Text, Context, Pretext

Critical Issues in Discourse Analysis

H. G. Widdowson

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for barbara

Preface

This book is, in a sense, a reconceptualized and extended version of one that was unwritten and unpublished thirty years ago. This itself would have been a revised version of my PhD thesis, entitled 'An applied linguistic approach to discourse analysis', submitted in 1973, in the early stages of my academic career.

Immodest though it might seem, I would like to acknowledge the work of this author, my former self, for it was here that many of the issues in discourse analysis (then a newly burgeoning growth in the field of linguistics) were first addressed and tentatively explored. To my later regret, I declined the offer to publish a write-up of my thesis, preferring to draw on it in the writing of a number of papers in applied linguistics and language education. Not surprisingly, when discourse analysis subsequently became fashionable within mainstream linguistics, my own early efforts in the applied linguistics backwaters went unnoticed, much, I must confess, to my chagrin. It was irritating to find ideas that (as I saw it) I had anticipated in my own writing, and expounded with such brilliance, re-emerging with all the appearance of novelty in the work of other people without so much as a nod of recognition or acknowledgement. But this is, of course, a familiar academic experience and as the years go by the frustrations fade, resentment is revealed as petty and misplaced, and a new and wiser realization dawns that ideas, like a kind of benign intellectual infection, spread in different minds in all sorts of ways and cannot be readily or reliably traced to particular sources.

Times have moved on since 1973. I have changed, and so has the field. Both, I like to think, for the better. Although many of the issues discussed in this book were first broached in the earlier unpublished one, they have also been taken up independently, conjured with, reformulated in a variety of ways by scholars of different disciplinary persuasions under the names of discourse analysis, conversation analysis, speech act analysis, pragmatics and so on. The concepts of discourse, text and context, which figure prominently

in the work of my prentice period, have all been subjected by others to extensive and impressive enquiry over the intervening years, and many a textbook is available to bring enlightenment on these matters to the novice student. Even so, it seems to me that the relationship between them remains problematic, and it is this that justifies the reconsideration I give to them in the early chapters of this present book. The third term that appears in my title, pretext, calls for more detailed comment, and I will come to that presently.

My interest in these theoretical matters remained a steady current in my mind over twenty years, but was galvanized by the rapid rise to fashionable prominence of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Here was a development in linguistics which claimed to be applicable to the immediate and pressing concerns of the non-scholarly world. Here was, it seemed, work which came under the very rubric of my thesis all those years ago: an applied linguistic approach to discourse analysis; but with an important difference. Whereas I had thought of language teaching as the main area of practical concern which discourse analysis could be relevant to, CDA had a much more ambitious and much more significant agenda. Its concern was to educate people more broadly in the abuse of power by linguistic means, to reveal how language is used for deception and distortion and the fostering of prejudice. Here was an approach to discourse analysis whose significance could hardly be exaggerated.

For there has surely never been a time when the need for such an investigation is so urgent, when public uses of language have been so monopolized to further political and capitalist interests to the detriment of public well-being and in denial of human rights and social justice. Over recent years, the cynical abuse of language to deceive by doublethink that characterizes the fictional dystopia of Orwell's *1984* has become a reality of everyday life. Ecological devastation goes under the verbal guise of economic development, and millions of people are kept subject to poverty, reduced to desperation, deprived of liberty and life in the name of democratic values and a globalized market economy that is said to be free. So much of the language we come across in print and on screen seems to be designed to deceive, used as a front, a cover-up of ulterior motives. This is an aspect of discourse, the effect that a particular use of language is designed to bring about, that I refer to as pretext.

And it was just this aspect that CDA focused attention on, particularly as it related to the insinuation of ideological influence and the covert control of opinion. It had, in principle, an initial appeal for me on two counts: it promised not only to extend the scope of discourse analysis as such, but to

do so with the express applied linguistic purpose of engaging with real world issues of immediate and pressing importance.

Regrettably, my further acquaintance with CDA had an adverse effect on this initial appeal, for reasons which I discuss in detail in the second half of this book. Whether these reasons are valid or not I must leave the reader to decide, but what I want to stress here is that it is not the cause of CDA that I call into question, for it is one that, as will be evident from my earlier comments, I wholeheartedly endorse. Where I take issue with CDA is in the mode of analysis and interpretation it adopts by way of promoting this cause. The need to demonstrate how discourse analysis can contribute to a critical awareness of the ways in which language is used, and abused, to exercise control and practise deception remains as pressing as ever. CDA, to its great credit, has alerted us to this need, and although, as will be apparent in this book, I have serious reservations about the way it does its work, I recognize too that it has the effect of giving point and purpose to discourse analysis by giving prominence to crucial questions about its socio-political significance which might otherwise have been marginalized.

This book is confrontational and uncompromising in its criticism, and I am aware that it will not endear me to some of my colleagues working in the field of discourse analysis, critical or otherwise. But my quarrel is with arguments, analyses, and the claims that are made for them, and not with people. We are all concerned with issues which have a significance compared with which individual sensitivities are trivial, and it should be possible to engage in adversarial argument about them without causing any serious hurt. But this, of course, is easier said than done, for people, and I am myself certainly no exception, quite naturally invest their emotional selves in their thinking, and the animation and animosity of intellectual exchange are always difficult to keep apart. All I can say is that no offence is intended, and I hope to be forgiven if any is taken. And in mitigation, I acknowledge, in all sincerity, the achievement and distinction of those people whose work has inspired my criticism: Norman Fairclough, Michael Halliday, Michael Stubbs, Ruth Wodak in particular. My disagreement with them does not diminish my indebtedness: they have all made crucial and indeed indispensable contributions to this book.

I also owe thanks to the counsel and support of those colleagues whose views are more congruent with mine, and in particular to two people, Kieran O'Halloran and Peter Trudgill, who have read and commented with impressive insight on an earlier draft of this book. My thanks, too, to Katharina Breyer for all her dedicated work on the index. Most thanks of all go to the person to whom the book itself is dedicated, Barbara Seidlhofer,

who gives me counsel and support, intellectual and emotional, in everything I do.

H. G. W.
Vienna, February 2004

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Certain chapters of this book are developed from papers published in various places over the past ten years.

