3.10 Summary

This chapter has addressed the nature of the term *genre*, emphasising the ways in which readers and listeners draw on *genre schemas*, along with other types of *schemas* and *scripts*, in their efforts to interpret texts. It drew a distinction between notional 'genres' and actual *texts* in the world, and considered the ways in which a text can draw flexibly on one or more genres in its creation. Some texts, for example those in more formal settings, might follow a particular genre closely (for example, an academic essay or business letter) whereas other texts (for example, those in the media) might draw more flexibly on a variety of genres to create more hybridity.

For readers and listeners it was argued that the *function* of any text and genre is central. For this reason it is useful for the analyst to start with the text's function and then examine ways in which the features of the text support that function in various ways. The features of a recipe, for example, might be analysed to see how far they support the main function of that genre. An actual recipe might then be analysed to see to what extent it fits with those expectations, in ways which will be considered in detail in the heuristic scheme for analysing discourse set out in Chapter 5.

The present chapter also discussed a more abstract level of analysis, in the form of *discourse modes* such as *narrating*, *describing* and *reporting*. It was suggested that these modes appear to be common to a number of genres and in some way 'above' them, as well as being identifiable in terms of common sets of features. It was suggested that for this reason it can be useful to examine the ways in which these modes operate in texts. However, although it was stressed that these modes are an additional useful way of approaching genres and texts, it would be a mistake to set too much store by them, for example by building an analytical framework upon them.

Having seen, then, what genres are in principle, how they operate with respect to texts, and how they can draw on various discourse modes, we can turn in the next chapter to look at a number of the discourse modes in detail, as this will allow us in the later chapters, when we look at a range of genres from a variety of situations, to understand and appreciate how these discourse modes and genres can be used by texts in various ways and for a variety of purposes. This will also prepare for discussion in Chapter 5 of how in practice to carry out a discourse analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Discourse Modes

Chapter 3 examined the nature and role of genres and genre knowledge in discourse, and introduced the notion of discourse modes. These are important because they feature in many of the genres we know in daily life, and therefore occur in many actual texts, as will be illustrated in the analyses of jokes, conversations, advertisements and other texts in the chapters to come. As noted above, discourse modes differ from genres because they do not have a specific social function in themselves; instead they are building blocks which we can draw on in many different genres and then use in actual texts in flexible ways for a range of purposes.

4.1 Patterning in discourse modes

Smith offers some general insights into the way in which discourse modes relate to the real world:

> People intuitively recognize passages of the Discourse Modes, although they are probably unaware of the linguistic basis for the differences between them. Each mode – Narrative, Description, Report, Information, Argument – introduces certain entities into the universe of discourse, with a related principle of discourse progression. The features have linguistic correlates of a temporal nature. In fact temporality in the larger sense is the key to the discourse modes. Temporal factors are woven into the fabric of a language and are part of our tacit knowledge of language structure. (Smith 2003:22)

She later clarifies the way in which each mode relates to temporal and other aspects of the world, setting out her reasoning as follows:

> The temporal modes are Narrative, Report, and Description. They introduce situations that are located in the world. In Narrative, events and states are related to each other in time; the text progresses with bounded events interpreted in sequence, and/or time adverbials. In Reports, events, states, and General Statives are related to Speech Time: texts progress back and forth. The mode of Description has events and states, and time is static. The text progresses spatially through a scene. Text progression in Description depends on lexical information, unlike the two other temporal modes.
>
> The Information and Argument modes are atemporal. General Statives predominate in the Information mode, while Argument has both General Statives and abstract entities. Text progression in these modes proceeds by metaphorical motion through the domain of the text. (Smith 2003:243)

This illustrates the fact that the discourse modes can be characterised and distinguished in terms of their relation to the world, and also by their internal linguistic features, as Smith goes on to discuss in detail. Some of the modes relate to aspects 'located in the world', while others are more cognitive. They relate to time and space in different ways. For example, as Smith notes, *narrating* mode (as it is termed here) is characterised by the fact that the text typically progresses 'with bounded events interpreted in sequence, and/or time adverbials' whereas *describing* mode 'has events and states, and time is static. The text progresses spatially through a scene' (ibid).

Smith's concern is with written texts rather than spoken language, so her analysis does not include anything resembling the *interacting* mode to be included here. However, in the past few years technology has opened up the possibilities for synchronous written communication such as text messaging and online synchronous messaging, in which it is clear that the interaction between participants closely resembles spoken interaction in many ways. This again demonstrates the value of including some sort of interactive mode in our framework alongside *narrating*, *describing* and *reporting*.

Seen in this light, *interacting* is not a temporal mode like *narrating*, but progresses as a result of interaction between speakers or writers. One of its main linguistic realisations is the question. It is arguably not the only mode which sets up a two-way dialogue, since *instructing* (not included as a discourse mode by Smith, but included by others, as noted in chapter 3) also implies a dialogue, in this case with a silent partner whose role is to follow the sequence. These two discourse modes, *interacting* and *instructing*, could therefore be seen as 'dialogic', as they imply a dialogue, to stand alongside the temporal modes of *narrating*, *describing* and *reporting*, and the mental modes of *informing* and *arguing*.

The aim of this chapter is not to set out in full the characteristics of each mode, (since the reader can consult Smith, 2003, and Werlich, 1976 for closer discussion of linguistic features of each) but to describe them only to the extent that their contribution to my overall framework of analysis, the heuristic approach set out in Chapter 5, can be appreciated, and also so that their role in the many spoken and written texts to be analysed from Chapter 6 onwards can be understood.

4.2 Narrating

When we read or listen to a text we usually manage to 'place' it quite quickly in terms of its genre, even if we might not always have a name for the genre precisely. For instance, with which genre would this text typically be associated?

> There are these three men abandoned on a desert island. Suddenly one of them notices something shining in the sand and pulls out a magic lamp. Smiling hopefully he rubs it and a genie comes out. The genie greets them and says that it can grant them one wish each, so the first man jumps up and down and says, 'Great! I wish I could go back home to my wife and kids', so the genie snaps his fingers and the man disappears.
>
> The second man then jumps up and down with joy and says, 'My father is sick. I wish I could go back to see him', so the genie snaps his fingers and the man disappears.
>
> The third man looks around him and is depressed to find himself all alone, so he says, 'Hmmm, I feel so lonely. I really wish my two friends were still here with me.'

It is clear from the fact that 'the text progresses with bounded events interpreted in sequence, and/or time adverbials' as Smith expresses it (2003:243) that this text draws on the *narrating* mode. It also follows a familiar genre – most readers from most cultures would have no difficulty in identifying it as a joke. The genre of Jokes includes many types or *sub-genres*, as we will discuss in more detail below, but what links them all is their *function*, as they all aim at humour. This example is of a fairly standard type which involves a story, in this case about three people, and conforms to a type which is quite common internationally, namely a story in which a stupid character is contrasted with one or more 'normal' people.

Since Chapter 7 will discuss the Joke genre more directly, the focus here will be on one particular aspect of this joke only, namely the discourse mode

of *narrating* which it employs. As already noted, a useful starting point for any analysis is the text's function, which is humour. In this light the *narrating* mode can be seen as one *feature* which helps to achieve that function. Narrating as a discourse mode is characterised by particular linguistic patterning, to which we can now turn, and also by particular structural organisational features, which will be considered below.

Narrating mode: linguistic features

Smith offers a general characterisation of this discourse mode: 'Narrative presents a sequence of events and states that have the same participants and/or causal and other consequential relation... They occur in a certain order, which is crucial for understanding' (Smith 2003:26). These features – for example, the fact that the participants tend to recur through the story – distinguish this mode from others. However, as with all the discourse modes, *narrating* mode is also associated with particular lexical and syntactical patterns. An obvious one is the use of a high frequency of verbs typically in the past tense and in general the use of *finite* verb forms. Also common in this discourse mode is the use of adverbs with a time or sequencing element such as 'suddenly', 'then', or 'so' in the joke above. A third feature of *narrating* mode is that, as Almasi puts it, 'characters are introduced in the beginning and referred to using various referents (e.g. he, his, him) throughout the text. This process is known as "co-reference"' (Almasi, 2002:142). This use of co-reference will then give a relatively high number of pronouns. This is not to say that all texts in narrating mode will share the same features exactly, but only that a prototypical text which uses this mode is likely to make use of them.

