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Editorial Statement

The Nottingham Linguistic Circular was published by the School of English Studies from November 1971 until volume 14 in 1985. It has now been relaunched, with volume 15 appearing in both paper and electronic form in 2000.

The new e-journal is freely available to readers over the internet. It can be found at:

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Hard copies of the journal are published and distributed to members of the Nottingham Linguistic Circle, which comprises all staff and researchers associated with the University of Nottingham who have an interest in modern English language and linguistics. To become a member of the circle, or to receive the next NLC directly, email the editor.

The publication policy of NLC remains true to the principles of the first issue, edited by Ronald Hartmann and Walter Nash:

> We hope to create a small market for writings which merit at least a passing notice, but which may not be germane to the big business of the learned journals. In considering such writings for publication we shall not impose limitations of doctrine or theme. Our editorial posture is one of non-commitment, the only requirement being that contributions should be of moderate length and have a clear bearing on linguistics or language. This is virtually an invitation to all comers, and since there are obviously many topics which lie beyond the scope of our arbitration, we have asked colleagues in various fields to help us by serving on an advisory panel...
>
> As editors, we are of course convinced of the value and desirability of our undertaking. However, it must be obvious that the strength of a 'little magazine' - its whole character and potential for growth - lies very largely with its readership. We would accordingly remind our readers of our editorial need to be pestered. We invite suggestions, criticisms, information, matter for debate. In short, we call for a participant audience to help in creating a lively magazine.

Contributors

Potential contributions to the journal should be sent to the editorial address below - preferably by email attachment. Please send plain text, without footnotes, and preferably use the Harvard system of referencing (Author's name (Date), with references collected at the end of the article). Please also supply 5 keywords and an abstract of no more than 100 words. Individual authors retain copyright on their work.

Archive

Issues 1-14 of NLC contained many articles of historic importance or which are still of interest. We are in the process of archiving a selection of this material for online access, as well as a comprehensive listing of titles. If the article you are looking for is not yet available online, please email the editor to request a copy.

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The application of current language and gender theory to managerial meeting discourse

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1. Introduction

The contextual setting of the workplace provides fertile ground for current language and gender research, though at present it is a relatively under-investigated area. Tannen (1994) has produced a large-scale study of language and gender in the workplace in the United States, but there is no British equivalent. Since the early 1970s, traditional gender roles in the workplace have been under challenge, specifically at a managerial level (Davidson and Cooper 1992, 1993). There are now more females entering the workplace in managerial positions than ever before and statistics suggest that this increase will continue. Projections indicate that white male managers will make up only 15% of new entrants in the next 20 years, with their places instead being taken by females and members of ethnic minorities (Burke and Davidson 1994: 4).

It is therefore integral for companies to get the best from their female workforce. As Burke and Davidson (1994: 3) argue, 'the economic success' of organisations relies upon their ability to adjust to changes that are made as a consequence of more females entering the workplace as managers. Examining language and gender at a managerial level thus appears to be an important and topical issue.

It is the intention that the three-tier framework presented here will provide a firm theoretical grounding for researching managerial business discourse. Gender as a performative social construct, communities of practice (CofP) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) are all topical frameworks developed in the last ten yeas, and all have influenced current thinking in language and gender research. What I am proposing here is that all three levels should be examined in conjunction with one another. It is hoped that CDA will address recent criticisms that have been applied to the CofP approach (Bergvall 1999), and that combining CDA and the CofP concept with the view of gender as performative will represent a clear move forward from previous language and gender research which has been heavily criticised on both theoretical and methodological grounds. Figure 1 presents the integrated framework, along with three corresponding 'levels':

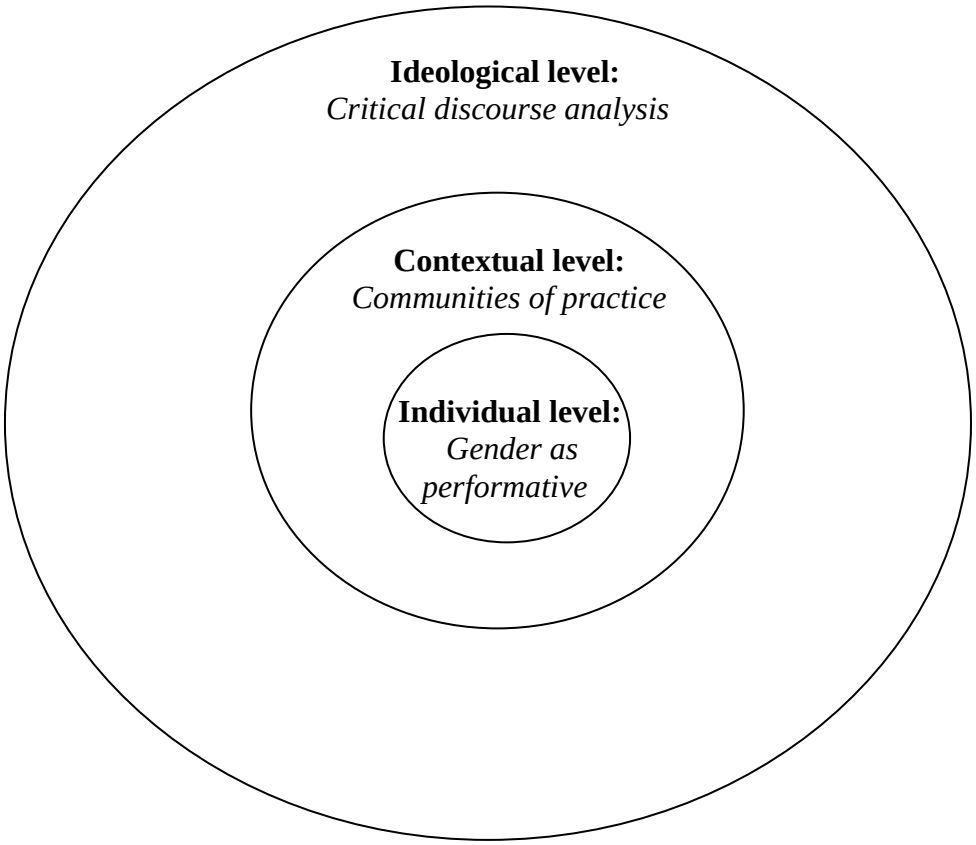

Figure 1: An integrated framework for language and gender studies

Gender as a performative social construct is identified with the 'individual level', i.e., with the individual speaker who will perform gendered identity when engaged in spoken interaction. Individuals come together and perform their gendered identity in the specific contexts of communities of practice, thus termed the contextual level. The communities of practice ellipse is contained within the overarching, ideological level, where individuals' linguistic behaviour may be constrained by forces operating at a wider societal level. This can be investigated by the practice of critical discourse analysis.

The following sections of the paper will define and illustrate each of the approaches in specific relation to managerial meeting discourse. This will commence with the perspective at the core of the diagram, the view of gender as performative.

2. Gender as a performative social construct

Language and gender theorists have recently turned their attention to the notion of gender as a performative social construct, following Butler's (1990) ground-breaking work. Butler believes that masculinity and femininity are not traits that we inherently have, rather they are effects that we perform by the activities we partake in. She argues that 'gender is always a doing', and as there is 'no gender identity behind the expressions of gender...identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (1990: 25). In order to show how gender as a performative social construct became popular in language and gender studies, it is necessary to provide a brief history of research within the discipline, and highlight the problems that have arisen from previous theoretical positions.

2.1 The road to performativity: a move away from polarisation

Language and gender research began approximately 25 years ago with the publication of Lakoff's (1975) *Language and Women's Place*. Although heavily criticised on methodological grounds, Lakoff raised considerable interest in the relationship between language and gender and this became a popular line of enquiry. During the late 1970s and early 1980s research which has come to be known as the *power/dominance* approach developed. The *culture/difference* approach then emerged in the mid 1980s and remained popular until the early 1990s. Both approaches assume that difference between male and female speech patterns is pre-existing, though they differ in their explanations as to why this is the case.

Researchers who follow the power/dominance approach, including Zimmerman and West (1975), Fishman (1978,1980) and Spender (1980), argue that the considerable economic power men have over women in society permeates into language, resulting in male domination in spoken interaction. Male domination of society's power structures ensures that men's speech is always more highly valued.

Coates (1997: 413) believes that the culture/difference approach arose as a backlash to the power/dominance framework. She states that whilst feminist linguists were not denying the existence of dominance and power, they had become tired of the negative portrayal of women in work which followed the dominance framework. She argues that many researchers thought the dominance model had actually become a deficit model, portraying male speech as the norm and female speech as deviant.

Researchers who follow the culture/difference approach, including Maltz and Borker (1982) and Tannen (1990, 1994), assert that men and women speak differently due to differences that are implemented during the socialisation process. Instead of viewing female language as something that is imposed on women from society's patriarchal institutions, culture/difference researchers began to celebrate female speech styles (Coates 1996). As a consequence, researchers who follow the culture/difference

approach have been criticised for ignoring the power structures that operate in society. Tromel-Ploetz (1991: 413) accuses Tannen's (1990) work of being 'deeply reactionary' and 'dishonest' due to its 'non-engaged' and 'apolitical' stance.

The explanations offered by the power/dominance and cultural/difference approaches are now thought to be too simplistic in their explanations. Both approaches have polarised gender, resulting in assertions that men speak one way whilst women speak another. A prime example of this is the view that females tend to favour co-operative, rapport-seeking speech styles, whereas males tend to favour competitive, status-seeking speech styles. Viewing men and women in this dichotomised way results in a gross oversimplification of the complexity of language and gender. It not only ignores the diversity of speech in groups of women and in groups of men, it also ignores cultural differences, and differences that may be the result of other social variables such as age, class and ethnicity.

Therefore, critics of the power/dominance and culture/difference approaches including Cameron (1995, 1996, 1997), Freed (1996) and Bergvall (1996) have now turned to Butler's view of gender as a performative social construct as a way of avoiding gender polarisation. Instead of viewing gender as something that is rigid and fixed, serving to perpetuate stereotypes associated with male and female speech, the notion of performativity allows gender to be viewed as something which is flexible. As Cameron (1997: 60) argues, men and women do not simply learn, 'and then mechanically reproduce ways of speaking appropriate to their own sex'. Males and females learn a much more complex set of gendered meanings, and both sexes are fully capable of using strategies associated with either masculinity or femininity.

Cameron (1997: 49) points out that Butler's notion of performativity obliges us to look at 'the rigid regulatory frame' within which speakers make linguistic choices. There are norms that govern how individual speakers decide to perform either masculinity or femininity. However, although Butler acknowledges that such norms do have a huge influence on how gender is performed, she believes that men and women are fully capable of resisting and subverting these norms, although speakers who break from the expected norm may be subjected to negative evaluations.

Bergvall, Bing and Freed's (1996) edited collection is aimed at encouraging language and gender researchers to move forward from the power/dominance and culture/difference approaches and replace them with the view of gender as a performative social construct. As Giora (1998) points out, the book is an 'almost pioneering attempt at undermining binary thinking, presenting it as erroneous and misleading'. Within the collection, Freed (1996: 55) explicitly makes this point, arguing that the error in previous explanations of differences in male and female speech lies in viewing gender as 'simple bi-polar distinctions, and in believing in the existence of natural and inherent differences between women and men'. Freed advocates the need to concentrate on the significance of context and the notion of communities of practice, the

second tier of my framework, as the way forward to provide convincing and sophisticated language and gender research.

Greenwood's (1996) article in Bing, Bergvall and Freed's collection commences with her dismissal of the dominance and difference frameworks as 'rigid' and 'unyielding' (1996: 77). She disputes the claim that males interrupt females more (Zimmerman and West 1975, West 1984), and suggests that in some contexts gender is not the most salient factor in distinguishing linguistic behaviour. She demands that researchers pay more attention to other social variables which could be affecting their data, rather than automatically attributing every difference between male and female speech to gender differences.

It is hoped that outlining the view of gender as a performative social construct illustrates the value of using this concept in language and gender studies. It is interesting to observe that little work which follows the idea of gender as performative has taken place in the institutionalised setting of the workplace. As has already been pointed out, workplace discourse is relatively under-investigated in language and gender studies, and the majority of work to date tends to follow either the power/dominance approach (West 1984, 1990) or the culture/difference approach (Case 1994; Tannen 1994). Placing gender as performative at the crux of my framework will therefore add a new dimension to language and gender research in the workplace. Each participant in managerial business meetings will be viewed as performing their gender identity, along with other aspects of social identity, throughout the meetings in which they participate.

The communities of practice approach, the second tier of my framework, will now be outlined and then applied to examining discourse that takes place in managerial business meetings.

3. Communities of practice

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992a: 87) argue that the explanatory force of previous language and gender research has been weakened by the lack of 'a coherent theoretical framework'. This problem stems from the fact that both language and gender have been abstracted from the social practices in which they are produced, thus blurring the complex way in which they relate to one another. They assert that researchers need to connect each abstraction 'to a wide spectrum of social and linguistic practice' (1992a: 88), and they believe that this can be achieved by adopting the CofP approach.

Furthermore, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet point out that the findings of previous studies which conclude that men speak one way whilst women speak another (the power/dominance and culture/difference approaches) often imply that speakers who do not meet with the expectations for their own sex are deviant from some kind of normative model. They point out that the speech of those who demonstrate such deviant linguistic behaviour has too often been dismissed as simply 'noise in a basically

dichotomous system' (1992a: 91). They argue that these 'deviant' results amongst groups of women and groups of men are just as important to study as those which conform to the allegedly normative model. They therefore urge researchers to stop seeing differences as the major goal of research.

Drawing on work by Lave and Wenger (1991), Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992b: 464) define a CofP as:

> An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour.
> Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short – practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour.

Communities of practice can develop out of formal or informal enterprises, and members can be either *core* or *peripheral* depending on how integrated they are in a CofP. Communities of practice can survive changes in membership, they can be small or large, and they can come into existence and go out of existence. In a recent work, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999: 189) point out that the notion of a CofP could also extend to more global communities, such as academic fields, religions or professions. However, they point out that due to both the 'size' and 'dispersion' of these global communities, 'face-to-face interactions never link all members', and 'their "focal" practices are somewhat diffuse'. Therefore, there is a need to look at how meaning is made at a more local level.

3.1 The construction of gender identity in communities of practice

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992a: 93) point out that individuals 'participate in multiple communities of practice and their individual identity is based on the multiplicity of this participation'. Gender is produced and reproduced in different forms of membership in communities of practice, and an individual's exposure or access to communities of practice is related to other aspects of social identity as well as gender, including class, race, age etc. Gender is also produced and reproduced in differential forms of participation in a CofP and this is crucially linked to the place of such groups in wider society. Interestingly, they quote the workplace as a prime example of this, stating that females are more likely to be subordinate to males in the workplace as a consequence of their subordinate place in wider society. Furthermore, they acknowledge that relations between different communities of practice when they come together in overarching communities of practice can also work to produce and reproduce gender arrangements, an example of gender differentiation being reproduced at a wider, institutional level.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992a: 95) believe that individuals and communities of practice change constantly, and that our gendered sociolinguistic identities are transformed as we change and expand 'forms of femininity, masculinity, and gender

relations'. Similarities between the CofP framework and the view of gender as performative are especially clear here. As Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 180) point out, the CofP approach is clearly more 'compatible' with the social constructionist view of gender than other, 'less dynamic or activity focused concepts'. Echoing the work of Butler, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992b: 466) believe that the CofP approach enables researchers to focus on 'people's active engagement in the reproduction of or resistance to gender arrangements in their communities'.

In conclusion to their theory, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992a: 96) argue that in order to make reasonable and justifiable claims about language and gender, integration with researchers from a variety of disciplines is required. They argue that language and gender studies 'require an interdisciplinary community of scholarly practice', as is no longer acceptable to simply dismiss social theory on the grounds that we are "just linguists"- not if language and gender research is to have any kind of 'social or political responsibility'(1992a: 88). The 3-tier framework I present is of an interdisciplinary nature, which can hopefully contribute to the social and political responsibility of language and gender research. The view of gender as a performative social construct originated in Philosophy, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's own CofP approach comes from the discipline of Education, and although Fairclough is recognised primarily as a linguist, his CDA framework has been very influential in Media Studies. It is hoped that the diverse background of the three approaches goes some way in contributing to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's idea of setting up an 'interdisciplinary community of scholarly practice'.

