <> say sweet things and <,> <#> To stay in <>
(SBCSAE)

These instances of overlaps are referred to as back channels: they are verbal affirmations that B is offering to A and serve to demonstrate to A that B is listening and that she is sympathetic to the story that A is telling. The overlaps are not an attempt by B to take the floor from A.

Of course, the linguistic characteristics of speaker turns covered in this section only touch upon the linguistic structure inherent in turns. For instance, in addition to having an overall structure, speaker turns tend to begin and end with certain structures. In an analysis of two corpora of spoken English, Tao (2003: 190–1) found that a mere twenty different forms began 60 percent of the turns he studied. Two of the constructions beginning turns in the excerpt above – and and mhm – ranked fourth and fifteenth, respectively, on Tao’s list. The frequent occurrence of the forms stems largely from the function that these forms play in conversation: mhm as a back channel and and as a marker of addition (a use of and that will be described in greater detail in the section below on unity of texture).

**Written registers**

Figure 4.2 schematizes the major written registers in the British National Corpus as they are classified by David Lee. Lee (2001: 53) developed this system of classification because of “the broadness and inexplicitness of the [original] BNC classification scheme.” For instance, in the original system, the sub-registers under “Fiction” in Lee’s system (drama, poetry, and prose) were all classified within a single register – imaginative prose – even though drama, poetry, and prose exhibit significant linguistic differences.

Figure 4.2 lists eight major registers of written English that differ along a number of parameters. Writing can be academic or non-academic, with the same sub-registers within each of these registers. The assumption behind this classification is that writing in the natural sciences, for
instance, will differ from writing in the social sciences, and that the audience towards whom the writing is directed – academic vs. non-academic – will also affect the way that language is used. As was the case with the spoken registers in Figure 4.1, there is an attempt to cover a wide range of written registers. Thus, national, regional, and local newspapers are included as well as broadsheets, tabloids, and the many different types of writing found in newspapers: reportage, editorials, and so forth. Not all of the written registers in the BNC are included in Figure 4.2; a number of registers without sub-registers, such as administrative and advertising writing, can be found as well. Some of the sub-registers, it should be noted, are not as discrete as the categorizations in Figure 4.2 would suggest. While literary criticism is traditionally regarded as fitting within the sub-register of humanities/arts, much literary criticism draws upon work in psychology or the social sciences to interpret literary texts. Many written texts will therefore exhibit characteristics of more than one register or sub-register.

Because the BNC was released in the mid 1990s, it does not contain newer types of registers, such as blogs. Also, with the proliferation of email, which is included in the BNC, the register of handwritten letters, both personal and professional, is now becoming somewhat archaic. There are also additional written registers, such as legal writing, not included in the BNC. Many modern corpora exclude legal English because...
it is a rather specialized register that has a very restricted use and has not changed much over the years.

Like spoken registers, written registers vary in terms of how rigidly they are organized hierarchically. While no written text has as loose a structure as spontaneous dialogues, a personal letter, for instance, will not have as clearly identifiable a hierarchical structure as a biology lab report. Since press reportage is such a common written register with which all literate people will be familiar, this sub-register of newspaper writing will be described in the next section.

Press reportage. Newspapers, as Figure 4.2 demonstrates, are composed of texts taken from a number of different sub-registers. These sub-registers differ primarily because language has a different function in each. Editorials, for instance, express opinions and therefore are persuasive in nature. Articles on the arts, on the other hand, could be descriptive (e.g. a discussion of a new exhibit at an art museum) or evaluative (e.g. a movie review). But at the core of any newspaper is reportage: texts that inform the readership of a newspaper about current local, national, or international events. And as van Dijk (1988: 52–9) demonstrates, news reportage has a very specific hierarchical structure to which news writers must adhere and which readers anticipate when they read a news article. Reportage, van Dijk (1988: 55) claims, consists of two major sections: a brief “Summary” followed by a lengthier “Story.” Each of these two sections contains many subsections, such as a lead, background information, and verbal comments from people with knowledge about the story. Because newspaper articles are presented in narrow columns, typography and layout are prime considerations too. Headlines are larger than the rest of the text, and paragraphs are typically shorter than in other kinds of writing, sometimes no longer than a single sentence. The discussion below highlights some of the major components of the summary and story sections of news report.

