

Collecting small language corpora with student assistance and using them in class:

the example of Semantics and Critical Linguistics



Les Cahiers du CeDoP

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PREFACE

Not unlike the way in which scholars in the exact sciences work with observational and experimental data, linguists often base their working hypotheses on data gained from a (more or less representative) corpus. While professional corpora are bound to be very large, a small, but well-chosen corpus can be used to enliven a course with « real-life » instances of language use. These data can be collected with the assistance of students and subsequently edited on leaflets, stencils or even small booklets for classroom use.

Students can be instructed to bring to class examples from a variety of linguistic documents available to them or to which they can gain access at little expense (papers, magazines, films, audio and video recordings of radio and TV, books read for other courses, etc.) ; consequently, the class can occasionally be turned into a small linguistic « workshop » where everyone's contributions are studied and discussed.

The present booklet is but one illustration of how, in a few hours of easy word processing, a corpus of examples collected by students can be turned into an inexpensive workbook which may be amended and completed with new or better examples as time proceeds. The advantages of the procedure are many :

- Carrying out small « scrapbook » assignments allows students to become actively and critically aware of their language environment, and thus to experience that notions encountered during teaching sessions are not theoretical abstractions, but features present in « real life ».
- Looking for illustrations of certain notions forces students to consult more or less large amounts of foreign-language material. This contributes to their linguistic input at the same time as it widens the scope of the course. Thirty pairs of eyes, even if they are inexperienced, see more than one ; and some students bring in excellent examples from sources that the teacher would not even think of _ or would not dare bring in !
- Trying to recognise in real-life examples where and how certain notions are represented in practice both develops and tests the students' insight.
- Seeing the result of one's own research in print is a strong motivating factor, since it is experienced as an acknowledgement of one's value and insight.

The present collection focuses on semantics and critical linguistics _ two areas of thought which lend themselves particularly well to classroom analysis of varied language material. The examples are relatively self-explanatory, but a workshop will be devoted to them at the ULB encounters between teachers in secondary and higher education. The corpus-collection procedure illustrated here can, however, be applied to a variety of notions in both linguistics and literature, e.g. in answer to questions like the following :



- What, in a piece of text of your choice, is objective information, what is subjective judgment, and can you always tell the difference ?
- What are the linguistic devices used to convince or sway the consumer in advertising ? How is language used to make a product attractive, to sustain consumer attention, to make the message memorable, to prompt sales ?
- What is linguistically interesting about some of the songs you like to listen to ? Do they use « ordinary » language, and if not, how is the language « deviant » ? Is language played with ? Is it used to create a special effect ? Does it resort to imagery ? Does it, like some forms of poetry, respect patterns of rhyme and metre ?
- When you watch a film with subtitles, do you sometimes note oddities or errors in the translations ?
- When an argument or a fight between people develops, can the cause sometimes be traced back to linguistic misunderstanding ? Can you find examples of conflicts triggered off by linguistic disagreement ?
- Do men and women speak the same language ? etc.

The procedure by which students study a certain amount of language material in order to locate interesting examples of language use can, of course, also be applied to the grammatical aspects of a course. Students may, for instance, scan newspapers for examples of the simple vs. the progressive present (and observe that unlike what they are told to do, a number of papers nowadays use the simple present in contexts where a normatively-minded grammarian would expect a simple form !!), or check whether imperatives are always orders (they are not : they can be requests, offers or conditions as well, but it takes a large corpus to find that out !) etc.

This booklet can be used in different ways :

Ideally, it should act as a mere incentive to start carrying out similar work with one's own students.

But of course, it can also be used as a small coursebook in its own respect, either to make students familiar with notions and categories in informal semantics (an essential contribution to their linguistic and general training, considering that whenever we speak or write, we always « mean », even when we do not seek to « communicate » our meanings) ; or as a small reader used to broaden the linguistic and structural repertoire while, in passing, drawing attention to the more semantic or critical aspects of language use. In the latter case, it may be a good idea to ask students to highlight with a fluoride marker those elements in the total messages which are the characteristic « markers » of such or such a category or linguistic device.

In my own experience, the procedure has shown itself to be rewarding and fun for both teachers and students -- and that is as good a reason as any other to share it with one's colleagues !

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Semantics : A Corpus of Examples.

When correlating communicative situations and stylistic features (or vice versa), it is important to remember that registers/varieties are not « of themselves », « by definition » marked by certain linguistic features, but that linguistic choices always correspond to a communicative need ; and unless they are put to the service of what and how a piece of language is trying to « do » or « mean », they make little sense in isolation. Once this perspective has been understood, the analysis and appreciation of a given text will take the form of judging the particular piece of discourse against the total potential resources of the language. *At the semantic level*, the description of varieties will be concerned with typical patterns in meaning and reference.

While manuals for stylistic analysis generally give satisfactory hints for « stylistic » analysis at the phonetic/graphetic, lexical, grammatical and even textual levels, indications for a semantic analysis are scanty, cf. Crystal & Davy p. 19 ; in Carter & Nash (*Seeing Through Language*) the issues are present, but not spelled out systematically (cf. p. 260) ; the closest thing to what I feel should be offered is to be found, not in a stylistic analysis, but in a « critical linguistics » approach, i.e. Norman Fairclough's *Language and Power*, which contains an interesting check-list, pp. 109-112.

Non-formal semantics offers an interesting series of terms and categories which can be usefully applied to the analysis of different registers and text types and, in addition, put to the service of a « critical linguistics » approach. *The aim of this collection is to illustrate these non-formal, critical categories.*

Outline : Semantics is primarily concerned with meaning and reference, i.e. with the relationship between the « map » and the « territory ». At the word level, it will assess denotation and connotation of the terms used, e.g. individual (1) or collective (2) affective connotations of linguistic items, words with built-in judgments (3) snarl- and purr-words (4, 5) and euphemism (6). The issue of synonymy (7) belongs here as well, as do the phenomena of polysemy and homonymy, which may trigger off ambiguity and/or misunderstanding (8), or be used as attention-catching devices in headlines (9) and advertising (10).

At the utterance level, semantics will seek to distinguish between, for instance, report (11), inference (12), judgment (13) and other functions of language : directive (14), aesthetic (15) phatic (16) or presymbolic (i.e. not primarily referential) in some other way (17). The perception of the reality represented may be warped through verbal devices like slanting (18), language-induced stereotyping (19) or two-valued orientation (20 ; language as the manifestation of a thought-system that leaves no alternative to a binary view of reality), while multi-valued orientation (21) is one of the steps towards open-mindedness.

In a communicative situation, an utterance may be relatively autonomous or, on the other hand, context-dependent : the meaning may be « public » (22), group-related (23) or personal (24) and therefore less easily agreed upon, while reference may be constative and univocal or « oblique » : irony (25), allusion (26), insinuation (27 : hints, innuendo), metaphor (informative, to convey a tentative truth (28) or evocative to convey emotional content (29)) and other « indirect » speech acts in which sentence meaning and utterance meaning come apart (30). But here as elsewhere, meanings intended one way by the speaker may be understood differently by the addressee or recipient (31).



In intensional orientation, the thought and action of people is conditioned by the (accurate or misleading) image projected by words. Various problems may develop when people ignore contexts (32), confuse levels of abstraction (low-level abstraction 33, high-level abstraction 34, confusion of levels of abstraction 35), or mistake signs for things themselves (36).

Cooperation and Conflict¹. - The basic and somewhat moralistic assumption behind Hayakawa's² (and a number of other linguists') philosophy of language is that human society rests on cooperation achieved by linguistic means. One might, with equal plausibility, develop the complementary (not necessary opposite) hypothesis that language not only reflects, but actually shapes, implements and enforces power relationships, i.e. patterns of inequality and dominance potentially leading to competition and conflict between people. These patterns may be prior to their linguistic manifestations, but language use may also aid in establishing, conditioning or maintaining them. It is interesting to study in this perspective who dominates whom, or who relates him/herself to whom via which patterns of interaction. This may be envisaged at different levels :

1. ***in interpersonal relationships*** : power vs. solidarity in the use of first names and (in some languages) personal pronouns (37). Directives as appeals to solidarity vs. directives as manifestations of inequality : who can boss whom around, who can afford to speak in imperatives or use « strong » modals of obligation ? How do people respond to directives ? (directives may trigger off obedience, 38 ; or elicit hostility, 39) What are the markers of authority, power and dominance in the family, at school, in group behaviour ? How does one establish oneself as the dominant member of a group (by linguistic means ? Is the linguistic prong of transactional analysis of any use here ? (40 : how does people's language reveal or confirm the « roles » they play in situating themselves with regard to other people : « my dog's bigger than your dog » ?) How do conflicts / fights between people develop ? (41 : failure to respect an interlocutor's « face », dignity, needs ; failure to acknowledge (presumed or real) authority, violations of the politeness principle, failure to agree on meanings of words, etc.).
2. ***dominance for interests (private or corporate)*** : is « convincing » someone a way of imposing one's will ? which techniques of linguistic « manipulation » can be recognised in, say, guides to public speaking (42), in advertising (43) or political rhetoric (speeches, posters or slogans) (44) ? Slanting (already illustrated) may be viewed as another way of imposing one's inferences and judgments on the addressee. An extreme manifestation of this is the phenomenon of *disinformation* (45), which is a blatant violation of Grice's communicative principles.
3. ***group-sponsored dominance***. Laws, regulations, and directives with collective sanction refer to an authoritative body (human or divine) with regard to which the citizens (or believers)

¹ The Belgian Association of Anglicists in Higher Education organised a conference on *Power, Cooperation and Conflict in English Language and Literatures* at the ULB in Nov.-Dec. 1995. Guest speakers were major figures like Norman Fairclough, Sandra Harris and Michael Stubbs. Additional information from M. Maufort (Eng. Lit.) and J.-P. van Noppen (Eng. Lang.)

² Hayakawa, S.I. : *Language in Thought and Action*, N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (the book has been through six editions)



situate themselves as inferior. Are laws, then, a way of making society viable (46) or do they reflect a class structure in which the power of the wielders of authority (or wealth) is confirmed, strengthened and protected ? (47). State-sponsored dominance may take various forms : cf. the manipulation of language resources in 1984, in the propaganda of Nazism, of Communism, of American Capitalism, cf. the metaphors and euphemisms used by governments (48).