Narrating mode: advancement

Smith makes a further point about the typical advancement in *narrating* mode, one which allows us to distinguish this mode from *reporting* mode, to be discussed below:

> Narratives advance dynamically. After the first sentence, the Events and States of a narrative are related to previous events and times in the text, rather than to Speech Time. (Smith 2003:93)

In Smith's terms 'Speech Time' is the time, as understood by the reader or listener, when the written or spoken text in question was created. As will be discussed in a later section, this is considered an important reference point in *reporting* discourse mode, as distinct from *narrating* mode, in which the central point of reference is a time or times in the narrative itself.

Narrating mode: structure

Besides the linguistic and other features discussed above, narratives often follow particular patterns or structures. Structure is not typically included as a defining dimension of discourse modes, since aspects of structure are more usually considered as part of *genre knowledge*, but in the case of narrating and narratives it has been argued that there is a prototypical structure which should therefore be taken into account in any discussion of the *narrating* mode. This is why it is considered here.

Narrative structure in various media has received a great deal of attention (see for example, Toolan, 2001; Bamberg, 1997; Chatman, 1989), and in full narratives we can see various patterns which seem to be typical. To illustrate this, look at an invented narrative which is somehow 'odd', and consider how it might be corrected:

A The boy ran after it.
B One day a boy was playing football in the park.
C The dog let go of the ball and the boy got it back again.
D He carried on playing football.
E Then a dog ran up to him, snatched his ball and ran away.
F It was lovely and sunny.

Two points can be made about our reading of this story. The sentences are in the wrong order and it is easy for us to recognise the 'correct' order of the sentences, but what is it which allows us to carry out both of these actions? We have never seen this exact story before, so how can we see that it is wrong and how is it that we are able to correct it? To put the question another way, what is it that we *know* (thinking back to Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1) which enables us to identify an odd narrative structure, and to alter it to our and everyone else's satisfaction?

First of all we make use of what could be called *discourse signals*, since they are signal sequences, beginnings and ends, among other things. These make up part of the knowledge which helps us to rearrange this story sequence correctly; for example, we know that *'One day'* is a typical narrative opening phrase, so we guess that sentence B is the first of the story. A second aspect of our knowledge which helps us to sequence the story correctly is the fact that certain *parts of speech* can act as discourse signals, so we make use of adverbs

such as 'then' in sentence E to help us to reconstruct the sequence of events. Thirdly, we draw on aspects of *cohesion*, and also, fourthly, of our *world knowledge*, to identify, for example, that the word 'it' in some of the sentences refers to the ball and in others to the dog. In short, we use 'lower order' and also 'higher order' elements shown in Figure 1.1, to help us both to see that the story sequence is wrong, and to correct it.

Nonetheless, in this short story there are few of these signals, cohesive devices and other features to help us, certainly not enough to tell us the order by themselves, so what other knowledge do we use in order to sort the sentences correctly? In essence, we draw heavily on our knowledge of *typical story structure* in the process. This is a *mental script* of the sort we discussed previously since we know that typical stories start by establishing a sort of setting, a status quo in which things seem to be stable. Next, as we know, we often get an event of some sort which upsets that stable situation. Our *script* tells us that the characters often then try hard to overcome the problem or the disruption. Finally, we know that often they succeed and we get a happy ending.

This 'script' of how narratives work, like other mental scripts, is largely subconscious but nonetheless powerful in shaping our expectations of stories, films and other narratives which we come across, and is therefore a part of our expectation of many genres in which narrative is involved, such as jokes. Using our shared mental script, we would probably agree to arrange the sentences like this:

1 B One day a boy was playing football in the park.
2 F It was lovely and sunny.
3 E Then a dog ran up to him, snatched his ball and ran away.
4 A The boy ran after it.
5 C The dog let go of the ball and the boy got it back again.
6 D He carried on playing football.

We are able to reconstruct this story and agree on it partly because we all agree on a basic *narrative structure*. When discussing narrative structure most commentators refer back to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (born 384 BCE) who was the first known critic (in his *Poetics*, ed. Atchity, 1998) to work through the basic pattern we see in the story above:

1. A stable beginning or setting.
2. A disruption of some sort.
3. A return to stability and equilibrium.

This is a simplified version of the scheme, of course, and we need to recall that Aristotle was concerned in the relevant passages of his work with the genre of tragic drama in particular, so we need to be cautious in applying what he said to all narratives. His particular aim was not to set a template for narrative, but to argue the reasons why some dramas are particularly effective. However, this has not prevented writers through the centuries using what Aristotle said almost as a prescription for how stories should be, sometimes extending his ideas in ways which were not in his original text. Other writers have proposed significant and interesting additions and developments, and one who made useful and well-known contributions is Todorov. In his *Poetics of Prose* and other writings, Todorov tried to compare the structure of a story with the grammatical structure of a sentence so as to develop what he called a 'grammar of narrative', in order to identify what he considered an 'ideal' narrative plot structure. We can see from some of his conclusions that his idea was close to what Aristotle was suggesting, but offers a slightly different perspective:

> An 'ideal' narrative begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction, the equilibrium is re-established; the second equilibrium is similar to the first, but the two are never identical. (Todorov, 1977 [1971]:111)

This fits quite well with our simple story above: the boy playing on a sunny day in lines 1 and 2 is our *stable situation*, then a power comes to *disrupt* that state (the dog in line 3), then the *action* of the boy himself serves as the force in the opposite direction (line 4), leading to the *reinstatement of the equilibrium* as he starts playing again. Of course, Todorov applied this analysis to more complex narratives, but in essence this is an outline of his scheme. I have applied it to a simple invented example, but if we stop to consider how this applies to more complex stories, written or on film, it seems to fit quite well, although each story naturally emphasises different stages in different ways.

Todorov's analysis was then developed (1990 [1978]) towards what is arguably his major contribution to narrative theory. After analysing a traditional Russian story called *The Swan-Geese* Todorov identified, beside the classical elements we mentioned above of *setting – disruption – return to equilibrium*, two more which he considered to be important:

> If we analyze 'The Swan-Geese' this way, we shall discover that the tale includes five obligatory elements: (1) the opening situation of equilibrium; (2) the degradation of the situation through the kidnapping of the boy; (3) the state of disequilibrium observed by the little girl; (4) the search for and recovery of the boy; (5) the reestablishment of the initial equilibrium – the return home. If any one of these five actions had been omitted, the tale would have lost its identity. (Todorov, trans. 1990:29)

Where this differs from the classic scheme is in *(3) the state of disequilibrium observed by the little girl* and *(4) the search for and recovery of the boy*, or in more general terms, the *recognition* that something has been disturbed or gone wrong, and the *attempt* to put it right. If we consider most narratives which are successful or well-known it appears that whereas they might have a setting, a disruption and a final equilibrium, it is frequently the two middle elements identified by Todorov which are the most significant and powerful. For example, although many have (1) a setting, (2) a disruption and (5) a final equilibrium, large parts may in fact be taken up with Todorov's stage 4, the efforts taken by the hero(es) or heroine(s) to resolve the problem. Every James Bond film, for example, offers the setting and disruption within the first few minutes, then a brief stage 3 (recognition) when his boss might explain with a worried frown how serious this issue is, but almost the whole film, in effect, represents stage 4, the attempt to resolve the situation, before the final stage of equilibrium, with a few digressions for flirtation and fun along the way.

Stage 4 seems important then, but what of stage 3, the *recognition* of the disruption? At first it may seem insignificant, but in practice it is often the main way of distinguishing less effectual narratives from more successful ones. This is the stage where the main character not only *realises* and *feels* the loss or problem or reversal, but also when we as the reader or audience notice and appreciate that suffering or worrying or crying – we feel the pain or the problem, sometimes at great length. Lesser narratives or films often do not show much of this stage, but greater ones often do. If we think about classics like Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*, the character spends large parts of the action bemoaning his fate, so we get a full sense of his suffering. In fact, even if we add this stage to our simple example story we can see that it does make a difference:

		Stage in narrative structure
1	One day a boy was playing football in the park.	1 *Setting and equilibrium*
2	It was lovely and sunny.	
3	Then a dog ran up to him, snatched his ball and ran away.	2 *Disruption*
4 (new)	**The boy cried out and shouted after the dog, worried that he might lose his ball for ever.**	3 *Recognition of disruption*
5	The boy ran after it.	4 *Attempt to resolve the disruption*
6	The dog let go of the ball and the boy got it back again.	5 *Return to equilibrium, (though not the same as at first)*
7	He carried on playing football.	

