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The Language of Evaluation

Appraisal in English

J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White

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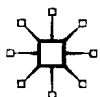
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Extract from *On the Case with Lord Peter Wimsey* from, *Three complete novels: Strong Poison, Have his Carcase, Unnatural Death*, Dorothy L. Sayers, New York: Wings Books, 1991.

Preface

The impetus for this book grew out of work on narrative genres, principally undertaken by Guenter Plum and Joan Rothery at the University of Sydney through the 1980s. Their point was that interpersonal meaning was critical both to the point of these genres (as emphasised by Labov) and also to how we classified them. This encouraged us to extend the model of interpersonal meaning that we had available at the time (based largely on work by Cate Poynton on language and gender), especially in the direction of one that could handle affect alongside modality and mood.

The appraisal framework we're presenting here was developed in response to this need as part of the Disadvantaged Schools Program's Write it Right literacy project, which looked intensively at writing in the workplace and secondary school (from about 1990 to 1995). Jim was academic adviser to this project, in which Joan Rothery focussed on secondary school English and Creative Arts (working closely with Mary Macken-Horarik and Maree Stenglin). Peter joined the team, and drew on his background as a journalist to focus on media discourse (working closely with Rick Iedema and Susan Feez). Appraisal theory developed as we moved from one register to another, and shuttled among theory, description and applications to school-based literacy initiatives. Caroline Coffin focused on secondary school history in this project, and adapted appraisal analysis to this subject area. The main innovation in this period involved moving beyond affect to consider lexical resources for judging behaviour and appreciating the value of things, and the recognition of syndromes of appraisal associated with different voices in the media and discourses of history.

During the 1990s Jim was also supervising influential PhD work by Gillian Fuller, Mary Macken-Horarik and Henrike Körner. Fuller's heteroglossic perspective on evaluation in popular science, drawing on Bakhtin, was a major influence on the development of engagement as a resource for managing the play of voices in discourse. Körner specialised in legal discourse, and her work on graduation, especially the distinction between force and focus, was also foundational. Macken-Horarik's study of appraisal in secondary school narrative drew attention to the need for a more dynamic perspective on evaluation as it unfolded prosodically in discourse. More recently Sue Hood's application of appraisal theory to

academic discourse led to further developments with respect to graduation, some of which we have incorporated here.

We are of course greatly indebted to these colleagues, and to all the functional linguists and educational linguists of the so called 'Sydney School' who gave value to our work. In 1998 Peter established his appraisal website and e-mail list, which has also proved a supportive context for the development of these ideas (www.grammatics.com/appraisal/). Our collective thanks to all of those, too numerous to mention, who have contributed to the ongoing discussions there. Thanks also to our SFL colleagues around the world who have engaged so helpfully with our ideas at meetings and over the net.

Of course none of this work would have been possible without the systemic functional linguistic theory that guides our endeavour. So a note of thanks as well to Michael Halliday, for his close attention to interpersonal meaning in language and for his design of the roomy theory that inspired this research.

Adelaide and Sydney, May 2005

3

Engagement and Graduation: Alignment, Solidarity and the Construed Reader

3.1 Introduction: a dialogic perspective

This chapter is concerned with the linguistic resources by which speakers/writers adopt a stance towards the value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address. The chapter provides a framework for characterising the different possibilities for this stance-taking which are made available by the language, for investigating the rhetorical effects associated with these various positionings, and for exploring what is at stake when one stance is chosen over another. Our approach locates us in a tradition in which all utterances are seen as in some way stanced or attitudinal. Thus we share with Stubbs the view that 'whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it' (Stubbs 1996: 197). More specifically, our approach is informed by Bakhtin's/Voloshinov's now widely influential notions of dialogism and heteroglossia under which all verbal communication, whether written or spoken, is 'dialogic' in that to speak or write is always to reveal the influence of, refer to, or to take up in some way, what has been said/written before, and simultaneously to anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners. As Voloshinov states,

The actual reality of language-speech is not the abstract system of linguistic forms, not the isolated monologic utterance, and not the psychological act of its implementation, but the social event of verbal interaction implemented in an utterance or utterances.

Thus, verbal interaction is the basic reality of language.

Dialogue ... can also be understood in a broader sense, meaning not only direct, face-to-face, vocalised verbal communication between

persons, but also verbal communication of any type whatsoever. A book, i.e. a verbal performance in print, is also an element of verbal communication. ... [it] inevitably orients itself with respect to previous performances in the same sphere Thus the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of a large scale: it responds to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on. [Voloshinov 1995: 139]

Similarly, Bakhtin observes that all utterances exist

... against a backdrop of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgements ... pregnant with responses and objections. [Bakhtin 1981: 281].

This dialogistic perspective leads us to attend to the nature of the relationship which the speaker/writer is presented as entering into with 'prior utterances in the same sphere' – with those other speakers who have previously taken a stand with respect to the issue under consideration, especially when, in so speaking, they have established some socially significant community of shared belief or value. Thus we are interested in the degree to which speakers/writers acknowledge these prior speakers and in the ways in which they engage with them. We are interested in whether they present themselves as standing with, as standing against, as undecided, or as neutral with respect to these other speakers and their value positions. At the same time, the dialogistic perspective leads us to attend to the anticipatory aspect of the text – to the signals speakers/writers provide as to how they expect those they address to respond to the current proposition and the value position it advances. Thus we are interested in whether the value position is presented as one which can be taken for granted for this particular audience, as one which is in some way novel, problematic or contentious, or as one which is likely to be questioned, resisted or rejected.

The framework we outline, then, is directed towards providing a systematic account of how such positionings are achieved linguistically. It provides the means to characterise a speaker/writer's interpersonal style and their rhetorical strategies according to what sort of heteroglossic backdrop of other voices and alternative viewpoints they construct for their text and according to the way in which they engage with that backdrop.

The framework's orientation is towards meanings in context and towards rhetorical effects, rather than towards grammatical forms. As a consequence, it brings together a lexically and grammatically diverse selection of locutions on the basis that they all operate to locate the writer/speaker with respect to the value positions being referenced in the text and with respect to, in Bakhtin's terms, the backdrop of alternative opinions, points of view and value judgements against which all texts operate. As already indicated in the opening chapter, this selection includes wordings which have traditionally been treated under such headings as modality, polarity, evidentiality, intensification, attribution, concession, and consequentiality.¹ The framework groups together under the heading of 'engagement' all those locutions which provide the means for the authorial voice to position itself with respect to, and hence to 'engage' with, the other voices and alternative positions construed as being in play in the current communicative context. In addition, it includes meanings which in the literature have been given such labels as 'hedges', 'downtoners', 'boosters' and 'intensifiers'² – for example, *somewhat, slightly, rather, very, entirely* and *sort of/kind of, true/pure* (as in *I'm kind of upset by what you said.* and *He's a true friend.*) These locutions are grouped together under the heading of 'graduation' on the basis that they are mechanisms by which speakers/writers 'graduate' either the force of the utterance or the focus of the categorisation by which semantic values are identified. This chapter explores how locutions in this second set (**graduations**) also play a dialogistic role in that they enable speakers/writers to present themselves as more strongly aligned or less strongly aligned with the value position being advanced by the text and thereby to locate themselves with respect to the communities of shared value and belief associated with those positions. We also demonstrate the ways in which categorical or bare assertions (eg *the banks are being greedy*) are just as intersubjectively loaded and hence 'stanced' as utterances including more overt markers of point of view or attitude. Our account, then, of these various sets of locutions amounts to a reanalysis, from this Bakhtinian, dialogistic perspective, of meanings and structures which have largely only been considered from the perspective of theories of language which view the individual, psychological, and self-expressive function of language as primary and as fundamental, and which, in many cases, see meaning as ultimately a matter of 'truth conditions' and not of social relationships.

In operating with such lexically and grammatically diverse groupings, we follow others who have had a similar semantic or rhetorical orientation. These include, for example, Fuller 1998, Martin 1997 whose category

of 'engagement' (as a cover-all term for resources of intersubjective positioning) we have taken over and develop, and Stubbs who proposes that the category of 'modality' should be extended well beyond the modal verbs to include all wordings and formulations by which speakers/writers modulate their attachment to/detachment from the proposition (Stubbs 1996: Chapter 8).

3.2 Value position, alignment and the putative reader

The framework which we provide of these resources of intersubjective positioning is directed towards modelling the key dialogistic effects associated with these meanings. First, we are concerned with the role they play in meaning making processes by which the speaker/writer negotiates relationships of alignment/disalignment *vis-à-vis* the various value positions referenced by the text and hence *vis-à-vis* the socially-constituted communities of shared attitude and belief associated with those positions. By 'alignment/disalignment', we refer to agreement/disagreement with respect to both attitudinal assessments and to beliefs or assumptions about the nature of the world, its past history, and the way it ought to be. We note, in this regard, that when speakers/writers announce their own attitudinal positions they not only self-expressively 'speak their own mind', but simultaneously invite others to endorse and to share with them the feelings, tastes or normative assessments they are announcing. Thus declarations of attitude are dialogically directed towards aligning the addressee into a community of shared value and belief.

Secondly, we are concerned with this negotiation of alignment/disalignment as it applies to the relationship which the text construes as holding between speaker/writer and the text's putative addressee. In exploring this aspect of intersubjective meaning we, of necessity, also attend to the ways in which, by the use of various indicators, singly-constructed, mass communicative texts of the type we are considering³ construct for themselves an 'envisaged', 'imagined' or 'ideal' reader, since it is with this putative addressee that the speaker/writer is presented as more or less aligned/disaligned.⁴ Thus one of our central concerns is with the ways in which these resources act to 'write the reader into the text' by presenting the speaker/writer as, for example, taking it for granted that the addressee shares with them a particular viewpoint, or as anticipating that a given proposition will be problematic (or unproblematic) for the putative reader, or as assuming that the reader may need to be won over to a particular viewpoint, and so on.

In making the issue of alignment/disalignment central to our modeling of these resources we seek to extend our understanding of how the relationship typically termed 'solidarity' is construed in texts of this type. We should stress, however, that we are not proposing that solidarity is simply a matter of degree of ideational and/or attitudinal agreement. As many have observed before us, it is always available to the speaker/writer to bid to maintain solidarity with those with whom they disagree by indicating that they recognise this diversity of viewpoints as valid and that they are prepared to engage with those who hold to a different position. Thus solidarity can turn, not on questions of agreement/disagreement, but on tolerance for alternative viewpoints, and the communality into which the writer/speaker aligns the reader can be one in which diversity of viewpoint is recognised as natural and legitimate.

By way of a brief introductory illustration of what is at stake here interpersonally, we consider the following short extract taken from a radio interview with the then Australian Prime Minister, John Howard. The host of a current affairs program is asking Mr Howard how he views the behaviour of Australian banks in raising their fees and charges soon after they had reported earning record profits.

[3.1] – *interviewer question*

There is an argument, though, is there, the banks have been a bit greedy. I mean, their profits are high and good on them, they're entitled to have high profits, but at the same time the fees are bordering on the unreasonable now.

Here there are two value positions being advanced – (1) a view which is positively disposed towards the fact that banks make high profits and (2) a view which is negatively disposed to one particular instance of high profit taking, that resulting from this recent increase in fees. In advancing such viewpoints, the interviewer, of course, connects with well-established, ideologically-indexed communities of shared value and belief about what is and isn't appropriate and moral behaviour for banks. In his manner of formulating the proposition that, in general terms, it is right and proper for banks to make high profits, the speaker anticipates no objections to, or questioning of, such a viewpoint and therefore presents both himself and the envisaged listener as unproblematically aligned into this particular value position. In contrast, there are overt signals of anticipation that the negative view of this recent profit-making exercise is likely to be problematic and may well face

objections from the envisaged listener. These take the form of devices by which the proposition that the banks are acting immorally is construed as currently subject to contestation and debate (*there is an argument though, is there ...*) and one which the speaker hesitates to align with categorically (ie ... *have been a bit greedy* rather than simply *have been greedy*, and ... *are bordering on the unreasonable* rather than simply *are unreasonable*). Thus, in this case, there is no clear-cut aligning of either the speaker or the addressee into an anti-bank community of shared value, even while the anti-bank viewpoint is being advanced. Simultaneously the speaker presents himself as potentially in solidarity with both those who hold this negative view of the banks and those who would reject it, on the basis that he recognises the validity of both viewpoints.

3.3 The resources of intersubjective stance: an overview of engagement

We turn now to considering the resources of dialogistic positioning in more detail. In this section we consider those meanings which we assign to the category of **engagement**, turning to the resources of **graduation** in section 3.16 and following sections later in the chapter. In sections devoted to individual sub-types of **engagement** and **graduation** we first identify the relevant locutions, explore their dialogistic functionality and then, where appropriate, consider potential effects with respect to putative audience construal, alignment and solidarity, as discussed above.

As indicated, we include within the category of **engagement** those meanings which in various ways construe for the text a heteroglossic backdrop of prior utterances, alternative viewpoints and anticipated responses. We begin by outlining the taxonomy within which we locate the various **engagement** meanings. The taxonomy is directed towards identifying the particular dialogistic positioning associated with given meanings and towards describing what is at stake when one meaning rather than another is employed.

Disclaimer: the textual voice positions itself as at odds with, or rejecting, some contrary position:

- (deny) negation (*You don't need to give up potatoes to lose weight.*)
- (counter) concession/counter expectation (*Although he ate potatoes most days he still lost weight.*)

Proclaim: by representing the proposition as highly warrantable (compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally agreed, reliable, etc.), the textual voice sets itself against, suppresses or rules out alternative positions:

- (concur) *naturally ..., of course ..., obviously ..., admittedly ...* etc.; some types of 'rhetorical' or 'leading' question
- (pronounce) *I contend ..., the truth of the matter is ..., there can be no doubt that ...* etc.
- (endorse) *X has demonstrated that ...; As X has shown ...* etc.

Entertain: by explicitly presenting the proposition as grounded in its own contingent, individual subjectivity, the authorial voice represents the proposition as but one of a range of possible positions – it thereby **entertains** or invokes these dialogic alternatives:

- *it seems, the evidence suggests, apparently, I hear*
- *perhaps, probably, maybe, it's possible, in my view, I suspect that, I believe that, probably, it's almost certain that ..., may/will/must*; some types of 'rhetorical' or 'expository' question

Attribute: by representing proposition as grounded in the subjectivity of an external voice, the textual voice represents the proposition as but one of a range of possible positions – it thereby entertains or invokes these dialogic alternatives:

- (acknowledge) *X said..., X believes ..., according to X, in X's view*
- (distance) *X claims that, it's rumoured that*

The taxonomy of options under **engagement** is represented via the system network provided at the end of this section (see Figure 3.4 on p. 134).

3.4 Engagement and the dialogistic status of bare assertions

Before we attend to the specifics of this taxonomy it is necessary to outline some broader parameters by which intersubjective positioning may vary. One of these issues was mentioned briefly in the previous section – the question of the status of the 'bare' or categorical assertion within a framework concerned with the resources of dialogistic positioning.

The barely asserted proposition has often, of course, been characterised as intersubjectively neutral, objective or even ‘factual’. Lyons, for example, sets up a contrast between the supposed ‘objectivity’ of the bare assertion, which he terms ‘factive’, and the ‘subjectivity’ of the modalised utterance, which he terms ‘non-factive’ (Lyons 1977: 794). But such a characterisation does not take into the account the dialogistic functionality of such formulations, attending only to the issue of truth conditions. Once we hold the view that all verbal communication occurs against a heteroglossic backdrop of other voices and alternative viewpoints a rather different picture emerges.

The various overtly dialogistic resources we have just outlined all recognise, and engage with, that dialogistic background in some way. Each construes a particular arrangement of other voices and/or alternative viewpoints. Thus, as discussed in the earlier section, the formulation *There is an argument though, is there, the banks have been a bit greedy* construes a heteroglossic environment populated by different, competing views of whether the banks’ behaviour is appropriate or not. The view that they have been ‘greedy’ is represented as but one view among a range of possible views. Following Bakhtin, we give the label ‘heteroglossic’ to all locutions which function in this way to recognise that the text’s communicative backdrop is a diverse one.

