Analysing Discourse
Textual analysis for social research

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1 Introduction

This book is written with two main types of reader in mind: students and researchers in social science and humanities who have little if any background in language analysis (e.g. in Sociology, Political Science, Education, Geography, History, Social Administration, Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Women's Studies); and students and researchers specializing in language.

People working in various areas of social science are often confronted with questions about language, and are often working with language materials – written texts, or conversation, or research interviews. However, my experience in teaching discourse analysis (for instance in the Faculty of Social Science research training programme at Lancaster University) indicates that there is widespread uncertainty about how to analyse such language material. I find that research students in Social Sciences often see the need to say more detailed things about their language data than they feel equipped to do. The prospect of following courses or reading books in Linguistics is generally daunting to them – not least because much of contemporary Linguistics is quite unsuitable for their purposes (especially the 'formal linguistics' which is concerned with abstract properties of human language, and has little to offer in the analysis of what people say or write). This book aims to provide a useable framework for analysing spoken or written language for people in social sciences and humanities with little or no background in language study, presented in a way which suggests how language analysis may enhance research into a number of issues which concern social scientists.

The book can also be seen as an introduction to *social* analysis of spoken and written language for people who already have some background in language analysis. There have been significant moves towards analysing language socially within Linguistics in recent decades – sociolinguistics and discourse analysis are now well-established parts of the field. But there are two limitations in most of this work which in this book I hope to begin to correct. The first is that themes and issues which interest social researchers have been taken up only to a rather limited extent. The second is that it is difficult to think of a relatively detailed presentation of

a framework for linguistic analysis in the existing literature which indicates how that framework might fruitfully be used to address a range of issues in social research. That is my aim in this book.

I envisage the book being used in a variety of ways. It is suitable for use as a coursebook for second or third year undergraduates, MA students and research students both in courses in research methods in social science departments, and in courses in analysis of language use in language departments. But it could also be used outside the context of a course by research students and academics in social science and humanities who are looking for a socially-oriented introduction to analysis of spoken and written language.

Given that readers are likely to vary considerably in their familiarity with the concepts and categories I draw from social research and discourse and text analysis, I have included glossaries of key terms and key people (pages 212–228), and references for them which in some cases extend the sources I have referred to in the main text of the book. Terms included in the glossaries are printed in **bold** at the point where they are first used.

Social analysis, discourse analysis, text analysis

I see this book as extending the work I have previously published in the area of discourse analysis in the direction of more detailed linguistic analysis of texts (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Fairclough 2001b, 1992, 1995a, 2000a). My approach to discourse analysis (a version of 'critical discourse analysis') is based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language. ('Dialectical' relations will be explained in chapter 2.) This means that one productive way of doing social research is through a focus on language, using some form of discourse analysis. This is not a matter of reducing social life to language, saying that everything is discourse – it isn't. Rather, it's one analytical strategy amongst many, and it often makes sense to use discourse analysis in conjunction with other forms of analysis, for instance ethnography or forms of institutional analysis.

There are many versions of discourse analysis (Van Dijk 1997). One major division is between approaches which include detailed analysis of texts (see below for the sense in which I am using this term), and approaches which don't. I have used the term 'textually oriented discourse analysis' to distinguish the former from the latter (Fairclough 1992). Discourse analysis in social sciences is often strongly influenced by the work of Foucault (Foucault 1972, Fairclough 1992). Social scientists working in this tradition generally pay little close attention to the linguistic features of texts. My own approach to discourse analysis has been to try to transcend the division between work inspired by social theory which tends not to analyse

texts, and work which focuses upon the language of texts but tends not to engage with social theoretical issues. This is not, or should not be, an 'either/or'. On the one hand, any analysis of texts which aims to be significant in social scientific terms has to connect with theoretical questions about discourse (e.g. the socially 'constructive' effects of discourse). On the other hand, no real understanding of the social effects of discourse is possible without looking closely at what happens when people talk or write.

So, text analysis is an essential part of discourse analysis, but discourse analysis is not merely the linguistic analysis of texts. I see discourse analysis as 'oscillating' between a focus on specific texts and a focus on what I call the 'order of discourse', the relatively durable social structuring of language which is itself one element of the relatively durable structuring and networking of social practices. Critical discourse analysis is concerned with continuity and change at this more abstract, more structural, level, as well as with what happens in particular texts. The link between these two concerns is made through the way in which texts are analysed in critical discourse analysis. Text analysis is seen as not only linguistic analysis; it also includes what I have called 'interdiscursive analysis', that is, seeing texts in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together. I shall explain this more fully in chapter 2 (see Fairclough 2000a).