This illustrates the value of Todorov's analysis, and of the elements he identified.

Breaking with the script

It is worth thinking about the role of this third stage when we consider other narratives, for example films and stories we know well, to reflect on how they deal with it. It is also important to note that the stages above are a sort of mental *script*, like other mental scripts we mentioned in Chapter 3, which means that genres and texts are not bound to follow it; indeed some will deliberately go against or contravene our expectations for various purposes. Many genres, for example, begin not with the *setting* but with the *problem or disruption* – a gun going off, perhaps. This is a common literary technique which is given the Latin name *in medias res* (in the middle of things) for obvious reasons, and serves to hook the reader or viewer into the story. Such narratives then either let us guess the setting or else offer a flashback or explanation to elucidate the setting in more detail.

A good example is the 'Three men' joke given earlier. In the first sentence this joke gives the first two narrative stages together, because it starts with stage 2, the disrupted situation itself ('There are these three men abandoned...') and then tells us the setting very briefly after it ('on a desert island'). There is then a second *disruption* to the already disrupted scene, this time a positive one, because one man finds a possible solution to their problem in the form of the magic lamp – a sort of new stage 2. This is followed by a very brief stage 3, *recognition of disruption* when the man smiles – he recognises that there is hope. However, the main and longest part of the joke is stage 4, the attempt to resolve the disruption, which in fact happens three times. As is common with this sub-genre of jokes, it does not end happily.

Do these differences, and this sad ending, mean that Todorov was wrong? On the contrary, this exemplifies the important point that the general narrative structure outlined above is often altered in different genres, as it is here in this kind of joke. Furthermore, when Todorov noted that narratives typically end with an equilibrium, he did not mean by this that there is usually a happy ending. In fact this joke fits his scheme well because it offers a sort of grim equilibrium, in which the men end up back where they began. This reminds us that there is no necessity at all for genres to follow *script* expectations and a genre might even achieve its purpose precisely by contradicting our expected script or schema. This is exactly what this joke does. Although it certainly requires us *to know* the standard narrative script, its humour comes precisely from its *overturning* of those expectations through the actions of the foolish man, and then the failure of all of them. So as readers, and also as

analysts, we need first to know the script, and then to appreciate how a genre or text adheres to or diverges from it.

Some texts offer even more radical digressions from the standard narrative sequence we have outlined above. An interesting example is the film *Memento* (2000), directed by Christopher Nolan, in which the whole story is told backwards. Even examples such as this, however, typically include all the elements we have noted above, but in a different order and quantity.

By contrast, unsuccessful films or books are sometimes weak partly because they omit or reduce one or more of the expected stages, or devote too much attention to one stage. Stages 3 and 4 are frequently less developed in weaker plots. We can see in children's stories that they often omit one of the stages, and the story can sometimes seem weak as a result. The way in which texts can diverge in this sort of way from the 'normal' sequence for various effects is important to several genres to be discussed in the chapters to come.

Is this narrative structuring universal?

Todorov was not the first to suggest that the third and fourth elements are crucial to successful narratives. Propp (1968), for example, in his work on folktales in the 1920s, had also seen these elements as important, but Todorov was arguably the analyst who brought them most to our attention, focussing in particular on the various types of what he called the *transformations* which a narrative depicts, whether it is a transformation in the character of the hero, or in some other element. However, he also at times made claims for his elements of narrative structure which now seem excessive. For example he suggested of the elements he had identified that 'this cycle belongs to the very definition of narrative: one cannot imagine a narrative that fails to contain at least a part of it' (Todorov. 1990: 29).

The assumption that all narratives will follow this scheme now seems rather ethnocentric, since other non-Western narrative traditions exist which do not conform to this pattern. To take just one example, Hoey (2001:1–2) reproduces a fascinating Anangu aboriginal story from Australia which is structured quite differently from Western expectations, appearing to 'contravene' many of the structural patterns set out above. In other words, it is risky to assume that this pattern is a human universal.

Notwithstanding, we must admit that the structure does seem to be deeply rooted in many cultures and traditions. Analysts have often argued for the longevity of such narrative patterns. For example, when Todorov (1977) discusses what he calls 'primitive narrative' he makes extensive reference to Homer's narrative poems, but even earlier human narratives, for instance the Mesopotamian story of Gilgamesh, which dates from over 3,000 years ago

(George, 2003), show remarkable similarities to the narrative pattern outlined above. This suggests that even if the structure outlined above is not universal, it does seem to have a long history in human societies, and to be common to many cultures.

Spoken Narratives

Aristotle's work revolved primarily around dramatic tragedy, and Todorov's around written stories, but what of spoken narratives? There is evidence that these follow rather different structural patterns. The most well-known early research on spoken narratives is that by William Labov (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972; and see Pridham, 2001) in which he and his colleagues analysed the spoken narratives of black New York teenagers, identifying six broad stages, rather than the five identified by Todorov. His aim was to identify 'the structural schema underlying spontaneous conversational narrative' (Johnstone, 2002:82).

As a way of looking in detail at the structural patterns which Labov identified, take a story told by a schoolboy called Michael. Here he reports an incident in which he and a friend called Fred were doing a task at school which involved designing and making model chairs for his schoolteacher, Mrs. Taylor. I have transcribed it broadly to make it as clear as possible to read, while trying to preserve some of the sense of his natural speech such as significant stresses. As you read, try to identify the *stages* of the story, to see if they resemble the pattern identified by Todorov, including the setting, the disruption and the other three stages:

1 At school we we did.. these chairs and, and, well I, me and Fred, a, did this really,
2 a..a, hard thing up and then suddenly it pinged back and all went loose.. a..and it was
3 really tough and we all had to do it <u>again</u>.
4 And.. and then Mrs Taylor said it was too loose, so we had to undo it.....and do it <u>again</u>.
5 And then she still said it was too loose and we di.... we had to do it <u>again</u>. But in the
6 end we got it but we had to do that a lots of times.... for it and it took ages,.... all day.

It is clear that although Michael is only nine years old, he has already learned the socially expected structure of a narrative. He starts with the *setting*, giving some basic context (the place, the task and the participants) and then moves

on to the incident itself. The *disruption* comes in line 2 when the unexplained 'hard thing' suddenly 'pinged back and it went all loose'. The *recognition of the disruption* stage comes when he says 'it was really tough', which is emphasised in Michael's intonation and stress in the original recording. It is interesting to note that Michael reports *three* attempts to repair the problem, since repetition three times (the 'Rule of Three' Atkinson, 1984): is an important feature of many genres (see Chapter 9). Finally the disruption gives way to the *resolution* stage in lines 5–6: 'But in the end we got it'. An important point to note is that the narrative sequence in Michael's telling of the story follows exactly the actual sequence of the events in real time, which Labov identifies as a feature of spoken narratives (unlike, for example, news reports which often report events in a different order – see Chapter 8).

This appears at first to fit Todorov's analysis of written stories quite closely, but as it is spoken, not written, it contains other features which Labov's analysis of spoken narrative helps to elucidate. In Labov's analysis spoken narratives frequently start with an *abstract*, summarising the story the speaker is about to tell. For example Michael might have said, 'We had this big problem with this chair today which kept breaking'. In fact Michael does not offer any 'abstract' of this kind (and of course Labov does not say that *all* spoken narratives will contain *all* features), but in many spoken narratives this 'abstract' does occur.

Secondly, Labov noticed what he called an *orientation* stage (which resembles Todorov's *setting* stage), followed by what he calls a *complicating action* (which is in effect the same as the *disruption)*. Whereas at this point Todorov saw a 'recognition of disruption' as a frequent feature in written narrative, Labov sees instead an *evaluation* aspect in which the speaker explains the point of the narrative. In our example this is not prominent – Michael simply says, 'it was really tough' – and it is not clear whether this is more like Todorov's 'recognition of disruption' or Labov's 'evaluation'. Perhaps both interpretations are plausible. Labov notes, by the way, that 'evaluation' can be scattered throughout the narrative (Labov, 1972:366).