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1

Text and discourse

Although discourse analysis has been a busy field of activity for many years, there is a good deal of uncertainty about what it actually is. The generally accepted view is that it has something to do with looking at language 'above' or 'beyond' the sentence, but this is hardly an exact formulation. Even when the term *discourse analysis* is used as a book title, as it is in a key work by Michael Stubbs, it is not always clear just what the term is intended to signify: 'Roughly speaking, it refers to attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence, or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts' (Stubbs 1983:1).

Even roughly speaking, this is an unsatisfactory description on a number of counts. To begin with, it is not clear whether Stubbs is using the terms *clause* and *sentence* to mean the same thing or not. This is not a terminological quibble. It makes a good deal of difference whether the linguistic organization to be analysed is above a clause or above a sentence. If it is above the clause, analysis would presumably take into account complex and compound units which would be conventionally defined as syntactic constituents and so below the sentence. Rules for co-ordination and embedding, which figure prominently, for example, in transformational grammar, would in this case be considered examples of discourse analysis.

This would actually be consistent with what Zellig Harris had in mind when he first used the term fifty years ago. He too was looking at how language is organized as 'connected discourse', by which he meant how patterns of formal equivalence might be discerned across sentences in stretches of what he calls morpheme sequences in actually occurring text. Equivalence, as Harris is at pains to point out, has nothing to do with what semantic meaning these stretches have but with the textual environments in which they appear. He illustrates the notion by asking us to suppose that in a particular text the following sentences occur:

> The trees turn here about **the middle of autumn**; The trees turn here about **the end of October**; ***The first frost comes*** after the middle of autumn; ***We start heating*** after the end of October.

The expressions I have put in bold here would be equivalent in that they share the same environment, and being equivalent they provide the same environment for the italicized expressions in the second pair of sentences, so that they too are equivalent with each other. If the text were to continue:

> We always have a lot of trouble when we start heating but you've got to be prepared when the first frost comes.

By the same process, the underlined expressions here are assigned equivalent status on the basis of their environment, which has already been established as the same by the preceding analysis. And we proceed in a kind of chain reaction mode, with one set of equivalences providing the environmental conditions for another (Harris 1952:6–7).

So far, the analysis simply involves identifying recurrent morpheme sequences which are actually present in the text, but Harris then goes on to assign equivalence on the basis of underlying structural similarity established by means of transformations. So, for example, we can say that a sentence that occurs in the text, like **We start heating after the end of October**, is equivalent to its transform **After the end of October, we start heating**, which does not. By the same criteria any sentence like **Casals plays the cello** is equivalent to one that takes the form **The cello is played by Casals** (these are Harris's examples). This procedure of establishing equivalence in absentia, so to speak, is, says Harris,

> the same basic operation, that of comparing different sentences. And it will serve the same end: to show that two otherwise different sentences contain the same combination of equivalence classes even though they may contain different combinations of morphemes. What is new is only that we base our equivalence not on a comparison of two sentences in the text, but on a comparison of a sentence in the text with sentences outside the text. (Harris 1952:19)

The transformations that Harris uses to identify structural equivalences underlying different morphemic manifestations on the surface are essentially devices of the same order as those subsequently adopted by Chomsky in the design of generative grammar. They are in both cases formal operations

on sentence constituents. What Harris was doing would appear on the face of it to be discourse analysis as Stubbs defines it, for he was studying how language is organized above the sentence by analysing 'larger linguistic units'. Discourse analysis in this conception is simply a matter of extending the scope of grammar. Though this is itself not, of course, a simple matter, there is, as Stubbs would agree, rather more to it than that.

Harris himself acknowledges as much by pointing out the limitation of his enterprise: identifying the underlying structural patterns that make connections across sentences tells us nothing about what they might mean. As he puts it:

> All this, however, is still distinct from an *interpretation* of the findings, which must take the meaning of morphemes into consideration and ask what the author was about when he produced the text. Such interpretation is obviously quite separate from the formal findings, although it may follow closely in the directions which the formal findings indicate. (Harris 1952:29)

For Harris, clearly, discourse analysis is a set of procedures for establishing underlying formal equivalences within a text. Although his work is motivated by the belief that 'Language does not occur in stray words or sentences, but in connected discourse' (Harris 1952:3), it is the connectedness itself that is focused on rather than on its discourse implication. He looks beyond the bounds of the sentence, it is true, but his vision is essentially that of the sentence grammarian.

Discourse analysis can be said to date back to Harris. But his celebrated article is of more than just historical interest. Even this very brief discussion of it raises a number of questions which have remained stubbornly problematic to this day. I mark them down here as issues to be taken up in this book.

- If discourse analysis is defined as the study of language patterns above the sentence, this would seem to imply that discourse is sentence writ large: quantitatively different but qualitatively the same phenomenon. It would follow, too, of course, that you cannot have discourse *below* the sentence.
- If the difference between sentence and discourse is not a matter of kind but only of degree, then they are presumably assumed to signal the same kind of meaning. If sentence meaning is intrinsically encoded, that is to say, a semantic property of the language itself, then so is discourse meaning.

- In the quotation cited above, however, Harris talks about interpretation as involving two factors: 'the meanings of the morphemes', which presumably refers to semantics and 'what the author was about when he produced the text', which brings in pragmatic considerations like intention. So interpretation cannot just be read off from the text as if it were an elongated sentence. But then if semantic and pragmatic meanings are different, *how* are they different, and by what principles can they be related?
- Harris says that interpretation 'may follow closely in the directions which the formal findings indicate'. How then do such findings direct interpretation?
- In the quotation, Harris talks of interpretation as if this were a matter of finding out 'what the author was about', thereby equating it with the discovery of intention. But what a first-person author means by a text is not the same as what the text might mean to a second-person reader (or listener), or indeed to a third-person analyst. How then are these different perspectives to be reconciled?
- Harris uses the term *discourse* in the title of his paper, and occasionally within it; the term that figures most prominently in the account of his analysis is *text*. It would seem that for him the terms are synonymous. Is there a case for making a conceptual distinction between them?

These issues are closely interrelated, of course, and, as we shall see, the discussion of any one of them will necessarily bring others in by implication. Let us begin with the synonymous use of the terms *text* and *discourse*. We have already noted that Harris appears to conflate them, using both to refer to the language that an author produces. Stubbs does not distinguish them either: both terms refer to 'language above the sentence, or above the clause', that is to say 'larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts'. I pointed out earlier that there is a crucial difference between language above the sentence and language above the clause. A consideration of the latter will include syntactic relations among sentence constituents and will come within the scope of grammar. If one looks for patterns of language above the sentence, however, then one goes beyond the bounds of conventional grammar and one needs to look for other principles of ordering.

