Notes for Norman Fairclough's *Analysing Discourse*

(Version 3)

Chapter 2: Texts, Social Events, and Social Practices [and Social Structures]

Introduction
21A Social life is made up of various kinds of **Social Events**.
     Social events often involve texts.
     In some social events (e.g. a lecture), texts are very important.
     In other social events (e.g. a soccer game), texts are not so important.

22A Social events (and the texts that are part of them) have causes. [Of course!?!]
     There are two main kinds of causes (or '**causal powers**').
     (A) **Social Structures** and **Social Practices**
     (B) **Social Agents** (= people!) [In other fields of research the term 'Subject' is used here]
The relationship between causes and *social* events in the social world is very complex, not mechanical
or automatic. This is different from the relationship between causes and effects in the *natural* world,
which are studied by science.

22B This chapter will first discuss *briefly* about social agents. But *mainly* it will discuss about social
structures and social practices.
     This chapter will deal with various social research themes (e.g. globalisation, governance).
     This chapter will also discuss the concepts of 'Genre' and 'Discourse'.

Texts and Social Agents [A brief discussion of the Causal Power of **Agency**]
22C   How much power do social agents (people) have? Social agents are not totally free to do
whatever they want, but on the other hand their actions are not totally pre-determined either.
     Social agents have their own causal powers. Their causal powers are not just part of (or produced
     or determined by) the causal powers of social structures and social practices. So they have some
     freedom to act. This is true about how social agents act in general. It is also true in terms of how
     they act in making ('texturing') texts: there are some limits on how they can make texts, but they
     still have a lot of freedom.

22D In the extract from Example 1 (p.229), a factory manager is talking about the workers in his city.

23A   In his speech the manager textures (makes) a **semantic relation** (= a meaning connection)
between the term 'negative culture' and various characteristics which he claims the workers have, such
as being 'totally suspicious' and 'inflexible'. This connection is not a standard, factual one: (we cannot
find it in a dictionary). Rather this connection is created by the manager: it is an effect of his causal
power as a social agent.
  Q1 How free is the manager, really, to speak like this or to speak in some other way?

Social events, social practices, social structures [the Causal Power of Social Practices and Structures]

23B Fairclough's approach is based on a kind of philosophy called **Critical Realism**, the leading thinker of which is the English philosopher, Roy Bhaskar.

23C Social structures are high-level, general, abstract things.
They include economic structures (e.g. capitalism), social class systems (e.g. feudalism), and languages (e.g. Japanese, English).
Social structures set limits to what is possible, what kinds of events *can* happen and what *cannot*. Not all the events that are *potentially* possible *actually* happen.
The relation between the various possibilities allowed by social structures and what kinds of events actually happen is not simple and direct: it is complex and **mediated**.
Social Practices mediate between social structures and social events.
For example, (in the case of university education), social practices include practices of teaching and practices of management.
Social practices are like filters. They are ways of filtering out (from all the possibilities allowed by the social structure) which events actually happen and which do not.
Social practices are **networked** together. The way they are networked together can change over time. For example, in British universities the practices of management have begun to dominate traditional practices of teaching (a phenomenon called 'the marketization of higher education' - Fairclough does not like this change!).

24A   Language (and other forms of communication with signs (the general term is '**semiosis**', which comes from the field of 'semiotics' or 'semiology') is a part of the social world at all three levels.

	Level of Social Organization	**Corresponding Semiotic Element**
Abstract, Long-lived, Stable	Social Structures	Languag**es**
	Social Practices	Orders of Discourse (Discourses, Genres, Styles)
Concrete, Transient, Variable	Social Events	Texts

24B Languages are social structures which define the potential possibilities for texts.
Orders of Discourse mediate between the abstract level of languages and the concrete level of texts.

Definition: Order of Discourse
= **'a network of social practices in its language aspect'**
= **'the *social* organization and control of linguistic variation'**
Orders of discourse are made up of Discourses, Genres and Styles.

24C   As we move from the analysis of abstract social structures down to the analysis of concrete social events and their texts it becomes more and more difficult to separate language from other

elements of the social world. In the terms of **Louis Althusser** (French Marxist philosopher (1918 - 1990)), language becomes increasingly '**overdetermined**' by other social elements.

+ Discourses, Genres and Styles are not purely linguistic categories: they refer to phenomena which exist at the boundary between what is language and what is non-language.

