Media Discourse

Analysing Discourse

Chapter 4

Genres and Generic Structure
Outline of Textbook

◆ This textbook has four main parts:-

◆ Part 1. **Social** analysis, **discourse** analysis, **text** analysis

◆ Part 2. **Genres** and Action

◆ Part 3. **Discourses** and Representations

◆ Part 4. **Styles** and identities
Chapter 4 Outline

1. Introduction
2. Genres and texts
3. Pre-genres, *disembedded* & *situated* genres
4. Analysing individual genres
   - Activity (+ Generic structure)
   - Social Relations
   - Communication Technologies
5. Dialogue and the public sphere
6. Arguments, assumptions and ideologies
7. Narrative
1. Introduction

Genre

= “The specifically discoursal aspect of ways of acting and interacting in the course of social events”

(Norman Fairclough)

= “a particular type or style of literature, art, film or music that you can recognize because of its special features”

(Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary)
2. Genres and texts

- There are various levels of text organization.

- Text-makers choose what meanings they want to express.

- These meanings are realized at the level of genres, discourses and styles.

- These get realized at the lower levels of semantics, grammar and vocabulary.
# Levels of Text Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>BOTH !!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Structures</td>
<td>Social Practices</td>
<td>Social Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse (Genres, Discourses, Styles)</td>
<td>Semantics</td>
<td>Grammar and Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonology (of speech) &amp; Graphology (of writing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Social Structures
- Actions and Social Relations
- Identification of Persons
- Representations of the world

### Social Practices

### Social Events

### Discourse

### Semantics

### Grammar and Vocabulary

### Phonology (of speech) & Graphology (of writing)
2. Genres and texts

◆Genres

Realized by: Actional meanings and forms.
Examples: interview, news report, comedy, love letter.

◆Discourses

Realized by: Representational meanings and forms.
Examples: police, counselling, omiai, news.

◆Styles

Realized by: Identificational meanings and forms.
Examples: reporter: veteran/junior/male/female/free.
2. Genres and texts

- Genre is *primarily realized* by the following features of texts:

  - **Text Level**
    - The overall *‘generic’ pattern* of organization of the text. [Ch4]
    - The *intertextuality* of a text: how other *‘voices’* are included. [Ch4]

  - **Above Clause (= 節) Level**
    - *Semantic relations* between clauses, sentences and paragraphs. [Ch5]
    - Formal *grammatical relations* between clauses and sentences. [Ch5]

  - **Clause Level**
    - Types of *exchange, speech function, grammatical mood* [Ch6]
Genres and Research Themes

- **Dialogue** + Public Sphere
- **Argument** + Citizenship
- **Narrative** + Ideology of the *News Media*
3. *Pre-genres, disembedded genres and situated genres*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Genre</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>Specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-genre</td>
<td>narrative, argument, description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disembedded genre</td>
<td>interview, civic self-publishing infomercial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situated genre</td>
<td>ethnographic interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Analysing individual genres

Genres can be analysed in three ways:

- 1. **Activity**
  What are people *doing* (discoursally)?

- 2. **Social Relations**
  What are their social relations?

- 3. **Communication Technology**
  What technology does the activity depend on?
4.1 Activity

- Genres are often defined (and named) according to the **purpose** of the activity.

- Some genres may have **more than one** purpose.

- Different purposes may be **hierarchically ordered**.
4.1.1 Generic structure

**Scientific Paper**
- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusion
- References.

**Accident Report**
- Headline (summary)
- Lead Paragraph (summary)
- Satellites (details)
- Wrap Up (outcome)
4.2 Social relations

- Genres, as forms of interaction, constitute social relations between interactants (social agents) such as organizations, groups or individuals.

- Brown & Gilman (1960)
  ‘The pronouns of power and solidarity’

- Example: Ethnographic Interview
4.3 Communication technologies

- The development of new communications technologies goes along with the development of new genres.

- New technology and multimodal texts.

- There is a close relationship between:
  (i) the economic, political and social changes of new capitalism
  (ii) technological change (mediation via new communication technology)
  (iii) changes of genre / new genres.
5. Dialogue and the Public Sphere

- **Ideal**: Dialogue should be free and equal.
- **Reality**: Even informal chat is not equal.

**Public Sphere** (公共圈) =
- ‘the domain of social life in which people can engage as citizens in deliberating (= thinking carefully) about issues of social and political concern, in a way which can feed into policy making’

- ‘an effective public sphere can be defined in terms of the quality of dialogue which takes place within it’
6. Arguments, assumptions, and ideologies

- **Stephen Toulmin** defined arguments as having four parts:

- **Grounds**: the premises of the argument.

- **Warrants**: the things that justify the inference from the Grounds to the Claim.

- **Backing**: something that gives support to a warrant.

- **Claim**: the conclusion of the argument.
6. Arguments, assumptions, and ideologies

- When we try to analyse arguments, a common problem is that parts of the argument may be only assumed, implied, taken for granted.

- Assumptions in texts are often *questionable* or doubtful.

- Such assumptions are often *ideological* and are related to specific discourses which try to make their view of the world seem like just ‘common sense’.
7. Narrative

Bal’s theory of narrative

- **Fabula** = the ‘material or content that is worked into the story’, a ‘series of logically and chronologically related events’

- **Story** = a fabula that is ‘presented in a certain manner’ (time, characters, focalization, point of view)

- **Narrative text** = The same story can appear in various texts, with various narrators, using various different media.
‘Firemen tackle blaze’ report

**Fabula**

1. *First*, a fire broke out, (which caused damage until it was put out)

2. *and then ...* workers were evacuated from the building,

3. *and then ...* firemen tackled the flames, (and successfully put out the fire)

4. *and then ...* the department was running again the next morning.

**Story**

1. Headline (3 – 1)

2. Lead Paragraph (2 – 1)

3. Second Paragraph (3 – 1)

4. Third Paragraph (Damage)

5. Wrap-Up Paragraph (4)
News and Ideology

- **News** = creating **stories** out of **fabula**

- News is a form of **social regulation**

- News imposes **narrative order** on fuzzy reality

- Making news is not just a matter of reporting ‘the facts’.
News Intentions

- **Referential Intention**
  = trying to make an accurate connection between the story and the real events.

- **Explanatory Intention**
  = trying to make sense of the events by *focalizing* them according to a certain point of view.
Chapter 4 Outline

1. Introduction
2. Genres and texts
3. Pre-genres, disembedded & situated genres
4. Analysing individual genres
   - Activity (+ Generic structure)
   - Social Relations
   - Communication Technologies
5. Dialogue and the public sphere
6. Arguments, assumptions and ideologies
7. Narrative