

Framing in Discourse

EDITED BY

DEBORAH TANNEN

Georgetown University

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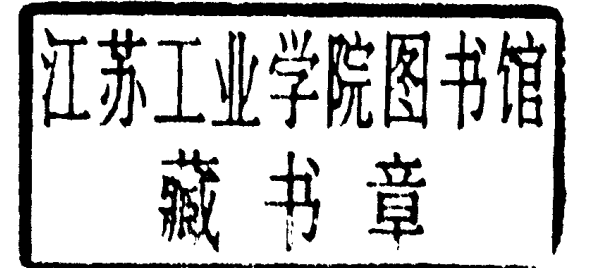
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Framing in Discourse

Introduction

DEBORAH TANNEN

Ever since its introduction by Gregory Bateson in "A Theory of Play and Fantasy" ([1954] 1972), the concept of framing has influenced thinking about language in interaction. Bateson demonstrated that no communicative move, verbal or nonverbal, could be understood without reference to a metacommunicative message, or metamessage, about what is going on—that is, what frame of interpretation applies to the move. Observing monkeys playing, he noted that it was only by reference to the metamessage "This is play" that a monkey could understand a hostile move from another monkey as not intended to convey the hostility that it obviously denotes. In other words, metamessages "framed" the hostile moves as play.

Bateson's work was taken up most directly by researchers in communication and psychology, especially those in systems or family therapy (for example, Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson 1967). It received some attention from anthropologists as well (see especially Frake 1977). Within sociology, the most important and comprehensive treatment of framing came in Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974), which provides a complex and subtly nuanced system of terms, concepts, and examples to elucidate the numerous levels and types of framing that constitute everyday interaction.

Although the influence of Bateson's and Goffman's work has been pervasive, there have been few studies directly applying Bateson's seminal theory or Goffman's elaborate framework in microanalytic linguistic analysis of real discourse produced in face-to-face interaction. In his later work, *Forms of Talk* (1981), Goffman's attention to multiple layers of framing in everyday life focused more and more specifically on the use of language, and Goffman became increasingly interested in the work of linguistic discourse analysis. In the chapter entitled "Footing" he observes that "linguistics provides us with the cues and markers through which such footings become manifest, helping us to find our way to a structural basis for analyzing them"¹ (p. 157). Until now, however, linguists have been slow to justify

I would like to thank Neal Norrick and Deborah Schiffman for comments on a draft of this introduction. I am grateful to Clifford Geertz and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, for the ideal environment in which to write this introduction.

Goffman's faith in our ability to make framing manifest. I believe that this collection begins to do so.

At the same time that discourse analysis can provide insight into the linguistic means by which frames are created in interaction, the concept of framing provides a fruitful theoretical foundation for the discourse analysis of interaction. In fact, frames theory already lies at the heart of the most comprehensive and coherent theoretical paradigm in interactional sociolinguistics: Gumperz's (1982) theory of conversational inference. Gumperz shows that conversational inference, a process requisite for conversational involvement, is made possible by contextualization cues that signal the speech activity in which participants perceive themselves to be engaged. Gumperz's notion of speech activity is thus a type of frame. Indeed, it is in the work of Gumperz and those influenced by him that one finds the greatest justification for Goffman's belief in the ability of linguistics to elucidate the structural basis for framing. With the possible partial exception of the final chapter by Schiffrin, the articles in this volume derive directly from this research tradition, by way of my training as a student of Gumperz at the University of California, Berkeley. Schiffrin is a more direct descendent of Goffman, with whom she studied at the University of Pennsylvania, though her work also shows the influence of William Labov, as mine also shows the influence of Robin Lakoff and Wallace Chafe.

Genesis of the Volume

Every now and then there is a flowering of intellect and spirit among doctoral students in a graduate program: a critical number of exceptional students appear at a time when the field is experiencing an explosion of interest in a particular subfield, and the department includes faculty members who are full of fire with that excitement. The students and faculty inspire and enlighten each other. This occurred in the graduate program in sociolinguistics at Georgetown University in the mid-80s, when the field of linguistics was experiencing a rise of interest in discourse analysis. The unique placement of Georgetown's Department of Linguistics in relation to the growing field of discourse analysis was the result of two happily coinciding phenomena: the unusual existence of two faculty members working actively in different areas of the same field (Deborah Schiffrin and I)² and the opportunity given us to direct meetings that brought leading discourse analysts to the Georgetown University campus. In 1981 I organized the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics "Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk" (see Tannen 1982 for a collection of the papers delivered at that meeting). Three years later, Deborah Schiffrin organized the 1984 GURT "Meaning, Form, and Use in Context: Linguistic Applications" (see Schiffrin 1984 for papers). The year after that, I directed the 1985 Linguistic Institute "Linguistics and Language in Context: The Interdependence of Theory, Data, and Application" (see Tannen and Alatis 1986, Tannen 1988 for papers from that meeting).