3.2 Communities of practice and meeting discourse

Bergvall (1999: 279) points out that the CofP approach is an extremely beneficial way to examine contexts 'where gender roles are in flux or under challenge'. Gender roles are both in flux and under challenge in business management, as has already been pointed out in section 1. Bergvall goes on to argue that the CofP approach is also beneficial in situations where participants may be constructing different practices 'in response to differing social opportunities and settings, such as work within non-traditional fields' (1999: 279). Again, this is highly applicable to female managers, who may construct differing practices in response to the fact that they are now able to enter the workplace in the non-traditional field of management. The CofP approach thus appears to be an extremely beneficial framework to use when examining managerial discourse. It will now be elaborated and applied to the specific context of managerial business meetings.

In a review of the CofP approach, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) elaborate on Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's definition of a CofP by examining a later work produced by Wenger (1998). They quote three crucial dimensions which Wenger defines as essential to the existence of a CofP (1998: 76):

a) Mutual engagement.
b) A joint negotiated enterprise.
c) A shared repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated over time
(Cited in Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999: 175)

Holmes and Meyerhoff state that mutual engagement 'typically involves regular interaction'(1999: 175). Business meetings provide a good example of mutual engagement through regular interaction. Holmes and Meyerhoff define a joint negotiated enterprise as a 'process' which involves 'the complex relationships of mutual accountability that become part of the practice of the community'. Participants in business meetings are constantly involved in a joint negotiated enterprise as they are collectively making decisions for which they are mutually accountable.

In reference to a shared repertoire, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 176) point out that this is the 'joint resources for negotiating meaning' which participants share. These can include linguistic resources such as specialised terms, nicknames, and certain linguistic routines that are preferred for getting tasks accomplished which have become part of the 'community's practice'. There are numerous examples of shared repertoires of negotiable resources over time in business meetings, including acronyms for the structure of departments and divisions, positions within the company and product names. Participants in meetings can have nicknames, either for each other or for other people within their business at a higher or lower hierarchical level to themselves. Furthermore, in some meetings there is a preferred pattern of conducting business, such as going through the agenda items in a specific manner or order etc.

Wenger (1998: 130-1) details the CofP approach further by proposing that the following 14 points make up the critical characteristics of a CofP:

1. Sustained mutual relationships- harmonious or conflictual.
2. Shared ways of engaging in doing things together.
3. The rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation.
4. Absence of introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an on-going process.
5. Very quick set-up of a problem to be discussed.
6. Substantial overlap in participants' descriptions of who belongs.
7. Knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise.
8. Mutually defining identities.
9. The ability to assess the appropriateness of actions or products.
10. Specific tools, representations, and other artefacts.
11. Local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter.
12. Jargon and short cuts to communication as well as the ease of producing new ones.
13. Certain styles recognized as displaying membership.

14. A shared discourse that reflects a certain perspective on the world.
(Cited in Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999: 176)

In business meetings, sustained mutual relationships are evident (point 1), and it is important to emphasise that these can be harmonious or conflictual. This is a point which I feel Eckert and McConnell-Ginet neglect to highlight, as I believe the term community of practice, specifically the term 'community', carries an implicit assumption that the relationships within it will be of a harmonious nature. Meetings provide a prime example of a context where there is evidence of shared ways of doing things together (point 2), and this is often combined with the rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation (point 3).

However, points 4 and 5, absences of introductory preambles and the very quick set up of a problem to be discussed are not necessarily evident in meeting discourse. In an institutionalised setting such as a meeting, participants have pre-defined roles and power at a local level of discourse management constrains these roles. Points 4 and 5 of Wenger's model would probably be evident in a CofP in an informal, non-institutional setting. However, due to the constraints of the setting and participants' roles within this, introductory preambles are common in meetings, especially from the chair, as on many occasions, background information in the form of an introductory preamble will be necessary, and a problem may take a longer time to be set up because of this need for background detail. Therefore, Wenger's model needs to be more flexible in order to examine a CofP in an institutional setting.

Points 6-10 are evident in meetings. There is substantial overlap in participants' descriptions of who belongs (point 6). Participants are aware of what other participants know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise in meetings (point 7). They also have mutually defined identities (point 8), and they have the ability to assess the appropriateness of actions or products (point 9). Specific tools, representations and other artefacts are evident (point 10), with the meeting's agenda providing a good example of a specific tool. Point 11, local lore, shared stories, inside jokes and knowing laughter can occur in meetings, although this depends on the formality of the encounter. This relates back to the point made above, that the model needs to be more flexible in order to take into account the importance of the setting of the speech event.

Finally, points 12-14 are evident in meetings. There are jargon and short cuts to communication, as well as the ease of producing new ones (point 12), there is evidence of certain styles being recognised as displaying membership (point 13) and participants will have a shared discourse that reflects a certain perspective on the world (point 14).

Therefore, it appears that the CofP approach will be an extremely beneficial framework through which business meeting discourse can be examined, although Wenger's model does need to be more flexible to account for the formality of the context and the power relationships that exist between participants at a local level of discourse management.

Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999: 177) likewise note the value of using the CofP approach to examine interaction in the workplace. They argue that it can be used to assess different practices within different workplaces which can be of use to both employees and those 'outsiders' who wish to interact with company members.

3.3 Criticisms of the communities of practice approach

Bergvall (1999: 279) points out that although the CofP approach is a very successful method of examining adolescent speech, it may not be as successful when looking at adult speech. Lave and Wenger's (1991) CofP framework was specifically designed as a social theory of learning, and Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1995) use the CofP approach to examine how adolescents acquire specific social identities in high school. Bergvall (1999: 279) makes the point that the CofP approach will inevitably be successful for looking at how novices or adolescents acquire gender and other norms because this is precisely what the model was specifically designed to do. She argues that the work of Ehrlich (1999) and Freed (1999) demonstrates that the CofP approach may not be so successful when examining adult speech, as it is less able to account for 'social ascriptions' which are pre-existing rather than under construction (1999: 281). This problem reinforces the point made in section 3.2, that the CofP approach may need to be more flexible, not only to pay attention to the contextual setting, but also to take account of the fact that adult speech is being analysed in workplace discourse.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992b: 485) believe that the only way to examine language and gender is to conduct small-scale, ethnographic studies. They accuse large-scale quantitative studies of generalising about male and female speech patterns, resulting in the perpetuation of stereotypes. In a later work, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999: 190) recognise that they have been criticised for only examining local practice, thus 'wallowing in the complexity at the expense of searching for gender patterns'. However, they defend themselves by arguing that studies which look for patterns that generalise language and gender at best can only achieve 'correlated information' and this can never offer satisfactory explanatory accounts.

Bergvall (1999: 284) argues that by only examining practice at a local level, the CofP approach lacks a principled way to account for 'gender norms established prior to the local practice of gender, at the more global level of ideology and hegemony' (1999: 284). Bergvall is not denying the importance of studying local practices. Rather, she is pointing out that just looking at this level ignores the role ideology plays in shaping gender roles and expectations in society. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet do mention that gender arrangements can be produced and reproduced in overarching communities of practice (see section 3.1), but they do not elaborate on this in any way due to their firm commitment to concentrating only on local practices.

In order to examine the crucial influence of ideology, Bergvall (1999: 284) argues that a more general approach is required. She points out that much work which examines

ideology stems from the practice of CDA, and a number of researchers are now using CDA as a way to examine how ideology operates linguistically. Furthermore, an increasing number of language and gender researchers are recognising the importance of examining the crucial role language plays in the ideological construction of gender (McEhlinny 1997, Talbot 1998). She argues that: 'without the broader studies of ideologies at the textual and global levels, we cannot understand how interpretations of gender by gatekeeping elites are generated or spread' (1999: 288). Therefore, my model incorporates CDA as its third overarching level in order to examine the role that language plays in the ideological construction of gender identity.

4. Critical discourse analysis

CDA allows linguistic evidence to be analysed in terms of what it tells us about power relationships in wider society, including how the discourse strategies we use can, in turn, reproduce social relations which have become naturalised. The major practical aim of CDA is to stimulate critical awareness of language especially in terms of how existing discourse conventions result from power relations.

Fairclough (1995b) argues that CDA foregrounds the links between social practice and language, thus enabling a consideration of the global influences of both social institutions and social formations. By examining the macro power structures in society, the framework allows a detailed explanation of how the asymmetries which exist between participants in discourse events are produced and maintained. Fairclough believes that the question of how much discourse contributes to the reproduction of society's macro structures is at the heart of CDA.

Fairclough's analytical framework enables all communicative events to be examined from a critical perspective. There are three dimensions to his approach, which he defines as *text, discourse practice* and *sociocultural practice* (1995b: 57). He states that his definition of text refers to either oral or written discourse. Discourse practice refers to the manner in which texts are produced and consumed. Sociocultural practice refers to the social and cultural aspects of society in which the communicative event is set.

Fairclough believes that textual analyses should be mapped onto an analysis of the wider social and cultural context of practice, including relations of power and ideologies, and this will be achieved by examining sociocultural practice. The three elements are interconnected, in the sense that the link between textual and sociocultural levels is made by way of discourse practice. However, Fairclough makes the point that a study which uses the CDA framework does not have to examine all three analytical levels. His framework is interdisciplinary, and can be used by linguists, sociologists and media analysts alike. For example, he argues that concentration on discourse practices would really be applicable to the work of media analysts, as it involves investigating aspects such as the editorial transformations of texts.

Therefore, although Fairclough believes that it is important 'to maintain the comprehensive orientation to communicative events which is built into this framework' (1995b: 62), it is perfectly feasible to concentrate upon certain aspects of it when conducting CDA. Fairclough himself concentrates primarily on linguistic analyses of texts and includes selective sociocultural interpretations. This is the pattern I wish to suggest for examining the ideological implications of gender relations on managerial business discourse.

Fairclough (1995a: 37) argues that the discourse of social institutions should be analysed instead of casual conversation, as this enables important issues surrounding the role that institutional discourse plays in producing and maintaining society's power structure to be examined. CDA thus appears to be an extremely beneficial framework to use in the institutionalised setting of the workplace, enabling gender norms that have been established prior to the performance of gender identity in communities of practice to be examined.

4.1 Criticisms of critical discourse analysis

CDA has been criticised as a framework through which linguistic data and social practice can be examined. Widdowson (1995, 1996) firmly rejects Fairclough's approach. He claims that by looking at both linguistic data and social practice, too little or too much attention is paid to either the data or to the sociological interpretation of the results. Fairclough (1996) openly refutes such an allegation, arguing that Widdowson is being too narrow-minded, wanting to seal off linguistics from a social scientific analysis. I wholly agree with Fairclough as I believe the study of linguistics can play a very important part in distinguishing society's power structures and the influence they have on linguistic behaviour.

Widdowson also asserts that if you are ideologically committed, then you will say your interpretation is the only valid one. Again, Fairclough firmly rejects such an allegation. He points out that CDA is not a political party, and strategies of interpretation do vary. Fairclough accuses Widdowson of offering a 'classic liberal distinction between ideology and science' (1996: 52), and of viewing society simply 'as a voluntary association of free individuals' (1996: 54).

Toolan (1997) argues along similar lines to Widdowson, commenting that the major problem with CDA is that it claims to have found a universal truth which has eluded all previous researchers. He states that Fairclough is too critical and dismissive of previous research, and accuses him of trying to 'garner kudos' (1997: 87) for himself and other critical discourse analysts as being the first to really see the workings of power in discourse. Moreover, Toolan (1997: 87) points out that it must be realised that even as a critical discourse analyst, you yourself and your personal ideologies are still implicated in your work. This is something from which no researcher can escape, and thus requires acknowledgement:

> It is far preferable to concede that you cannot analyse or write about power, hegemony and dominance without yourself being implicated and compromised by the powerful and hegemonizing turns of your own discourse.

I believe it is crucial to recognise this point in order for research that follows the CDA framework to have credibility, and I fully intend to concede that I will be 'implicated' and 'compromised' by the 'powerful and hegemonizing turns' of my own discourse.

5. Conclusion

Talbot (1998: 150) points out the CDA framework and the notion of gender as a performative social construct can complement each other, as both perspectives are conscious of avoiding 'gender polarization' and both have a 'perception of gender as d*ynamic*'. It is hoped that I have demonstrated here, through a concentration on managerial business discourse, the value of using the communities of practice approach combined with a view of gender as a performative social construct and CDA. Using all three perspectives within a connected theoretical framework should therefore produce a thorough analysis which will address recent criticisms and hopefully provide a fruitful contribution to theoretical perspectives in language and gender research.

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Absurd Tricks with Bicycle Frames in the Text World of *The Third Policeman*

Joanna Gavins

1. Preview

The majority of the abundant existing academic material on Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* (1967 [1993]) can be seen to be mainly concerned with the analysis of the philosophical and scientific content of the text from a purely literary critical standpoint (e.g. Booker 1991, Clissman 1975, Doherty 1989, Kemnitz 1985, Spencer 1995). Simpson (1997) and (2000) are notable exceptions to this rule, employing a stylistic methodology to examine the discoursal incongruities contained within the text. These analyses aside, however, current understanding of the stylistic mechanisms at work within *The Third Policeman* remains relatively slight. The present study is intended not only as a further contribution to existing knowledge about the stylistics of O'Brien's text, but also as a unique exploration of its narrative structure from a specifically Cognitive Poetic perspective. The analysis which follows in section 3 below uses Text World Theory, as developed by Paul Werth (e.g. 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1999), as its methodological framework, the basic principles of which are explained in section 2. Like those analyses which have gone before it, my examination of the structure of *The Third Policeman* is by no means exhaustive. It does, however, provide a unique insight into the complex conceptual processes involved in our understanding of this absurd and often almost hallucinatory narrative experience.

2. Text World Theory

Like many proponents of the Cognitive Linguistics movement, Paul Werth began his career in generative linguistics. In his (1999) monograph, *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*, he reflects on both the benefits and the drawbacks of the generativist approach to language study. While he acknowledges the revitalising effect generative grammar had on the discipline of linguistics as a whole from the 1950s onwards, Werth also comments:

> in other terms, Linguistics, led by its flagship the Generative Enterprise, is heading for the asteroid belt. It is travelling in ever decreasing circles, using more and more complex devices to talk about smaller and smaller fragments of language.
>
> (Werth 1999:19)

Werth accuses generativists of having actively distorted their observations, simplifying or normalising data in order to confirm pre-formed hypotheses, with those aspects of language not susceptible to formalist treatment being simply shelved or ignored. He proposes 'a more human linguistics' (1999:18); a Cognitive Discourse Grammar, sharing the same anti-objectivist research commitments as those set out by George Lakoff, as follows:

> For me, cognitive linguistics is defined by two primary commitments… The generalisation commitment is a commitment to characterizing the general principles governing all aspects of human language… The cognitive commitment is a commitment to make one's account of human language accord with what is generally known about the mind and brain, from other disciplines as well as our own.
>
> (Lakoff 1990:40)

Yet while Werth's approach to linguistic study appears to be broadly in line with that of the rest of Cognitive Linguistics on the surface, Lakoff and his colleagues do not escape his criticism either. In particular, Werth points out that, despite numerous grand gestures made towards the development of a fully experiential account of *real* human language, the majority of recent cognitive analyses has been limited to sentence-level phenomena. As far as Werth is concerned, such limitation can only result in an account of discourse which is as fundamentally distorted and contrived as any observation offered in the objectivist tradition.

Werth argues that a proper engagement with the problems of context is an essential foundation for a full understanding of the complexities of discourse. Ensuring that one's data is taken from real, extended text is the first step towards this, since its basic properties may be fundamentally different from those of artificially constructed text fragments. This is now a familiar argument in the field of Cognitive Poetics, the reasons for which are outlined by Cathy Emmott below:

> - Real text often has a hierarchical structure. A reader needs to be able to recognise this structure in order to be able to 'orientate' him/herself, but also to be able to interpret certain items at sentence level, such as pronouns.
> - In real text, the meaning of an individual sentence is derived partly from the surrounding sentences, the textual context.
> - Real text requires the reader to be able to draw on stored information from the preceding text (and general knowledge).
> - Stored information from the preceding text may also be used to assist interpretation by narrowing down the possibilities, such as when a reference item could in theory denote several referents.
> - Real text has 'connectivity'. Sentences are organized so that they flow on from each other and this connection is often signalled linguistically.
>
> (Emmott 1997:75)

As well as the textual context mentioned here, Werth argues that any truly experiential discourse model should also be able to deal with the wider social and cultural context which surrounds the text's production and reception. The first level of his Text World Theory, the *discourse world*, is designed to deal with precisely that aspect of human communication.