4. *the effect of dominance on language judgments*. In sociolinguistics, the « prestige » or « standard » variety is that of the dominant (economically most powerful ?) classes, while language judgments (which may, in fact, be disguised social judgments) tend to disparage the linguistic habits of smaller, less powerful groups as childish, primitive, incorrect or unpleasant. Linguistic differences are made to reflect or establish differences in social status or prestige, e.g. to make someone feel socially inferior or uncomfortable (49), and may be used as standards by which to rate a person socially (50).

Examples of Key Categories

1. Individual affective connotation : a word or a phrase triggers off an emotive response, which remains individual because it is based on a single person's experience or sensitivity.

I dislike the word funeral. I've had to attend too many funerals. I've seen too many people die. - W. A. Griswell.

« I can't say that word. I hate that word ». Frazier didn't much like the word [lesbian] either. A dolorous quality attached itself to it. Perhaps it was the number of syllables or too many consonants. *Gay* pleased her. It had a frivolous, lighthearted quality and it made her laugh, especially when she thought of the opposite of gay -- grim. Maybe she'd start calling straight people grims, or how about dire straights ? - R. M. Brown : *Venus Envy*.

« You mustn't mind my saying that. Toff has a special sense for me. I divide the world into two parts - the toffs and the tarts. The toffs can do without the tarts, but the tarts can't do without the toffs. I'm a tart. (...) The toffs have a settled job and a good income. (...) The tarts - well, we pick a living here and there - in saloon-bars. We keep our ears open and our eyes skinned. - G. Greene : *The Comedians*.

Mrs. Fairley informs me that she saw her only this morning talking with a person. Mrs. Poultenay used « person » as two patriotic Frenchmen might have said « Nazi » during the occupation. - J. Fowles : *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

« I'm sorry, Thomas. By the way, my name's Alden, if you'd care... »
« I'd rather stick to Pyle », I said. « I think of you as Pyle. » - G. Greene : *The Quiet American*.

« Come in », Mr. Jones said. (I somehow couldn't bring myself to think of him as Major Jones). - G. Greene : *The Comedians*.



Mrs. Brattle was a modest, pure, high-minded woman -- whom we shall not call a lady, because of her position in life, and because she darned stockings in the kitchen. - A. Trollope : *The Vicar of Bullhampton*.

2. Collective affective connotation occurs when a group of people experience a shared emotive response to a word or phrase.

Few words are as loaded as [quagmire]. Historically linked to Vietnam and defeat, quagmire connotes a limitless undertaking that corrodes a nation's confidence and well-being. - M. Kramer : « Banish the Q Word », *TIME*, May 20, 1990.

« Black » and « white » have in many communities powerful connotations in addition to the literal denotation of colours. The word « black » in many communities denotes fear or even wickedness, and there is an equally widespread association of « white » with purity and goodness. These connotations can dangerously affect our attitudes without our realising it. - R. Quirk : *The Use of English*.

Black is commonly associated with negatives -- the black market, the black sheep -- anything which is supposed to be bad. (...) Whatever we do, we will be called black in the inferior sense by some. (...) In a world like that, it's hard not to believe there's something inferior about being black. - Steve Biko, quoted in J. Briley : *Cry Freedom..*

The Amish refer to most outsiders as «Englishmen». The word has a very strong negative connotation, as the Amish consider outsiders who disturb their peaceful life as evil. - *Bettina*.

3. Words with built-in judgments are words which, in a language community, immediately and automatically call forth an emotive response or value-judgment.

« A particular newspaper had been mentioned, his lordship remarking : « Oh, you mean that Jewish propaganda sheet ! ». - K. Ishiguro : *The Remains of the Day*.

« Fascism » has become synonymous with Nazism, and so with racism, and so, by now, with almost any -ism the speaker disapproves of. - *The Economist*.

« Brothers and sisters, this dream of freedom from poverty, racism, war and violence is not a utopian fantasy. Now is the time to fulfil the promise of democracy ! » - Coretta Scott King.

Zhirinowsky is xenophobic, racist, reactionary and irresponsibly populist, elevating saloon-bar wisdom to national policy. - *The Independent*.

City officials in Paris want to abolish the expression « Gay Paris » because (...) outsiders picture a city full of homosexuals. - *TIME, Sidelines*.



« You're a Communist ! » - « Yes, and I'm proud to be one. I fight for the freedom of people ». - Angela Davis.

« Let [Liberals] think it out carefully in the warmth which may come to the weary Liberal combatant when he sees his ideas increasingly accepted by enlightened peoples and victorious nations. (...) Socialism is, in its essence, an attack ... upon the right of the ordinary man or woman to breathe freely without having a harsh, clumsy tyrannical hand clapped across their mouths and nostrils. A free parliament -look at that- a free parliament is odious to the Socialist doctrinaire. (...) But I will go farther. I declare to you, from the bottom of my heart, that no Socialist system can be established without a political police. (...) (...) On with the forward march. Leave these Socialist dreamers to their utopias or their nightmares. Let us be content to do the heavy job that is right on top of us. And let us make sure that the cottage home to which the warrior will return is blessed with modest but solid prosperity, well fenced and guarded against misfortune, and that Britons remain free to plan their lives for themselves and for those they love. » - *W. Churchill, BBC, June 4, 1945.*

4. Snarl-words are words used for their unpleasant, disparaging connotations rather than for their actual reference.

You have (...) the privilege of being the worst, most incompetent, drivelling, snivelling, jibbering jabbering idiot of a steward in France. - G.B. Shaw : *Saint Joan*.

[This actor] comes off the screen like melting tar (...) He has all the charisma of dandruff (...) [He has] a pretty façade, but when you knock there's just no one home. - D. Bogaerde : *Voices in the Garden*.

Our doddering bastard of a governor, our half-dead gangrened gaffer is hollow like an empty petrol drum. - A. Sillitoe : *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*.

Billions of blue blistering barnacles ! (...) You thundering nitwitted numbskull you ! - Captain Haddock in *The Red Sea Sharks*.

« You're nothing but a coward, a fraud and an ignorant puncher ! » - Chris Eubank as quoted in *The Sun*.

Curse the blasted, jelly-boned swines, the slimy, the belly-wriggling invertebrates, the miserable sodding rutters, the flaming sods, the snivelling, dribbling, dithering, palsied, pulseless lot that make up England today. They've got the white of egg in their veins and their spunk is so watery it's a marvel they can breed. - D.H. Lawrence voicing his anger when *Sons and Lovers* was rejected by a publisher.

5. Purr-words, on the contrary, are chosen for the pleasant, positive judgments or evaluations they convey rather than for the things they refer to in objective terms :

You're wonderful ! - *Woman's Own*.



She really was a wonderful woman. - D.H. Lawrence : *The Lovely Lady*.

President Reagan, on behalf of our nation I thank you for the wonderful things that you have done for America. - *G. Bush*.

Not only the finest long short story that Hemingway has ever written, but one of the best written by anyone anywhere. - *The Listener*.

Blanche : « Young man ! young, young, young, young man ! Has anyone ever told you that you look like a young prince out of the Arabian nights ? - T. Williams : *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious ! - *Mary Poppins*.

6. Euphemisms are paraphrases or lexical choices made in order to avoid the unpleasant or taboo connotations of words referring to certain (culture-conditioned) categories of meaning.

« Animal behaviour is conditioned by what has been called the four F's : Feeding, Fighting, Fleeing and...reproduction. » - Mark Johnson.

Before the war a spade used to be called a spade -- often brutally so. I remember an institution named *Hospital for Incurable Diseases*. How gentle, how tactful, I thought, and tried to imagine the feelings of the patient driven through the gates. But by today a dustman has become a refuse collector, a policeman a law enforcement officer, the pilot of a plane a captain, a man who sells second-hand socks from a market stall a business executive and a dog a home-protection officer. - G. Mikes : *How to Be Decadent*.

A company that has « cash flow problems » is one that knowingly continues to trade while insolvent ; a lie may be referred to as a « categorical inaccuracy » ; the Gulf War hostages were referred to as « Saddam Hussein's guests ».

Their missiles cause civilian casualties ; ours cause collateral damage. Our boys are loyal ; theirs are blindly obedient. - *Guardian Weekly*, February 1991. (cf. also 2-valued orientation and slanting).

I was struck by the way the media and indeed the world conveniently sidestep horrible events by using the handy term *ethnic cleansing*. - S. Kingston in *TIME*, Letters to the Editor.

Your brother was never much in the brain department, was he ? - S. Shepard : *Curse of the Starving Class*.



7. Synonyms may have the same extensional referent, but are not always freely interchangeable because they have different connotations or belong to different registers.

« Nationalism » has become synonymous with evil in general and with right-wing extremism in particular. - G. Behrens : *Love, Hate, and Nationalism*.

« Fascism » has become synonymous with Nazism, and so with racism, and so, by now, with almost any -ism the speaker disapproves of. - *The Economist*.

- « The scheme I would suggest cannot fail of success, but it has what may seem to you a drawback, Sir, in that it requires a certain financial outlay. »

- « He means, » translated Corky, « that he has got a pippin of an idea but it's going to cost a bit ». R. Usborne : *Wodehouse at Work* .

We are often told that the traditional belief is that [God] 'dwells' ('lives', for some odd reason, is avoided) in some non-physical 'space' beyond the physical universe of men and matter. - D.W.D. Shaw : *Who is God ?*

Passenger (to the taxi driver) : Get me downtown and make it fast !

Driver : Make it fast ? It's coming loose maybe ? (here, example of homonymy)

Passenger : Fast ! Fast ! Uh... Quick ! Quick-fast !

Driver : Gotcha Pal. Fast, swift, quick, speedy, rapid, dashing, lively, smart, snappy, zippy, expeditious, hustling, hasty, breakneck, headlong, fleet, like a flash...

Passenger : Just my luck. I get a cab driven by a thesaurus !

G. Higgins : The Hogfather (Cartoon in Punch).

8. The terms Polysemy and Homonymy refer to words which, although written and/or pronounced the same, have different meanings and/or grammatical functions.

Washable : 1) of ink : will wash out when spilled. 2) Of paint, wallpaper : resists washing.

Open on Sundays : 1) on Sundays, not on weekdays. 2) on Sundays as well as weekdays.