In the fall of 1985, immediately following the Linguistic Institute, I taught a graduate seminar on frame analysis. As a direct outgrowth of that seminar, several of the participants wrote dissertations applying frame analysis to discourse produced in a range of contexts. As the dissertations emerged and were uniformly excellent, I realized that the class members were doing, at last, what Goffman had believed it would be the mission of linguists to do. It was then that I conceived the idea for this volume. Frances Smith and Suwako Watanabe were regular members of the seminar who began their dissertations after the seminar ended. Branca Ribeiro, who was already writing her dissertation at the time, was an auditor. The three chapters by these authors are based on their dissertations, which I directed. Although she did not attend the seminar, Susan Hoyle was a member of the same exceptional group of graduate students. Her chapter is condensed from her dissertation, which was directed by Deborah Schiffrin, whose own work is represented here as well. Schiffrin served as reader on the Ribeiro, Watanabe, and Smith dissertations, and I served as reader on Hoyle's. The chapter by Carolyn Strachle was written at a later time, revised from an independent study that had begun as an outstanding paper written for my graduate course in the discourse analysis of conversation.

This volume, then, reflects the recent burgeoning of work and interest in discourse analysis within linguistics. Together, the chapters demonstrate the importance of framing as a theoretical foundation and methodological approach in the discourse analysis of interaction. They also provide insight into discourse types that have not previously been studied by linguists. All the chapters combine to demonstrate how theories of framing can be translated into nuts-and-bolts discourse analysis. Each makes both theoretical and empirical contributions, enriching our understanding of framing at the same time that it shows how analysis of framing adds to our understanding of conversational interaction.

Overview of Chapters

The volume begins with two of my own articles that lay a theoretical groundwork for the analysis of framing in discourse. Although these chapters have been previously published, they appeared in places not normally seen by linguists: the first in a volume edited by Roy Freedle for his psychologically oriented Discourse Processing series, the second in a special issue of the *Social Psychology Quarterly* edited by sociologist Douglas Maynard. The chapters that follow were all written expressly for this volume, each applying aspects of frames theory to a unique interactional context.

Chapter 1, "What's in a Frame? Surface Evidence for Underlying Expectations," provides a general introduction to research on framing. It begins with a theoretical overview of how the term "frame" and related terms such as "script" and "schema" developed and have been used in a range of disciplines to refer to what I define as "structures of expectation." The disciplines surveyed are linguistics, cognitive psychology, artificial in-

telligence, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology. I have not attempted to bring the literature review up to date, because it was not intended as a literature review per se but rather as a review of terms and concepts; as it stands, it still fulfills the purpose of introducing the concept of framing, the various terms that have been used to denote the concept, and the ways in which those terms and concepts have been employed in a range of disciplines. The chapter then reports the results of research examining linguistic evidence for the existence of frames underlying narrative performance in a corpus of stories told by Americans and Greeks about a film (which has become known as "the pear film"). First I discuss the levels at which frames operate; then I illustrate sixteen types of linguistic evidence for the presence and character of cognitive frames.

The type of "frames" that are the subject of analysis in Chapter 1 are what I later came to call "schemas": "structures of expectation" associated with situations, objects, people, and so on. Goffman (1981:67) noted that this paper concerns types of framing quite different from the sense in which he and Bateson used the term. Chapter 2, and the remainder of the book, focus primarily on the type of frame that Goffman analyzed: the "alignments" that people "take up to" each other in face-to-face interaction.

Chapter 2, "Interactive Frames and Knowledge Schemas in Interaction: Examples from a Medical Examination/Interview," by me and Cynthia Wallat, suggests a model for integrating these two senses of framing in a single analytic framework. "Knowledge schemas" are the type of framing device discussed in Chapter 1; "interactive frames" are frames in Bateson's and Goffman's sense, that is, what people think they are *doing* when they talk to each other (i.e., are they joking, lecturing, or arguing? Is this a fight or is it play?). The interaction of these two types of frames is illustrated by analysis of a videotaped encounter in which a pediatrician examines a cerebral palsied child in the presence of the child's mother. We show that the frames/schema model allows us to elucidate the complexity of the pediatrician's verbal behavior in the interaction.

In the episode analyzed, the pediatrician balances several competing and conflicting *interactive frames*: within an "examination frame," she conducts a standard pediatric examination according to a prescribed routine; within a "consultation frame," she answers the mother's questions about the child's condition, at times examining the child to discover the answer to the mother's questions; and within a "reporting frame," she announces the findings of the pediatric examination aloud for the residents who may later view the videotape being made. At times, the demands of these frames conflict. For example, the mother's questions in the consultation frame require the doctor to interrupt her examination and put the child "on hold," making her potentially more restless and consequently making the examination more difficult.

At the same time, there are conflicts between the doctor's and the mother's *knowledge schemas*—that is, their expectations about health in gen-

eral and cerebral palsy in particular. For example, the mother and doctor differ in their interpretations of the child's noisy breathing. Associating "noisy breathing" with "wheezing," the mother fears that the child is having respiratory difficulty. The doctor, in contrast, associates the noisy breathing with cerebral palsy, i.e., as an expected and harmless result of poor muscular control. A conflict in schemas often triggers a shift in frames. Thus, the mother's concern with the child's noisy breathing leads her to interrupt the doctor's examination to exclaim, "That's it! That's how it sounds when she sleeps!" The doctor must then shift from the examination frame to the consulting frame to reassure the mother that the child's noisy breathing is not a sign of danger.