Bare assertions obviously contrast with these heteroglossic options in not overtly referencing other voices or recognising alternative positions. As a consequence, the communicative context is construed as single voiced or, in Bakhtin’s terms, ‘monoglossic’ and ‘undialogised’, at least for the brief textual moment taken up by the utterance. By this, the speaker/writer presents the current proposition as one which has no dialogistic alternatives which need to be recognised, or engaged with, in the current communicative context – as dialogistically inert and hence capable of being declared categorically. Such a monoglossic style is demonstrated by the following extract,

Two years on, the British government has betrayed the most fundamental responsibility that any government assumes – the duty to protect the rule of law.

It is a collusion in an international experiment in inhumanity, which is being repeated and expanded around the world.

In broad terms, then, we can categorise utterances accordingly to this two-way distinction, classifying them as ‘monoglossic’ when they make no reference to other voices and viewpoints and as ‘heteroglossic’ when

Table 3.1 The monoglossic and the heteroglossic

Monoglossic (no recognition of dialogistic alternatives)	Heteroglossic (recognition of dialogistic alternatives)
The banks have been greedy.	<u>There is the argument though that</u> the banks have been greedy.
	<u>In my view</u> the banks have been greedy.
	<u>Callers to talkback radio see</u> the banks as being greedy.
	<u>The chairman of the consumers association has stated</u> that the banks are being greedy.
	<u>There can be no denying</u> the banks have been greedy.
	<u>Everyone knows</u> the banks are greedy.
	The banks haven't been greedy.
	etc.

they do invoke or allow for dialogistic alternatives. See, for example, Table 3.1.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the precise effects as to dialogistic positioning associated with the use of bare assertions (monoglossing) are complex. There is, in fact, a set of potential effects where the precise nature of positioning will be determined by a range of factors. These include the communicative objectives being pursued by the text as a whole (for example, whether it argues, explains, narrates, recounts, records, etc.), the proposition's role with respect to these communicative objectives, and the nature of the proposition itself (for example, the degree to which it foregrounds evaluative versus experiential/informational meanings).

One key distinction within monoglossic assertions turns on whether the disposition of the text is such that the proposition is presented as taken-for-granted or whether, alternatively, it is presented as currently at issue or up for discussion. There are various textual arrangements by which taken-for-grantedness can be construed. One is via constructions which fall within the category often termed 'presupposition' (see, for example, Kempson 1975). This taken-for-grantedness is exemplified in the following extract.

[3.2] After nine years of the government's **betrayal** of the promised progressive agenda, Canadians have a gut feeling that their country is slipping away

from them. [Canadian Hansard, http://www.parl.gc.ca/37/2/parlbus/chambus/house/debates/002_2002-10-01/han002_1215-E.htm]

Here the proposition that the government has betrayed its progressive agenda is construed as something which is no longer at issue, which is not up for discussion and which accordingly can be treated as a 'given'. Taken-for-grantedness thus has the strongly ideological effect of constructing for the text a putative addressee who shares this value position with the writer/speaker and for whom the proposition is, likewise, not at issue.

Alternatively, the disposition of the text may be such that the categorical, monoglossically asserted proposition is presented as very much in the spotlight – as very much a focal point for discussion and argumentation. Such a disposition is demonstrated in the following extract taken from an editorial in *The Sun* newspaper concerned with the case of Maxine Carr, the partner of Ian Huntley who notoriously murdered two British schoolgirls in 2003. The editorial was written after it was announced that, having served a prison term for obstructing police inquiries, Maxine Carr was to be given a new identity and her anonymity was to be protected by law. This followed a campaign of hatred towards the woman by the tabloid press and after she had received numerous death threats while in jail.

[3.3] THE cloak of secrecy thrown around Maxine Carr sets a dangerous legal precedent.

Now every supposedly 'notorious' criminal will demand a new life shielded from public scrutiny once they leave jail.

Why does Carr gets this unique protection, which is not justified by any facts laid before the court?

She is just a common criminal who lied to give her murdering boyfriend an alibi.

What if she gets a job at a school?

What if she chooses to live with another Svengali-like criminal?

But the media cannot tell you anything about Carr from now on.

[*The Sun*, leading article, 15/5/04]

Here, even while the proposition that this legal decision 'sets a dangerous legal precedent' is monoglossically declared, it is not taken-for-granted. The fact that the writer then goes on to supply a series of arguments in

support of the value position construes it as very much at issue and the focus of a debate. As a consequence, the texts construes a reader who does not necessarily share the writer's views on Maxine Carr's right to anonymity – who is perhaps undecided and looking for further guidance, or who, while already leaning in the writer's direction, is still interested in further argumentation. The text might even be read as anticipating that the reader may hold to a diametrically opposed position, and hence will need to be won over, although this reading is less plausible given the lack of indicators elsewhere in the text that the writer anticipates objections or resistance by the reader to the arguments being advanced.

3.5 Heteroglossia: dialogic contraction and expansion

We turn now to overtly dialogistic locutions and to the different orientations to heteroglossic diversity which they indicate. Before we set out a more detailed account of individual options, we observe that these heteroglossic resources can be divided into two broad categories according to whether they are 'dialogically expansive' or 'dialogically contractive' in their intersubjective functionality. The distinction turns on the degree to which an utterance, by dint of one or more of these locutions, actively makes allowances for dialogically alternative positions and voices (**dialogic expansion**), or alternatively, acts to challenge, fend off or restrict the scope of such (**dialogic contraction**).

Since this is a distinction not elsewhere identified in the literature we begin by briefly demonstrating it. Consider the following two contrastive text extracts by way of exemplification.

[3.4] (*dialogic contraction*)

Follain punctures the romantic myth that the mafia started as Robin Hood-style groups of men protecting the poor. He **shows** that the mafia began in the 19th century as armed bands protecting the interests of the absentee landlords who owned most of Sicily. He also **demonstrates** how the mafia has forged links with Italy's ruling Christian Democrat party since the war. [Cobuild Bank of English]

[3.5] (*dialogic expansion*)

Tickner said regardless of the result, the royal commission was a waste of money and he would proceed with a separate inquiry into the issue headed by Justice Jane Matthews. His attack came as the Aboriginal women involved in the case demanded a female minister examine the religious beliefs they **claim**

are inherent in their fight against a bridge to the island near Goolwa in South Australia. [Cobuild Bank of English]

Both extracts are obviously dialogistic in that they explicitly reference the utterances and viewpoints of external voices. This follows from the fact that they employ the grammar of reported speech. But there is more at stake here than the simple multiplying of voices. The first extract [3.4], exemplifies a formulation in which a special type of reporting verb has been used (*show, demonstrate*) – one which adopts a particular stance towards the attributed proposition, holding it to be true. (Reporting verbs of this type have been widely discussed in the literature in the context of notions of ‘factivity’ – see for example, Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1970 – and in the literature on attribution and direct and indirect speech. See, for example, Hunston 2000 or Caldas-Coulthard 1994). By such ‘endorsing’ formulations, the authorial voice presents the proposition as ‘true’ or ‘valid’ and thereby aligns itself with the external voice which has been introduced as the source of that proposition. By indicating in this way a heightened investment by the author and by co-opting some authoritative second party to the current rhetorical cause, such formulations set themselves against, or at least fend off, actual or potential contrary positions. Thus in the above instance, *show* and *demonstrate* are employed as the textual voice sets itself against the discredited alternative view of the Mafia as *Robin Hood types*. Such wordings, then, can be construed as **dialogically contractive** – they close down the space for dialogic alternatives.

The second text [3.5], has the opposite effect. Here the textual voice distances itself from the proposition framed by *claim*, representing it as, if not doubtful, then as still open to question. The effect is to invite or at least entertain dialogic alternatives and thereby to lower the interpersonal cost for any who would advance such an alternative. Accordingly, such **distancing** formulations can be seen as **dialogically expansive**, as opening up the dialogic space for alternative positions.

It must be stressed that it is not proposed that the verb *to claim* necessarily has this function in all cases. The rhetorical potential of such a word, for example, may vary systematically under the influence of different co-textual conditions, and across registers, genres and discourse domains. Our concern is, in fact, not specifically with *to claim* as a lexeme but with the dialogistic positioning exemplified in the above text extract – the dialogistic position which we have labelled **distancing**.

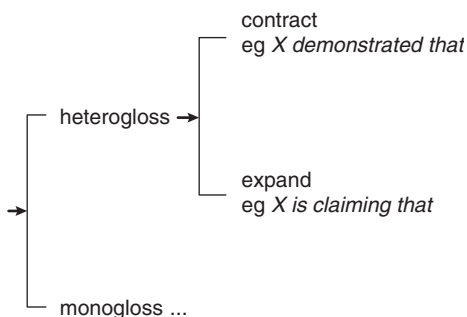


Figure 3.1 Engagement: contract and expand

Whether or not all uses of *claim* are **distancing** in this way is an open question. The same point applies in all the exemplifications of dialogistic resources which follow.

In this distinction, then, between modes of **attribution** which **endorse** the proposition in this way and those which **distance** the authorial voice from the proposition, we see this fundamental contrast between dialogic **contraction** and **expansion**.

The **engagement** system as outlined to this point is set out in Figure 3.1.

3.6 Entertain: the dialogistic expansiveness of modality and evidentiality

We turn now to considering individual options within the **engagement** system in more detail. We will begin by exploring formulations which, are in our terms, **dialogically expansive**.

We begin with what we term 'entertain' – those wordings by which the authorial voice indicates that its position is but one of a number of possible positions and thereby, to greater or lesser degrees, makes dialogic space for those possibilities. The authorial voice **entertains** those dialogic alternatives. This is a semantic domain which has traditionally be covered in the literature under the headings of 'epistemic modality' (eg Palmer 1986 or Coates 1983) and 'evidentiality' (eg Chafe & Nichols 1986). Within the systemics tradition it is dealt with under the heading of 'modals of probability', 'reality phase' and certain types of 'interpersonal metaphor' (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.2 and Halliday 1994). It encompasses meanings by which speaker/writer makes assessments of

likelihood via modal auxiliaries (*may, might, could, must*, etc.) via modal adjuncts (*perhaps, probably, definitely*, etc.), via modal attributes (*it's possible that ..., it's likely that ...* etc.), via circumstances of the *in my view* type, and via certain mental verb/attribute projections (*I suspect that ..., I think, I believe, I'm convinced that, I doubt*, etc.). In including this final subset of mental verb projections we follow Halliday who has argued convincingly that such structures are 'modal' rather than experiential or informational in their communicative functionality.⁵ This view is shared by Palmer who, for example, holds that formulations such as *I think* act to indicate 'epistemic judgement' (Palmer 1986: 168). This sub-category of **entertain** also includes evidence/appearance-based postulations (*it seems, it appears, apparently, the research suggests ...*) and certain types of 'rhetorical' or 'expository' questions (those which don't assume a specific response but are employed to raise the possibility that some proposition holds).⁶

When viewed dialogically (rather than from the perspective of a truth-functional semantics, as is often the case), such locutions are seen actively to construe a heteroglossic backdrop for the text by overtly grounding the proposition in the contingent, individual subjectivity of the speaker/writer and thereby recognising that the proposition is but one among a number of propositions available in the current communicative context. Consider by way of illustration, the use of the modal adjunct *probably* in the following extract:

[3.6] It was not a great speech. It reads like a sixth-form essay answering the question: 'Imagine you ruled the world. What would you do?' It was not the answer of a statesman, not of a realist. In fact it was **probably** the most immature, irresponsible, disgraceful and misleading address ever given by a British Prime Minister. It was all bluster, all bluff. [*Sunday Express*, 7/10/01]

More traditional accounts of modality might have interpreted such a locution as indicating 'lack of commitment to the truth value' of the proposition (for example, Palmer 1986, Lyons 1977 or Coates 1983). But the dialogic perspective shifts our focus so that such a concern with 'epistemic status' and 'reliability of knowledge' is seen to be not always and not necessarily the primary, determining communicative motive. In this extract, for example, 'informational reliability' is not at issue. The writer is interested in advancing an entirely subjective, entirely opinion-based negative assessment of the Prime Minister's address – namely that, not only was his speech *immature, disgraceful*, and so on, but that it was more so than other similarly deplorable political addresses. He employs

probably, and hence stops short of categoricity, in order to mark the proposition as contentious and to signal recognition that there may well be some who will not precisely share the writer's views on this matter. Tellingly, the utterance is organised in such a way that the alternative positions which are being allowed for, or **entertained**, are not those which would reject the overall negativity of the writer's viewpoint, but rather those which might quibble about whether this was, in fact, the worst speech ever given by this prime minister or by other prime ministers. Thus the speaker makes space in the text's heteroglossic backdrop for those who share his negative view of the speech but may hold that this prime minister has made even worse ones, or that some other prime minister has given an even worse address. The authorial voice presents itself as invested in this proposition while at the same time acknowledging that the value position being advanced is contingent and hence but one of a number of potential dialogistic alternatives. In this, then, we see that the primary functionality of the modal is dialogistic. It acts to acknowledge a heteroglossic backdrop for the proposition by presenting it as potentially at odds with some dialogistic alternative.

Interestingly, this sense that the writer is highly invested in the proposition would have been substantially maintained even had low intensity modalising options been employed. Thus,

In fact this was **possibly** the most immature, irresponsible, disgraceful and misleading address ever given by a British Prime Minister.

In fact it **may** have been the most immature, irresponsible, disgraceful and misleading address ever given by a British Prime Minister.

This points to the role of the co-text in conditioning the meanings which are conveyed by such locutions. Here the assertiveness of the *in fact*, the use of the superlative *most* and the vigour of the negative evaluation all act to indicate a strong investment in the proposition by the writer which is not greatly moderated by the use of low-intensity modal forms such as *possibly* and *may*. (For further discussion of the variability of the meanings of such modals under co-textual conditioning, see Hunston in press.)

The fundamentally dialogistic functionality of such 'modalising' locutions is perhaps most transparently apparent in cases where a mental-verb projection is employed (what Halliday terms the explicitly

subjective option for assessments of probability – Halliday 1994). For example,

[3.7] The sad aspect of all this is that by giving support to this invasion Blair will be destroying the UN and I **believe** will have betrayed the British people.

Here the maximally explicit grounding of the value position in the writer's own subjectivity acts to construe a heteroglossic backdrop by which speakers/writers can be strongly committed to a viewpoint while, nonetheless, being prepared to signal a recognition that other's may not share this value position.

In some contexts, of course, such formulations can convey a sense of uncertainty or lack of commitment to truth value on the part of the speaker/writer. We observe such a context in the following extracts:

[3.8] Many things (as the notes to this extremely well prepared catalogue show quite clearly) had an aristocratic provenance which showed that Gibbs has an acute sense of tradition and fine workmanship. The organ screen in the stables was **possibly** designed by Thomas Chippendale and came from the Earl of Harewood's sale at Harewood House, Yorkshire in 1988. But Chippendale is only half the story. A pair of Moroccan painted doors – **probably** 18th century – were evocative things in their own right and indicate the eclectic nature of this collection. [*Birmingham Post* 30/09/2000: 50]

[3.9] In modern times, humans have caused extinctions of individual species by destroying their environment or by overhunting. But before humankind came on the scene, mass extinctions **may** have been caused by major changes in sea level or disruptions in the food chain. [Bank of English]

In each of these cases it is available to the reader to interpret the modalising locutions as a sign by the writer that their knowledge of the matters under consideration is to some degree limited and therefore not sufficient to allow for a categorical formulation of the proposition (eg *The organ screen was designed by Thomas Chippendale / mass extinctions were caused by major changes in sea level*). This potential 'epistemic' effect is not at odds with the fundamentally dialogistic role of such locutions. In all of these instances the proposition is grounded in an explicit subjectivity and is thereby construed as but one position among a range of alternative positions. Dialogistic alternatives to the proposition are thereby 'entertained'. However, the 'epistemic' effect is a contingent one, dependent upon the presence of particular co-textual and contextual factors by which it becomes available for the reader/listener to interpret

such locutions as signs of a lack of certain knowledge on the part of the speaker/writer.