The discourse world is the immediate situation surrounding one speaker or writer and one or more listeners or readers, participating in a joint language venture. The sentient beings at this level of Text World Theory are known as the *participants*, and their presence is crucial to the experiential nature of the discourse world. This is to say that the immediate situation is not merely a collection of objects and entities at a certain time and place, but rather a 'state of affairs conceived of by the participants' (Werth 1995a:50). As far as Werth is concerned, until the participants have registered and experienced the immediate situation, until they have processed whatever conceptual information it presents, its constituent parts alone cannot truly constitute a state of affairs. Furthermore, Werth's model of the discourse world contains not only the participants and all those elements immediately manifest to them, but also all the personal and cultural background knowledge they bring with them to the language event. Werth admits that this experiential baggage is, in principle, 'no less than *all* the knowledge available… to the whole human race' (Werth 1999:117), yet its inclusion in the discourse world is vital, since it has the potential to effect not only the choice of language used, but how each participant receives and interprets that communication.

Werth's proposed solution to the apparent unwieldiness of context is to introduce a principle of *text-drivenness* into his model of discourse processing. This principle specifies that the *text* constructed during the course of the language event will enable the participants to discern and activate, from the wealth of personal and cultural experience potentially available to them, only those areas of knowledge needed to make sense of the discourse at hand. Following Fillmore (1982 and 1985), Werth claims that the composite structure of such knowledge is essentially *frame*-based; stored as coherent schematisations of experience which allow efficient retrieval and deployment at a later date. Thus, the content of a discussion on football, for example, and specifically the occurrence of linguistic patterns stored as part of a football knowledge-frame, will signal to the participants involved that associated knowledge of that game will be more useful to them during the discourse process than, say, their knowledge of baking a cake or changing a tyre.

Though based on a prototype of face-to-face communication, Werth claims that his model of the discourse world extends to *all* language events, from telephone conversations to written communication of all types. Furthermore, he claims that the participants in all cases manage their behaviour according to certain co-operative principles, which he terms the 'Principles of Discourse' (Werth 1999:49) and which draw obvious influence from Grice (1975):

> (i) **Communicativeness** (informativeness): discourses should normally be assumed to be *purposive*, and to be *efficient* in prosecuting their purposes, unless there is evidence to the contrary.
> (ii) **Coherence**… except in pathological cases, entities, events and propositions are not introduced into the Common Ground superfluously…

> (iii) **Co-operativeness** (responsibility, authoritativeness and reliability): the participants in a discourse tacitly agree to jointly negotiate a Common Ground as efficiently as is consistent with the other principles.
>
> (Werth 1999:49-50)

Werth considers the participants in all discourses to be involved in the joint and deliberate negotiation of the 'Common Ground' mentioned here. Common Ground basically constitutes all those propositions expressed during the discourse, together with any propositions evoked from the participants' background knowledge. Werth claims, however, that propositions are '*incremented'* into the Common Ground only once they have been assessed for truthfulness and reliability by the hearer or reader; a process based, more often than not, on his or her perception of the speaker's authority. The conceptual space in which the Common Ground is constructed is known as the *text world*.

Text worlds, then, are mental representations which can be seen to bear some resemblance to Fauconnier's (1994) mental spaces. However, unlike Mental Space Theory and, indeed, the Possible Worlds theories which preceded it (e.g. Kripke 1972, Lewis 1973, 1986), all the levels of Text World Theory are constitutionally equivalent. This means that, though mental constructs, the text world and all its contents are as richly detailed and realistic as the discourse world from which they spring. Text worlds are also deictic spaces, the boundaries of which are defined by the deictic and referential elements contained within the text. These deictic and referential elements Werth calls *world-building elements*. They denote the basic deictic arrangement of the text world and can be seen to provide some sense of setting, including time, place and characters. What the text is actually 'about' is composed of *function-advancing propositions*. These relate to the actions, events or arguments involving the entities present in the text world, as well as any predications made about them. The separate discourse functions these elements may advance are numerous and include the advancement of plot, in the case of narrative texts; the advancement of an argument, in discursive texts; and advancement towards a particular goal, in instructive or imperative texts. The distinction Werth draws between world-builders and function-advancers, then, can be seen to be derived from the same basic figure/ground distinction, originating in Gestalt psychology, which informs the majority of Cognitive Linguistic thinking.

Once the boundaries of the text world are established and the discourse is progressing, further conceptual layers may be created. These layers are known as *sub-worlds*, which can be of three main types and may occur for a number of reasons. Firstly, *deictic* sub-worlds occur whenever the basic world-building parameters of the text world vary. These variations may be initiated by either the participants, choosing to focus on a different time, location or set of entities, or by characters creating deictic departures from within the text (in their narration of memories, for example). Such character flashbacks may have as their world-building elements predicates like *remember* and *recall* and are the most common form of temporal alternation. They work by taking the narrated action out of the existing temporal parameters of the text world and into a

previous time frame. Variations in the temporal co-ordinates of the text world frequently also cause a subsequent variation in its spatial parameters as well. This is particularly common with flashbacks, which often project the reader into a sub-world which depicts both a different time and a different place. Werth also includes any shift in tense in the main text world, as well as instances of Direct Speech, as typical examples of deictic sub-world builders. He explains:

> [Direct Speech] is not normally thought of as a temporal variation at all, but its main effect is to change the basic time-signature of the text world, for example by injecting some Present Tense utterances into a Past Tense narrative. This takes us, as it were, directly into the character's discourse world: the tenses used are then regrouped around the ST of this discourse world, rather than that of the participants.
>
> (Werth 1999:221)

Spatial deictic sub-worlds may also occur without a change in time-signature. Werth (1999:224) describes these worlds as the '"Meanwhile, back at the ranch" variety' which act as windows onto other concurrent scenes.

Attitudinal sub-worlds are divided into three central areas of conceptual activity, which again may be undertaken by either the participants or the characters. They relate to either *desire* (want-worlds), *belief* (believe-worlds) or *purpose* (intend-worlds). The first of these, want-worlds, have as their world-building elements such predicates as *wish*, *want*, *hope* and *dream*. Werth explains:

> they build a more or less remote sub-world whose function it is to state what it would take to satisfy the desire. At its simplest, this stipulation might be that such and such an entity should exist. More complex desire worlds may contain further conditions on the properties to be possessed by the entity in question.
>
> (Werth 1999:230)

Advertisements for job vacancies provide a useful example of the sorts of fulfilment conditions one might expect to find set out in the complex want-worlds that Werth describes above. Similarly, believe-worlds occur when a character or participant expresses a degree of belief in a particular proposition. The sentence *John believes Alice is lying*, for example, sets up a remote world in which *Alice is lying* holds. John's attitude to the proposition (i.e. he believes it) is then relativised to that remote world. Finally, intend-worlds relate to those speech-acts or propositional attitudes clustered around the concept of *intending future action*. Werth includes promises, offers, commands and requests as intend-world builders. He acknowledges that there is some degree of overlap between intend-worlds and want-worlds. However, though the fulfilment of want-worlds may involve some form of future action, Werth argues that, unlike with intend-worlds, there is no intention to carry that action out.

Epistemic sub-worlds cover any remoteness or hypotheticality expressed within the text world. Conditional constructions are a typical example of such sub-world builders and function in a similar way to the belief-contexts discussed above. For example, the sentence *If Doncaster Rovers get promoted to the third division, I'll lay an egg* can be seen to construct an initial situation (in which Doncaster Rovers are promoted to the third division) which is unrealised and remote from the originating text world. This is followed in the second clause by an event which takes that situation to a further point or conclusion. Indirect Speech is another typical example of an epistemic sub-world builder. We have seen above that an instance of Direct Speech will set up a sub-world with different deictic co-ordinates to the text world in which it occurs. Indirect Speech is a means of further shifting the relationship between those two worlds. Consider the following examples:

Direct: 'I like playing golf on Saturdays', said Jack.
Indirect: Jack said he liked playing golf on Saturdays.

Werth (1999:241) notes that where Direct Speech contains the original words spoken, the narrativised account of the Indirect version moves one tense backwards, suggesting a shift in epistemic distance rather than temporal setting. I have argued (Gavins 2001) that Indirect Thought is similarly epistemic sub-world building, as is any instance of remoteness expressed through the epistemic modal system. This includes use of modal auxiliaries such as *must*, *could* and *might*, and modal lexical verbs such as *think* and *suppose*.

As I have already mentioned above, all of the sub-worlds detailed here may be created either by the participants or by the characters. When participants at the discourse world level are responsible for the construction of either a text world or a sub-world they are free, particularly in face-to-face communication, to question the statements contained within those worlds and to clarify any aspect of the discourse they do not understand. When characters at the text world level communicate, however, the reliability of the worlds that they create cannot be assessed according to the same criteria as those produced at the discourse world level. As Werth points out:

> as we shift our focus of attention to the text world level, it is the text world, rather than the discourse world which provides our conceptual backcloth, and truth, probability, reliability and relevance are calculated no longer with respect to the participants, but instead with respect to the characters.
>
> (Werth 1999:210-211)

To explain his reasoning further, Werth gives the following example of a witness in a court case:

> the witness is allowed to say that he or she has seen and spoken to a certain person, but all references to anything reported by that person have to be discounted as hearsay. Why does the law make that distinction? Because, in a court case, the witness, the judge, the prosecution and defence, and the

> jury are all co-present: they are all participants. Witnesses are, therefore, open to questioning about what they say – indeed this is the function of the procedure. Furthermore, they are under oath: this corresponds to a formalisation of the tacit principle of co-operativeness
>
> (Werth 1999:214)

What a witness has seen, then, is acceptable evidence, since he or she can be interrogated about it, but what a witness may have heard through report is inadmissible, since the court cannot directly question the person responsible for saying it. Werth goes on:

> In terms of the court discourse world, the absent informant is not a participant but a character. Unlike a witness, a character cannot be questioned and is bound by no oath to comply with the principles of discourse.
>
> (Werth 1999:214)

This distinction is essentially founded on the logical notion of *accessibility*. A world created by the participants may also be accessed by them, since they have sufficient information to assess it for truth and to follow any inferences and reference chains contained within it. The participants, however, are unable to access worlds created by characters, since they exist at a level removed from the immediate situation. The information contained within a character world, Werth (1999:213) argues, can only be stored for possible future processing. In accordance with this reasoning Werth makes an important distinction between *participant-accessible sub-worlds* and *character-accessible sub-worlds*:

> A participant-accessible sub-world is one in which the basic text-world parameters remain set as they are, but the participants temporarily depart from them. Since, in the world referred to by the text, the participants are responsible for this departure, the details remain bound by the principles of discourse, and normal discourse processes (reference chaining, inference drawing) continue to go through. A character-accessible sub-world is one in which the text-world parameters are departed from under the responsibility of a character, and hence in a way which is unpredictable and irrecoverable from the point of view of a participant (the reader, say).
>
> (Werth 1999:214-215)

The text world analysis of *The Third Policeman* which follows demonstrates how each of the levels of Text World Theory operate within a narrative structure, as well as how certain narratives create worlds which are more difficult to manage than others.

3. The Text World of *The Third Policeman*

Like the discourse worlds of all written communication, that which surrounds the production and interpretation of *The Third Policeman* is split, with the author and the reader occupying separate spatio-temporal points. As such, the reader cannot rely on the comprehension aids normally available in face-to-face-communication, such as body language, tone of voice and so on, to help him or her make sense of the discourse at hand. The text itself becomes the most important source of information from which a text world may be built. Despite the absence of human contact, however, the reader approaches the written language situation expecting to find the same levels of co-operation and coherence as those which form the basis of face-to-face conversation. The text, in the case of *The Third Policeman*, opens as follows:

> Not everybody knows how I killed old Mathers, smashing his jaw in with my spade; but first it is better to speak of my friendship with John Divney because it is he who first knocked old Mathers down by giving him a great blow in the neck with a special bicycle-pump which he manufactured himself out of a hollow iron bar. Divney was a strong civil man but he was lazy and idle-minded. He was personally responsible for the whole idea in the first place. It was he who told me to bring my spade. He was the one who gave me the orders on the occasion and also the explanations when they were called for.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:7)

The first thing to note about this opening is the lack of deictic detail it offers the reader, by which he or she might normally establish the temporal and spatial boundaries of the text world. It nominates a few characters as present (the narrator, Mathers and John Divney), plus an accompanying spade and a bicycle-pump, but gives no further information about the precise time or place in which the story is set. The first clause of the opening passage also contains a change in tense, from the present continuous 'knows' to the simple past 'killed'. This is a deictic alternation, a flashback, which shifts the reader's focus to a separate time-zone; the first time-zone being the narrator's here and now and the second being a previous time when a murder took place. I have also argued in Gavins (2001) that our understanding of the passage is further complicated by the epistemic modal construction also contained within its opening clause. The modal lexical verb 'know' signifies that the function-advancing details of the murder which follow belong in a remote sub-world at a further epistemic distance from the world in which 'not everybody' exists. This complex conceptual structure is best illustrated and explained through the text world diagram in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 employs the same notation as Werth's own text world illustrations (the format for which is laid out in Werth 1999:xvi-xvii). The initial text world is shown on the far left of the diagram, divided into its constituent world-building (WB) and function-advancing (FA) elements. Since this world is only briefly established by the clause 'Not everybody knows', its world-builders are predictably limited. We know that the narrator and a group of people defined only as 'not everybody' exist as characters (c) in the text

world, but its exact time (t) and location (l) remain unclear. In the function-advancing section of the text world the modal lexical verb, from which the epistemic sub-world to its immediate right originates, is also shown. Since Werth accounts only for the sub-world building properties of a limited number of modalised propositions, the specific (MOD) notation is my own addition to Text World Theory (Gavins 2001). Figure 1 also shows how a shift in tense in the new world immediately creates a further embedded sub-world relating to Mathers' murder. In this final, more detailed conceptual layer the vertical arrows signify the actions and events it contains, while the horizontal arrows show any arguments or predications made about its characters. Since the details of the murder have been narrated to us by a participating character, constituting an Internal Type A narration in Fowler's (1986) terms, this world is only character-accessible. Coupled with the ever-increasing epistemic distance of the narration, made apparent in Figure 1, this means that the reader's introduction to the text world of *The Third Policeman* is conceptually somewhat shaky. This is a predominantly function-advancing passage, holding few clues to the spatio-temporal setting of the events described, presented at considerable epistemic distance by a narrator whose reliability is impossible to gauge. Such vague beginnings are not unusual in narrative fiction; the majority of novels give little away in their first lines, drawing the reader inwards and often raising more questions than they answer. What is unusual about *The Third Policeman*, however, is how little the novel's clarity improves as the narration progresses.