Social Practices
25A
Definition: Social practices
= **articulations (connections) of different types of elements of the social world which are associated with particular areas of social life.**
One of the elements which social practices articulate (connect) is discourse (and therefore, language).

Five Elements Articulated in Social Practices
Action and Interaction
Social Relations
Persons (with beliefs, attitudes, histories, etc.)
The Material World
Discourse

{**NOTE**: Compare this chart with the charts on p. 135-6 and 205: they are all a little different}

25B   The relationship between these different elements is **dialectical**. That is, each element partly **internalizes** (contains) the other. So, for example, social relations are partly a matter of discourse (how we talk to each other) and, on the other hand, discourse is partly a matter of social relations (how we behave to each other).
       Social events are causally *shaped* (but not absolutely *determined*) by networks of social practices.

Discourse as an element of social practices: genres, discourses and styles
26A Discourse [in the abstract, non-countable noun, sense] appears in three ways in social practices:

Discourse as an Element of Social Practice		
Genres	Ways of (inter) acting	interview, lecture
Discours**es**	Ways of representing	New Labour, Thatcherism
Styles	Ways of being	manager, 'flexible worker'

26B Genres: 'part of the action' of the social practice.
     Discourses: different discourses represent the world in different (often conflicting) ways.
     Style: includes bodily behaviour, involves our social and personal identities.
NOTE: The term 'discourse' is often used in two different senses:
     (a) abstractly (non-countable noun): 'language in use';
     (b) concretely (countable noun): 'a particular way of representing part of the world'.

26C The terms 'discourse' and 'genre' are used in various academic fields. This is useful because it helps researchers in different fields communicate with each other. They are **interdisciplinary**

terms. [However, in my opinion, this can sometimes be confusing because they are used in slightly different ways in each field.]

Text as action, representation, identification

26D In the field of linguistics there are various approaches to language. One approach is called 'Functional Linguistics'.

Within this approach, the most influential version is called '**Systemic Functional Linguistics'** (SFL).

NOTE: The leading scholar of SFL is **Michael Halliday**. His influential book, 'An Introduction to Functional Grammar' has been translated into Japanese.

> Functional linguistics emphasizes the '**multi-functionality**' of language.
>
> In particular, SFL theory says that texts have three main functions:
> 1. **Ideational**: representing the world;
> 2. **Interpersonal**: enacting social relations and showing attitudes, desires, values;
> 3. **Textual**: connecting parts of texts together and connecting texts to their contexts.

27A   Fairclough divides the functions of texts in a slightly different way to SFL and he prefers to talk about text *meaning* rather than function.

27B

Major Types of Text Meaning		
Type of meaning	*Corresponding aspect of Discourse*	*Corresponding Function in SFL*
Action	Genres	Interpersonal (and Textual)
Representation	Discourses	Ideational
Identification	Styles	Mostly included in interpersonal

27C   Texts express these three different kinds of meaning *simultaneously*. The first sentence of Example 1 shows how representation, action and identification are all expressed at the same time.

  Representation: X is different from Y

  Action: the manager (the 'knower') is giving information in an interview to the researcher (the 'eliciter')

  Identification: the manager strongly commits himself to the truth of his claim.

28A   When we analyse a specific text as part of a specific social event we must do two interconnected things:

> (a) analyse the three aspects of meaning that the text expresses. This involves analyzing how these meanings are **realised** in the various linguistic features of the text (grammar, vocabulary, etc.)
>
> (b) connect the concrete social event to the more abstract social practices that it has been shaped by. This involves analyzing which genres, discourses and styles have been drawn on by the people who made the text (speakers or writers), and how the various genres, discourses and styles have been articulated (combined) together in the text.

Dialectical relations
28B   Fairclough says that the relationship between the three aspects of meaning is a complex, dialectical one.
The French intellectual Michel Foucault (1926-1984) seems to have had similar ideas about the dialectical relations of aspects of meaning.
 28B* Foucault mentions three axes (or dimensions) of meaning in discourse
        Axis of Knowledge = relations of control over things
        Axis of Power = relations of action upon other people
        Axis of Ethics = relations with oneself
[**NOTE**. I think this quotation comes from an essay by Foucault called 'What is Enlightenment?']