This dialogistic functionality of modals and related meanings has previously been noted by those analysts who have identified what is often termed the 'pragmatic' aspect of these locutions. Myers, for example, has observed that one purpose of such locutions, at least as they operate in academic discourse, is not to mark knowledge claims as uncertain, but rather to mark the claim as 'unacknowledged by the discourse community' (Myers 1989: 12). Similarly, Hyland argues that 'hedges' (which include low intensity modals) sometimes act to convey 'deference, modesty or respect' rather than to convey uncertainty (Hyland 2000: 88). More specifically, in their analyses of *I think*, Aijmer (1997) and Simon-Vandenberg (2000) observe that the locution has a variable functionality according to whether, in their terms, it is employed with 'factual' propositions (eg ***I think** Mary teaches French*) or an 'opinion' (eg *Mr President, once again **I think** we are being denied as a parliament the opportunity to make our opinions known concerning the recommencement of whale hunting* (Simon-Vandenberg 1998: 301). For them, while the 'factual' uses of *I think* are to be interpreted as pointing to some degree of tentativeness or uncertainty on the part of the speaker, the 'evaluative' uses, in contrast, have a 'deliberative' function, expressing authority. While we are reluctant to operate with a taxonomy which so abruptly separates 'fact' from 'opinion' in this way, we nevertheless share with these researchers the view that the 'meaning' of such locutions will vary systematically according to co-textual conditioning. And we would certainly want to allow that the epistemic effect (signalling uncertainty of knowledge) is typically in operation when the proposition foregrounds experiential/informational rather than evaluative/interpersonal meanings.

3.6.1 Entertain and writer–reader relationships

The primary functionality, then, of such modalising locutions is to make allowances for, and hence to make space for, alternative voices and value positions in the ongoing colloquy within which the text is located. They construe a heteroglossic backdrop for the text in which the particular point-of-view is actually or potentially in tension with dialogistic alternatives. By this, they project for the text an audience which is potentially divided over the issue at stake and hence one which may not universally share the value position being referenced. By recognising

and thus, to greater and lesser degrees, dialogistically validating alternative viewpoints they thus provide for the possibility of solidarity with those who hold to alternative positions, at least to the extent that those who hold to contrary positions are recognised as potential participants in the on-going colloquy.

The degree to which values of entertain function in this way to signal authorial anticipation that the proposition may be problematic for the intended addressee will vary under certain co-textual conditionings. This functionality is most likely to be in operation where the value position is one which obviously relates to some ideologically-significant, established axiological formation (eg *The sad aspect of all this is that by giving support to this invasion Blair will be destroying the UN and I believe will have betrayed the British people*). The functionality is less likely to be in operation when the value position at issue is one which is not so obviously ideologically connected, when, perhaps, it can be seen as more 'private' than 'public'. Consider by way of example the following:

[3.10] [Your correspondent] suggests that MPs 'should talk to and be advised by those who know best' [about the issue of euthanasia]. As a nurse with more than 50 years experience including 10 years caring for the terminally ill I feel it appropriate to respond.

It has been my privilege to have cared for **possibly** several hundred terminally ill patients. [letter to the editor, *Bolton Evening News*, 16/02/04]

Here there is no immediately obvious connection between the question of how many patients the writer cared for and any axiological community with which the reader might be affiliated. Accordingly, the formulation is less likely to be interpreted as anticipating the possibility of some dissent over this viewpoint on the part of those addressed and is more likely to be interpreted as a sign by the writer that this is not meant to be taken as a precise figure and accordingly that she herself might have set the figure slightly higher or slightly lower.

3.6.2 Further values of entertain

To this point we have confined our discussion to modals of probability. As indicated above, the grammar of **entertain** is more diverse than this. It also includes 'evidentials'. For example:

[3.11] One obvious failing in Britain is the gap between the skills the workforce offers and those employers want. That mismatch **seems** worse than it was ten years ago. [Bank of English – *Economist* sub-corpus]

[3.12] One persistent idea has been that the two main moderate right-wing parties, the Rassemblement pour la République and the Union pour la Démocratie Française, must get together if they are to have any chance of regaining power. But each time this has been tried, it comes up against the **apparently** irreconcilable rivalries of the three figures who have dominated the French right for the past 15 years – Jacques Chirac, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. [Bank of English – *Economist* sub-corpus]

[3.13] His defensive behaviour **suggests** he feels ashamed and guilty that you've discovered his habit. [Bank of English – *Sun* sub-corpus]

In each of these cases, the proposition is construed as contingent and subjectively based as a consequence of being derived via a process of deduction or surmise on the part of the speaker/writer. To present a proposition as surmised is obviously to present it as but one proposition among a range of potential alternatives and thereby to open up dialogic space for any such alternatives.

The category of **entertain** also includes a particular type of 'pseudo' question which is frequently employed in singly-constructed, non-interactive texts to **entertain** rather than to assert some proposition. These may perhaps be termed 'rhetorical questions', although this term is often restricted to those 'pseudo' questions where the addressee is positioned to supply a particular answer (see, for example, Sadock 1974). In contrast, this type of question is open-ended and has been given the label 'expository question' by Goatly (2000). The following headline to a news report on British 'celebrity', Tara Palmer-Tomkinson exemplifies this option:

[3.14]

Is Tara on a downhill spiral to her bad old ways?

A drunken night out for Britain's favourite IT girl has set alarm bells ringing
[*Daily Express*, 19/10/04: 10]

Here an expository question is employed to put the proposition into play as one possible view of Ms Palmer-Tomkinson's behaviour.

3.6.3 Directives and the modality of permission/obligation

We also include within this category of **entertain** locutions concerned with permission and obligation, traditionally the category of 'deontic' modality (for example, *You must switch off the lights when you leave.*). Obviously we are concerned here with a fundamentally different type of dialogic relationship – relationships of control and compliance/

resistance rather than of the offering of information and viewpoints. Despite this fundamental difference, deontic modals still construe the communicative setting as heteroglossic and open up the dialogic space to alternatives. The contrast is between the imperative (*Turn out the lights before you leave*) and the modal formulation (*You must turn out the lights before you leave*). The imperative is monoglossic in that it neither references, nor allows for the possibility of, alternative actions. The modal, in contrast, explicitly grounds the demand in the subjectivity of the speaker – as an assessment by the speaker of obligation rather than as a command. The ‘directive’ is thus construed as contingent, as individually based and accordingly the speaker’s role as a participant in a dialogic exchange is acknowledged.

3.7 Dialogistic expansion through the externalised proposition – attribution

Under the heading of ‘attribution’, we deal with those formulations which disassociate the proposition from the text’s internal authorial voice by attributing it to some external source.⁷ This is most typically achieved through the grammar of directly and indirectly reported speech and thought. We are concerned, therefore, with the framing of propositions by means of communicative process verbs (eg *Mr. Mandela said the Group of Eight nations have a duty to help battle the scourge of AIDS*), or verbs which reference mental processes such as *believe* and *suspect*, (eg *Dawkins believes that religion is not an adaptive evolutionary vestige, but in fact a cultural virus*). The category similarly includes formulations which involve nominalisations of these processes (eg *Indonesia rejects United Nations assertion that bird flu is spreading, Chomsky’s belief that language is for individuals rather than groups*) and various adverbial adjuncts such as *according to* (eg *He now poses little threat to the world, according to Halliday*) and *in X’s view*.

We notice in passing that in a few cases the same lexemes crop up in both this category and that of the previously discussed **entertain** – specifically mental process verbs such as *believe*, *suspect* and circumstantials such as *in X’s view*. In context, however, the two categories are easy to distinguish in that **entertain** values present the internal voice of the speaker/writer as the source (eg *I believe, in my view*) while **attributing** values present some external voice (eg *many Australians believe, in Dawkin’s view*).

This category also includes instances of **attribution** where no specific source is specified – formulations which are sometimes categorised as ‘hearsay’, for example,

the government’s serologist *reportedly* lied about his qualifications
Williams retired in 1932, when he was 46. *It is said that* he lied about his age as he grew older ...

and the instance discussed previously,

there is an argument that. ...

3.7.1 Attribute: acknowledge

Within **attribution** there are two sub-categories. The first of these we term ‘acknowledge’ – those locutions where there is no overt indication, at least via the choice of framer, as to where the authorial voice stands with respect to the proposition. This is the domain of reporting verbs such as *say, report, state, declare, announce, believe* and *think*. For example:

[3.15] A bishop today *describes* the Church of England’s established status as indefensible, in a pamphlet *arguing that* the church should lose its political ties to the state.

The Rt Rev Colin Buchanan, Bishop of Woolwich, *says*: ‘In this, as in so many other things, the Church of England prefers to live by fantasy rather than look coolly at the facts.’ [*The Guardian*, 21/06/04]

In identifying certain **attributions** as instances of **acknowledge** we attend narrowly only to the semantics of the framing device (typically the reporting verb) – specifically whether or not it acts to disassociate the authorial voice from the current proposition. It may well be, of course, that there are indicators elsewhere in the text that the writer/speaker more globally supports or rejects the value position being advanced. This, however, is a separate issue which needs to be dealt with elsewhere in the analysis. We will discuss this issue further below when considering the consequences for addresser–addressee rapport of **attribution**.

Acknowledgements are obviously dialogic in that they associate the proposition being advanced with voices and/or positions which are external to that of the text itself and present the authorial voice as engaging interactively with those voices. In this way they overtly construe the

communicative setting as heteroglossic. This aspect of **acknowledgement** has been widely attended to in the extensive literature on reported speech and citation, especially as it operates within academic discourse. But equally importantly, such formulations are dialogic for the same reasons that values of **entertain** are dialogic – they ground the viewpoint conveyed by the proposition in an explicit subjectivity thereby signalling that it is individual and contingent and therefore but one of a range of possible dialogic options. In this sense they are anticipatorily (as opposed to retrospectively) dialogistic, making space in the ongoing dialog for those who might hold alternative views.

3.7.2 Attribute: distance

The second sub-category of **attribution** involves formulations in which, via the semantics of the framer employed, there is an explicit distancing of the authorial voice from the attributed material. For obvious reasons we give the label ‘distancing’ to this sub-category. It is most typically realised by means of the reporting verb, *to claim* and by certain uses of ‘scare’ quotes. The contrast here is with **acknowledging attributions** where the semantics of the framer (eg *say, report, believe, according to*) is such that there is no specification as to where the authorial voice stands with respect to the proposition, thus leaving it open to the co-text to present the authorial text as either aligned/disaligned with respect to the position being advanced, or as neutral or disinterested. Caldas-Coulthard has observed that the author, by the use of *claim*, ‘detaches him/herself from responsibility for what is being reported’ (Caldas-Coulthard 1994: 295). We would put this in slightly different terms, since values of **acknowledge** also potentially have this rhetorical effect, and observe, rather, that *claim* acts to mark explicitly the internal authorial voice as separate from the cited, external voice. We demonstrate both this functionality of values of **distancing** and how they are dialogistically different from values of **acknowledge** by means of the extract which we considered briefly above in section 3.5. We repeat it here for ease of reference and indicate instances of both **acknowledge** and **distance**.

[3.16] Tickner **said** [*acknowledge*] regardless of the result, the royal commission was a waste of money and he would proceed with a separate inquiry into the issue headed by Justice Jane Matthews. His attack came as the Aboriginal women involved in the case **demand** [*acknowledge*] a female minister examine the religious beliefs they **claim** [*distance*] are inherent in their fight against a bridge to the island near Goolwa in South Australia. [Bank of English – OzNews sub-corpus]

To demonstrate what is at stake here in the author choosing to **distance** rather than **acknowledge**, we provide a rewriting of the paragraph in which the values have been reversed:

[3.16] (rewritten) Tickner **has claimed** [*distance*] that regardless of the result, the royal commission was a waste of money and he would proceed with a separate inquiry into the issue headed by Justice Jane Matthews. His attack came as the Aboriginal women involved in the case **demanded** [*acknowledge*] a female minister examine the religious beliefs which they **say** [*acknowledge*] are inherent in their fight against a bridge to the island near Goolwa in South Australia. [Cobuild Bank of English – *Australian News* sub-corpus]

In the original version the writer is neutral with respect to the reported assertions of Tickner (then Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in an Australian Labor government) but steps back from the reported assertions of the Aboriginal women. It is not that the women's propositions are overtly presented as doubtful or unreliable, but rather that the writer explicitly indicates that they are not taking responsibility for the proposition's reliability. The situation is exactly reversed in the rewritten version where the authorial voice is neutral or unspecified with respect to where it stands on the Aboriginal women's position but is overtly disassociated from the propositions of the Minister.

Distancing formulations are dialogistically expansive on the same basis as **acknowledgements**. They explicitly ground the proposition in an individualised, contingent subjectivity, that of some external source. They go somewhat further than **acknowledgements** in that, in presenting the authorial voice as explicitly declining to take responsibility for the proposition, they maximise the space for dialogistic alternatives.

3.7.3 Attribution, alignment and writer–reader relationships

There is obviously rather more to the dialogistic functionality of these **attributions** than simply that of indicating a dialogistically expansive stance on the part of the speaker/writer. For a comprehensive analysis of the rhetorical effects of these meanings in context it is necessary to do more than simply classify them as either **acknowledging** or **distancing**. The very extensive literature on citation, referencing and intertextuality in academic discourse attends to this domain of enquiry. We confine ourselves to just a couple of key questions – those which relate most directly to our central concerns with alignment and solidarity.

Some texts operate under a regime by which it is assumed that it is possible for the speaker/writer to remain aloof from, and unimplicated in, any of the value positions which are contained in attributed material. Such a regime operates in the ‘hard news’ reporting of the ‘high-brow’ or ‘broadsheet’ news media and was illustrated by extract [3.15] above. Such texts present a relatively ‘impersonalised’ or ‘impartial’ façade to the reader, at least when compared with more explicitly evaluative texts. To the degree that the reader interprets the writer in such instances as having nothing invested in the position being advanced in the reported material (neither acting to advance it or to undermine it), such **acknowledgements** allow the writer to remain aloof from any relationships of either alignment or disalignment. They present the writer as some sort of ‘informational fair trader’ who simply conveys the views of others and who is therefore unimplicated in any relationship of solidarity which the reader may enter into with the quoted source whose viewpoint is being reported. Of course, there are all manner of ways in which such texts may indirectly indicate that the writer either supports or is opposed to the attributed value position. In which case, greater to lesser degrees of alignment (either for or against the value position) will be indicated and the text may be interpreted as more or less forthrightly aligning the reader into a particular value position.

Such alignment-neutral attributions, however, are in the minority. It is more typical, particularly in argumentative texts such as media commentaries, political speeches or academic articles, for **attribution** to be much more obviously implicated in issues of alignment and solidarity. In such texts it is available to the speaker/writer to announce overtly where they stand with respect to the attributed material via some inscribed attitudinal assessment either of the attributed material itself or of its source. For example:

There were no slip-ups in the powerful speech – finally silencing the critics who **falsely** claim Bush is no more than a Texas cattle-rancher. [Bank of English]

The Archbishop of Canterbury **rightly** describes the mass killing of children as ‘the most evil kind of action we can imagine’. [*The New Statesman*, editorial, 13/09/04: 6]

Banerji, of course, was not among those recession deniers. Rather, he has **compellingly** argued that those so-called New Economists were a major contributor to the excesses of the bubble, as detailed here last week. [www.thestreet.com, accessed 07/31/02]

In such cases the monoglossia of the attitudinal assessment (for example that the assertions of Bush's critics are 'false') over-rides the heteroglossia of the **attribution** to present the speaker/writer as categorically aligned with a given value position and thereby bidding to align the reader into this point of view.

Other more indirect methodologies are also available by which it is possible for attributed material to be implicated in the alignment strategies at work in the text. These are mechanism by which the reader is covertly positioned to regard the attributed material as either highly credible and warrantable, or alternatively, as dubious and unreliable. High credibility can be implied via the use of sources who have high status in the field (for example, *Mr. Mandela said the Group of Eight nations have a duty to help battle the scourge of AIDS*) or, as Hood 2004 has observed, via the assembling of a multiplicity of sources in support of the attributed material. For example:

[3.17] **Most linguists believe that** linguistic structure is most productively studied in its own terms, with its communicative use(s) considered separately. [Online linguistics lecture – LING 001: Introduction to Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania: http://www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/Fall_1998/ling001/com_phil.html]

An assessment of low credibility can be invoked via the use of sources who have low social status or who are shown to be in the minority. For example:

[3.18] NATURE WILL SORT OUT THE PROBLEMS – WON'T IT?