« Both sides are appealing » : 1) les deux parties vont en appel ; 2) les deux faces sont attrayantes.

The question « was it a good match ? » could evoke different responses from a cricket enthusiast, a relative of a recently married couple or a woman who has been buying curtains. - R. Chapman : *The Language of English Literature*.

Tsvigyn found herself nailed, not to a cross, but by the police. - *TIME*.

How right is Silvio Berlusconi ? - *TIME*

Is it true that you're gay and have you ever had a relationship with another man ?

Yes, I am always very happy and I have always had a relationship with my Dad. Will that do ? - *Robbie*.



« Are you a businessman, sonny ? » Frank asked. « Then you know it's good business for you to run along down into your cabin. There isn't any good business for you up here. » - E. Hemingway : *Islands in the Stream*.

The peasant once refused to bow
And sell his soul for bread and salt :
The only *revolution* now
Is Lenin turning in his vault. - R. Woddis : *GUM for Hire*.

Vast bureaucracies of civil servants -- no longer servants and no longer civil. - Sir W. Churchill.

9/10. Polysemy, Homophony and Homonymy may cause ambiguity and misunderstanding, but may also be used in playful language use, e.g. in jokes or as attention-catching devices in headlines and advertising.

« Are you staying here, Sir ? »
The question baffled me. How could I possibly have dinner here if I wasn't staying ?
« Yes, I am staying. »
« This way, Sir ». He began to make his way with great dignity among the tables while I followed abjectly.
(...) « May I have your room number, Sir ? »
I swallowed hard. (...)
« Room number ? Oh, I'm not living in the hotel. »
« Ah. Not staying. » (...) - J. Herriot : *All Creatures Great and Small*.

« Lovely day isn't it ? Spring in the air. »
« Why should I ? » - G. Mikes : *How to be Decadent*.

- « How is a duck like an icicle ? »
- « Both grow down ». - Peppicello & Weisberg : *Linguistics and Humor*.

- « I bet he knew the Wife of Bath »
- « Today she'd be the Wife of Shower », she laughed. - R.M. Brown : *Venus Envy*.

Inspector (with his pencil and notepad) : Careful now, I'll take down anything you say.
Dan : Anything I say ?
Inspector : That's right.
Dan : OK, then. Trousers. - *BBC TV*

Do not walk on the grass -- smoke it ! - *A Button*.

Grizzly : The Bear Facts. - *BBC Documentary*.

Environment : Why are the Greens so Blue ? - *Newsweek*.



Norway superhero Johann Olav Koss leads the host country to a host of medals. - *TIME*.

Gone demo-crazy. - *Headline of an article about the process of democratisation and its problems in the Philippines, Time Magazine, March 1991.*

Incest More Common Than Thought in U.S. - *The Sunday Telegraph, Nov. 11, 1990.*

The Past : An Extraordinary Present. - *Advertisement for ancient objects as gifts.*

Good advertising keeps businesses in business. - *TIME.*

We make it our business to keep your business your business. - *Royal Bank of Scotland.*

Class regardless of class. - *KLM Advertisement.*

How Sir Yehudi Menuhin keeps time. - *Advertisement for Watches.*

Ferry Reasonable ! - *Advertisement for Sea-Line Ferries.*

Have an eargasm. - *Clarion Stereo.*

WriteNow Right Now ! - Scott & Foresman : Title of a quick-learn word-processing manual.

11a. Reports are presumably objective accounts of reality, free of any personal selection, interpretation or value judgment. They are (in principle) verifiable by empirical observation or some other form of truth assessment.

Melina Mercouri, Greek Minister of Culture and former screen actress, died yesterday aged 68 in hospital in New York, where she had been undergoing surgery for cancer. She was born in Athens on October 18, 1925. - *The Times.*

At least 83 people in Madagascar died after eating tainted shark meat ; dozens more were hospitalized. - *TIME.*

Senior officials of four francophone African countries met in Maastricht during the spring of 1989 to participate in a seminar on « the interaction between structural adjustment and food security » run by the European Centre for Development Policy Management. - *The Courier.*

More than 90 % of higher-education colleges have to offer remedial classes to their freshmen. In a recent study of school results in six rich countries, American students ranked last in mathematics and second to last in science. - *The Economist, March 1991.*

The most common form of clutch is the dry single plate type, as manufactured by Messrs Borg & Beck Ltd. Fig. 59 is a diagrammatic illustration to show the operating principle and it can be seen that there are three elements. - *The Penguin Car Handbook.*



This is essentially a semantic point, but it is strongly supported by purely formal evidence. Most strikingly, the epistemic and deontic modals of English have no past tense / past time forms. - F.R. Palmer : *Modality and the English Modals*.

« Oh, look », she implored him. But what was there to look at ? A few sheep. That was all. - V. Woolf : *Mrs. Dalloway*.

11b. Explicit Reference to Modalities of Reporting (= Editorial Reserve)

The Belgrade-based news agency Tanyuk reports that heavy fighting is continuing in the Mostar region southwest of Sarajevo, and around the Croatian port city of Dubrovnik. The reports have not been independently confirmed. - *BBC World News*.

A representative of the High Commissioner for Refugees said in New York that information had come from what he called 'various credible sources'. One memorandum leaked to journalists was from an official of the agency who said he saw Bosnian Moslems being rounded up and sent off to what he described as concentration camps. - *BBC World News*.

We have just heard that the Bosnians and Serbs surrounding Sarajevo are to be given a deadline for lifting their siege or face the threat of NATO air strikes. - *The News, BBC Radio*.

11c. From Report to Inference :

« All quiet tonight. There's no fog. The Britons won't try anything. » - Conversation between Roman guard and officer, overheard by Anticlimax in *Asterix in Britain*.

12a. Inferences are based on observable data, but are the result of a logical interpretation of those data. While the facts are in principle verifiable, the inference remains a matter of fallible human logical processing. Logical inferences may be marked linguistically by the modal auxiliary « must ».

« The coffee is always cold here. » - Student at the Cité Paul Héger.

« In Gemelli dei Monti they smelt the wind, and felt the first rain squalls, and counted the first frosts, and said : « It's going to be a bad winter ». - M. West : *The Devil's Advocate*.

- « What makes you think I've got a cold ? »

- « It's obvious. Your cheek is hot. Your nose is red. Your lip is inflamed. You keep surreptitiously dabbing with that filthy handkerchief. - I. Murdoch : *A Word Child*.

« Soon be autumn -- the rain's getting colder. - *The Punch Book of Utterly British Humour*.



When people see the cops in front of your house, they immediately think you have done something wrong. - *Someone complaining about his neighbours.*

« He must be a homosexual. I've never seen him with a girl-friend. » - A Student .

« People feel that if you jump from a Ford to a Cadillac, you must have stolen money. »
- Pierre Martineau, quoted in Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders.*

« You told us with your own mouth that there was only one God. Now you talk about his son. He must have a wife, then. » The crowd agreed. - Ch. Achebe : *Things Fall Apart.*

12b. From Inference to Judgment :

« Because the girl didn't go with him for love, but for a pack of scraps. Certainly she is a girl from the village who, perhaps not for the first time, grants her favours to some lustful monk out of hunger, and receives as recompense something for her and her family to eat. »

« A harlot ! » I said, horrified. - U. Eco : *The Name of the Rose.*

- « Do you think she's making it with that guy ? »

- « Who, Taylor ? How should I know ? »

- « I think she is. She's after him for his money. » - S. Shepard : *Curse of the Starving*

Class.

(*inference + judgment*)

13. Judgments are subjective evaluations, in which the speaker produces utterances which rate or classify items in terms of a scale of values. Judgments sometimes dress up as reports, but may be diagnosed when the question of their truth-value or verifiability is raised.

« My sister is very beautiful, » Marcus said to me one day. He announced it quite impersonally, as who should say « two and two make four, » and I received it in the same spirit. It was a fact, like other facts, something to be learned. - L.P. Hartley : *The Go-Between.*

Ann Clwyd : British Coal and the Secretary of State have lied through their teeth.

The Speaker : That is a statement that is unacceptable in this House and I ask the Hon. Lady to rephrase it.

Ann Clwyd : Madam Speaker, I will withdraw that and I will say that the Secretary of State and British Coal have told blatant untruth. - BBC TV *Westminster Daily.*

Sir Robert Chiltern : « The affair to which you allude was no more than a speculation. »

Mrs. Cheverley : « It was a swindle, Sir Robert. Let us call things by their proper names. »

As long as Apartheid will exist (*sic*), South Africa will remain the world's most evil country. - *The Tribulations of the White Tribe.*



Spielberg's *Holocaust Park* is a manipulative film that tricks the viewers with documentary effects. - Tom Segev in *TIME*.

14. Directive is the term for uses of language by means of which one person seeks to condition another person's course of action : orders, commands, advice, ... ; directives may be direct or indirect.

Use 10 x 15 cm. cards. Above the red margin, write what you are going to illustrate or document. Also number your cards (in the order indicated below) in the upper right hand corner. Give detailed information about the origin of each quotation, and make sure that the text is copied without mistakes. - J.-P. van Noppen : *Maîtrise de la Langue Anglaise, II*.

NO SMOKING - FASTEN SEAT BELTS. - *Airplanes*.

« Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come. » - G.B. Shaw : *Pygmalion*.

« Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly. (...) Ask questions instead of giving direct orders. (...) Let the other person save face. » - D. Carnegie : *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

Get real - if you're not ready to buy, carry or use a condom, you are not ready for sex. - *Rolling Stones*.

« An apple a day keeps the doctor away » - *Popular saying*.

« It is the will of God that America should fight Communism in Viet Nam. » - *Born on the 4th of July*.

« If any of you know cause of impediment why these two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony, ye are to declare it » - *Book of Common Prayer*.

« Fasting is ordained for you, as it was for those before you, so that you might remain conscious of God during a certain number of days. » - *The Qu'ran, 2 : 183*.

O ye people : Worship your Guardian Lord who created you and those who came before you,
that ye may become righteous. - *The Qu'ran*.

For reservations or information, contact your Travel Agent or Delta. - *Advertisement*.

« So to relieve winter 'dry skin' itching, use Lanacare now. » - *Daily Mail*.

Come to where the flavor is. - *Marlboro advertisement*.