A curious feature of Labov's scheme is that there is no stage for *attempt at resolution*. In the discussion of Todorov's scheme above this was taken as an important stage in many narratives and one which is at the heart of many films and novels and possibly the most original part of Todorov's analysis. Furthermore there is a clear example of it in Michael's story when he reports three attempts to repair the chair, and it is placed at the centre of the story. Even so, Labov does not identify this as a separate stage, but in effect includes it as part of his fifth stage, the *result* or *resolution*.

Finally, Labov identifies a part which does not seem so common in written narrative and which does not enter Todorov's scheme – namely the *coda*, which serves to signal an end to the story and a return to the present

moment, such as 'That was that', or 'That was the most dangerous moment in my life' In fact at the end of his story we see Michael saying, 'but we had to do that a lots of times...for it and it took ages...all day' and this seems to serve partly as a *coda* in Labov's terms, signalling the end of the action, and also as *evaluation*, showing the main point of the narrative. This tells us firstly that Labov was perhaps correct to suggest that spoken narratives might

Table 4.1 Elements of spoken narrative structure

Stage (adapted from Labov, 1972, and Pridham, 2001)	Example from Michael's story
Abstract	
Summarizes the central action and the main point of the narrative. Narrators often begin with one or two clauses summarizing the whole story.	None
Orientation	
Sets the scene. At the outset it is necessary to identify in some way the time, place, persons and their activity or situation.	At school we we did... these chairs and, and, well I, me and Fred, a, did this really, a...a, hard thing up...
(Complicating) action	
What happened (then)?	and then suddenly it pinged back and all went loose...
Evaluation	
Answers the question: 'so what?'	a...and it was really tough
The means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, why it is being told and what the narrator is getting at.	
Result or resolution	
What finally happened to conclude the sequence of events.	and we all had to do it again. And... and then Mrs Taylor said it was too loose, so we had to undo it... and do it again. And then she still said it was too loose and we di...we had to do it again. But in the end we got it
Coda	
At the end of the **narrative**. Signals end and return to the present.	but we had to do that a lots of times...for it and it took ages,... all day.
'And that was that.'	
'And that was one of the most important ...'	

be slightly different from written ones, and also that in any actual text we might find the elements which Labov and Todorov identified in slightly different sequences and quantities. The point is, of course, that neither of the two schemes should be treated as a complete description of all narratives, but both are useful when we actually seek to analyse and understand what a speaker or writer is trying to do when narrating.

To summarise, we can set Labov's scheme out with the examples from Michael's story alongside (see Table 4.1).

A general scheme of narrative structure

This example has illustrated some valuable aspects of the scheme broadly set out by Todorov, and also some interestingly different aspects identified by Labov. It is useful at this stage to combine the two interpretations, to give the following eight possible stages or slots for narratives. This could then serve as a guide to possible stages of both written and spoken narratives, though of course these will probably not all occur in any one text.

1. **Abstract:** Summarizes the central action and the main point of the narrative
2. **Setting or orientation:** Sets the scene
3. **Disruption or complicating action:** What happened next?
4. **Recognition of disruption:** Showing the effect of the disruption on participants
5. **Attempt at resolution:** How the issue was resolved (may be repeated or complex)
6. **Result or resolution:** What finally happened to conclude the sequence of events
7. **Evaluation:** Used to indicate the purpose of the narrative, why it is being told and what the narrator is getting at (could occur at other points in the sequence)
8. **Coda:** At the end of the narrative. Signals end and return to the present: 'And that was that.'

As noted above, this narrative structure should not be treated as inevitable or universal, as individual storytellers and even whole cultures may not follow this pattern closely or at all (as in the example of the Australian folk tale). Furthermore some elements will occur more often in spoken or written narratives..Nonetheless, in many cultures this pattern has become part of our narrative expectation, and in the next chapters when we look at jokes and other texts which draw on the *narrating* discourse mode it will be useful as a way of understanding how various texts follow or diverge from this 'standard pattern' to achieve various effects.

Before turning, then, to consider the *interacting* discourse mode, Table 4.2 provides a summary of elements of the *narrating* discourse mode. My examples are from English; other languages will of course use different patterns to achieve similar effects.

Table 4.2 Features of the narrating discourse mode

1. Presentation of 'a sequence of events and states that have the same participants and/or causal and other consequential relation' (Smith, 2003:26).
2. Events reported predominantly in the past tense, although other tenses can be used. Frequent use of finite verb forms (Jeffries, 2006:87).
3. Frequent use of adverbs of sequencing and consequence.
4. Frequent use of pronouns (Jeffries, 2006:93) and other co-referencing devices (Almasi, 2002).
5. Events typically draw on or follow a standard narrative structure, frequently with a setting, a disruption, a recognition of the disruption, an attempt to resolve the disruption, and a final equilibrium.
6. Spoken narratives often also include other features such as an abstract, a coda and evaluation.

4.3 Interacting

It was noted above that the *interacting* discourse mode is characterised by its 'dialogic' two-way nature, as is the *instructing* mode, since both of them imply more than one active participant. In *instructing* mode the other participant is typically silent and implied, supposedly following the instructions, whereas in *interacting* mode, by contrast, each participant offers written or spoken contributions.

This section, then, considers some aspects of interaction central to the *interacting* discourse mode. Many of them draw for their examples on work done in the Conversation Analysis (CA) research tradition, but it must be borne in mind that *interacting* discourse mode as defined here operates at a relatively abstract level, and can enter into written discourse (for example, in texting and online gaming) as well as spoken discourse, so the discussion of the *interacting* mode in this chapter is not intended to be a discussion of conversation *per se*. Conversation will be discussed in Chapter 6 as one example of a genre which uses the *interacting* discourse mode.

Adjacency pairs

During the analysis of the 'Window' exchange in Chapter 1 it was suggested that Ann's opening remark, namely 'It's cold with that window open', might typically be understood not as a simple statement of fact but as a request requiring a particular response, that is, the first part of a pair of utterances between speakers. In a series of now well-known lectures on conversation delivered in the 1960s, the linguist Harvey Sacks discussed such paired utterances. Drawing on the work of Harold Garfinkel from the 1960s onwards, in a broad research area which came to be known as 'ethnomethodology' (discussed in Garfinkel, 1984[1967]; 2002), linguists such as Sacks set out to understand the ways in which conversational interaction is managed by participants. Their work developed into what is now known as Conversation Analysis (CA). They were interested in more than simply language, indeed language was not their central focus: 'CA is only marginally interested in language as such; its actual object of study is the interactional organization of social activities' (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998:14).

Sacks, among others, noted that adjacency pairs were an important mechanism by which such 'social activities' were organized. He characterised them in his lectures as follows: 'Aspects of certain sequences that occur in conversation can be isolated, for which the following features obtain: They're two utterances long, and the utterances that compose them are adjacently placed to each other' (Sacks, 1995, Vol. 2:521). For this reason he came to call these utterances 'adjacency pairs' (Sacks, 1995, Vol. 2:521; Levinson, 1983), although it was later accepted that the two parts need not be strictly adjacent to each other, as will be discussed below. Sacks noted that the first part of the pair of utterances calls for a particular answer, since 'given a first pair part, not anything that could be a second pair part goes, but given some first, only some seconds are admissible' (Sacks, 1995, Vol. 2:521). In his original lectures Sacks identified a number of such adjacency pairs, and it is interesting to see his original formulation of these types:

> Now, characteristically there are names for the components of such pairs, for example, greeting-greeting, question-answer, 'goodbye-goodbye' (whatever you want to call that), complaints followed by an excuse or a request for forgiveness or an apology or a denial, offers followed by acceptances or refusals, requests followed by acceptances or rejections, compliments followed by acceptances of a compliment, etc., etc. (Sacks 1995, Vol. 2:521)

Sacks was quoted above as saying that 'given some first, only some seconds are admissible'. To put this another way, 'a first pair part is typically made in the expectation of a certain second pair part; for example, an apology is typically made in the expectation of an acceptance. It is, however, possible that an apology is met with a refusal' (Cheng 2003:19). In the case of an apology, acceptance would be termed the 'preferred' response whereas refusal would be considered a 'dispreferred' response or 'dispreferred second' (Schegloff *et al.*, 1977:362). Cheng suggests ways of identifying such 'dispreferred' responses in terms of their structure: 'Structurally, a dispreferred response differs from a preferred response. A dispreferred second pair part is marked and made structurally complex, while a preferred second pair part is unmarked and typically structurally simple' (Cheng, 2003:19 citing Schegloff *et al.*, 1977). Since the preferred response is expected by both interlocutors it is frequently shorter and less complex, 'whereas the 'dispreferred' alternative can be marked by pauses, hesitations, excuses, mitigations and justifications' (Jupp, 2006:43). To put it another way:

> responses which agree or are congruent with the expectation projected by a first pair-part are produced contiguously and without mitigation. Responses which diverge from that expectation – which in some way disagree – tend to be prefaced by hesitations, discourse markers such as Well... and, unlike congruent responses, are accompanied by accounts for why the speaker is responding in this way. (Hutchby 2001: 67)

Jupp has summarised the status of adjacency pairs as follows, and several of these key dimensions will be revisited in the chapters to follow:

a) the sequence is composed of two adjacency turns issued by two different speakers;
b) given the first, the second is expectable (conditional relevance rule)
c) when the second part is missing (for example, the answer in the 'question/answer' pair), its absence is pointed out by one of the speakers;
d) this mechanism provides a frame for interpretation: by producing a second pair, speakers display their understanding of what the first pair is actually doing.