Only a few scientists believe it will. [Bank of English – British ephemera sub-corpus]

Although in such cases it is some external source, rather than the speaker/writer, who is presented as advancing the proposition, there is a strong sense that the speaker/writer is implicated in the value position and hence there is clear signalling of the value position into which the reader is being aligned.

Of course, it will be rare in such argumentative texts for the speaker/writer to leave it up to attributed material to advance core value positions. Writers/speakers will themselves announce in categorical terms where they stand on the key issues, typically only bringing in the external source to lend support to their argument. In which case, the potential of **attribution** to allow for alternative dialogic positions will be over-ridden

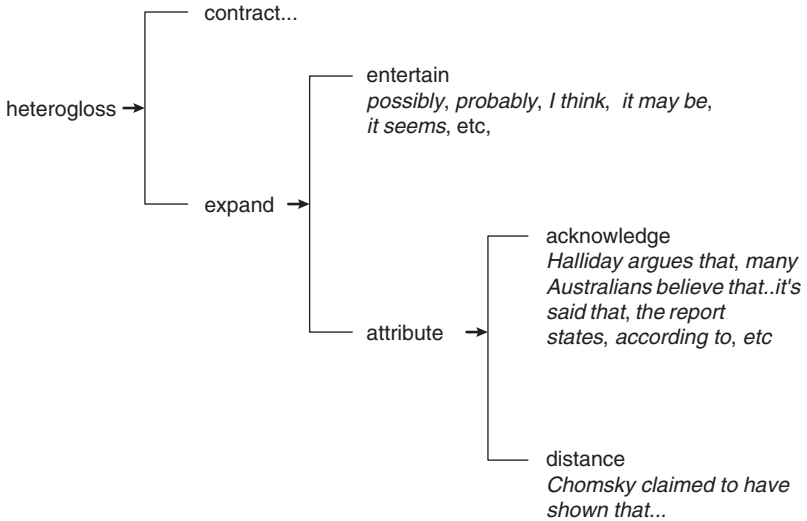


Figure 3.2 Engagement – dialogic expansion

(when the text is viewed as a rhetorical whole) by the monoglossia of the speaker/writer's own assertions.

The system of **engagement** (focussing on heteroglossic resources) as outlined to this point is set out in Figure 3.2.

3.8 The resources of dialogic contraction – overview: disclaim and proclaim

We turn now to those meanings which, in contrast to the values of **entertain** and **attribution** we have just considered, act to contract the dialogic space rather than to open it up. These are meanings which, even while they construe a dialogistic backdrop for the text of other voices and other value positions, are directed towards excluding certain dialogic alternatives from any subsequent communicative interaction or at least towards constraining the scope of these alternatives in the colloquy as it henceforth unfolds. These contractive meanings fall into two broad categories. The first of these we term 'disclaim' – meanings by which some dialogic alternative is directly rejected or supplanted, or is represented as not applying. The second of these we term 'proclaim' – meanings by which, through some authorial

interpolation, emphasis or intervention, dialogic alternatives are confronted, challenged, overwhelmed or otherwise excluded. We consider each of these options in turn.

Under **disclaim** we cover those formulations by which some prior utterance or some alternative position is invoked so as to be directly rejected, replaced or held to be unsustainable. Obviously to deny or reject a position is maximally contractive in that, while the alternative position has been recognised, it is held not to apply. This is the domain of negation and concession/counter-expectation. We distinguish two sub-types within this **disclaim** category.

3.9 Disclaim: deny (negation)

From the dialogistic perspective, negation is a resource for introducing the alternative positive position into the dialogue, and hence acknowledging it, so as to reject it. Thus in these dialogistic terms, the negative is not the simple logical opposite of the positive, since the negative necessarily carries with it the positive, while the positive does not reciprocally carry the negative, or at least not typically.⁸ This aspect of the negative, though perhaps at odds with common-sense understandings, has been quite widely noted in the literature – see for example, Tottie 1982, Leech 1983: 101, Pagano 1994 or Fairclough 1992: 101.⁹ Consider, for example, the following extract from an advertisement placed in magazines by the British Heart Foundation.

[3.19] We all like something to grab hold of. But sometimes you can have too much of a good thing. And a man whose table diet consists of double cheeseburgers and chips can end up looking like a tub of lard. There's nothing wrong with meat, bread and potatoes. But how about some lean meat, wholemeal bread and jacket potatoes?

Here the **denial**, *There is nothing wrong with meat, bread and potatoes*, is dialogic in that it invokes, and presents itself as responding to, claims/beliefs that 'there IS something wrong with meat, bread and potatoes'.

3.9.1 Denial, alignment and writer–reader relationships

Denial is a variable mechanism with respect to alignment and putative reader positioning. We only have the space here to consider a couple of instances of this variability. On some occasions in mass-communicative texts of the type we are considering, the denial is directed outwards and

away from the current writer–reader relationship as the writer indicates a disalignment with some third party. Consider the following extract by way of example,

[3.20] Sir, Your report ('Anthrax vaccine refused by half Gulf personnel', February 12), recorded comments by Paul Keetch MP who claimed that the Ministry of Defence was 'sowing confusion' among troops by making this programme voluntary and that by doing so it was abdicating leadership. May I repeat my assurances that this is **not the case**. Anthrax represents a real threat to our armed forces and we seek to protect our troops through detection systems, individual physical protection and medical countermeasures (immunisation and antibiotics). But the best single protection against anthrax is immunisation.

While we strongly advise personnel to accept the vaccine for their own protection, the programme is a voluntary one. That is entirely consistent with long-standing medical practice in the UK to offer immunisations only on the basis of voluntary informed consent. ... [*The Times*, letters to the editor, 21/02/03, from Lewis Moonie, MP, Parliamentary Under-secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans Affairs]

Here, obviously, the writer indicates a disalignment with the views of 'Paul Keetch MP' and in so doing aligns the reader into a position of opposition to Keetch's views. The denial is constructive of the putative reader to the extent that it presents that reader as potentially susceptible to the 'false' views of Keetch. This is conveyed, not so much by the **denial** itself, but by the fact that the writer supplies so much argumentative material in what follows by way of support for the denial, thus construing the putative reader as possibly still needing to be convinced, or at least as still needing more information on the subject.

In other cases, the **denial** will be against the putative addressee, specifically against beliefs which they speaker/writer assumes that at least some members of his/her mass audience will be subject to. This was the case in [3.19] above and also in the following instance.

[3.21] The gas we use today, natural gas, contains more than 90 per cent methane, and was known long before the discovery of coal gas. Natural gas burns with twice the heat of coal gas, is **not** poisonous and has **no** odour. [Bank of English – US academic sub-corpus]

Tottie 1987 and Pagano 1994 employ the term 'implicit negation' in connection with **denials** of this type and Pagano makes the point that

they act to project 'existential paradigms' onto this intended audience (1994: 254). **Denials** such as those exemplified by [3.21] present the addresser as having greater expertise in some area than the addressee and as, on that basis, acting to correct some misunderstanding or misconception on the addressee's part (for example, that natural gas *would* be poisonous). Thus they are corrective rather than confrontational, presenting the addresser as sensitively attending to the addressee's level of knowledge and seeking to adjust their communication accordingly. As such they will enhance solidarity as long as the reader is not resistant to having this particular lack of knowledge projected onto them, and as long as they have no reason to reject the particular viewpoint being advanced.

3.10 Disclaim: counter

The second sub-type of **disclaim** includes formulations which represent the current proposition as replacing or supplanting, and thereby 'countering', a proposition which would have been expected in its place. For example, in

[3.22] **Even though** we are getting divorced, Bruce and I are still best friends,

the proposition that Bruce and the writer *are still best friends* is in a countering relationship with the proposition that they are getting divorced. That Bruce and the writer are still best friends is presented as defeating what would otherwise be the 'normal' expectation arising from their divorce, namely that they wouldn't be on friendly terms.

Such formulations are often given the label 'adversative' while Tottie (1987) classifies them as a type of negation. They are dialogistic in the same way as **denials** in that they invoke a contrary position which is then said not to hold. They often operate in conjunction with **denials**, with the **denying** proposition in direct contradistinction with the expectation which is assumed to arise from an immediately prior or an immediately posterior proposition. For example,

[3.23] **Even though** he had taken all his medication, his leg **didn't** look any better. [Bank of English – US academic sub corpus]

The **countering** is typically conveyed via conjunctions and connectives such as *although*, *however*, *yet* and *but*. It may also be realised via a small

set of comment adjuncts/adverbials. For example:

[3.24] Only ten tonnes or so have been sold. Most of the stockpile is ‘scrap’, and since almost everybody bans ivory imports there is no longer a legal market. **Surprisingly**, there seems to have been little smuggling through Hong Kong. [Cobuild Bank of English – *Economist* sub-corpus]

Adjuncts such as *even*, *only*, *just* and *still* also have a counter-expectational aspect to their meaning. Thus,

They even organised a car for you at the airport.

indicates that more services are being provided here than would normally be expected.

3.10.1 Countering, alignment and writer–reader relationships

These **counters** are similar to **denials** such as [3.21] above in that they project on to the addressee particular beliefs or expectations, or, to modify Pagano’s term slightly (Pagano 1994), particular axiological paradigms. Thus in [3.23] above, the text construes an audience which has the expectation that to take all one’s medication is typically to ensure that healing will follow. Frequently, such **counters** are aligning rather than disaligning in that they construe the writer as sharing this axiological paradigm with the reader. The writer is presented as just as surprised by this ‘exceptional’ case as it is assumed the reader will be. Solidarity, of course, will be at risk for any actual addressee who doesn’t happen to subscribe to the taken-for-granted axiological paradigm. Thus any reader who happens to regard it as perfectly natural for divorcing couples to remain on good terms will be alienated by [3.22], the more so because the viewpoint which they object to is taken for granted.

The engagement system as outlined to this point is set out in Figure 3.3.

3.11 Proclaim: concur, pronounce and endorse

We group together under the heading of ‘proclaim’ those formulations which, rather than directly rejecting or overruling a contrary position, act to limit the scope of dialogistic alternatives in the ongoing colloquy. We identify three sub-types of **proclamation** which we now consider in turn.

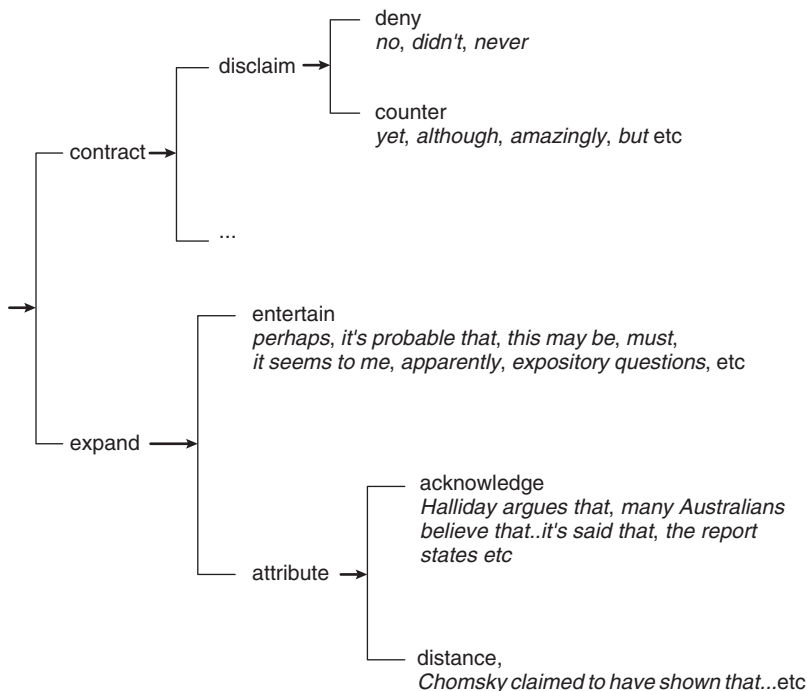


Figure 3.3 Engagement – contract: disclaim

3.12 Proclaim: concur

The category of ‘concur’ involves formulations which overtly announce the addresser as agreeing with, or having the same knowledge as, some projected dialogic partner. Typically, this dialogic partner is the text’s putative addressee. This relationship of **concurrence** is conveyed via such locutions as *of course*, *naturally*, *not surprisingly*, *admittedly* and *certainly*. Consider by way of example the following transcription from an interview by Abu Dhabi television with the monarch of Jordan, King Abdullah.

[3.25] **Abu Dhabi TV:** Why do these groups resort to violence Your Majesty, despite the contradiction between violence and Islam?

HM King Abdullah: Naturally, we understand the state of anger and frustration from which Arabs and Muslims suffer as a result of their feelings of the

absence of justice, or of injustice being levied against them. [www.jordanembassyus.org/hmka01212003.htm, accessed 18/03/04]

Here the speaker's use of the locution *naturally* construes for the text an audience which shares with the speaker the view that the anger and frustration of Arabs and Muslims is understandable.

Similarly, in the following,

[3.26] When, belatedly, their selectors chose Paul Adams, who would assuredly have won them the second Test in Johannesburg, their attack became 'very good' in the opinion of Trevor Bailey, who has seen a few in his time. Bailey, **of course**, was that rarity, a cricketer who at his best was world-class with both bat and ball. [Bank of English – OzNews sub-corpus],

the writer's use of *of course* construes an audience for the text which shares the writer's highly-positive estimation of the celebrated English cricketer, Trevor Bailey.¹⁰

This relationship of **concurrence** may also be realised via certain types of rhetorical or 'leading' questions – those by which the writer/speaker is presented as assuming that no answer needs to be supplied for a particular question on account of that answer being so 'obvious'. (There is a contrast here with 'expository' questions of the type discussed in section 3.6.2 above which don't assume a given reply on the part of the addressee and which, accordingly, are dialogically expansive rather than contractive.) Addresser and addressee are thus presented as so thoroughly in alignment, and the proposition at issue so 'commonsensical', that agreement can be taken for granted. Consider by way of example the following leading question from the front cover of the 25 March 2002 edition of the *New Statesman* magazine. A full-page coloured picture depicts a group of young, friendly and happy Iraqi children in close-up. Looking up towards the camera, they wave bunches of flowers and with welcoming smiles directly engage with the viewer. The text of a headline superimposed over the picture reads.

Iraq: Should we go to war against these children?

Here the question leads the reader to an 'unavoidable' answer. The text operates under the assumption that the reader will inevitably supply, 'No, of course we shouldn't go to war with these children.'

These various **concurring** formulations, then, are dialogistic in that they present the speaker/writer as 'in dialogue' with the text's audience generally. Such formulations are contractive in that they represent the

shared value or belief as universally, or at least as very widely, held in the current communicative context. Thus they have the effect of excluding any dialogistic alternatives from the ongoing colloquy in that they position any who would advance such an alternative as at odds with what is purportedly generally agreed upon or known. Accordingly, they construe for the text a backdrop which is heteroglossic in that it contains multiple voices (the authorial voice and those it is purportedly in concord with), but from which dissident voices and positions are excluded.

3.12.1 Some complications for writer–reader relationships – interactions between **concur** and **counter**

The functionality of values of **concur** is complicated by the fact that they often occur as a precursor to a **countering**. This arrangement is illustrated in the following.