My focus in this book, however, is on the linguistic analysis of texts. But what I want to make clear is that this is not just another book on linguistic analysis of texts, it is part of a broader project of developing critical discourse analysis as a resource for social analysis and research. The book can be used without reference to that broader project, but I would like readers to be aware of it even if they do not subscribe to it. I include a brief 'manifesto' for the broader project at the end of the Conclusion. Some readers may wish to read this broader framing of the book (pages 202–11) at this point.

Terminology: text, discourse, language

I shall use the term text in a very broad sense. Written and printed texts such as shopping lists and newspaper articles are 'texts', but so also are transcripts of (spoken) conversations and interviews, as well as television programmes and web-pages. We might say that any actual instance of language in use is a 'text' – though even that is too limited, because texts such as television programmes involve not only language but also visual images and sound effects. The term 'language' will be used in its most usual sense to mean verbal language – words, sentences, etc. We can talk of 'language' in a general way, or of particular languages such as English or Swahili. The term **discourse** (in what is widely called 'discourse analysis') signals the particular view of language in use I have referred to above – as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements. But, again, the term

can be used in a particular as well as a general, abstract way – so I shall refer to particular 'discourses' such as the 'Third Way' political discourse of New Labour (Fairclough 2000b).

Language in new capitalism

The examples I use throughout the book to illustrate the approach will be particularly focused upon contemporary social change, and especially changes in contemporary capitalism and their impact on many areas of social life. The set of changes I am referring to are variously identified as 'globalization', post- or late-'modernity', 'information society', 'knowledge economy', 'new capitalism', 'consumer culture', and so forth (Held *et al*. 1999). I shall use the term **new capitalism**, meaning the most recent of a historical series of radical re-structurings through which capitalism has maintained its fundamental continuity (Jessop 2000). My reason for focusing on it is that a great deal of contemporary social research is concerned with the nature and consequences of these changes. And, quite simply, because no contemporary social research can ignore these changes, they are having a pervasive effect on our lives. A more specific reason for focusing on new capitalism is that this is now developing into a significant area of research for critical discourse analysts. There is a web-site devoted to it (http://www.cddc.vt.edu/host/lnc/) and the journal *Discourse and Society* has recently devoted a special issue to the theme (13 (2), 2002). I should add, however, that using the term 'new capitalism' does not imply an exclusive focus on economic issues: transformations in capitalism have ramifications throughout social life, and 'new capitalism' as a research theme should be interpreted broadly as a concern with how these transformations impact on politics, education, artistic production, and many other areas of social life.

Capitalism has the capacity to overcome crises by radically transforming itself periodically, so that economic expansion can continue. Such a transformation towards new capitalism is taking place now in response to a crisis in the post-Second World War model (generally known as 'Fordism'). This transformation involves both 're-structuring' of relations between the economic, political and social domains (including the commodification and marketization of fields like education – it becomes subject to the economic logic of the market), and the 're-scaling' of relations between the different levels of social life – the global, the regional (e.g. the European Union), the national, and the local. Governments on different scales, social democratic as well as conservative, now take it as a mere fact of life (though a 'fact' produced in part by inter-governmental agreements) that all must bow to the emerging logic of a globalizing knowledge-driven economy, and have embraced or at least made adjustments to 'neo-liberalism'. Neo-liberalism is a political project for facilitating the re-structuring and re-scaling of social relations in accordance with the demands of an unrestrained global capitalism (Bourdieu 1998). It has been

imposed on the post-socialist economies as the (allegedly) best means of rapid system transformation, economic renewal, and re-integration into the global economy. It has led to radical attacks on universal social welfare and the reduction of the protections against the effects of markets that welfare states provided for people. It has also led to an increasing division between rich and poor, increasing economic insecurity and stress even for the 'new middle' classes, and an intensification of the exploitation of labour. The unrestrained emphasis on growth also poses major threats to the environment. It has also produced a new imperialism, where international financial agencies under the tutelage of the USA and its rich allies indiscriminately impose restructuring on less fortunate countries, sometimes with disastrous consequences (e.g. Russia). It is not the impetus to increasing international economic integration that is the problem, but the particular form in which this is being imposed, and the particular consequences (e.g. in terms of unequal distribution of wealth) which inevitably follow. All this has resulted in the disorientation and disarming of economic, political and social forces committed to radical alternatives, and has contributed to a closure of public debate and a weakening of democracy (Boyer and Hollingsworth 1997, Brenner 1998, Crouch and Streek 1997, Jessop 2000).

Readers will find in the Appendix a set of texts which I have used for illustrative purposes throughout the book. In the main, I have selected these texts on the basis of their relevance to a number of research issues arising in a range of disciplines from the transformations of new capitalism. In some cases, I have taken examples from previous research to try to show how the approach adopted in this book might enhance existing methods of analysis.