What further confuses the issue is the reference that Stubbs makes to 'written texts'. For here we find sentences of an orthographic kind, the written utterances of actually performed language of a different order from sentences as abstract grammatical constructs. And these written utterances

will often take the form of linguistic units consisting of many grammatical sentences, or (as we shall see) of no sentence, or clause, at all, and the form they take is determined by just the kind of pragmatic intention that Harris excludes from consideration.

Since *discourse* analysis is said to apply to written *texts*, Stubbs, it would seem, makes no clear distinction between the terms. And this is borne out by remarks he makes a little later in the same (introductory) chapter to his book. The terms, he tells us, are 'often ambiguous and confusing', but seeing no need to disambiguate or clarify them, he simply comments: 'One often talks of "written text" versus "spoken discourse" . . . "discourse" implies length whereas a "text" may be very short' (Stubbs 1983:9). Presumably a text cannot be all that short since, by Stubbs's own definition, it would have to be a larger linguistic unit than a sentence to qualify for discourse analysis at all. But for Stubbs the fact that the terms *text* and *discourse* are 'confusing and ambiguous', does not really matter, since for him nothing essential hangs on the distinction: his 1983 book is called *Discourse Analysis*, his later book has *text analysis* in its title. Clearly he finds no place for the distinction in his own work, and seems sceptical of its significance in the work of others. He comments:

> One brief point about terminology. There is considerable variation in how terms such as *text* and *discourse* are used in linguistics. Sometimes this terminological variation signals important conceptual distinctions, but often it does not, and terminological debates are usually of little interest. These distinctions in terminology and concept will only occasionally be relevant for my argument, and when they are, I draw attention to them (e.g. in section 7.2). (Stubbs 1996:4)

No indication is given as to when the distinction is conceptually significant and when it is not. One may concede that debates about terminological distinctions as such are of little interest, but they clearly cannot be so summarily dismissed when they have conceptual substance, as they apparently do, occasionally, in Stubbs's own work, though just where and how is actually never made evident. Section 7.2, to which he draws the reader's attention, does not actually address the issue at all.[1]

Stubbs is not alone in the indiscriminate use of the terms *text* and *discourse* to refer to language above the sentence. It is indeed so orthodox a view that it seems perverse, not to say foolhardy, to question it.[2] Here it is again as expressed without equivocation by Wallace Chafe in no less authoritative a work than the *Oxford International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*:

> The term 'discourse' is used in somewhat different ways by different scholars, but underlying the differences is a common concern for language beyond the boundaries of isolated sentences. The term TEXT is used in similar ways. Both terms may refer to a unit of language larger than the sentence: one may speak of a 'discourse' or a 'text'. (Chafe 1992:356, 2003:439–40)[3]

One may indeed so speak, and scholars do. But is it helpful so to speak? Hoey, noting how some scholars are indifferent to the distinction, and other inconsistent in their use of it, makes the observation: 'And yet the distinction continues to be made. It is as if some basic differentiation is felt to exist that people cannot quite agree on but cannot leave alone' (Hoey 1991:197). Let us then consider how far this feeling might be substantiated and the differentiation justified.[4]

We can begin with the question of how we deal with uses of language which are indeed very short texts, taking as they do the form of isolated sentences. The most obvious instances of such texts are public notices like

TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED
STICK NO BILLS
HANDLE WITH CARE

and so on. These, on the Chafe criterion, are not texts at all since they have no other sentences to keep them company. And yet they are intuitively textual in that they are not fragments or components of any larger linguistic whole but are complete communicative units, separate speech events as Hymes might call them (Hymes 1968).

In view of this, we might concede that in certain circumstances single, isolated sentences can serve as texts. But then the question inevitably arises as to what these circumstances might be. And this in turn might lead us to suspect that perhaps it is these circumstances and not the size of the linguistic unit which determines textuality, and that whether a piece of language is larger than a sentence has little if anything to with it. This suspicion is strengthened by the obvious fact that there are instances of language which have all the appearance of complete texts, but which do not even consist of separate sentences but of isolated phrases and words. Public notices again:

NO ENTRY
CHILDREN CROSSING
HARD HAT AREA
TRAINS TOILETS GENTLEMEN LADIES SILENCE PRIVATE
OPEN CLOSED IN OUT

and so on. Here there is no sentence in sight, but only noun phrases, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, parts of speech in grammatical limbo, constituents that have somehow declared independence from syntax and are on their own.

But it is not only that parts of sentences seem to take on textual independence. Parts of words do as well, even those parts, like the graphological letter, which have no encoded meaning whatever. Thus the single letter **W** signals to me where I am to register for a conference. The single letter **P** tells me where to park my car. These are notices which apparently function in just the same way as others less sparing with language. Do we say that they are non-texts on the grounds that they are smaller than a sentence? This does not seem to be a very satisfactory way of proceeding.[5]

It might be objected that I am giving unwarranted attention to relatively trivial uses of language. These are texts, if you like, but minimal texts. But the interesting question surely is how they can be texts when they *are* so minimal. One answer might be that they are a sort of shorthand: they stand for larger texts, rather like acronyms. Just as **PTO** at the bottom of a letter stands for the sentence *Please turn over*, so **P** stands for *Parking*. But this is still a one-word text. Well then, ***Parking*** in turn stands for *Parking is permitted here* or *Here is a place for parking your car*, or something along these lines: shorthand.

These still do not meet the Chafe criterion, of course, since we have still not gone 'beyond the boundaries of isolated sentences'. But quite apart from that, how do those who write such shorthand know that I will interpret it as intended? How do they know how minimal they can be? The letters BBC can indeed be said to stand for the *British Broadcasting Corporation*, BC for *Before Christ* (or *British Columbia*), NYPD for *New York Police Department*, and so on. These are established encodings with fixed denotations, symbolically secure. But **P** does not have the same fixity of meaning. If I see it as a notice at the side of a country road I interpret it as referring to a small space at the side of the road, a so-called lay-by, where I can pull in for a brief stay. If I see the letter **P** as a notice in a street in the middle of the city, I know that it refers to something entirely different: to a covered concrete place, a multi-storey edifice, where I pay to leave my car. In other words, how I interpret the text **P** depends on where I see it and what I know about the lay-by and the multi-storey car park. It depends, in other words, on relating the text to something outside itself, that is to say to the *con*text: to where it is located on the one hand, and to how, on the other hand, it keys in with my knowledge of reality as shaped and sanctioned by the society I live in – that is to say, my social knowledge. **P** is a linguistic symbol, a letter of the alphabet, an element of English graphology. But that

is not how I *interpret* it when it figures as a text. I read it not as a conventional element of the code but as an index whose function is to point away from itself to the context, and so indicate where meaning is to be found elsewhere.