« Winners choose Longines. » - *Advertisement*.



15. When language is used in its aesthetic function, priority is given not to its referential, « informative » function, but to its visual or sonorous features. In some extreme cases, meaning may be sacrificed altogether ; more frequently, it is only of secondary importance.

Maybe Karl Lagerfeld should not make stylistic flourishes with languages he can't read. The designer thought the Arabic verse embroidered in gray pearls on his dress - designed by Chanel and modeled by Claudia Schiffer - said « a love poem in memory of a maharani ». Muslims knew better. The words appear over and over in the Koran : « They are the ones who found guidance ». - *TIME*.

Eena, Meena, Mina, Mo,
Catch a nigger by his toe,
If he squeals, let him go
Eena, Meena, Mina, Mo ! - *English nursery rhyme*.

UNIR1, UNICI2I (you and I are one, you and I see eye to eye). - *The Dinky Toys*.

« Armageddon » is a fine, thumping word, almost onomatopoeic in its evocation of finality. - *Time Magazine*.

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck would chuck wood ?
- *English tongue-twister*.

16. Similarly, in phatic use, the focus is not so much on what is said as on the interpersonal, communicative function, on the faculty of language to « keep lines of communication open » and reach easy agreement through relatively insignificant small talk (or writing).

- Hello John, how are you ?
- Not too bad. How are you ?
- Fine.
- And how's your mother ?
- She's very well, thanks. - M. Geddes, *Elementary Conversation*.

- Do you mind if we talk ?
- Why... no, no.
- Yes you do ; you do.
- No, I really don't mind at all, really.
- It's ... it's a nice day. - E. Albee : *The Zoo Story*.

« Aye well », he said, « it's grand hay weather. »
I agreed with him.
« Mind you », he said, « a night's rain would do a lot o'good ».
I gave my opinion and the silence fell again. - J. Herriot : *All Creatures Great and Small*.

« Good evening, Lady Stutfield. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season ? »
« I suppose so, Mr Dumby. It's been a delightful season, hasn't it ? »



« Quite delightful ! Good evening Duchess. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season ? »

« I suppose so, Mr Dumby. It's been a very dull season, hasn't it ? »

« Dreadfully dull. Dreadfully dull. » - *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

*** In the following example, the initial phatic nature of the conversation is not acknowledged, and Liza invests the subject « weather » with a representative meaning, i.e. turns small talk into a meteorological report.**

Mrs. Higgins : Will it rain, do you think ?

Liza : The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation.
- G.B. Shaw : *Pygmalion*.

17. Language may be used « presymbolically » in other ways, i.e. in other situations where the important thing is not so much « what is said » but the function it fulfills : in this manner, words may be used without people actually believing, understanding, or meaning what they say, e.g. in ritual, but also (more simply) when singing under the shower.

« [God] bless you ! » - *Said when somebody sneezes*.

ABBA have a way of making English sound like Esperanto : « The judges will decide / the likes of me abide / Spectators of the show /Always lying low » what does that mean, exactly ? - *What's That Chirping ?* in *TIME*.

For all these and all His mercies, may the Lord be praised. - Simple form of grace before a meal.

They began in unison, « I pledge allegiance to the flag of... » « Just a moment, » the new teacher said, « what does pledge mean ? What does allegiance mean ? I think it is quite wrong for you to have to say something with long words in it if you don't understand what you're saying. » Danny said, « Miss Warden - well, she never told us. We just had to learn it and then say it, that's all. » (...) « It's like a, like a, well, sort of sign, isn't it ? » - J. Clavell : *The Children's Story*.

« I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.

Begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father : through whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.

And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary : and was made Man. (...) »

(*The Rite of Low Mass*)

« O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us ; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may



cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen... » (*The Rite of Low Mass*)

18. Slanting is a linguistic device through which a speaker (or writer) deliberately gives a biased, subjective account of a given reality (e.g. a favourable or unfavourable view) and chooses 1) the features to be described and 2) the terms in which these features are communicated in such a way as to make certain value judgments inescapable.

[The press] ridiculed [the strike] by the way they presented the argument : to constantly refer to a « miners' strike » when it was in fact a « coal dispute ». There were three parties, miners coal board and government, yet the whole thing was put on the back of the miners. (...) There is a way in which miners' communities are seen as unimportant as compared to, say, the needs of government or the coal board to make or save money. In that way people's lives are ridiculed. - Mike Power interviewed about his *Media Hits the Pits*.

Schindler was a drinker, womanizer, black marketeer and con artist. - *Some Germans*.

vs.

Schindler was the lone individual doing good in a desperately dangerous context and was most comfortable when in the company of those he saved. - *Schindler's Friends*.

We Palestinians are a bunch of uneducated terrorists, who should have reconciled ourselves long ago to the loss of our homeland... delinquent children with machine guns in our hands and old men who refuse to forget.

vs.

The Palestinians - you - are gentle, decent farming people of great traditions, unfairly driven from your land in order to appease Zionism and make way for a Western foothold in Arabia. - J. Le Carré : *The Little Drummer Girl*.

As imperialist-class powers (...) wanted to bring the German Democratic Republic militarily « back into the fold », the state borders of the GDR were closed securely. That saved peace in Europe. - *East German History Textbook*.

vs.

The GDR leadership had a wall erected right through the middle of Berlin because it believed it was the only way to stop the mass flight of people to the West and the economic bloodletting connected with it. - *West German History Textbook*.

Ernest Hemingway was a braggart and a bully and often a liar. He was violent, he was antisemitic and took great pleasure in killing animals.

vs.

Ernest Hemingway was a great storyteller, a charming man, capable of touching gestures of kindness and generosity.

Guns don't kill people. People kill people. - *Pamphlet of the National Rifle Association, supporting free sale of guns*.



19. Stereotyping is a form of « classifying » language use, in which a number of beliefs or judgments are automatically projected onto a group of things or people, very often regardless of the features of the individuals belonging to the group.

He keeps on talking about a gypsy encampment. Why didn't you say so before ? They're the villains, without a shadow of doubt. Those sort of people are always thieving. - Dupont in Hergé's *The Castafiore Emerald*.

The « typical » Frenchman with beret and moustache and a loaf of unwrapped bread under his unwashed armpit. Or the amorous Italian with an insatiable libido and garlic-scented halitosis. Or the pot-bellied, workaholic German. Or the stuffy, sexless Brit with his rolled umbrella and good, gray Times. - S. Sullivan in *Newsweek*.

Heaven is where the police are British, the chefs French, the mechanics German, the lovers Italian and it is all organised by the Swiss. Hell is where the police are German, the chefs British, the mechanics French, the lovers Swiss and it is all organised by the Italians. - *An Anthology of European Jokes*.

« Darlin', some people will never get past it once the word's out that you're gay. You will be reduced to an object. It's not fair but that's the way it is. If you wear a purple skirt people will say it's because you're a lesbian. You own an art gallery. They'll say that gay people are always artistic. You have a dog and a cat and live alone. Lesbians always have cats, don't they ? » - R.M. Brown : *Venus Envy*.

Two million foreigners equals two million unemployed. - *translated slogan of J.M. Le Pen*.

20. Two-valued orientation is a widespread, and often misleading, form of simplification in which language is used to represent reality in limited, binary terms regardless of intermediary nuances. The danger resides in the reduction of a complex reality to a simple binary contrast (e.g. yes/no or for/against), which is easily adopted and absorbed and may discourage further discernment.

New York : Love it or Leave it. - *Bumper sticker*.

« Oysters is something you either like or hate ». - *G. Debusscher*.

One is either a German or a Christian... you cannot be both. - *Adolf Hitler*.

Any Christian who is not a hero is a pig. - Léon Bloy, quoted in J. Irving's *Prayer for Owen Meary*.

Friend or foe ? - *Asked by patrols and guards around military perimeters during the war. If no satisfactory answer was given, guards were entitled to open fire.*

Four legs good, two legs bad. - G. Orwell : *Animal Farm*.



For a Communist, the world is divided into just two classes of human beings : the Communists and all the rest. - George Orwell : *Essays, Journalism and Letters*.

You're always tirading against Capitalism, and yet you won't accept the only possible alternative. (...) One's got to accept either Capitalism or Socialism. There's no way out of it. - G. Orwell : *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*.

There are only two things you can do about God : affirm Him like the Catholics or deny Him like the Communists. - M. West : *The Devil's Advocate*.

[Ross Perot] does not compromise well. [He] has two modes : your way and my way - and we're going to do it my way. (...) once Perot makes a decision, that's it - no dissent - either go out and do it or get off the team. (...) « With Perot, you're either with him or against him. If you're against him you're in deep, deep trouble. If Perot were elected president, he'd be about the closest thing we've had in a century to a dictator. » - *TIME*, May 25, 1992.

Our slain soldiers will go to heaven, and their dead soldiers will go to hell. - *Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussain Al-Ahmar, speaker of the Yemen Parliament*.

If God be for us, who can be against us ? - *Romans 8 : 33-34*.

Let your Yes be simply Yes, and your No be simply No ; anything more than that comes from the evil one - *Matthew 5 : 37 ; also directive and maxim of quality + sincerity condition*.

Russia's army : Tiger or Teddy Bear ? - *Headline in Newsweek*.

21. Multi-valued orientation, on the other hand, seeks to escape from this simplistic reductionism, and to recognize nuances between two extremes.

What I don't understand about the press in general is a kind of contempt for the *facts*. To propagate the myth of the diva is so simplistic. It's a very simplistic way to look at people. The power of the printed word is black and white, but people are many shades of gray. They can't quite understand how I could be a so-called powerful woman and yet be frightened, let's say. It's like they don't go together. It's too complex. - Barbara Streisand in *TIME*.

Nationalism is neither inherently right-wing nor left-wing, nor is it necessarily good or evil. - G. Behrens in *TIME*.

I am a liberal Christian who disagrees with many of the Rev. Billy Graham's theological convictions and with some of his actions. Yet I have only the greatest respect for him and his lifelong ministry. While many other televangelists measure their success in secular terms, Graham has always kept the focus on the message instead of the messenger. - *TIME*, Letters to the Editor.

I don't think people can be divided into the good and the bad as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them : mad moods or recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. - O. Wilde : *Lady Windermere's Fan*.