The approach to text analysis

My main point of reference within existing literature on text analysis is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a linguistic theory and associated analytical methods particularly associated with Michael **Halliday** (Halliday 1978, 1994). In contrast with the more influential Chomskyan tradition within Linguistics, SFL is profoundly concerned with the relationship between language and other elements and aspects of social life, and its approach to the linguistic analysis of texts is always oriented to the social character of texts (particularly valuable sources include Halliday 1994, Halliday and Hasan 1976, 1989, Hasan 1996, Martin 1992, Van Leeuwen 1993, 1995, 1996). This makes it a valuable resource for critical discourse analysis, and indeed major contributions to critical discourse analysis have developed out of SFL (Fowler *et al*. 1979, Hodge and Kress 1988, 1993, Kress 1985, Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, Lemke 1995, Thibault 1991).[1]

But the perspectives of critical discourse analysis and SFL do not precisely coincide, because of their different aims (for a critical dialogue between the two,

see Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). There is a need to develop approaches to text analysis through a **transdisciplinary** dialogue with perspectives on language and discourse within social theory and research in order to develop our capacity to analyse texts as elements in social processes. A 'transdisciplinary' approach to theory or analytical method is a matter of working with the categories and 'logic' of for instance sociological theories in developing a theory of discourse and methods of analysing texts. This is inevitably a long-term project which is only begun in a modest way in this book, for instance in the discussion of 'genre chains' (chapter 2), 'dialogicality' (chapter 3), 'equivalence and difference' (chapter 5), and the representation of time and space (chapter 8). Van Leeuwen's work on representation (referred to above) can also be seen as developing text analysis in this transdisciplinary way. Another concern I have had is to try to make the analytical categories as transparent as possible for social analysis of discourse, moving away to an extent from the often forbidding technical terminology of Linguistics.

I should also briefly mention corpus analysis, though I shall not be dealing with it at all in this book (De Beaugrande 1997, McEnery and Wilson 2001, Stubbs 1996). The sort of detailed text analysis I introduce is a form of 'qualitative' social analysis. It is rather 'labour-intensive' and can be productively applied to samples of research material rather than large bodies of text. Though the amount of material that can be analysed depends on the level of detail: textual analysis can focus on just a selected few features of texts, or many features simultaneously. But this form of qualitative analysis can usefully be supplemented by the 'quantitative analysis' offered by corpus linguistics, as De Beaugrande (1997) and Stubbs (1996) argue. The packages available (such as Wordsmith, which I make some use of in Fairclough 2000b) allow one, for instance, to identify the 'keywords' in a corpus of texts, and to investigate distinctive patterns of co-occurrence or **collocation** between keywords and other words. Such findings are of value, though their value is limited, and they need to be complemented by more intensive and detailed qualitative textual analysis.

Critical discourse analysis can in fact draw upon a wide range of approaches to analysing text. I have chosen in this book to place the main emphasis on grammatical and semantic analysis because while this form of analysis can, I believe, be very productive in social research, it is often difficult for researchers without a background in Linguistics to access it. There are other approaches to analysis which are more familiar and more accessible (conversation analysis is a good example) which I have not dealt with in this book (for an overview, see Titscher *et al.* 2000). That does not mean that they cannot be drawn upon in critical discourse analysis – indeed I have made some use of them in earlier publications (Fairclough 1992, for example).

Social research themes

Each chapter of the book will address one or more social research themes, and I shall signal these at the beginning of the chapter. The aim will be to show how the particular aspects of text analysis dealt with in the chapter might productively be drawn upon in researching these themes. The themes include: the government or **governance** of new capitalist societies, **hybridity** or the blurring of social boundaries as a feature of what some social theorists call 'postmodernity', shifts in 'space–time' (time and space) associated with '**globalization**', **hegemonic** struggles to give a '**universal**' status to particular discourses and representations, **ideologies**, citizenship and 'public space', social change and change in communication technologies, the **legitimation** of social action and social orders, the dominant **character** types of contemporary socities (including the manager and the therapist), **societal 'informalization'** and the shift away from overt hierarchies. (All the terms in bold are included in the glossary.)

From the perspective of a social scientist, the set of themes addressed and the social theorists and researchers I have drawn upon will no doubt seem rather disparate. Although I have selected themes and sources which I find generally helpful in addressing the theme of Language in New Capitalism, these should be seen as no more than illustrative with respect to my general aim: on the one hand, to consider how social research and theory might inform the approach to text analysis, and on the other hand, how text analysis might enhance social research. In a sense, the diversity of sources and themes is advantageous, because it may help to make the point that the relationship I am advocating between text analysis and social research is a general one which is not limited to particular theories, disciplines or research traditions in social science. Although I have chosen to focus on the research theme of Language in New Capitalism, this should not be taken to imply that textual analysis is *only* relevant to social research oriented to this theme. And of course a single book cannot possibly begin to show all the areas of social research which might be enhanced by text analysis.