(Jupp, 2006:43)

The conditional relevance rule refers to 'the way in which particular types of utterance can be made conditionally relevant by prior turns' (Clift *et al.*, 2009:48). The same writers then explain how this operates:

> The production of a first pair-part, such as a greeting, sets up a constraint that a next selected speaker should follow directly by producing

the relevant second pair-part—in this case, a return greeting. Moreover, whatever does follow a first pair-part will be monitored for exactly how it works as a response to that move. (Clift *et al.*, 2009:48)

The first speaker, in other words, is attentive to the way in which the other participant either follows the 'rules' by offering a preferred response, or breaks the rules by not offering it. From this, he or she draws inferences which guide the next utterances.

It will be appreciated that this process involves – indeed depends on – shared expectations on the part of speaker and hearer, and shared understandings of how a discourse interaction is supposed to work. In that sense it is 'normative', meaning that participants are 'expected' to follow certain social 'norms' or tacit rules. This shared set of understood rules is important because it means that participants can on this basis make reasonable deductions about the feelings and aims of other speakers in the interaction. In other words,

> motivational inferences can be drawn from the non-occurrence of a second part following the production of a first. For instance, not returning a greeting may be taken as a sign of rudeness; not providing an answer to a question may be taken as indicative of evasiveness; while not proffering a defence to an accusation may be taken as a tacit admission of guilt. (Clift *et al.*, 2009:48)

Types of adjacency pair

It may be helpful at this point to list some of the most common adjacency pair types. The list which is offered in Table 4.3 includes those identified by Sacks and a number of other writers, with some illustrative examples of preferred and dispreferred responses.

It was noted above that dispreferred responses are often structurally different from preferred responses. In spoken language we can also use a range of other indicators to 'apologise' for giving a dispreferred response, including some of these: 'delay/hesitation, preface, expression of doubt, token 'yes', apology, mention of obligation, appeal for understanding, making the dispreferred response non-personal, giving an account, hedges and mitigators' (Cheng, 2003:19 citing Yule, 1996). In other words, preferred responses tend to be swift and brief: 'Broadly, responses which agree or are congruent with the expectation projected by a first pair-part are produced contiguously and without mitigation' (Clift *et al.*, 2009:49). By contrast, dispreferred responses tend to be signalled as such, for example by the various markers in the

Table 4.3 Types and examples of adjacency pairs

Type /function of adjacency pair*	Initiation move (examples)	Response move (examples)	
Greetings	Good morning	Good morning	*Preferred*
Leavetaking formulae	A: Goodbye	B: Goodbye	*Preferred*
Complaints	A: Isn't he dreadful?	B: Yes, but he's not all bad.	*Dispreferred*
Offers	A: Would you like some carrots?	B: Yeah	*Preferred*
Compliments	A: Why?, it's the loveliest record!	B: Well, thank you. (Pomerantz, 1978:84)	*Preferred*
Invitations	B: Uh if you'd care to come over and visit a little while this morning I'll give you a cup of coffee.	A: hehh Well that's awfully sweet of you, I don't think I can make it this morning - hh uhm I'm running an ad in the paper and -and uh I have to stay near the phone. (Heritage, 1984, p. 266)	*Dispreferred*
Requesting information	A: What's the name of that color?	B: Blue. (Merritt, 1982:235, in Duranti, 1997)	*Preferred*
Requesting action	Sara: Barbara I have to go to a lecture in a few minutes and Joan isn't back from lunch ... could you take over the desk for me?	Barbara: erm (tut) well I – I could but it would be better if you could find someone else cos I have to leave at two. (adapted from Holmes, 2008:380)	*Dispreferred*

* From Sacks (1995) unless otherwise indicated.

dispreferred responses in Table 4.3, such as 'erm (tut) well I – I...' in the example of Requesting action.

It is worth noting that when a response is said to be 'preferred' this has nothing to do with the personal preferences of the speakers. As Duranti explains it:

> Sacks and other conversation analysts did not think of preferences as psychological properties, residing in an individual's consciousness. Rather, they saw preferences as tendencies provided in the system and by the system ... Preferences are interpretive frameworks within which

members must operate at the very moment of engaging in the mediating activity of talk. (Duranti 1997:260)

So any first pair-part sets up an expectation within the system which implies in itself a preference, no matter what the speaker actually wants.

Teaching exchanges

One common type of exchange has three parts rather than two, and is known as the *IRF* sequence because of the initials of its three parts: Initiation, Response and Feedback/follow-up (Seedhouse, 1996). This IRF sequence, which for convenience we could term an 'adjacency trio', is common and important in teaching situations and some situations with parents and children, and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. However, it is not so common in other situations. If someone offered us the third 'feedback move' in certain everyday situations we would be confused, and might suppose the speaker to be either joking or arrogant, as in this invented example:

Edward: Excuse me, what time is the next bus?
Flavia: It's due in five minutes
Edward: Excellent! Well done!
Flavia: *(Thinks: Well why did you ask me if you knew already?!?)*

We could explain this more technically by saying that Flavia took Edward's move to be part of an Information Request adjacency pair and responded accordingly, drawing on her prior knowledge to offer what she took to be the appropriate response, only to be surprised to find that his question was not genuine, as he knew the answer already. In other words, the IRF sequence is not appropriate in all situations.

Adjacent and not adjacent

The term 'adjacency pair' suggests that the response will necessarily be 'adjacent' or near to the 'initiation'. However, this is rather misleading because frequently in practice the response move can be at some distance from the initiation move. Look at the following example, which contains as many as three adjacency pairs, and notice how the pairs are structured.

1 A: Can I borrow your car?
2 B: When?
3 A: This afternoon
4 B: For how long?
5 A: A couple of hours
6 B: Okay.

(Silverman, 1998:106)

The conversation starts in line 1 with an initiating move which is a request. However, the response is delayed until line 6 when B eventually agrees. In line 2, instead of immediately responding to line 1, B begins his own new adjacency pair, which in this case is a request for information. This move is termed an *insertion sequence* Schelgoff, 1972; Levinson, 1983–84 because it is inserted between the two parts of the initial adjacency pair. Lines 4 and 5 are another insertion sequence. However, consider this example:

A: that wasn't the guy I met, was it – when we saw the building? -
B: saw it where –
A: when I went over to Chetwynd Road
B: yes

(Clark, 1996:200)

When the sequence which is inserted is not directly related to the main pair, as is the case here, it is termed a *side sequence* rather than an insertion sequence.

These examples illustrate a number of important points about adjacency pairs. Firstly, they can be combined in real discourse in quite subtle ways, with one or more parts inserted between the parts of another pair. Secondly, what is fascinating is that speakers (and indeed writers) can for the most part expertly (but instinctively, without conscious awareness of what they are doing) follow these quite complex operations so as to achieve what they want in discourse and society. This means, thirdly, that if we as analysts look closely for and at adjacency pairs in real interactions, they can offer a valuable insight into what the conversants are doing and seeking to do. For this reason adjacency pairs are an important part of the analytical toolkit, and will be seen again in the analyses in later chapters.