« I've stuck my neck out on this paper to take a stand against white prejudice. But if you think that means I'm going to go soft on some sensationalist pushing black prejudice, you brought your complaint to the wrong man. » - D. Woods in *Cry Freedom*.

In the last two decades there has been a trend of identifying methodological positions by dichotomies or words placed in opposition to one another. Process and product thus become another pair of words joining use and usage, discourse and text, capacity and competence, (...) The setting up of two basic categories of approaches to teaching writing is not intended to suggest that only two approaches exist. - R. Tuffs : *Direct Mail Letters in the Language Classroom*.

22a. Most meanings are « public », i.e. are easily agreed on by all participants in a communicative situation ; that is, basically, why we manage to communicate with other people.

Please Do Not Disturb. - *On the door of a hotel room*³.

Ladies - Gents. - *On the doors of toilets (and not, say, dining rooms or elevators)*.

DON'T WALK. -- YIELD RIGHT OF WAY. --- STOP. - *Traffic Signs*.

22b. Occasionally, however, someone may fail to acknowledge this public meaning ; this may lead to misunderstanding, conflict or some other unpleasant situation.

In America, traffic signs for pedestrians say « DON'T WALK ». This is generally understood to mean « don't cross the street when the light is red ». In *Rain Man*, the main character Raymond, who is autistic, takes the meaning literally, and stops in the middle of the pedestrian crossing when the sign instructs him not to walk. - *Own example*.

« We will not accept society as it exists in South Africa. We demand confrontation. » The prosecutor stared at him. « In short, you demand violence ? » - « No », Biko replied calmly. « You and I are now in confrontation, but I see no violence. » - J. Briley : *Cry Freedom*.

- « [Ted Burgess] is quite a decent feller but he's a bit wild ».

- « Wild ? », I repeated, thinking at once of lions and tigers. « Do you mean he's dangerous, Hugh ? »

- « Not to you or me. He is a bit of a lady-killer. » (...) Lady-killer : what did that mean ? (...) I did not think Ted would kill Marian. - L.P. Hartley : *The Go-Between*.

³ The public meaning is not, as frequently believed, « Do not disturb under any circumstances »: some hotels append a text in small print to their “don't disturb” cards saying that guests will be woken in case of emergencies and that urgent telegrams will be delivered even if the card is displayed.



22c. Public meaning may also be deliberately taken outside its usual range of reference. This may cause surprise and thus attract attention (e.g. in politics or advertising) or even contribute to the natural evolution of the meaning of a word.

« Peace » for us means Israel's destruction and nothing else. - *Yasser Arafat*.

Graffiti has been a Portuguese habit for centuries. Walls are covered with all manners of words, drawings and symbols. It's a practice known as tile painting. It's an art form passed down through the generations. - *Advertisement for Portugal in TIME* (the picture shows a wall covered with *azulejos*).

Since Weber's time the term *charismatic* has come to be used of any figure enjoying exceptional popular authority. Since such popular authority can be acquired by the exercise of fairly mundane political skills and by the manipulation of a leader's image, the word *charisma* has become arbitrary and subjective. - *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Institutions*.

« Words are slippery », warned Historian Henry Adams. The word propaganda has slipped quite a bit. At one time it described any information, true or false, that was spread to promote a cause. But today nearly everyone understands it as referring to distortions of the truth. - *Time Magazine*.

22d. When meanings come to be fraught with misleading connotations, it may become necessary to « redefine one's terms » :

Newspapers screamed of death camps [and] President Bush warned of Nazi-style genocide. But these *emotionally freighted words* obscured the fact that such phrases have *precise historical meanings*, and their use is often an act of propaganda. A glossary : *Death Camps* : Nazi sites, such as Auschwitz and Treblinka, for the slaughter of 6 million Jews and others in World War II. (...) *Concentration Camps* : First used by the British during the Boer War for civilians imprisoned under brutal conditions. The term later referred to Nazi prison and slave-labour camps, like Dachau. Similar camps were known as gulags in the Soviet Union. (...) *Internment Camps* : Where civilians are held in wartime for security reasons. The U.S. interned 110,000 Japanese-Americans during World War II. (...) *Detention Camps* : Where civilians are held before transfer elsewhere, like the U.S. camp for Haitian refugees at Guantånamo Bay. « A Lexicon of Horrors », *TIME*, August 17, 1992.

No practice of Islam has been more misunderstood than *jihād*, often disdainfully labelled as a holy war and used inaccurately to portray Muslims as violent and warring people. (...) The noble spirit of *jihād* [is] the struggle to the utmost of one's capacity, the striving in the way of God with one's wealth and life, but above all, the spiritual striving. - Sabeeha Rehman in *TIME*.



23. Some words, or some meanings of words, will be restricted to a particular group of people, and be meaningless, impossible to understand, or unacceptable to others.

To musicians, the word « Mickey Mouse » means sentimental and insincere : « a mickey mouse band is a real corny outfit » (S. Longstreet) ; to college students, it means simple, elementary : « a lot of the mickey mouse stuff has been eliminated from the program ». In the armed forces, it means a blunder due to confusion and stupidity : « the only big mickey mouse was a brief shortage of jungle boots » ; and to black people, it means a stupid person, especially a white person or police officer. - *A Dictionary of American Slang*.

« Up close, Woods could see that it was Biko and he knew too that « the system » was the black word for any white authority - the police, the army, the rent officer. » - J. Briley : *Cry Freedom*.

« A sin ! We heard that terrible word and shrank back in fright. It wasn't a word, it was a serpent, the same serpent that had beguiled Eve, and it was coming down from the teacher's platform and opening its mouth in order to eat us. » - N. Kazantzakis : *Report to Greco*.

You see that piece of shit from the Morris Office ? (Hollywood term for *manuscript*). - *A Hollywood Lexicon in The New Yorker*.

« Take a butcher's » ; « He fell down the apples » ; « Mind your loaf » ; « Have you seen my new whistle ? » « Have an arry » - *Cockney Rhyming Slang*. (a look, the stairs, your head, a suit, a bottle).

The old currant bun's getting warm, and me plates o'meat ache... (rhyming slang for *sun* and *feet*) - L. Ortzen : *Down Donkey Row*.

24. An extreme case of restricted meaning is the situation where an individual decides to invest words with a meaning of his/her own, or starts using a private vocabulary. When the meaning becomes too personal or deviant, this may of course make communication rather difficult.

« There's glory for you ! »

« I don't know what you mean by 'glory' », Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. « Of course you don't - till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you' ! » (...) « When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less. » - L. Carroll : *Through the Looking-Glass*.

« By *logos* or *presence*, Derrida signifies what he also calls an « ultimate referent » - a self-testifying absolute, or ground, or foundation directly present to our awareness outside the play of language itself, which is adequate to « centre » (that is, to anchor and organise) the linguistic system and to fix the determinate meaning of any spoken utterance within that system. - M. H. Abrams : *A Glossary of Literary Terms*.



I don't think I'm ambitious for what one would imagine the word ambitious means. (...) what I am ambitious for is to do what I happen to do. I'm ambitious to do that as well as I can and not to waste time. - Jeremy Irons : *Premiere UK*.

My idea of « good company » is the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation ; that is what I call good company. - J. Austen : *Persuasion*.

- That's what you were drinking in Parnassus.

- Over at ... ?

- Parnassus.

- I don't understand.

- Skip it. It's a private joke between lil' ol' Martha and me. - E. Albee : *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* ?

*** Reference (the relationship between the word and the thing signified) may be univocal (i.e. the word may refer to the thing as directly and unambiguously as possible)...**

A byte is a unit of computer memory made up of a series of eight smaller units called bits. One byte is just enough memory to store a single letter or figure. - *The Oxford Wordpower Dictionary*.

In 1854, Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, the son of a surgeon. - Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

If two triangles have two sides equal to two sides respectively and have the angles contained by the equal sides equal, they will also have their third sides equal respectively ; in fact, they will be congruent triangles. - *Euclid*.

« Water boils at 100° Centigrade ».

There are two dead pigeons in the water tank. - Monty Python : *Faculty Tower*.

« bellad. alcaloid. tot. 0.2 mg - ergotaminii tartras. 0.6 mg - phenobarbital 40 mg - acid. malic.- acid. tartaric.- cocc. rubr. A - indigotin.- flav. sunset - erythrosin.- tartrazin.- gelatin.- amyl. lacca - polyvinyl. acetat - lactos. pro comp. uno. » - *Bellergal, Patent medicine* .

25. ... but language may be used differently : in irony, for instance, the speaker/writer means the contrary of what he/she says/writes, but often says it in such tones that the « real », i.e. the actually intended meaning becomes quite clear.

Isn't it nice the way some people have manners, though, even in this day and age. Isn't it nice that some people won't just come breaking into other people's houses even if they do hear some sub-human monster yawling at them from inside ? - E. Albee : *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf* ?



That hero of democracy, Boris Yeltsin. (...) Yeltsin has shut down newspapers, produced a constitution out of his hip pocket that makes him virtual czar, forbidden candidates in the recent election to criticize his constitution on television, put off for years his own need to run for re-election and so on. - M. Kinsley : *Is Democracy Losing its Romance ?*

« The mighty United States of America, the leader of the free world, again took a country of its own size and chalked up another smashing victory. After Grenada and Panama, I wonder which country will be on the hit list next. Liechtenstein ? » *TIME*, Letters to the Editor.

You picked good weather for a holiday, he murmured. - J. Briley : *Cry Freedom*. (it is pouring outside).

26. In allusion, the speaker uses terms which are reminiscent of more or less famous earlier utterances, which may be cultural, literary, biblical, etc., and thus lend one's utterance a certain additional « weight » or value. Allusion may also be used playfully, or as an attention-catching device.

Spielberg's *Holocaust Park* is a manipulative film that tricks the viewers with documentary effects. - Tom Segev in *TIME*.

Tiger, Tiger, Fading Fast. - Headline, *TIME*.

Some Like it Cold. - Headline, *TIME*.

Take a walk on the wild side. - *Advertisement for Mustang Jeans*, allusion to Lou Reed's song.

27. Insinuation (hinting) is an oblique form of language use in which the speaker communicates only part of the total intended meaning, or communicates it indirectly, and leaves it up to the listener to guess, infer or understand the full intention of the message.

« It takes up to 40 dumb animals to make a fur coat. But only one to wear it. » - *WWF*.