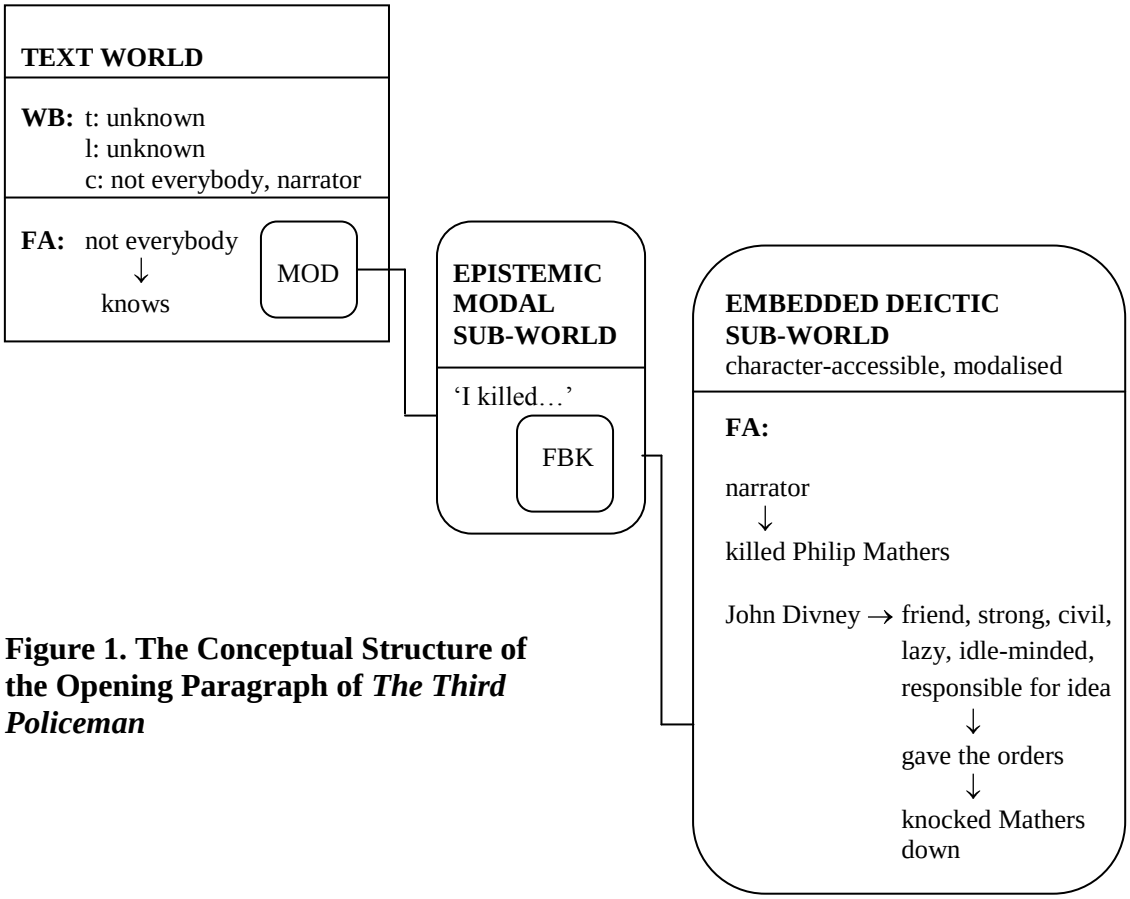

Figure 1. The Conceptual Structure of the Opening Paragraph of *The Third Policeman*

The remainder of Chapter One continues straightforwardly enough, providing a detailed account of the narrator's personal history along the same heavily function-advancing lines as the novel's opening paragraph. The narrator describes his early upbringing and schooling away from home, the death of his parents and the subsequent appointment, in his absence, of John Divney as caretaker of their pub. His relationship with Divney on his return home from school develops from initial distrust, through extreme intimacy (as he takes to following and even sleeping with Divney, in order to keep an eye on his movements), to an eventual conspiracy. To rescue themselves from the financial ruin which looms as a result of Divney's mismanagement of the pub, the two men plan to rob and murder a local retired cattle-trader, Mathers. They wait for the old man at the side of a country road near his home, hit him over the head and steal his black money box. As the narrator finishes Mathers off with a spade, however, Divney makes off with the box, telling his co-conspirator that he has hidden it under the floorboards in Mathers' own home. It is during the narrator's later return to that scene, to recover his new fortune, that the nature of his narration undergoes a dramatic transformation:

> Without stopping to light another match I thrust my hand bodily into the opening and just when it should be closing about the box, something happened.
>
> I cannot hope to describe what it was but it had frightened me very much long before I had understood it even slightly. It was some change which came upon me or upon the room, indescribably subtle, yet momentous, ineffable. It was as if the daylight had changed with unnatural suddenness, as if the temperature of the evening had altered greatly in an instant or as if the air had become twice as rare or twice as dense as it had been in the twinkling of an eye; perhaps all of these and other things happened together for all my senses were bewildered all at once and could give me no explanation.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:24)

The confident, declarative tone which has characterised the storytelling up to this point is suddenly replaced with one of confusion and uncertainty, articulated through an array of epistemic modality. With no clear idea of what has happened to him, the narrator relies on perceived changes in his physical environment to describe his bewildering predicament, expressed modally in such phrases as '*as if* the daylight had changed', '*as if* the temperature had altered' and '*as if* the air had become twice as dense'. Furthermore, the narrator shows little trust in what his senses are telling him, adding '*perhaps* all of these and other things happened' and admitting 'all my senses were bewildered all at once and could give me no explanation'. This new narrative structure is comparable to that identified at work within Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* (1950) by Simpson (1993:51-53). Molloy's narration fluctuates in a similar manner between a subjective, first person narration, typically associated with Fowler's (1986) Internal Type A, and a more externalised, Type D narration, typified by the frequent use of perception modality or 'words of estrangement'. In Text World Theory terms, I have argued in Gavins (2001) that the confused modality of *The Third Policeman* adds another conceptual layer to the text world structure shown in Figure 1. The narrator's

perceptions form an epistemic modal sub-world embedded within the deictic sub-world of the main narrative, shown to the far right of the diagram. The contents of this world are character-accessible and are not only conceptually positioned at an epistemic distance yet further from the reader's here and now, but are also explicitly doubted by their own narrator.

The questionable reliability of the narrator's perspective continues to be foregrounded as he becomes increasingly distressed by his confused state, upset not least by the appearance of Mathers' ghost. Following this incident the modality of the novel changes again:

> *I decided* in some crooked way that the best thing to do was to believe what my eyes were looking at rather than to place my trust in a memory. *I decided* to show unconcern, to talk to the old man and to test his own reality by asking about the black box which was responsible, if anything could be, for each of us being the way we were. *I made up my mind* to be bold because *I knew* I was in great danger. *I knew* that I would go mad unless I got up from the floor and moved and talked and behaved in as ordinary a way as possible.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:27, *my emphasis*)

As if to pre-empt any doubts about the narrator's dependability, a renewed decisiveness is expressed through positive epistemic modality with all traces of previous confusion removed. This self-confidence is not long-lived, however, once Mathers' ghost enquires after the narrator's name:

> I was surprised at this question. It had no bearing on my own conversation but I did not notice its irrelevance because I was shocked to realize that, simple as it was, I could not answer it. *I did not know* my name, *did not remember* who I was. *I was not certain* where I had come from or what my business was in that room. I found *I was sure of nothing* save my search for the black box. But I knew that the other man's name was Mathers, and that he had been killed with a pump and spade. I had no name.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:32, *my emphasis*)

Despite the narrator's earlier assertions of his trust in his own judgement, the realisation that he lacks knowledge as basic as his own name undermines our faith in his reliability once again.

Nevertheless, based on expectations of co-operation mapped directly from the discourse world level, the majority of readers will persevere with their efforts to construct a solid and coherent text world from the narrator's erratic and untrustworthy commentary. They are encouraged along this path by the intermittent presence of footnotes running alongside the main narrative which, on first impressions, seem to add weight to the narrator's authority. The footnotes all relate to the work of de Selby, an eccentric

scientist and philosopher, in whom the narrator claims to have an intellectual interest. On the bizarre suggestion from Mathers' ghost that all human beings have a 'colour', for example, which he claims is determined by the colour of the prevailing wind at the time of their birth, the narrator makes the following note:

> [4] It is not clear whether de Selby had heard of this but he suggests (*Garcia*, p.12) that night, far from being caused by the commonly accepted theory of planetary movements, was due to accumulations of 'black air' produced by certain volcanic activities of which he does not treat in detail. See also p.79 and 945, *Country Album*. Le Fournier's comment (in *Homme ou Dieu*) is interesting. 'On se saura jamais jusqu'à quel point de Selby fut cause de la Grande Guerre, mais, sans aucun doute, ses théories excentriques – spécialement celle que nuit n'est pas un phénomène de nature, mais dans l'atmosphere d'un etat malsain amené par un industrialisme cupide et sans pitié – auraient l'effet de produire un trouble profond dans les masses.'
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:33)

From their frame-knowledge of similar texts, most readers would recognise the format in which this information is presented as that of academic prose; a genre which one might normally expect to convey reasonably reliable and authoritative information. Indeed, the narrator provides a neat summary of de Selby's ideas, complete with additional quotes from a suitably obscure French critic and full references to the work of both de Selby and his commentator. The absurd content of the footnote, however, is the reader's first clue to the myth of authority being created through its form, a confidence trick which can be further exposed with the help of a second text world diagram, Figure 2 below.

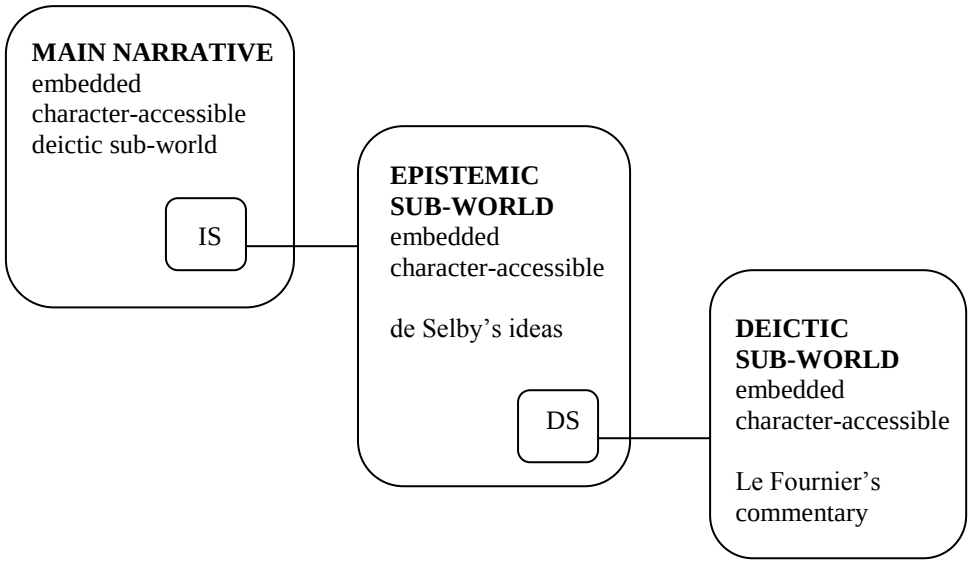

Figure 2. Embedded Worlds

Once again, an epistemic sub-world is formed, this time from the Indirect Speech (IS) contained in the narrator's footnotes, which is embedded in the world of the main narrative. That world, previously shown to the far right of Figure 1, you may recall, is also embedded and, thus, already twice removed from the initial text world. Consequently, the real epistemic value of the narrator's footnotes is negligible since, at this conceptual distance, their reliability and truth are utterly inaccessible and unverifiable by the reader. Furthermore, the narrator's quotes from Le Fournier are, like all Direct Speech (DS), also sub-world forming and, thus, yet more remote from the reader's here and now. As such, there can be no possibility of any of the narrator's information on de Selby being incremented into the Common Ground. Rather, as Werth argues, it can only be held for possible future processing should further evidence of its reliability become available to the reader.

The narrator eventually leaves Mathers' house, and his ghost, and sets out on a quest to retrieve the black box. His first stop is a police barracks where Mathers has told him he will be able obtain a gown which will allow him to predict his life expectancy. Quite how this knowledge will assist the narrator's search for the box is never made clear. Nevertheless, the narrator arrives at the barracks and is greeted by the large, red-faced Sergeant Pluck who asks, 'Is it about a bicycle?' This enquiry is unlikely to be out of place in the reader's frame-knowledge of police and their likely responsibilities and interests. As such, it presents little cognitive challenge on first impressions. However, though the narrator immediately answers 'no', the conversation continues as follows:

> 'Are you sure?' he asked.
> 'Certain.'
> 'Not about a motor-cycle?'
> 'No.'
> 'One with overhead valves and a dynamo for a light?'
> 'No.'
> 'In that circumstantial eventuality there can be no question of a motor-bicycle'…
> 'Tell me,' he continued, 'would it be true that you are itinerant dentist and that you came on a tricycle?'
> 'It would not,' I replied.
> 'On a patent tandem?'
> 'No.'
> 'Dentists are an unpredictable coterie of people,' he said, 'Do you tell me it was a velocipede or a penny-farthing?'
> 'I do not,' I said evenly.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:57-58)

The Sergeant's pursuit of the topic beyond his co-participant's first negative response violates all of our frame-based expectations of how such an encounter should proceed. Even more remarkable, however, is the narrator's complicity in this highly infelicitous exchange. At no point does he signal any desire to bring the interaction with the

Sergeant to a close, protesting no further against its pointlessness than his minimal negative turns. The structure of the passage is one repeated on a number of occasions throughout the course of the novel. One of which, also an exchange between the narrator and Sergeant Pluck, is analysed in detail by Simpson (1997) and (2000). For the purposes of the present analysis, however, it is sufficient to note the further damage inflicted on the reader's trust in the narrator by his behaviour during this particular interaction.

As I have already mentioned above, despite mounting evidence of the narrator's psychosis, most readers will continue, and possibly take pleasure, in the attempt to construct a solid and coherent text world based on the information presented through his perspective. This enterprise is aided in the latter sections of the novel by an increase in the world-building detail offered by the text:

> It was a queer country we were in. There was a number of blue mountains around us at what you might call a respectful distance with a glint of white water coming down the shoulders of one or two of them and they kept hemming us in and meddling with our minds. Half-way to these mountains the view got clearer and was full of humps and hollows and long parks of fine bogland with civil people here and there in the middle of it working with long instruments, you could hear their voices calling across the wind and the crack of the dull carts on the roadways. White buildings could be seen in several places and cows shambling lazily from here to there in search of pasture.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:80)

This passage is perhaps one of the most heavily descriptive in the entire novel, providing enough deictic and referential information for the reader to build a richly detailed mental representation of the narrator's surroundings. Our patience is also encouraged by a recurring pre-empting of our doubts by the narrator himself:

> I knew the Sergeant was talking the truth and if it was a question of taking my choice, it was possible that I would have to forego the reality of all the simple things my eyes were looking at.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:89)

Here, the narrator assures the reader of his confidence in the truth of a story told to him by Sergeant Pluck about a number of local people who, having spent so much time riding their bicycles, found that not only had their personalities had become intertwined with those of their chosen means of transport but that, as a result of 'an exchange of atoms', they had in fact become half-human and half-bicycle.

Sufficient appeasement of the reader by such means is the key to the success of the final twist in the tale of *The Third Policeman*. The narrator's quest eventually brings him full circle, back to the scene of Mathers' murder and inside the walls of the old man's house.

There, he meets the third policeman, Policeman Fox, who he describes as having the face and voice of Mathers. The following exchange takes place between them:

> 'I thought you were dead!'…
> 'That is a nice thing to say,' he said, 'but it is no matter because I thought the same thing about yourself. I do not understand your unexpected corporality after the morning on the scaffold.'
> 'I escaped,' I stammered.
> He gave me long searching glances.
> 'Are you sure?' he asked.
> Was I sure? Suddenly I felt horribly ill as if the spinning of the world in the firmament had come against my stomach for the first time, turning it all to bitter curd.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:189)

Should the reader's text world, painstakingly constructed over the course of the novel, manage to withstand the strain of this extraordinary encounter, the narrator's next visit, to Divney himself, ensures the collapse of even the most concrete conceptual foundations:

> He sobbed convulsively where he lay and began to cry and mutter things disjointedly like a man raving at the door of death. It was about me. He told me to keep away. He said I was not there. He said I was dead. He said that what he had put under the boards in the big house was not the black box but a mine, a bomb. It had gone up when I touched it. He had watched the bursting to bits of it from where I had left him. I was dead. He screamed to me to keep away. I was dead for sixteen years.
>
> (O'Brien 1967 [1993]:203)

The narrator, then, has been dead since Chapter Two. More specifically, he has been dead since 'something happened' on page 24. The cognitive effect of this revelation lacks a descriptive term under the Text World Theory model. However, an approximate explanation of how a reader might deal with the challenge of a disintegrating text world can be found within Cathy Emmott's (1997) *Narrative Comprehension* framework. Emmott identifies a number of possible instances when readers may 'miscue' on textual signals and be forced to repair their text world at a later point. The examples she uses of this phenomenon are, in the main, the results of inattention on the part of the reader, rather than any deliberate deception contained within the text. Nevertheless, the idea of *world-repair* seems to provide a perfect account of the cognitive effort readers must invest if they are to salvage the wreckage of their mental representation of the text *The Third Policeman*. With our suspicions of narratorial unreliability confirmed, the quest for the black box may thus be re-evaluated as one man's ghostly journey through an absurd and hellish landscape. A journey which, it seems, is destined to last beyond its sixteen years as, joined by the recently deceased Divney, the narrator returns to the police barracks and to the familiar greeting of Sergeant Pluck – 'Is it about a bicycle?'

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Words and Weapons: *The Battle of Brunanburh*

Jayne Carroll

1 Introduction

'An unrestrained song of triumph', whose poet is 'a gifted and well-trained publicist.'[1] These phrases describe *The Battle of Brunanburh*, the poetic annal for 937 in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. *Brunanburh* celebrates the victory of the Anglo-Saxons, led by West Saxon king Athelstan and his brother Edmund, over a Norse-Scots coalition, led by Dublin Viking Óláfr Guðfriðsson—Anlaf in the poem—and Scottish king Constantine II. That the poem has a panegyric function, glorifying the English at the expense of their enemies, is indisputable. The purpose of this paper is to examine a few of the ways in which this is done: more specifically, how the linguistic patterning of the poem contributes to its effect. The full text of the poem is provided as an Appendix, along with a translation.