The same point can be made about the other texts we have been considering. When I see the one word TRAINS, for example, written on the wall of Russell Square underground station in London, I know that it refers to the trains of the Piccadilly Line proceeding westbound towards Hammersmith. And I also know that it not only has reference to a particular direction – westwards, but it has the force of a direction in a quite different illocutionary sense as well – come this way to the trains. But the same word can serve as a totally different text and invoke a quite different interpretation, where reference is to other trains with the force of a warning. Similarly, when I see the notice TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED, its location and my familiarity with such notices will lead me to infer that it is meant to have the force of prohibition in reference to individuals who might be tempted to stray onto this particular piece of private land. I know that it is not meant to refer generically to all who trespass or to have the force of a general assertion about their fate; like SINNERS WILL BE DAMNED or THE MEEK WILL INHERIT THE EARTH.

How do I know all these things? Obviously because I have been socialized into a particular reality and know how to use language to engage indexically with it. I recognize a piece of language as a text not because of its linguistic size, but because I assume it is intended to key into this reality. Texts can come in all shapes and sizes: they can correspond in extent with any linguistic unit: letter, sound, word, sentence, combination of sentences. To put the matter more briskly, I identify a text not by its linguistic extent but by its social intent.

But identifying something as a text is not the same as interpreting it. You may recognize intentionality but not know the intention. This is where discourse comes in, and why it needs to be distinguished from text. As I have tried to show, we achieve meaning by indexical realization, that is to say by using language to engage our extralinguistic reality. Unless it is activated by this contextual connection, the text is inert. It is this activation, this acting of context on code, this indexical conversion of the symbol that I refer to as discourse. Discourse in this view is the pragmatic process of meaning negotiation. Text is its product.[6]

The main concern of this book is to explore the relationship between text and discourse, between the language people produce and which provides objective data for linguistic analysis, and the way this is processed by the

parties themselves, which is a matter of interpretation. We can begin by noting obvious differences between spoken and written text as discourse realizations.

The spoken text of conversational interaction is the direct reflex of the discourse enacted between two, or among several, parties. The discourse may be prepared, pre-scripted in different degrees. Interviews, for example, may be structured in advance, though the actual wording of the participants cannot be entirely predicted. Casual conversation is, of course, much less structured, but even here the participants have some expectation as to how the discourse is likely to proceed, the relative informality of the engagement, the kind of topics which would count as normal, and so on. As Firth put it, conversation is a 'roughly prescribed social ritual' (Firth 1957:31). But whatever the degree of prescription, the text, the actual language which realizes the interaction, is immediate to it, and is directly processed on line. As such it provides only a fugitive and partial record of the discourse. It is fugitive because its sound simply disappears into thin air unless it is artificially recorded. And when it is recorded, it necessarily changes in character, for it no longer represents the actual experience of the participants themselves. What is recorded, and subsequently analysed, therefore, is a second-hand derived version of the original: not the reflex of interaction but the result of intervention. It is a partial version too because it records only the linguistic text, and not other features of interactive behaviour of a paralinguistic kind other than what is vocally realized. Transcription can of course be refined to take some of this into account, but no means all. Even a visual record on film is bound to miss some interactive features, like eye contact and direction of gaze which may be highly significant for the participants themselves. And most accounts of spoken text are anyway based on written transcriptions. It has long been recognized that speech and writing are quite different modes of interaction, and the differences have been extensively documented (see Halliday 1989, Stubbs 1983). Nevertheless, in practice what is studied as speech is a derived version of it, stabilized and objectified by transcription as a kind of written text.

Now if one compares a text which is originally written as such with one which is the partial transcription of speech, the differences between them become obvious. What is most immediately striking about the transcribed record of unscripted conversation is its non-linearity. Though the interacting parties in the conversation may make satisfactory sense of what is going on, and feel that they are co-constructing their discourse in a reasonably orderly fashion, the transcription of their actual text usually records it as

being fragmentary and discontinuous. And of course the greater the precision the transcription strives for by the use of elaborate notation to signal these features, the more fragmentary and discontinuous the discourse appears to be, and the further removed the transcribed text becomes from that which served to realize the discourse in the first place. People are usually surprised to discover how incoherent recorded conversation is, even their own. The transcribed written version of conversation is even more remote from the reality of immediate interaction.

In short, the textual record of speech is a poor representation of the discourse which gave rise to it, and the more precise the analytic account, the further removed it is from the actual experience of the speakers. Making sense of a spoken interaction from the insider point of view of the participants is very different from making sense of it as an outsider third person transcribing it. We have here an observer's paradox, but not that which Labov points out, and resolves, whereby a non-participant third-person presence impinges on the participation process itself (Labov 1972). This is the more intractable paradox that the very observation of an interaction necessarily misrepresents it, and the more precise the observed record, the greater the misrepresentation. The text of spoken interaction can only have an immediate discourse effect and is of its nature fugitive and partial. When transcribed, these features necessarily disappear. This we might call the paradox of irreducible subjectivity.

Recognition of this paradox does not, of course, imply that there is no point in transcribing speech, but only that it sets limits on its claims to representation. Transcriptions can reveal a great deal about the textual reflex of spoken discourse by focusing attention on specific linguistic features. They can record the occurrence of certain speech sounds, lexical items, grammatical structures and so on, and these are clearly relevant to the analysis of text as such, and indeed it may be possible to infer from them something of the significance they might have had for the discourse process which gave rise to them. The point I would wish to make is that the transcribed record of spoken text cannot capture the experience of its original use. This is recognized well enough in the analysis of speech at the phonetic level: what is acoustically recorded is not the same as the auditory apprehension of sounds. Nor of course can such analysis capture the paralinguistic features of spoken utterance, let alone the significance attached to them by interlocutors (see Cook 1995). I would simply extend the same principle to the textual level. Analysis does not match interpretation. But this raises an interesting question: why is this experience so elusive of

analysis? Why is there a disparity between what is recorded as text and what that text means to its speakers? Discourse participants seem to be able to make coherent sense of what on the face of it, on the evidence of the textual record, is a fragmented patchwork of utterance. The key question that needs to be addressed here is how they manage to do this. I shall return to this question later in the book (particularly in chapter 5).