In Chapter 3, "Framing in Psychotic Discourse," Branca Telles Ribeiro uses the frames/schema model to analyze the discourse of a Brazilian woman, Dona Jurema, being interviewed by a psychiatrist, Dr. Edna, at a psychiatric hospital in Rio de Janeiro. On the basis of this interview, Dr. Edna diagnosed Dona Jurema as being in the midst of a psychotic crisis and admitted her to the hospital. Ribeiro demonstrates that frame analysis elucidates the coherence in Dona Jurema's psychotic discourse. There are two frames operating in the interaction: the interview frame, in which Dr. Edna asks the patient questions, and the psychotic crisis frame, in which the patient fails to answer the psychiatrist's questions, speaking instead to people who are not present and as people who are not present—even, in some cases, not alive—or as herself at a different age or in a different context. Dona Jurema jumps from topic to topic, chants and sings, and assumes different voices and different footings. Ribeiro shows, however, that everything she utters in the frame of her psychotic episode is perfectly coherent within the scenario created—for example, Dona Jurema as a child speaking to her mother, grandmother, or sister. Ribeiro also examines a lower level of framing and its relation to the higher level: the types of moves performed in Dona Jurema's discourse that make up the various interactive frames. Furthermore, she shows that Dona Jurema makes accurate use of knowledge schemas pertinent to each frame, such as the injunction against making noise in a hospital. Ribeiro's study is exemplary of the power of frames theory to illuminate an otherwise seemingly incoherent discourse type. It is also a ground-breaking analysis of psychotic discourse.

In Chapter 4, "Participation Frameworks in Sportscasting Play: Imaginary and Literal Footings," Susan M. Hoyle analyzes discourse produced by her son and his friends while they played dyadic indoor games, such as video basketball and Ping-Pong, and simultaneously reported on the games they were playing by speaking in the role of sportscaster. The primary basis for Hoyle's analysis is spontaneous sportscasting, which the boys initiated on their own, aware that they were being taped but unaware of which aspect of their talk would be the object of interest. In a second part of the study, the boys staged a more elaborate, multivoiced performance, in which they took the roles not only of sportscaster but also of half-time interviewer and

interviewee for a hypothetical television audience. These more elaborate instances of sportscasting play were performed in response to Hoyle's specific request that the boys "do sportscasting" for her to tape.

Hoyle integrates the concepts of framing and participation structure to show that the boys balance multiple participation frameworks in their sportscasting play. For example, the "outermost frame" of "play" or "fulfilling a request to do sportscasting" is a rim around the embedded frame of "doing sportscasting." In their spontaneous play, the boys shift between speaking as sportscasters commenting on their play and speaking as themselves, for example, to resolve procedural disputes and manage the game. In the elicited sportscasting, they never speak as themselves, but shift among nonliteral frameworks, for example, to move from announcing the action to acting out a half-time interview with a player. Hoyle demonstrates that the analysis of interaction from the point of view of framing leads to "a greater appreciation of children's discourse abilities" at the same time that analysis of children's framing of their play adds to our understanding of the human capacity to manipulate frames in interaction.

Chapter 5, Frances Lee Smith's "The Pulpit and Woman's Place: Gender and the Framing of the 'Exegetical Self' in Sermon Performances," examines the sermons delivered by students in a preaching lab at a Baptist seminary. Focusing her analysis on the "text exegeter" portions of the sermons—that is, the portion in which the preacher explains, or exegetes, a fixed sacred text, Smith finds that the male and female student preachers she taped tended to take different footings in framing their sermon performances and consequently in presenting themselves as exegeters. Referring not only to Goffman's "footing," as the other contributors do, but also to his concept of the "textual self" as described in his essay "The Lecture" (1981), Smith begins by profiling four discernible "exegetical authority" footings, each projecting a distinct textual self. She finds that the men tended to foreground "their textual-self authority both by putting themselves on record as exegeters of the text and by calling attention to the current participation framework in the exegetical task more often than did the women." In contrast, the women use a variety of framing strategies to downplay their personal authority as text exegeters. For example, one woman referred to the text itself as the source of authority, another framed her sermon as a children's story, and another took the footing of a "low-profile" exegeter.

Smith's contribution is significant for the gender and language topic area, as it shows that the level at which women and men differ is not so much (or not so significantly) the matter of lexical or syntactic choice but the far more complex level of footing, that is, the alignment they take up to the material about which they are speaking and the audience to whom they are addressing their discourse. Smith's analysis is particularly significant in providing an innovative and potentially ground-breaking approach to gender differences. Rather than designing her study as a direct comparison of male and female styles, she focuses her analysis on the footings assumed by the

student preachers, the selves projected by these footings, and the linguistic means by which they were created. She begins by developing the categories within which the various footings could be grouped and only then asks where the women and men tend to fall, concluding that women make more use of the linguistic devices that constitute two of the footings. In addition, Smith's chapter makes a significant contribution to the fields of language and religion in general and the language of sermon performance in particular.

In Chapter 6, "Cultural Differences in Framing: American and Japanese Group Discussions," Suwako Watanabe applies frame analysis to issues in cross-cultural communication. Specifically, she addresses the question of why Japanese students in American classrooms find it difficult to participate in small group discussions, a speech activity favored by many American teachers. By comparing American and Japanese small group discussions on similar topics, Watanabe identifies two types of framing: (1) bracketing (delineating the event at its beginning and end), and (2) specific conversational moves such as requesting or joking. Examining the strategies by which participants open and close discussion, present reasons, and structure arguments, she finds that the Japanese students use strategies that grow out of two patterns characteristic of Japanese communication: nonreciprocal language use and avoidance of confrontation. The Americans perceived the group as four individuals bound only by an activity, whereas the Japanese perceived themselves as group members united in a hierarchy. Consequently, the Japanese speakers avoided confrontation by putting forth conclusions that were "inclusive, allowing both supportive and contradictory accounts at the same time." In contrast, the Americans' conclusions were exclusive, leading therefore to some confrontation when individuals' accounts differed.