A final point which this example illustrates is that, as noted above, the two parts of a pair might not be 'adjacent' at all. In fact, since adjacency pairs occur in writing as well as in speech (for example, in emails, text messages, birthday greetings cards) there might be a considerable time lag in the answers. For example, there is frequently a lag of hours between text message pairs, and I have received Christmas cards with messages replying a year later to my previous year's greeting, a time lag of a full year between initiation and response! These are no less adjacency pairs than those we

find in oral interaction, so the discussion of such pairs can contribute to our understanding of written as well as spoken interactions. (Indeed we will draw on them when analysing courtroom discourse in Chapter 7, and online discourse and text messaging in Chapter 8). This again illustrates how important adjacency pairs are to language behaviour, as an essential part of the *interacting* discourse mode, which is in turn a significant part in many *genres*, and therefore of central importance to the discourse analyst.

Turn-taking

Another important part of the *interacting* discourse mode is the way in which speakers and writers take and give *turns* as they interact. Turns have been described as follows:

> Turn is the fundamental unit of description in conversation analysis. It can be defined as the length of time a speaker holds the floor. Length and turn constructional units are constantly negotiated by speakers as they interact. A turn can be anything from any audible sound, to a single word, a clause, a sentence, a narrative. (Jupp, 2006:42)

In practice speakers (and also writers in some written interaction, though not in the same ways) are sensitive to the moments when turns might be given and taken. Jupp puts it as follows, referring to the 'turn-taking system', and explaining what is known as the *transition relevant place*:

> Another feature of this type of organization is projectability. Through the turn-taking system, hearers can detect first possible completion of the current speaker's turn. This point is called transition relevant place, that is the moment at which change of speaker may take place. Turn-allocational techniques centre around three options:
>
> 1. a current speaker may select a next speaker (for example, asking a question);
> 2. if (1) is not used, then parties may self-select in starting to talk;
> 3. if (2) is not used, then the current speaker may continue to talk.
>
> (Jupp, 2006:42 emphasis in original)

Just as analysis of adjacency pairs is a useful tool for the discourse analyst, so the analysis of turn-taking behaviour can also can give insights into patterns of language behaviour. Both are important *features* of many texts, spoken and written, which help to achieve the text's function.

Perceptions and reality in analysing interaction

When writers invent dialogue they tend to present it as relatively ordered and neat, in stark contrast to the apparent chaos of transcripts of real-life interaction. This contrast is illustrated in the two texts below. The first is an attempt at representing a job interview, in a book designed for language learners, while the second is a transcript of an authentic interview. The first arguably represents our mental model or genre of how interviews 'should' work, whereas the second shows how participants in practice negotiate interactively, drawing on their genre expectations but also achieving other social purposes. This is the first text; note how orderly it is:

Job Interview 1

	Mr. Richards:	Good morning Mr Plant. Do sit down.
1	Christopher:	Thank you.
2	Mr. Richards:	First of all I'd like you to tell me a bit about what you've been doing.
	Christopher:	Well, I left school after I'd done my A levels.
3	Mr. Richards:	What subjects did you take?
4	Christopher:	French, German and Art.
5	Mr. Richards:	Art?
6	Christopher:	Well, I really wanted to study art. But a friend of my father's offered me a job. He's an accountant in the City.
7	Mr. Richards:	I see. In your application, you say that you only spent nine months with this firm of accountants. Why was that?
8	Christopher:	Well to be quite honest, I didn't like it – so I got a place at the Art College.
9	Mr. Richards:	Did your father mind?
10	Christopher	Well, he was quite disappointed at first. He's an accountant too, you see.
11	Mr. Richards:	Have you any brothers or sisters?

(Abbs *et al.*, 1979:49–50, quoted in Cook, 1989)

The authors of this interview (perhaps to help the language learners) have made the turns and turn-taking very neat and organised. There are no side sequences or insertion sequences here (though to be fair it is true that in a formal job interview there might be fewer than in everyday conversation).

Furthermore, each speaker completes his turn perfectly, with no hint of hesitation or interruption. Each turn offers a perfect answer to the

previous – this time the parts of the adjacency pairs are indeed neatly 'adjacent' to each other. In terms of 'topic placement', again we see a high level of organisation, with the interviewer succeeding in guiding the topics exactly according to our idealised notion of the genre. In short, the text matches an ideal, commonsense idea of how interaction in general works, as well as our stylised sense (our genre) of the job interview. But is discourse in *interacting* discourse mode really as neat as this?

The second interview, below, gives the lie to this impression of order and neatness. This is an authentic text, unlike the invented one above, and it shows the ways in which our *genre schema* of the job interview, our stylised ideal representation of it, (similar to the invented example above) meshes with the reality in some areas, but diverges from it quite starkly in others.

Job Interview 2

12	Interviewee:	Hallo
13	Gilbey:	Hallo. Do have a seat
14	Interviewee:	Thank you very much.
15	Gilbey:	Well thank you very much indeed for coming today. Very pleased to see you
16	Interviewee:	*(inaudible)*
17	Gilbey:	Perhaps I ought to start by introducing us all . em my name's Mr Gilbey I'm Assistant County Personnel Officer
18	Interviewee:	mhm
19	Gilbey:	This is Mr ... Tibbles who's a ... personnel officer and this is Rob Woodhull who's the administrative officer who would be your immediate
20	Interviewee:	Ah yes
21	Gilbey:	superior... if you were to get the job ... did you have any trouble getting here today
22	Interviewee:	No *(inaudible)*
23	Gilbey:	Car parking OK?
24	Interviewee:	Well I came on the bus today actually
25	Gilbey:	Did you?
26	Interviewee:	And the bus was on time yes
27	Gilbey:	That's a bit of a walk up is it it it's raining out there? Did you...
28	Interviewee:	Oh no
29	Gilbey:	manage to keep dry
30	Interviewee:	It's not it's not far from the bus stop actually
31	Gilbey:	Fine . Right – now ... just to start by em asking you

(Cheepen, 1988: 31, transcription as in the original)

The formal greetings and other formulae in the opening lines do seem to conform to our expectation of a job interview genre. However, the actual interaction quickly diverges from the genre expectation because one of the participants, Mr. Gilbey, chooses to add some friendly informality to the daunting formal situation, perhaps to relax the job candidate (lines 17–32). In other ways also this example demonstrates how authentic interaction patterns, such as use of adjacency pairs, turn-taking behaviour, actually operate in interaction. It offers examples of straightforward adjacency pairing (lines 12 and 13), and of interesting negotiation and *repair* (lines 23–26 and 27). The point to make here is that the analyst can start by identifying the discourse mode as interacting, and on that basis can draw on tools such as analysis of adjacency pairs, turn-taking behaviour and so on, so as to explain the main purposes of the participants.

Summary: interacting

In brief, then, the interacting discourse mode as we define it here has the following features. Note again that although the discussion above has focussed on speech, this discourse mode could also apply to written interaction.

Whereas with other discourse modes it is possible to predict particular verb forms and other grammatical features as typical (for example, in *narrating* discourse mode we expect frequent past tense forms), in *interacting* discourse mode it is not so easy to identify particular grammar or lexis characteristic of the discourse mode, apart from question forms, since interaction can be in written form or spoken, and can in effect use any grammar or lexis. It is characterised more by participant behaviour than by aspects of grammatical or lexical form, so its characteristics are largely confined to those identified in Table 4.4.

Before turning to look at other discourse modes, we could usefully ask ourselves how the interacting discourse mode operates in practice. If you think about a university lecture, we can see that it mostly consists of one person speaking (one turn) and therefore not many adjacency pairs. However, at the end there may be a period of questioning and answering, in which we

Table 4.4 Features of the interacting discourse mode

1. Turn-taking and turn-giving behaviour, including turns, pauses, overlaps.
2. Sequencing patterns typified by the frequent use of adjacency pairs.
3. A high incidence of question forms (part of turn-giving strategies).

could see more adjacency pairs and more turn-taking and turn-giving. The Lecture genre, as we typically conceive it, could therefore be characterised in terms of one of its defining features, namely by these particular patterns of turns and turn-taking, quite different from the pattern we see in other forms of linguistic interaction. To put it another way, each genre which makes use of the *interacting* discourse mode will deploy different patterns of turns and turn-taking and different uses of adjacency pairs, and this in part is what allows us to define it and to distinguish it from other genres.