« If the shoe fits, wear it » ; « Barking dogs don't bite » ; « Empty vessels make the most sound » ; « If you go to bed with dogs you'll wake up with fleas ». « You don't look at the mantelpiece when you poke the fire ». - *English proverbs*.

My brain ? It's my second favorite organ. - Woody Allen : *Sleeper*.

Frank sighed. « What this town needs is an enema. » - R. M. Brown : *Venus Envy*.

Shall I get you a last drink before you leave, Lord Dearham ?
Got the message, Mrs. Harley. Well, yes... I'd love to. - S. Weston : *Yesterday's Mirror*.

Chocolate ... I wish I had some now. - G. B. Shaw : *Arms and the Man*.



28/29a. Metaphor is a special case of oblique reference, based on a double relation of resemblance-in-difference. There are different principles of assimilation, e.g. based on similar structural analogy, or on similar emotive effect.

Finite and quite rigid words are not, in any sense that holds good of bricks. They move and change, they wax and wane, they wither and burgeon ; from age to age, from place to place, from mouth to mouth, they are never at stay. (...) They depend on the very building they compose for the very chemistry of the stuff that composes them. - Sir Walter Raleigh : *Style*.

Great indeed is the strength of the letters of the alphabet, those twenty-six miniature soldiers that stand at the edge of the cliff and defend man's heart at least for some little time, preventing it from falling and drowning in the black, bottomless eye of Buddha ! - N. Kazantzakis : *Report to Greco*.

That tree on the shore was a witch stretching out her hands towards the sea. - *Anne Ponceau*.

The bed was a battlefield and he was a master tactician in this kind of warfare. - L. Uris : *QB VII*.

I fell totally and for ever in love with the Greek landscape from the moment I arrived. (...) as if Greece were a woman so sensually provocative that I must fall physically and desperately in love with her, and at the same time so calmly aristocratic that I should never be able to approach her. - J. Fowles : *The Magus*.

Each time a human cell divides, it must replicate its DNA, a manuscript some 3 million characters long. - *TIME*.

Only Swiss cheese has more holes than President Clinton's State of the Union address. - P.C. Latsis, *TIME*, Letters to the Editor.

The heart is a reservoir of words. - *TIME*.

Oh my America, my new found lande,
My kingdome, safeliest when with one man man'd. - J. Donne : *To his Mistris going to Bed*.

Humid seal of soft affection,
Tenderest pledge of future bliss,
Dearest tie of young connections,
Love's first snowdrop, virgin kiss ! - Robert Burns : *To a Kiss*.

You are the cool nights of the desert and the hot kisses of the sun. - M. Fleetwood : *Behind the Mask*.



28/29b. Metaphoric Collocations in a Specific Register :

« Mr Derek Davy has pointed out to me that only in stockmarket reports would the inanimate noun *tin* be subject of the verb *suffered*. Hoping to confirm this usage by a random reference to *The Times* (2 July 1971), I immediately discovered that on that day the breweries 'came alive with a start'. One 'soared' and others 'moved up hopefully' and they were still 'active' some days afterwards. In this improbable world, lead may be buoyant and oil firm, but steel may sag badly as the day goes on. »- G.W. Turner : *Stylistics*.

28/29c. Some metaphors are so useful or successful that they come to be adopted as stock phrases and start living a 'life of their own' as new lexical items in the language :

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an *iron curtain* has descended across the continent. - *Winston Churchill*, 1946.

Religion ... is the *opium of the people*. - *K. Marx*.

We no longer have the easy divisions of the *cold war* to make things clear and crisp and simple. - C. Krauthammer : *The Greatest Cold War Myth of All*.

30. There is a whole range of other « indirect » speech acts, in which sentence meaning and utterance meaning come apart : understatement, overstatement, directives dressing up as reports, etc.

They stood, unwilling to part.

« The wood is so lovely now, » she said. « I wanted you to see it ». (...)

It was getting dark. He followed her to the wood. - D.H. Lawrence : *Sons and Lovers*.

- We do have a private research room available.

- Thank you, I'm OK here.

- Won't you be more comfortable in the research room ?

- No. Would it make *you* more comfortable ? - J. Demme : *Philadelphia*.

- If you will excuse me, I'm just about to drop.

- Sure, honey. Why don't you set down.

- What I meant was that I'd like to be left alone. - T. Williams : *A Streetcar Named*

Desire.

Cecily : « Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the garden, Dr. Chasuble. »

Miss Prism : « Cecily, I have not mentioned anything about a headache. » - O. Wilde : *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Smoker : « Do you mind if I smoke ? »

Non-smoker : « Of course not. Do you mind if I fart ? » - *Carole*.



31. But here as elsewhere, meanings intended one way by the speaker may be understood differently by the addressee or recipient : this misunderstanding may find its origin at the sound, word, sentence or utterance level.

A local citizen was concerned about an intense light in the sky.

« It's Sirius », an undergraduate student in astronomy said.

« Really ? », asked the man. « How serious is it ? » - C. Knight in *Reader's Digest*.

- Waiter, how long will the fish be ?

- About fifteen centimetres. - *Popular Jokes in English*.

« My boyfriend tells everyone that he is going to marry the most beautiful girl in the world, » said Helen.

« I am so sorry, » said Kate. « Perhaps he will change his mind and marry you after all. »
- *The Book of British Humour*.

« The space of the former Soviet Union ... is essentially a post-imperial space, where Russia has to defend its interests by all available means, including military and economic ones ». The speech created a sensation. Western delegates were stunned - until Kozyrev explained an hour later that he was playacting. - C. Krauthammer : *Enough Bear Stroking*.

A boy and a girl are dancing together at a party. It is very hot inside.

He asks her : « Would you like to go out with me ? »

« Yes, it's hot in here », she replies, and starts for the door.

« Well, that's not exactly what I meant », he says, stopping her. - *Cynthia*.

32. In so-called intensional orientation, the thought and action of people is conditioned by the (accurate or misleading) image projected by words. Problems may develop when people ignore contexts :

Dr. Thomas Sowell reports in *Forbes* that recently some speakers have accused Jews of being slave traders. He explains that « to talk about Jews trading slaves is like saying that white people have toenails. It is true enough in itself, but grossly misleading if it suggests that nonwhites do not have toenails ».

Gail, the company secretary, spent many hours on the phone to book a conference room for our annual training session. Finally, when the details were ironed out, she burst into my office. « Great news, Scott ! » she announced. « We're getting our regular room at the hotel ! » All eyes were on Gail and me as she suddenly realized that she had interrupted a meeting with co-workers. - Scott Duink in *Reader's Digest*.

The Cure wrote a song called « Killing an Arab ». The reference was to Albert Camus' *L'Étranger*, but because of the title, the National Front thought it was a racist song, and published leaflets mentioning the song. Eventually, The Cure had to publish denials and decided to play down the single.



- Dad to Julie : It's no use going to University if you're not going to work hard and try to succeed.

- Julie to Mom (a few days later) : Dad said it's no use going to University. - *Viviane*.

*** The « ladder of abstraction » represents the way in which human thought may move from a low level of high specificity towards levels of increasing generality and abstraction, i.e. where more and more individual details are left out. Normally, we move « up and down » on the ladder, i.e. make general statements which are backed up with specific evidence, or give low-level accounts to reach higher-level conclusions or inferences. But occasionally, people will be « stuck » at one level of abstraction :**

33. Low-level abstraction :

- What do you know about the Royal Family ?

- Well, Elizabeth II is the Queen of England. Her mother's name is Elizabeth too - she's the Queen Mother. The Queen's husband is Prince Philip. Her sons are Charles, Andrew and Edward -- they are princes too. Andrew is in the Navy. Lady Diana is Prince Charles' wife ; she is a princess. William is the baby and he is Queen Elizabeth's grandson. - From *Easy Street*.

He said, « Morning ! » and I said, « You got a fine city here, Mayor. » And then he had coffee with me. And then I went to Waterbury. (...) - A. Miller : *Death of a Salesman*.

- What's a bicycle ?

- You ride on and you fall off. - D. Crystal : *Listen to your Child*.

34. High-level abstraction :

« Matter in time appears to us, with our vested interest in survival, to be governed by two opposing principles : law, or the organising principle, and chaos, or the disintegrating one. These two, the one to us sorting and erecting, the other to us demolishing and causing havoc, are in eternal conflict. This conflict is existence. » - J. Fowles : *The Aristos*.

Apollo and Dionysus were the sacred pair who gave birth to tragedy. (...) Entrenched in his individuation, motionless, [Apollo] stands tranquil and sure amidst the turbulent sea of phenomena and enjoys the billows presented in his dream. (...) Dionysus shatters individuation, flings himself into the sea of phenomena and follows its terrible, kaleidoscopic waves. Men and beasts become brothers, death itself is seen as one of life's masks, the multiform stalking-blind of illusion rips in two, and we find ourselves in breast-to-breast contact with truth. - N. Kazantzakis : *Report to Greco*.

President Reagan, on behalf of our nation I thank you for all the wonderful things you have done for America. - G. Bush : *Inaugural Address*.



A religious revival or a great awakening begins when accumulated pressures for change produce such acute personal and social stress that the whole culture must break the crust of custom, crash through the blocks in the mazes, and find new socially structured avenues along which the members of the society may pursue their course in mutual harmony with one another. - W.G. McLaughlin : *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*.

- How's your snow art progressing ? (*Calvin has just shaped a pile of snow with a hole in it*).

- I've moved into abstraction. This piece is about the inadequacy of traditional imagery and symbols to convey meaning in today's world. By abandoning representationalism, I'm free to express myself with pure form. Specific interpretation gives way to a more visceral response.

- I notice your oeuvre is monochromatic.

- Well c'mon, it's just snow. - Bill Watterson : *Calvin & Hobbes*.

35. Problems may arise when levels of abstraction are confused, i.e. when low-level realities (individuals, for instance) are viewed and/or judged in terms of the connotations attached to a high-level unit (for instance, an ethnic group, a nation, a religion, ...) and thus unfairly stereotyped.

I love humanity. It's people I can't stand ! - *Peanuts*.

I love women. I'm normal. - *Heard on a BBC talk show about AIDS*.

They say wearing a safety belt may save your life. But I'd much rather be ejected from my car than burnt alive or crushed inside it. - *Overheard*.