Given these difficulties with spoken text, it is with some relief that we turn to written text. This, surely, is more straightforward. No transcription problems are involved: it comes in only one version. You do not have to depend on some third-person intervention to record it; it is participant-produced, self-authored as a direct record of the discourse intentions of a first-person party. The text is there at first hand, stable, continuous, well ordered, fixed on a page, or on a screen. But these very features of the textual record can mislead us into thinking that its relationship with the discourse that gave rise to it is relatively unproblematic, and we are drawn into the delusion that meaning is inscribed in the text itself, and that what the writer intended to mean can be discovered, inferred, directly from textual evidence. There is no sign here of the disorderly fragmentation that is obvious in the text of spoken discourse. But appearances are deceptive. The orderliness and apparent completeness of written text disguises the fact that it too is only a partial record of intended meaning. Garfinkel, in outlining his approach to conversation analysis, says that '**what the parties said** [i.e. the spoken text] would be treated as a sketchy, partial, incomplete, masked, elliptical, concealed, ambiguous, or misleading version of **what the parties talked about** [i.e. their discourse]' (Garfinkel 1972:317). The same applies, I would argue, to written text.

Indeed, written text, as distinct from the written transcription of spoken text, poses even greater problems of interpretation. For whereas transcription records, however imperfectly, the discourse of both parties to the interaction, written text records only that of the first party, who can only account for second-person reaction by proxy. The writer enacts a discourse with a projected reader who may be very different from the actual readers who derive their own discourse from the text. Consequently the piecing out of the imperfections of the text on the page (its sketchiness, partiality, incompletion and so on) does not yield the writer's version of the originating discourse, but the reader's version of it. And unlike spoken conversation, there can be no on-line negotiation to enable the two parties to converge on a common understanding. In this respect, the stability of the text conceals an intrinsic instability of meaning.

When discourse takes the form of spoken interaction, the text is simultaneous and transitory and leaves no trace unless recorded. Since there is continual textual reflex of the discourse, it is easy to suppose that they are the same thing, although a glance at a transcription makes it immediately obvious how little of the discourse is actually made textually manifest. Written text is different. Here we have a record made by one of the discourse participants, the writer, who enacts the discourse on behalf of both first- and second-person parties, but who, usually, only records the contribution of the first. The textual record is always necessarily one-sided.

The actual second-person reader, as distinct from the projected one, then has to interpret this text, that is to say, to realize a discourse from it. The discourse which the writer intends the text to record as output is, in these circumstances, always likely to be different from the discourse which the reader derives from it. In other words, what a writer means *by* a text is not the same as what a text means *to* a reader.

So in reference to what Zellig Harris has to say, interpretation is not simply a matter of what the author was about when he produced the text. It is also what the reader is about when processing it. There may often, of course, be a close correspondence. This seems fairly clearly to be the case with public notices. There are, to be sure, anecdotal counterexamples. There is the man who misunderstood the force of the notice DOGS MUST BE CARRIED and declined to take the escalator because he had no dog. There is Jonathan Miller in the revue *Beyond the Fringe* reflecting on the notice in the toilet in a train GENTLEMEN LIFT THE SEAT. This, he suggests, might not actually be an injunction, but a statement of general truth about gentlemen and their habitual behaviour, or even a loyal toast ('Gentlemen, lift the seat!').

But these are comical anecdotes: comical precisely because such incongruous instances of mistaken reference and force are rare. And indeed in most of our daily transactional uses of language we are so contracted into the conventions of belief and behaviour that define them that we can fairly confidently count on an unproblematic convergence of intention and interpretation. It is hard to see how social life would be possible otherwise.

In other cases, however, convergence is less straightforward. This is particularly so when our individual identity is implicated, when the values, attitudes and beliefs which provide us with our security are brought into play. I have talked about (locutionary) reference and (illocutionary) force as aspects of pragmatic meaning achieved in discourse. When we talk of such values, attitudes, beliefs and individual identity, we introduce a third, and much more problematic aspect: that of (perlocutionary) *effect*.

A simple example, and a traditional one. I can make reference to the same person in a variety of ways: the Duke of Wellington, the Iron Duke, the victor of Waterloo; or, to be a little less dated, the Prime Minister, Mr Blair, our Tony, Bush's poodle, and so on. The difference between these phrases lies in the attitude they appear to express, in how I seem to position myself in respect to the person referred to. So I might be deemed to indicate deference, admiration, disrespect. And of course, since communication is a matter of convergence, my choice of referring expression can be seen as an attempt to persuade my intended interlocutor into the same position. So it is that expressions can be said to be indexically the same in reference but different in effect. The same point can be made about force. I can report an event with the intention to alarm or amuse or impress, to incite your sympathy or your contempt, and you may recognize the intention and so ratify the effect intended.

But equally, of course, you may not. And there's the rub. For, like reference and force, effect is not a feature of the text but a function of the discourse, either as intentionally written into the text or interpretatively read into it.You may *deem* me to have said or written something disrespectful, or rude, or ironic, or racially biased, but to do so you have to make assumptions about my intentions, which, in accordance with normal pragmatic practice, can only be partially signalled in the text. These assumptions are naturally and inevitably made on the basis of *your* conception of the world, *your* social and individual reality, *your* values, beliefs, prejudices. This is the necessary consequence of discourse conceived as social action. It is your discourse you read into my text. You can only interpret it by relating it to your reality. Where your reality corresponds to mine, or where you are prepared to co-operate in seeing things my way, then there can be convergence between intention and interpretation. Otherwise, there will be a disparity. You will be taking me out of context – out of the context of my reality. What for me is a statement of fact may for you be an assertion to be challenged.

When we are engaged in face-to-face interaction, this challenge can, of course, be made directly and will be immediately textualized as a constituent part of the ongoing discourse. Thus the second person jointly constructs the spoken text, so long as this is the reflex of reciprocal interaction, as in conversation. But with other kinds of spoken language, there is no such possibility of intervention, and it is the first person who is in complete control of text production. And this, as we have already noted, is also the case with written text. In some kinds of discourse, most obviously in writing, the participants are kept apart, and there can be no possibility of reconciling their positions by overt negotiation. Intention and interpretation

cannot mutually modify each other: they inform different discourses, and only the first is textualized.