Watanabe links the level of conversational moves to higher levels of framing. For example, the Japanese gave reasons in the frame of storytelling, whereas the Americans gave reasons in the frame of reporting. Furthermore, in beginning and ending the discussions, the Japanese reflected the hierarchical structure of the group. This observation has interesting implications for the issue of gender. In the Japanese discussion groups, the first to speak was always a woman. Whereas Americans would likely see the first-to-speak position as relatively dominant, Watanabe suggests that in the Japanese framework, speaking is face-threatening to the speaker, so women take this potentially compromising position because they have less face to lose.³ This chapter, then, demonstrates the usefulness of frames theory for illuminating cross-cultural communication and small group interaction. It also adds to our understanding of differences in Japanese and American discourse strategies.

In Chapter 7, "Samuel? 'Yes, Dear?': Teasing and Conversational Rapport," Carolyn A. Strachle examines a particular conversational move, teasing, in a naturally occurring casual conversation among three friends: Samuel, Diana, and the author herself. Strachle aptly observes that teasing is a

linguistic analogue to Bateson's playful nip: a move whose obviously hostile meaning is reversed by the frame of play (but is in danger of being perceived as a literally hostile bite). Examining the role of teasing in the relationships among the three participants, she finds, for example, that whereas teasing is pervasive in the interaction, not all participants engage in it equally. Samuel and Diana tease each other incessantly as part of their flirtation and display of mutual affection (they were newly paired), but there is no teasing between Samuel and Carolyn, who is Diana's best friend.

In addition to examining the role of teasing in negotiating relationships, Strachle examines four linguistic cues that frame utterances as teasing: prosody (for example, a high-pitched, whiny voice), laughter (accompanying or immediately following an utterance to signal benign and playful intent), pronouns (a present party is referred to in the third person, as "she," or two parties use the pronoun "we" to exclude a third), and routinized formulae (such as the fixed interchange that provides the chapter's title). Moreover, many of the formats by which Samuel (and, less often, Carolyn) tease Diana are posited on framing her as a child. Teasing is a much noted and little analyzed conversational strategy; Strachle's analysis of its linguistic and interactional components is therefore a significant contribution to an understanding of the act of teasing, as well as to our understanding of framing in conversational interaction.

Chapter 8, Deborah Schiffrin's "Speaking for Another" in *Sociolinguistic Interviews: Alignments, Identities, and Frames*, is similar to Strachle's in its focus on a particular interactional move within the context of an interaction in which the author was a participant. Schiffrin analyzes discourse that took place during a sociolinguistic interview she conducted with three members of a lower middle class Jewish community in Philadelphia: a married couple called Zelda and Henry and their neighbor and friend Irene. Schiffrin shows that the previously undescribed conversational move "speaking for another"—that is, voicing something about someone else, in that person's presence, which only that person is in a position to know—accomplishes a frame shift by realigning participants. Just as Strachle shows that conversational participants align themselves to each other and create their relationship by teasing, Schiffrin shows that by speaking for someone else who is present and by allowing oneself to be spoken for, the participants in this conversational interview negotiate their relationships to each other as well as their gender identities. Thus, global or macro level relationships are created as well as evidenced by local or micro level moves that align, or frame, participants in relation to each other.

In Schiffrin's analysis, Henry and Zelda both speak for Irene, their neighbor and friend, who is significantly younger than they, but they frame themselves differently in doing so. Zelda's realignments are supportive and integrative: by speaking for her, she protects Irene from Henry's potential criticism. Henry's realignments are judgmental, challenging, and divisive: they align him with the interviewer in opposition to Irene, negatively evalu-

ate her behavior, and prompt her to reveal potentially compromising information, although he does, like Zelda, take a protective stance toward her.

Schiffrin goes on to examine types of framing found in the sociolinguistic interview and shows that the interview itself provides a frame for the realignments and identity displays she previously discussed. Although speaking for another occurs both within and outside the interview frame, it occurs only during question/answer exchanges. On the broadest level, by speaking for Irene, Zelda and Henry display and reinforce the closeness of their relationship with her and also transform the interview frame. Schiffrin's tripartite conclusion demonstrates that (1) sequential coherence in discourse results from the availability of a range of interpretive frames; (2) speaking for another is a ritualization of the submersion of the self in interaction which constitutes the interactive process itself; and (3) an understanding of how participants construct and shift gender identities and mutual alignments is crucial for the analysis of variation in sociolinguistic interviews.

Each chapter, then, applies aspects of frames theory to a unique interactional context to which frame analysis has not previously been applied. The volume thus demonstrates how frame analysis provides a framework for linguistic discourse analysis.

Organization of the Volume⁴

With the exception of the first chapter, which provides an introduction to frames theory, the chapters are arranged in descending order of the level of framing they primarily address. Chapters 2 through 4 use frame analysis to account for the nature of the events they examine. Chapter 2, by Tannen and Wallat, introduces a frames/schema model to elucidate the nature of the pediatrician's task in the examination/interview. Chapter 3, by Ribeiro, logically follows Tannen and Wallat both because it is concerned with a medical encounter and because it applies Tannen and Wallat's frames/schema model. More importantly, however, it uses frame analysis to characterize the nature of psychotic discourse. In Chapter 4, the study of boys' sportscasting play, the frame shifts that Hoyle describes actually give the event its character as sportscasting. Chapter 5, Smith's analysis of sermon performance, is liminal in terms of the level of framing it addresses. The concept of 'exegetical self' is an essential element of preaching but not in itself constitutive of it.