[3.27] [Robert Maxwell was] the eternal outsider, a man who had fought Establishment prejudice and pettifogging bureaucracy to get where he was. **Sure** [*concur*], he broke rules. **Yes** [*concur*], he ducked and dived. **Admittedly** [*concur*], he was badly behaved. **But** [*counter*] look at what he achieved. From nothing, he had become a multinational businessman with an empire stretching across the world, the confidant of statesmen and just as famous himself. [Bank of English – UKMags sub-corpus]

There are two interlinked rhetorical moves here (a rhetorical pair) by which the authorial voice first presents itself as agreeing with the construed reader with respect to a proposition, only to step back, so to speak, and to indicate a rejection of what are presented as the natural assumptions arising from that initial proposition. In the above instance, for example, the authorial voice acknowledges the validity of certain strongly negative assessments of Robert Maxwell, only then to dismiss these as not sufficient to prevent an over-ridingly positive regard for Maxwell. The writer thus acknowledges an anti-Maxwell community of shared value, even recognising that it has some validity, only then to indicate disalignment from that community and membership in the contrary pro-Maxwell point of view. In the literature such pairings are characterised as ‘concessions’, pointing to the strategy which is in play here by which argumentative ground is given up initially (the initial **concurring** concession), only for that ground to be retaken in the subsequent **counter** move. In such contexts there is often a sense that the **concurrence** is in some way reluctant, grudging or qualified on the part

of the speaker/writer, and in this there is a contrast with the **concurrency** moves considered above (ie those employing *naturally* or *of course*) where typically there is no such sense of holding back or distancing. In more delicate analyses, then, it may be useful to distinguish between conceding **concurrency** (the type we are currently considering – eg *Admittedly ... but; I accept that ... however ...*) and affirming **concurrency** (as discussed in the previous section – *naturally, obviously, of course, etc.*).

We note, as well that conceding **concurrency** can indicate higher or lower degrees of reluctance:

[more reluctant] **Admittedly** he was badly behaved, but look at what he has achieved.

[less reluctant] **Certainly** he was badly behaved but look at what he has achieved.

In the case of the less reluctant formulations there is an indication of a relatively high degree of commitment by the speaker to the conceded proposition. We note as well that it is only as elements in a **concede + counter** pairing that terms such a *certainly* have this conceding functionality. It is important to note that there are two uses of *certainly* – the concessional meaning just discussed and an alternative meaning where agreement with some dialogic partner is not implied. In this second instance, the locution simply construes high commitment to the proposition on the part of the speaker/writer via an assessment of high probability, and hence is classified as an instance of *entertain*. Such a use is exemplified in the following.

In my view, whether or not Mr. French broke the law in publicly corroborating evidence of which he had no personal knowledge, he has **certainly** disgraced the Attorney General's office in lending credence to the assertions of the Swift Boat veterans for Truth. [http://talkleft.com/new_archives/007655.html]

By such **concede + counter** pairings, the writer construes a putative reader who is presumed to be to some degree resistant to the writer's primary argumentative position. Thus in [3.27] above the reader is presumed to be resistant to the writer's ultimately positive view of Robert Maxwell. The pairings occur as the writer bids to win the reader over. By the concessional first step, the writer validates the reader's contrary viewpoint by acknowledging that it is understandable and has a rational basis. A point of solidarity is thus established. It is only in then holding

that the usual or expected implications do not arise from the conceded proposition(s) that the authorial voice sets itself against the putative reader. Thus such pairings can be seen as gestures towards solidarity in contexts where the writer anticipates, at least initially, disagreement on the part of the reader.

3.13 Proclaim: endorsement

By the term ‘endorsement’ we refer to those formulations by which propositions sourced to external sources are construed by the authorial voice as correct, valid, undeniable or otherwise maximally warrantable. This construal is achieved indirectly by the use of verbal processes (or their nominalised equivalents) which portray certain acts of semiosis as providing the grounds for the speaker/writer to presuppose this warrantability. The verbs in question include *show*, *prove*, *demonstrate*, *find* and *point out* and have been discussed in the literature in terms of notions of ‘factivity’ (see for example Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1977). For example:

[3.28] Five of the studies examine the effects of economic dependence on economic inequality. All five **show that** dependence is associated with greater inequality. More specifically, five studies **demonstrate that** investment dependence – investment by foreign firms in a society’s domestic economy – increases economic inequality. [Bank of English – US academic sub-corpus]

[3.29] Complaints about the treatment of the ‘Al Qaida’ detainees should subside now that Downing Street has released details from a report which **shows that** the British prisoners have ‘no substantial complaints’ about their conditions.

The dialogism of such formulations is obvious enough, at least in its retrospective aspect. In both referencing and endorsing the utterances of a prior speaker, the authorial voice enters into a dialogic relationship of alignment with that speaker. However, the situation is, perhaps, not quite so straightforward when we consider the anticipatory dialogic aspect. These dialogistically contractive **endorsements** are like dialogistically expansive **attributions** (see section 3.7) in that, through the grammar of reported speech (what in SFL is termed ‘projection’), they ground the proposition in an individual, and hence contingent subjectivity. However, while **attributions** exploit the grammar of reported speech to unambiguously disassociate the proposition from the internal authorial voice, at least momentarily, no such authorial disassociation

operates with **endorsements**. Here the internal voice takes over responsibility for the proposition, or at least shares responsibility for it with the cited source. The subjectivity at issue, then, is a multiple one – that of both the external source and the inner authorial voice. And crucially it is the inner authorial voice which does the rhetorical heavy lifting, so to speak, intervening in the meaning making to construe the proposition as ‘proven’, ‘shown’, ‘demonstrated’ and so on.

Endorsements, therefore, associate the proposition with an individual subjectivity, and primarily with the subjectivity of the authorial voice. And since individual subjectivities are always in alternation and in tension with other subjectivities, **endorsements** act to construe a heteroglossic backdrop of potential alternative viewpoints for the proposition. However, simultaneously, the **endorsement** functions to exclude any such alternatives from the ongoing colloquy via the speaker/writer’s adjudgement of the proposition as maximally warrantable. For this reason they are, as we have already indicated, **dialogistically contractive** and by dint of this contractiveness they clearly align the reader into the value position which is being advanced at this point by the text.

3.14 Proclaim: pronounce

The category of **pronounce** covers formulations which involve authorial emphases or explicit authorial interventions or interpolations. For example: *I contend ...*, *The facts of the matter are that ...*, *The truth of the matter is that ...*, *We can only conclude that ...*, *You must agree that ...*, intensifiers with clausal scope such as *really*, *indeed*, etc. and, in speech, appropriately placed stress (eg *The level of tolerance IS the result of government intervention*).

Pronouncement is demonstrated in the following extract taken from a speech by US president John F. Kennedy in which he announced his government’s plans to land an astronaut on the moon.

[3.30] Now it is time to take longer strides – time for a great new American enterprise – time for this nation to take a clearly leading role in space achievement, which in many ways may hold the key to our future on earth. I believe we possess all the resources and talents necessary. **But the facts of the matter are that** we have never made the national decisions or marshaled the national resources required for such leadership.

The formulation, *the facts of the matter are that*, constitutes an overt intervention into the text by the authorial voice – an interpolation of

the authorial presence so as to assert or insist upon the value or warrantability of the proposition. The authorial voice makes more salient its subjective role through this effort at 'vouchsafing' the proposition that the US had *never made the national decisions or marshalled the national resources required for such leadership*. Such insistings or emphasising imply the presence of some resistance, some contrary pressure of doubt or challenge against which the authorial voice asserts itself. It is only necessary to insist when there is some counter viewpoint against which the insistence is directed. Accordingly, while such formulations acknowledge the heteroglossic diversity of the current communicative context, they set the authorial voice against that diversity, presenting that voice as challenging or heading off a particular dialogic alternative. Thus the interpersonal cost to any who would advance such a contrary position is increased and the dialogic space for this alternative in any upcoming dialogic interaction is reduced.

Consider, by way of further example, the following sequence taken from a letter by the *Guardian* newspaper's features editor to readers of the UK Chinese community's www.dimsum.co.uk web site. The letter was a response to anger by members of the Chinese community over a review published in the *Guardian* of the movie, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. The members of the community felt that the review was racist and perpetuated anti-Chinese stereotypes. The **pronouncement** which is at issue here is indicated in bold:

[3.31] Dear (angry) readers,

I apologise for not replying to all of you personally, but since most of you have made similar points about Charlotte Raven's column, I hope you don't mind if I address them together.

Broadly most of you have written or mailed me to say that you thought Charlotte's column about *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* was racist because it invoked the old stereotype of the Chinese being inscrutable. Some of you made more specific points about Charlotte's lack of appreciation for Chinese cinema, and someone went as far as to suggest that by using the phrase 'it seemed to contain multitudes' to describe the performance of the cast, Charlotte was alluding to Western images of 'Chinese masses'.

In e-mail correspondence and conversations with some of you I have defended Charlotte's column quite robustly.

It is absolutely clear to me that what Charlotte was arguing was that *Crouching Tiger* was a bad film to which liberal audiences imputed a significance shaped by their own prejudices about Chinese cinema and the Chinese in general.

Here we observe the writer interpolating himself explicitly into the text in order to indicate his maximal investment in the current proposition. More crucially, the textual voice doesn't indicate this heightened personal investment in the proposition in a communicative vacuum. Rather it does so against some opposed dialogic alternative – against a contrary view of what the *Guardian's* reviewer ('Charlotte') was arguing in her reviewing.

By way of further illustration consider the following two extracts:

[3.32] Andrew B. Lewis of Burlington, Vermont, wrote, 'There was a lot of talk during Daniel Schorr's spot on "Weekend Edition" about George Bush's not having a coherent postwar policy for Iraq. **I contend that** Bush and King Fahd do, indeed, have a policy that entails the destruction of the Kurds and the Shiites.' [Bank of English]

[3.33] ... many birdkeepers who have been robbed complain of lack of police interest. The police respond by countering that they have more pressing priorities with which to contend. This may be true, but **I contend that** a telephone call to a person who has been robbed takes only a couple of minutes and shows that someone cares. [Bank of English]

Once again these authorial interventions are directed towards confronting and defeating a contrary position.

We identify, then, as instances of **pronouncement** formulations which involve authorial interpolations and emphases which are directed against some assumed or directly referenced counter position. Such formulations are dialogistic in that they acknowledge the presence of this counter view in the current communicative setting and are contractive in that they challenge, confront or resist this particular dialogistic alternative. In being directed in this way against a contrary value position they have some kinship with the two sub-systems of **disclaim** – **deny** and **counter**.

3.14.1 Pronouncement, alignment and writer–reader relationships

The consequences for writer-reader relationships associated with the use of **pronouncements** will vary according to whether the challenge is to a value position which the text directly or indirectly presents as being held, or likely to be held, by the addressee (eg [3.31]), or whether, alternatively, the challenge is to the value position of some alternative third party. This latter situation applied in [3.33] above which is taken from the 'club news' section of the journal of the (British) National Council

For Aviculture and which accordingly has an intended audience of bird-keepers. The writer's challenge is to the police on behalf of this target audience, many of whom have apparently been writing to the journal complaining that police do not take appropriate action in the event of their prize birds being stolen.

When the **pronouncement** confronts the addressee (as in [3.31]), there is an obvious threat to solidarity since the authorial voice overtly presents itself as at odds with this construed addressee. Where such a confrontation does take place, the speaker/writer will often employ further dialogistic resources by which additional grounds will be supplied by which solidarity may obtain, even in the face of this apparent disalignment.

When the **pronouncement** confronts some third party (eg the police as in [3.33]) on behalf of the putative addressee, the opposite situation applies. Here the text obviously builds solidarity in that the speaker/writer is presented as standing with the addressee in opposition to some axiologically alien third party. This strategy (the addresser standing with the addressee against some dialogic adversary) is frequently exploited in political rhetoric and journalistic commentary.

3.14.2 Pronouncement – lexicogrammatical realisations

As the previous discussion has indicated, **pronouncement** is a rhetorically, discourse-semantically motivated category and its realisations are lexico-grammatically diverse. Nevertheless, it is still possible to provide an account of the typical grammar of **pronouncement**. We notice, in fact, that the range of options is in some way analogous with the range of options which are available for the realisation of the modal values which we outlined in Chapter 1 (see sections 1.2.2 and 1.2.4) and considered again in our discussion of **dialogistic expansiveness** (see section 3.6 above). Recall that in English there are two axes of variation by which modal assessments can be construed: subjective versus objective and explicit versus implicit. The subjective–objective distinction turns on whether the speaker/writer's subjective role in making the assessment is overtly announced (eg *I believe that he's lying*; *He may be lying* = 'subjective') or is in some way obscured, backgrounded or impersonalised (eg *It's probable he's lying*; *Probably he's lying* = 'objective'). The explicit–implicit distinction turns on whether the modal assessment is given prominence through being encoded by means of a matrix clause (eg *I believe that*; *It's probable that* ... = 'explicit') or whether it is

Table 3.2 Realisation options for pronunciation

	subjective (<i>explicitly grounded in the speaker/writer's subjectivity</i>)	objective (<i>subjectivity obscured or impersonalised</i>)
explicit (<i>emphasis via a matrix/top level clause</i>)	I <u>contend</u> it's the worst address by a British Prime Minister	<u>The facts of the matter are that</u> it was the worst address
implicit (<i>emphasis via a sub-clausal element</i>)	It <u>WAS</u> the worst address ...	<u>Really</u> , it's the worst address ...

but one element of the clause (eg *He's probably lying; He may be lying* = 'implicit').

The same optionality and proportionalities can be observed across many of the realisations of **pronouncement**. See, for example, Table 3.2.

In the previous discussion we exemplified two of these options: objective explicit (*the facts of the matter are ...*) and subjective explicit (*I contend that ...*). The objective, implicit option is exemplified by the following:

[3.34] Contrary to what one might expect, unhappy couples reported many occasions of feeling happy when together. The beeper found them enjoying themselves watching their child's baseball game, having a barbecue with neighbors, even going out to a movie alone with each other. ... What really differentiates cool from warm couples is greater frequency of negative experiences, rather than fewer positive experiences when together. The distressed couples in our study reported twice as many times together that both were in negative moods. [Bank of English]

Here the *really* is employed as the authorial voice sets itself against the commonsense assumption that dysfunctional couples are those which experience few happy interactions.

The subjective, implicit option is realised via formulations in which there is some added emphasis on the finite auxiliary – eg *I DID turn out the lights before I left*. This is obviously more a feature of speech than of writing. Nevertheless, we do observe the same option in written language, where formatting (for example all capitals) is employed to

Table 3.3 A taxonomy of pronunciation realisations

	subjective (<i>explicitly grounded in the speaker/writer's subjectivity</i>)	objective (<i>subjectivity obscured or impersonalised</i>)
explicit (<i>emphasis via a matrix/top level clause</i>)	<p><u>It is absolutely clear to me that</u> what Charlotte was arguing was that Crouching Tiger was a bad film to which liberal audiences imputed a significance shaped by their own prejudices</p> <p><u>we have to remember that</u> bobbies move around – and slowly. And when they're busy with one person, they're not available to others</p> <p><u>I contend that</u> Bush and King Fahd do, indeed, have a policy</p> <p><u>I contend that</u> a telephone call to a person who has been robbed takes only a couple of minutes and shows that someone cares</p>	<p><u>the facts of the matter are that</u> we have never made the national decisions or marshaled the national resources required for such leadership.</p>
implicit (<i>emphasis via a sub-clausal element</i>)	<p>Bobbies on the beat are <u>NOT</u> the real answer</p> <p>A terrifying new probe yesterday revealed Saddam Hussein <u>WAS</u> secretly preparing for chemical, biological and even nuclear war</p>	<p>Conservatives do not <u>really</u> want states to spend more, in order to compensate for reduced federal spending</p> <p>What <u>really</u> differentiates cool from warm couples is greater frequency of negative experiences</p>

indicate the emphasis. This is a device favoured by tabloid newspaper headline writers.

Examples of the various options within **pronouncement** grouped according to this taxonomy are provided in Table 3.3.

3.14.3 Pronouncement and assessments of high probability

There is one further aspect of the functionality of these **pronouncing** meanings which requires a brief mention. It is sometimes the case in the

hedging and meta-discourse literature (see for example, Hyland 2000) that emphasising formulations of this type are grouped together with assessments of high probability (eg *He must be lying; I'm convinced he's lying*) under a heading such as 'booster' or 'up-toner'. There are certainly grounds for such a grouping on the basis that assessments of high probability and the authorial interpolations which we classify as **pronouncement** both indicate heightened investment or involvement in the proposition by the speaker/writer – both types of locution do 'boost' in this way. Nevertheless, alongside this point of communicative similarity, there is also an important dissimilarity. Despite the speaker/ writer's upscaled investment, assessments of high probability are nevertheless still dialogistically expansive, and are classified as instances of **entertain**. Thus *he must be lying* construes the proposition as one which has been derived by the speaker via some process of deduction and hence one which is presented as defeatable should new, counter evidence become available. Accordingly, there is nothing rhetorically untoward about *He must be lying, don't you think?* In formulations involving explicitly subjective modal assessments such as *I'm convinced he's lying*, the explicit grounding of the proposition in the speaker/writer's own cognitive processes presents the proposition as but one view among a range of potential alternative views, even while the speaker/writer signals that they are strongly committed to this particular viewpoint. Halliday has made a similar point in observing that we only explicitly declare ourselves to be 'certain' when, in fact, there is some question or debate as to certainty (Halliday 1994: 362). Accordingly, as assessments of probability, such modals are dialogically expansive – they still 'entertain' the possibility of dialogistical alternatives. Pronouncements, in contrast, do not 'entertain' alternative positions in this way but, as we have demonstrated, are directed towards challenging and dismissing an alternative viewpoint. They, therefore, are dialogistically contractive rather than expansive. As a consequence of this analysis we are able to distinguish between two sub-types of 'boosters' – those which are dialogistically expansive (eg *I am convinced that ...*) and those which are contractive (eg *I contend that ...*).