In this chapter I have argued the case for making a conceptual distinction between text and discourse, and this has involved rejecting as unsatisfactory, and misleading, the definition of either of them in terms of language 'above the sentence'. The sentence is an abstract unit of syntax which can be adduced to account for linguistic competence, what people know of the encoding possibilities of their language. Whatever reality it has as knowledge, made explicit by linguistic analysis, it is not actually realized as performance in normal language behaviour. It can be *manifested* if people (like language learners) are asked to display their knowledge by giving examples of well-formed sentences, but that is a very different thing, a matter of mention, of usage rather than use (Widdowson 1978). Normally people do not manifest their knowledge as sentences, but realize it as utterances. This is readily recognized in the case of spoken language use, which is frequently so textually fragmented that forms corresponding to sentences are hard to find. But since such forms normally do appear in writing, it is easy to suppose that here the text *does* consist of sentences. And we do indeed commonly refer to sentences, rather than utterances, when talking about written text.

But these are sentences in a different sense. For here they are units of actual written performance bounded by a capital letter and a full stop, which may (though, as we have seen need not) correspond with any number of units which can be analysed into sentences in the syntactic sense. Sentence in this case is the word we use for written utterance.

Since the production of text, written as well as spoken, is performance it cannot be accounted for as such by invoking the competence category of the syntactic sentence. It is not, as I have argued earlier, an encoded arrangement of language above, or below, the sentence but a different phenomenon altogether: the overt linguistic trace of a process of negotiating the passage of intended meaning, the pragmatic process of discourse realization, whereby the resources of the language code are used to engage with the context of beliefs, values, assumptions that constitute the user's social and individual reality. In this sense, text is an epiphenomenon. It exists as a symptom of pragmatic intent. Of course, you can ignore this symptomatic function, disregard any discourse significance a text might have, and treat it simply as the manifestation of linguistic data. But since text always carries the implication of discourse, to do this is to analyse the textual product in dissociation from the pragmatic process which realizes it, and without which it would have no point.

Notes

1 What we do find in 7.2 in fact is a reaffirmation that there is no conceptual distinction between the two. Where a distinction is made, however, is between two senses of the term *discourse*: 'In previous chapters, I have used text and discourse to mean naturally occurring instances of language in use. However, discourse is also used to in a very different sense to mean recurrent phrases and conventional ways of talking, which circulate in the social world, and which form a constellation of repeated meanings.' Such 'discourse patterns' are said to 'embody particular social values and views of the world' (Stubbs 1996:158). This, we are told, is the sense of discourse that is developed in Foucault 1972 and Fairclough 1992. What makes this sense 'very different' is not explained. The difference is certainly not apparent in Stubbs's own work: the immediately preceding chapter of his book actually deals with discourse in this second sense, being a detailed analysis of 'how language mediates and represents the world from different points of view' (Stubbs 1996:128). I consider this analysis in chapter 7.

2 Just how orthodox it has become is indicated by the following entry in a recently published glossary of sociolinguistics: 'Discourse analysis. A branch of linguistics which deals with linguistic units at levels above the sentence, that is texts and conversations. Those branches of discourse analysis which come under the heading of sociolinguistics presuppose that language is being used in social interaction and thus deal with conversation. Other non-sociolinguistic branches of discourse analysis are often known as text linguistics' (Trudgill 2003).

3 A new edition of the encyclopedia was published in 2003. Chafe's entry, however, is unchanged.

4 It is perhaps of interest to note that the distinction between text and discourse, drawn very much along the lines proposed in this chapter, figures explicitly and prominently in the first edition of Coulthard's *Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (Coulthard 1977), but unaccountably disappears in the revised edition (Coulthard 1985).

5 In his later work, Stubbs concedes that the definition of text (or discourse) as language above the sentence needs to be revised to account for the textual status of such notices: 'It is therefore more accurate to say that text and discourse analysis studies language in context: how words and phrases fit into both longer texts, and also social contexts of use' (Stubbs 2001a:5).

6 Note that the distinction between text and discourse in terms of product and process is clearly drawn in Brown and Yule 1983: 'In summary, the discourse analyst treats his data as the record (text) of a dynamic process in which language was used as an instrument of communication in a context by a speaker/writer to express meanings and achieve intentions (discourse)' (Brown and Yule 1983:26). For arguments along similar lines to those in this chapter against defining discourse as structural units 'above the sentence or clause' see Schiffrin

1994, chapter 2. Schiffrin contrasts this with 'discourse as language use'. Interestingly, this distinction parallels one that I proposed myself in earlier days. Discourse, I suggested then, might be defined as 'the use of sentences in combination' but added: 'This is a vague definition which conveniently straddles two different, if complementary, ways of looking at language beyond the sentence. We might say that one way is to focus attention on the second part of my definition: *sentences in combination*, and the other to focus on the first: *the use of sentences*' (Widdowson 1979:90). I later recognized (as does Schiffrin) that discourse as use has to do not with sentences but with utterances, and for me it followed that a distinction needed to be made between text and discourse. Schiffrin does not come to that conclusion: for her, as for Stubbs, the difference between these latter terms has no conceptual significance, and she uses the two in free variation. She prefers to assign different kinds of significance to the term *discourse*. As we see, however, she does not do this along the same lines as Stubbs: there is no recognition in her account of the distinction he makes.

2

Text and grammar

As was pointed out in the preceding chapter, Zellig Harris conceived of discourse analysis as the discovery of patterns of formal equivalences across the sentences in a text, and therefore, essentially, as an extension of the scope of grammar. His device for establishing such textual constituents was the transformation, by means of which he sought to identify regularities underlying different surface appearances. This device was then adopted by Chomsky not to extend the scope of grammatical analysis but to focus it more exclusively on the constituent relations within the sentence itself. The generative grammar that Chomsky developed does not account for textual relations of the kind Harris was concerned with, and makes no claim to do so.

There is, however, an approach to grammar that does. I refer to systemic-functional grammar, as developed by Michael Halliday. This presents itself in opposition to a generative grammar of the Chomskyan stamp in that it accounts not only for the formal properties of sentence constituents as such, but for how they function in texts. This functional perspective is entirely consistent with Halliday's conception of language as 'social semiotic' and his concern for language in use, and the fact is, as Harris himself noted, language use takes the form of texts, not isolated sentences. The question is how far grammar can be designed to take account of this fact.