The remaining chapters link macro and micro levels of framing. The two types of framing identified by Watanabe in her study of American and Japanese discussion groups in Chapter 6 operate on the event and discourse levels, respectively. The first type, bracketing, by which participants open and close discussion, operates on the event level; conversational moves of the second type, such as presenting reasons and constructing arguments, operate on the local or discourse level. The last two chapters, by Strachle and

Schiffrin, focus on particular conversational moves within a larger event, and the role of these moves in the negotiation of relationships among participants. Thus they address framing at both more local and also more global levels than the other chapters. Within the casual conversation among friends that Strachle analyzes in Chapter 7, talk framed as teasing (a local level framing type) functions to establish a flirtatious intimacy between two speakers (framing at the global, relationship level). Analogously, Schiffrin shows in Chapter 8 that within the context of a diffuse sociolinguistic interview (an interview which in many ways resembles a casual conversation among acquaintances and friends), "speaking for another" frames Irene, the younger neighbor, as somewhat childlike in relation to Zelda and Henry. The book, therefore, builds toward an appreciation of the role of framing in the most significant and pervasive realm of human interaction: the negotiation of interpersonal relations and personal identity.

Notes

1. In fact, Goffman makes this remark in reference to the work that appears as Chapter 2 in this volume.
2. Geertz (1983:158-159), in an illuminating ethnography of American academic ways of thinking, notes the odd career path by which academics tend to be trained at one of a few centers and then be consigned for life to some outlying college or university. I would add that academic departments tend to hire one person in each field or subfield, setting each scholar in intellectual isolation in the home institution, driven to seek collegial interchange outside the university at professional meetings.
3. This hypothesis is reminiscent of Fishman's (1978) observation that women in casual conversations at home with their husbands do the grunt work of keeping the conversation going.
4. A note on transcription conventions is in order because of minor differences in conventions employed in each chapter. Since, with the exception of Schiffrin, all the authors use transcription conventions based on Tannen (1984), there is uniformity in the gross characteristics, but each author uses a few idiosyncratic conventions adapted to the needs of her own study. This may be irritating to a reader who reads the volume through from beginning to end. Yet I have refrained from making the conventions uniform, since that would entail forcibly altering all but one author's transcript excerpts to make them conform to a single system, probably my own. Aside from the hegemonic implications of such a move, I am keenly aware of how central my transcription system is to my own analysis. Recent research (for example, Ochs 1979, Preston 1982, 1985, Edwards 1990) makes abundantly clear that transcription systems are not neutral and interchangeable but rather represent interpretation in themselves. Readers' indulgence is asked, therefore, in the matter of small differences in conventions from one chapter to the next. To prevent confusion, each chapter is followed by its own key to transcription conventions used in that chapter.

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What's in a Frame? Surface Evidence for Underlying Expectations

DEBORAH TANNEN

Georgetown University

Introduction

I have been struck lately by the recurrence of a single theme in a wide variety of contexts: the power of expectation. For example, the self-fulfilling prophecy has been proven to operate in education as well as in individual psychology. I happened to leaf through a how-to-succeed book; its thesis was that the way to succeed is to expect to do so. Two months ago at a conference for teachers of English as a second language, the keynote speaker explained that effective reading is a process of anticipating what the author is going to say and expecting it as one reads. Moreover, there are general platitudes heard every day, as for example the observation that what is wrong with marriage today is that partners expect too much of each other and of marriage.

The emphasis on expectation seems to corroborate a nearly self-evident truth: in order to function in the world, people cannot treat each new person, object, or event as unique and separate. The only way we can make

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sense of the world is to see the connections between things, and between present things and things we have experienced before or heard about. These vital connections are learned as we grow up and live in a given culture. As soon as we measure a new perception against what we know of the world from prior experience, we are dealing with expectations.

The notion of expectations is at the root of a wave of theories and studies in a broad range of fields, including linguistics. It is this notion, I believe, which underlies talk about frames, scripts, and schemata in the fields of linguistics, artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology at least (and I would not be surprised if similar terms were used in other disciplines I do not happen to know about). In this chapter I will illustrate a way of showing the effects of these "structures of expectation" on verbalization in the telling of oral narratives. Before I proceed, however, it will be useful to give a brief sketch of the various ways in which these terms have been used in the fields I have mentioned.

Because of the infinite confusion possible as a result of the great number of authors and contexts we will need to discuss, I will categorize the main theorists first according to the disciplines they work in, and then according to their choice of terms.

In the field of psychology we need to consider the work of Bartlett (1932), Rumelhart (1975), and Abelson (1975, 1976). Rumelhart is a cognitive psychologist and Abelson a social psychologist, but both have become increasingly associated with the field of artificial intelligence. In the latter field, Abelson works closely with Schank (Schank & Abelson 1975). The second major researcher in this field is Minsky (1974). Linguists we will consider are Chafe (1977a,b) and Fillmore (1975, 1976). In anthropology, Bateson (1972) (his work was originally published in 1955) and Fraake (1977) must be noted, as well as Hymes (1974), who may more precisely be called an ethnographer of speaking (to use the term he himself coined). In sociology the theorist is Goffman (1974).