Doctors keep saying that smoking causes lung cancer ; but I know someone who used to smoke one pack a day, and who lived to be a hundred. - *Overheard*.

It had been emphasized during the teaching session that the vocabulary should be of a higher level of formality than plain everyday language. This student attended the session and yet used the verb « get » three times in a sentence. This example proves that there is a difference between learning and knowing a rule. - V.R.- *Student Project*.

36. Since words are not univocal « maps » of reality (the « territory »), people may be misled by words : they may be induced to believe that the linguistic representation is an accurate account of what they may expect the world to be like. Advertising will occasionally resort to this procedure to project a favourable image of a commercial product ; but this may lead to frustration or disappointment when implied or explicit « promises » are not kept.

- What's your mother's zodiacal sign ?

- Pisces.

- That means « fish ». She must be a very good swimmer. - Annick, *personal anecdote*.



When black kids in the inner cities put on their X cap, they identify with Malcolm X. They don't really know what his message was, but he is one of the few « role models » whose life stories have any resonance. - from *Newsweek*.

I just voted for a man who has the same name as a very good pediatrician who treated my granddaughter. - Article on Zhirinovsky in *TIME*.

MacKinnon felt ... well, raped. And the reviewer ? « She's claiming that a book review equals rape, » says Romano. That's quite a stretch. - R. Lacayo : « Assault by Paragraph », *TIME*.

The news that women have informed the BBC that they kneel down by their sets to kiss the male announcers good night makes one wonder to what level the public interest can sink. - *News Chronicle*.

Clarks, the Real Taste of Freedom. - (*What is the taste of freedom ; can chewing-gum make us free ?*)

In the Prologue of the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer speaks of the « drought of March ». As a description of reality, that is unlikely : everybody knows that March is a rainy month in England. Chaucer borrowed the phrase from Latin poetry. - *Joëlle*.

37. Language may reflect or implement relationships of power and dominance between people. One way in which differences in status between people may be revealed is through the use of forms of address and personal pronouns :

When his relationship with the young man is at its best, Shakespeare in his sonnets addresses him in the intimate thou-form : « Shall I compare thee to a summer's day ? ». Later, when the relationship has deteriorated, he abruptly changes his way of addressing him and uses the polite and distant you-form : « No longer mourn for me when I am dead / Then you shall hear the surly sullen bell » .

Q. : Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

H. : Mother, you have my father much offended. - W. Shakespeare : *Hamlet*, III, iv.

Catherina : Louka, you have been telling stories.

Louka (the maid) : I have done Raina no harm.

Catherina : Raina !

Louka : I have a right to call her Raina : she calls me Louka. - G.B. Shaw : *Arms and the Man*.

T. : You can call me Hugh, if you like, I don't charge extra.

L. : Oughtn't I to call you my Lord ?

T. : Oh no, not in ordinary conversation. Perhaps if you were writing me a begging letter ... but Trimmingham is quite in order, if you prefer it to Hugh. - L.P. Hartley : *The Go-Between*.



* In this respect, directives (cf. n° 14 above) may play a double role : they may be manifestations of solidarity (when one person requires the assistance of another) or signs of inequality (when one person orders or bosses another one about -- a situation which requires a position of power.). Depending on the aims and circumstances, directives will display a higher or lower degree of directness, and elicit obedience or hostility.

38. Obedience :

« Army, Air Force, same difference (...) I wouldn't be able to put up with all that « yes-sir-no-sir » stuff. »

Just then, his boss upstairs hollered « Get me the tape from the truck ! » -- and the packer sheepishly hurried outside. - P. L. Butler in *Reader's Digest*.

- « I'm asking the questions. You're answering them. »

- « Yes, Sir. I -- »

- « Did you think we brought you here to ask questions and for me to answer them ? »

- « No, Sir. I -- »

- « What did we bring you here for ? »

- « To answer questions. »

- « You are goddamn right, » roared the colonel. « Now suppose you start answering some before I break your goddam head. » - J. Heller : *Catch 22*.

- « Oh shut up, Christopher, for Christ's sake, stop that bloody caterwauling ! »

- « Sorry, Hilary. » - I. Murdoch : *A Word Child*.

« If you don't shut your mouth, » somebody once said to him, « you'll get a frog down it. » After that Mike had kept his teeth tightly clamped except when the surprise was too great. - G. Greene : *The Destructors*.

39. Hostility :

- Shut up !

- Hey ! Missus. Don't talk to me like that. Don't talk to me in that tone a' voice. There was a time when I had to take that tone a' voice from pretty near everyone. They don't talk to me like that now. Not any more. - S. Shepard : *Buried Child*.

- Go and wash up and clear the table.

(he hurls a plate to the floor)

- That's how I clear the table ! (he seizes her arm) Don't ever talk that way to me ! What do you think you are ? A pair of queens ? - T. Williams : *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

- Do you hear what I'm saying ? I'm talking to you ! Where's the scissors ?

- Why don't you shut up, you daft prat ? - H. Pinter : *The Homecoming*.



40. In some situations, speakers will need or want to affirm their power or authority over others in (linguistically) explicit terms, or seek to achieve dominance over others by casting themselves in certain « roles ».

« I am your God, and you will bow under my feet. Do you think you have power to stop my will ? » - *David Koresh (leader of the Davidian Sect in Waco, Texas)*.

« I'm chief », said Ralph tremulously. « And what about the fire ? And I've got the conch - » - *W. Golding : Lord of the Flies*.

« You see, Hobbes, I have a water balloon, and you don't. I therefore have offensive superiority, so you have to do what I say. What do you think of that ? » - *B. Watterson : Calvin and Hobbes*.

« I am the conductor here », Archbishop Tutu shouted. « Follow me ! We shall all be free ! Black and white together ! » - *Confessions of a White South African, in The Sunday Times*.

« This is my house and as long as you live here, you'll live by my rules. I want your hair cut and start looking for a job. You got that ? Is that clear ? » - *Ned's Atomic Dustbin*.

De Wet backhanded Biko across the face with a blow that snapped his head to one side and brought a flush of blood to his mouth. Biko pulled his head back (...) with a look of stoic resignation. De Wet was finally satisfied that Biko understood who was boss in this building. - *J. Briley : Cry Freedom*.

41. Conflicts between people may develop when participants in an exchange fail to respect an interlocutor's « face », dignity, or needs, fail to acknowledge (presumed or real) authority, when they cannot agree on meanings of words, or refuse to honour the politeness principle etc. :

The other day, my father asked me to drive him to Essen, Germany. Unfortunately, my car broke down on the way. My Father became nervous and started insulting my car. All this really got on my nerves and I started screaming too ; I told my dad that the next time he wanted to go to Essen, he'd better ask someone else. - *Vincent*.

- What are you doing there ?

- I was going to hang my picture over the mantle.

- You have nerve. I was saving that space for Pharaoh's horses. That's no place for a portrait – we want something pretty up there.

- Is that so ? Well, be that as it may, as long as I'm paying the rent here I'm gonna be boss. My picture goes over the mantle, get that ? - *S. Smith in The Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics*.

- Hi, Calvin. Can I play with you and your tiger ?

- Hobbes and I are not playing. We're doing big important things, and we don't need you to mess them up. - *B. Watterson : Calvin and Hobbes*.

- Do you hear what I'm saying ? I'm talking to you ! Where's the scissors ?



- Why don't you shut up, you daft prat ?
- Don't you talk to me like that. I'm warning you. - H. Pinter : *The Homecoming*.

*** Similarly, language may be used to exert power or dominance to serve certain interests. Several forms of linguistic « manipulation » pursue the aim of imposing one person's or group's will on others.**

42. Guides to public speaking, for instance, will give prospective speakers advice on how to sway or convince audiences by means of ready-made techniques :

If you feel yourself being continually cut off, you may try to speed up, leaving smaller gaps between your turn and someone else's, and within your own talk. And you may force yourself not to stop when others start talking, but to talk right over them. If that doesn't work, you can try using a nonverbal sign of having something to say -- like waving your hand or leaning forward. - D. Tannen : *That's Not What I Meant !*

In a depressing number of companies the switchboard girls are trained to fight off all salesmen like the plague. When asked to describe the nature of your call, state your objective in such a way as make it sound important and attractive : « I'd like to discuss a new technique in adhesives » or « I'm sure he'll be interested in profiting from a new discovery ». There is no point in launching into a sales pitch with anyone other than the decision taker. - adapted from D. Patten : *Success for Marketing for the Small Business*.

Interrupt the opposition lawyer by volunteering answers, as soon as you can see the drift. This gives the impression that you are cooperative, and serves to confuse the lawyer's style. (...) Blurt out relevant facts and opinions on cross-examination, even though the opposition lawyer may attempt to limit your answer. These attempts will give he impression that the lawyer is trying to conceal some of your evidence. - W. O'Barr : *Effective Courtroom Strategies*, quoted in *Crystal's The English Language*.

43. In advertising, potential consumers are manipulated into wanting or buying a product :

I'd like to save you a lot of money. Right here. Right now.

The truth is, in a few weeks, your subscription to TIME International's going to expire. That means you'll have to make a special trip to the newsstand to get your issues of TIME International. That also means you'd pay more for each issue. A lot more ... When you add it all up, that's a lot of time - and money you'll be saving. - *Renewal Offer from TIME*.

Consider the current as for Kellogg's Frosted Flakes, in which adults shamefully confess that, yes, they actually love the kids' cereal. Or the frosted Mini-Wheats ad featuring a body builder who, after turning into a doe-eyed nipper, claims « the kid in me loves frosted mini-wheats ». These successful ads are targeting adults who, on some visceral level, want to behave like children. - *Newsweek*.



Important things to do : Save the planet. Save the whales. Save \$ 50 on a game gear super sonic sports pack. SEGA. - Ad in *Rolling Stones*.

44. In political rhetoric, speakers will resort to rhetorical devices to convince the public to adopt their views or certain patterns of behaviour :

Part of the secret of Zhirinovsky's appeal is his ability to combine populist rhetoric with a crude yearning for ease and glory. Proclaiming slogans like «I'm just the same as you » he careens through Moscow in limousines. (...) For every constituency he designed a tailor-made message. The military received pledges of a resurrected and expanded Russian Empire. Fixed-income pensioners and students were promised a decent standard of living. Crime-weary citizens were assured that gang leaders would be executed. Foreigners were offered up as scapegoats, and Jews were blamed for anti-Semitism. - *TIME*.