28C   Each of these three axes is complex in itself. But they are also complexly interconnected with each other.
        Axis of <u>Knowledge</u> is related to Representation (and so to Discourses)
        Axis of <u>Power</u> is related to Action (and so to Genres)
        Axis of <u>Ethics</u> is related to Identification (and so to Styles)
To help us understand the relation between texts and social life it is useful to relate the three aspects of meaning to various categories in social theory in this kind of way. Another example is to relate the French social theorist, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of '**habitus**' to Identification.

29A   Each of the three aspects of meaning are dialectically related because they '**internalise**' each other in complex ways (David Harvey, 1996).
  Dialectics of discourse
Each of the three aspects of meaning are dialectically related:
        On one hand, Discourses are *enacted* in Genres and *inculcated* in Styles.
        On the other hand, Actions (Genres) and Identities (Styles) are *represented* in Discourses.

29B   Example 14 (p.250) is from an 'Appraisal Training' meeting held at Fairclough's own university. In this meeting, someone is telling the staff about a new system of appraisal that will be used to measure and evaluate their job performance. This example shows how the Discourse, Genres and Styles of Appraisal dialectically internalize each other.
        There is a Discourse of Appraisal (a way of talking about staff performance). This represents (specifies) certain appropriate Genres (such as the 'appraisal interview') and Styles of Appriasal (ways of behaving, ways of identifying oneself during the appraisal process). And these Genres and Styles presuppose certain representations which draw on the Discourse of Appraisal.

Mediation [**Chains** of events, chains of texts, and **networks** of practices]
30A   The relationship between texts and social events is often complex because texts are often **mediated** (that is, they involve the use of (mass) media such as radio or television).

30B   The mediation of texts involves 'movement of meaning' from one practice, event or text to another one. Mediation often involves complex chains or networks of different types of texts. E.g. newspaper stories are based on interviews, official documents etc, and are read and then talked about by people, and may even give rise to further news stories, and so on.

30C   Modern societies involve the chaining and networking together of different social practices across different **domains** or fields of social life (e.g. the economy, education, family life) and across different **scales** of social life (global, regional, national, local).

Texts are a very important part of this kind of chaining and networking. Orders of Discourse specify particular chaining and networking relationships between different types of texts.

The changes associated with New Capitalism (or globalization) depend partly on new kinds of textual mediations of social events. These new kinds of textual mediation involve new kinds of chaining and networking relations between different types of texts. These new relations between texts depend on new communication technologies, in particular the Internet.

31A **Genre chains** occur where certain different genres are regularly linked together with systematic (standard, regular) changes from one genre to another. Genre chains help make 'action at a distance' easier, for example as we find in globalisation where the genres of international organizations, multinational companies, and powerful governments are changed into other genres in other countries and at lower scales of social life.

Genre chains
31B Example 3 (p.234) contains some extracts of Rick Iedema's study of genre chains. Iedema studied genre chains in the texts connected with a project to renovate (reform) a mental hospital.

31D/E Iedema's work shows how the **transformations** from one genre (discussion in a meeting about the hospital) to another genre (written report) are systematic. It also shows that the transformations were **anticipated** by the people in the meeting because the participants move from rather casual talking to trying to speak in the formal language that will be used in the report.

32A Example 1 (p. 229) (an 'ethnographic' interview with the factory manager) is also part of a genre chain.
The chain includes:
* the 'practical' genre of factory management, which the manager uses when he speaks;
* the academic genre of ethnographic interview;
* the academic genre of writing the book from which the interview was taken;
* the 'management education' genre used in the appendix of the book;
* the genre of governance of business organizations which the book aims to influence.

Genres and governance
32B '(Certain) Genres are important in sustaining the institutional structure of contemporary society'. The institutional structure of society is composed of things like government, business, law, universities and the media. These are all connected and together they control the governance of society. The genres associated with them are called 'genres of governance'.
Definition: Governance
= **'any activity within an institution or organization directed at regulating or managing some other (network of) social practice(s).'**
In a sense, the ethnographic interview in Example 1 is a genre of governance.

32C A typical feature of genres of governance is that they show recontextualization.
Definition: Recontextualization
= **'the appropriation (absorbing) of elements of one social practice within another, placing the former within the context of the latter, and transforming it in particular ways in the process.'**
Recontextualization is a concept developed by **Basil Bernstein**, a famous scholar in the field known as 'the sociology of education'.
For example, in Example 1, the language of (and the practice of) factory management (what the manager said in the interview) is recontextualized in the language of (and the practice of) academic

writing, and this is then recontextualized inside businesses as the language of (and the practice of) management education.