I have drawn on the work of a number of social theorists. Again, this selection of sources should not be regarded as in any way exhaustive or exclusive – they are theorists with whom I have found it fruitful to conduct a dialogue when working within critical discourse analysis. They all, in one way or another, raise questions about language and discourse, though none of them use the resources for detailed analysis which, I am suggesting, can enhance such theoretical projects and associated research. See the glossary of the main social theorists to whom I refer.

A systematic discussion of the relationship between critical discourse analysis and social theory can be found in Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), which can be seen as complementary to this book. It includes extended discussion of the relationship of critical discourse analysis to the main social theories I refer to here, as well a

detailed account of critical discourse analysis. Readers will find in Fairclough 2000b an extended application of critical discourse analysis to a particular case, the language of the 'New Labour' government in the UK.

Social effects of texts

Texts as elements of social events (see chapter 2) have causal effects – i.e. they bring about changes. Most immediately, texts can bring about changes in our knowledge (we can learn things from them), our beliefs, our attitudes, values and so forth. They also have longer-term causal effects – one might for instance argue that prolonged experience of advertising and other commercial texts contributes to shaping people's identities as 'consumers', or their gender identities. Texts can also start wars, or contribute to changes in education, or to changes in industrial relations, and so forth. Their effects can include changes in the material world, such as changes in urban design, or the architecture and design of particular types of building. In sum, texts have causal effects upon, and contribute to changes in, people (beliefs, attitudes, etc.), actions, social relations, and the material world. It would make little sense to focus on language in new capitalism if we didn't think that texts have causal effects of this sort, and effects on social change. Though as I shall argue below, these effects are mediated by meaning-making.

We need, however, to be clear what sort of causality this is. It is not a simple mechanical causality – we cannot for instance claim that particular features of texts automatically bring about particular changes in people's knowledge or behaviour or particular social or political effects. Nor is causality the same as regularity: there may be no regular cause–effect pattern associated with a particular type of text or particular features of texts, but that does not mean that there are no causal effects.[2] Texts can have causal effects without them necessarily being regular effects, because many other factors in the context determine whether particular texts actually have such effects, and can lead to a particular text having a variety of effects, for instance on different interpreters (Fairclough *et al.* 2002).

Contemporary social science has been widely influenced by 'social construc-tivism' – the claim that the (social) world is socially constructed. Many theories of social constructivism emphasize the role of texts (language, discourse) in the construction of the social world. These theories tend to be idealist rather than realist. A realist would argue that although aspects of the social world such as social institutions are ultimately socially constructed, once constructed they are realities which affect and limit the textual (or 'discursive') construction of the social. We need to distinguish 'construction' from 'construal', which social constructivists do not: we may textually construe (represent, imagine, etc.) the social world in particular ways, but whether our representations or construals have the effect of changing its construction depends upon various contextual factors – including the

way social reality already is, who is construing it, and so forth. So we can accept a moderate version of the claim that the social world is textually constructed, but not an extreme version (Sayer 2000).

Ideologies

One of the causal effects of texts which has been of major concern for critical discourse analysis is ideological effects – the effects of texts in inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies (Eagleton 1991, Larrain 1979, Thompson 1984, Van Dijk 1998). Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation. This 'critical' view of ideology, seeing it as a modality of power, contrasts with various 'descriptive' views of ideology as positions, attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, etc. of social groups without reference to relations of power and domination between such groups. Ideological representations can be identified in texts (Thompson 1984 glosses ideology as 'meaning in the service of power'), but in saying that ideologies are representations which can be shown to contribute to social relations of power and domination, I am suggesting that textual analysis needs to be framed in this respect in social analysis which can consider bodies of texts in terms of their effects on power relations. Moreover, if ideologies are primarily representations, they can nevertheless also be 'enacted' in ways of acting socially, and 'inculcated' in the identities of social agents. Ideologies can also have a durability and stability which transcends individual texts or bodies of texts – in terms of the distinctions I explain in chapter 2, they can be associated with discourses (as representations), with genres (as enactments), and with **styles** (as inculcations).

Let us take an example: the pervasive claim that in the new 'global' economy, countries must be highly competitive to survive. One can find this claim asserted or assumed in many contemporary texts. And one can see it (and the neo-liberal discourse with which it is associated) enacted in, for example, new, more 'business-like' ways of administering organizations like universities, and inculcated in new managerial styles which are also evident in many texts. We can only arrive at a judgement about whether this claim is ideological by looking at the causal effects it and related claims have in particular areas of social life (e.g. whether people come to believe that countries must be highly competitive to survive), and asking whether they and their enactments and inculcations contribute to sustaining or changing power relations (e.g. by making employees more amenable to the demands of managers). Notice that even if we did conclude that such a claim is ideological, that would not make it necessarily or simply untrue: we might for instance argue that contemporary economic relations do indeed impose greater competitiveness, though point out that this is not the inevitable 'law of nature' it is often represented

as being, but the product of a particular economic order which could be changed. I return to the discussion of ideologies in chapter 3, with respect to ideological assumptions in particular, and in chapter 4, with respect to argumentation.

Text, meanings and interpretations

Part of what is implied in approaching texts as elements of social events is that we are not only concerned with texts as such, but also with interactive processes of meaning-making. In the case of a face-to-face conversation, the text is a transcript of what is said, and to a degree one can see meaning-making going on by looking at how participants respond to each other's conversational turns. Let us take a very simple example (from Cameron 2001):

1 *Customer*: Pint of Guiness, please.
2 *Bartender*: How old are you?
3 *Customer*: Twenty-two.
4 *Bartender*: OK, coming up.

In turns 2 and 3, the Bartender and the Customer are interactively establishing that the preconditions for ordering an alcoholic drink in a bar are met, i.e. that the Customer is (in the case of Britain) over the age of 18. The Customer in turn 3 shows his or her understanding that this legal constraint is at issue, and the Bartender's purpose of resolving the legal issue in asking the question, by collaboratively providing what may on the face of it seem irrelevant information in the context of ordering a drink. The Customer is able to recognize that the Bartender's question in 2 is relevant not only on the basis of his or her knowledge of the licensing laws, but also because of the position of the question – if a request (turn 1 in this case) is answered with a question, that tends to mean responding to the request is conditional upon the answer to the question.

This example suggests that there are three analytically separable elements in processes of meaning-making: the production of the text, the text itself, and the reception of the text. The production of the text puts the focus on producers, authors, speakers, writers; the reception of the text puts the focus on interpretation, interpreters, readers, listeners.[3] Each of these three elements has been given primacy at different points in the recent history of theories of meaning: first the intentions, identity etc. of the author, then the text itself, then more recently the interpretative work of the reader or listener. But it seems clear that meanings are made through the interplay between them: we must take account of the institutional position, interests, values, intentions, desires etc. of producers; the relations between

elements at different levels in texts; and the institutional positions, knowledge, purposes, values etc. of receivers. It is very difficult to be precise about the processes involved in meaning-making for the obvious reason that they are mainly going on in people's heads, and there are no direct ways of accessing them. When we move from spoken dialogue to, for instance, published texts, the problems are compounded because we no longer have the ongoing negotiation of meaning within dialogue, which at least gives us some evidence of how things are being intended and interpreted. And a published text can figure in many different processes of meaning-making and contribute to diverse meanings, because it is open to diverse interpretations.

It is clear from the example above that meaning-making depends upon not only what is explicit in a text but also what is implicit – what is assumed. So we might say that the Bartender's question in turn 2 makes the assumption that alcoholic drinks can only be served if customers are over a certain age. What is 'said' in a text always rests upon 'unsaid' assumptions, so part of the analysis of texts is trying to identify what is assumed (see chapter 3).

Interpretation can be seen as a complex process with various different aspects. Partly it is a matter of understanding – understanding what words or sentences or longer stretches of text mean, understanding what speakers or writers mean (the latter involving problematic attributions of intentions). But it is also partly a matter of judgement and evaluation: for instance, judging whether someone is saying something sincerely or not, or seriously or not; judging whether the claims that are explicitly or implicitly made are true; judging whether people are speaking or writing in ways which accord with the social, institutional etc. relations within which the event takes place, or perhaps in ways which mystify those relations. Furthermore, there is an explanatory element to interpretation – we often try to understand why people are speaking or writing as they do, and even identify less immediate social causes. Having said this, it is clear that some texts receive a great deal more interpretative work than others: some texts are very transparent, others more or less opaque to particular interpreters; interpretation is sometimes unproblematic and effectively automatic, but sometimes highly reflexive, involving a great deal of conscious thought about what is meant, or why something has been said or written as it has.

The focus in this book is quite particular: it is on analysing texts, with a view to their social effects (discussed below). The social effects of texts depend upon processes of meaning-making – we might want to say that the social effects of texts are mediated by meaning-making, or indeed that it is meanings that have social effects rather than texts as such. But one resource that is necessary for any account of meaning-making is the capacity to analyse texts in order to clarify their contribution to processes of meaning-making, and my primary concern in this book is with providing that resource. So I shall not give a developed overall account of

the process of meaning-making, though my approach does assume the need for such an account. However, I shall be looking at texts dynamically, in terms of how social agents make or 'texture' texts by setting up relations between their elements. This means that my approach to text-analysis will move further towards the production of texts than towards the reception and interpretation of texts. But what I have said above should hopefully make it clear that this does not imply any minimization of reception and interpretation.

Texts and authors

I shall refer to the 'author' of a text. Goffman (1981) differentiates the 'principal', the one whose position is put in the text, the 'author', the one who puts the words together and is responsible for the wording, and the 'animator', the person who makes the sounds or the marks on paper. In the simplest case, a single person simultaneously occupies all these positions, but in principle this may not be so – for instance, a spokesman may be simply the 'mouthpiece' for others in an organization (i.e. just the 'animator'), or a news report may be authored by a journalist while the principal may be some politician, for instance, whose position is being implicitly supported. There are various further possible complications: authorship can be collective without that necessarily being clear from a text (various hands for example may contribute to a news report). There are also objections to placing too much weight on authorship from a structuralist and post-structuralist point of view, but these are often linked to an excessive playing down of agency (see chapter 2 for my position on this question). When I refer to 'authors', I shall do so without getting too much into these complications, and I shall be primarily referring to whoever can be seen as having put the words together, and as taking on commitments to truth, obligations, necessity and values by virtue of choices in wording (see chapter 10).

Forms, meanings and effects

The analysis of texts is concerned with the linguistic forms of texts, and the distribution of different linguistic forms across different types of texts. One might attribute causal effects to particular linguistic forms (or more plausibly to a strong tendency to select one form in preference to other alternative forms in a significant body of texts), but again one has to be cautious and avoid any suggestion that such effects work mechanically or in a simple, regular way. They depend upon meaning and context. For example, a linguistic form which is heavily used in accounts or narratives about the 'global economy' is **nominalization** (which is discussed in chapter 8): instead of representing processes which are taking place in the world as processes (grammatically, in clauses or sentences with verbs), they are represented

as entities (grammatically, through nominalization, i.e. transforming a clause into a nominal or noun-like entity). A simple example from a text of Tony Blair's: 'change' is a nominalization in 'The modern world is swept by change'. One common consequence of nominalization is that the agents of processes, people who initiate processes or act upon other people or objects, are absent from texts. For instance, a different way in which others might formulate the process Blair is referring to is: 'Multinational corporations in collaboration with governments are changing the world in a variety of ways'. In this case, agents ('multinational corporations', 'governments') are textualized.

However, it is not only nominalizations that elide agents, so too, for example, do passive verbs (e.g. 'can be made . . . and shipped') and what we might call passive adjectives ('mobile') as in this other sentence of Blair's: 'Capital is mobile, technology can migrate quickly, and goods can be made in low cost countries and shipped to developed markets'. Another relevant linguistic feature here is the intransitive verb 'migrate' where a transitive verb might have been used (e.g. 'corporations can move technology around quickly'), and the metaphor of 'migration'. It is also significant that one finds nominalizations like 'change' and inanimate nouns like 'capital' and 'technology' as the agents of verbs, rather than human agents. In thinking about the social effects of texts here, one might say that nominalization contributes to what is, I think, a widespread elision of human agency in and responsibility for processes in accounts of the 'new global economy', but it is clear that it is not nominalization alone that contributes to this effect but a configuration of different linguistic forms (Fowler *et al.* 1979).

Moreover, whether nominalization contributes to such effects depends upon meaning and context. One would not I think attribute such effects to the nominalizations 'house-cleaning' and 're-organization' in this sentence from a horoscope: 'It could even be a good time for house-cleaning and domestic re-organization'. As to context, it is only because this sort of account of the 'new global economy' is widespread in a particular type of text that we might ask whether nominalization contributes to the elision – and, to take it further, we might say thereby to the mystification and obfuscation – of agency and responsibility. These include very influential texts produced by international agencies such as the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, national governments, and so forth. We can measure the influence of such texts by looking at their wide international and national distribution, their extensive and diverse readership, and the extent to which they are 'intertextually' incorporated in other texts (e.g. in the media). We would also need to take account of how such texts are interpreted by people who read them and how they enter processes of meaning-making.

Summing up, we can attribute causal effects to linguistic forms, but only through a careful account of meaning and context.

Critical analysis and 'objectivity'

I see analysis of texts as part of social science, and I should say something about the view of social science which informs this book – the philosophy of social science. The position I take is a realist one, based on a realist ontology: both concrete social events and abstract social structures, as well as the rather less abstract 'social practices' which I discuss in chapter 2, are part of reality. We can make a distinction between the 'potential' and the 'actual' – what is possible because of the nature (constraints and allowances) of social structures and practices, as opposed to what actually happens. Both need to be distinguished from the 'empirical', what we know about reality. (These distinctions are a reformulation of those in **Bhaskar** 1979, see also Sayer 2000.) Reality (the potential, the actual) cannot be reduced to our knowledge of reality, which is contingent, shifting, and partial. This applies also to texts: we should not assume that the reality of texts is exhausted by our knowledge about texts. One consequence is that we should assume that no analysis of a text can tell us all there is to be said about it – there is no such thing as a complete and definitive analysis of a text. That does not mean they are unknowable – social scientific knowledge of them is possible and real enough, and hopefully increasing, but still inevitably partial. And it is extendable: the 'transdisciplinary' approach I argued for earlier aims to enhance our capacity to 'see' things in texts through 'operationalizing' (putting to work) social theoretical perspectives and insights in textual analysis.

Textual analysis is also inevitably selective: in any analysis, we choose to ask certain questions about social events and texts, and not other possible questions. For example, I might have focused in this book on a number of quantitative features of texts, comparing different types of text in terms of the average number of words per text, the average number of words per sentence, the relative frequencies of different parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, prepositions, etc. I might have perfectly good reasons for such a focus – perhaps because I am interested in texts from a pedagogical point of view, in the relative difficulty of texts for young children or people learning a foreign language. The general point is that there are always particular motivations for choosing to ask certain questions about texts and not others. My actual motivation for asking the sorts of questions I shall ask in this book is the belief that texts have social, political, cognitive, moral and material consequences and effects, and that it is vital to understand these consequences and effects if we are to raise moral and political questions about contemporary societies, and about the transformations of 'new capitalism' in particular.

Some readers may be concerned about the 'objectivity' of an approach to text analysis based upon these motivations. I don't see this as a problem. There is no such thing as an 'objective' analysis of a text, if by that we mean an analysis which simply describes what is 'there' in the text without being 'biased' by the 'subjectivity' of

the analyst. As I have already indicated, our ability to know what is 'there' is inevitability limited and partial. And the questions we ask necessarily arise from particular motivations which go beyond what is 'there'. My approach belongs broadly within the tradition of 'critical social science' – social science which is motivated by the aim of providing a scientific basis for a critical questioning of social life in moral and political terms, e.g. in terms of social justice and power (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Morrow 1994). Conversely, much social research can be seen as motivated by aims of making existing forms of social life work more efficiently and effectively, without considering moral or political questions at all. Neither approach is 'objective' in a simple sense, both approaches are based in particular interests and perspectives, but that does not prevent either of them being perfectly good social science. Nor does it mean that the social import and effects of particular research are transparent: social research may have outcomes which are far from what was intended or expected.

Doing social scientific analysis of social events and texts entails shifting away from our ordinary experience of them. Human beings are reflexive about what they do in their practical social life – they have ways of talking about it, describing it, evaluating it, theorizing it. For example, we might describe what someone says as 'long-winded', or 'wordy', or say that someone is 'too fond of his (or her) own voice'. These are some of the categories we have for talking about texts. We also have categories when we do social scientific analysis of texts ('noun', 'sentence', 'genre', and so forth), but they are specialist categories which are different from the ones we use in our ordinary social interaction. These social scientific categories, unlike practical categories, allow particular texts to be seen in relation to elaborated general theories. But if we assume that our knowledge of texts is necessarily partial and incomplete as I have suggested, and if we assume that we are constantly seeking to extend and improve it, then we have to accept that our categories are always provisional and open to change.

The limits of textual analysis

Textual analysis is a resource for social research which can enhance it provided that it is used in conjunction with other methods of analysis. By itself, textual analysis is limited. I discussed above the involvement of texts in meaning-making, the causal effects of texts, and the specifically ideological effects of texts. None of these can be got at through textual analysis alone. To research meaning-making, one needs to look at interpretations of texts as well as texts themselves, and more generally at how texts practically figure in particular areas of social life, which suggests that textual analysis is best framed within ethnography. To assess the causal and ideological effects of texts, one would need to frame textual analysis within, for example, organizational analysis, and link the 'micro' analysis of texts to the 'macro'

analysis of how power relations work across networks of practices and structures. Textual analysis is a valuable supplement to social research, not a replacement for other forms of social research and analysis.

There is a superficially plausible argument that we should produce descriptions of texts first, and only then social analysis and critique. For a version of this argument from the perspective of conversational analysis, see Schegloff (1997), and the replies in Wetherell (1998) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999). This presupposes analytical categories and frameworks which are adequate for text description (and analysis of conversation) independently of particular research projects and problems. The objection to this position is that it precludes what I have referred to as a transdisciplinary process in which perspectives and categories from outside textual analysis or discourse analysis can be operationalized as ways of analysing texts which enhance insight into the textual aspect of the social practices, processes and relations which are the focus of the particular research project. An example is the discussion in chapter 8 of Example 1, Appendix (pages 229–30) in terms of the social research question of how people simultaneously inhabit different 'space–times' (e.g. 'global' and 'local' space–times) and routinely move between them. The description of how time and space are represented is an attempt to work textually with the social research question in a way which one would not arrive at by simply describing the text in terms of what grammars of English say about the representation of time and space.

Texual description and analysis should not be seen as prior to and independent of social analysis and critique – it should be seen as an open process which can be enhanced through dialogue across disciplines and theories, rather than a coding in the terms of an autonomous analytical framework or grammar. We can relate this to the distinction between 'actual' and 'empirical' which I drew above. We cannot assume that a text in its full actuality can be made transparent through applying the categories of a pre-existing analytical framework. What we are able to see of the actuality of a text depends upon the perspective from which we approach it, including the particular social issues in focus, and the social theory and discourse theory we draw upon.

The organization of the book

The book is organized into four Parts and an Introduction and a Conclusion, eleven chapters in all. Part 1 (chapters 2–3) provides a framing for the strictly 'internal' analysis of texts, locating text analysis in its relationship to discourse analysis and social analysis. This has partly been done in this introductory chapter, and will be developed in chapter 2, where I shall look at texts as elements of concrete **social events**, which are both shaped by and shape more abstract and durable **social structures** and **social practices**. Chapter 3 moves closer towards the text itself,

but focuses on how the 'outside' of a text is brought into the text, as we might put it. This is partly a matter of **intertextuality** – how texts draw upon, incorporate, **recontextualize** and dialogue with other texts. It is also partly a matter of the **assumptions** and presuppositions people make when they speak or write. What is 'said' in a text is always said against the background of what is 'unsaid' – what is made explicit is always grounded in what is left implicit. In a sense, making assumptions is one way of being intertextual – linking this text to an ill-defined penumbra of other texts, what has been said or written or at least thought elsewhere.

The next three Parts are centred respectively on genres, discourses, and styles. Part II is concerned with **genres**, and with text as action. A genre is a way of acting and interacting linguistically – for example, interview, lecture and news report are all genres. Genres structure texts in specific ways – for instance, news reports have a characteristic generic structure of: headline + lead paragraph (summarizing the story) + 'satellite' paragraphs (adding detail). These are the concerns of chapter 4. The nature of the **semantic** and grammatical relations between sentences and **clauses** depends on genre (chapter 5), as do the type of '**exchange**' (e.g. giving information, eliciting action), **speech function** (e.g. statements, offers, demands) and the **grammatical mood** (declarative, interrogative, imperative), which are dealt with in chapter 6.

Part III's in concerned with **discourses**, and with text as representation. A discourse is a particular way of representing some part of the (physical, social, psychological) world – there are alternative and often competing discourses, associated with different groups of people in different social positions (chapter 7). Discourses differ in how social events are represented, what is excluded or included, how abstractly or concretely events are represented, and how more specifically the processes and relations, social actors, time and place of events are represented (chapter 8).

Part IV is concerned with styles, and with text as identification, i.e. texts in the process of constituting the social identities of the participants in the events of which they are a part (chapter 9). One aspect of identification is what people commit themselves to in what they say or write with respect to truth and with respect to obligation – matters of '**modality**'. Another is **evaluation** and the values to which people commit themselves. These are the focuses of chapter 10.

The aim in the Conclusion is twofold. First, synthesis – to pull together the various analytical concerns which have been discussed through the book and apply them to a single example, Example 7 (Appendix, pages 239–41). Second, to frame the focus on textual analysis in this book within the wider perspective of critical discourse analysis by offering a brief 'manifesto' for the latter as a resource which can contribute to social research and to social change in the direction of greater social justice.

Notes

1 Other work which I have found useful includes: Cameron (2001), De Beaugrande (1997), De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), Gee (1999), Hoey (1983), (2001), Hunston and Thompson (2000), Lehtonen (2000), Stillar (1998), Stubbs (1996), Swales (1990), Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter (2000), Toolan (1998), Verschueren (1999).
2 The reduction of causality to regularity is only one view of causality – what is often referred to as Humean causality, the view of causality associated with the philosopher David Hume (Sayer 2000, Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer 2002).
3 Goffman (1981) has suggested that producer and receiver are both complex roles. In the case of producer, for instance, the person who actually puts the words together (author) may or may not be the same as the person whose words they are (principal).

Part I

Social analysis, discourse analysis, text analysis