Systemic-functional grammar (henceforth S/F grammar) has the express purpose of analysing language into systems of options which constitute the 'meaning potential' for the creation of text. As Halliday puts it: 'The aim has been to construct a grammar for the purposes of text analysis: one that would make it possible to say sensible and useful things about any texts, spoken or written, in modern English' (Halliday 1994:xv). Although English is specifically mentioned here, the same would presumably apply to any language. Perhaps the first thing to be clear about is that the aim of the grammar so formulated is to account for text as a linguistic unit in its own right, to explain it as such and not simply to use it to exemplify the

occurrence of other structural units, like clauses or phrases. The purpose, it would appear, is not therefore to show how different grammatical features simply show up in stretches of language, but how they operate to form larger units of meaning. As Halliday says: 'The grammar, then, is at once both a grammar of the system and a grammar of the text' (Halliday 1994:xxii).

One might reasonably infer from this statement that text analysis is taken as a straightforward matter of applying the categories of the grammar. But only, it would appear, up to a point. Halliday explains that analysis works on two levels:

> One is a contribution to the *understanding* of the text: the linguistic analysis enables one to show how, and why, the text means what it does. In the process, there are likely to be revealed multiple meanings, alternatives, ambiguities, metaphors and so on. This is the lower of the two levels; it is one that should always be attainable provided the analysis is such as to relate the text to general features of the language – provided it is based on the grammar in other words.

At this level, then, application of grammatical categories reveals the properties of the text, not only, we should notice, how it is constructed, but what it means. That is to say, the meaning is internally in the text, and understanding derives directly from analysis. Analysis, it would seem, does not just *contribute* to, but actually *constitutes* understanding. Certainly there is no mention here of where any other contribution might come from. But this is the lower level of analysis. There is a higher one:

> The higher level of achievement is a contribution to the *evaluation* of the text: the linguistic analysis may enable one to say why the text is, or is not, an effective text for its own purposes – in what respects it succeeds and in what respects it fails, or is less successful. This goal is much harder to attain. It requires an interpretation not only of the text itself but also of its context (context of situation, context of culture), and of the systematic relationship between context and text. (Halliday 1994:xv)

At this level, the text is interpreted externally in relation to context. We are concerned here not with what texts mean but what users mean by texts in the realization of their communicative purposes. At this level, presumably, the multiple meanings, ambiguities and so on which emerge from the first level get resolved by reference to contextual factors.

Halliday, then, like Harris, talks about the processing of text at two levels. But whereas for Harris the first level is concerned only with the

identification of textual features, for Halliday it is concerned also with an understanding of their meaning, and therefore some degree of *interpretation* as well. So it would appear that for Halliday the meaning of a text is compounded of the meanings of its constituent sentences, so that understanding it is a cumulative matter. A text, it seems, is taken to be simply a sum of its sentential parts, so understanding it is straightforwardly a function of a grammatical analysis which reveals the multiple meanings, alternatives, ambiguities, metaphors encoded in the separate sentences it is composed of.

Halliday's first level of analysis looks to be more comprehensive than that of Harris in that it takes meaning into account. It is less comprehensive, however, in that it seems not to address the question of how sentences are related to form larger linguistic units, and so long as it does not do that, it is hard to see how the grammar that is applied is actually a grammar of text as such as distinct from the sentences in a text. Furthermore, the meaning that is taken into account at this level of 'understanding' is not of the kind that Harris has in mind: it has to do not with the pragmatic matter of 'what the author was about when he produced the text', but with what is semantically encoded in the sentences of the text itself. The pragmatic meaning of a text only comes into consideration at the second level of 'evaluation' when attention is shifted from the text itself to its relationship with context.[1]

The model that we are presented with here is based on the assumption that there is meaning contained within a text, an understanding of which will result directly from a linguistic analysis of its constituent sentences. Thus text is isolated as a linguistic object for analysis (and understanding), but in consequence, of course, it is dissociated from the contextual conditions which make it a text in the first place. For, as I have argued, text only exists in conjunction with context, as the reflex of discourse, and understanding in the usual sense would normally imply not the identification and subsequent elimination of alternatives, ambiguities and so on, but a more direct homing in on relevant meaning. The two levels of analysis that Halliday proposes would not appear to correspond with the normal process of assigning meaning to texts. In normal circumstances of use, people do not process utterances (spoken or written) as separate sentences, one by one, and then consider how the text so analysed might relate externally to contextual factors. We do not first come to an understanding of the semantics of a text, and then evaluate what its possible pragmatic import might be. We do not read possible meanings *off* from a text; we read plausible meanings *into* a text, prompted by the purpose and conditioned by the context. In other words (in my words) you derive a discourse from it and it is that which realizes the text as text. What is happening in Halliday's formulation,

I suggest, is that analysis is confused with interpretation. This confusion, as we shall see in later chapters (chapters 6 and 7) has far-reaching consequences.

The confusion might be remedied (in some degree at least) if we relate analysis and interpretation to the text/discourse distinction I proposed in the preceding chapter and take analysis to be a process of identifying what semantic features are manifested in a text and interpretation as one that involves recognizing how a text functions as discourse by discriminating which, and how, these features are pragmatically activated. From this perspective, it is only at the evaluation level, in Halliday's terms, that we are dealing with a text at all. At what he calls the understanding level, we are dealing only with textual data and using it as evidence for how semantic meaning is encoded in sentences. With regard to the analysis of text, S/F grammar is, in this view, systemic, but not functional. Now of course this is not to deny that S/F grammar is *based* on text in the sense that its systems reveal all manner of detail about the semantic resource that is textually deployed in the making of meaning. This is where its unique achievement lies. But a text-based grammar is not at all the same as a grammar of text.