2 Verbal Structure in *The Battle of Brunanburh*

So, *Brunanburh* is an exercise in glorification; propaganda we might say, for the West Saxon royal line. It is with some surprise then, that we note how much space is given over to the description of their enemies. The distribution of lines is given in Table 1. Only nineteen of its seventy-one lines have the English (individuals and group) both as subject matter *and as grammatical subject*, while thirty-six have their enemies, the coalition of Norsemen and Scots, as subject matter and grammatical subject.[2] Eighteen lines are descriptive, and cannot be allotted to either side, although they are linked thematically to the English.

English	**Invaders**	**Descriptive**
1–10a	10b–12a	12b–17a 'sun' passage
20b–25	17b–20a	60–65a beasts of battle
57–59	26-56	65b–73 migration

Table 1: assignment of clauses in *Brunanburh*

How then, does the poet glorify the English, if they have such a small piece of the action? One answer may be found in the examination of the verbs used.

[1] The opinions of Klaeber and Dobbie, quoted in Dobbie (1942), p. xl..

[2] The descriptive 'beasts of battle' passage does have the English forces as implied grammatical subject, but this passage is not about the activities of the English.

2.1 Invaders as grammatical subject.

Turning first of all to the verbs which have the Invaders as grammatical subject, and which are listed in the second Table. As you can see, a significant proportion of these verbs are either intransitive verbs (i.e. verbs which do not take a direct object) or 'passive-type' constructions (i.e. a form of the verb 'to be' *wesan, beon* or *weorðan* with a past participle).[3] Of seventeen main verbs, 11 are intransitive and four are passive:[4]

intransitive		**passive**		**transitive**	
crungun (perished)	10	geflemed wearð (were put to flight)	32	gesohtun [land] (sought land)	27
feollan (fell)	12	gebeded [wearð] (were compelled)	33	generede [feorh] (preserved life)	36
læg (lay)	17	befylled [wæs] (was deprived)	41	forlet [his sunu] (abandoned his son)	42
lægun (lay)	28	beslagen [wæs] (was deprived)	42		
gewat (departed)	35				
com (came)	37				
þorfte +inf (needed [not] to)	39				
þorfte +inf	44				
þorftun +inf	47				
plegodon (played)	52				
gewitan +inf (departed)	53				

Table 2: verbs with invaders as grammatical subject[5]

In addition to the mains verbs listed under **intransitive** in the table, the three infinitives which follow the main verb *þurfan* (39, 44, 47) are also intransitive:

hreman (to exult)	39
gelpan (to boast)	44
hlehhan (to laugh)	47

[3] By 'passive-type' I mean the verbs *beon/wesan* teamed with the past participle. Henceforth I shall refer to this as passive.

[4] Past participles which function as adjectives e.g. *aswefede* (30), *ageted* (12), *scoten* (19), are discussed below.

[5] The verbs in brackets indicate that the past participle shares its auxiliary verb with another past participle or adjective.

The extensive use of the passive is supported by the use of past participles which are used as adjectives (i.e. they do not follow *beon/wesan* or *weorðan*):

garum ageted (destroyed by spears)	18a
ofer scild scoten (shot over shields)	19a
sweordum aswefede (put to sleep with swords)	30a
wundun forgrunden (destroyed by wounds)	43b

It is very difficult to distinguish between the past participles which form a passive construction with *beon/wesan* or *weorðan* and these adjectives. Their use implies a 'silent' auxiliary verb, and they can be seen as being 'passive' in meaning. The fact that *garum ageted* (18a), *ofer scild scoten* (19a), *sweordum aswefede* (30a) follow *licgan* 'to lie' strengthens the argument that these phrases are passive in meaning. Modern English grammarians class 'to lie' as a copula verb and therefore semantically similar to the verb 'to be'.[6]

To extend this argument, the adjective *sceard* 'deprived' (line 40) functions in a similar 'passive' structure. It is the complement of *wæs* (40), which also forms the passive with *befylled* (deprived, 41) and *beslagen* (deprived, 42). The adjective *sceard* can therefore be seen as having a parallel grammatical structure with these past participles which also function as adjectives, and thus forming a kind of passive itself.

Just as none of the poem's passive verbs have the English as grammatical subject, neither do any of these past participle-adjectives describe the English forces. This strengthens the argument that they are a kind of elliptical passive, used only to describe the invading forces.

So, what does the extensive use of passive and intransitive verbs in the poem do? Well, it contributes to a stillness, a lack of progress surrounding the invaders. They are not *doing* anything to anyone else: things are done to them as they fall, lie, yield and depart. This sense of passivity is further emphasised with repetition of verbs: *licgan* appears twice; *þurfan* appears three times in syntactically identical half-lines. Not only are the invaders denied an active role, the repetition suggests an extremely limited range of non-action. The repetition of *þurfan*+inf warrants further mention. The negated form of *þurfan* is in each case followed by a verb of speaking — the enemies are denied a voice, allowed only a physical presence, not an aural one. This rather still and ineffective physical presence does little more than provide cannon fodder for the English.

Where the invaders *are* the grammatical subjects of transitive verbs, as shown in the third column of the table, and therefore in a position to act positively, their actions are concerned only with preservation of life:

[6] See for example, Quirk *et al.* (1985), 16.21, 1172. The functional similarity of *licgan* with *wesan* with regard to concord is noted in Mitchell (1985), vol. 1, §33, 16.

gesohtun [land] (they sought land)	27
generede [feorh] (he [Olafr] saved life)	36

The only transitive infinitive to follow an intransitive main verb which has the invaders as grammatical subject also denotes a life-saving action:

secan [Difelin] (to seek Dublin)	55

The only life-preserving action that Constantine performs which takes effect *upon* something is that of abandoning his son:

forlet [his sunu] (abandoned his son)	42

The most cursory reading of Old English heroic texts reveals the shame of abandoning loved ones on the battlefield, and although Constantine's son is dead, the use of *forlætan* in this context points to a cultural hinterland of references to disgrace incurred in this way.

Where the invaders are subjects of transitive verbs and therefore acting upon something, main verb and object are contained within one half-line, in each case within a b-line:

land gesohtun	27b
feorh generede	36b
and his sunu forlet	42b[7]

This limits the effects of even these few transitive verbs — they do not have far-reaching consequences.

2.2 English as grammatical subject.

[7] Lines 43b–44a describe Constantine's son, but the nominal object of *forlætan* is *sunu*, and this precedes the verb within 42b. There is a possibility that *giungne* is used substantively, as a variation of *sunu* rather than a modifier. This would therefore mean that *forlætan* has two grammatical objects, and these extend over three lines. However, the objects are divided by *on wælstowe* (43a), in a way that is not paralleled by the extension of object and verb over two half-lines seen in clauses which have the English forces as subject. The position of *sunu forlet* and *giungne* suggests separation rather than extension, which complements the sense of the passage.

So, we have seen that the Invaders were, on the whole, subjects of passive or intransitive verbs. In contrast, with only one exception, the English are subjects of active, transitive verbs. These are shown in Table 3.

transitive		**intransitive**	
geslogon [ealdorlangne tir] (struck longlasting glory)	4	legdun (lay)	22
clufan [bordweal] (clove the shieldwall)	5		
heowan [heaþolinde] (hewed battle-shields)	6		
ealgodon [land / hord and hamas] (defended land, treasure and homes)	9		
heowan [herefleman] (hewed the deserters)	23		
wyrndon [ne hondplegan] (did not refuse handplay)	24		
sohton [cyþþe / Wesseaxena land] (sought homeland / land of the West Saxons)	58		
letan […][8] (let)	60		

Table 3: verbs with the English as grammatical subject

In contrast to the invaders-intrans.verb usage outlined above, this number of transitive verbs is notable. In addition, these verbs and their objects extend over more than one half-line in five of the eight instances, in the first four cases from a b-line to an a-line.

ealdorlangne tir (long-lasted glory / struck at battle)
geslogon æt sæcce 3b–4a

land ealgodon (land defended / hoard and homes)
hord and hamas 9b–10a

Myrce ne wyrndon (the Mercians did not refuse / hard handplay)
heardes hondplegan 24b–25a

cyþþe sohton, (homeland sought / land of the West Saxons)
Wesseaxena land 58b–59a

[8] *Lætan* has *saluwigpadan, þone sweartan hræfn, / hrynednebban, and þane hasupadan, / earn æftan hwit* (61a–63a) and *grædigne guðhafoc and þæt græge deor / wulf on wealde* (64a–65a) as appositive objects. The objects of 61a–63a function as the 'subjects' of *hræw bryttian* (60b) in an 'accusative-infinitive' construction. Similarly, the objects of 64a–65a function as the 'subjects' of *æses brucan* (63b).

Letan him behindan	hræ bryttian	(They left behind them corpses to enjoy
saluwigpadan,	þone sweartan hræfn,	dark-coated one, the black raven, / horny-
hyrnednebban,	and þane hasupadan,	beaked one, and the dun-coated one, / the
earn æftan hwit,	æses brucan	eagle white behind, carrion to break / the
grædigne guðhafoc and	þæt græge deor,	greedy battle-hawk, and the grey beast, / the
wulf on wealde.	60a–65a	wolf in the wood.)

There are three instances of verb and object being confined to half-line with the English as subject:

bordweal clufan	5b	(they clove the shield-wall)
heowan heaþolinde	6a	(they hewed the battle shield)
heowan herefleman	23a	(they hewed the survivors)

These can be shown to be considerably different to the verbs and objects contained within one half-line with the invaders as subject. To begin with, two are a-lines, as opposed to all three instances with invaders as subject being b-lines. Secondly, these half-lines can be seen as being extensions of actions in themselves: *bordweal clufan* (5b) and *heowan heaþolinde* (6a) function as appositives, both sharing the subject *afaran Eadweardes* (7a). Similarly, *heowan herefleman* (23a) functions appositively with *on last legdun laþum þeodum* (they laid on the tracks of the hated peoples, 22) both having *Wesseaxe* (20b) as subject.

The actions of the English are effective: they act *upon* the invaders, which suggests both heroic progress, and contrasts with the carefully crafted impotence of the Norse coalition.

As can be seen from Table 3, the only example of an intransitive verb which has as its grammatical subject the English forces is *legdun* (22, from infinitive *lecgan* 'to lay'). The intransitive use of *lecgan* (22) is exceptional; all other instances in the OE corpus are transitive. The usage appears to rely on the audience supplying an object of *lastas* to complete the sense of 'press on behind, pursue' found in elsewhere in the OE corpus,[9] which points to a transitive reading of the verb.[10] In any case although, technically speaking, *laþum þeodum* is not the object of the *lecgan*, these 'hostile peoples' are certainly the ones being acted upon by the English: they are, after all, being chased, and this is made even clearer in the apposition of *on last legdun laþum þeodum* (22) and *heowan herefleman* (23a), as noted above.

As if to emphasise the use of positive, affective verbs which have the English as subject, the one use of the negative to modify a verb with the English as subject has the function of making positive a verb with a negative component: *wiernan* 'to refuse' (24). The Mercians *didn't* refuse fierce handplay to any of their enemies.

[9] *Genesis* 2402, 2538, Krapp (1931), 72, 75.
[10] See Campbell (1938), 104–5, n.22.

3 Word order in *The Battle of Brunanburh*

From the above examination of verbal structure, it should be clear that the poet of *Brunanburh* uses linguistic structures to distinguish between his English protagonists and their adversaries. Word order is also manipulated in order to achieve certain effects. What follows is a very basic analysis of the thematic structure of *Brunanburh*, or to put it more simply, the ordering of the first elements in each clause.[11]

Brunanburh consists of thirty-six clauses.[12] In the edition of the poem in the Appendix, the clause divisions are denoted with double back slashes. Twenty-eight of these have either the English (ten) or the invaders (eighteen) as subject, although this subject is sometimes implied rather than realised in the text. The *Brunanburh*-poet's 'usual' choice of word order is to place the grammatical subject first in the clause, following any subordinating and co-ordinating conjunctions or adverbs which commonly begin or join clauses, such as *þæt*, *oð* and *siððan*.[13]

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[11] For a full discussion of the concept of 'theme' and its application to Old English, see Cummings (1995). He applies ideas from Halliday (1994) to Old English prose and verse. My application of the ideas of theme and markedness is not intended to illustrate the suitability of this form of analysis to Old English. My examinations and conclusions are based only on my observations of what seems to be the characteristic structure of the poems examined. All that I have used from Cummings and Halliday is the idea that certain elements are not usually placed at the beginning of clause. When they are, it usually for particular effect. I have translated this idea to suggest that when the poet places an element at the beginning of a clause which differs from his usual choice, there may be a particular reason for him so doing.

[12] Each clause must have a main finite verb, but may not have a subject. Where two finite verbs are in apposition, I have followed Mitchell in counting each as belonging to a different clause, i.e. examples of parataxis (1985, §1529). At this point I am not discriminating between main and subordinate clauses. For the purposes of this discussion, the non-expression of verbs in what would otherwise be separate clauses has led to their inclusion in a clause which has an expressed verb. Clause divisions as follows: 1a–5a; 5b; 6a–7a; 7b–8a; 8b–10a; 10b; 11a–12a; 12b–13a; 13b–16a; 16b–17a; 17b–20a; 20b–22b; 23a–24a; 24b–25b; 26a–28a; 28b–32a; 32b–34b; 35a; 35b–36a; 36b; 37a–39a; 39b–40a; 40b–42a; 42b–44a; 44b–46b; 47a–b; 48a–51a; 51b–52b; 53a–56b; 57a–59b; 60a–65a; 65b– 68a; 68b–69a; 69b–72a; 72b–73a; 73b.

[13] i.e. the themes of the clauses *þæt hi æt campe oft…*(8) and *oð sio æþele gesceaft…*(16) are the grammatical subjects *hi* and *sio æþele gesceaft*, not *þæt* and *oð*, which are subordinating conjunctions. See Cummings (1995), 309.

Table 4 shows the distribution of elements at the beginning of each clause in the poem.

	English (10 clauses)	Invaders (18 clauses)	Descriptive (8 clauses)	Total (36 clauses)
subject	5	9	3	17
verb	3	6	1	10
complement	1	1	2	4
object	1	2	2	5

Table 4: elements realised as theme

Therefore, of the ten clauses which have the English as implied or realised subject, five of them have the subject as theme, i.e. the subject is placed first in the clause following any conjunctions.

The table includes details of the descriptive passages only in order to support the argument that the subject is the 'usual' thematic element for the *Brunanburh*-poet. As I am primarily concerned with an examination of the differences in linguistic presentation of the English forces and those of their adversaries, what follows deals only with the clauses which have them as grammatical subjects, implied or realised.

Analysis of Old English clauses is complicated by the fact that many of them are without grammatical subject. The subject is implied, or may be 'borrowed' from the preceding or following clause. Even when it is clear to the reader that a clause is borrowing its subject from a neighbour, nevertheless, it is counted as subject-elliptical in my analysis.

3.1 Clauses with elements other than subject as theme: the English as subject

Of the five clauses which have the English as grammatical subject, but do not have that subject realised as theme, four are subject-elliptical.[14] Therefore, there does not appear to be any particular design in the placing of other elements at the beginning of the clause.[15] However, there is one clause which does have a realised subject — the third clause in the poem. It has as its theme the verb *heowan* (6), and the subject, *afaran Eadweardes* 'sons, descendants of Edward' (6a), is placed finally.

[14] 5b; 7b–8a; 23a–24a; 60a–65b.

[15] But see Cummings, *op.cit.*, for a discussion of 'markedness' in elements placed at the end of subject-elliptical clauses.

The fact the subject is used so consistently as theme in clauses which are not subject-elliptical, suggests that this clause is exceptional, and that the poet was following a particular agenda in his construction of the poem at this point. Either the poet wished to make *heowan* prominent, or he had a reason for placing the subject at the end of the clause, or perhaps both the prominence of *heowan* and the marked final position of *afaran Eadweardes* are important.