**Summary:** A news article opens with two obligatory elements – a headline and a lead – and several optional elements: a date, a byline, and the name of the city in which the news event took place:

**Housing lawsuit vs. state dropped**

By Jonathan Saltzman

GLOBE STAFF

Three of the largest public housing authorities in Massachusetts, citing a pledge by Governor Deval Patrick to adequately fund public housing, said yesterday they have dropped a lawsuit that accused the Romney administration of shortchanging the state’s nearly 250 local authorities by millions of dollars.


Because the above excerpt was taken from an article in the Metropolitan section of a Boston newspaper, no city name is given. Had the article been about an event taking place outside Boston, a city name would have been provided. No date is given because the article appeared in the print edition.
of the newspaper, where the date is given on each page. The Web versions of news articles will always contain dates, since such articles are often retrieved individually by search engines, making the date an important piece of information. The author’s name is given, since he is a staff member of the newspaper in which the article appeared. Many articles from news services, such as Associated Press, do not contain the names of authors.

Not all of these optional elements, however, are crucial to the opening of a news article. Most important are what van Dijk (1988: 53) characterizes as the two essential elements of the Summary: the headline and the lead, which provide in capsule form exactly what the news story is about. Headlines are always written in telegraphic speech: an abbreviated language lacking function words. The above headline, “Housing lawsuit vs. state dropped,” lacks the definite article the before Housing and state and omits the auxiliary verb is before dropped. Headlines are also typically in larger fonts than the main text; the kind of language they contain depends upon whether they appear in a broadsheet or tabloid. Because the Boston Globe is a broadsheet, the language of the lead is neutral and factual: “Three of the largest public housing authorities in Massachusetts ... dropped a lawsuit.” Tabloids, in contrast, often contain headlines that employ various literary devices, such as “rhyme” and “punning” (Malmkjær 2005: 165), and that are often highly sensationalistic. For instance, the headline “No Way, Hillary” appeared in a news story in the New York Post (March 28, 2007) discussing the results of an opinion poll reporting that 50 percent of those surveyed would not vote for Hillary Clinton if she ran for president of the United States. In the Daily Mirror (March 28, 2007), a British tabloid, the headline “Nut skis down tube escalator” opened a story about an individual skiing down an escalator at a London Underground station.

The Story: While the opening of a news article is relatively short, the remainder of the article – termed the “Story” by van Dijk (1988) – can be considerably longer, depending upon the complexity of the event being reported and the amount of space that the newspaper has to devote to the event. The Story has two main components: the “Situation” and a second section, “Comments,” containing comments, often in the form of quotations, about the situation. The Situation will follow the lead and contain a narrative recounting, called the “Episode,” of exactly what transpired. The excerpt below was taken from an article entitled “F&C to sell Canadian business” and contains the lead followed by a few paragraphs from the beginning of the Situation:

Cincinnati flavor-maker F&C International Inc. has agreed to sell its Canadian subsidiary, including its snack seasonings business, to an Irish food company for up to $7.7 million.

The sale agreement, subject to a public auction slated for Sept. 22, would be the largest asset sale in F&C’s effort to emerge from bankruptcy reorganization.

Bankruptcy Judge J. Vincent Aug Jr. Wednesday granted F&C’s request to expedite the sale of the Canadian business to Kerry Ingredients of Canada, a unit of Kerry Group plc, subject to creditor objections ...
The first part of the Situation provides essential information about the sale: that the sale is part of a “bankruptcy reorganization” on the part of F&C, was authorized by a “Bankruptcy Judge,” and would involve a particular company: Kerry Ingredients of Canada. Within the Situation it is also common to find background information. A few paragraphs later, it is noted that F&C was “once a hot stock on Wall Street” and that its former chairman had been terminated following the disclosure of “inventory discrepancies estimated at up to $8 million.” Background information is crucial in a news story because newspapers assume that potential readers may not be familiar with all of the events leading up to the story, and will therefore need background information to fully understand the events discussed in the story.