Let us now consider the above scholars in groups according to the terms they prefer to use. The term "schema" traces back to Bartlett (1932) in his pioneering book, *Remembering* (Bartlett himself borrows the term from Sir Henry Head). This term has been picked up by Chafe as well as Rumelhart, and by others, as for example Bobrow and Norman (1975), who are also in the field of artificial intelligence. The term "script" is associated with the work of Abelson and Schank. The term "frame" is associated most often with the anthropological/sociological orientation of Hymes, Goffman, and Fraake, and with the artificial intelligence research of Minsky. Their use of the term stems from Bateson. "Frame" is also used by Fillmore, who notes that he came to it by a different route, that of the structuralist notion of syntagmatic frame.

To complicate matters further, a number of these writers use more than one term (Fillmore: scene-and-frame; Chafe: schema, frame, and categorization), or express dissatisfaction with the term they use (Bartlett writes that

he would really prefer "active developing patterns" or "organized setting"; Fillmore says he would prefer "module").

To uncomplicate matters, however, all these complex terms and approaches amount to the simple concept of what R. N. Ross (1975) calls "structures of expectations," that is, that, on the basis of one's experience of the world in a given culture (or combination of cultures), one organizes knowledge about the world and uses this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events, and experiences. Bartlett (1932), the earliest of the theorists discussed here and the first psychologist to use the term "schema," in effect said it all: "The past operates as an organized mass rather than as a group of elements each of which retains its specific character" (p. 197).

Bartlett's concern, as his title indicates, is "Remembering"; he relies heavily on Head's notion of "schema" (quoting extensively from a book entitled *Studies in neurology*) (Head 1920) in order to support his theory that memory is constructive rather than consisting of the storage of all previously perceived stimuli. Bartlett contends that an individual "has an overmastering tendency simply to get a general impression of the whole; and, on the basis of this, he constructs the probable detail" (p. 206). One more aspect of Bartlett's work that is particularly significant, in his estimation as well as mine, is the "whole notion, that the organized mass results of past changes of position and posture are actively *doing* something all the time; are, so to speak, carried along with us, complete, though developing, from moment to moment" (p. 201). This is the aspect of schemata which he felt was lost in that term, and it is for this reason that he preferred the term "active, developing patterns." Bartlett's apprehensions about the term "schema" were obviously justified, for in most of this work, the notion of constant change has been lost. For example, Charniak (1975), an artificial intelligence (AI) investigator who follows Minsky, states, "I take a frame to be a static data structure about one stereotyped topic . . ." (p. 42).

Perhaps the most direct descendent of Bartlett is Chafe (who, although he does not specifically emphasize the dynamic nature of schemata, does not imply a necessarily static notion of them either, perhaps because as a linguist he is not so much subject to the computer metaphor). In fact, as Bartlett investigated the nature of memory by reading passages to groups of subjects and having them recall them at later intervals, so Chafe (1977a,b) has been studying the recall of events by showing a film to groups of subjects and having them retell what they saw at later intervals (in fact, these data are the basis of the present paper).

As a linguist, however, Chafe (1977a) is interested in verbalization. He posits the question: after witnessing or experiencing an event, "What kinds of processes must this person apply to convert his knowledge, predominantly nonverbal to begin with, into a verbal output?" (p. 41). The first element in this process, he hypothesizes, is the determination of a schema, which refers to the identification of the event; the second is the determination of a frame, which refers to the sentence-level expression about particu-

lar individuals and their roles in the event; finally, a category is chosen to name objects or actions which play parts in the event. For all these choices, one must "match the internal representation of particular events and individuals with internally represented prototypes" (p. 42).

Since we are encountering the term "prototype" here, it is as good a time as any to note that this is another currently popular term which is inextricably intertwined with the notion of expectations. As Fillmore (1975) notes, the "prototype idea can be seen in the color term studies of B. Berlin and P. Kay (1969) and in the 'natural category' researches of E. Rosch (1973)" (p. 123). Fillmore lists a number of other related concepts as well from a variety of disciplines. The prototype, like the frame, refers to an expectation about the world, based on prior experience, against which new experiences are measured and interpreted.

Returning to our discussion of the uses of the term "schema," we may note the work of Rumelhart (1975), who devises a schema for stories in the interest of developing an automatic "story parser" for artificial intelligence consumption. Rumelhart acknowledges his debt to Schank as well as Propp (1958).

To give one final example of how the notion of schemata has been used in AI, we refer to Bobrow and Norman (1975), who "propose that memory structures [in a computer] be comprised of a set of active schemata, each capable of evaluating information passed to it and capable of passing information and requests to other schemata" (p. 148). Their association of schemata with automatic processes seems to reflect faithfully the function of expectations: "Any time there is a mismatch between data and process or expectations and occurrences, conscious processes are brought in" (p. 148). This reflects, then, the way in which a person's perception of the world proceeds automatically so long as expectations are met, while s/he is stopped short, forced to question things, only when they are not.