Afaran Eadweardes points back to the beginning of the poem, which begins with *Æþelstan cyning* and *Eadmund æþeling* as subjects of the first clause (1a–4a). These three half-lines, as well as having the same referent, are linked through alliteration.[16] The placing of the subject *afaran Eadweardes* at the end of the clause creates an 'envelope' structure in the first few lines of the poem: S .. V .. .. V.. S :

Æþelstan cyning, eorla dryhten,	**King Athelstan, lord of men,**
beorna beahgifa, and his broþor eac,	**warriors' ring-giver, and his brother too,**
Eadmund æþeling, ealdorlangne tir	**the atheling Edmund**, long-lasting glory
geslogon æt sæcce sweorda ecgum	struck at the battle with swords'edges
ymbe Brunanburh; bordweal clufan,	around Brunanburh; clove the shield-wall
heowan heaþolinde hamora lafan	hewed the battle-shields with hammers'
afaran Eadweardes; (1a–7a)	leavings, **offspring of Edward.**

[16] For a detailed discussion of the linking of related elements through alliteration, see Addison (1982), 267–76. Addison points out that the vowel-alliteration throughout the poem links the English leaders and the qualities with which the poet seeks to endow them.

These lines fit together thematically. As the first part of the narrative they form an abstract, a synopsis of what the poem is about, what happens in the battle. The clauses of 1a–5a and 6a–7a[17] are recognisably linked: they vary each other. The subject of clause three (i.e. 6a–7a) is a summing up of the subjects of the first clause, before the commentary of 7b–8a; it groups Athelstan and Edmund in a similar way to that used towards the end of poem, when they are referred to as *þa gebroþor* (57a) 7.ii on handout. Indeed, this envelope structure in the first few lines can be seen as a microcosm of the structure of the whole poem. This later reference to Athelstan and Edward as *þa gebroðor* (57a), and its accompanying half-lines *begen ætsamne* (57b) and *cyning and æþeling* (58a) can also be seen as forming an envelope with the subjects of these first two clauses:

Swilce **þa gebroþor begen ætsamne,**	Likewise, **the brothers both together,**
cyning and æþeling, cyþþe sohton,	**king and atheling**, sought homeland,
Westseaxna land, wiges hremge.	West Saxons' land, exultant from the battle.
(57–59)	

The first two clauses of the poem have subjects which at first specify the two protagonists, Athelstan and Edmund, and then group them as members of the same (royal) family: *Æþelstan cyning, eorla dryhten, beorna beahgifa, and his broþor eac, Eadmund æþeling* becomes *afaran Eadweardes*. Lines 57–9 — the final clause of the poem which has them as realised subject — reverses this process. Athelstan and Edmund are first grouped and then split, described using the same titles as in the very first clause: *þa gebroþor begen ætsamne* becomes *cyning and æþeling*.

So, does this throw any light on the marked positions of *heowan* and *afaran Eadweardes*? The fact that this number of structural and thematic links centres around the subject *afaran Eadweardes* suggests that its placing at the end of a clause does serve to highlight it. It stands to reason that this highlighting is deliberate, given the usual practice of the poet.

The placing of *heowan* at the beginning of the second clause is more than explained by the marked position of *afaran Eadweardes*, which forms part of larger structural patterns as shown above. However, *heowan*'s position does make it prominent in its own right, and this verb is also part of a larger pattern of links within the poem. *Heowan* is used twice in the poem, in line 6 and in 23, where again it has the English forces as subject, this time the specified West Saxons (*Wesseaxe* 20) of the previous clause:

> heowan herefleman hindan þearle
> mecum mylenscearpan. (23a–24a)
> (They hewed the fleeing soldiers from behind severely, with sharp-ground swords.)

In line 6, the English were hewing *heoþolinde*, the shields of their adversaries. In the above lines, they are hewing the invaders themselves — *herefleman*, those of the army who are

[17] Discounting, of course, the subject-elliptical clause in 5b, *bordweal clufan*.

fleeing. The invaders are quite clearly being paralleled with their inanimate wooden shields. This renders them passive, mirroring the effect of the poet's use of intransitive and passive verbal constructions discussed above. The effect is highlighted not only by means of identical syntax and alliteration, but also through the identical positioning of the half-line and marked word-order. Both are a-lines beginning clauses, and of course, the first instance of *heowan* is marked through being the first element of a clause which has a realised subject *afaran Eadweardes* the sons of Edward.

So, from our examination of the clauses of *Brunanburh* which have the English as implied or realised subject, we can see that the marking of a clause element seems to accompany that element's place in a larger linguistic or thematic structure.

3.2 Clauses with element other than subject as theme: invaders as subject

Examination of the clauses which have the invaders as subject, but do not have that subject as first element in the clause also gives interesting insights into the linguistic structure of *Brunanburh*. In contrast to the clauses with English as subjects, of which four out of the five were subject-elliptical, only four of the nine clauses are subject-elliptical.[18] In every one of the remaining five clauses, the subject is preceded by the verb: [19]

Þær læg secg mænig	There lay many a man
garum ageted, guma norþerna	destroyed by spears, northern men
ofer scild scoten… (17b–20a)	shot over shields
Þær geflemed wearð	There was put to flight
Norðmanna bregu, nede gebeded	the leader of the Norsemen, compelled by
to lides stefne litle weorode; (32b–34b)	necessity, to the ship's prow, with a small troop.
cread cnear on flot (35a)	pressed the ship onto the water
Gelpan ne þorfte	Had no need to boast
beorn blandenfeax bilgeslehtes.. (44b–51a)	the grey-haired warrior at the battle
Gewitan him þa Norþmen nægledcnearrum,	Departed then the Norsemen in nailed ships
dreorig daraða laf, on Dingesmere,	sad remnant of spears, onto *Dingesmere*,

[18] The nine clauses are: 17b–20a; 32b–34b; 35a; 36b; 39b–40a; 42b–44a; 44b–46b; 47a–b; 53a–66b.

[19] The use of *þær* in 17b and 32b suggests an interesting focus on place, see Isaacs (1962), 236–44. However, it is quite usual for *þær* to be followed by subject and then verb, e.g. 37, or see *The Battle of Maldon* ll. 17, 105, in Dobbie (1942), 7, 10.

ofer deop wæter Difelin secan… (53a–56b) over deep water Dublin to seek

As discussed above, the *Brunanburh*-poet uses verbal structure to emphasise the passivity of the invaders. This placing of verb before subject at the beginning of the clause appears to foreground this use of verbal structure. It is perhaps to alert the reader/listener, a signpost to the systematic use of the verbs within the poem.

4 Who are the agents in *Brunanburh*?

Attention has been drawn to the varying linguistic structures which contribute to the reader/listener's perception of the English as active and primary and the invaders as passive and secondary, despite the large proportion of the poem devoted to the Norse-Scots alliance.

4.1 How the English strike victory

Within the first few lines of the poem, we are given information about the weapons with which the English can score a victory. We are told of the 'edges of swords' in 4b, and the 'leavings of hammers' i.e. swords, in 6b.

sweorda ecgum	4b
hamora lafan	6b

By any account, swords are offensive weapons. We are also told what it is exactly that the English are doing with these weapons. As we have already seen, they clove the shield wall and hewed the battle-shields.

bordweal clufan	5b
heowan heaoþolinde	6a

And of course the swords bite into the defensive weapons which are wielded by the invaders. Even before the invaders themselves are explicitly mentioned, they are defined by their use of defensive weaponry.

The English are thus immediately defined in a very precise fashion, characterised as sword-wielding warriors. They are fighting against an enemy which is characterised by its use of solely defensive armoury, and defined, in line 9, as *laþra gehwæne* 'each of the hated ones', *against* the English: the Norse-Scots coalition is a force which is hated by them.

This cluster of information about the weapons of the English leaders is almost the first that we are given: it is positioned conspicuously, at the beginning of the poem. This seems to me to be

particularly important, especially in view of the fact that information about the English forces takes up such a small proportion of the poem as a whole.

The English do things to various (grammatical and physical) objects, as opposed to the invaders who, as we have seen, do not. On only one occasion do the English do something *directly* to the invaders, when they hew the fleeing survivors.[20]

The lines which take the invaders as grammatical subject, are passive and intransitive constructions. This has the secondary effect of cutting the English out of these clauses. We have

> Þær geflemed wearð
> Norðmanna bregu, nede gebeded… (32–3)

'There the leader of the Northmen was put to flight, constrained by necessity…'

> he wæs his mæga sceard,
> freonda befylled on folcstede,
> beslagen at sæcce… (40–2)

'He was deprived of his kinsmen, deprived of friends on the battlefield, bereft at the battle…'

where we could have had 'The English put the leader to flight..', 'The English deprived him of kinsmen…..'. The poet does not even give us the agent of these deeds as indirect object: 'He was deprived of his kinsmen *by the English*…'.

This exclusion of the English illustrated by these lines holds true not only for passive clauses, but for all clauses which detail the fate and (non)-actions of the invaders, active, passive, transitive, intransitive. However, there are a number of occasions when we are given agents in the form of indirect objects.[21] These agents are the weapons. Many men are lying dead ***garum*** *ageted* (18a) 'destroyed **by spears**';[22] five young kings are ***sweordum*** *aswefede* (30a) 'put to sleep **by swords**'. To similar effect, as they leave Brunanburh, the invaders are described as the victims of weapons: *drerig daraða laf* (54a) 'sad remnant of spears'. The association of the invaders and defensive weapons made at the poem's beginning is also re-established, in 19b, *ofer scild scoten*.

[20] *heowan herefleman* (23a).

[21] These indirect objects are in phrases which function as complements, i.e. a phrase which tells us something about the nature of the subject.

[22] *Garum* 'with spears' also depends upon *scoten* (19a) as well as *ageted*.

Logic, rather than grammatical structure, tells us that it is the English forces who are wielding these spears and swords, but the association of English and offensive weaponry has been carefully established by the poet in the first few lines of *Brunanburh*. As if to re-establish that link, the clause in which the English act upon the invaders as direct object has the additional information that they are hewing *mecum mylenscearpan* (24a) 'with swords ground sharp'. This association reaffirms the link between the English forces of 937 and their migrating ancestors. Both are engaged in warfare *sweorda ecgum* (4b) / *sweordes ecgum* (68a).

This use of weapons to accentuate the effects created by the linguistic structure of the poem perhaps explains why the poet used such a number of compounds based on weapons, two of which are *hapax legomena*, to describe the battle:[23]

bilgeslehtes 'sword-clash'	45b
cumbolgehnastes 'clash of banners'	49b
garmittinge 'spear-meeting'	50a
wæpengewrixles 'weapon-exchange'	51a

In fact, the clash of battle is described almost entirely in terms of its weapons; it is a highly stylised account in which the victors' control of sword and spear ensures the cowering of the invaders behind shields.

[23] *cumbolgehnastes* and *garmittunge* are *hapax legomena*, formed on the model of many such battle kennings.

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Appendix 1: *The Battle of Brunanburh*[24]

// Æþelstan cyning, eorla dryhten,
beorna beahgifa, and his broþor eac,
Eadmund æþeling, ealdorlangne tir
geslogon æt sæcce sweorda ecgum
ymbe *Brunanburh*; // bordweal clufan, //
heowan heaþolinde hamora lafan
afaran Eadweardes; // swa him geæþele wæs
from cneomægum, // þæt hi æt campe oft
wiþ laþra gehwæne land ealgodon,
hord and hamas. // Hettend crungun, //
Sceotta leoda and scipflotan
fæge feollan. // Feld *dunnade*
secga swate, // siðþan sunne up
on morgentid, mære tungol,
glad ofer grundas, Godes condel beorht,
eces Drihtnes, // oð sio æþele gesceaft
sah to setle. // Þær læg secg mænig
garum ageted, guma norþerna
ofer scild scoten, swilce Scittisc eac
werig, wiges sæd. // Wesseaxe forð
ondlongne dæg eorodcistum
on last legdun laþum þeodum, //
heowan herefleman hindan þearle
mecum mylenscearpan. // Myce ne wyrndon
heardes hondplegan hæleþa nanum //
þæra þe mid Anlafe ofer *eargebland*
on lides bosme land gesohtun
fæge to gefeohte. // Fife lægun
on þam campstede *cyningas* giunge
sweordum aswefede, swilce seofene eac
eorlas Anlafes, unrim heriges,
flotena and Sceotta. // Þær geflemed wearð
Norðmanna bregu, nede gebeded
to lides stefne litle weorode; //
cread cnear *on* flot, // cyning ut gewat
on fealene flod, // feorh generede. //
Swilce þær eac se froda mid fleame com
on his cyþþe norð, Costontinus,

[24] The edition is that of Campbell (1936), pp. 93–95.

har hildering; // hreman ne þorfte
mecga gemanan: // he wæs his mæga sceard,
freonda *befylled* on folcstede,
beslagen at sæcce, // and his sunu forlet
on wælstowe wundun *forgrunden*,
giungne æt guðe. // Gelpan ne þorfte
beorn blandenfeax bilgeslehtes,
eald inwidda, ne Anlaf þy ma; //
mid heora herelafum hlehhan ne þorftun, //
þæt heo beaduweorca beteran wurdun
on campstede, *cumbolgehnastes*,
garmittinge, gumena gemotes,
wæpengewrixles, // þæs hi on wælfelda
wiþ Eadweardes afaran plegodan. //
Gewitan him þa *Norþmen* nægledcnearrum,
dreorig daraða laf, on Dingesmere,
ofer deop wæter Difelin secan,
eft *Ira* land, æwiscmode. //
Swilce þa gebroþor begen ætsamne,
cyning and æþeling, cyþþe sohton,
Wesseaxena land, wiges *hremge*. //
Letan him behindan *hræ* bryttian
saluwigpadan, þone sweartan hræfn,
hrynednebban, and þane *hasupadan*,
earn æftan hwit, æses brucan
grædigne guðhafoc and þæt græge deor,
wulf on wealde. // Ne wearð wæl mare
on þis eiglande *æfre* gieta
folces gefylled beforan þissum
sweordes ecgum, // þæs þe us secgað bec,
ealde uðwitan, // siþþan eastan hider
Engle and Seaxe up becoman,
ofer brad brimu Brytene sohtan,
wlance wigsmiþas, // *Wealas* ofercoman,
eorlas arhwate, // eard begeatan. //

Appendix 2: Translation[25]

At this time king Athelstan, lord over earls and his warriors' ring-giver, and his brother too, the prince Edmund, won by the edges of their swords life-long glory in battle about Brunanburh.

They sliced through the shield-wall and hacked the linden battle-targes with swords, the legacies of hammers, these sons of Edward, since it was inborn in them from their forebears that they should often, in warfare against every foe, defend land, treasure-hoard and homes. The aggressors yielded; Scots and vikings fell dying. The field grew wet with men's blood from when in the morning-tide that glorious star, the sun, glided aloft and over the earth's plains, the bright candle of God the everlasting Lord, to when that noble creation sank to rest.

There lay many a man picked off by spears, many a Norseman shot above his shield and Scotsman too, spent and sated with fighting. Onwards the men of Wessex in their contingents all day long pursued the trail of the enemy peoples, and from the rear harshly hacked down fugitives from the army with stone-sharpened swords. Nor did the men of Mercia stint of tough hand-combat any of those worthies who with Olaf came questing ashore across the waves' welter in the bosom of the ship, as dying men to battle. Five young kings lay on the battle-field, put to rest by swords, and seven of Olaf's earls too and a countless number of the array of vikings and of Scots.

There the Norsemen's chief, driven by necessity, was sent fleeing to his ship's prow with a puny retinue; the vessel crowded afloat; the king embarked upon the tawny ocean and saved his life. And there too the prudent Constantine went in flight north into his own land; the hoary warrior had no cause to crow over that mating of swords. He was pruned of his kinsmen and of friends felled on the field of battle, struck down in the strife; and he left behind his sons on the site of slaughter, young men mangled by wounds at the fray. The grey-haired warrior, the old villain, had no cause to brag of the sword encounter, no more did Olaf. In the midst of the remnants of their army they had no cause to scoff that they were superior in martial deeds on the battle-field, in the clash of standards, the meeting of spears, the conflict of men, the exchange of weapons, according as they contended on the field of slaughter with Edward's sons.

So the Norsemen set forth, a dreary remnant left over by the javelins, in their riveted ships upon Dingesmere, to find their way back to Dublin across the deep water, back to Ireland, humiliated.

Likewise those brothers, the two together, king and prince, headed for home, the land of the West Saxons, vaunting their valour. Behind them they left sharing out the corpses the dark-

[25] The translation is that of Bradley (1995), pp. 516–18.

plumaged, horny-beaked black raven, and the dun-plumaged white-tailed eagle enjoying the carrion, the greedy war-hawk and that grey beast, the wolf of the forest.

Never yet within this island has there been a greater slaughter of folk felled by the sword's edges before this one, according to what books tell us, and ancient authorities, since when from the east the Angles and Saxons arrived here, sought out Britain across the broad ocean, proud craftsmen of war, overcame the Welshmen and, being men keen after glory, conquered the country.