An overview of the **engagement** system is provided by the system network set out in Figure 3.4.

3.15 Engagement, intertextuality and the grammar of reported speech

By way of clarification we briefly note that under this framework, reported speech (what in systemic linguistics is termed 'projection') is

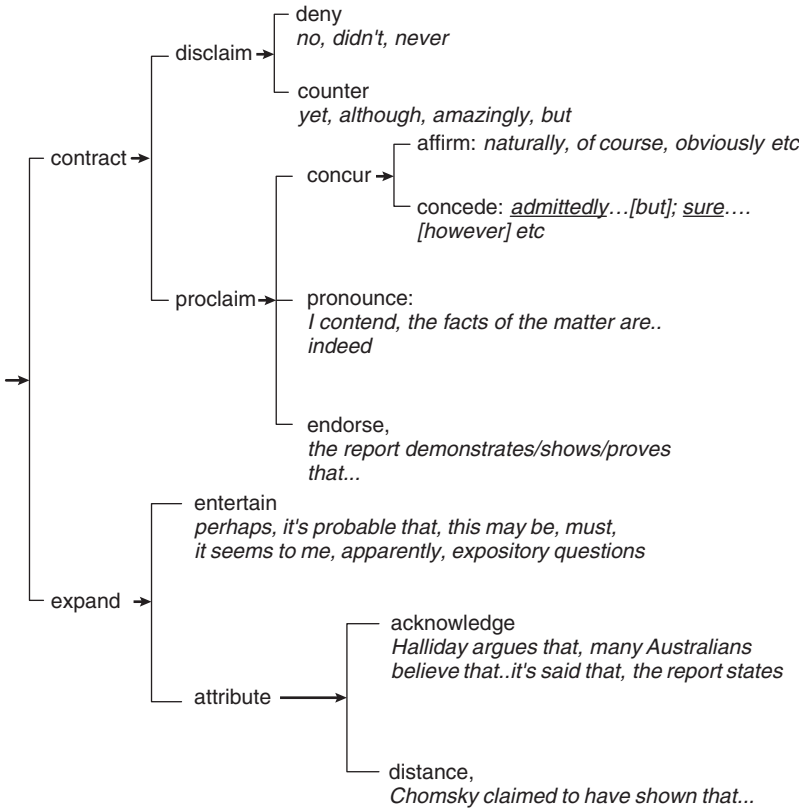


Figure 3.4 The engagement system

diversified across the system. This follows from the fact that the structure

matrix clause + projected clause

can variously realise **attribute: distance**, eg:

They are claiming he can't tell the wood from the trees.

attribute: acknowledge, eg:

They have stated that he can't tell the wood from the trees

as well as **proclaim: endorse**, eg:

They demonstrated that he can't tell the wood from the trees.

This follows from our dialogistic perspective under which the issue of who/what is the primary source of the proposition is secondary to the issue of how the authorial voice is positioning itself with respect to the anticipated reactions and responses of the audience which is being construed for the text. Thus it is the semantics of dialogistic **contraction/expansion**, orientated as this is towards such anticipation, which takes precedence over whether the purported source of the proposition is external or internal to the text. Frameworks which give preference to sourcing (for example, Sinclair's notion of 'attribution' and 'averal' – Sinclair 1986) have a retrospective orientation in that they look backwards to the origin of the proposition in some prior utterance. Our framework has a prospective or anticipatory orientation in that we are concerned with the way in which the text builds for itself an audience and presents itself as engaging in various ways with this audience.

The distinction captured by Sinclair's notions of 'attribution' and 'averal' (as he defines these terms) is, of course, a highly significant one rhetorically. It is almost always vital in the sort of text analyses we conduct to establish who is being presented as the source of the proposition and whether or not the speaker/writer has sought to shift responsibility for the proposition to some external source. White (1998, 2004b) has used the terms 'extra-vocalisation' and 'intra-vocalisation' to cover the distinction.

3.16 Graduation: an overview

We turn now to the second major sub-system of meanings with which we are concerned in this chapter – those concerned with up-scaling and down-scaling.

As we indicated briefly in Chapter 2, a defining property of all attitudinal meanings is their gradability. It is a general property of values of **affect**, **judgement** and **appreciation** that they construe greater or lesser degrees of positivity or negativity. See for example, Table 3.4.

Gradability is also generally a feature of the **engagement** system. Here the meaning which is scaled will vary from sub-system to sub-system, though, more broadly, **engagement** values scale for the degree of the

Table 3.4 The gradability of attitudinal meanings

	low degree ←-----→		high degree ←-----→	
judgement	competent player	good player		brilliant player
	reasonably good player	quite good player	very good player	extremely good player
affect	contentedly	happily	joyously	ecstatically
	slightly upset	somewhat upset	very upset	extremely upset
appreciation	a bit untidy	somewhat untidy	very untidy	completely untidy
	attractive	beautiful		exquisite

Table 3.5 The gradability of engagement values

	lower ←-----→		higher ←-----→	
entertain	I suspect she betrayed us	I believe she betrayed us	I am convinced she betrayed us	
	possibly she betrayed us she just possibly betrayed us	probably she betrayed us she possibly betrayed us	definitely she betrayed us she very possibly betrayed us	
attribute	She suggested that I had cheated	She stated that I had cheated	She insisted that I had cheated	
pronounce	I'd say he's the man for the job	I contend he's the man for the job	I insist that he's the man for the job	
concur	admittedly he's technically proficient (but he doesn't play with feeling)		certainly he's technically proficient (but ...)	
disclaim	I didn't hurt him		I never hurt him	

speaker/writer's intensity, or the degree of their investment in the utterance. See for example, Table 3.5.

The semantics of **graduation**, therefore, is central to the appraisal system. It might be said that **attitude** and **engagement** are domains of **graduation** which differ according to the nature of the meanings being scaled. This section provides an outline of the lexicogrammatical resources by which **graduation** is realised and a discussion of some of the key dialogistic effects associated with this up-scaling/down-scaling.

3.16.1 Force and focus

Graduation operates across two axes of scalability – that of grading according to intensity or amount, and that of grading according to prototypicality and the preciseness by which category boundaries are drawn. Graduation according to intensity/amount has its natural domain of operation over categories which involve inherently scalar assessments – for example the attitudinal assessments just exemplified (gradable along clines of positivity/negativity) but also assessments of size, vigour, extent, proximity, and so on. The term ‘force’ references graduations of this type. We explore the semantics of **force** in detail in sections 3.18 to 3.20 below.

Graduation according to prototypicality operates as phenomena are scaled by reference to the degree to which they match some supposed core or exemplary instance of a semantic category. Via locutions such a *true, real, genuine* (ie *He’s a true friend*) the phenomenon is assessed as prototypical and via locutions such as *kind of, of sorts, effectively, bordering on*, and the suffix *-ish* (ie *It was an apology of sorts, we’ll be there at five o’clock-ish*) the phenomenon is assessed as lying on the outer margins of the category. The term ‘focus’ references graduation of this type and we explore the semantics and dialogistic functionality of this resource in the following section.

3.17 Graduation: focus

Graduation according to prototypicality (**focus**) applies most typically to categories which, when viewed from an experiential perspective, are not scalable. These are the clearly bounded, either–or categories which operate in experiential taxonomies where category membership is more or less precisely determined by some combination of sufficient and necessary conditions. In this case, **graduation** operates to reconstrue these categories in such a way that they participate in scalable clines of prototypicality. For example,

They don’t play **real** jazz.

They play jazz, **sort of**.

From the experiential perspective, jazz music is a distinct category, within a taxonomy of music types, defined by various properties (for example, according to one commonly-applied definition, it involves improvisation and certain ‘swung’ rhythms). However, in the above instances, it is reconstrued according to an interpersonal semantic by

which some types of musical performances are assessed as prototypical of the jazz category and others as being only marginal exemplars. Membership in the ‘jazz music’ category is no longer an either–or proposition but a matter of degree. **Graduation** which operates in this way is termed ‘focus’.

Under **focus** it is possible to up-scale, or ‘sharpen’, the specification so that prototypicality is indicated (eg *a real father, a true friend*) or to down-scale, or ‘soften’, the specification so as to characterise an instance as having only marginal membership in the category (eg *they sort of play jazz, they are kind of crazy, it was an apology of sorts*). **Softening** values have been explored in the literature under such headings as ‘hedges’ (see for example Lakoff 1973) and ‘vague language’ (see Channell 1994) and the sharpening of values has been considered under the heading of intensifiers, boosters and amplifiers (see, for example, Labov 1984 and Hyland 2000).

Graduation according to prototypicality, however, is not confined to such ‘experiential’ categories. Some inherently scalar categories (generally gradable according to intensity) are also gradable according to prototypicality. For example, we encounter both *a **very** red carpet* [*intensity*] and *a piece of **genuinely** red carpet* [*prototypicality*]. Similarly it is possible to graduate an attitudinal, and hence naturally scalable, term such as *upset* not only by reference to intensity (*slightly upset, very upset*), but also by reference to prototypicality – *I’m feeling kind of upset / I’m feeling upset, sort of*. In this last instance, *kind of / sort of*, construes the speaker’s feelings as lying on the borderline of *upset-ness*, as having only a marginal/non-prototypical membership in the category.

The **graduation** network as demonstrated to this point is illustrated in Figure 3.5.

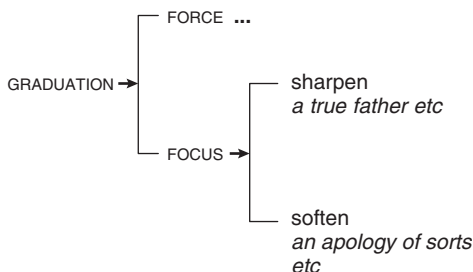


Figure 3.5 A preliminary outline of graduation

3.17.1 Focus and attitude – experiential categories

When the term being graduated under **focus** is an otherwise non-attitudinal term (eg *jazz music, husband, father*) there is a strong tendency for the cline of prototypicality to be invested with attitudinality. Instances of **sharpening** often strongly flag a positive attitudinal assessment (eg *a real husband, a true husband*) while instances of purported marginality flag a negative assessment (eg *jazz of sorts, it provides a sanctuary of a kind*). The nature of the **attitude** evoked will be determined by the specific semantics of the graduated category and will also be subject to co-textual influences such as, for example, attitudinal prosodies established by inscribed attitudinal values elsewhere in the text.

3.17.2 Focus, inscribed attitude and writer–reader relationships

When the term being graduated according to prototypicality is already explicitly attitudinal (eg *a real brat, a real wonder, kind of upset, kind of crazy, bordering on the unreasonable, kind of marvellous*) the rhetorical effect varies according to whether the value is **sharpening** or **softening**. Under sharpening (*a real brat, a genuine hero*), the effect is to indicate maximal investment by the authorial voice in the value position (either negative or positive) being advanced and hence to strongly align the reader into the value position being advanced.

When the **softened** term is a negative one, the effect is to indicate a lessening of the speaker/writer's investment in the value position and hence to offer a conciliatory gesture directed towards maintaining solidarity with those who hold contrary views. We considered an instance of such a **softening** in our discussion of *bordering on the unreasonable* in the introductory section of the chapter.

The effect is not so straightforward when the **softened** term is a positive one. Consider by way of example the following extract from a New York Film Academy review of actor Meryl Streep's performance in the movie *Adaptation*. In the movie, Streep portrays a real-life, still living New York celebrity and author, Susan Orlean. The movie is notable in that it makes very clear that the characterisation of Orlean is not intended to be true-to-life but, rather, is fancifully fictional. It is particularly relevant for our current concerns that in this 'fictionalised' characterisation, Orlean is portrayed in very negative terms as, according to the review, an 'orchid-obsessed, drug-snorting, Lady Macbethish adulteress'. (**Softenings** of positive attitudinal terms have been underlined.)

[3.35] Maybe the language isn't precise, but her [Streep's] faux Susan Orlean is flawless – a smartly assayed embodiment of yearning (intellectual, artistic, spiritual) that's very funny and even **kind of sexy**. And what's the real-life Orlean's review? 'It's the funniest concept you can imagine: Meryl Streep, greatest actress in the world, is me,' says the author. 'It's **kind of marvelous**.' [www.ew.com/r0/ew/ – accessed 29/08/03]

The first softening (*kind of sexy*) occurs as the writer, via the counter-expectational *even* (*even kind of sexy*), construes a putative reader for whom it will be surprising that such a negatively-evaluated character could be portrayed as 'sexy'. The precise communicative effect of the softening is difficult to articulate precisely. The strategy seems to be one in which the writer indicates reserve towards the positively evaluative 'sexy' so as to maintain solidarity with those for whom such positivity towards a 'drug-snorting, Lady Macbethish adulteress' would be untoward. The second softening (*kind of marvellous*) occurs in a quote from the real-life author, Susan Orlean, herself. Once again the precise communicative effect is difficult to pin down but it seems to us to act as a display of modesty on the part of Orlean. Presumably appearing to take too much pleasure in being portrayed by the 'greatest actress in the world' may come across as gloating or smug and hence the expression of this pleasure is attenuated (*kind of marvellous* rather than just *marvellous*). In general, then, softening of positive values occurs when the positive assessment is being construed as potentially problematic for writer–reader solidarity.

3.18 Graduation: force – intensification and quantification

We turn now to the second major sub-category of **graduation** – that of **force**.

As indicated, **force** covers assessments as to degree of intensity and as to amount. Assessments of degree of intensity can operate over qualities (eg *slightly foolish*, *extremely foolish*; *it stopped somewhat abruptly*, *it stopped very abruptly*), over processes (eg *This slightly hindered us*, *This greatly hindered us*), or over the verbal modalities of likelihood, usuality, inclination and obligation (eg *it's just possible that*, *it's very possible that*). We employ the term 'intensification' to refer to this scaling of qualities and processes.

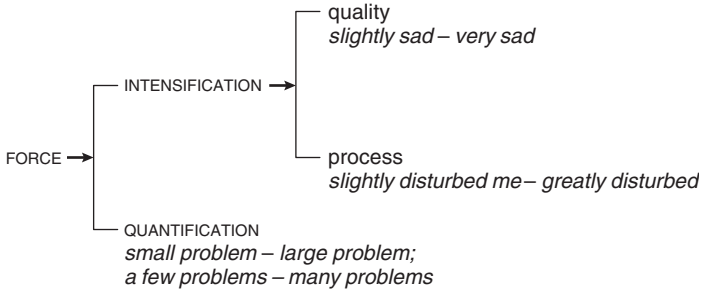


Figure 3.6 Force: intensification – quality and process

Assessments of amount apply to entities, rather than to qualities and processes. We term such assessments, ‘quantification’. These provide for the imprecise measuring of number (eg a *few* miles, *many* miles) and imprecise measuring of the presence or mass of entities according to such features as their size, weight, distribution or proximity (eg *small amount*, *large amount*; *nearby mountain*, *distant mountain*).

A preliminary network for the resources of **force** is provided in Figure 3.6.

3.19 Force: intensification

3.19.1 Modes of intensification – isolating

The assessment of degree of intensity of qualities and processes is termed ‘intensification’. **Intensifications** divide into two broad lexicogrammatical classes – ‘isolating’ and ‘infusing’. The distinction turns on whether the up-scaling/down-scaling is realised by an isolated, individual item which solely, or at least primarily, performs the function of setting the level of intensity, or whether the sense of up/down-scaling is fused with a meaning which serves some other semantic function. Isolating realisations are exemplified by the following:

Up/down-scaling of qualities

[pre-modification of an adjective]

a bit miserable, somewhat miserable, relatively miserable, fairly miserable, rather miserable, very miserable, extremely miserable, utterly miserable

[*pre-modification of an adverb*]

slightly abruptly, somewhat abruptly, fairly abruptly, quite abruptly, rather abruptly, very abruptly

Up/down-scaling of verbal processes

[*adverbially modified verbal group*]

this upset me slightly, this upset me a bit, this upset me somewhat, this upset me greatly

Up/down-scaling of modalities

just possible, somewhat possible, quite possible, very possible
reasonably often, quite often, very often, extremely often

Localised or relative scaling with respect to intensity is realised via comparatives and superlatives – for example,

less miserable, least miserable, more miserable, most miserable
more probable, most probable
happier, happiest

3.19.2 Maximisation

At the upper-most end of the scale of intensification are located value which have been termed ‘maximisers’ (eg Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik 1985) – locutions which construe the up-scaling as being at the highest possible intensity. There is a proliferation of options at this maximising end of the intensity spectrum. For example,

utterly miserable, totally miserable, thoroughly miserable, absolutely miserable, completely miserable; perfectly happy

These maximizers also include the highest value for the modal assessments of usuality – ie *always*. This value often operates hyperbolically to convey strong writer/speaker investment in the proposition, rather than any ‘literal’ sense of constancy or uninterrupted repetition. For example,

When I’m on a diet I’m always thinking about food; This gate in constant use.

3.19.3 Lexicalisation

Intensifiers of this type (eg *slightly*, *very*, *rather*) are typically classed as ‘grammatical’ items on the grounds that they are a closed set and that

they have no referential meaning. However, intensification is also carried out by isolated modifiers which are 'lexical' rather than 'grammatical'. These are locutions which are either figurative in some way,

ice cold,
crystal clear
dirt poor

or which convey an attitudinal overtone,

reasonably happy,
amazingly happy, deliriously happy, perfectly happy
dreadfully cold,
ridiculously easy

We note, however, that such formulations involve what Sinclair has termed 'delexicalisation'. They are collocations which are so fixed and formulaic that the intensifying premodifying epithet no longer carries its full semantic load. As Sinclair observes,

The meaning of words chosen together is different from their independent meanings. They are at least partly delexicalized. This is the necessary correlate of co-selection. If you know that selections are not independent, and that one selection depends on another, then there must be a result and effect on the meaning which in each individual choice is a delexicalization of one kind or another. It will not have its independent meaning in full if it is only part of a choice involving one or more words. [Sinclair 1994: 23]

Thus, in practice, there is nothing semantically untoward about the fact, for example, that *ice cold Coke* is, in fact, virtually never *ice cold*. Similarly, to characterise someone as *deliriously happy* is not to characterise them as *delirious* (a negative **judgement of capacity**), and is only subtly different from characterising them as *extremely happy*.

3.19.4 Modes of intensification – infusion

As indicated, with **infused** intensification there is no separate lexical form conveying the sense of up-scaling or down-scaling. Rather the scaling is conveyed as but one aspect of the meaning of a single term. For example.

Quality

contented, happy, joyous
(she performed) competently, skilfully, brilliantly
warm, hot, scalding

Process

this disquieted me, this startled me, this frightened me, this terrified me
the water trickled out of the tap, flowed out of the tap, poured out of the tap, flooded out of the tap
the price inched up, the price rose, the price shot up
she ambled, she walked, she strode
I glanced over the manuscript, I looked over the manuscript, I scrutinised the manuscript
The clouds drifted across the sky. The clouds raced across the sky.

Modality

possible, probable, certain
rarely, occasionally, sometimes, often, always

Here, then, degree of intensity is conveyed as individual terms in a sequence of semantically related terms contrast in degree of intensity with the other members of that sequence.

3.19.5 Modes of intensification – repetition

Intensification can also be realised via repetition – either by the repeating of the same lexical item,

It's hot hot hot.

We laughed and laughed and laughed.

or by the assembling of lists of terms which are closely related semantically. For example,

In fact it was probably the most immature, irresponsible, disgraceful and misleading address ever given by a British Prime Minister.

3.19.6 Intensification and verbal processes – some additional issues

Above we demonstrated the up/down-scaling of verbal processes by means of ‘grammatical’ intensifiers such as *slightly* and *greatly* (eg *This slightly troubles me / This greatly troubles me*). However, **intensification** as it applies to processes is somewhat more complex grammatically than this initial outline may suggest. While qualities (as realised by adjectives and adverbs) are very generally scalable by means of grammatical intensifiers (eg via *slightly, rather, very*), this is not the case with processes. Only a relatively small subset is scalable via such ‘grammatical’ means. This grammatically-scalable group includes verbs of **affect** (as demonstrated in the previous examples) as well as several other semantic subsets (Matthiessen 1995, section 4.8.2.5). For example:

[*processes conveying attitudinal assessments*]

You slightly misled me. You completely misled me.

We have been somewhat betrayed by the government. We have been utterly betrayed by the government.

This slightly improves its appearance. This greatly improves its appearance.

[*processes of transformation*]

They have slightly reduced the deficit. They have greatly reduced the deficit.

[*processes of conation*]

This hindered us slightly. This greatly hindered our progress.

She helped us slightly. She helped us a great deal.

Many other types of processes are not scalable by these means. Thus, by way of just a few examples, it is not typically possible to scale the intensity of the action depicted by a motion verb by means of such grammatical adverbs. English does not allow for,

*The water slightly flowed. *The water greatly flowed.

Nor does it provide ‘grammatical’ means for up-scaling/down-scaling the intensity of most verbs of perception. Thus the non-occurrence of,

*He slightly watched the passing parade. *He greatly watched the passing parade.

Rather, as Hood 2004 demonstrates, English provides for the up-scaling/down-scaling of such processes via lexical means, specifically by means of lexical adverbs which scale by reference to a notion of vigour.¹¹ The precise semantics of this up-scaling/down-scaling will vary according to the specific semantics of the verb. We illustrate a range of these lexical intensifications with respect to 'vigour' below:

The water flowed slowly. The water flowed swiftly

She brushed it gently. She brushed it vigorously.

She held it loosely. She held it firmly

The light shone dimly across the valley. The light shone brightly across the valley.

She slept lightly. She slept deeply/soundly

She watched desultorily. She watched intently.

He casually observed those around him. He closely observed those around him.

Here the 'vigour' which is being scaled up or down is variously a matter of speed (*slowly/swiftly*), physical force (*gently/vigorously*, *loosely/firmly*), illumination (*dimly/brightly*), consciousness (*lightly/deeply*) or concentration (*desultorily/intently*; *casually/closely*).

These lexicalised realisations of degree of intensity take us to a point in the grammar which is marginal between interpersonal meaning and experiential meaning in that such values combine a subjective assessment of degree of 'vigour' with a depiction of some condition in the external world – the 'manner' in which the process took place. Traditionally within systemic functional linguistics, such adverbs have been classified as 'circumstances of manner' and treated as experiential meanings (see Halliday 1994: 150–1). We follow Stillar, who has argued for separating circumstances/adverbials of manner from other circumstantial meanings (such as those of time, location, cause) on the basis that manner is not an aspect of the material world, since there is no 'inherent way' in which processes are enacted. Accordingly circumstances of manner always implicate the speaker/writer's subjectivity – the speaker's selection of particular manner adverb leaves a trace of their own attitudes and point-of-view (Stillar 1998: 37).

Scaling for degree of 'vigour' is not, of course, confined to 'isolating' formulations of this type. In exemplifying the infused **intensification** of verbal processes above, we offered several instances where the

intensification is likewise by reference to degree of vigour. Thus,

The clouds drifted across the sky (*down-scaled 'vigour' with respect to motion*)

is the analogue of

The clouds moved slowly across the sky

while

The clouds raced across the sky (*up-scaled 'vigour' with respect to motion*)

is the analogue of

The clouds moved rapidly across the sky.

Similarly,

I glanced over the work (*down-scaled 'vigour' of perception*)

is the analogue of

I casually looked over the work

while

I scrutinised the work (*up-scaled 'vigour' of perception*)

is the analogue of

I looked closely at the work.

3.19.7 Intensification of processes – metaphor

Figurative meanings (metaphor and simile) are also occasionally employed in the intensification of processes. These occur both under isolation, for example,

He came out like a jack in a box (*high degree of vigour*)

and under infusion, for example,

Prices have sky-rocketed (*high degree of vigour*)

The water dribbled from the tap (*low degree of vigour*)

Such metaphors typically involve de-lexicalisation. In the terms employed in the literature on metaphor they are, to greater or lesser degrees, 'dead', 'dormant', 'inactive' or 'conventionalised'.

3.19.8 The grammar of intensification – summary

In summary, then, the semantics of intensification is one by which:

- the **intensification** (up-scaling/down-scaling) applies to either qualities (*slightly greedy, very greedy*) or verbal processes (*reduced it slightly, reduced it greatly*);
- the **intensification** is realised either via an isolated lexeme (*slightly, very, greatly*), via semantic infusion (*happy ^ ecstatic; trickled ^ poured*) or via repetition (*laughed and laughed and laughed*);
- the realisation is either figurative (*crystal clear, came out like a jack in box, prices sky-rocketed*) or non-figurative (*very clear, greatly reduced, moved rapidly*);
- in the case of isolated **intensifications**, the realisation is either grammatical (*very easy, greatly reduced*) or lexical (*amazingly easy, crystal clear, moved rapidly*);
- lexical **intensifications** of qualities are typically attitudinal – for example, *amazingly, dreadfully, ridiculously*, though at least some figurative locutions are less so – for example, *ice cold*;
- lexical **intensifications** of processes are not typically attitudinal – for example, *moved swiftly, stared intently*, with a few exceptions – for example, *prices fell dramatically*.

The combinations of these features which operate for the scaling of qualities is demonstrated in Table 3.6, and for the scaling of processes in Table 3.7 following.

3.20 Force: quantification

Quantification involves scaling with respect to amount (eg size, weight, strength, number), and with respect to extent, with extent covering

Table 3.6 Feature combinations for quality intensifications [Qualities]

repetition	infusion	isolation		
		grammatical	lexical	
			non-figurative	figurative
<i>a deplorable, disgraceful, despicable act</i>	<i>contended ^ happy ^ joyous</i>	<i>slightly greedy ^ relatively greedy ^ very greedy</i>	<i>dreadfully poor</i> (attitudinal)	<i>dirt poor</i> (attitudinal); <i>ice cold</i> (non-attitudinal)

Table 3.7 Feature combinations for process intensifications [Processes]

repetition	infusion		isolation		
	non-figurative	figurative	grammatical	lexical	
				non-figurative	figurative
<i>we laughed and laughed and laughed</i>	<i>likes ^ loves ^ adores; trickles ^ flows, gushes</i>	<i>prices inched up ^ prices skyrocketed</i>	<i>slightly reduce ^ greatly reduce</i>	<i>move slowly ^ move rapidly</i> (non-attitudinal); <i>fell dramatically</i> (attitudinal)	<i>came out like a jack in a box</i> (non-attitudinal); <i>wander about like Brown's cows</i> (attitudinal)

scope in time and space (ie how widely distributed, how long lasting) and proximity in time and space (ie how near, how recent).

The semantics of this sub-system are complicated by the fact that the quantified entity can be either concrete (eg *large shark, many sharks, nearby sharks*) or abstract (eg *a large problem, many problems; a few anxieties, a slight fear; a great success, her many betrayals*). Often these abstract entities will convey attitudinal meanings. For example:

(affect) I have many worries about your performance. / A huge sense of relief overwhelmed me. / I have a tiny little concern as regards her design sense

(judgement) There is vast corruption in this government. / His one small moral weakness is towards ... / He's got a great talent for playing

the guitar / I do seem to have a small talent for explaining things to people of all ages

(appreciation) The many beauties of the Nile valley. / There is a slight problem with your essay / There are a few problems with your essay.

The abstractions, of course, construe as entities values which might otherwise have been construed either as qualities or as processes. For example.

a slight concern [quantified entity] versus *slightly concerned* [intensified quality/process]

a huge success [quantified entity] versus *very successful* [intensified quality]

her many betrayals [quantified entity] versus *frequently betrayed* [process with high value of usuality]

Following Halliday, such formulations are classified as ‘grammatical metaphors’ in that they involve one category (a quality or a process) being presented as if it were another category (a thing/entity). (See Chapter 1 section 1.2.2 for further discussion.) Accordingly, such formulations construe semantically complex categories in which one layer of meaning (the semantic status of the category as quality or process) is laid over another layer of meaning (the lexicogrammatical status of the category as noun).

What this means is that formulations such as *a huge disappointment/a slight concern* involve **quantification** when viewed from the perspective of the lexicogrammar (reckonings of the size of ‘entities’) but **intensification** from the perspective of the discourse semantic meanings being made. We give preference to the lexicogrammar and classify such as instances of graduation: **quantification** (rather than of **intensification**) in recognition of the fact that there is a subtle difference of meaning between the assessment of some behaviour as, for example, *a huge disappointment* (quantification) rather than as *hugely disappointing* (**intensification**). However, it is still necessary to recognise the special ‘grammatically metaphorical’ nature of this type of **quantification**. In some analyses it may be useful to identify them as instances of **intensification** via **quantification**, or **intensification** as **quantification**.

3.20.1 Modes of quantification: number, mass and extent

Quantifications graduate with respect to imprecise reckonings of number (eg *a few, many*), imprecise reckonings of mass or presence (eg *small*,

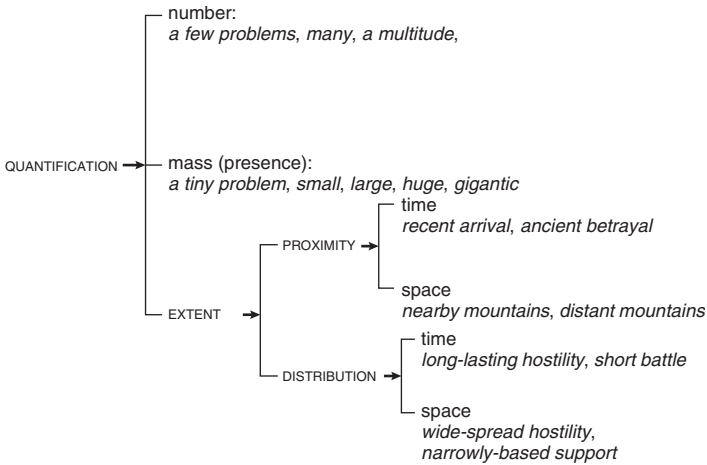


Figure 3.7 Force: quantification

large; thin, thick; light, heavy; dim, bright) and imprecise reckonings of extent in time and space, with time and space being measured with respect to proximity (eg *near, far; recent, ancient*) or distribution (eg *long-lasting, short-term; wide-spread, sparse*). A system network for quantification is provided in Figure 3.7.

3.20.2 Quantification: isolation and infusion

Quantification is typically via an isolated term acting as a modifier of the graduated entity – eg *many, large, heavy, near, recent, long-lasting*. Nevertheless, there are locutions which are analogous with the infusing formulation we observed under **intensification** in that the estimation of quantity is carried, not by a modifier, but by the noun head itself. For example:

[*number*]

Canon unveils **a throng of** digital imaging products (versus many digital imaging products)

The trickle of enquiries rapidly became **a stream** (versus ‘a few enquiries soon became many enquiries’)

[*mass – size*]he's a **mountain** of a man (versus 'he's a large man.')she's a **slip** of a girl (versus 'she's a small girl')[*extent*]I see a **paucity** of talent in this countryThere was a **profusion** of pink at the Alexandra Blossom Festival

3.20.3 Quantification: metaphor

As the examples just listed demonstrate, these infusions often involve metaphor which, once again, is to greater or lesser degrees delexicalised (eg *a trickle of enquiries, a mountain of a man*). But metaphor is also to be found in isolating locutions. For example,

Very shortly we were struggling through **mountainous seas**

The combinations of these features which operate for quantification are set out in Table 3.8.