33A   '**Promotional Genres**' are a kind of genre of governance. Promotional Genres are used to advertise and sell things: (brands - Nike; organizations - Support Greenpeace!; political parties - Vote for New Labour!; countries - Visit Thailand!; regions - Ski in Japan Alps!; cities - Very, very Kyoto!; individuals - Beckham Hair!). They have become much more widespread in the New Capitalism. Example 2 (a newspaper advertisement/feature about a town in Hungary – shows this.

33B   The genre chain in Example 1 also show another feature of globalization: changes in the relationships between different **scales** of social life; in this case, from **local** (a manager talking about workers in Liverpool city, England) to **global** (the potential market for the management education ideas contained in the book).
In general, genres of governance connect the local scale with the national, regional (European Union) and global scales.
34A   Example 3 (p. 234), the extracts from the genre chain about the renovation of a mental hospital is an example of recontextualization combining with **rescaling**. The chain moves from a local scale meeting to a global scale report.
The genre chain acts as a **regulative device** for selecting and privileging some discourses and excluding other.
34B   Genres of governance are mediated genres, designed for 'action at a distance'. Therefore, we can view 'the [mass] media' as part of the apparatus of governance.

Genre mixing
34C   A text may not be written or spoken in one single genre. It may mix or hybridize two or more different genres. Example 2 (not 9!), the advertisement/feature about the town in Hungary is an example of **genre hybridity**: it is a mixture of a journalistic feature article, corporate advertising, and tourist pamphlet.
35A   A genre within a chain often has both '**retrospective**' (backwards) and '**prospective**' (forwards) relations with the genres 'preceding' and 'following' it in the chain. These relations may lead to hybridization of the genre.
An example of this is the '**conversationalisation**' of genres such as radio chat shows: they use the casual language which the producers anticipate will be normal in the places (homes) where people listen to them.
35B   A feature of 'postmodern' social life is that not just genres but also social practices are becoming mixed and hybridized. This has been particularly studied in the media, where fact and fiction texts (such as television news and entertainment programmes) are frequently mixed.

Relational approach to text analysis
35C   Fairclough's approach to texts and text analysis is a **relational** approach. This means that he thinks that the analysis of discourse must be carried out on several levels and that it is the *relations* between the levels which is important, rather than the levels themselves.
NOTE. Relational approaches reflect the ideas of the kind of social theory called **Structuralism**. Whereas traditional social science tended to study things in themselves, structuralism focused on the *relations between* things. It is the relations between various social practices within networks of social practices that keep the practices stable and relatively durable. These relations are relations of **power**.

Levels of Text Analysis
Social Structures
Social Practices

Social Events
        Actions and Social Relations
        Identification of Persons
        Representations of the world

Discourse (Genres, Discourses, Styles)
Semantics
Grammar and Vocabulary
Phonology (of speech) and Graphology (of writing)

36A   We must study both the **External** and the **Internal** relations of texts.

External relations = relations of texts to other elements of social events, and to social practices and social structures.
One special aspect of text external relations is the relation between one text and other texts. This is called **intertextuality** and is the topic of Chapter 3.

36B   **Internal relations** = semantic (meaning) relations, grammatical relations and vocabulary ('lexical') relations between different parts of a single text. Also phonological and graphological relations, but these are not dealt with in this book.

37A   Internal relations can be divided into Syntagmatic and Paragdimatic internal relations.
Syntagmatic relations = relations between various elements (words, phrases, clauses, sentences) actually present in a text.
Paragdimatic relations = relations between what is in a text and what is (significantly) excluded from a text. This is about *choices*: which options were chosen by the writer/speaker and which were not.

37B   **Discourse level analysis.**
At this level, **interdiscursive relations** (that is, relations between genres, discourses and styles) are analysed. This level is very important because:-
'The level of discourse is an intermediate level, a mediating level between the text itself and its social context (social events, social practices, social structures).'
'Discourses, genres and styles are *both* elements of texts, *and* social elements'.

38A   **Realization**. In the terminology of Michael Halliday and SFL, the relations between the discourse, semantic, and grammatical and vocabulary levels are relations of realization. Each level of organization is realized (or 'instantiated') in the level below it.
Summary
See original: it is clear enough.   **END**.