In the next chapter, when we look at examples of spoken texts, we will see in greater detail how these features work in practice, in other words how turn-taking, adjacency pairs and other features of the interacting discourse mode are used in different genres and help to define those genres. For example we will look in more detail at a sample of conversation, so as to illustrate more clearly the complexities of adjacency pairs and of turns, as well as repairs, and our skills in dealing with them as we speak.

4.4 Describing

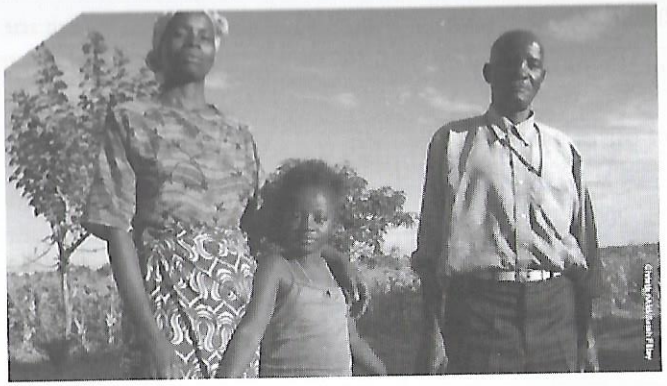
The third discourse mode to be discussed is that of *describing*. Consider the text from a charity leaflet, focussing on a girl called Vestina, in Illustration 4.1.

The *function* of the text is clearly *persuasive*, attempting to encourage us to donate money. One of the main *features* of the text is its extended use of the *describing* discourse mode. A few *events* are mentioned briefly (for example, that her parents died when she was small), in a nod towards *narrating* discourse mode, but here they are designed to explain what is predominantly a description of Vestina's situation.

The description is achieved by frequent use of structures typical of this discourse mode, such as the Subject-Predicator-Complement (SPC) clause structure described by Jeffries (2006:129,138), as in these examples:

Subject	*Predicator*	*Complement*
Vestina Gundy	is	14, HIV positive and from Zambia
She	's	a bright spark
...she	's	tiny for her age
...Vestina	's not	a statistic
She	's	a child

This use of *intensive* verbs (such as *be, seem, become, appear)* along with verbs of change (such as *make*) and verbs of perception (*think, believe, consider*), (types discussed in Jeffries, 2006) is common in this discourse mode. We recall the earlier example of the travel webpage text about Sydney using *describing* mode



For Vestina, shoes mean school. And school means a future

Vestina Gunda is 14, HIV positive and from Zambia. She's tiny for her age. Poor health means she coughs constantly. But she's a bright spark. And an education could transform her chances in life.

Both Vestina's parents died of HIV-related illnesses. Now she lives with her grandparents, who adore her. But they are struggling to look after Vestina, her sister and six of her cousins – all orphans.

Our partner organisation, the Arch Diocese of Lusaka (ADL) has been working with the family to make sure she can go to school.

Vestina's background could easily condemn her to a life of poverty and exploitation, bad health and an early death. But if she can get an education, her chances will improve dramatically. Statistically, every year of education causes life expectancy to rise.* Of course, Vestina's not a statistic. She's a child. And you could help a child like her by giving just £2 a month.

* Ricci & Zachariadis, *Longevity and Education: A Macroeconomic Perspective*, 2007

Can £2 a month really send a child to school?

Illustration 4.1 Excerpt from a Christian Aid fundraising leaflet (2007)

in similar ways. As Jeffries puts it – and the point applies also to other descriptive texts as well as travel brochures: 'One of the reasons why such structures are common in travel brochures is that they enable the writer to make quite bold statements without being at risk of contradiction. The intensive verb acts as an equals sign, making the sentence appear to be stating a given truth whereby the subject and the complement are clearly identical'. (Jeffries 2006:133). Smith offers further characterisation of this mode in general, which can apply to the Vestina text and also, as she notes, to travel writing. Her point about the time dimension in describing mode is also pertinent:

> Descriptive passages tend to focus on specifics: particular objects, people, mental states...Time is static or suspended. There are no significant changes or advancements. The entities introduced in descriptions are usually states, ongoing events, athelic events. Description is predominant in travel writing; it appears in fiction, and most other genres. Descriptive passages progress spatially through a scene. (Smith, 2003:28)

Table 4.5 Features of the describing discourse mode

Features of the describing discourse mode	Examples from the text
1. Frequent use of intensive verbs such as be, become, seem, appear (Jeffries, 2006; cf. 'Relational Processes' in Bloor and Bloor 2004)	Vestina Gunda is 14... She's tiny for her age...
2. Frequent use of the verb 'have' to describe features: 'She has brown hair'	-
3. Verbs in the Present Simple and Past Simple, to describe current situations, or other verbal forms such as the Present Progressive to describe ongoing situations or activities	Now she lives [Present Simple] with her grandparents, who adore [Present Simple] her. But they are struggling [Present Progressive] to look after Vestina, her sister and six of her cousins ...
4. Frequent use of descriptive adjectives	HIV positive, tiny, poor, bright
5. Adverbs of frequency used to describe actions or verbs	constantly

So in the *describing* discourse mode there is less of a focus on events than in *narrating*, and more focus on people, places and things. To summarise, this discourse mode is typically characterised by the existence of the features set out in Table 4.5. (Examples again come from English. Other languages will of course use different structural and lexical resources.)

In Chapter 8 we will see that other genres, such as Lonely Hearts advertisements, also draw extensively on the *describing* discourse mode as one of their features.

4.5 Reporting

Chapter 8 provides an extensive discussion of News reports, at which point I will address a number of issues related to the *reporting* discourse mode as used in practice. In this chapter, then, it is necessary only to set out the essential features of this mode, in particular to distinguish it from *narrating*. Again, Smith offers a useful account of what she terms 'reports':

> Reports give an account of situations from the temporal standpoint of the reporter. They are, like narrative, mainly concerned with events and states. The significant difference between these modes is that, in Reports, the relation to Speech Time determines temporal advancement. Situations are related to Speech Time, rather than to each other.(Smith, 2003:29–30)

The main difference, then, between *narrating* and *reporting* discourse modes relates to what Smith calls *Speech Time*, since a report is assumed to be relating events from the point of view of the person doing the reporting. Situations in this mode, in other words, are set out in relation to Speech Time and not in relation to each other, as they are in narrating. One result of this is a high frequency of verbs, adverbs and other forms with 'deictic' reference:

> Reports conform to the basic speech situation, in which the speaker is central. This centrality is signaled by adverbials such as here, now, last week, which take Speech Time as their orientation, or anchor. Such forms are known as 'deictic'. 'Deixis' is the term for linguistic forms that are anchored to the time of speech. The present tense conveys that a situation holds now, the past tense conveys that a situation precedes now. (Smith, 2003:29–30)

In her earlier book in this series, Jeffries describes *deixis* as follows: 'Deixis refers to the capacity of some words to shift their reference, depending on who says (or writes) them and/or the speaker's position in space and time' (Jeffries, 2006:190). This is an important concept in language as a whole; as Chapman puts it, in English 'the whole grammatical system of verb tenses is deictic' (Chapman, 2006:123). In the discourse mode of *reporting*, since the events are conveyed from the speakers' 'here and now', or from Speech Time as Smith calls it, the result is a high frequency of forms with deictic reference to that particular place and time. Such expressions occur in almost every printed news report, with clear deictic reference to the time and place of writing (though this is less true of online reporting, which could be read many days later). A particularly important feature in this respect in English

Table 4.6 Features of the reporting discourse mode

Features of the reporting discourse mode	Examples
1. Deictic verbs with implicit reference to the place of speaking	'come' 'go' (Jeffries, 2006: 190)
2. Deictic use of the Present Perfect tense	the government has announced
3. Deictic noun phrases	'this man', 'that boy' (Chapman, 2006:123)
4. Deictic adverbs of time	tomorrow, yesterday, on Wednesday, last week
5. Deictic adverbs of place	here, there

is the use of the Present Perfect tense, since it is often employed to imply a direct relationship between the recent past and the current time of speaking, as in 'the government has announced...'

I summarise some of the features of the *reporting* mode in Table 4.6.