Systemic-functional grammar is an account of the meaning potential that is encoded in formal systems. These systems are functional in the sense that their development reflects the essential social functions that language has to serve. But how this semantically encoded potential, this social semiotic resource, gets actually, and pragmatically, realized in particular occasions of use is quite a different matter. Here we are concerned with function in a different sense, not with how use is abstracted as code but how code is actualized as use. It is easy to see how the two senses might be confused, and so to suppose that in dealing with the functional features of sentences one is at the same time dealing with how they are functioning in the text. Consider the following remarks in another introduction to S/F grammar:

> For Halliday, the only approach to the construction of grammars that is likely to be successful will be one that recognizes meaning and use as central features of language and tackles the grammar from this point of view. It follows from this that Halliday's grammar is *semantic* (concerned with meaning) and *functional* (concerned with how language is used). (Bloor and Bloor 1995:2)

Here the grammar is represented as having two central features: meaning, which is semantic, and use, which is functional. There is, however, no such distinction in S/F grammar: the two are conflated in that the systemic/semantic systems which encode meaning potential are functionally

informed. Furthermore, the grammar itself cannot be concerned with how language is used, how the potential these systems encode gets pragmatically realized in use. S/F is functional not because it deals with how language is used, here and now, in actual acts of communication, but because it reflects how language *has been used*, and how these uses have over time been abstracted and semantically encoded. Language is as it is, as a system, because of the social functions it has evolved to serve. This is a diachronic statement. From this starting point, you can explain the functional provenance of form, show it to be socially motivated and not just inexplicably random, and so provide an immensely rich account of how meanings get to be encoded in the language. This is the great achievement of S/F grammar. But it cannot be an account of how language is used. These authors, however, appear to think that it can: 'Since a speaker's or writer's choice of words is constrained by the situation of utterance, and since words and groups of words take on special significance in particular contexts, the grammar must be able to account for the way in which the language is used in social situations' (Bloor and Bloor 1995:4).

Presumably it is the 'functional' feature of the grammar which is supposed to account for the way language is used in social situations. The difficulty is that there is no such separate feature in systemic-functional grammar: it is incorporated into the semantic. But, as we have noted, how language is used in social situations is a matter of contextual conditioning and belongs to what Halliday calls the higher level of text evaluation. It is decidedly not a function of linguistic analysis, or what he calls understanding, which is entirely derived from text and does not depend on context at all. So Bloor and Bloor seem to be calling on the grammar to do something which is in principle beyond its scope. But we can see how the confusion arises. If a grammar claims to be a grammar of text, then it surely follows that it should account for the 'special significance' that language takes on when it used *as* text, that is to say in context. Halliday talks about evaluation, the higher level of analysis, as requiring an interpretation of the 'systematic relationship' between text and context. In what respects the relationship between text and context is systematic is a key issue in discourse analysis, but systematic or not, it is hard to see how it can be *systemic* in an S/F grammar sense.

We might agree with Bloor and Bloor that *significance* is the meaning a text takes on when it is used in association with context. It is a function of what Halliday calls evaluation, and it is necessarily a pragmatic matter. But this cannot be equated with the *signification* of the formal components which constitute the text as linguistic object, and which can be exemplified

without reference to any context at all. As a simple illustration, take the following:

They are arriving tomorrow.

The signification of the auxiliary is that it simultaneously encodes present tense, third person plural subject and (in combination with the present participle) continuous aspect. But since all of these are signalled elsewhere in the clause, the auxiliary in fact has no auxiliary significance whatever. So we can dispense with it in actual use, and if we have access to contextual information, we can dispense with the subject too. So it is that we have no difficulty interpreting the reduced clause as a text in the form of a telegram:

ARRIVING TOMORROW

So it is too that communication can often be achieved by minimal linguistic effort so long as an effective contextual contact is thereby achieved:

Me Tarzan. You Jane.
Mistah Kurtz – he dead.[2]

Of course, one can accept that signification is a function of significance in that it is historically derived from it: contextual uses of language find formal expression in the code. But the relationship is not reflexive: significance is not a function of signification. You cannot read it off from linguistic features. Text does not signal its own meaning, so, to refer back to Halliday's first level, linguistic analysis, no matter how detailed, cannot result in an understanding of 'how and why a text means what it does', for this must also take into account, among other things, what Harris refers to as 'what the author was about when he produced the text'.

Indeed, one might argue that the more detailed the linguistic analysis, the further one is likely to get from the significance of the text. And this follows because only some of the semantic meaning encoded in linguistic form is activated as contextually appropriate on a particular occasion. What is distinctive about S/F grammar is that it shows how the language code is informed by the range of contextual functions it is called upon to discharge in the social process. These external contextual functions become encoded as internal semantic relations. Every clause represents a convergence of options from the different semantic networks, and can be analysed as message, exchange, representation, at different constituent ranks and at

different levels of delicacy. Analysis can, in principle, take anything that has been encoded into account, and the decision to select certain features to attend to is essentially arbitrary, a matter of descriptive convenience.

But it is a pragmatic commonplace, of course, that when this system is actually exploited in use only a part of its potential is realized, quite simply because if the actual context provides sufficient information for your communicative needs, you do not have to pay much attention to how this contextual information has been encoded in the language. In exploiting the meaning potential of the system you also exploit its redundancy. You regulate your attention and select what is significant: you activate whatever in the text seems to be contextually relevant and disregard the rest. Otherwise, language use would be an intolerably cumbersome process. So significance, the contextual functioning of language, depends on paying selective heed to the contextually derived signification inscribed in the code.

Texts, indeed, are very commonly designed to make the most economical connection with context precisely to *avoid* unnecessary linguistic processing, so that understanding them is not a function of analysis at all. Understanding the text CLOSED on a shop window does not require me to recover a clause like **This shop is closed**, and then analyse it for its meaning. I relate it directly to context and make an immediate pragmatic inference. It would appear then that in this case, Halliday's first level can be dispensed with altogether, and the text is evaluated without being understood. Of course, one might argue that if one cannot apply the first level of grammatical analysis to instances of use, such as public notices, then they are not texts at all. But then, as we saw in chapter 1, this takes us back to a definition of text in terms of its formal properties rather than its pragmatic use. Such a formalist definition is not one which is likely to find much favour in functionalist circles.

It seems clear that the linguistic analysis of text is not necessary for understanding. Indeed, it would appear that, if anything, it deflects attention from an inference of meaning and interferes with interpretation, so that the first level of analysis in Halliday's scheme has a way of obstructing the processing at the second level. Consider the case of multiple meanings and ambiguities. These occur in texts with a fair degree of frequency. But in many cases, though they can be revealed by semantic analysis, they are not pragmatically activated because the signification is overridden by contextual factors. So it is that we might conceive of the man in the London underground (referred to in the preceding chapter) setting about understanding the text DOGS MUST BE CARRIED by semantic analysis and being confused by two possible meanings: