Discourse Analysis

A Multi-Perspective and Multi-Lingual Approach

Susan Strauss and
Parastou Feiz

Discourse Analysis

This introductory textbook presents a variety of approaches and perspectives that can be employed to analyze any sample of discourse. The perspectives come from multiple disciplines, including linguistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology, all of which shed light on meaning and the interactional construction of meaning through language use. Students without prior experience in discourse analysis will appreciate and understand the micro-macro relationship of language use in everyday contexts, in professional and academic settings, in languages other than English, and in a wide variety of media outlets.

Each chapter is supported by examples of spoken and written discourse from various types of data sources, including conversations, commercials, university lectures, textbooks, print ads, and blogs, and concludes with hands-on opportunities for readers to actually do discourse analysis on their own. Students and instructors can also utilize the book's comprehensive companion website, with flash cards for key terms, slides, additional data samples, for in-class activities and self-study.

With its accessible multi-disciplinary approach and comprehensive data samples from a variety of sources, *Discourse Analysis* is the ideal core text for the discourse analysis course in applied linguistics, English, education, and communication programs.

Susan Strauss is Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Penn State University.

Parastou Feiz is Associate Professor in the Department of English at California State University—San Bernardino.

This page intentionally left blank

Discourse Analysis

Putting our Worlds into Words

Susan Strauss and Parastou Feiz

Penn State University and California State University San Bernardino

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2014
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Strauss, Susan G.
Discourse analysis : putting our worlds into words / Susan Strauss, Penn State University and Parastou Feiz, California State University — San Bernadino.
pages cm.
1. Discourse analysis—Textbooks. 2. Discourse analysis—Problems, exercises, etc. I. Feiz, Parastou, author. II. Title.
P302.S733 2013
401'.41—dc23 2013024239

ISBN: 978-0-415-52218-2 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-415-52219-9 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-0-203-12155-9 (ebk)

Typeset in Helvetica Neue and Optima
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Contents

This page intentionally left blank

Preface and Acknowledgments

This is a book on discourse. It is a book that introduces a number of approaches to the analysis of discourse. It reflects the ways in which the two of us teach courses on discourse analysis in our respective universities. Our courses are populated with students whose areas of specialization have ranged from English and applied linguistics to business; communication; media studies; anthropology; recreation, park, and tourism management; Asian studies; Russian; French; German; Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese; science education; math education; literature; composition studies; creative writing; and early childhood education. We provide a collection of perspectives and tools that users of this book might employ in their own work involving the analysis of discourse. We subscribe to no one individual theory about discourse. We address various theories in the individual chapters, and leave open the application of other theories from multiple disciplines that most adequately account for the discursive phenomena under investigation.

We have chosen the title *Discourse Analysis: Putting our Worlds into Words* as the most succinct encapsulation of the processes of discourse and discourse analysis, where "worlds" refers to overlapping spheres of experience, perception, and communication and "words" refers to the multivariate ways in which we express those ideas, perspectives, and perceptions: both the said and the unsaid; the explicit and the implicit; the word, the gesture, or both.

As we hope to have shown throughout these chapters, words create worlds and worlds create words—and stances and identities are shaped and re-shaped, reflected and reified in the words and worlds of discourse.

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals who helped us put this volume together: the students in our discourse analysis courses over

the years at both of our universities; Derron Bishop, who read early versions of Chapters 2 through 6 and offered invaluable comments that we incorporated into the current version of the book; Xuehua Xiang, who read Chapters 2 and 3 and provided comments on those and who also provided us with sample discourse data for Chinese; Yumi Matsumoto, who gave us input on Japanese examples and provided one of her personal photographs taken in Japan, and Jongoh Eun for supplying us with some of the Korean examples. We thank Brian Goldfarb, our friend and colleague, who gave us the best support friends and colleagues could ever ask for, including his creative suggestions for the book cover. As for data excerpts, a small number of examples and some data presented in this book were written and collected for projects conducted by the Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research (CALPER) at the Pennsylvania State University under grants from the U.S. Department of Education. And we thank the staff at Routledge/Taylor and Francis for their support and input at every stage of this process, especially Ivy Ip, Leah Babb-Rosenfeld, Elysse Preposi, Denise File, and the production team.

Susan thanks her children Tenaye, Mihret, Adanech, Biniyam, Bereket, and Terefech for their patience and enthusiasm and infinite curiosity about words and worlds and meanings. Their love kept this process moving, from the first word we put on paper until the very last. She also thanks Noriko Akatsuka for introducing her to the field of linguistics, and now for being an adoring adoptive grandma to her six children. This book is dedicated to them and to the memory of Susan's loving mother, Beatrice Eleanor Strauss, who courageously fought brain cancer during the early days of her professional academic career. Susan also thanks her father, David Strauss, and her sister, Beryl Strauss, for being there when she needed them.

Parastou thanks her husband, Brian Goldfarb, for his unbending support, the inspiring conversations, and invaluable input throughout the process of writing this book. She is also grateful to her mother, Jaleh, for her love and consistent encouragement, and to her aunt Monir and brother, Ali, for always being there. This book is also dedicated to Parastou's father, Bahram Feiz, who was the first person who inspired her to think about the power of words.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Discourse, Words, and the World

> Through language we shape our own relation to a socially organized lifeworld, one where the verbal calibration of diverse perceptions becomes part of the negotiation of ongoing social life . . . The word disrupts the world: Nothing in the lifeworld remains the same once language is invoked. (Du Bois 2011b).

LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE

It is not an overstatement to assert that some form of language occupies nearly every moment of our waking lives: letters, words, sentences, signs, symbols, and thoughts—printed, spoken, computer-generated, flashed on screen, finger-spelled, imagined, and recalled. By and through language, we

DISCOURSE is the social and cognitive process of putting the world into words, of transforming our perceptions, experiences, emotions, understandings, and desires into a common medium for expression and communication, through language and other semiotic resources. Such semiotic resources include gestures, eye gaze, vocal intonations, and interactional gaps of silence; they include color and shape and imagery; and all elements of expression and communication that accompany our words and ideas—or that replace them, complement them, contrast them, or situate them in contexts. **Discourse** is the **social and cognitive process** that reflects, creates, shapes, re-creates, and reifies meaning in the lifeworld.

connect with some people, and put others off. We praise and complain, argue, agree, exaggerate, and downplay. By using language and *not* using language, we empathize and we ignore. We can be exuberant or caring or impassive.

We are constantly surrounded by and immersed in language. Our lives are jam-packed with language in its multiple forms, accompanied by the myriad semiotic resources that combine to shape language into discourse. (Coulthard, 1985).

Language is the very stuff that our daily communications are made of. It so completely fills our lives that we typically pay little attention to it; we may even take it for granted. On the surface, everyday language is commonsensical; it is there and we use it—to exchange ideas, to express desires, to take stands, to imagine, to create, and to understand. It is the very essence of what makes us human.

When some aspect of a communicative activity goes wonderfully right or woefully wrong, we find ourselves reviewing language, rewinding and playing back what we've heard or rereading what we've read, just to see why.

However, it's not the *language* that we're attending to when we notice words and phrases and tones of voice and attitudes. It is not the language itself that moves us or angers us or inspires us to act (or react). It is the *discourse.*

Discourse is the social and cognitive process of putting the world into words, of transforming our perceptions, experiences, emotions, understandings, and desires into a common medium for expression and communication, through language and other semiotic media. Discourse is more than letters and words, appearing one at a time or strung together, reflecting bits of thought and bits of meaning. Discourse is the composite process whereby elements of language combine with other elements of semiosis, like gestures, eye gaze, fluctuations in voice—rhythm, intonation, rate of speech, and spates of silence. It includes color and shape and imagery. Discourse is visual and aural; it is creative and musical—an entire system of social semiotics with its own patterns similar to the patterns of grammar in language (e.g., Hodge and Kress,1988, 1993, 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006).

Discourse includes "all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity, seen in connection with social, cultural and historical patterns and development of use." (Blommaert, 2005: 3). Discourse "reaches out further than language itself in the forms as well as meanings that can be the focus of analysis" (Jaworski and Coupland, 2006: 6). Discourse is language "recruited 'on site' to enact specific social activities and social identities" (Gee, 2005: 1). "Discourses[1] are ideas as well as ways of talking that influence and are influenced by the ideas" (Johnstone, 2008: 3).

It is no wonder that the study of discourse has become key to a range of disciplines across the social sciences (communication, anthropology, sociology, political science, psychology, education, ethnic studies), humanities (gender studies, literature, history, composition, languages, media studies, arts and architecture), and sciences (geography, medicine, engineering).

Discourse: Putting the World Into Words

Expressing an emotion, depicting an event, labeling an object, locating a point in space—all involve choice. We choose words from among other possible words, or we invent one if our bank of existing words is insufficient. We use our limited repertoire of words, expressions, and symbols, and our even more limited patterns of grammar to "verbally calibrate" (Du Bois, 2011b), to express what we *mean*, in explicit terms or through gesture or drawing or implicature. And each and every time we do, we reveal something about how we perceive the world, we understand something about how others perceive it, and we guide others to see the world in various ways.

As Harris (1983: ix) notes in the introduction to his translation of Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*, "[w]ords are not vocal labels which have come to be attached to things and qualities already given in advance by Nature, or to ideas already grasped independently by the human mind. On the contrary languages themselves, collective products of social interaction, supply the essential conceptual frameworks for men's analysis of reality and, simultaneously, the verbal equipment for their description of it. The concepts we use are creations of the language we speak."

* * *

Nothing in discourse is neutral. Each and every instance of discourse is imbued with some element of stance; it is motivated by a perspective.

Stance in discourse is one primary area of focus in this book. We define stance in the following way.

This book is about discourse. It is about the reflection, creation, shaping, re-creation, and reification of meaning in situated contexts. It is about locating and understanding meaning through various analytic lenses and using a variety of units of analysis: grammar and grammatical units, genre and generic structure, register, reference, deixis, information structure and intonation units, conversation analysis, conversational implicature, speech acts, politeness, face threatening acts, indexicality, identity, and the social construction of ideology and power.

STANCE is the **speaker's or writer's feeling, attitude, perspective, or position as enacted in discourse.** *Stance-taking* is an inevitable consequence of participating in and producing discourse, of putting the world into words. Stance emerges in a speaker's or writer's choice of one linguistic form over another, the coloring of utterances with prosodic contours or punctuation, the sequential ordering of utterances; it emerges in gestures, silences, hesitations, hedges, and in overlapping stretches of talk. In all of these instances of discourse (and others), a speaker's or writer's stance is enacted and created; it is negotiated and re-negotiated.

* * *

We provide a number of theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis of discourse and texts,[2] where micro-level instances of language and discourse combine to create, reflect, and shape the broader, macro-levels of meaning. The chapters in this book are systematically organized, with many common threads running through them. Each presents a theoretical and methodological overview of a number of approaches commonly used in discourse analytic research. Each includes excerpts of actual discourse, culled from face-to-face interactions, television (talk shows, dramas, sitcoms, weather, commercials), film, textbooks, cookbooks, magazines, print ads, and websites, to illustrate the concepts and methodologies presented. Each chapter includes sample analyses of these and other data excerpts, together with exercises and follow-up questions to encourage readers to probe well beyond the information provided. Each chapter also includes data excerpts from other languages, for readers interested in applying concepts from the English-based examples to other languages.

The chapters are organized as follows:

Chapter 2: The Building Blocks of Language: The Stuff That Discourse Is Made Of

Chapter 2 takes a basic cognitive approach to *grammar,* presenting it as a fluid and dynamic system of essential structure—a structure that is driven by conceptual imagery and choice. Nouns, or ways of naming entities and ideas, reflect conceptual schemas in terms of individuation or agglomeration, singularity or plurality, degrees of concreteness or abstractness. The noun *snow* typically denotes a mass of frozen precipitation, as it falls or as it has covered the

ground. Pluralized, *snows* refers to repeated *cycles of snowfall.* In grammar and in discourse, a simple *-s* at the end of the word makes a conceptual difference. It reflects perception. It reflects *stance*. *Verbs* like *suffer* verses *experience* or *undergo* convey differing points of views of events and the entities involved in them. Adjectives like *classic* and *signature* and adverbs like *now* or *more than ever* underscore qualities of things and time frames for events, drawing attention to some elements in the discourse and eclipsing others. Grammar and discourse and stance are inextricably related. One cannot be analyzed without the other.

Chapter 3: Genre, Modality, Register, and Participation Framework

The chapter introduces genre as social practice, as a metaphorical, socioculturally shaped frame of discourse that provides basic structure with permeable boundaries to communicate essential content within a context and for a particular purpose. Recipes are discursive genres, as are narratives, sermons, lectures, and comedic monologues. Genres vary. Modalities (spoken, written, electronic, and hybrid) vary. Registers of discourse range from the everyday to the technical. Participation frameworks provide perspectives for participant roles like speakers, hearers, overhearers, and audiences. And with each variation and with each shift, the discourse changes—at times in blatantly obvious ways, and at times only subtly. The chapter provides these and other frames of reference that are crucial to the analysis of discourse.

Chapter 4: Reference, Deixis, and Stance

Reference involves designating things, ideas, entities, and people by picking them out with words and sometimes gestures. How we "refer" to things involves choice: How important is the entity to the speaker or writer? How specifically does it need to be designated? Is quantity relevant to referential choice? Is specificity? How much attention is the hearer or reader guided to pay to this referent? Such linguistic choices (with occasional gestures) pervade all of discourse. The chapter provides detailed discussion concerning how instances of reference pattern within discourse. We discuss socio-cognitive motivations underlying the range of meanings of possible markers of referential choice.

Chapter 5: Information Structure, Cohesion, and Intonation Units

The frameworks of information structure, cohesion, and intonation units provide insights into the ways in which topics, persons, ideas, memories, and

events are introduced into the discourse and then developed. The chapter discusses the notion of "consciousness" from the point of view of givenness and newness of information—essentially, assumptions that producers of discourse make concerning the ability of discourse recipients to follow and process. The chapter shines light on the various ways in which language-in-interaction converts an individual's personal experience and perception into a common communicative medium.

Chapter 6: Conversation

The analytic focus of discourse in this chapter shifts to talk-in-interaction, the mutually achieved understanding between and among participants in naturally occurring conversation. The chapter provides a detailed overview of Conversation Analysis (CA), pointing out mechanisms underlying turns-at-talk, including the mechanisms of turn construction, turn organization, turn sequencing, and speaker change. What is of prime importance in a CA-based analysis is the micro-second by micro-second orientations of conversational participants to talk as it emerges in interaction, rather than the general notion of "context" (e.g., where the talk takes place, who the interactants are, their relationship histories, etc.).

Chapter 7: Pragmatics—Implicature, Speech Act Theory, and Politeness

In contrast with Conversation Analysis, context is key to the study of pragmatics and to all fields related to it. Pragmatics is the area of linguistic and sociolinguistic study that is concerned with the ways in which speakers/hearers and writers/readers create and derive meaning from non-literal interpretations of spoken, written, electronic, and hybrid discourse. From this perspective, implicature and inference drive meaning making and interaction. The chapter presents various approaches to and applications of conversational implicature, speech act theory, and politeness, with some discussion of pragmatics across cultures.

Chapter 8: Indexicality, Stance, Identity, and Agency

Chapter 8 examines pragmatic meaning from the perspective of indexicality. Rooted in semiotics, where meaning derives from the combined elements of signs, symbols, and context, an indexicality-centered approach to discourse analysis provides keen insights into the cognitive and social construction of stance (e.g., affective, epistemic, moral, elitist). The chapter presents an overview of indexicality, from a deictic and referential perspective, followed

by in-depth discussion of indexicality as the patterned, context-dependent connections of linguistic forms to meanings evoking abstract concepts of personal and social identity, gender, agency, power, authority, entitlement, emotion, elitism, resistance, aesthetics, morality, responsibility, imagination, freedom, and so forth—all elements of communication and interaction that pervade our daily lives and existence.

Chapter 9: Critical Discourse Analysis

Chapter 9 presents the broad, interdisciplinary methodological approach to language and society with the central view of *discourse as social practice*. The chapter presents CDA and its goal of uncovering patterns of discourse through which ideologies are shaped, communicated, and propagated—ideologies that involve hidden dimensions of power, control, injustice, and inequity. These are "hidden" because they are normalized and naturalized, often packaged in discourse as common-sense assumptions of social reality and the "truth." The chapter presents basic approaches to analysis by three foundational scholars (Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak) and concludes with data excerpts for readers to analyze on the basis of these three (and other) approaches.

In short, no instance of discourse is value-free or stance neutral. Speakers and writers make choices—sometimes consciously, yet more often not: Choices of words, grammatical constructions, prosodic fluctuations, gestures, grimaces, head nods, eye gaze, colors and images—all combine to form the social and cognitive processes and products of discourse.

* * *

This book represents our views on discourse and the ways in which we teach Discourse Analysis in our own classes. The book is informed by work in multiple disciplines by scholars and discourse analysts who have influenced our ways of thinking and have forever changed our ways of seeing. Most of these scholars are cited here. We owe a debt of thanks to them and to our former teachers who first ignited our interests in language and discourse. Those interests are now never-ending passions.

The book is designed for the non-linguist in fields such as business and marketing, communication, psychology, health and human development, sociology, history, education, literature, medicine, and law. It may prove useful to the linguistics specialists in all related fields of study, e.g., applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and communicative disorders. We hope, too, that it will be of interest to anyone in any field who is curious about

language and discourse and how discourse both shapes the world and is shaped by it.

In thinking about language, cognition, and social interaction, we must strive for the analytic over the superficially descriptive. For in language and discourse, as in life, what is on the surface typically reflects a mere fragment of what lies below. An utterance is not an utterance on its own; its meaning derives from a systematic, contextually situated whole. We hope to provide some guidance to readers of this book to uncover those systems, to make sense of the parts that comprise the wholes, and to "see" the world in new and compelling ways.

NOTES

1. See Gee (2010) and Johnstone (2008) for discussions and underlying meanings of *discourse* as a "mass noun" and its use in the plural form, i.e., *discourses*, as a "count noun." In this book, we use the term *discourse* to refer to processes, as discussed above, as well as the outcomes and products of such processes.
2. We use the term *text* in the sense of representation of discourse for the purpose of analysis. This may mean spoken discourse (transcribed or not), written discourse, visuals, graphics, and so forth. See Blommaert (2005); Chafe (1992); Fairclough (1995a, 1995b, 2003); Widdowson (2004); and others for more perspectives on "text."

CHAPTER TWO

The Building Blocks of Language

The Stuff That Discourse Is Made Of

> Views of grammar are critically dependent on assumptions made about semantics. In particular, the autonomy of grammar appears self-evident given the prevalent assumption that meanings consist of truth conditions. The meaningfulness of grammatical elements becomes apparent only by adopting a conceptualist semantics that properly accommodates our ability to conceive and portray the same objective situation in alternate ways. The term *conceptualization* (emphasis original) is interpreted broadly as embracing any kind of mental experience. It subsumes (a) both established and novel conceptions, (b) not only abstract or intellectual "concepts" but also sensory, motor, and emotive experience, (c) conceptions that are not instantaneous but change or unfold through processing time; and (d) full apprehension of the physical, social, cultural, and linguistic context. Thus, far from being either static or solipsistic, conceptualization is viewed as the dynamic activity of embodied minds interacting with their environment. (Langacker, 1998: 3)

LANGUAGE, DISCOURSE, AND MEANING

Discourse analysts need not be linguists. In fact, many are not. However, informed research on language, from communication studies to business, from science education to media studies, should be grounded in a fundamental understanding of language and the linguistic building blocks that combine to create meaningful expressions of experience and perception—all of which enable us to communicate ideas, establish positions, chat, tell stories, convince, dissuade, complain, wield power, exert domination, and rise up against it.

Every element of language that comprises discourse is imbued with *meaning* beyond what we know as "literal meaning."

In discourse, words don't exist as individual, discrete entities. They are not simply labels for us to identify and name things or to describe actions. Discourse necessarily involves words and grammar and other features of language[1] whose meanings are inextricably linked to our experiences, our cultures, our situated contexts and conventions of practice, and, by definition, to some form of prior discourse. In discourse, words combine with other words and parts of words, such that all elements of language express *meaning* well beyond literal meaning and well beyond structure-based meaning.

LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR: THE CREATION OF MEANING

In the sections that follow, we will elaborate on this discussion of words, meaning, and structure. We'll use the term *grammar* to introduce some of the more basic categories of language and to introduce a repertoire of elementary terms that will aid us in our work in analyzing discourse. We begin the discussion with a brief look at how some linguists view *grammar as structure*, governed in whole or in part by rules of syntax. We will then move to a more pliable view of grammar as a socio-cultural-cognitive system of language—an approach to grammar that is essential to the analysis of how people use language in everyday life to communicate, invent, solve problems, and daydream.

Formalist Approaches to Grammar: Form Is Independent of Meaning

For some linguists, grammar and grammatical rules exist independently of the meaning and function of utterances. In this paradigm, grammar consists of an autonomous system of abstract, mathematical rules that generate acceptable or grammatical strings of words that can account for syntactic constructions of all languages of the world. Such rules allow humans to compose an infinite number of sentences from a severely limited number of possible linguistic categories. The purpose of linguistic analysis here is to uncover abstract syntactic rules in a systematic and scientific way. What constitutes linguistic *data* is the syntactically "correct" example. Sample sentences are invented by linguistics to illustrate target grammatical phenomena.

The Primacy of Syntax

Let's analyze two classic example sentences that permeate the early literature embracing the primacy-of-syntax view of grammar. The focus here is on structure, essentially concerning how subjects, verbs, and objects (if required), combine in English to express a coherent thought:

(1) The farmer **kills** the duckling. (Sapir, 1921/2011: 86)
(2) Colorless green ideas **sleep** furiously. (Chomsky, 1957)

With just a cursory reading, one can immediately identify the part of each sentence commonly known as the verb. The verbs in (1) and (2) have been highlighted with boldface type to help them stand out (*kills, sleep*). One can also identify the subject of each sentence (*The farmer, Colorless green ideas*); these sentential subjects have been underlined in the sentences, also to help them stand out. Beyond the subject and verb, one might sense that the syntax in (1) would not be complete without knowing whose or what type of life is taken by the farmer.[2] Thus, the words, "the duckling," functioning here as the direct object, completes both the grammar and the thought, serving to answer the question: *What or whom does the farmer kill?*

Because of the type of verb used in (2), "sleep," there is no further information necessary to process the syntax. Instead, what follows the verb in this sentence is an adverb, the function of which is to add detail to the action expressed by the verb, thus answering the question: *How do colorless green ideas sleep?* Furiously.

Now, it is well known that there is little (if any) discernible literal meaning to the sentence in (2). In fact, it was initially composed for this very reason, i.e., to illustrate that a sentence can be grammatically acceptable in form, independent of meaning (Chomsky, 1957). The two adjectives, colorless and green, are designedly contradictory. And ideas cannot sleep—furiously, soundly, or otherwise. Yet, the syntax doesn't jar us. It doesn't make us think twice or shake our heads in confusion.

To carry the notion of the primacy of syntax one step further, have a look at example (3), from Pinker (1994: 208).[3] Yes, this *is* a sentence. It has a subject and a verb and even a direct object of that verb.

(3) Buffalo buffalo **buffalo** Buffalo buffalo.

As we did with examples (1) and (2), we have again highlighted the verb using boldface type and underlined the words that comprise the subject of the sentence. Where a version of the word appears with an initial upper case B

(Buffalo), it refers to a city in New York State. Thus, the first two words, "Buffalo buffalo," as the sentential subject, designate some indeterminate group of bison from Buffalo, New York, just as Buffalo museums would refer to the museums of the city of Buffalo. The third word is the verb "buffalo," meaning "to bewilder, baffle, or bully." And finally, the last two instances, identical in form as the initial two, Buffalo buffalo, serve as the direct object of the verb "to buffalo." Q: *What or whom do Buffalo buffalo* ***buffalo?*** A: Buffalo buffalo. There is a certain degree of reflexivity[4] here. That is, the subject and object have the same form and designate members of all one group—the Buffalo buffalo do something to their own kind (in other words, Buffalo [adj.] buffalo [noun] bully [verb] themselves [direct object—reflexive]). These additional examples work much in the same way:

(4) Bear **bear** bear. (Ursae tolerate ursae.)
(5) Fox **fox** fox. (Vulpae deceive vulpae.)

While the meanings of (3), (4), and (5) border on the nonsensical, it is still possible to extract the intent of each complete string of words. As we attempt to process the whole of the message, we find ourselves breaking down the words into grammatical categories or word classes, striving to locate the verb, to identify the subject, to determine whether a direct object might be needed, and if so, to find it.

Such formalist approaches to language and linguistic analysis (including Generative Grammar[5]) are grounded in structure and specific sets of universal rules that allow for certain word combinations (grammatical utterances) and disallow others (ungrammatical utterances). Form takes precedence. Meaning rests at the level of each individual word filling a particular slot for a particular category of grammar (e.g., Noun Phrase (NP) subject + Verb Phrase (VP)). In primacy-of-syntax views of grammar, form and structure remain uninfluenced by conceptual meaning, farmers kill ducklings, ideas sleep, and foxes outfox their own kind. Formalist approaches to language and linguistic structure are concerned with the sets of rules for how humans create grammatically possible utterances. Syntax (i.e. focusing on structure and how words string together in language) and semantics (i.e., focusing on individual word meaning) are independent domains of inquiry.

Other Approaches to Grammar: Form and Meaning Are Inextricably Connected

Other views of language consider grammar as an integral part of any communicative process, from the ever-silent realm of an individual's inner speech and

self-directed private speech (Vygotsky, 1968), to all forms of socially grounded communication in any modality—be it spoken or written; mediated graphically, digitally, or electronically; or any one of the possible hybridized combinations thereof. Though varied and diverse in their approaches and foci of analysis, these linguists share the belief that grammar is not an autonomous aspect of the human mind that works independently from meaning and function. Tomasello (1998) refers to this group of linguists as "cognitive-functional linguists" (p. xi) and describes their general approach to linguistics as follows:

> Indeed, because they take a more psychological approach to human linguistic competence, cognitive and functional linguists do not accept the distinction between syntax and semantics as it is characterized by Generative Grammar. To these linguists [i.e., cognitive-functional], all language structures are symbolic instruments that serve to convey meaning, from the smallest morpheme to the most complex structures. (p. xi)

Another major difference between cognitive-functional approaches to language, grammar, and discourse, and the more formalist ones, concerns the notion of *choice*. That is, speakers and writers and texters and bloggers *do* follow rules of syntax. Of course they do. But when we speak and write or text and blog, we are making choices. Choice pervades all of the ways we use language, at every level, from the word or lexical level to all levels of grammar and beyond.[6] When we use language to think and to communicate, choice is ever-present.

Sometimes those choices are consciously driven. We may have searched for just the right word, trying this one, scratching it out (or backspacing over it to make it disappear), and then typing another, until the precise image of what we were hoping to convey takes its intended shape. We may have similar experiences in the online production of speech, stopping mid-word or pausing to select our very best candidate from the list of possible other words spinning through our head at the same time—all in the course of seconds, or microseconds. We may actually utter a word, stop ourselves, and then change it, explaining that the prior choice wasn't what we really meant.

Sometimes, though, choice is less intentional, less conscious. Such less-transparent linguistic choices tend to occur more often at the level of grammar, as we will see later in this chapter.

We'll use two very basic examples to introduce the interrelated notions of choice and meaning as they relate to discourse and grammar. Here are two sets of sentences. We've left blank spots to be filled in. Each possible

answer would yield a grammatically correct utterance. How does the image of the scene change for you with each possible choice? Does your image of the writer or speaker change depending upon which word is used in the blank spaces? If so, how? If not, why not? What other words could you think of that might complete the A and B blanks and spark a new array of images?

Choice—An Introduction

1. Here is the report that you _____(A)_____. I hope that it is _____(B)_____.

   A: asked for, need, were looking for, noted, requested

   B: okay, to your liking, satisfactory, what you want, not too short

2. We had _____(A)_____ time at your _____(B)_____.

   A: such a good, a marvelous, a great, a pretty good, an okay

   B: party, barbecue, bash, celebration, get-together, soirée, partay

GRAMMAR AND MEANING

The process of analyzing discourse requires an understanding of the components of language and how these components fit together to express meaning. In contrast with formalist ways of thinking, our view of grammar considers linguistic meaning not as something that is given, static, or objectified. That is, grammatical meaning cannot be predicted *a priori* by pre-determined rules, nor can it be reduced to the domain of the literal, however *literal meaning* may be defined. Rather, meaning requires context. It is fluid and emergent. Meaning expressed through discourse and grammar reflects conceptual understandings and perceptions, socio-cultural expectations, and both collective and individual stances and viewpoints. Meaning is dialogically built through discourse and grammar in concert with lived experiences and in response to other current and prior discourse.

Yes, words fill the slots within traditionally understood categories of grammar, such as parts of speech (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions) and parts of structure (e.g., phrase, clause, sentence). However, words used in discourse *mean* something. Each word conjures up an array of concepts and images, as we saw with the case of words like *party, bash,*

soirée, and *partay.* Other words conjure up more powerful images, like *kill, soothe, die, survive, struggle, destroy, reconstruct*, or *furiously.* When we hear or read words like these, we want to know more. What happened? Why? How? Who is involved?

Let's take Sapir's invented example of English syntax to illustrate the first steps toward developing these ideas:

The farmer kills the duckling.

The sentence contains two nouns and a verb in the present tense. There is a basic conceptual structure presented here, as we outline:

Who is involved?	One farmer and one duckling.
What is happening?	He (or she?) kills it.
Why?	No idea. No clues are provided here.

The sentence is categorically grammatical. We can immediately identify its subject, verb, and object. It is a perfect example of language. But it is not discourse. And it is unlikely that such a sentence was or ever will be uttered verbatim in an actual context, unless it is in response to a question posed by an interlocutor hearing an ongoing narrative: Q: "And then what happens?" A: The farmer kills the duckling. As represented here and as cited elsewhere in the literature, this sentence is responsive to nothing.

When we view grammar from perspectives other than formalist ones, our views of structure change; our views of linguistic and discursive meaning expand exponentially. We have within our grammars of language an array of choices, multiple alternatives right there for us to transform experiences and perceptions and understandings into words. Grammar provides us with infinite ways of perceiving and relating events as they occur in our lives. The same event can be represented in myriad ways by individuals who have witnessed that event and lived it, or who have only heard about it or read it in a book. The grammar of any language provides linguistic resources for speakers to express what they have experienced, directly or indirectly, reacting with an acute intensity or a detached impassiveness. Each rendition of one event by multiple witnesses or experiencers will contain linguistic details pointing to each individual's own particular vantage point. We illustrate this next, taking the instance of the farmer and the duckling as a neat and simple example for English.

ALTERNATE NPS AND VPS FOR "THE FARMER KILLS THE DUCKLING"

If, hypothetically, someone chose to recount this event (either having witnessed it directly or having found out about it in another way), the details of the event would take on an altogether different meaning. The event would become an instance of discourse, and the words used would move beyond simple language and structure.

In which *genre* would such a sentence occur? Is the genre a narrative, ordinary conversation, a news story, an essay, a religious sermon, a political debate? As you will read in Chapter 3, genres constitute larger units of discourse, setting the frame for the conventions and expectations surrounding how language and discourse are used and organized at a broader level.

Essentially, there are two characters involved, a farmer and a duckling, and one action, killing. The larger, more powerful entity is the one who performs the action on the smaller, less powerful one. Why the original noun phrase *The farmer*? Why the original verb *kill* (and why is it in the present tense?)? Why the original noun phrase *the duckling* as the direct object?

Since this would hypothetically be a discursive use of language, the teller would have a long list of options, minimally including inventories of nouns and verbs from which to choose that would enable that teller to verbally match his or her perspective of the event. The following below contains some candidate samples.

Does the farmer have a name? Is his or her name in any way relevant to the story? Should it be mentioned? (If so, will our story recipient know who it is?) Is the farmer kind or cruel? Is the duckling so badly injured that the act of killing it is actually an act of beneficence? Was the farmer or the farmer's family hungry?

the farmer:	the farmer, Jake, Martha, the ranch hand, the owner, the grower, he, she, the guy, the gal, a creep, an euthanasist, the monster, the saint, a passerby, the boss, an underling, a hick, our friend, the picker, Mr. Green Jeans, Ms. Haymaker, the benevolent man, the kind woman . . .
the duckling:	the baby duck, the duck, the gosling, the chick, the bird, it, a creature, an animal, a hatchling, the poor innocent thing . . .
kills:	mutilates, smothers, puts out of misery, finishes off, slaughters, butchers, ends a life, sends to heaven, snuffs out, relieved of suffering, says good-bye to, sends off to greener pastures, bids adieu to . . .

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS THAT MAY FIT THE STORY

One could add yet more choices by expanding the parts of speech inventory and including categories of words like adjectives (we have added a handful to the previous box) and adverbs, as in the following box.

adjectives:	kind, cruel, enraged, insane, benevolent, incensed, thoughtful, fluffy, soft
adverbs:	accidentally, unfortunately, intentionally, with ether, with a machete, for a prize, in the silo, behind the barn, in front of its mother, last night, early Sunday morning, to end its suffering, just one hour ago

As should be evident from the previous activity, grammar clearly does serve as a communicative mechanism for structure, concept, and choice. It provides resources for speakers and hearers to make visible to their recipients (and to themselves) how it is they conceptualize an event, how they evaluate the participants, how they understand and express causes and effects, how and where they attribute blame or gratitude or empathy, how and through what means speakers and writers attempt to sound objective and value-free, and how hearers and readers are positioned to interpret the discourse. We do all of this and more with the words we use—the words that fill each slot for each grammatical category, traditionally referred to as "parts of speech."

Other perspectives of this event might well use altogether different syntax, as in *The duckling dies* (or *died*), whereby the act of killing fades into the background, now drawing our attention directly to the outcome, *the duckling's death*.

At issue here, and throughout the foregoing discussion, are language, grammar, conceptualization, and perspective-taking or *stance*. Which contextual elements of the story are salient in the event retelling? Which remain backgrounded? Which are not even mentioned? Why?

Grammar, Conceptualization, Stance, and Discourse

Words express concepts and ideas. How we choose our words and how we string them together to say what we mean, in speech or writing, reveals much about who we are, how we feel about things, what we think about things, how strongly things matter to us. Some processes involved in word selection are deliberate and painstakingly planned. Some are much less obvious, even to ourselves.

And regardless of how it is that we produce discourse, nothing in it is neutral. Just as words and language are imbued with meaning, discourse is imbued with *stance*. Each and every instance of discourse is produced from a perspective, a position, a stance. It could be a stance of authority and regulation, as in a one-word sign that says "STOP" or "YIELD." It could be one of elation or sadness or seemingly neutral objectivity. It could be one of certainty or doubt. Discourse emerges from and is built on stance and perspectives. We begin our discussion of perspective-taking with an introduction to grammar as a conceptual mechanism linking language and thought.

GRAMMAR AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Grammar is essentially conceptual. It is the very mechanism through which we organize our thinking and express thoughts and ideas in words, phrases, and sentences—emphasizing here, downplaying there. Speakers and writers choose words and phrases and structures to construe reality, to represent detail in explicit granularity or in broad outlines of shapes and shadow, to demonstrate empathy, to imply blame or innocence, and to underscore fortuitousness or intentionality—and virtually anything in between or beyond the range of possibilities just noted for construing the world using the symbolic system of language.

Grammar is inextricably tied to human cognition and functions in concert with "other cognitive facilities, especially with perception, attention, and memory" (Radden and Dirven, 2007: xi). As noted by Langacker (2008: 3–4): "The elements of grammar—like vocabulary items—have meanings in their own right . . . [Grammar] is thus an essential aspect of the conceptual apparatus through which we apprehend and engage the world." It is tied to human feelings and emotions, to logic and planning, to our past and present, and to future experiences. Grammatical categories are conceptual categories.

In the sections that follow, we will introduce some of the basic parts of speech (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) and discuss their conceptual meanings and contextual functions in discourse.

Conceptualizing Things—Nouns

Nouns name things. We use nouns to identify things and people. We use nouns to name locations and ideas. Some nouns are concrete. They name things that are visible or tangible, like "tree," "telephone," "water," or "apparition." Some exist as concepts, emotions, and beliefs, like "idea," "gratitude," "independence," and "fatalism." And some are somewhere in between, like

"atmosphere" or "universe." All of these word types are nouns. Sometimes the same word can refer to a concrete thing, like "school" (i.e., the building) and "school" (i.e., education, the institution of schooling). The distinction between **concrete nouns** and **abstract nouns** is a conceptual one. Depending upon the context and the communicative intent of the speaker or writer, the same noun might be used to express a concrete thing or an abstract idea.

Another important distinction that grammarians make concerning nouns involves the very basic categories **count** and **non-count (or mass)**. Some nouns fit squarely into one category type and rigidly resist the other type. Most nouns, though, can be construed as count or non-count/mass types, depending on usage and context, and not just the word itself. Let's take *peach* as an example:

peach	an individual piece of fruit (a *peach* / six *peaches*)	COUNT TYPE
peach	a flavor or main ingredient (pie, jellies, jams, yogurt), a color (*peach* peignoir), a substance ("The baby even had *peach* in his ears.")	MASS TYPE

In fact, *fruit* in general is often construed as a mass/non-count type of noun (just as we mention it right here in this sentence) when the image we have of it or would like to convey of it is more of an amorphous substance, or when discrete individuation of an item is not relevant.

This flexibility in object construal, specifically in the case of fruit (as concrete nouns), becomes all the more clear when we write up shopping lists for the produce department. Here is a hypothetical example:

Shopping List (Fruits)

apples	oranges
grapes	watermelon
strawberries	grapefruit
cantaloupe	peaches

Some nouns appear in the plural form and are thus used as *count nouns* (apples, oranges, grapes, strawberries, peaches). Others are in the singular

form and used here as *mass or non-count* nouns (watermelon, cantaloupe, grapefruit), but each of these words could easily be pluralized and used as count nouns as well (e.g., two watermelons, three cantaloupes, six grapefruits). Why do you think this is so? Just by virtue of the presence or absence of the English plural marker *-s*, how does your construal of these items change? What seems to influence your use of singular vs. plural in conceptualizing the previously listed fruits? The mental processes of conceptualizing everyday items is so conditioned by our grammars[7] that most of us are not consciously aware of this very tight concept-language connection.

Let's take another example of a noun that may be used variably in English, both as a mass noun and as a count noun: snow.

More often than not, we consider *snow* as a non-count/mass type of noun, as in the following examples:

> They rarely see snow in Southern California.
> Send over some snow to us in Meckenbeuren. Ours is already gone.
> They're predicting snow for the entire Northwest this weekend.

But, the word (or more precisely the concept) can also be used with contextual features that are more consistent with a count-type usage:

> **One** snow, in particular, was remarkable. (referring to one snowfall, from among others)

Here is a discourse-based example from the children's book, *The Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving* (Mcgovern, 1993: 8–12):

> **Winter**
>
> . . . The first winter in Plymouth was terrible for the Pilgrims. They could not finish building their homes before the snow fell. They could not find enough food in the forests . . . That winter, many of the Pilgrims got sick. Many of the Pilgrims died.
>
> **Spring**
>
> At last the snows began to melt. Spring was coming . . .

Just by virtue of a single *-s* at the end of the word *snow* in the Spring description of the weather, the focal point of this image shifts from the occurrence of frozen precipitation that covers the ground, tree limbs, and rooftops to a *regularity of snowfall events*—one snowfall and then more, which contributed to the harshness of that first winter. Both versions of the clause in question are perfectly grammatical—what shifts is the conceptual representation (and hence perspective) of the weather condition in question:

At last the snows began to melt.

(Original version: **plural**, **count type**—drawing attention to the mass of snow surrounding the Pilgrims *and* to the many times that snow fell that winter.)

At last the snow began to melt.

(Variation: **singular, non-count/mass** type—drawing attention to the mass of snow surrounding the Pilgrims.)

Grammar is so much more than mere structure. Grammar does have meaning in its own right. One *-s* at the end of a word can change the conceptual imagery.

Practice with Mass Nouns and Count Nouns

Count	**Non-count (mass)**
desk	wood
can	aluminum
lamp	electricity
moon	moonlight
panda	bamboo
train	railroad

How do you know that the words in the **left-hand column** are count nouns? Can you naturally add an *-s* to make them plural?

What about the nouns in the **right-hand column?** Can you naturally add an *-s* to make them plural?

What, conceptually, is at play with regard to singularity and plurality? Name some other typical **count nouns**:

_____, _____, _____, _____

Name some other typical **non-count (mass) nouns:**

_____, _____, _____, _____

Can you think of some non-count (mass) nouns that can be used like count nouns?

Here is one example: water → waters

What sort of conceptual changes occur when *water* becomes *waters*?

Here is another example: cheese → cheeses

Now what sort of conceptual change occurs when *cheese* becomes *cheeses*?

Nouns: Unified Wholes vs. Individuated Members

We find similar conceptual patterns in English grammar that reflect discrete individuation on the one hand and circumscribed sets of collectives on the other.

These individual vs. collective patterns become especially salient with so-called **collective nouns** that refer to various types of membership sets. Collective nouns designating human groups include words like: *faculty, staff, family, team, the House, the Senate, police, jury, congregation, company, board*, *force, band, orchestra, committee, the IRS, college,* where individual members belong to a common group with common ties of various types and sources. Collective nouns referring to animals include *flock, litter, herd, gaggle, pod, pride, cry,* and *cete.*

When reference is made to collective entities in discourse using collective nouns, we find an interesting variability in the co-occurring verb forms, at times exhibiting the **third-person present tense singular *-s*** (or other irregularly transparent third-person singular present tense forms like *is, has, does*), at times the non-singular form. Note how such choice of verb form affects

Tenure-line faculty **are** invited to apply for seed grants through P&G.

(plural verb *are*—conceptually pointing to multiple individual faculty members who may be interested)

The faculty **expresses** its dissatisfaction with Hill's most recent action.

(singular verb *expresses*—conceptually pointing to the group as a whole)

the conceptual realizations of the group or individuals in question, as in the examples on the previous page.

Now, of course it is not "grammatically" possible for each and every collective noun in English to occur at *any* time with *either* a singular verb form *or* a plural verb form in the present tense, but the general variability is indeed possible. And the variability is meaningful from the dual points of view of concept and perspective.

Some variations are dialectal. In British English, for example, we might find the word *couple* co-occurring with plural verb morphology, while in American English, we tend to find the word occurring more often with singular morphology, as in the above examples.

British English: *couple* + plural morphology, pointing to each of the two individual members:

"A couple **have** had three foster children removed from their care because they belong to the UK Independence Party." (BBC News, November 2012).

American English: *couple* + singular morphology, pointing to the unit as a whole:

"The New Jersey couple **has** no idea how the new law [concerning international adoption from Russia] will affect them." (Gringberg, 2012).

Similarly, British English tends to use plural verb forms with seemingly singular collective nouns, such as sports team names designated by the countries, cities, counties, towns, or other institutions to which the teams belong, thus underscoring a focus on the group composed of individual members, rather than the group as a unified circumscribed whole. In contrast, American English uses singular verb forms.

Here are a few examples:

British English: "singular" team names with plural (non-singular) verbs

Euro 2012 final: Spain v Italy as it happened (football/soccer)

All the action and analysis as Spain **retain** their European Championship trophy in style. (cf. singular: . . . *as Spain retains its European* . . .) (BBC News, July 2012)

American English: "singular" team names with singular verbs

Anytime Cleveland **Wins** it is a Favorite NFL Moment (Gissiner, 2012)

Some of these dialectal differences in collective noun usage may be predictable. However, by virtue of the grammatical patterns, it becomes clear how team membership and participation are both grammatically referred to and conventionally accepted by speakers of the dialects in question.

In the noun patterns that we address next, the referents are non-human, and the distinctions rest between pointing out abstract wholes or sets, on the one hand, and concretely specific individuated parts that comprise those sets, on the other—often with the abstract concept being a mass type noun and the concrete specific members, count type.

Examples of this type of noun include:

Abstract, unified set	**Concrete, specific types of members**
cutlery	knives (and the different types)
flatware	spoons, forks, knives, utensils
aircraft	planes, dirigibles, hot air balloons, helicopters
produce	fruits and vegetables (and the various types)
ammunition	bullets, BBs, missiles, grenades
weaponry	guns, missiles, grenades, knives, blunt objects

Words conjure up images and images conjure up words. Some nouns denote abstract, amorphous concepts. Others denote concrete entities with sharply detailed shapes, sizes, and features. All pattern meaningfully within our discourse to illustrate, explain, relate news—to communicate our ideas, findings, and feelings. And all contribute in varying degrees to our ways of seeing and to our ways of having others see what we see.

Next, you will find excerpts from a news story reporting the discovery of a large number of World War I relics. These "relics" are bullets, variably referred to in this article and the photo captions as: *ammunition, pieces of ammunition, pieces of bullet, bullets,* and *explosives*.

First World War ammunition frozen in time for nearly a century has been found as glacier melts (excerpts), by Alex Gore. 9/2/2012

First World War ammunition frozen in time for nearly a century has been discovered in northern Italy.

More than 200 pieces of the ammunition were revealed at an altitude of 3,200 metres by a melting glacier on the Ago de Nardis peak in Trentino.

photo caption 1: Frozen in time: The ammunition was discovered as a glacier melted in Trentino

photo caption 2: Explosives: More than 200 pieces of the 85–100mm caliber bullets were found

photo caption 3: Conflict: The bullets were spread over a 100-square-metre area between 1915 and 1918

photo caption 4: Discovery: The ammunition was revealed at an altitude of 3,200 metres on the Ago de Nardis peak.

(Gore, 2012)

SINGULAR AND PLURAL NOUNS IN DISCOURSE

How do these images appear in your mind as you read through the excerpts? Do the plural versions take on different imageries than the singular version, *ammunition?* If so, how? If not, why do you think this is the case?

Discourse is inherently driven by choice, which is inherently driven by perspective and purpose. We have isolated the grammatical category of nouns as our initial entry point into the domain of analyzing discourse to illustrate these ideas.

We'll now have a quick look at verbs, adjectives, and adverbs as they appear in actual discourse.

CONCEPTUALIZING ACTIONS, MOVEMENT, STATES, PERCEPTION, COGNITIVE PROCESSES—VERBS[8]

We review verbs here, very generally, to give an idea of how verbs reflect and create meaning in discourse. Verbs express actions, movement, states, perception, and cognitive processes. One major quality of verbs that will come into play in the analysis of discourse is **transitivity**. Verbs are often categorized as **transitive** or **intransitive**. Simply put, transitive verbs take direct objects and intransitive verbs *cannot* take any type of object at all.

Transitivity is then obviously related to grammatical structure. However, in discourse, the concept that underlies transitivity is potentially very powerful. In certain contexts, the use of transitive verbs expresses *power, strength, agency, will, intentionality,* and *deliberateness,* while the use of intransitive verbs expresses *spontaneity, automaticity,* and *occurrences that might be beyond*

our control. Naturally, the key word in the grammar-concept link is *context*. Where do these types of constructions appear? Who or what are the subjects of the transitive or intransitive verbs? Who or what are the objects of the transitive verbs? Are subjects animate? Are they human? What about the objects?

Even working just at the word level, look at the following word lists. Compare the potential imagery that a single transitive verb can conjure up. Who or what might the subject be? Who or what might the object be? To what extent does the object of the verb change as a result of the action of that verb performed by the subject? Try this with a variety of potential subjects (human, non-human, animate, inanimate) and a variety of potential objects.

Transitive Verbs:

blemish, stain, ruin, destroy, demolish
nibble, nosh, snack on, eat, devour, inhale, scarf down
hit, pound, tap, strike, beat, pummel

Who or what do you imagine the subject(s) to be?

Who or what do you imagine the object(s) to be?

How much "power" does the subject seem to have over the object?

To what extent does the object undergo a change as a result of the subject and verb?

Practice with Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Typical transitive verbs: (take a direct object)	Typical intransitive verbs: (cannot take a direct object)
eat	sleep
drink	remain
write	happen
read	revolve
tease	laugh
discover	arrive
throw	live
spend	descend
absorb	complain
make	be (am, is, are)
cover	disappear
show	appear
drop	fall

raise	rise
lay	lie
grow (hair, tomatoes)	grow (to increase in size)
run (a business)	run (to move faster than walking)
walk (a dog)	walk (to ambulate)
climb (a tree)	climb (to move upward)
fly (a plane, a kite)	fly (to move in the air)

Locate the transitive and intransitive verbs in the following paragraph that describes how to hold a golf club. For transitive verbs, be sure to indicate what the direct object is.

How to Hold a Golf Club:

Hold the club in your left hand. Place your right-hand pinky ("little finger") between the index finger and middle finger of your left hand. Align both thumbs so that they follow the line of the club shaft. Both thumbs should point downward and be parallel to the line of the club shaft.

(Hint: These are the verbs you should identify: *hold*, *place*, *align*, *follow*, *point*, and *be*. Which are transitive? intransitive?)

Now, write your own "how to" description about how to fold and fly a paper airplane.

In the first paragraph, describe *how to fold the paper*. In the second paragraph, describe *how to fly the plane*.

Be sure to use both transitive and intransitive verbs. (Feel free to use some of the verbs from the previous lists, in addition to your own.)

How do transitive and intransitive verbs appear to differ in terms of how they express both control and movement?

VERBS IN DISCOURSE

Carrying the grammar-concept link further, we need to examine the **tense and aspect** involved in the spate of discourse under investigation. What is being discussed? Is it an event, an action, or a state? Is it past, over and done with, or is it still happening? Is the consequence of the event relevant to anything else in the discourse? Is the consequence depicted as temporary or permanent? All of these features, and more, are expressed through **tense and aspect marking** on verbs.

The following excerpt is from a web-based article about a winter storm on Prince Edward Island (an island province of Canada just north of Halifax and east of Quebec City). The first line shown in the figure is in bold. It is the headline of the news story.

As you read the excerpt, pay attention to five things:

- What or who are the subjects? (animate, inanimate, human?)
- What types of verbs occur with the subjects? (transitive, intransitive?)
- What or who are the direct objects? (animate, inanimate, human?).
- Which tense and aspect markers are used? (**present, past, perfect, progressive?**)
- How do grammar and conceptualization intersect with the overall image of this news excerpt?

Winter blast causes outages, traffic restrictions on Prince Edward Island (excerpt)

A blast of winter weather **has left** Maritime Electric crews working to restore power . . . to . . . customers affected by power outages.

A spokesperson for the company said three areas **are suffering** outages caused by the weather.

The Maritime provinces **are grappling with** heavy snowfall, blowing snow and rain today.

(*The Guardian*, 2012)

You might want to organize your findings using tables or other graphic devices, such as this one, to help you isolate some of the variables.

SUBJECT	VERB	DIRECT OBJECT
Winter blast	causes	outages, traffic restrictions
A blast of winter weather	has left	Maritime Electric crews working
Three areas	are suffering	outages
The Maritime provinces	are grappling with	heavy snowfall, blowing snow, and rain

NOTES about tense and aspect:

- Winter blast *causes* outages, traffic restrictions on P.E.I.—"causes" is in the present tense. It is in a *news headline*.
- A spokesperson for the company *said* . . . (The verb "say" is in the past tense. The event is over and done with. There is an anonymous entity responsible for the details provided here.)
- Three areas **are suffering** outages (The verb is in the present progressive, the action is immediate and ongoing, and it involves a negative consequence for human **experiencers**. Here, "people" are conceptualized through a geographic location—"three areas.")
- The Maritime provinces are grappling with heavy snowfall, blowing snow, and rain. (The verb is in the present progressive, the action is immediate and ongoing, and again, it involves a negative consequence for human **experiencers**. Here again, "people" are conceptualized through a geographic location—"The Maritime provinces.")

ANALYZING THE VERBS IN DISCOURSE

Which entities in the previous discourse are framed as particularly powerful? Which are framed more as victims? What, in the discourse, creates such a contrast of forces?

Let's now move to adjectives for a brief view of how they pattern in discourse.

CONCEPTUALIZING QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF PEOPLE, THINGS, EXPERIENCES, AND EVENTS—ADJECTIVES

The function of adjectives is to provide detail concerning the quality, color, size, shape, scale, physical characteristics, and personality traits of nominal entities (i.e., nouns or **noun phrases [NPs]**). Adjectives express speakers' and writers' perceptions, evaluations, and judgments about people, things, experiences, and events.

In linguistics, adjectives are often discussed on the basis of the categorical distinction of **attributive** and **predicative** adjectives. This distinction, too, like transitivity in verbs, relates to syntactic structure. That is, **attributive adjectives** precede the noun and **predicative adjectives** follow a copular element or linking verb in the utterance, e.g., verbs like *be, become, seem, feel, taste*.

Some adjectives *must* precede the nouns (i.e., they must be attributive) and conversely, some adjectives *must* follow a copula or linking verb (i.e., they must be predicative), or the expressions will not make sense:

obligatorily attributive adjectives (must precede the noun)

"Magenta is George's favorite color."
adjective noun

***His color is favorite.**
noun [copula] adjective

Fugues begin with a main theme.
adjective noun

***The fugue's theme is main.**
noun [copula] adjective

obligatorily predicative adjectives (must follow a copula)

Her sister did not feel appreciated.
noun [copula] adjective

***Her appreciated sister.**
adjective noun

The children were asleep when we came home.
noun [copula] adjective

***The asleep children.**
adjective noun

So, while sentence structure is clearly a factor in the placement of adjectives relative to the nouns and noun phrases they modify, the effect that such adjective and noun placement has in discourse can be remarkable—especially with respect to such conceptual features as the permanence or temporariness of such quality, the seemingly inherent nature of that quality to the nominal referent, and so forth.

To illustrate:

Attributive: The **Handsome** Boy Modeling School.
Predicative: Seventeen Ways to Look **Handsome**.
[copula]

Attributive: Meryl Streep wore a **gorgeous** gown.
Predicative: Meryl Streep's gown was **gorgeous**.
[copula]

The following excerpt contains a number of adjectives, some attributive and some predicative. It is a commentary, purportedly by Chef Wolfgang Puck, that accompanies a "Featured Recipe" on the Wolfgang Puck website. This recipe is for one of the more well-known Puck pizzas. The adjectives are in boldface font and we have underlined them to help them stand out more.

With this rather narrow focus on adjectives, attend to the following issues:

- What is the adjective type? (Attributive or predicative?) How many attributive adjectives did you locate? How many predicative adjectives? List them together with the nouns that they occur with.
- Do you find any adjective strings, i.e., with more than one attributive adjective in a row? Would it be grammatically possible to do this with predicative adjectives? Why or why not?
- How do the predicative adjectives differ from the attributive adjectives in this excerpt with respect to permanence of the quality associated with the nouns they describe? How does this affect your read of the excerpt? How does this affect your conceptualization of the noun and its descriptor?

Featured Recipe

Pizza with smoked salmon and caviar

When I opened the **original** Spago in 1982, this quickly became its **signature** pizza. If you feel **decadent**, you can top the pizza with Sevruga, Beluga, or Osetra caviar; less **expensive** salmon roe or just **chopped fresh** chives are also **elegant**.

(Puck, n.d.)

ADJECTIVES IN DISCOURSE

With just these few lines, we can see how crucial adjectives are to discourse. In this excerpt, they present qualitative information about the larger item in question (a special pizza) and elements relating to its historical origins, in

addition to a handful of ingredients (both from the original recipe and suggested alternatives). Moreover, these adjectives set a descriptive tone in the discourse that positions the author, the pizza, and the reader squarely within a domain of exclusivity, taste, and culinary style.

Which adjectives are obligatorily attributive?

signature pizza → *the pizza is signature
original recipe → the recipe is original (a very different meaning)

Now, compare adjective placement and the consequent meaning changes that occur as a result of such alternation:

Attributive
Smoked salmon → Predicative: The salmon is smoked.

Attributive
Chopped, fresh chives → Predicative: The chives are **chopped**.
The chives are **fresh**.

Predicative
If you feel **decadent** → Attributive: The **decadent** you.
[variation: The dessert looks **decadent.** vs. A **decadent** dessert.]

Predicative
Chives are **elegant** → Attributive: The **elegant** chives.

How does adjective placement affect your reaction to the text as a reader? How does it change the "attributes" and their relationships to the nouns and noun phrases in question?

CONCEPTUALIZING MANNER, LOCATION, TIME, DURATION, INTENSITY, DIRECTION, AND MORE—ADVERBS

In grammar, adverbs may be among the least understood "parts of speech" and at the same time one of the most powerful grammatical categories in terms of stance marking. Put simply, adverbs modify verbs. But how? And what does it really mean to "modify a verb"?

Adverbs are not well understood because they appear in a wide variety of forms and structures. The simplest way to recognize an adverb is by noticing the traditional *-ly* at the end of a word. *Slyly, shyly, readily, consequently,*

appropriately, *immunoelectrophoretically*, and *otorhinolaryngologically* are all adverbs. However, *unlikely*, *earthly*, and *fatherly* are not. (They are adjectives.)

Beyond the nearly telltale *-ly* adverbial morpheme, though, there are countless other ways of grammatically modifying a verb. In English, time reference words like *today*, *yesterday* and *tomorrow* are adverbs—as are time reference phrases like *at 2:32 p.m.*, *before the bell rang*, *right in the middle of my daydream*, and *just before the farmer kills the duckling* are also adverbs.

Adverbs "modify verbs," typically by answering such questions as: *How?*, *When?*, *Where?* and *Why?:*

How:	*with his bare hands, painstakingly, without looking, in red ink, instead, by pushing it uphill, from top to bottom, very quickly* (there are two adverbs here), *so carefully* (two adverbs here, too)
When:	*at 4:30, before the sun came up, while the boys were sleeping, last month, every six hours, yesterday*
Where:	*in the bedroom, at the bank, behind the desk, on Mars, outside, here*
Why:	*for his own pleasure, for a better tan, so he'd win, because she was the better candidate, so investors would have more faith*

An adverb can also be a full subordinate clause, i.e., clauses beginning with words like *because*, *if*, *when*, *while*, *provided that*, as in *Just as I was about to send you a message* ← [ADV], *you logged off.* And an adverb can be a single word that modifies a full sentence that precedes it: *If you read everything that's on the syllabus then you'll do fine in Smith's class,* **maybe**.

From the points of view of both syntax and conceptual meaning, adverbs are often optional. They provide specific details of time, place, location, manner, and direction.

One example of a grammatically (or pragmatically) obligatory adverb are the words, *too* or *also.* (See Chapter 5, Information Structure, for additional discussion of cohesion).

Hydrogen is an element.
Oxygen is ***also*** *an element. / Oxygen is an element,* ***too.***