Abelson's interest in scripts spans three fields: ideology, story understanding (that is, for the purpose of computer simulation), and social behavior (talk at UC Berkeley, March 1977). Abelson's broad interests render his work on scripts particularly interesting. He became interested in scripts, he explains, in connection with the predictability he discerned in Goldwater's belief system! Among the most interesting of the perspectives Abelson (1976) investigates are the relationships of scripts, attitudes, and behavior: "In our view, attitude toward an object consists in the ensemble of scripts concerning that object" (p. 16). He notes, therefore, that it is interesting to talk about scripts when there is a clash between how people behave and how you might expect them to behave. An understanding of their scripts, then, explains the link between attitudes and behavior.

In the area of story understanding, Abelson has worked alongside Schank. They note that their notion of script is like Minsky's notion of frames, "except that it is specialized to deal with event sequences" (Schank & Abelson 1975). In fact, for Schank and Abelson, *script* is only one form of knowledge structure; it is their aim to define others as well. Schank &

Abelson (1977) differentiates among scripts, plans, goals, and themes, which, they note, are explained in descending order of clarity. It should be noted, perhaps, that earlier papers make other distinctions. In Abelson (1975), there are script, theme ("a conceptual structure which accounts for a number of related scripts"), and dreme ("a conception of the possibility that one or more themes are subject to change") (p. 275). In Abelson (1976), "The basic ingredient of scripts we label a *vignette*" (p. 2). Finally, Schank and Abelson (1975) distinguish two kinds of scripts: situational and planning scripts. Planning scripts are said to "describe the set of choices that a person has when he sets out to accomplish a goal" (p. 154), and therefore seem identical to what they now define as a separate knowledge structure called a plan. The situational script seems to be what they now simply call "script," that is, a familiar, causally connected sequence of intentional (goal-oriented) events (Abelson talk, UC Berkeley, March 1977).

Schank and Abelson's (1975) notion of script is best characterized by their example of the restaurant script. They illustrate the existence of scripts in knowledge structures by presenting the following sort of story:

John went into the restaurant. He ordered a hamburger and a coke. He asked the waitress for the check and left.

One might ask how the story can refer to "the" waitress and "the" check "just as if these objects had been previously mentioned." The fact that they can is evidence of the existence of a script which "has implicitly introduced them by virtue of its own introduction" (p. 4).

It remains now for us to determine the notion of *frame*. As mentioned above, this term has probably the widest distribution, occurring in the work of Bateson and Frake in anthropology, Hymes and Goffman in sociology, Minsky in artificial intelligence, and Fillmore in linguistics.

Bateson introduced the notion of *frame* in 1955 to explain how individuals exchange signals that allow them to agree upon the level of abstraction at which any message is intended. Even animals can be seen to use frames to interpret each other's behavior, by signaling, for example, "This is play." Bateson (1972) insists that "frame" is a psychological concept, but to characterize it, he uses "the physical analogy of the picture frame and the more abstract . . . analogy of the mathematical set" (p. 186).

In his work on the ethnography of speaking, which seeks to analyze language as it is used by people in specific cultures, Hymes (1974) includes *frame* as one of the "means of speaking." In order to interpret utterances in accordance with the way in which they were intended, a hearer must know the "frame" s/he is operating in, that is, whether the activity being engaged in is joking, imitating, chatting, lecturing, or performing a play, to name just a few possibilities familiar to our culture. This notion of frames as culturally determined, familiar activity is consonant with the term as used by Goffman (1974) and Frake (1977).

Fillmore traces the cognitive anthropological use of "frame" to structural linguistics and credits his field with having broadened the concept from its

linguistic application to isolated sentences to a sequence of conversational exchange. Frake goes on to complain, however, of the very misconception that Bartlett cautioned against and which we have noted in the work of the artificial intelligence theorists, that is, the idea that people have in their heads fully formed "cognitive ideolects" which can be described and which add up to "culture." In other words, he is opposing a static notion of frames in favor of an interactive model. He notes that anthropologists had come to refer to "eliciting frames," as if they were there and had merely to be tapped. Frake suggests instead, and this is an approach basic to the work of John Gumperz and other ethnographers of speaking, that the key aspect of frames is what the people are *doing* when they speak. He discusses the notion of *event* which seems to correspond to what Gumperz (1977) calls an *activity* as the unit of study: an identifiable interactional happening that has meaning for the participants. Thus the anthropological/sociological view stresses *frame* as a relational concept rather than a sequence of events; it refers to the dynamic relationship between people, much like Bartlett's (1932) "organized mass" of past experience which is "actively *doing* something all the time" (p. 201, italics his). Frake (1977) ends his paper with the extended metaphor of people as mapmakers whose "culture does not provide a cognitive map, but rather a set of principles for mapmaking and navigation," resulting in "a whole chart case of rough, improvised, continually revised sketch maps" (pp. 6-7). This metaphorical chart case seems awfully like a set of overlapping, intertwining, and developing scripts.

In contrast with the anthropological/sociological characterization of frames as an interactional unit with social meaning, Minsky's (1974) is a static concept, rooted in the computer model of artificial intelligence. Acknowledging his debt to Schank and Abelson, Bartlett, Piaget, and others, Minsky propounds the notion of frame as an all-inclusive term for "a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation" (p. 212). For Minsky, this term denotes such event sequences as a birthday party (corresponding to Schank and Abelson's restaurant script), but also ordered expectations about objects and setting (for example, a certain kind of living room). Minsky distinguishes at least four levels of frames: surface syntactic frames ("mainly verb and noun structures"), surface semantic frames (seemingly corresponding to Fillmore's notion of case frame), thematic frames ("scenarios"), and narrative frames (apparently comparable to Schank and Abelson's scripts). Although Minsky's explication of the frame theory, which appeared in 1974 as a memo from the MIT Artificial Intelligence Lab, does not constitute much theoretical innovation beyond the work of Bartlett and others we have seen who followed him, it represents a particularly coherent, complete, and readable formulation of the theory, and perhaps for this reason it has had resounding impact on the field of AI as well as on many other disciplines.