3.21 Force (intensification and quantification), attitude and writer–reader relationships

As already outlined briefly in the opening chapter (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.5), **force** (both **intensification** and **quantification**) interacts with attitude to either increase or decrease the 'volume' of that attitude as evaluative prosodies are set up across the text. There are associated effect with respect to alignment and solidarity. Upscaling of attitude frequently acts to construe the speaker/writer as maximally committed to the value position being advanced and hence as strongly aligning the reader into that value position. Thus, in the following extract,

Table 3.8 Feature combinations for quantification

isolated		infused	
non-figurative	figurative	non-figurative	figurative
<i>small ^ large ^ huge,</i>	<i>mountainous seas</i>	<i>a crowd of party-goers,</i>	<i>mountain of a man,</i>
<i>a few ^ many</i>		<i>a profusion of pink</i>	<i>a trickle/stream of enquiries</i>

for example, the up-scaling of *unwise* construes the writer as maximally committed to the community of shared value which regards the legislature negatively:

[3.36] The legislature's **extremely unwise decision** to remove the cap on tuition increases at Ohio's colleges was accompanied by an even more reckless act. [www.cleveland.com/livelines/index.ssf?/livelines/more/060801.html]

Downscaling frequently has the obverse effect of construing the speaker/writer as having only a partial or an attenuated affiliation with the value position being referenced.

Force plays another important attitudinal role in frequently acting to flag that meanings which are not explicitly attitudinal are, nevertheless, evaluatively charged. Thus **force** is one of the mechanisms by which attitudinal tokens (as opposed to inscriptions) are construed. This functionality was briefly noted at several points previously. Thus in Chapter 2 we observed that the infused intensification conveyed by *smashed* in,

We took the traditional lands and **smashed** the traditional way of life.

acts to signal to the reader/listener that ethical issues are at stake here. And as we noted in section 3.7.3 above, via upscaled quantification of the sources to whom some proposition is attributed (eg *most linguists believe that ...*), it is possible to construe indirectly that proposition as highly warrantable. (For further detail and discussion of this effect see Hood 2004.)

A full system-network for **graduation** is supplied in Figure 3.8.

3.22 Analysing intersubjective positioning

With this we conclude our outline of the resources of **engagement** and **graduation**. In this final section we provide a brief exploration of how these meanings interact with each other and with values of **attitude** as evaluative orientations are built across the unfolding text. Although the text we employ for this purpose is a short one (a free-standing snippet from a newspaper column made up of five similar such snippets), it nevertheless demonstrates some of the key effects which are to be observed as **engagement**, **graduation** and **attitude** interact in context. The text is concerned with two popular British television police dramas, *Inspector*

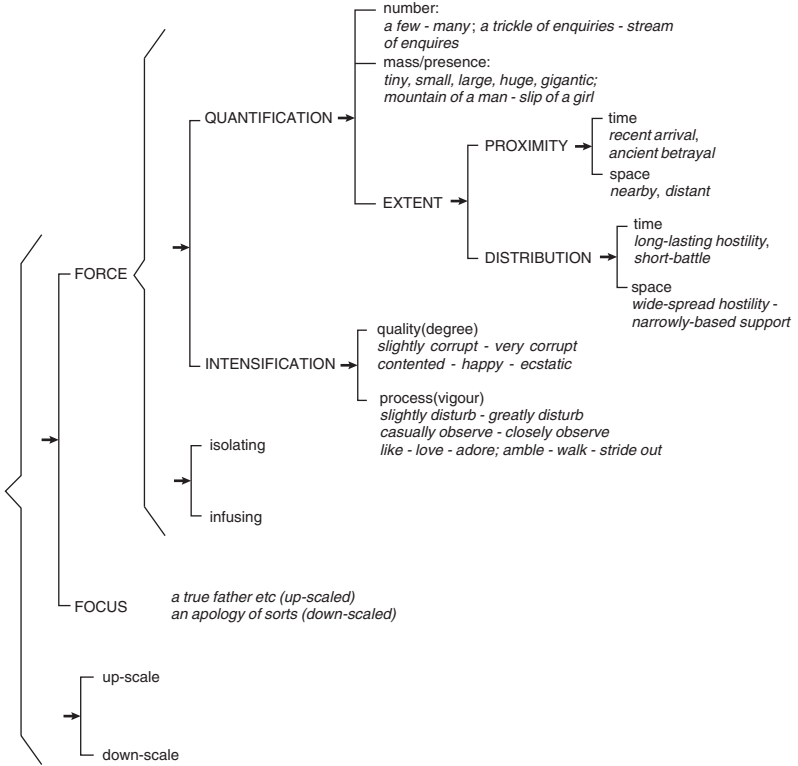


Figure 3.8 System network for graduation: force and focus

Morse and *The Sweeney*, both of which featured the actor John Thaw in the lead role. *Inspector Morse* was screened in the 1990s and *The Sweeney* in the 1970s. The latter was renowned for its warts-and-all portrayal of its police detective characters (played by Thaw and Denis Waterman) who were beloved by viewers on account of their fallibility and the fact that they often cut corners in their efforts to apprehend the guilty. It also makes reference to the British ‘Police and Criminal Evidence Act’ a major 1984 reform to the codes of practice by which police officers in the UK stop, search, detain and arrest suspects.

I KNOW *Inspector Morse* was supposed to be the pinnacle of the late John Thaw’s career, but to my mind he never did anything better than Detective

Inspector Jack Regan in *The Sweeney*. I still occasionally watch reruns on satellite TV. Even now, 25 years on, they remain wonderful – not least in their depiction of a proper police force in the days before the twin blights of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and political correctness. [From a weekly column by Simon Heffer, *Daily Mail* – 23/02/02]

In such analyses we are interested in whether key propositions are formulated monoglossically or heteroglossically and, if the proposition is monoglossically formulated, in whether it is ‘taken-for-granted’ or treated as ‘at issue’. If heteroglossically formulated, we are interested broadly in whether the author’s stance is dialogistically contractive or expansive, and then more narrowly in the sub-type of **engagement**, the nature of any alignments construed, and the responses being anticipated. With respect to **graduations**, we are interested in which meanings they are applied to and whether they act to indicate increased or decreased investment in the value position.

In the following we provide a proposition by proposition analysis attending to these issues:

I know [*contract: concur*] Inspector Morse was supposed [*expand: distance*] to be the pinnacle [*attitude: intensified +ve appreciation*] of the late John Thaw’s career ...

By *was supposed to be* the writer attributes the proposition (that Inspector Morse was the pinnacle of John Thaw’s career) to some unspecified, but presumably quite broadly-based, external source, while at the same time **distancing** himself from that proposition. (The contrast here is between *Inspector Morse is supposed to be the pinnacle* [distancing] and *Inspector Morse is seen as the pinnacle* [acknowledging].) By *I know*, he presents himself as sharing with the reader, not a positive assessment of Inspector Morse, but the knowledge that there are many people (those who do the ‘supposing’) who hold this view. As indicated previously, **concurrences** of this type are often precursors to a **counter**, in which case they present the writer as conceding a point to a contrary value position, only then to step back and to more broadly confront that dialogic alternative. This is the case here – the *I know* is likely to be read as concessive, especially as it operates in conjunction with the **distancing** effect of *supposed*. By this combination of dialogistically expansive and contractive meanings, the writer construes a heteroglossic backdrop for the text in which there is divided opinion as to which of the John Thaw police dramas is the best, anticipates that at least some

of his readers will hold *Inspector Morse* to be Thaw's best work, while foreshadowing that he himself does not share this view. He thus anticipates disalignment between himself and at least some members of his construed audience over this issue.

but [contract: counter] to my mind [expand: entertain] he never [contract: deny / intensify: heightened negation] did anything better [attitude +ve appreciation / intensify: heighten = 'the best'] than Detective Inspector Jack Regan in *The Sweeney*.

The connective *but* supplies the foreshadowed **counter**, thereby signalling that the writer's own preference for *The Sweeney* over *Inspector Morse* is somehow counter-expectational. He thus makes dialogic space for those who prefer *Inspector Morse* in his acknowledgment that his own taste is 'abnormal'. By the **denial** (*never*) he, of course, explicitly declares his disalignment with those who believe that Thaw did, in fact, do things which were better than *The Sweeney*. We note the use of the intensifying *he never did* (contrasting with *he didn't do*) in order to signal the strength of his alignment with this particular value position. Crucially, this intensified declaration of disalignment with at least some of his projected audience is framed by the dialogistically expansive *to my mind*. He thereby acknowledges that this is but one of a range of possible views of Thaw's various performances, by this simultaneously signalling an anticipation that those he is addressing may not share his view and making space for any such dialogistic alternatives in the ongoing colloquy in which he places the text.

I still [contract: counter] occasionally [intensify: down-scaled usuality] watch reruns on satellite TV.

The *still* here construes the writer's occasional watching of such reruns as in some way counter-expectational – it counters the expectation that an individual such as the celebrated columnist Simon Heffer would not watch such programs, given their age or perhaps given that they are now only shown on 'satellite' television. The sentence is only incidental with respect to the text's central evaluative concerns. Nevertheless it acts to construe as natural, and to project onto the audience, particular expectations about the viewing of old television programs and the viewing habits of the writer. It constructs the writer and reader as sharing certain assumptions about what is 'normal' behaviour in this regard.

Even now, [*contract: counter*] 25 years on, they remain wonderful [*attitude +ve appreciation*]

Here the writer references, and projects onto the audience, a paradigm of aesthetic evaluation by which the value of television programs is assumed to decline with age. The *even* presents *The Sweeney's* 'wonderfulness' as an unexpected exception to this 'rule' and thereby intensifies the positivity of the writer's assessment. At the same time, Heffer acknowledges the somewhat untoward nature of his high estimation, thus opening up a line of possible rapport with those who are not quite so positively disposed.

not least in their depiction of a proper [*graduation/focus: (sharpen), token of attitude: +ve normality*] police force in the days before the twin blights [*attitude -ve appreciation (valuation = unhealthy)*] of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and political correctness. [*for this writer, attitude: -ve propriety*]

The crucial propositions here are that previously the UK had a 'proper' police force, but this is no longer the case, and that this is because the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and political correctness have 'blighted' law enforcement in the UK. The proposition that policing has been ruined in this way is monoglossed and, by means of the nominalisation *the twin blights of*, formulated as 'taken-for-granted'. This taken-for-grantedness acts to present this highly negative view of policing policy as unproblematic and self-evident for the reader for whom the text is intended, thus construing both writer and the intended reader as having categorical membership in this particular attitudinal community. Via the monoglossia, the writer construes the value positions of those who have a different view of these changes to policing practices (presumably those who implemented them and keep them in place) as not needing to be recognised or engaged with in any way. As a consequence, those who might hold to such a dissenting view are excluded from any possible solidarity with the writer since, not only are they very obviously at odds with the writer, but theirs is a viewpoint which places them outside the discursive community which the text constructs for itself.

This analysis is demonstrated diagrammatically in Table 3.9. Instances of upscaling **graduation** are indicated by SMALL CAPS and attitudinal inscriptions are boxed. (Notice that these inscriptions often also involve graduation.) The table should be read downwards, following the numbering (not from left to right), zigzagging across columns as required.

This short text, then, provides examples of two rather different configurations of alignment/disalignment. The first is primarily a dyadic arrangement between writer and audience as the writer presents himself as potentially at odds with at least some of his readers over which is the best John Thaw police drama series, while at the same time providing grounds by which solidarity may be maintained in the face of this disagreement. The second alignment configuration is a triadic one. Writer and reader are presented as standing together in their negativity towards these ‘politically correct’ changes against the alien, ‘otherness’ of those who implemented them and/or who might now speak in their favour. In the first instance the relationship of disalignment is construed via values of **distance**, **counter** and **denial** while the grounds for solidarity, in the face of this disalignment, are provided via instances of **concur** and

Table 3.9 Engagement analysis of Heffer text

heterogloss	monogloss
<p>expand</p> <p>(2) Inspector Morse <u>was supposed</u> [<i>distance</i>] to be the <u>PINNACLE</u> of the late John Thaw's career</p> <p>(4) <u>to my mind</u> [<i>entertain</i>]</p>	<p>contract</p> <p>(1) <u>I know</u> [<i>concur</i>]</p> <p>(3) <u>but</u> [<i>counter</i>]</p> <p>(5) he <u>NEVER</u> [<i>deny</i>] did anything <u>BETTER</u> than Detective Inspector Jack Regan in The Sweeney</p> <p>(6) I <u>still</u> [<i>counter</i>] occasionally watch reruns on satellite TV ...</p> <p>(7) <u>Even now</u> [<i>counter</i>], 25 YEARS ON, they remain <u>WONDERFUL</u> <u>not least</u> [<i>deny</i>] in their depiction of</p> <p>(8) a <u>proper</u> police force in the days before the twin <u>BLIGHTS</u> of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and <u>political correctness</u></p>

entertain. In the second instance, total alignment between writer and reader is construed via the monoglossic, taken-for-grantedness of the writer's negativity towards the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and 'political correctness'.

Analyses of this type clearly demonstrate the point that appraisal meanings do not operate as isolated values but rather as elements in integrated complexes of meaning where the ultimate rhetorical effect is an artefact of which meanings have been chosen, in which combinations and in which sequences.

Notes

1. For modality see Palmer 1986, and for evidentiality see Chafe & Nichols 1986.
2. For hedging/boosting see Jakobson 1957, Myers 1989, Meyer 1997, Hyland 1996, and for intensification see Labov 1984.
3. Since our focus is upon typically written, singly-constructed texts directed at a mass audience, we must, of necessity, leave as an open question whether or not the positioning effects we describe also apply in immediately interactive, person-to-person text types where, of course, any construal of addresser-addressee relationships is usually subject to immediate challenge, rejection or compliance by the addressee. For discussion of the negotiation of alignment in the context of person-to-person verbal interaction see Clark, Drew & Pinch 2003 or Eggins & Slade 1997.
4. This notion of a 'putative', 'ideal' or 'imagined' reader/audience has, of course, been widely explored in the literature. See, for example, Eco 1984, Coulthard 1994 or Thompson 2001.
5. The now widely accepted argument is that *I think* in structures such as *I think we should leave now* or *I think Rupert cheated* is not the main clause and does not carry full ideational/informational weight. Rather it functions in much the same way as modal adjuncts such as *possibly* or *probably* would – thus *I think we should leave now* is close in its communicative functionality to *Probably we should leave now*. For the details of this argument see Halliday 1994: 254.
6. For further discussion of this type of 'expository question' see White 2003.
7. Although there is some overlap between our use of the term 'attribute' and the use that is made of the term in the Birmingham school of Sinclair, Tadros and Hunston (see for example Sinclair 1986, Tadros 1993, Hunston 2000), ours is, nevertheless, a somewhat different formulation directed towards analysing dialogistic functionality rather than towards identifying the primary source of the proposition.
8. There are some contexts where the positive can invoke the negative – for example, a sign at the verge of a wide expanse of neatly mown lawn by a footpath in Toronto, Canada, carried the following: 'Please Walk On The Grass'. Certain assertions of obligation or entitlement also may involve the positive invoking the negative. Thus, 'Class 4A must work quietly' may suggest that that someone, somewhere has been suggesting that Class 4A has

NOT been working quietly. This is especially the case with counter-factuals – for example, ‘You should have helped your mother with the groceries’.

9. Leech makes essentially this point when he states, ‘In fact, the [Co-operative Principle] will predict that negative sentences tend to be used precisely in situations when ... [the speaker] wants to deny some proposition which has been put forward or entertained by someone in the context (probably the addressee).’
10. We note that some instances of *of course* are less highly charged rhetorically in that they perform more of a text organisational function. In order to develop a particular description, explanation or argument, the author needs to state some information which will almost certainly be known by the intended reader because, for example, it is part of the established ‘knowledge’ operating in that field. This type of *of course* acts almost as an apology, conveying a meaning along the lines of, ‘I know you know this, but I still need to state it in order to make my point clearly.’
11. We are indebted to Sue Hood for this insight and specifically for this notion of intensification via degrees of ‘vigour’. For an extended discussion see Hood 2004.

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