Futuretalk: one small step towards a Chronolinguistics

Peter Stockwell

1 The precedent of *psychohistory*

Set initially in the year 12,069 (Galactic Era), on the planet Trantor near the galactic centre, Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy tells the story of the rise and fall of an interplanetary empire and the social scientists who negotiate its evolution through the dark ages. They are able to do this thanks to a mathematical formalisation of social theory invented by Hari Seldon and called 'psychohistory':

> PSYCHOHISTORY—… Gaal Dornick, using non-mathematical concepts, has defined psychohistory to be that branch of mathematics which deals with the reactions of human conglomerates to fixed social and economic stimuli. …
>
> … Implicit in all these definitions is the assumption that the human conglomerate being dealt with is sufficiently large for valid statistical treatment. The necessary size of such a conglomerate may be determined by Seldon's First Theorem which … A further necessary assumption is that the human conglomerate be itself unaware of psychohistoric analysis in order that its reactions be truly random. …
>
> The basis of all valid psychohistory lies in the development of the Seldon Functions which exhibit properties congruent to those of such social and economic forces as …
>
> ENCYLOPEDIA GALACTICA
>
> (Asimov 1953: 16, original ellipses)

Psychohistory, in this science fiction novel, amounts to social prediction based on formulated principles of social change. Though the passage above is carefully ellipted at crucial explanatory moments, psychohistory involves a statistical projection that claims predictive accuracy. Though a fictional science, psychohistory here encompasses two principles of real social science: the observer's paradox and the principle of provisionality. Firstly, the population must not be aware that they are bing observed, as this self-consciousness will affect their behaviour and thus change the data. Secondly, it is assumed that psychohistory cannot be absolutely accurate over time, and its findings must be regarded as provisional 'truths' to be revised in the light of incoming real historical data. In other words, the prediction is 'actualized' as the future becomes the present; in the novel, the 'Foundation' is set up to monitor these adjustments.

Psychohistory awaits considerable advances in cultural theory, sociology and mathematics, as well as in socioeconomic computer modelling. The more modest aim of this paper is to focus only on the language of the future, and to establish the first principles of the study of future language possibilities. I call this embryonic discipline *chronolinguistics*.

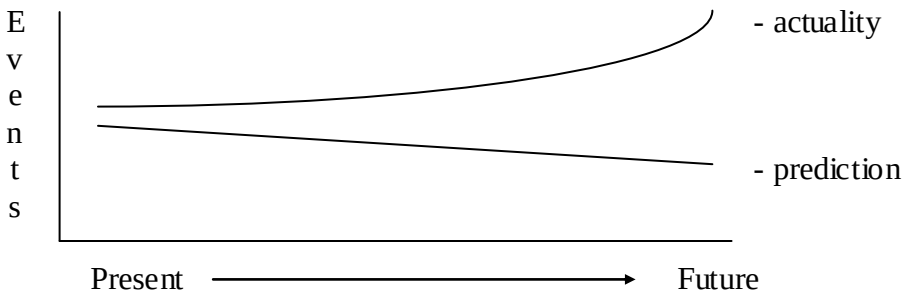
Chronolinguistics is an inter-discipline with its roots in three areas: historical linguistics; sociolinguistics; and futurology. The first two of these have obvious relevance. Indeed, the philological formulation of sound-change principles and subsequent application to a range of linguistic and dialectal situations can be seen as identical to the predictive method in chronolinguistics. The last of these disciplines – futurology – perhaps needs a brief explanation. 'Futurology' covers both sociological extrapolation of the sort produced by Toffler (1970, 1980, 1990, 1995), as well as science fiction that is primarily extrapolative in its fictional world (rather than merely alternative or speculative for satirical purposes – see Littlewood and Stockwell (1996) for these distinctions). In general, it is important to distinguish these forms of science fiction, since they require different approaches to an interpretation of their worlds: one as futurology and one primarily as art. Futurological extrapolation was popular in early science fiction, such as H.G. Wells' (1933) *The Shape of Things to Come*. This category encompasses both utopian (generally 19th century socialist) and dystopian (generally 20th century political and often feminist) science fiction.

Non-futurological science fiction (or 'artistic' SF) is more symbolist in the sense that it treats the future as a metaphorical world primarily for critical reflection on the present. Characters in SF are often not individuals but 'everyman' tokens, and the language they use symbolises the culture they inhabit. SF doesn't often deal directly with language; when it does, it can be treated as a technology to be extrapolated and as an index of social change (see Stockwell 2000). It is the latter sort of SF that is most useful for chronolinguistics: where social form and linguistic function are placed in a corresponding relationship with each other.

2 First steps in chronolinguistic theory

Is chronolinguistics possible? My answer to this would be that the achievement of a workable chronolinguistics is very difficult but not impossible. The first task is to decide upon a criterion for measuring the accuracy of chronolinguistic prediction. The intuitive assumption is that predictions are reasonably accurate in the short term, and become more and more divergently inaccurate as time goes by; furthermore, that this divergence is exponential, as factors leading to inaccurate predictions multiply each other over time. Fig. 1 graphically represents this.

Fig. 1



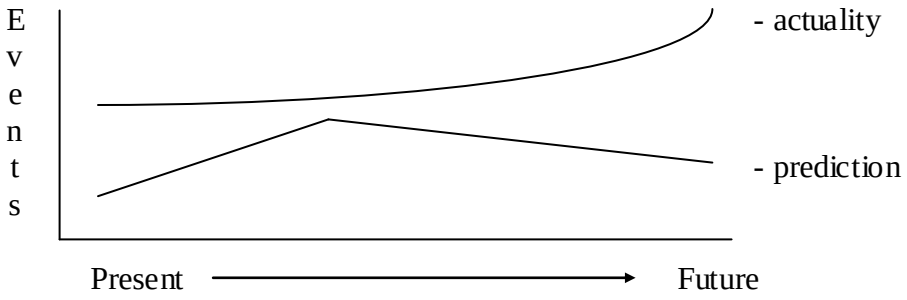
A little thought, however, indicates that the assumptions embodied in this projection may be wrong. In the short term (a period of up to 20 years into the future), language usage is likely to be very similar to the present. Any changes are likely to be minor and unpredictable because they are too local. For example, amongst my own students every few years, a new faddish word sweeps through the population and is used by students for a year or two, before it is then lost and replaced by another faddish word. In the mid-1990s, this word was 'pants', used adjectivally as a pejorative term: 'this film is pants'. Today, most of my current students no longer use this word; pointedly, it is now current amongst late twenty-year-olds and thirty-somethings (the original users now a little bit older) and is unsurprisingly having a resurgence in current advertising campaigns mistakenly aimed at a 'youth' market that has moved on. The word that my students have moved on to is 'random', used as a non-committal response or expression of vagueness: 'Are you coming out tonight' – 'Oh, random'.

The point here is that I can confidently predict that there will be a new faddish student word in a few years time, but I cannot possible predict exactly what that word will be. The general pattern is predictable with a reasonable degree of confidence, but the specifics are not. This gives us our first principle of chronolinguistics:

The general is more predictable than the specific.

That is, global-scale and macro-sociolinguistic factors are easier to predict accurately, than, say, more particular discourse practices or dialectal innovations and shifts, and in turn these are more predictable than individual lexical innovations or jargon or in-group register or idiolects. The last of these represent absolute specificity and are thus almost impossible to predict. This means that close-range prediction is likely to be inaccurate because it is necessarily too specific. Long-term prediction is likely to be highly divergent from actuality as suggested above. The greatest accuracy, then, is likely to be in the medium term: defined here as the period of the future between 20 and 100 years. A more accurate representation of the confidence of chronolinguistic prediction is conveyed by Figure 2.

Fig. 2



I can draw an illustrative example from my own experience. For the past few years, I have acted as the publicity and membership officer of the Poetics and Linguistics

Association (PALA), an international scholarly association with members in over 50 countries worldwide. All communications in the society are channelled through me, almost exclusively by email, and this has given me a valuable insight into a form of electronic-medium language which is developing: a sort of emerging 'World Standard Electronic English'. Currently, 80% of the world's internet traffic decodes from transmitted bits into screen manifestations in English. In spite of recent developments in making keyboards and webpages more friendly to scripts and fonts such as Cyrillic, Hellenic, Chinese, Japanese and Thai, nevertheless English and the western alphabetic script remain the dominant forms of the internet.

The well-known patterns of email discourse that blend features of speech and writing can be seen in most of the email utterances that I receive: I therefore suspect that my experience is typical. Patterns of informal register, conversational tags and idioms, dashes and parentheses indicating unplanned discourse, and a high tolerance of orthographic and syntactic 'errors' all indicate the provisionality of email that is usually more associated with face-to-face dialogue than with written forms. The fact that this form of discourse has arisen recently and rapidly, and is used more by young people than older people, and is more like speech than writing, all suggest it is likely to be more dynamic and protean than other forms of language. It is the perfect microcosm for studying linguistic innovation and change.

Because of American economic dominance over the internet (which of course also accounts for the dominance of English there), it might be expected that the patterns of World Standard Electronic English (WSEE) would be drawn thoroughly from American English. In fact, my own observations seem to suggest that WSEE is a sort of 'common ground' form. Email 'speakers' deliberately avoid any obvious regionalisms, such as lexical choices or syntactic constructions which are pointedly or consciously regarded as local or national variants. Speakers avoid culture-specific references and idioms, or where they are used they are often accompanied by dashes and explanatory comment that makes it clear that the usage is regarded as a code-switch into a regionalism that requires qualification. What is left is WSEE.

The emergence of this default form as a global standard has been accompanied by an increase in the dialectal repertoire of email speakers. Email communications within the culture, speech community or even within the same institution, retain as many regionalisms and local usages as would spoken interaction. I have observed this at first hand not only in my own practice, but also on the few occasions when, by virtue of bugs in other users' distribution lists, I have been accidentally sent the internal messages of colleagues in other universities around the world. The striking thing about these accidentally eavesdropped conversations is how different they are from the form of messages sent outside the institution, in WSEE.

It seems that WSEE will continue to be refined over the next decade or so, but it will be interesting to see the specific changes which, I predict, must occur when the keyboard is replaced by speech as the primary input device for electronic communication.

2.1 The principles of linguistic change

Ancient commentators on language used to equate linguistic change with national degeneration, moral corruption or mongrelisation. Change was seen simply as the consequence of national invasion. Of course, while invasion often does affect language, specific changes are just as often seen to reflect existing trends or newly acquired political features. For example, the gradual loss of most inflectional suffixes in Old English was a process that was well underway and was merely accelerated by Viking and Norman French invasions.

Over the 20th century, English has moved into position as a post-national language. It is no longer co-terminous with any single nation-state, and is not even 'owned' by any one homogenous culture. In effect, the language itself has become uninvadable. Changes in World English can be seen to be largely due to the effects of two general factors: a general realignment that reflects social and technological evolution; and a local realignment when patterns come into contact with other linguistic systems. The former of these manifests itself in creation and innovation, and the latter shows up in borrowing (or, rather, 'copying') from other languages.

Aitchison (1981) has codified the principles involved in such copying:

- detachable elements are most easily copied (for example, Middle English imported many lexical items from French, but aspects of the tense system were not copied)
- copied elements have an existing superficial similarity (thus, words that have phonological clusters common in the copying language are more likely to be copied)
- copied elements are 'x-ised' (this can be seen in the 'anglicisation' of many foreign words, and also in other languages, such as the 'nipponisation' of words like 'hotel – 'hoteru', 'sunglasses – sunugurasu' and 'taxi – takkusi')
- a principle of 'minimal adjustment' operates: changes happen in small stages. It is this fact that allows trends to be extrapolated.

(after Aitchison 1981: 120-3)

The establishment of principles such as these demonstrate that chronolinguistics is a possibility. Principles formulated inductively on the basis of past evidence can then be used as predictive formulations when applied to the evidence of the present, and extrapolated into the future. Labov (1994) has developed his thinking in this direction, in his *Principles of Linguistic Change*. He points out that long-term stability is more puzzling than the fact of change, and the challenge for sociolinguists is to account for stability as well as change. In his discussion, he points to 'the Historical Paradox', which alludes to the fact that the more the past is studied, the greater the gaps in knowledge become apparent.

Labov invokes Christy's (1983) 'uniformitarian principle' in order to address the Historical Paradox:

> knowledge of processes that operated in the past can be inferred by observing ongoing processes in the present
>
> (Labov 1994: 21, quoting Christy 1983: ix)

This statement can be treated as a special case of a more general principle that applies equally to the future:

> *Knowledge of processes that operated in the past and will operate in the future can be inferred by observing ongoing processes in the present.*

Labov points out that uniformitarianism is distinct from the religious-based controversy between gradualism and catastrophism; both are amenable to uniformitarianism.

> In linguistics, we must be careful not to confuse a commitment to uniformitarian thinking with a commitment to gradualism.
>
> (Labov 1994: 23-4)

He goes on to point out that catastrophic changes, such as dislocation of populations and political upheavals, generate external change (that is sociolinguistic) while gradualism manifests itself in internal change (more purely linguistic in nature). This combination is familiar to evolutionary science as 'punctuated equilibrium'.

Labov claims that the complexity of study in linguistic change can be addressed using a sort of 'triangulation' method:

> Solutions to the Historical Paradox must be analogous to solutions to the Observer's Paradox. Particular problems must be approached from several different directions, by different methods with complementary sources of error. The solution to the problem can then be located somewhere between the answers given by the different methods. In this way, we can know the limits of the errors introduced by the Historical Paradox, even if we cannot eliminate them entirely.
>
> (Labov 1994: 25)

2.2. The dramatisation of linguistic change

The key issues so far concern the extent to which change is social and predictable or idiosyncratic and chaotic. Science fiction provides examples of both aspects of change, and the genre also illustrates and dramatises the hard linkage between social change and linguistic change. In other words, language in science fiction is treated systemically, not as a 'random fluctuation system' or simply as chaotic fashion.

The usefulness of science fiction in chronolinguistics lies in its resistance to the Oberver's Paradox. Science fictional worlds are created for reasons other than linguistic

study, and in this sense they can be seen to have the same status as naturalistic data. Of course there is a difference between those science fictional narratives that are primarily concerned with action-adventure and those which set out to construct a rich world. The former often have science fictional paraphernalia (spaceships, time-warps and bug-eyed monsters with exotic names), but their main concern is the thriller element, and the alternativity setting (futuristic or alien) is cosmetic. Such narratives rarely feature any linguistic comment at all: the future is English-speaking and universal translator machines patch over any inter-species communication problems. (Meyers (1980: 118) and Stockwell (2000: 48-53) discuss speculated technologies such as these from a linguistic perspective).

By contrast, richly detailed science fictional worlds present opportunities to the chronolinguist. Elsewhere (Stockwell 2000: 204-24) I have termed such richly imagined and detailed alternative worlds *architexts*. In architextual science fiction, a complex social fabric is presented, with a mass of intricate detail that goes far beyond the texture required simply to progress the narrative. Utopias and dystopias are the typical forms of architextual science fiction, and it is in these settings that science fictional extrapolation of alternative linguistic systems is most commonly found. Crucially for chronolinguistics, marked issues of language change or alternativity are present *both* as a signal of the alternativity of the imagined world and also as the means by which that world is realised for the Earth-bound reader. Linguistic alternativity is thus a complex indicator of the architext.

Science fiction, not being constrained to our reality, contains many thousands of alternatively configured worlds. There are of course continuities and patterns of common mythology across many of these worlds: there can even be said to be a consensually agreed version of what the future will probably be like, in much science fiction. Certainly there is a cinematic default version of the future, which has even influenced the names and development of real current and prospective technology. Overall, then, there is a dense cluster of science fictional worlds in the area of 'minimal departure' from our own present, with fewer speculations moving off to the wilder shores of radically different or unique worlds surrounding this conventionalised core. This distribution of alternative versions of the future means that science fictional architexts overlap and offer a continuum that then means it is more likely that aspects of the actual future have been covered or approximated in some of them.