Labour says he's black. Tories say he's English. - *The Greater London Council*.

If you vote for the Conservative candidate, you betray your country. - E. Powell.

The advocates of nuclear disarmament seem to believe that, if they could achieve their aim, war would become tolerable and decent. They would do well to ponder the fate of Dresden, where 135,000 people died as the result of an air attack with conventional weapons. On the night of March 9th, 1945, an air attack on Tokyo by American heavy bombers, using incendiary and high explosive bombs, caused the death of 83,793 people. The atom bomb on Hiroshima killed 71,379 people. - Air Marshall Saundby, 1964, quoted in K. Vonnegut : *Slaughterhouse 5*.

The trumpet summons us again [to] a struggle against the common enemies of man : tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself. (...) Will you join in that historic effort ? - J.F. Kennedy : *Inaugural Address*.

The animals had assumed that [milk and apples] would be shared out equally. One day, however, the order went forth that [they] were to be collected for the use of the pigs. Squealer was sent to make the necessary explanation to the others.

« Comrades ! », he cried. « You do not imagine, I hope, that we pigs are doing this in a spirit of selfishness and privilege ? Our sole object in taking these things is to preserve our health. Milk and apples (this has been proved by science, Comrades) contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig. (...) It is for *your* sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty ? Jones would come back ! Surely there is no one among you who wants to see Jones come back ? - G. Orwell : *Animal Farm*.

45. An extreme manifestation of linguistic manipulation is the phenomenon of disinformation, which takes unfair advantage of the general assumption that people and media speak or write the truth (quality) and all the truth (quantity).

The assassin (of JFK) was an angry misfit named Lee Harvey Oswald ; he had no accomplices. That was the conclusion of the official investigation, and that is what so many



people cannot quite believe. (...) The official investigation, it now seems clear, was seriously flawed. It was colored from the start by Washington's understandable haste to satisfy the country that Oswald had acted alone, that there was no plot that might have justified public calls for retribution. And it was marred by a desperate effort on the part of several key agencies to conceal facts that might have proved embarrassing and secrets they didn't want told. - *Newsweek*.

« Gringos are snatching babies and ripping out their vital organs for sale abroad. » There was no evidence that such gruesome trade exists. But an anti-foreigner paranoia took root swiftly. Diplomats believe the rumours are being deliberately spread to incite violence and derail the civilian government's fast-moving peace negotiations. - *TIME*.

The attack on the market in Sarajevo that killed 68 people in February caused deep emotion. The Serbs were obviously pointed at as guilty for the act. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic claimed that it was all fake and that « all those bodies were really just plastic dummies ». This suggested that the Serbs were actually the victims of a disinformation campaign. Karadzic's statement was successful : there were doubts about the attack in Sarajevo and even in Brussels, where a « historic » decision was being taken, people talked of an « alleged Serb attack », which delayed NATO and UN action against the Serbs. - *Jerry*.

There was all the medical evidence of the blows Steve Biko had received, the details of that ruthless ride on the floor of a Land Rover to far-off Pretoria, the contradictory testimony of the police, and yet he could still hear the Magistrate's verdict... « On the available evidence the death cannot be attributed to any act or omission amounting to a criminal offence on the part of any person. » - J. Briley : *Cry Freedom*.

The turmoil was prompted by an advertisement in *Justice* that attacked the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington as a « false and manipulative representation » ; as well, it questioned whether the Nazi gas chambers ever existed and whether the genocide of the European Jews ever really occurred. - *TIME*.

46. According to the « optimistic » view of cooperation and collaboration, laws, regulations, and directives with collective sanction are part of the « contract » which constitutes the « foundations of society » and allows men to live together harmoniously :

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. - *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, home, or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks. - *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted. - *Bill of Rights, Art. viii*.

Every foreigner who is on Belgian territory enjoys the same protection granted to persons and property, save in exceptional cases established by the law. - *The Belgian Constitution*.



47. On the other hand, it may be claimed (in a more « critical » perspective) that directives with collective sanction refer to an authoritative body (human or divine) with regard to which the citizens (or believers) situate themselves as inferior, and reflect a class structure in which the power of the wielders of authority (or wealth) is confirmed, strengthened and protected :

I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. - *The First Commandment*.

Civil litigation is normally a privilege of the rich. The poor cannot protect themselves by their own exertions against the wrongs they are subjected to. - F.H. Lawson : *Law and Society*.

When you're heir to the British throne, problems disappear. Take the 1772 Royal Marriages Act, barring the Church from marrying divorced royals. If Charles and Di legally split, the act could cramp his romantic future. But last week the London tabloids reported that Queen Elizabeth II had persuaded John Major to ask Parliament to nix the law. - *Newsweek*.

Every member of the Chamber of Deputies is entitled to travel free on all lines of communication that are operated or contracted out by the State. The law specifies those means of transportation which members may use free of charge apart from those mentioned above. - *The Belgian Constitution*.

The person of a diplomatic agent shall be inviolable. He shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention. - M. Hardy : *Modern Diplomatic Law*.

The Colour Bar Act (South Africa, 1944) reserves jobs to white people and forbids the delivery of aptitude certificates to Black and Asian workers. - *Quid*, 1993.

« Since God has blessed you with a homeland, it is a sin to dodge the draft and refuse to give your life for your country. »

48. The manipulation of language resources as an instrument of state-sponsored dominance may take various forms, e.g. the metaphors and euphemisms used by governments :

When a dictatorship like Saudi Arabia, which imprisons and tortures dissenters, is called moderate, that's linguicide. And when a few missiles fired at Tel Aviv are called weapons of terror while thousands of missiles fired at Baghdad and Basra are called marvels, that's linguicide too. (...) Rarely has it been so obvious that language is volatile stuff, that it succumbs easily to manipulation, to the sedulous distortions of propagandists and censors. In the Gulf War, words have been used to salve the conscience, to cordon off the truth, rather than to communicate it. - *N.Y. Times* and M. d'Ancona : *Low Warspeak*, 1991.

You see, we never really said publicly that we were imposing press censorship. Therefore, we can hardly announce today that we are lifting it. - *International News : Freedom under Attack*.



War is Peace. Freedom is Slavery. Ignorance is Strength. - G. Orwell : *1984*.

49. In sociolinguistics, the « prestige » or « standard » variety is that of the dominant classes, while language judgments (which may, in fact, be disguised social judgments) tend to disparage the linguistic habits of smaller, less powerful groups as childish, primitive, incorrect or unpleasant :

Dr. Halde spoke better English than I did. Mine was the raw, inaccurate stuff of common use, but his had the same ascetic perfection as his face. His enunciation had the purity that goes with a clear and logical mind. (...) I had this engrossing face before me, this assured and superior English. (...) All at once I was vulnerable, a man wielding a club against a foil fencer. - W. Golding : *Free Fall*.

Research into popular attitudes towards accents in Britain produces surprisingly uniform reactions : speakers of RP - identifiable only by voice - tend to be credited with qualities such as honesty, intelligence, ambition, even good looks. (...) the RP speaker, compared with the speaker of non-standard English, has a better chance of asserting his rights, whether in a court of law, or when negotiating credit with a shopkeeper or bank manager - in any situation, in fact, where credibility is at premium. - « The Best Kind of English », *BBC TV*.

I've been so sad / since you said my accent was bad / You say that if I want to get ahead / The language I use should be left for dead / How dare I show face / When my diction is such a disgrace ... *The Proclaimers*.

50. Linguistic judgments may be used as a standard by which to rate a person socially :

Cease this detestable boo-hooing instantly. (...) A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere - no right to live. - G.B. Shaw : *Pygmalion*.

You see this creature with her kerbstone English : the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. (...) Yes, you squashed cabbage leaf, you disgrace to the noble architecture of these columns, you incarnate insult to the English language ... - G.B. Shaw : *Pygmalion*.

That fellow obviously didn't like us. He was prejudiced from the start. Probably a Socialist or some sort of crank - he talked like one. - J.B. Priestley : *An Inspector Calls*.

« I say, Eileen, are you the daughter of a commoner ? »

She said : « What the bloody hell do you mean ? »

I told her : « That will do. You are a commoner. And getting commoner and commoner every day. »

- G. Mikes : *How to Be a Brit*.

He calls the knaves Jacks, this boy ! said Estelle with disdain, before our first game was out. - C. Dickens : *Great Expectations*.



Appendix : Model Instructions.

Scrapbook Assignment.

The course will introduce a number of concepts which you will be asked to illustrate with examples drawn from your own linguistic experience : books, papers, journals, libraries, films, songs, video clips, cartoons, radio broadcasts, advertisements, etc. *Do not* simply copy examples from the course, but try to impress your teacher and fellow students⁴ with an original contribution showing that you are *critically aware of your linguistic environment*. You may report on genuine conversations, on speeches heard or films seen, but *do not cook up any examples of your own*. The point of the assignment is to encourage you to *recognise* the workings of language in your linguistic environment, not to just come up with a stack of examples.

Inasmuch as possible, find convincing, amusing and original examples (e.g. polysemy is more fun in a pun than in a dictionary, and there is a bonus mark for « good » contributions reflecting genuine insight and understanding !). If you feel that an excerpt is not self-evident, feel free to add a personal comment. If you find several good examples, feel free to contribute more than one.

Presentation : Use 10 x 15 cm. cards (« fiches »). Above the red margin, write what you are going to illustrate or document. Also number your cards (in the order indicated below) in the upper right hand corner. Give detailed information about the origin of each quotation (e.g. M. Kinsley : « Yuppies and the Servant Problem ». Essay in *TIME, European Edition*, July 5, 1993, p. 55), and make sure that the text is copied without mistakes (marks are taken off for misspellings and other inaccuracies). Cartoons, advertisements etc. may be introduced as long as they can be pasted (or folded) on a card of the required size. Write your name on the back of each card. Hand in your assignment in the form of a stack tied with a rubber band.

⁴ In principle, the cards will not be returned, but added to a vast collection of examples to be used for future reference and illustration. Most examples in the present coursebook have been contributed in this manner by students of earlier years.