Fillmore, too, has chosen the term "frame," and it is perhaps fitting to end with his treatment of this material, for his short paper (1975) brings all these ideas into focus in connection with linguistics. He begins with a

listing of theories of Prototype and Frame from a variety of disciplines. Fillmore uses nearly all the terms we have discussed somewhere in his paper (except "scripts"). His thesis is that a frame-and-scene analysis of language can elucidate hitherto fuzzy areas of linguistics. He uses "the word *frame* for any system of linguistic choices . . . that can get associated with prototypical instances of scenes" and the word *scene* for "any kind of coherent segment of human beliefs, actions, experiences or imaginings" (p. 124). Furthermore, "people associate certain *scenes* with certain linguistic *frames*" (p. 2). Fillmore then shows how this approach to meaning is useful in three areas: (1) analysis of discourse, (2) acquisition of word meaning, and (3) the boundary problem for linguistic categories.

These, then, have been the major theories making use of notions of frames, schemata, and scripts. They may all be seen, in some sense, to be derived from Bartlett. It may be useful, before proceeding to our data, to consider one more research tradition which also can be seen to derive from Bartlett, and to be related to the concept of structures of expectation, even though it does not employ the specific terms we have been investigating. This is the work of the constructive memory theorists in cognitive psychology.

Research in this tradition has demonstrated the effect of context on memory performance tasks. The first of these were Pompi and Lachman (1967), who showed the superior performance on memory tasks of subjects who had read a passage in coherent order over those who had read a scrambled version of it. Even more striking, however, is the research of Bransford and his co-workers (Bransford & Franks 1971; Bransford & Johnson 1973). They showed that subjects were unable to recall well a passage which contained only pronouns and described a series of actions. When the same passage was read, however, under the title which identified the sequence of actions as, for example, someone washing clothes, subjects were able to recall it well. In the terms we have been considering, we might say that the title identified the sequence of events as a familiar script, or that it fit the activity into a known frame.

Similar evidence lies in the research of Anderson and Ortony (1975). They presented subjects with sentences like "The woman was waiting outside the theater." After reading a list of such sentences to subjects, they tried to elicit the sentences by using one-word cues. It was found that context-associated words which did not actually appear in the sentences were better cues than context-free words which actually were in the sentence. In other words, in the sentence given, "actress" was a better cue than "woman," even though the word "woman" actually was in the target sentence while "actress" was not. This is reminiscent of the Schank and Abelson restaurant script hypothesis, which pointed to the fact that a waitress could be treated as given when no waitress had been mentioned.

What unifies all these branches of research is the realization that people approach the world not as naive, blank-slate receptacles who take in stimuli as they exist in some independent and objective way, but rather as experienced and sophisticated veterans of perception who have stored their prior

experiences as "an organized mass," and who see events and objects in the world in relation to each other and in relation to their prior experience. This prior experience or organized knowledge then takes the form of expectations about the world, and in the vast majority of cases, the world, being a systematic place, confirms these expectations, saving the individual the trouble of figuring things out anew all the time.

At the same time that expectations make it possible to perceive and interpret objects and events in the world, they shape those perceptions to the model of the world provided by them. As Bartlett put it, one forms a general impression (we might say, one labels something as part of a certain scene, frame, or script) and furnishes the details which one builds from prior knowledge (that is, from the script). Thus, structures of expectation make interpretation possible, but in the process they also reflect back on perception of the world to justify that interpretation.

All these theories have referred to frames and other structures of expectation, but they have shown no way of discovering what those structures consist of, for they have been mainly concerned with language comprehension. In this chapter, I would like to consider how expectations affect language production, and, in the process, show a way of discovering what constitutes them—that is, to show how we can know what's in a frame.

Data for the Present Study

In connection with a project directed by Wallace Chafe, a movie was shown to small groups of young women who then told another woman (who they were told had not seen the film) what they had seen in the movie. The film was a six-minute short, of our own production, which included sound but no dialogue. It showed a man picking pears from a tree, then descending and dumping them into one of three baskets on the ground. A boy comes by on a bicycle and steals a basket of pears. As he's riding away, he passes a girl on a bike, his hat flies off his head, and the bike overturns. Three boys appear and help him gather his pears. They find his hat and return it to him, and he gives them pears. The boys then pass the farmer who has just come down from the tree and discovered that his basket of pears is missing. He watches them walk by eating pears.

This film was shown and this procedure followed in ten different countries. I oversaw the administration of the experiment in Athens, Greece, and have studied the Greek narratives.¹ In describing the events and people in the movie, subjects organized and altered the actual content of the movie in many ways. The ways in which they did this are evidence of the effect of their structures of expectation about objects and events in the film. The comparison of narratives told by Greek and American subjects makes it possible to see that these structures are often culturally determined, as one would expect.

On the basis of this hypothesis, I have isolated sixteen general types of evidence which represent the imposition of the speakers' expectations on the content of the film. These are not absolute categories, and certainly this