At various junctures in the Situation, different kinds of commentary will be provided, either by the writer or by the people interviewed for the story. The excerpt below contains two direct quotations taken from an article entitled “Prospects good for new oil well.”

New Zealand Oil and Gas announced yesterday that a second test on the well near Inglewood had showed flow rates between 220 and 280 barrels a day.

Flow testing continued yesterday.

A first flow test at Ngatoro-2 on the weekend had flowed up to 170 barrels of oil a day.

“I would be most surprised if they don’t make it commercial because of its locality,” an industry source said yesterday.

The well, 4km south-west of Inglewood, was close to the infrastructure necessary to develop it.

“Anything in these sorts of order (of flow rates) is starting to look very attractive from NZOG’s point of view.”

(ICE-New Zealand W2C-001)

The excerpt begins with three short paragraphs describing two tests done on an oil well at two different times, and noting that the second test had revealed increasing amounts of oil being produced by the well. Two quotes follow and serve to provide a perspective from an expert that the well has considerable commercial potential. Quotes add credibility and perspective to a news story. While the source in this story is not named – he or she is simply referred to as “an industry source” – in other contexts names of sources are included, especially if the source is a highly knowledgeable and credible source of information.

Commentary can also come from “the journalist or newspaper itself” even though, as van Dijk (1988: 56) correctly observes, “newsmakers share the ideological view that fact and opinion should not be mixed.” In several sections of commentary in an April 3, 2007 article in the New York Times (“Justices Say E.P.A. has Power to Act on Harmful Gases,” p. A1) the choice of wording is highly evaluative. This article dealt with two Supreme Court rulings in the United States that authorized the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) to regulate automobile emissions. The ruling is characterized as “one of its [the Supreme Court’s] most important environmental decisions in years” (evaluative language is emphasized here and in the
other two examples). Because the Bush Administration did not want the E.P.A. to regulate emissions, the ruling is described not just as a loss for the Bush Administration but “a strong rebuke.” Advocates of regulating gases were not simply pleased with the ruling but “exultant.” The choice of language in these examples is not just descriptive but helps convey the editorial perspective of the newspaper in which they occur.

While the headline and lead are obligatory and occur in a specific order, there is more variability in the Story section of a news story. The Episode will come first but where the Background and Comments are placed can vary, as can exactly how much information is placed in each of these sections. One source of this variability is that the length of an article is often constrained by the amount of space that is available for an article. Thus, editors can always cut out or trim sections of the Story if necessitated by space limitations.

### Unity of texture

For a text to achieve coherence, it is not enough that it have a hierarchical structure. Additionally, all of its component parts must fit together in a manner that is recognizable to the hearer or reader. The individual parts of a text – the sentences and clauses within it – must also be linked. Various devices work together to achieve what is referred to as unity of texture: constituents within a clause are ordered in a specific way so that the thematic structure of the clause promotes the easy flow of information from clause to clause, and relationships between clauses are indicated by various markers of cohesion, such as logical connectors like *therefore* or *however*. Without specific linkages between clauses, hearers and readers would have to infer how everything is related, making comprehension difficult if not impossible.

### Thematic structure

In traditional grammar, sentences are often divided into a subject and a predicate. In the very simple sentence *The boy walked the dog*, *The boy* is the subject and *walked the dog* the predicate. The notions “subject” and “predicate” are related to syntax (the topic of the next chapter): how constituents are ordered within a sentence or, more basically, a clause. The above example is a main clause that is also a declarative sentence.

Elements in clauses, however, can be viewed from a different perspective, specifically in terms of how their placement in a clause contributes to the flow of information in a text and helps connect one clause with another. Viewing clauses from this perspective involves the study of their thematic structure.

The study of thematic structure is rooted in work on functional sentence perspective (FSP) conducted originally by Prague School linguists such as František Daneš (1974) and Jan Firbas (1992) and adapted for English by the British linguist Michael A. K. Halliday (see Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). The theory of FSP explains why speakers/writers pick one word order over another – why, for instance, they would say or write
The boy walked the dog vs. its passive equivalent, The dog was walked by the boy. Instead of viewing a clause as containing a subject and a predicate, FSP divides the clause into the theme and the rheme. In the first example above, the theme is the first major element in the clause, namely the subject: The boy. The rheme is everything else. In the second example, the theme shifts to The dog and the rheme, again, is everything else.

There are various factors that will influence the placement of constituents in the theme and the rheme, specifically what is given (or old) information in the clause and what is new information. There is a general principle in English and other languages that, wherever possible, old information should precede new information. For instance, in the example below, the writer uses two constructions containing passive verbs: It was built and it was purchased by Phyllis and Keith:

Stanhope Hall must be one of the most extraordinary houses in this book. It was built way back in 1135 as a fortified manor house. In 1976 it was purchased by Phyllis and Keith who restored it, quite miraculously, from an almost derelict state to its present form in which it resembles its original appearance to an extraordinary degree.

(BNC CJK 1806)

The writer could just as easily have used equivalent constructions with verbs in the active voice: Someone built it and Phyllis and Keith purchased it. However, in this context, the passive constructions place the old information – the pronoun it – in the theme, and the new information – everything else in the two sentences – in the rheme. Old information is information recoverable from the prior linguistic context. Thus, it is old information because its referent, Stanhope Hall, occurs in the first sentence. New information is information introduced into the text for the first time. The words following the first instance of it – was built way back in 1135 as a fortified manor house – are new information because they have no prior mention in the text; the same holds true for the words following it in the second example. The tendency to place new information towards the end of a clause is referred to by Quirk et al. (1985: 1357) as end-focus.

The patterning of old followed by new information in a clause greatly enhances cohesion: old information in the theme provides a link to information introduced previously. And because passivization is a syntactic process that moves constituents around in a clause, clauses in the passive voice occur quite commonly in texts, despite the fact that many style manuals recommend against the use of the passive. Advice not to use the passive must be weighed against the advantages of using the passive to promote cohesion and the appropriate placement of new and old information.

In speech, degrees of prominence are marked not just by word order but by intonation as well. Speech is segmented into tone units: sequences of words in which one unit – usually the last part of the rheme – receives the highest pitch and consequently the greatest prominence. The example below contains a single tone unit. Because this is a declarative sentence, the pitch will rise, peak on the first syllable of mother, and then fall, ending the tone unit and potentially starting a new tone unit.
He told his MÔTher| *(adapted from Quirk et al. 1985: 1599)*

In an **unmarked tone unit** (i.e. the most frequent and common type of tone unit), the last stressable syllable will receive the greatest stress, since placing greater stress on this syllable serves to highlight the new information in the unit. Typically, the prominent syllable in a tone unit will be a **content word** (e.g. a noun or verb) rather than a function word (e.g. a preposition or article), since content words carry more meaning than function words. Function words will only be stressed if prominence on them is contextually warranted. For instance, the example below is one possible response to the question *Did Harriet do the work?*:

NÔ | Ì did the work |

The reply contains two tone units. In the second tone unit, the highest pitch occurs on the function word *I* to emphasize the fact that the person uttering this clause did the work rather than the person referred to in the question. This is an example of a **marked tone unit**: one that is less common. Had this been an unmarked tone unit, the most prominent syllable would have been the one on *work*.

Writing, it should be noted, has nothing approximating the complexity of intonation for highlighting prominent pieces of information. At best, punctuation and other kinds of typography provide a crude representation of intonation. The two examples below both contain instances of the logical connector *Thus*:

**Thus**, Irish nationalism is conceived by most members in an abstract way, but it has concrete import for key groups. *(BNC A07 221)*

**Thus** hard braking should be avoided, particularly if the glider has started to swing. *(BNC AOH 543)*

In a rough sense, placing or not placing a comma after *Thus* mimics the intonation choices that speakers have when this word occurs clause-initially: they can either give *Thus* prominence by placing it in a tone unit by itself, or deemphasize it by integrating it into a larger tone unit containing the words following it. In writing, a comma after *thus* adds emphasis to it; no comma decreases its prominence in the clause. The effects in writing, of course, are much less pronounced than in speech, since writing is a mainly visual medium, and punctuation can provide at best only a rough representation of the intonation patterns that would exist if the written text were read aloud.

In addition to passivization, there are other syntactic processes that serve to focus items in a clause or add extra emphasis to them. One process, already mentioned in Chapter 2, is topicalization, which involves moving information out of its normal positioning in the rheme to the front of the clause. The example below focuses on many characteristics of Max Bialystock, all occurring in a series of noun phrases at the end of the first sentence. Although the theme of the second sentence – *a mensch* – is
new information, its form – indefinite article + noun – is parallel to the other noun phrases. Moving it out of the rheme therefore adds emphasis to it and also promotes cohesion.

Max Bialystock is many things – a stinking liar, a crook, a shameless noodge, a stud muffin for the elderly and infirm. And of course a big fat Broadway producer. But a mensch he is not.


The final sentence in the next example contains a clause beginning with How that is parallel in form to the two clauses ending the preceding sentence and that contains some old information, the pronoun that:

“They’re [Iraqi militants] watching us carefully,” he [Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr.] said. “There’s an air of suspense throughout the city. We believe, there’s no question about it, that many of these extremists are laying low and watching to see what it is we do and how we do it. How long that will last, we don’t know.”


Placing the how-clause in the theme links the second sentence with the prior sentence.

Two types of clauses – the pseudo-cleft and the cleft – can also contribute to focus and emphasis. These types of clauses tend to occur most frequently in speech because the item being focused or emphasized receives heavy stress. A pseudo-cleft is a paraphrase of a declarative sentence; the pseudo-cleft begins with what and contains a form of the verb be:

**Declarative Sentence:** I like organic food.

**Pseudo-Cleft:** What I LIKE is organic food.

In the above example, the pseudo-cleft construction places heavy stress on the verb like and allows the speaker to emphasize the fact that she likes organic food.

In the example below, the pseudo-cleft places emphasis on do, stressing that the speaker does his own stretching rather than relying on treatment by a physiotherapist, whose availability cannot be counted on.

You know I I think you still need to go back uhm maybe do something at least once a week but that’s not always available because there’re so many people who need phi physiotherapy Uhm so what I’ve always tended to do is to do my own stretches at home

*(ICE-GB:S1A-003 26–29)*

In the example below, stress could be placed on either the first syllable of happening or time, again depending upon which of these two words the speaker wishes to emphasize.

Uhm I think a lot of the way that that the arts and dance are progressing is uhm is towards an awareness that part of art and dance, a central part of art and dance is to do with the recovery of the whole person uhm to do with making people whole that that’s the role of art and dance And uhm I think what’s been happening for for a quite a period
of *time* is that therapy has been uhm put on one side dance on another

A similar effect can be achieved in a cleft sentence. A cleft sentence has the structure of *it* + *be* + [ ] + relative pronoun (e.g. *who* or *which*) with some item stressed and emphasized following *be*:

*Declarative Sentence:* My brother called me yesterday.

*Cleft:* It was my BRÔther *who* called me yesterday.

Instead of using a cleft sentence in the second example below, Speaker A could have answered her own question by saying *You told me that, didn’t you* with falling pitch rather than rising pitch on *didn’t you* to indicate that A came to the realization that B had indeed brought certain information to her attention.

*B:* I thought they were playing the borderline

*A:* Yeah was it you who told me that? *It WÀS you that told me that wasn’t it*

But by using a cleft sentence instead, with stress on *was*, this realization is highlighted more explicitly. In the cleft structure below, the speaker could highlight the first syllable of either *study* or *architecture*:

*B:* On what did you I mean did you decide at that stage to continue in *architecture*

*A:* No not really I kind of I I started the course thinking that uhm I’d sort of do the full seven years and stuff but like I’m just going through the course I just just realised that it was actually the study of architecture I really enjoyed

With stress on *STŰdy*, he is telling B that he realized that he liked studying architecture rather than practicing it; with stress on *ARCHitecture*, he is saying that he preferred studying architecture rather than some other subject.

**Markers of cohesion**

While cohesion is promoted through focus and emphasis, it can also be achieved by a series of processes that establish explicit connections between clauses. Whenever speakers or writers use a word such as *therefore*, for instance, they are explicitly signposting a relationship between sections of the text that they are creating, indicating that what comes next in the text is a logical consequence of what has previously been said. This kind of link, called a cohesive tie, is part of a process called *Conjunction*, one of five types of cohesion proposed for English by Michael A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan in their highly influential 1976 book *Cohesion in English*. In this book, Halliday and Hasan comprehensively describe how cohesion is achieved by conjunction and four other processes: *Reference*, *Substitution*, *Ellipsis*, and *Lexical Cohesion*. 
Reference. Because the study of reference is typically done within the field of semantics, a full discussion will be deferred until Chapter 6. But for purposes of establishing cohesive ties in a text, Reference is a process whereby a construction such as a third-person pronoun links parts of a text that have the same referent. In the example below, she and her refer back in the text to Maria, a proper noun that refers to a particular female in the external world named Maria.

Maria was last seen shouting for help inside a military jeep that evening. Her family heard she had been taken to the Regional Command Military camp in Legaspi City. She has not been seen since. Members of her family have received death threats.

(BNC AO3 527)

Similar links can be created with other third-person pronouns, such as he/him/his, it/its, or they/them/their as well as with demonstrative pronouns such as this/that and these/those. The conversational exchange below opens with mention of an individual referred to as some guy. Throughout the exchange, reference back to this person is made with the pronoun he, until the last turn where he is referred to as this kid, with the demonstrative pronoun this pointing back ultimately to the initial mention of some guy.

$<$A> Some guy came out and he was $<$B> Oh $<$A> he was trying to sell us cologne $<$B> No he wasn’t trying to sell us cologne $<$A> Well it No I guess he was trying to like lure us to a place where they would sell like imitation cologne but he said it’s not imitation because $<$E> I got a deal $<$B> Yeah $<$E> you can’t refuse $<$A> because it’s made by the same people $<$B> I mean this kid was # He looked like a (SBCSAE)

Also in the excerpt are two instances of it contracted with is that refer back to the earlier mention of cologne. The word cologne, it should be noted, is repeated twice before it is referred to with the pronoun it. This repetition is an instance of Lexical Cohesion, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

While demonstratives such as this or that can occur before nouns, they can also occur alone and have very broad reference. The instance of This in the second sentence below refers back to all of the information conveyed in the sentence that precedes it.

The use of coinage in Roman Britain appears to have ceased c. 420 A.D. almost at the same time that the pottery factories ceased production. This was probably the direct consequence of the withdrawal of the Roman army and administration.

(ICE-GB W1A-001–70-71)
**Substitution.** Substitution and Reference are similar in the sense that both processes involve some linguistic item substituting for another item occurring in the prior linguistic context. Substitution differs from reference, according to Quirk et al. (1985: 864), in that it is less contextually dependent: in the earlier example above, interpreting who the pronoun she refers to depends upon knowledge of who Maria is. In addition, substitution involves a wider range of constructions: not just nouns and pronouns but verbs and adverbs as well.

The pronoun one (or its plural form ones) very commonly substitutes for a previously mentioned noun. In the first example, one in the last turn substitutes for particle in the second turn:

S3: yes we use, we simply use the arrow to say which is the positron so
the arrow denotes the direction of, electric charge, this way it’s negative that way it’s positive. yeah? yes?
S5: does the W particle have mass?
S3: which one?

Likewise, ones in E’s turn substitutes for kids in B’s turn:

<$B> <#> And I like withheld recess from several kids on on Thursday
<$E> <#> Well did you give candy to the ones that got excellents

While the same in the last sentence below is a noun phrase, it does not substitute for another noun phrase but instead a much larger structure: everything the speaker says the mother did in the utterances preceding the same:

Yeah. I mean, your mother sat by the fire for years Yes, yeah, controlling everything. Yeah, oh yeah, so she thought. Yeah, yeah. And you did the same did you?

The next two examples contain the adverb so which occurs along with the verbs do and thought (as well as too in the second example). In the first example, so substitutes for the predication generate the bulk of our money supply.

The need for state interference in this market springs from the fact that it is no longer the state but the commercial banks which generate the bulk of our money supply. They do so by creating credit.

In the second example so in S1’s turn substitutes for everything said by S2 in the preceding turn:

S2: um huh, so everyone in the community goes to the high school play
that’s very interesting
S1: yeah i thought so too.

**Ellipsis.** Ellipsis is like Substitution except that it involves deleting information recoverable from some prior context rather than replacing
the information with a word like *do* or *so*. For instance, in the example below, the speaker begins by mentioning that he thinks *Oxford United* has experienced *one best thing*:

Basically what I, I think the best thing that’s happened to Oxford United this season. Well there are *two*.

(BNC KRT 4288)

However, rather than repeating this information in his second utterance following *two*, he simply leaves it out. It might seem counterintuitive that the omission of linguistic material creates a cohesive tie. However, in order to correctly interpret the second utterance above, the hearer has to recover the missing information from the prior context.

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 154) comment that words such as *two*, which are members of the class of numeratives (i.e. words that describe quantities of something), commonly precede the positions where ellipsis takes place, as do certain kinds of pronouns, such as *these* and *any* in the examples below (the elliptical material is italicized in brackets):

In same cases additional amounts are available for particular needs. The optician will include *these* [*additional amounts*] when appropriate.

(ICE-GB W2D 117–118)

<$B>$ <#> Can I grow some basil from seed
<$C>$ <#> Yes that’s how I’ve <$#> I don’t have any [*basil*] this year but I’ve grown it other years

(SBCSAE)

While the previous examples illustrated ellipsis within noun phrases, larger structures can be elided too. In the first two examples below, verbs and other elements are deleted:

When you buy a used vehicle the seller may agree to include a current licence in the sale. If the seller does not [*include a current licence*] you must use form V10, or form V85 for goods vehicles weighing over 1525 kgs unladen.

(ICE-GB W2D-010 101–2)

<$C>$ <#> Take this to the table please
<$B>$ <#> <$#> Okay I will [*take this to the table*] <$#> just wait a minute

(SBCSAE)

In the next example, the subject and contracted verb in the last turn are elided:

<$B>$ <#> Okay <$#> Two weeks ago I’m watching TV and David Horowitz is going to have this former car radio thief on
<$A>$ <#> It’s her boyfriend
<$B>$ <#>Yeah [*it’s*] her ex boyfriend

(SBCSAE)

**Lexical Cohesion.** The types of cohesion discussed so far “move hand and hand,” Halliday and Hasan (1985: 83) note, with Lexical Cohesion, which establishes a link with the prior context by, for instance, repeating
a word mentioned earlier or using a synonym of the word. For instance, in an example such as the one below, the reader/writer has a number of options to link the second sentence with the first:

I turned to the ascent of the peak. is perfectly easy.

(Halliday and Hasan 1976: 279)

One way to create a link with the ascent is to simply repeat the phrase. However, if such repetition is undesirable, a synonym such as climb can be used instead. Other options include using progressively more general words, such as task or thing, or simply a pronoun such as it, which involves an earlier type of cohesion, Reference, rather than Lexical Cohesion.

Exactly which choice is made is guided on the one hand by clarity – the need to use an expression that clearly refers back to something mentioned earlier – and the avoidance, where possible, of repetition. The excerpt below illustrates how these two considerations work.

Democratic presidential hopefuls sparred genially last night on details of the Iraq war, healthcare, and guns, but they stood resolutely united in blaming President Bush for getting the country into the war and in agreeing on the need to end it.

In the first national debate of the 2008 presidential season, the eight contenders all denounced the war, with two of the group – former senator John Edwards of North Carolina and Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut – acknowledging outright that their 2002 votes to authorize the war were the biggest professional mistakes of their lives.

(Milligan 2007)

The excerpt opens with the introduction of two items of new information – Democratic presidential hopefuls and the Iraq war – that each begin what Halliday and Hasan (1985: 84) refer to as a cohesive chain: a series of expressions all related to each other. Democratic presidential hopefuls are first referred to by the referential pronoun they (“they stood resolutely”) and subsequently by two instances of Lexical Cohesion: the synonymous expression the eight contenders and the more general expression the group. The Iraq war is first referred to with the more general expression the war, which is followed a few words later by the referential pronoun it, and then at the start of the second paragraph by the repetition of the expression the war.

Personal pronouns will be used when it is clear in the context exactly what is being referred to: it refers clearly back to the war because there is no intervening noun that it could refer to. However, as a text progresses, and more nouns are introduced, it becomes necessary to either repeat an expression or use a synonym or more general expression. Thus, in the second paragraph Democratic presidential hopefuls are referred to as the eight contenders. Using a synonymous expression such as this both preserves clarity and provides for variety of expression; that is, it avoids both ambiguity and potentially undesirable repetition.
Conjunction. Conjunction is different from the types of cohesion discussed so far. It does not depend on linguistic items occurring in the prior context. Instead, it involves the inclusion of various kinds of expressions that mark relationships between what occurred previously in a text and what follows. In this sense, the expressions that are part of this type of cohesion – words such as also or therefore and phrases such as on the other hand – act as signposts, specifically marking how various segments of the text are logically related.

Although there are different ways to describe the relationships that words within the category of Conjunction mark, Halliday and Hasan (1976: 242–3) propose four different relationships: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. Within each of these general groups are a series of grammatical items expressing different variations on how additive relations, for instance, can be expressed in texts.

In its purest form, addition is signaled in texts by the coordinating conjunction and and transitional expressions such as also and in addition. Additive and is particularly common in spontaneous dialogues; such dialogues are unplanned and and serves as a way for speakers to signal that they are adding something new to what they said previously:

I’d always wanted to go to Australia. And I met this Australian in London and I lived with him for a year and went to Australia. But something happened. And I don’t this is the big thing I don’t know. I felt we had to break up and that we just couldn’t stay together and sort of our sex life disappeared and for years we were just completely platonic.

(ICE-GB-S1A–050–5–10)

In written registers, such uses of and would not occur, since writers have the opportunity to more carefully plan what they are going to write next.

Exemplification is another kind of additive relationship. Expressions such as for instance or for example indicate that a specific example of some previously mentioned general point is forthcoming. In the example below, for instance introduces an example of how the Volga provinces differed from other parts of Russia:

In general, conditions of land tenure, communal arrangements, and cultural traditions differed considerably in the Volga provinces from those in the West and the centre of European Russi. For instance, members of Volga communes were apt to be more outward-looking than those in Kursk guberniia because of their wider market ties and better transport facilities.

(BNC A64 1015)

Adversative relationships are marked by the coordinating conjunction but and other expressions such as however, instead, and in contrast that serve to mark some kind of difference or contrast between sections of a text. Towards the end of the excerpt below, however indicates that there are two views on postmodernism: that it is either a “break from modernism” or a “continuation of” it:

Some theorists have thought about postmodernism as a kind of radical break from modernism, so a radical shift from, the kind of, sort of stylistic,