For example, both catastrophic change and gradual change have been used to configure serious science fictional architexts. In Russell Hoban's (1982) *Riddley Walker*, catastrophic social disjunction corresponds with radical linguistic change. The narrative is set in a future long after a nuclear war has destroyed what we know as Kent in the south-east of England. The novel is told in the first person by the eponymous character, 'written not even in proper English but in a broken-up and worn-down vernacular of it' (Hoban 1982: flyleaf). Here is the opening:

> On my naming day when I come 12 I gone front spear and kilt a wyld boar
> he parbly ben the las wyld pig on the Bundel Downs any how there hadnt

> ben none for a long time befor him nor I aint looking to see none agen. He dint make the groun shake nor nothing like that when he come on to my spear he wernt all that big plus he lookit poorly. He done the reqwyrt he ternt and stood and clattert his teef and made his rush and ther we wer then. Him on 1 end of the spear kicking his life out and me on the other end watching him dy. I said, 'Your tern now my tern later.' The other spears gone in then and he wer dead and the steam coming up off him in the rain and we all yelt, 'Offert!'
>
> (Hoban 1982: 1)

It is worth quoting my analysis of this passage at length:

> The non-standard future English used here is based on a range of features from traditional rural southern vernacular, such as 'dint' for 'didn't' and 'He done' for 'He did.' The minimal use of written conventions such as punctuation, the high use of conjunctions ('and'), and sentences that are not fully realised clauses ('Him on 1 end of the spear...') all serve to suggest a spoken monologue. The many simplified spellings ('ther', 'wer', 'agen') are usually indexes of a lack of education in the writer; here in this futuristic context they signal a simple-minded perception. The writing is full of conversational tags ('any how'), and spelling pronunciations ('teef,' 'kilt,' 'parbly') which possibly indicate a return in the southern accent to rhoticity […] In English accents at least, such rhoticity is associated with rural areas, and there is unfortunately still a widespread common stereotype of speakers with such accents as being simple in outlook and uncivilised.
>
> The opening passage quoted above is accompanied by a hand-drawn map of what is now Kent, with place-names that reflect both the catastrophic disjunction in language and the brutalised society that now exists: 'Do It Over' (Dover), 'Sams Itch' (Sandwich), 'River Sour' (Stour), 'Bernt Arse' (Ashford). 'Bollock Stoans' (Birchington), 'Horny Boy' (Herne Bay), 'Widders Bel' (Whitstable), 'Fathers Ham' (Faversham), and so on. These forms reflect the predominance of spoken forms over written conventions, such as the elimination throughout the novel of the possessive apostrophe ('s). They also reflect current stigmatised pronunciations, towards the current local vernacular, but extrapolated further. Thus 'Canterbury,' often now pronounced with a glottal stop for the medial /t/ in casual speech (/ka/↔bri/), is in the novel further ellipted to a sustained nasal: 'Cambry'.
>
> In a detailed piece of stylistic analysis, Schwetman (1985) points out further historical changes such as the simplification of voiced dental [d] to a general unvoiced [t] to indicate past tense ('kilt', 'ternt', 'clattert'). Terminal consonant clusters are simplified ('ben', 'groun'), and folk-etymologies reflected in spellings (later 'tack ticks'). Schwetman calls this 'Post Modern English', and suggests that it has the flavour, if not the

> precise specifics, of medieval English, evoking a peasant people and asserting the regressive effect of the nuclear apocalypse.
>
> (Stockwell 2000: 60-1)

Many apocalyptic science fiction narratives present a post-holocaust world in the form of a regression. The conservative features of language presented in *Riddley Walker* are matched with songs and rhymes that are recognisable distortions of current children's songs, with aspects of contemporary life (such as 'Punch and Judy' puppet shows) whose meaning has been lost, and folk-tales of distorted oral history, stories passed on by 'the tel women':

> I said, 'Ben there a strait story past down amongst the tel women?'
>
> She said, 'There bint no tel women back way back. Nor there aint never ben no strait story I ever heard. Bint no writing for 100s and 100s of years til it begun agen nor you wunt never get a strait story past down by mouf over that long. Onlyes writing I know of is the *Eusa Story* which that aint nothing strait but at leas its stayd the same. All them other storys tol by mouf they ben put to and took from and changit so much thru the years theyre all bits and blips and all mixt up'.
>
> (Hoban 1982: 19-20)

In this extract, the features of existing southern rural vernacular are again in evidence: 'ben' and 'bint' as (originally Old English) forms of the copula; negative concord in 'bint no' and 'aint never'; variant past tense forms 'begun; and the orthographic respresentation of accent features such as final consonant cluster reduction ('leas', 'tol') and the London Cockney influence of 'mouf'.

The linguistic consequences of gradual change are apparent in William Gibson's near-future 'Sprawl' series. In these novels, a consistent architextual world is constructed, beginning with the classic *Neuromancer* (1984), and then building up more and more intricate details in *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988), *Virtual Light* (1993), *Idoru* (1996) and *All Tomorrow's Parties* (2000). Gibson has said that his language is an extrapolation of '80s Canadian biker slang. Into this he adds the format of modern brand and trade names and abbreviations to suggest a techno-capitalist future. A high proportion of direct speech throughout all the novels gives the reader an immersed sense of a future vernacular.

> Molly was snoring on the temperfoam. A transparent cast ran from her knee to a few millimetres below her crotch, the skin beneath the rigid micropore mottled with bruises, the black shading into ugly yellow. Eight derms, each a different size and color, ran in a neat line down her left wrist. An Akai transdermal unit lay beside her, its fine red leads connected to input trodes under the cast.
>
> He turned on the tensor beside the Hosaka. The crisp circle of light fell directly on the Flatline's construct. He slotted some ice, connected the construct, and jacked in.

> It was exactly the sensation of someone reading over his shoulder.
> He coughed. 'Dix? McCoy? That you man? His throat was tight.
> 'Hey, bro,' said a directionless voice.
> 'It's Case, man. Remember?'
> 'Miami, joeboy, quick study.'
> 'What's the last thing you remember before I spoke to you, Dix?'
> 'Nothin'.'
> 'Hang on.' He disconnected the construct. The presence was gone. he reconnected it. 'Dix? Who am I?'
> 'You got me hung, Jack. Who the fuck are you?'
> 'Ca – your buddy. Partner. What's happening, man?'
> 'Good question.'
> 'Remember me being here, a second ago?'
> 'No.'
> 'Know how a ROM personality matrix works?'
> 'Sure, bro, it's a firmware construct.'
> 'So I jack it into the bank I'm using, I can give it sequential, real time memory?'
> 'Guess so,' said the construct.
> 'Okay, Dix. You *are* a ROM construct. Got me?'
> 'If you say so,' said the construct. 'Who are you?'
> 'Case.'
>
> (Gibson 1984: 98-9)

Though there are several lexical items here that refer to items in an alternative reality, they are close enough extrapolations of our own world for us to be able to make good guesses as to their meaning in context. Gibson does this by often using existing lexis but compounded to produce apparently new words: 'temperfoam' is obviously a form of flexible mattress; 'micropore' must be a dressing material; 'derms' are some sort of skin attachments, and so on. Company names ('Akai', 'Hosaka') are used to convey the familiarity of the objects, and terms from existing computer terminology ('jack', 'ROM') are placed alongside new phrases ('personality matrix', 'firmware construct') which follow the same formation patterns that we are familiar with today.

Gibson's world is uncomfortably close to our own, and so the linguistic patterns of our own reality are only slightly 'tweaked'. He focuses on technology and economics as the central factors in the world he presents, and places enough context around the unfamiliar so as to dramatise the position of the reader as being already embedded in the world. The alternative world and its vernacular needs no explicit explanation, then.

2.3 An epidemiology of linguistic change

Borrowing a computing or biological analogy, language change has recently been understood as being epidemiological: that is, linguistic features such as words and sound changes, as well as cultural ideas and myths ('memes') can be seen as being

transmitted like a virus. Two recent works have explored this analogy: Sperber (1996) and Gladwell (2000). Sperber, with specific reference to langauge and culture, describes some representations as being more 'catching' than others. Gladwell explores the question of why some phenomena move suddenly from being insignificant to becoming epidemics; he calls this moment 'the tipping point'.

Gladwell claims that small changes can have disproportionate effects, and that change does not happen smoothly but in stages, with one dramatic moment punctuating periods of stability (as Labov 1994 has described above). Determining when an idea wil 'tip' depends on three general factors which Gladwell describes as:

- The Law of the Few
- The Stickiness Factor
- The Power of Context.

The first of these refers to the notion that certain communities of people contain 'connectors'. These are people who, for one reason or another, have influence in the group. One way that this can be measured in sociolinguistic terms would be by using Milroy's (1987) 'network strength score' as an index of the relative density and multiplexity of social network relationships. Bex (1996), for example, has deployed exactly this model in order to understand the cultural formation of literature, literary genres, and the process of canonisation by which certain groups' values are privileged and accorded prestige status. Gladwell (2000) claims that the anthropological work of Dunbar (1996, see also Dunbar et al 1999, and Runciman et al 1996) supports his notion that the optimum size for an influential social network is around 150 individuals.

The second of Gladwell's factors, 'stickiness', corresponds with Sperber's (1996) distinction between 'winning mysteries' and 'relevant mysteries'. These are the cultural ideas which win favour and are promoted, not because of any intrinsic merit, but because they satisfy a local social and individual relevance (the connection here with Sperber's more linguistic work is apparent at this stage: Sperber and Wilson 1986).

Finally, 'the power of context' seems to me the crucial element, and it is the factor which determines the form of application of the previous two. It refers to the complex cultural environment into which the innovative feature (linguistic or cultural) is introduced. In Gladwell (2000) and Sperber (1996), the delineation of context is largely an *ad hoc* matter, used after the interpretative moment to rationalise the event within the terms of the theoretical framework. However, an understanding of the richness of the contextual world of the innovation is crucial to our general understanding of linguistic change, for the predictive purposes of chronolinguistics. It is exactly this sort of richly described context that is offered by architextual science fiction.

3 First principles of Chronolinguistics

I am now in a position to propose the first principles of chronolinguistics:

- *the general is more predictable than the specific*
- *language is not a random fluctuation system*
- *most changes have complex causes rather than a single identifiable cause*
- *correspondence of projection and actuality is high in medium-term, lower in short-term, and lowest and diminishing in long-term*
- *the base repertoire of possible changes can be divided into:*
    - *articulatory phonetic*
    - *psycholinguistic*
    - *cognitive*
    - *culture clash*
- *all triggers are sociolinguistic*
- *standardisation promotes cross-cultural uniformity*
- *language loyalty promotes diversification*
- *the social network is the unit of determination for linguistic diffusion*
- *social form and linguistic function are integrated and inseparable*

The empirical testbed for chronolinguistic hypotheses lies in the fields of social speculation (futurology) and science fiction, where complex methodological investigation, in context, can be undertaken. Theorisation can then be validated or falsified by the actualisation of a state-of-affairs in the future, as the passage of time turns the future into the present. In this way, fiction becomes the laboratory of chronolinguistics.

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NLC 15

Abstracts

The application of current language and gender theory to managerial meeting discourse
Louise Mullany (Nottingham Trent University)

This paper aims to illustrate the benefit of integrating the view of gender as a performative social construct, with the communities of practice approach and critical discourse analysis as a three-tier framework for language and gender research. The framework has been designed for examination of discourse in an institutionalised context, specifically for managerial business meetings. It is the intention that the importance and value of examining workplace discourse will be clearly emphasised. Although the model is designed with business meetings in mind, it is hoped that it will provide a useful and fruitful way to examine the complex relationship between language and gender in future research, in particular to studies which concentrate on discourse in an institutional setting.

Keywords: *gender, performativity, communities of practice, critical discourse analysis, business discourse.*

Absurd Tricks with Bicycle Frames in the Text World of *The Third Policeman*
Joanna Gavins (University of Leeds)

The majority of the abundant existing academic material on Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* (1967) can be seen to be mainly concerned with the analysis of the philosophical and scientific content of the text from a purely literary critical standpoint. Current understanding of the stylistic mechanisms at work within the novel remains relatively slight. The present study is intended not only as a further contribution to existing knowledge about the stylistics of O'Brien's text, but also as a unique exploration of its narrative structure from a specifically Cognitive Poetic perspective. The analysis uses Text World Theory, as developed by Paul Werth, as its methodological framework. Like those analyses which have gone before it, my examination of the structure of *The Third Policeman* is by no means exhaustive. It does, however, provide a unique insight into the complex conceptual processes involved in our understanding of this absurd and often almost hallucinatory narrative experience.

Keywords: *text worlds, Flann O'Brien, absurdism, stylistics, cognitive poetics*.

Words and Weapons: *The Battle of Brunanburh*
Jayne Carroll (University College, Dublin)

'An unrestrained song of triumph', whose poet is 'a gifted and well-trained publicist.' These phrases describe *The Battle of Brunanburh*, the poetic annal for 937 in the Anglo-

Saxon Chronicle. *Brunanburh* celebrates the victory of the Anglo-Saxons, led by West Saxon king Athelstan and his brother Edmund, over a Norse-Scots coalition, led by Dublin Viking Óláfr Guðfriðsson - Anlaf in the poem - and Scottish king Constantine II. That the poem has a panegyric function, glorifying the English at the expense of their enemies, is indisputable. The purpose of this paper is to examine a few of the ways in which this is done: more specifically, how the linguistic patterning of the poem contributes to its effect.

Keywords: *Brunanburh, transitivity, Anglo-Saxon, stylistics.*

Futuretalk: one small step towards a Chronolinguistics

Peter Stockwell (University of Nottingham)

In the area of linguistics and language teaching, science fiction is useful in very many ways. An obvious way is that it sets up many complex and rich worlds and outlines the sorts of adjustments that language must make in those contexts. It thus draws a strong link between language and context; it shows how the construction of reality is largely a matter of language; and it speculates on where we are linguistically heading. It is a useful mirror on language development.

Extrapolating the dialects of the future has been the province of science fiction in the last century. Though few SF writers are professional linguists, their method in general tends to take a holistic view of form, meaning and social context. Characters in science fiction are not individuals but are ‘everyman’ tokens, and the language they use symbolises the culture they inhabit. Linguistic extrapolation in science fiction thus treats language both as the technology of communication and as an index of social change.

In this paper, I argue that predicting the language of the future, though extremely difficult, is possible. I call this new discipline chronolinguistics, and I set out the draft principles and parameters of a chronolinguistics, based on future languages speculated by science fiction writers.

Keywords: *chronolinguistics, historical change, sociolinguistics, science fiction, futurology, architexts.*

In today's information-intensive and increasingly international world, the ability to use language effectively is at a premium. The Centre for Research in Applied Linguistics is dedicated to the description and understanding of language as it is acquired and used in the real world, both in monolingual and bilingual contexts. The centre has particular strengths in the following five research strands:

- **Corpus-based Language Enquiry**: The centre uses its access to language corpora to describe the nature of language use in both written and spoken contexts. The 100 million word British National Corpus is available as a tool to inform mainly written usage. The centre has also developed, in conjunction with Cambridge University Press, the 5 million word Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Spoken Discourse (CANCODE). Through its exclusive use of the CANCODE, the Centre is now developing a major new grammar pertaining to differences between spoken and written discourse. Corpus evidence also informs research into Discourse and Text Analysis, which focuses on analysis of text at the level of discourse organisation, mainly for the purposes of language teaching and learning.

- **Vocabulary Studies**: The centre has a number of staff interested in lexical issues, corpus research into lexis, second language vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary testing, and metaphorical usage of vocabulary. Current research is inquiring into the vocabulary size of English learners in several countries and the nature and use of vocabulary learning strategies.

- **Psychological Aspects of Language Acquisition and Use**: One research direction within the centre focuses on investigating the psychological factors, conditions, processes and contexts that characterise or affect second language learning and processing. Areas of specific interest include language learning motivation, learner autonomy, group dynamics in the language classroom, and the psycholinguistics of speech production.

- **The Interface of Language and Literature**: This work includes: the relationship between literature and language teaching; incorporation of critical thinking in creative language use; the nature of stylistic constraints on language use; the affect of societal factors on language use; and cognitive poetics.

- **Second Language Pedagogy**: The centre has staff specialising in a wide range of second language methodological issues, including materials and curriculum design; language test construction; CALL; and English for Academic Purposes.

CRAL Staff

Jean Brewster:
Task-based learning; language and content integration; interactional strategies; teacher training

Ronald Carter:
Applied linguistics, especially in relation to language education; literary linguistics and literary theory; theory and practice of discourse grammar; lexis and discourse; corpus linguistics

Zoltan Dornyei:
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Integration of critical thinking in a five-skills approach to language learning and use; the use of language in literature

Gill Meldrum:
The evaluation of learner writing; critical writing in academic English

Norbert Schmitt:
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Barbara Sinclair:
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Anoma Siriwardena:
Language and cultural/social identity; contributions to language learning; language awareness for teachers

Roger Smith:
Written academic discourse; task-based learning; disciplinary cultures in higher education

Gail Stankler:
Pronunciation

Peter Stockwell:
Literary linguistics; sociolinguistics; cognitive poetics; science fiction; surrealism