4.6 Instructing

The last of the discourse modes to be considered in this chapter is termed *instructing*, not included in Smith's discussion but nonetheless quite common. An example of a text which uses this discourse mode extensively is the 'Washing Clothes' text discussed earlier:

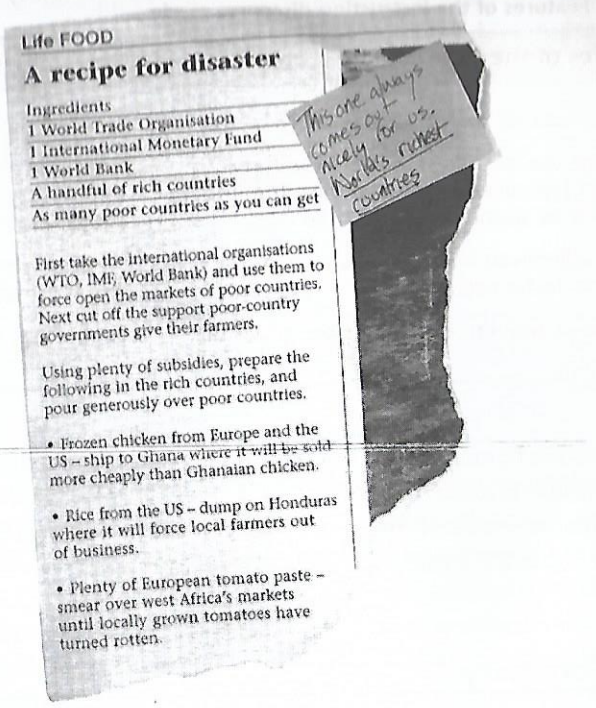
> First you arrange items into different groups... If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities that is the next step; otherwise, you are pretty much set. (Bransford and Johnson, 1972:400)

The same text offers a good instance of switching between discourse modes, since besides its extensive use of *instructing*, it also includes aspects of *describing* in the phrases *'it is better to do too few things at once than too many'* and: *'A mistake can be expensive as well'*. It therefore demonstrates how texts can mix discourse modes for various purposes, and also how attention to the discourse modes could potentially allow the analyst to identify interesting textual patterns.

A genre which makes extensive use of the *instructing discourse mode* is the Recipe. We all have in our minds an idealised *genre* of Recipe, which is probably similar for most of us, albeit with individual and cultural differences here and there. Most people's genre schema of recipes would probably include a picture of the completed food, a list of the ingredients, then a sequence of instructions as to how to prepare the dish. It might also include other information such as the number of hungry people which the dish will provide for, and so on.

If we think about this genre we can see that there are various elements of *describing discourse mode* (for instance the list of ingredients is a sort of description) but that the main element of recipes is drawn from the *instructing discourse mode* in the steps which the cook needs to follow. Here again, then, we see how a genre can draw primarily on one discourse mode, but make use of others in various flexible ways. The key is *flexibility*, and the key aim is that the genre, and then the text itself, will achieve their intended *functions*.

We can now turn to consider an interesting example, a recipe (Illustration 4.2), but not quite what we would expect. What the charity is doing here is


Life FOOD

A recipe for disaster

Ingredients
1 World Trade Organisation
1 International Monetary Fund
1 World Bank
A handful of rich countries
As many poor countries as you can get

This one always comes out nicely for us. World's richest countries

First take the international organisations (WTO, IMF, World Bank) and use them to force open the markets of poor countries. Next cut off the support poor-country governments give their farmers.

Using plenty of subsidies, prepare the following in the rich countries, and pour generously over poor countries.

- Frozen chicken from Europe and the US – ship to Ghana where it will be sold more cheaply than Ghanaian chicken.
- Rice from the US – dump on Honduras where it will force local farmers out of business.
- Plenty of European tomato paste – smear over west Africa's markets until locally grown tomatoes have turned rotten.

International trade rules are destroying the livelihoods of millions of people in the world's poorest countries. Join the Trade Justice Campaign and help make trade work for the world's poorest communities.

Get cooking – send off these cards today.

Christian Aid is campaigning as a member of the Trade Justice Movement – calling for trade justice, not free trade – with rules weighted to benefit poor people and the environment.

Illustration 4.2 Excerpt from a Christian Aid fundraising leaflet: recipe

offering us a 'spoof' or parody of a recipe, in what is actually a leaflet, part of a charity campaign. It draws on our genre expectations (and it would not work without them) and then ironically places different elements in the various parts of the recipe. The text is therefore highly intertextual, since it relies heavily on knowledge of the Recipe genre for its effectiveness. At first sight it looks like a recipe we might have at home in the kitchen – it is apparently torn out of a magazine; it has a small yellow reminder note on it which ironically says 'This one always comes out nicely for us. World's richest countries', parodying a note which might be added to a recipe as a reminder, or a note to a friend about a genuine recipe. It then follows the pattern we expect from recipes in having the ingredients at the top, then the procedure in *instructing discourse mode*, followed by other elements. In other words, this text draws

Table 4.7 Features of the instructing discourse mode

Features of the instructing discourse mode	Examples
1. Frequent use of the imperative form of the verb	Cut the onions
2. Frequent use of the Present Simple tense to describe typical actions – avoiding the imperative so as to sound less dictatorial	'First you arrange items into different groups.' ('Washing' text)
3. Use of adjectivals to specify aspects of the elements to be used	*Fresh* parsley, *runner* beans, *coconut* milk
4. Adverbs of sequence to tell us the order of events	First, then, next, thirdly

on our genre schema, and on the typical recipe *instructing* discourse mode, to make an ironic intertextual point.

To summarise, some of the key features of the *instructing discourse mode* are set out in Table 4.7, again focusing on texts in English.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has discussed some of the main discourse modes so as to allow for their identification in some of the texts to be analysed in the chapters to come. It has not been possible to describe all of the discourse modes exhaustively, but the discussion here should at least facilitate their identification in various texts in ways which can open up possible avenues for analysis. For example, if a text appears to make use of the *reporting* discourse mode, the analyst can look in particular for deictic features; if the text appears to be in *narrating* mode, the analyst can look for patterns of verb tenses and adverbs; if the text appears to use extensive *interacting*, then an approach looking at adjacency pairs and turn-taking (in speech or writing) could be fruitful.

The discourse modes are offered, then, as potentially useful indicators of the kinds of features which a text might employ in order to achieve its functions or purposes. They can be used in order to open up a text for analysis, if the text is of a kind suited to this kind of approach. However, they are not intended to constitute an all-embracing method, or to be employed in any rigid way. This will become clearer in the next chapter, where I draw on the discussion so far on the nature of discourse, genre and discourse modes so as to set out a broad heuristic approach to discourse analysis in general, in which attention to genre and discourse mode have their place, as preparation for the more detailed discussion of spoken and written texts in the second half of the book.

CHAPTER 5

Analysing Discourse

The analyst seeking to develop a fully comprehensive methodological approach to discourse would face at least two major obstacles, namely the sheer variety and also the 'hybridity' of texts in the real world (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), both of which any proposed approach would have to address. It is noteworthy, in this regard, that those approaches to discourse which have made most progress in recent years have confined themselves to relatively clearly defined domains of discourse and relatively non-hybrid texts, for example work in Conversational Analysis and academic writing. While scholars in these and other specialist areas have made progress in developing methodological procedures and approaches which serve to illuminate the particular texts, genres and domains on which they focus, none would claim that those approaches can then straightforwardly be applied to the full range of other texts, spoken and written, encountered around us.

This sheer heterogeneity and hybridity of textual data, then, in conjunction with the fact that each analyst approaches her or his data from different viewpoints and with differing intentions, means that it is illusory to hope for a single 'Discourse Analysis Method' or a set of 'hard-and-fast rules or methods' (Rapley, 2007:5) which can lead us step-by-step into the analysis of every text we wish to examine. For this and other reasons it seems more satisfactory on methodological and indeed on practical grounds to avoid attempting any such single approach to analysis, but to consider discourse analysis more like a 'craft skill', as some writers have suggested (Potter, 1997; Rapley, 2007). This suggests the need not for any fixed method of doing discourse analysis but for what is sometimes called a 'heuristic', a procedure through which each analyst can interrogate each text in a systematic way, drawing on a range of approaches, techniques and procedures to suit the text and context at hand.

Johnstone argues for such an approach, describing her preferred method as 'a set of discovery procedures for systematic application or a set of topics fo