



Analyzing Communicative Purpose: From Genres to Conversation


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Communicative Purpose

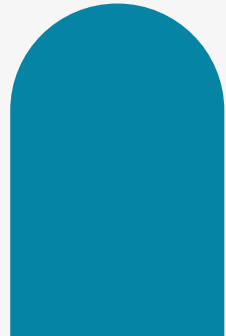


- Genres are not just text types; they are goal-oriented social actions.
- The form of a genre is shaped by its communicative purpose.
- A single genre can serve different purposes for different participants.

For example: bringing food to the class can serve different purposes:

- 1- To express genuine thanks.
 - 2- To reciprocate past shared meals.
 - 3- To be seen as "contributing" in a non-academic way.
 - 4- Targeted gift to influence an authority figure.
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Discourse communities

- A discourse community is a social group that forms around a shared set of goals and uses specific forms of communication (genres) to achieve those goals.
- People do not just use language in communities, they use specific kinds of language (genres) to actively build and maintain communities.



All genres have political or ideological dimensions because their main functions are to create and maintain communities and to serve as the means through which people in those communities learn how to be 'legitimate members.'

Critical genre analysis

- Critical Genre Analysis (CGA) asks not just "How does this genre work?" but "Who does this genre work *for*, who does it work *against*, what is the ideology behind it and what is the power of this genre? "

For example, a beauty vlogger would combine features of different genres in her makeup tutorial in order to play multiple roles of 'expert,' 'friend,' and 'salesperson.'

The ideology behind this blending can be that "buying this product is a path to self-improvement and social belonging".

The power lies in the vlogger's ability to influence purchasing decisions while appearing to be just a helpful friend.




Constructing reality



"Constructing reality" means that language does not merely describe the world, but it actively creates and shapes how we understand and experience the world.

Every text (a sign, a speech, or an ad) builds a specific version of reality that serves someone's interests.



- Texts promote ideologies by constructing particular versions of reality.

For example, a simple sign on a bus that says “For your comfort and peace of mind during your journey CCTV is fitted to this bus” is made in the passive voice for a reason which could be pushing the mind away from the ones that watch the cameras.

Ideology and indexicality

- Indexical meaning is the kind of meaning that texts create, not through the words that they contain, but through the way they 'point' to things in the physical or social world.
- A CCTV "points" at something or someone, saying: "This is what should be watched."



- Ideology is how that pointing reinforces specific worldviews, power structures, and values.
- Indexical meaning can be conveyed through deictic expressions.
- Points to: Fashion photography, glamour.
- Ideology: "Surveillance is part of the luxury experience" (not about suspicion).





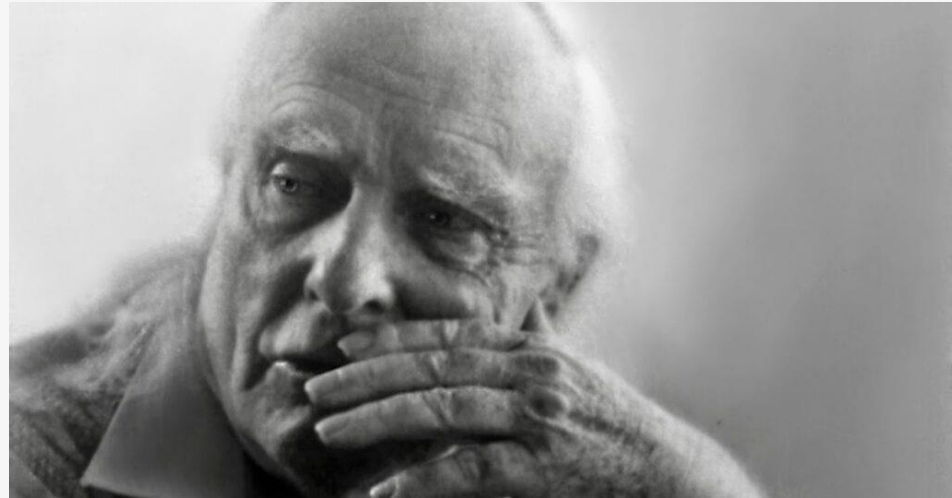
Caution! Do not expose your life to the elements. It's not worth it.

Ideology and indexicality show us that texts construct reality not just through what they say, but through what they point to, and every act of pointing values certain people, places, and ideas while devaluing or erasing others, reinforcing power structures in the process.

The Texture of talk

- Texture of talk refers to what makes conversation meaningful, organized, and coherent not just random words.
- The texture basically comes from two things: the ways different parts of a text are related to one another, and the various expectations that people have about texts.

➤ Herbert Paul Grice proposed four maxims that sum up the expectations people have in a conversation: the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance, the maxim of quantity, and the maxim of manner.

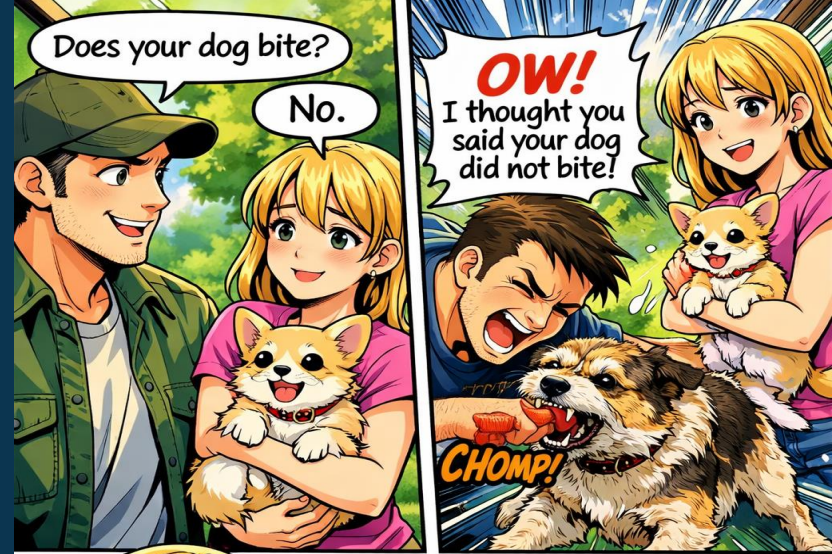


- The point that Grice was making was **not** that people always follow or even that they **should** follow these maxims, but that when they do not follow them, they usually –but not always– do so for a reason.



- **Maxim Violated:** Quality (he does not actually think it is good, but he does not want to say "It is awful").
- **Implicature Created:** "I do not like it, but I care about you too much to say so and hurt your feelings."

Another example of not following the maxim of quantity but this time there is no reason and no implicature:



How We Do Things With Words

- This concept, developed by philosopher John Austin, revolutionizes how we see language.
- It says: When we speak, we are not just describing the world, we are performing actions in it. Words are tools for doing things.

According to Austin, all speech acts have three kinds of force: **locutionary force**, the force of what the words actually mean, **illocutionary force**, the force of the action the words are intended to perform, and **perlocutionary force**, the force of the actual effect of the words on listeners.



I now pronounce you husband and wife.



Thank you

